Shame in SLA:
Narrative insights from
French learners of FLs

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Abstract

The experience of shame is excruciatingly painful as it involves a loss of self-esteem and a diminished sense of self. Research in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis has found links between shame and a diversity of pathologies, and it has been shown to impact individuals' psychological well-being in a negative way. It is proposed here that the affective variable of shame has its place as a valid subject for investigation into the multifaceted and complex phenomena underlying the acquisition and use of an additional language as it may interfere with second language (L2) learning.

The current research in progress is one of the rare exploratory studies devoted to shame in second language acquisition (SLA) and, to the author's knowledge, the only one so far to have been conducted in the context of the French foreign language classroom. Its aim is to explore the nature, antecedents and consequences of this phenomenon from the perspective of four focal French learners of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Through in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, 34 students recalled their negative L2-related experiences and their thought-provoking remarks interestingly revealed that the language classroom can generate a number of occasions for learners to experience shame and other negative and pathogenic emotions, like anxiety and humiliation, which in some cases may deter them from engaging in the long-term learning of foreign languages.

Among the various skills, speaking the target language was reported to be the most liable to elicit shame because of the greater likelihood of displaying an incompetent self to others, as compared with writing skill. It is argued here that taking shame into consideration in the teaching practice will offer new insights into the non-linear process of acquiring another language to researchers and practitioners alike, and provide a better understanding of what takes place in the language classroom. It is hoped that the current research will help teachers recognize shame-indicating cues in their learners and address them in a systematic way. The findings provided a valuable individual-level analysis of French students' experiences of shame in L2 educational contexts and the investigation moves away from single cause-effect explanations for learner shame and suggests that there are several different routes through which shame emerges, and these routes (i.e. 'attractors' in a Dynamic Systems Theory perspective) are multifarious and so multiple and profoundly ingrained, both educationally

and culturally in the French context, that shame has crystallized into a semi-permanent attractor state within language classrooms.

Finally, this thesis suggests to build on the findings of the current study and stresses the need for further research on this complex and multifaceted emotion.

Publications

Galmiche, D. (2014). Impact de la honte sur la motivation à apprendre et à utiliser une langue étrangère [The impact of shame on the motivation to learn and use a FL]. *Affect(s), foreign language learning and teaching research, LAIRDIL, 23–24*(1), 103–117. Toulouse, France: University of Toulouse III.

Galmiche, D. (2017). Shame and SLA. *Apples - Journal of Applied Language Studies, 11*(2), 25–53.

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Galmiche, D., & Oades-Sese, G. V. (2020). Shame. In M. J. Zimmer-Gembeck & A. M. Waters (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Child and Adolescent Development, Vol. 4, Emotion in Childhood* (pp. 1–14). New York, NY: Wiley.

Conferences

Galmiche, D. (2015). *Learner motivation: Impact of shame on L2 learning and use*. Paper presented at the conference Multidisciplinary perspectives on creation and innovation in foreign languages, LAIRDIL international symposium, Toulouse, France.

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Galmiche, D. (2016). *Shame and SLA: A study of French students of English as a foreign language*. Paper presented at the conference Focus on the learner 2016: Contributions of individual differences to second language learning and teaching, Konin, Poland.

Acknowledgements and dedication

To Fernando, for your smile...

Obtaining my doctoral degree means a lot to me. First, it is a great achievement in my academic life. It is the end of an important part in my professional life and the beginning of a new journey in which I hope I will be sharing all I have learnt from my research.

It is the end of a most exciting adventure which allowed me to see language teaching and learning with an entirely new eye. I very much enjoyed the journey, although it has been rough sometimes. If I had to summarize this journey, I would say that it has been an emotional roller-coaster which allowed me to reach my most cherished dream, my vision, that of transforming my classes into places where my students will learn and thrive, learn the rules of the foreign language, but also learn on the human level. This vision has materialized. The thesis has enabled me to acknowledge more the importance of the psychological aspects and dimensions of foreign language learning and teaching, and to realize how important is the taking into account of learners' emotions and how significant is a vision-informed teaching. But more important is the fact that this thesis journey took me to places which I had never suspected I would be taken to.

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While I am writing these lines, my thoughts go to my dad. I know that, as a mathematics teacher you would have been extremely happy (and I know that you *are*) to see that your daughter has fulfilled her most cherished dream of becoming a motivating teacher who endeavours to help her students get rid of their shame.

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Finally, although I would not go as far as to thank them, I would like to acknowledge the role of some of my former teachers of mathematics, English, Latin and Greek in instilling in me the desire to write this timely research project and fight this noxious emotion and help learners become resilient in face of failure and shame-inducing situations.

To all those who suffer from silent shame, at their workplace, at home, in the classroom and in many other places, and to all those I may have forgotten to thank, I dedicate my thesis.

Foreword

When I started working on the subject of shame nearly seven years ago, I noticed that, whenever someone asked me about the subject of my thesis and I answered "shame," the reaction was invariably the same: "Shame? It must be very interesting!" However, I perceived in the very tone of the voice of my interlocutors that it was only politeness which made them say that and they never asked me to expand on the subject. I soon became aware that nobody is very much inclined to speak about shame, because speaking about this emotion amounts to reliving one's own past shameful episodes one had better forget or bury deep inside themselves.

Talking about shame is shaming. It is like a stigma, an intimate failure being exposed, revealed to the other and to oneself, like a secret wound being re-opened and soring constantly, a wound never to be healed. I fully subscribe to Anne Lécu's (2016) − a French Dominican sister and medical Doctor − definition of shame:

> What is shame? First of all, shame is a pain. […] At the heart of misery, shame is this misery squared, this grey and sly misery which creeps in somebody's mind who is imprisoned in its net that they had better not to have been born. The person who is under the domination of shame experiences a feeling of filth, something sticky which holds them to the ground, with their nose in the dust. (p. 26, my translation)

But I have also realized that every friend, every parent, every colleague and every student I came across, although they were not particularly willing to acknowledge this feeling, had been presented with events connected directly or indirectly with the issue of shame at one time or another in their life. It seems that no human being is immune from these mortifying moments when one feels there is no way of escaping from the ignominy of being *here and now* and from exposing one's deficient self, and in some extreme cases, wishes for a premature death.

Things became quite problematic though when I started to see shame (almost) everywhere, and when I realized that it is an inevitable part of the human experience and that it is to be found in a number of aspects of one's existence. Shame *is* everywhere. Shame is our little inner voice. Shame is a quintessential emotion and its study is vital if we are to understand human motivation and behaviour.

I gradually came to realize that our internal struggles have often something to do with shame, our most secret wounds may originate in shame and I now strongly believe that acknowledging this very ubiquity of shame can help us on the path towards a better understanding of ourselves as both fragile and powerful human beings. Exploring shame is like accomplishing a journey into the depths of the human soul, the remotest part of the brain and the unfathomable of Being, a plunging into the most intimate layers of the human psyche.

Only by facing shame can we transform ourselves into *human* beings. Shame makes everyone of us unique and at the same time, *like* the other. Shame is a toxic emotion. It unveils the darkest side of our personality and appears not only when one has done something wrong or morally condemnable, but also when one feels their identity is flawed and inadequate. Shame is a shrinking of the self, a negation of identity. Shame is 'I am bad at the core'.

Shame also confronts us with our humanness, with what makes our strengths and weaknesses, with our grandeur and our littleness. Shame reveals the Self, the worst possible self but also the best possible self, because one may feel pride when they eventually succeed in overcoming their shame-proneness. Although excruciatingly painful and tormenting, shame, when faced with earnest, and redeemed, can lead to a full restoration of the self and to a regeneration of the soul.

I have grown aware that I have not arrived there by chance, the choice of the topic for my Doctoral Dissertation finds its origins in my own early (language) shame issues, which have, until recently, represented the struggle of my life. Towards the end of my thesis writing, it became clear to me that vulnerable and shamed students can sometimes make fragile language learners, and even in some cases, fragile human beings, and because language and the self are intimately interwoven, the language ego and the self are indistinguishable. Our mission as teachers is to try and answer the question of "how can we make our students emotionally strong and able to develop shame resilience?" or that of "how can we develop in them the desire to reach their ideal language self?"

My most cherished hope in writing this thesis, although it may appear quite ambitious and presumptuous, is to take the reader, be they the language learner, the language teacher, or whoever might be interested in all the puzzles and enigmas offered by second language acquisition, on a journey that will eventually change them by instigating in them the willingness to reflect upon the role of the phenomenon of shame in the acquisition of another language and eventually lead them to a self-questioning and a better self-understanding. The thesis is written for teachers, teachers in preparation, teacher educators and researchers whose

interest lie in SLA. It is not intended to provide advice on ‘what to do’ or to give any ‘recipe’ but rather to encourage teachers to reflect on the ways to turn classes into places where individuals thrive and flourish.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEQ	achievement emotions questionnaire
APA	American psychological association
ASGS	adapted shame and guilt scale
ASPS	adolescent shame-proneness scale
BSGQ-C	brief shame and guilt questionnaire for children
CEFR	common European framework of reference for languages
CFA	apprentice training centre
CLT	communicative language teaching
CoS	compass of shame
CoSS	compass of shame scale
DST	dynamic systems theory
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
ESS	experiential shame scale
FL/FLs	foreign language(s)
FLA	foreign language anxiety
FLCA	foreign language classroom anxiety
FLCAS	foreign language classroom anxiety scale
FLCS	foreign language classroom shame
FLE	foreign language enjoyment
FLL	foreign language learning
FLT	foreign language teaching
GASP	guilt and shame-proneness
GRETA	public educational school for adults
ISS	internalized shame scale
L1	first language
L2	second language
L2-TOSGA	second language test of shame and guilt affect
L3	third language
L4	fourth language
NPD	narcissistic personality disorder
OECD	organisation for economic co-operation and development
PFQ	personal feelings questionnaire
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PTSD	posttraumatic stress disorders
SAD	social anxiety disorder
SAGI	shame and guilt inventory
SCAAI	self-conscious affect and attribution inventory
SLA	second language acquisition
SSGS	state shame and guilt scale
TL	target language
TOSCA	test of self-conscious affect
TOSCA-A	test of self-conscious affect for adolescents
TOSCA-C	test of self-conscious affect for children
UTC	unwillingness to communicate
WTC	willingness to communicate

Chapter 1
Introduction

"We see the L2 teacher as a juggler rushing to keep the various plates of "skills", "pace", "variety", "activities", "competences", etc. all spinning on their sticks. Yet their job is doomed to failure if the affective ground in which the sticks are planted is not firm." (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997, p. 65)

Although a rich and varied literature emanating from social, developmental and clinical psychology has made obvious the role of the self-conscious emotion of shame in a number of psychiatric syndromes as well as in a wide range of psychological disorders, psychopathologies and dysfunctioning of the self (Miller S. B., 1996; Tangney, 1995; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007a, 2007b), shame issues in relation with foreign language learning (FLL) and use have received little, if any, attention from applied linguists.

This thesis set out to explore the role of shame in the FLL journey of French learners within the context of the language classroom. There is much anecdotal evidence of French students' reluctance to use the target language in class. It was hypothesized that shame may be at the origin of their attitude. Shame has not been the subject of systematic investigation until recently, when a few researchers started to be interested in the ways this emotion could affect L2 learning.

One of the salient difficulties that may explain the paucity of research into the impact of this phenomenon on FLL is that exploring such a phenomenon presents a number of methodological and ethical issues that cannot be easily resolved. To put it in a nutshell, how can shame be effectively identified and assessed without damaging the individual's identity? How can accurate meanings be obtained from something which seems so multifaceted and complex? The current project tries to unveil the complexity that lies beneath learners' classroom shame.

In order to make as transparent as possible my role in the current research project, I think that there is a need, especially because I used a qualitative approach, to present some

personal, professional and academic information that will help understand the reasons why I came to explore shame in SLA, the way the research was conducted and how I interpreted the data in the current study. It is important to note that the findings here were interpreted through my own "overall world view" (Egbert & Sanden, 2014) and "conceptual framework of the world" (Frost, 2011). In the following section, I propose to offer a brief account of my family and professional and academic backgrounds.

I was born in France and was adopted at the age of two by a French couple. My adoptive mother being a scientist, and having little time to devote to the education of her children, I was brought up by a nanny, Marthe, a refugee from Eastern Germany whom I grew very much fond of. She stayed with us until I was seven. I was immersed in a French and German-speaking family environment, as Marthe spoke German with me. I still remember the feeling of comfort and happiness when I used German as a little girl, and this feeling has followed me into my adulthood, as German is the language that soothes me in times of trouble. Those years with Marthe remain a particularly moving memory of my childhood, and may be at the origin of what became a passion for, and even fascination, with foreign languages (FLs).

During my childhood and my adolescence, I was used to going to Germany several times every year, especially at Christmas time. I also went to middle school in Saarland and made friends with my penfriend, Annette, whom I stayed in touch with for many years. I was privileged enough to be offered the possibility of learning additional foreign languages such as English, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Vietnamese, Latin and Greek, at school or during my stays abroad, but it is German that has always procured me the most profound and lasting joy.

At the age of twenty, I obtained an Erasmus grant which enabled me to spend a year in England, in Stafford, where I attended Stafford Polytechnics University classes. It is at that time that I decided to become a language teacher. Learning foreign languages has not always been an easy task, and I would say that it proved to be something of an emotional journey sometimes, a journey full of the usual ups and downs, and I would sometimes experience more downs than ups. But what I retain from my multifarious experiences with the learning of foreign languages is that emotions are a significant feature during the learning of another language, and more often than not, I experienced negative emotions like anxiety, embarrassment, nervousness and even shame, especially at times when I felt reluctant to use the target language in the language classes. But, to counterbalance these negative emotions, I could count on emotions like enjoyment, pride and feeling of accomplishment.

What struck me though was the fact that I experienced almost no negative emotion when I was studying and using foreign languages abroad − I had the opportunity to regularly go to

foreign countries − while I would frequently experience painful, even debilitating emotions in the language classroom in my own country.

Despite all the negative experiences I had been living within the context of the language classroom, I started to realize that the learning of a second language (L2) or a foreign language (FL) is of particular significance in today's world and, I decided, after some years, to fulfil my dream of becoming a language teacher. Additionally to my interest in the learning and teaching of FLs, from an early age, I have also felt a particular interest in the field of psychology, and this interest provided confirmation to my intuition that the psychological aspects of second language acquisition were a significant dimension of FLL success or lack of success.

I have now been teaching foreign languages for over three decades and have always endeavoured to be observant of my students' emotional states and moods and tried to make them feel comfortable with their learning, but over the years, and during my over-three-decade teaching career, I have become aware of the many difficulties encountered by learners during the L2 learning process. I have also identified with those students who, despite their desire to learn the target language, are often daunted by the task and perform poorly, and eventually give up the study. The question that has been haunting me all these years is why is it that some students seem to flourish and thrive in the language classroom while some others seem to whither?

Over the years, I have grown dissatisfied with the reticence to take part in communicative activities of most of my students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Whenever I asked them to try to give me the reason(s) for their reluctance to engage with speaking English, the overwhelming majority of my students reported that they were extremely anxious when approaching certain tasks like using the target language or writing tests. The word 'anxiety' came regularly, like a leitmotiv, in their complaints about the way they felt in the classroom.

However, after all these years of language teaching, I started to feel that there was more to this problem of unwillingness to communicate (UTC) than anxiety. In addition, I intuited that the term 'anxiety' was generally used to 'hide' or avoid to mention a more acute emotion, that of shame and would be one of the reasons why so many of my students seemed to have lost their interest in and motivation for learning another language, and refused to take part in communicative activities within the language classroom. I started to feel that the real issue with most of my students was with anxiety over experiencing shame in the future, that is, I sensed that they were inhibited by the fear of experiencing potential shame when approaching certain tasks.

My professional experience as well as a lifetime of excruciatingly painful shyness which makes it extremely difficult for me to speak in public, led me to hypothesize that shame, or rather fear of experiencing shame, could be at the origin of this reticence/unwillingness to use the target language (TL) in instructional settings, and this intuition was the catalyst which stimulated the present project.

My interest in the students' emotional experiences began with my teaching practice, where I often witnessed the embarrassment, humiliation, anxiety or shame felt by all those students who could not learn the target language or speak it despite long hours of learning. I found myself interested in their difficulties and in the challenges that their attitudes to the target language and behaviours represented, and decided to focus on learners' individual difficulties which interfered with the learning of a foreign language. I have always wondered/been concerned about the ways how to turn the language classroom/FLL into a rewarding experience, a place in which students thrive and achieve, and in which their self-confidence and self-esteem can be boosted and resilience and hopefulness increased.

Although the French Ministry of National Education has been trying for some time to improve the language teaching situation, I feel that they are overlooking a major point, that is, the way students *feel* in their classrooms. In other words, what are the emotional implications of teaching and learning a foreign language? I strongly believe that in order for students to be more engaged in the learning of another language and more desirous to use the target language, they need to have teachers who are fully aware of their students' emotional needs. Therefore, the topic of emotion, and especially of the role of shame, should be of major importance with regard to any significant reform aiming at the improvement of the quality of language teaching.

Accordingly, the reasons why I decided to embark on the current project, a journey which turned out to be more complex and demanding than I had anticipated in terms of time devoted to the project and skills required to conduct the research, are diverse. First, as a language teacher, I have always had a deep interest in the way my students learn, and I have always been fascinated with the influence of emotion on the FLL process, and with the way they may facilitate or hinder the learning process. Second, in conducting this research, I had the pleasure to combine my two fields of interest, teaching and psychology. Third, my main aim in writing this thesis was to help teachers and instructors create safe, comfortable and motivating learning environments in which learners will thrive by identifying the role that shame may play in the learning of another language. The study is therefore rooted in interdisciplinary theoretical basis. The choice of the specific research context − French

schools − has been naturally guided by my own teaching background as well as by the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, no research has been conducted on French learners' experiences of language shame.

My first incursions into research took place in 2010-2012, when I conducted two mixed-approach method studies for my Master's degree in a French apprentice training centre (CFA, also called vocational school). I was interested in the reasons why some students reported developing and sustaining an interest in FLL while some others claimed that their interest and motivation had been plummeting over the years. What influence might emotion and affect have on the FLL process? What situational factors might have led them to give up the learning of a FL? These studies addressed the reasons for learners' lack of motivation to learn a second language in low-proficiency English classes in France. In 2010, 139 students participated in the project and in 2012, 185 students participated in the study (Galmiche, 2012). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the use of questionnaires, field notes and interviews.

The analysis of the results confirmed the links between affect, motivation and L2 learning, which had been shown in a variety of earlier studies and the findings suggested the need for further research on the subject and for finding long-lasting solutions to the problem of lack of motivation. The use of in-depth, face-to-face interviews which complemented questionnaires in the second study allowed to learn about some significant aspects of L2 learning within the context of the French language classroom, notably the recurrence and pervasiveness of two emotions, anxiety and shame.

It is to be noted that investigation into the role of emotions in the field of foreign language learning was long restricted to the role of motivation and the research proposed a number of theoretical frameworks (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), and, despite the fact that students of FLs may experience a variety of different emotions during their FLL journey, research on the role of emotions was long limited to the phenomenon of anxiety (e.g. Horwitz, 2001, 2010; MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). It is now generally assumed that emotion plays a significant role in the learning (and teaching) of second or foreign languages, enabling learners to make progress in their studies or preventing them from doing so.

My main aim in the present study was therefore to investigate further the emotional aspects of second language learning, to obtain a better and more comprehensive understanding of the emotions that language learners may experience, and to confirm my initial findings about the role of shame in SLA, by explaining the phenomenon of shame from a variety of perspectives. The best means of having access to individuals' experiences was

thus to listen to participants' own accounts of their feelings and thoughts about language learning, and to listen to their own interpretation of the language learning process and of the factors which they thought had led them to particular behaviours and attitudes towards L2 learning.

As Pekrun and Stephens (2010) note, such research is

> necessary to judge the relative importance of different emotions as experienced by different students, and in different types of academic situations [… and] to generate more comprehensive conceptions of the contents and functions of student emotions, beyond hypotheses that can deductively be derived from existing theories. (p. 296)

It became clear that the experience of shame was not an isolated phenomenon limited to a trivial number of language learners, but instead, shame appeared to be a common experience in the French FL classroom. So common was the experience of shame that a significant number of my students were desirous to participate in the study in order to share their stories with others and they reported that they were hoping that things would change and that their testimonies would allow to cast some light on the way FLs were being taught in France. It is worthy of note that, for the sake of good interviewer-interviewee rapport, and for the reliability of the participants' testimonies, I adopted a non-judgmental attitude towards the interviewees' shame experiences.

Shame being a most pervasive emotion, it seems strange that no major empirical research has been conducted positioning it at the heart of its investigation in the context of second language acquisition? Why is it so? Perhaps it is because shame is a complex, ambiguous and multifaceted phenomenon, and investigating this emotion presents a number of challenges of methodological and interpretive order. How can shame be effectively identified and measured within classrooms? The present research draws upon multiple data types of sources in an endeavour to uncover the multi-facetedness that lies at the heart of language learners' classroom shame.

Research topics

The study aims to investigate the following research topics:

1. The main sources of foreign language classroom shame (FLCS)
2. The consequences and manifestations of linguistic shame

3. Learner characteristics and FLCS
4. Shame and other emotions
5. Reasons why learners succeed or fail to override the feeling of shame

Hypotheses

It was assumed that shame would impact the learning of a FL. The sources of language shame were assumed to be both internal factors (e.g. the learner) and external factors (e.g. the teacher). It was assumed that shame acted in correlation with other emotions. Finally, it was assumed that shame was a dynamic emotion.

Key conceptual theoretical frameworks used in the thesis

I built my research on three theoretical frameworks which I deemed were relevant to my study:

The overarching theoretical framework that was employed in the current research is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2009b) which is drawn from the Theory of the Possible Selves by Markus and Nurius (1986). It originated from the domain of social Psychology Dörnyei's attempt to broaden the scope of research on the variable of motivation in the field of SLL by referring to psychological categories of the Self.

The L2 Motivational Self System is composed of 1) the Ideal L2 Self, 2) the ought-to L2 Self and 3) the L2 learning experience. The construct of the Possible Self is a key theoretical construct in the domain of Psychology. It refers to the mental representations of what individuals would like to become, what they imagine they could become, and of what they are afraid of becoming in the future. Individuals who develop a clear, elaborate and vivid vision of what they would like to become in the future are able to reach their goals with persistence and are focused on the task at hand. In other words, they are able to take actions to achieve different goals, are highly disciplined and are focused on the task at hand and to visualize themselves in the future. Closely associated with possible selves are vision and mental imagery as possible selves can be seen as "visions of an individual's future selves" (Oyserman & James, 2009, p. 373).

The strength of the concept/theoretical model of "the L2 self formulation lies in its ability to map out new conceptual linkages by taking the self as the starting point" (MacIntyre,

MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009, p. 50). What must be pointed out is the fact that the construct of the ideal L2 self is not exclusively oriented to the future but it also takes into account the learner's current/ongoing and past experiences. Taking into consideration the experiences that took place in the past plays a significant role in the way individuals will take action in the future. However, it is worth mentioning that, if an individual's possible self is too remote from their current self, that is, when the discrepancy between the actual and the future self is too big, this may impact their sense of agency (Ryan & Irie, 2014). These ideas will be elaborated further, with examples from my data.

In addition to the Theory of the Possible Selves, McAdams and Pals' (2006) Third level of personality of their Theoretical Framework of Personality − *Integrative life narratives* − was employed, as it can be regarded as an overarching theoretical framework which explains the complexities of human personality. McAdams and Pals' model of personality envisions the overall personality of the individual as the interplay of three different levels (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015):

Dispositional traits are the main components of the Big Five Model and include personality traits like extraversion, neuroticism, friendliness, dominance, dutifulness and depressiveness. These traits are to be seen as being relatively stable across situations and over time. They can be seen as the basis for individuals' personality.

Characteristic adaptations are context-dependent constructs which contain "motives, goals, plans, strivings, strategies, values, virtues, schemas, self-images, mental representations of significant others, developmental tasks, and many other aspects of human individuality" (McAdams & Pals, 2006, p. 208).

Integrative life narratives, the third level of Personality construct, involves the "narrative identity" created by the individuals themselves in order to define who they are, to connect with others, and in the end make sense of their lives and regulate their behaviour. Narrative identity can be regarded as "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233). As to L2 narrative identity, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) defined it as "the specific aspect of an individual's ongoing internal narrative that relates to learning and using a second/foreign language" (p. 202).

Finally, the theories of "Situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and "Imagined communities" (Kanno & Norton, 2003) were also used in the present study:

Situated learning

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is unintentional and usually occurs in activities, contexts and culture. This involves that social interaction plays a significant role in situated learning and learners belong to a 'community of practice' which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. Learners become engaged with the culture and by developing a sense of belonging to a community and interacting with others, they develop a sense of identity. "Learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: they are aspects of the same phenomenon" (p. 115).

Imagined communities

'Imagined communities' (Kanno & Norton, 2003) are "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination" (p. 241). Individuals' investment in the target language (TL) can be understood in terms of their affiliation and their imaginary identification with their future communities.

Organization of the thesis

The thesis will be organized as follows: following this chapter, Chapter 2 will propose a review of the literature on shame in the field of Psychology. Chapter 3 will be devoted to a review of the literature on anxiety and shame, because an understanding of L2-related shame cannot be done without knowledge about what anxiety is and how the two emotions are intimately interwoven.

Chapter 4 will focus on a review of the French education system and its specificities. I will present a brief overview of English education in contemporary France in order to throw light into the context of the research and situate the experiences of the participants. I will provide a general picture of the developments in FL education over the past decades and include general insights from language policies in France, since having an idea of the policy about language learning and teaching and of how these policies translate into curricula and classroom practices gives insights into how learners may be influenced by and perceive the learning of FLs. Also, individuals' engagement with the learning of a FL highly depends on the public discourse, and their attitude to FLL is influenced by an interplay of social, political and economic events and global forces.

Chapter 5 will focus on the Methodology and the research approach procedures that have been employed in the current study. Chapters 6 and 7 will be devoted to the analysis of the

data emerging from the qualitative face-to-face, in-depth, interviews with the learners. It will be divided into two parts, that is, Chapter 6, entitled ‘burdened by shame’, dealing with the participants who were unable to develop strategies of resilience after shame experiences and Chapter 7, entitled ‘Combating shame’, which focuses on the experience of resilient students who envisioned concrete measures to fight shame back.

Chapter 8 will be the conclusion to the dissertation in which I will first provide a summary of the research’s main findings. Following this will be a section devoted to the limitations of the study and then the conclusion moves on to present a number of lessons learnt from conducting this research and I will eventually provide tentative practical pedagogical implications and recommendations, both from myself and from the learners themselves, as well as possible future directions for research into language shame.

Chapter 2
Shame in psychology

"Everyone has a shadow side of which he is more or less ashamed. But when I see someone who resembles me, who shares the same symptoms, the same shame, and the same inner battles, then I say to myself, so I am not alone in this, I am no monster." (Simenon, cited in Jacoby, 1994, p. vii)

"O my god, in you I trust, Do not let me be ashamed; Do not let my enemies exult over me." (Psalms 25:2)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Shame has always been a most cherished subject of philosophers, poets and novelists from Plato to Tolstoy and its role in a wide range of human endeavours is now fully acknowledged, but, surprisingly enough, it was long relegated to the margins of psychotherapy and psycho-analytical literature and was not thoroughly and systematically investigated by researchers until the last few decades. A perusal of the literature on shame has revealed that scientists preferred to devote time and energy to the study of other emotions such as guilt or anxiety[1] and until recently, shame has never been given the status of a key construct in the human psychological apparatus. This void in empirical research constitutes a real enigma: why was shame consistently overlooked? Why has such a pervasive, universal and ubiquitous emotion been so long neglected and side-lined comparatively to more 'basic' emotions such as sadness or joy?

This paucity in empirical research is all the more surprising as shame is an emotion which must be seen as central to human nature and poses an array of problems for individuals. However, most of the time, it is concealed, hidden, covered up, both from oneself and the

[1] Zeidner (2014) has argued that the sustained academic interest in test anxiety over the past century or so can be attributed to the increasing number of evaluative situations for individuals in today's society and to the acknowledgment of their long-term consequences (educational, social and clinical) on some individuals.

others. It is worth noting though that shame has gained recognition and is now seen as "one of the quintessential human emotions" (Lewis M., 1992, p. 1). Reflecting the increase in interest in this complex construct, a range of experimental and correlational studies using different methods to assess the significance of shame in individuals' lives has developed over the last decade and the findings of these studies have shown its key role in the human moral apparatus (Galmiche & Oades-Sese, 2020).

The present chapter offers a literature review which covers the current state of research on shame and aims at clarifying the conceptual confusion between shame and a number of other related constructs such as, for instance, embarrassment or anxiety, while at the same time delineating their intertwined relationships. The role of shame in eliciting a number of problematic and dysfunctional behaviours will be shown with supporting empirical evidence. It is hoped that future research will consider the most complex and intricate role of this phenomenon in relation to some of the psychological and emotional issues to be found in the second language classroom.

My purpose in this chapter is twofold:

1) To provide the reader with some 'big picture' of shame by first defining it, by differentiating it from other constructs, then by examining its sources, its dynamics and its consequences, because I firmly believe that an understanding of this most intriguing and multidimensional phenomenon will help answer some of the fundamental questions about our experience as human beings.

2) To lay the foundations for the subsequent chapters by showing that, as a pervasive psychological and emotional construct that can influence social relationships and guide our thoughts, intentions and behaviours, shame is related to some of the core issues that underlie SLA.

In order to help contextualise the linguistic issues that will be dealt with later, this chapter proposes to cover some of the key aspects of shame in the field of psychology/psychoanalysis and to review past and current theoretical as well as empirical research because the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis are the basis of our general understanding of emotions. Yet one must be aware that the complexity of this phenomenon cannot be done justice within a single chapter and the dynamicity of shame is such that it leaves one with the uncomfortable feeling that they have omitted some very fundamental aspects and facets of this phenomenon.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

Theorists and scholars embrace different views on how to define the concept of shame, referring to feeling states, personality traits and cultural standards. However, there is broad consensus that shame experiences englobe a wide range of emotions and cognitions, as expressed in the following definitions provided by dictionaries.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2015) defines shame as "the feeling of humiliation or distress arising from the consciousness of something dishonourable or ridiculous in one's own or another's behaviour or circumstances, or from a situation offensive to one's own or another's sense of propriety or decency," while *Merriam-Webster* (2015) defines shame as "a feeling of guilt, regret, or sadness that one has because they have done something wrong, the ability to feel guilt, regret, or embarrassment, dishonour or disgrace." The various shadings of meaning proposed in the definitions above clearly show that shame is a multifaceted, negatively valenced and pathogenic phenomenon, as heavily loaded words like 'humiliation,' 'distress,' 'sadness,' 'dishonour' and 'disgrace' testify. They also reveal the kaleidoscopic nature of shame which encompasses a range of different concepts and a wide array of different meanings. The very essence of 'shame' seems therefore to be versatile, ambiguous and elusive and curiously enough, the second definition does not dissociate the feeling of shame from that of guilt, which may be somewhat misleading and confusing, as we shall see in section 2.4.

Etymology

Etymological inquiries into the word 'shame' have proved very useful as it revealed a connection between the modern English word 'shame' and the French Teutonic root *skam* and the pre-Teutonic root *skem,* which mean to cover, to veil, to hide. As will be shown later, the connection between shame and hiding oneself (one's face or body) is interesting for the topic under consideration. Originally, the word 'shame' was related to 'private parts' (Jacoby, 1994). In literary associations, shame carries with it notions of wound.

The word 'shame' in different languages

What is worth noting first is that, curiously enough, the English language has only one word for shame, and does not make any distinction between the affective state itself and behaviour, while Indo-European languages have a great variety of words relating to the different aspects

of shame (Iglesias, 1996). The French language distinguishes between *honte* (i.e. a loss of honour in the eyes of others), *vergogne* (from the Latin verecundia, a particular kind of modesty) and *pudeur* (commonly used in replacement of words like shyness, bashfulness or decency/chastity and traditionally associated with the idea of covering up one's genitals), while German makes a distinction between *Schande* (dishonour, disgrace) and *Scham* (shame, embarrassment).

Interestingly, Greek distinguishes between shame in the sense of 'disgrace,' 'dishonour' (*aiskhyne)* and shame in the sense of 'modesty,' bashfulness, decency (from the goddess *Aidos,* Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). Frankish has the word *haunita,* old German *hônida* and Dutch, *hoonde,* all synonyms for dishonour. What is clear from the definitions above is that in many respects, shame is the antonym of honour.

Being ashamed can be so painful that one often uses code words such as "I felt uncomfortable" or "It was an awkward moment," or metaphors like "I felt like the ground would open up and swallow me." These remarks reveal that individuals are generally unwilling to admit having experienced such degrading feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and worthlessness and prefer to use metaphors to express the feeling.

Shame in the Bible

In western Judaeo-Christian cultures, the idea of shame is found in the Genesis, in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve lived naked in the Garden of Eden until the snake (i.e. Satan) seduced Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. When they ate from the apple, both Eve and Adam knew that they were naked and felt shame with their nudity and their sin.

2.3 ATTRIBUTES OF SHAME

2.3.1 A neglected phenomenon

Even though research on emotions has flourished in the last decades, empirical studies that specifically target shame remain few. In this section, I examine some of the main reasons why shame has garnered so little empirical attention. The importance of shame was long ignored in the behavioural sciences, "severely repressed and unresolved" (Wurmser, 1981) in

psychology and psychoanalysis. Charles Darwin's (1872) early findings[2] on shame were not followed up by developmental psychology or psychoanalysis until a few decades ago. Psychoanalyst Charles Rycroft (1968, p. 152) attributed this blindness to shame to the fact that it was seen as "the Cinderella of the unpleasant emotions," something that, according to him, "received much less attention than anxiety, guilt, and depression."

Corroborating these views, Helen Block Lewis, a pioneer in recognizing the importance of shame in psychotherapy and the first person to have studied shame and guilt in a clinical setting, argued that shame is "the sleeper in psychopathology" (1987a) and "a wordless state" (1971). Similarly, Francis Broucek (1991, p. 4) insightfully expressed that "there has been a cultural conspiracy to avoid discussing shame."

To summarize, shame was long regarded as taboo and this "taboo on shame is so strict [...] that we behave as if shame does not exist" (Kaufman, 1989, p. 46). A good illustration of this oblivion is the fact that there was no entry for 'shame' in Laplanche and Pontalis' *The Language of Psycho-Analysis (*1973).

One may wonder at this point why there was such a neglect or lack of interest about shame. According to Robert Karen (1992, p. 45), one reason why shame was long excluded from close investigation may be that this emotion "strikes at our sense of humanness, fostering images of ourselves as animals, bugs or things [...] So we don't talk about it, we don't express it, and we don't acknowledge it." In other words, shame has to be hidden from view, out of sight.

The key question now is why was shame 'brushed under the carpet' and kept hidden for such a long time, while other emotions such as anxiety, fear or sadness have been subjected to constant and thorough investigation? Two main reasons why shame was long under-researched can be invoked:

1) ***Definitional issues and categorization of emotions***

- Basic and secondary emotions

  For long, scientists studied 'basic/primary' emotions[3] (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 1989) such as sadness, joy, surprise, fear, anger and disgust, which were families of emotions deemed to be universally experienced and easily recognizable through their

[2] In his masterpiece *The expression of the emotions in man and animals* (1872), Darwin focused on the physical expression of shame, namely blushing and assumed that it played a significant role in individuals' social behaviour.

[3] The terms 'basic or primary emotions' refer to all the emotions based on biological characteristics that are universal and situated at the basis of the hierarchy of emotion terms.

facial expressions. These emotions emerge early in human development. As to 'secondary' emotions such as pride, shame and guilt, they were regarded as understandable only after a deeper understanding of the basic ones was done. Said differently, secondary emotions were regarded as a lot more 'complex' since they require self-evaluation (self-introspection) and as blends of the primary/basic emotions. What made these emotions even more difficult to assess was the fact that their antecedents, phenomenological features and facial displays were found to be not pan-cultural (Eid & Diener, 2001; Ekman, 1972, 1992; Kitayama, Markus, & Matsumoto, 1995). Moreover, it was easier to study emotions which do not require verbal reports to describe internal states (e.g. Davidson, 2001; Ekman, Levenson, & Friesen, 1983; LeDoux, 1996; Panksepp, 1998).

- Confusion between shame and guilt
  For many years, the design and development of trustworthy measures of shame and guilt were significantly hampered by the lack of consensus among scholars, theorists, researchers and laypersons about the definition of these emotions, which they tended to confuse.

2) Methodological issues regarding the assessment of shame

There is an extremely rich and diverse theoretical literature on shame but it is only recently that psychologists started investigating it in a systematic and evidence-seeking manner. One of the reasons that can be invoked for this lack of empirical research may be that researchers have regularly been faced with methodological roadblocks concerning the validity and accuracy of measurement and assessment of emotions such as shame and guilt, as highlighted by Harder and Zalma (1990, p. 729), "the development of valid scales for the measurement of proneness to shame and guilt is important for clinically relevant assessments...unfortunately the task of measuring them has proven to be quite difficult."

Facial coding

Research has heavily relied on facial coding as well as self-report measures to assess the emotion of shame (Andrews, 1995; Deblinger & Runyon, 2005; Feiring & Taska, 2005). Coding facial expressions enables researchers to infer the inner emotional states of participants. Facial movements are a good indication of the emotion that is felt by the individual. Said differently, what is observed on the face of the person is a reflection of what they experience inwardly.

Validity of facial coding

In 1989, Ekman distinguished between the facial expressions of emotions such as sadness, happiness, fear, disgust, anger and surprise across different cultures. But as far as the assessment of shame was concerned, using facial coding proved to be seriously limitative for six reasons:

- First, there is no consensus as to whether the feeling of shame is expressed in the same way everywhere. Izard (1991) advocated that the downturned face and averted gaze are universal expressions of shame while Lazarus (1991) and Ekman (1989) posited that shame (and guilt) have no universal facial patterns[4].
- Second, relying on the sole facial coding of emotions is limitative regarding the complexity of shame and Lazarus (1991) suggested using other sources of assessment such as participants' self-report, body posture analysis and autonomic nervous system responses.
- Thirdly, another hindrance to the validity of shame measurement also comes from (a) the unacknowledgement of this feeling by participants who may voluntarily inhibit or modify their facial expression, misresponding on self-report and interview measures and from (b) the confusion between shame and guilt by participants.
- Fourthly, theorists have described shame as happening outside of the individual who experiences it and entailing a state of speechlessness (Feiring & Taska, 2005; Izard, 1991).
- Fifth, self-conscious emotions are far more difficult to trigger in the context of a laboratory than emotions such as joy, fear or disgust, which can be easily elicited by fictions, photographs, or audio records.
- Lastly, measuring shame may raise some ethical issues.

2.3.2 A complex and multidimensional emotion

Basic emotions such as anger, fear or surprise tend to happen automatically and do not require much cognitive processing. As to shame and guilt, they require self-reflection and self-

[4] However, recent research conducted by Tracy and Robins in 2008 revealed that shame was a universal and automatic cognitive process to be found across cultures in similar failure situations. Another study by Tracy and Matsumoto in the same year has also shown that shame could be elicited in sighted, blind and congenitally blind individuals.

evaluation (i.e. introspection). Without going too much into details, the complexity and multifacetedness of shame stem from the fact that it can be conceptualized in terms of:

- An emotion composed of (1) a primary affect, (2) an auxiliary emotion and (3) a composite of other emotions such as fear, anger, or self-disgust.
- Cognitions and beliefs about the self (e.g. the way people think they are perceived by others as being flawed, inferior or inadequate etc.).
- Behaviours and actions (hiding or attacking others).
- Evolved mechanisms (the expression of shame seems to use similar biobehavioural systems to those of animals expressing submissive behaviour).
- Interpersonal dynamic interrelationships (Fossum & Mason, 1986; Harper & Hoopes, 1990).

2.3.3 A moral emotion

Moral emotions are key elements in man's moral apparatus as they allow to establish links between moral standards and moral behaviours. Shame and guilt are characterized as 'moral' emotions. Tangney and Dearing (2002, p. 2), two leading experts on shame and guilt, have expressed that "the experience of shame and guilt can guide our behaviour and influence who we are in our own eyes." In this quote, the authors clearly indicate that self-conscious moral emotions are moral in the sense that they "function as an *emotional* barometer, providing immediate and salient feedback on our social and moral acceptability" (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007b, p. 22, my emphasis). They are the motivational force to do good and to avoid doing bad and occur whenever individuals appraise themselves according to their own personal standards[5] or whenever they think of the way they are seen/appraised/judged by the others (Miller S. B., 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek further claim (2007a, p. 347) that:

> self-conscious moral emotions can exert a strong influence on moral choice and behavior by providing critical feedback regarding both anticipated behavior (feedback in the form of anticipatory shame, guilt, or pride) and actual behavior (feedback in the form of consequential shame, guilt, or pride) [...] People's anticipatory emotional reactions are typically inferred based on history − that is,

[5] Tangney et al. (2007b, p. 22) defines moral standards as "an individual's knowledge and internalization of moral norms and conventions. People's moral standards are dictated in part by universal moral laws and in part by culturally specific proscriptions."

> based on their past consequential emotions in reaction to similar actual behaviors and events.

However, the findings of empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that, when considering social behaviour and interpersonal adjustment, shame and guilt cannot be considered *equally* 'moral' emotions since the feelings of shame and guilt are conducive to antagonistic motivational behaviours and 'action tendencies' (Ferguson, Stegge, & Damhuis, 1991; Lewis H. B., 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996). To summarize, when individuals are faced with shame-inducing situations, they have a propensity to hide themselves, to deny, or escape, whereas in guilt experiences, they tend to confess and apologize for the misdeed/wrongdoing (see section 2.4).

2.3.4 A self-conscious emotion

Self-consciousness is an essential component of emotions such as guilt, shame and embarrassment (Fuchs, 2002). Self-conscious emotions provide 'critical feedback' (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007b) in the sense that (1) individuals evaluate their self-representations as if they were somebody else, that is, from an external point of view, (2) they constantly compare their behaviour with standards and (3) they appraise the way they appear to others and how they are judged. These three points mentioned above are reminiscent of Helen Merrell Lynd's (1958, p. 20) contention that "shame interrupts any unquestioning, unaware sense of oneself." In sum, self-conscious emotions require a sophisticated level of consciousness and in order to feel them, individuals must have developed an articulated sense of self and have the capacity to form their own judgement about their behaviour. Lewis M. (1992, pp. 19-20) gives an enlightening definition of self-conscious emotions:

> I suggest that emotions can be classified in relation to the role of the *self*. The elicitation of fear, joy, disgust, surprise, anger, sadness and interest does not require introspection or self-reference. Therefore, let us consider these emotions as one set. The elicitation of jealousy, envy, empathy, embarrassment, shame, pride and guilt does require introspection or self-reference. These emotions constitute another set [...] Thus, I propose that the difference between primary and secondary emotions is that the secondary emotions involve self-reference. Secondary emotions will be referred to as *self-conscious* emotions. Shame is a self-conscious emotion. (my emphasis)

As expressed in the above quote, self-conscious emotions are characterized by self-reflection and self-evaluation (or introspection). They arise from the awareness of our

negative characteristics (in the case of shame), negative behaviours (in the case of guilt) or unsocial behaviour (in the case of embarrassment). In this sense, they are typically human phenomena since animals have not the capacity to self-reflect. They are fundamentally about the self, are essential to psychological functioning and are important at both intra and interpersonal levels (Tracy & Robins, 2008). They require psychologically complex elicitors.

To summarize, self-conscious emotions provide feedback to the self about the individual's behaviours, thoughts and intentions. They enable an assessment of our worth as human beings. Self-consciousness has been shown to gradually emerge in early childhood (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1964; Robbins & Goicoechea, 2005) with the ontogenesis of the self (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979; Lewis, Sullivan, Stanger, & Weiss, 1989). For instance, a two-year old child can experience shame when he soils his pants as his blushing and avoiding gaze testify.

2.4 SHAME AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS

There is persisting ambiguity regarding how shame can be distinguished from a number of cognate phenomena. In this section, I analyse some of the constructs which I feel have been confused with shame and I also establish the relationship between them.

2.4.1 Shame and guilt

It is necessary to clarify the sense of the words shame and guilt because a lot of confusion still exists today, both in the literature and in everyday parlance, about what the two emotions are composed of, about how they are elicited and about their consequences. This section presents a summary of research findings which highlight that shame and guilt are clearly distinct experiences, each with its own motivational and behavioural characteristics.

Definitions from the dictionaries

The traditional distinction between the two emotions of shame and guilt is that shame arises from the public exposure of one's defects and failures, while guilt is triggered whenever one

has committed an immoral or sinful act. This dichotomy is highlighted in the definitions proposed in the dictionaries.

Webster's New World Dictionary (1982) defines shame as a "painful feeling of having lost the respect of others because of the improper behavior, incompetence, etc. of oneself or another" (p. 1308), while guilt is described as a "painful feeling of self-reproach resulting from a belief that one has done something wrong or immoral" (p. 622). An investigation into the root meanings of guilt has revealed a connectedness with transgression, crime, violation of taboo, boundaries or legal code through deliberate action.

It appears thus clearly from the definitions above that the emotion of shame is within the family of reactions referred to as humiliation and embarrassment while guilt is associated with reactions such as regret, remorse, repentance and self-reproach. One can feel ashamed (not guilty) of having red hair or of being overweight or extremely clumsy.

Interestingly enough, the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle, who spent a huge amount of time studying human emotions, defined shame as "the mental picture of disgrace" and "pain or disturbance in regard to bad things...which seem likely to involve us in discredit" (trans. 1941, p. 1392). As to Plato, he associated shame with "the fear of an evil reputation." (trans. 1924, p. 25).

The study of shame and guilt started with Darwin's observations of his son and in his masterpiece *The expression of the emotions in man and animals* (1872) he did not make a clear distinction between the two constructs. However, he remarked that shame had a unique behavioural expression, and that "persons who feel shame for some moral delinquency, are apt to avert, bend down, or hide their faces [...]" (chapter XIII). Later, Freud (1964) regarded shame as a more primitive version of guilt and it is generally assumed that guilt involves more elaborate forms of thinking.

Commonalities

The confusion between shame and guilt is obvious in such sentences as "Look what you have done! You should be ashamed!" The words used in the above quote clearly focus on the *action* done rather than on the *self*. The following example illustrates the way the feelings of shame and guilt can be mixed in the minds of individuals: a friend of mine who is divorced and has always held strong religious values, expresses her feelings of shame and guilt at having transgressed her moral and religious convictions. She argues that if "she had followed God's will, she would never have divorced." She further adds that she feels both ashamed and

guilty, without being able to distinguish between the two emotions. The message that she conveys is that she feels defective at heart. Her action is bad and has led to the feeling that her whole self is bad.

Differences

Traditionally, the emotions of shame and guilt were regarded as similar (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). However, this conflation is misleading as an extensive theoretical as well as empirical literature revealed that they are significantly distinct emotional experiences which differ along cognitive, affective and motivational dimensions in interpersonal contexts (Lewis H. B., 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

These differences have very important implications for human behaviour and motivation. Contemporary views of these two constructs assume that they differ (1) in terms of the motivations they are conducive to (e.g. a study by Tangney et al., in 1996 indicated that guilt is conducive to a wish to confess, apologize and repair the damage and wrongdoing caused to another, while shame is linked to responses that are aimed at protecting the self from negative evaluation by escaping, hiding or disappearing) and (2) in the appraisals they trigger (Hong & Chiu, 1992; Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994), that is, shame and guilt give rise to different construals about the transgression and wrongdoing. When one feels guilty, the focus is essentially on the badness of the behaviour (I *did* something wrong) while the feeling of shame is directed at the natural deficiency of the whole self (*I* did something wrong)[6].

Interestingly enough, Wicker, Payne and Morgan (1983) have shown that individuals perceive more control over guilt-eliciting experiences than over shame-inducing situations because (and this is a key idea) in guilt, one acknowledges their failure but does not see themselves as a failure.

Another difference is also worth noting, while *guiltless* is positive (i.e. to be free from guilt, to be innocent), *shameless* is highly negative (i.e. to be insensitive to one's self, to be lacking in dignity).

[6] My personal feeling, however, is that one should be cautious about such a dichotomy between shame and guilt (i.e. self-focus versus action-focus) as the negative evaluation of the entire self, engendered by the feeling of shame, can also be triggered in guilt-inducing situation, depending on the seriousness of the harm done to the other and the possibility or lack of possibility of making amends. My contention is therefore that one's sense of self can also be damaged in case of guilt, and the badness of an action can lead to the feeling that one is bad at the very core and that the self is irredeemably flawed.

Solitary guilt and public shame

There has been some debate over the notion that shame is a public emotion (i.e. people are present and aware of the failure or transgression) while guilt is a private emotion. Shame is assumed to be elicited in the case of public exposure and disapproval of some deficiency or transgression. Guilt is supposed to arise from self-engendered pangs of conscience and the awareness that one has committed reprehensible acts towards the other(s). This anthropological focus on public versus private transgressions (e.g. Benedict, 1946) is no longer sustainable and is now seen as misleading since empirical research has failed to support such a dichotomic view of shame and guilt as purely private or public emotions and it was amply demonstrated that shame can be felt within the confines of the self, whenever nobody else is present to witness the misdeed or transgression[7]. Shame can therefore be characterized as both an intrapersonal and interpersonal phenomenon.

In order to better understand the differences between the two constructs, I will take one telling example of a guilt-inducing episode. Suppose a man has 'kissed' his best friend's wife. He no doubt will experience an acute feeling of guilt, some pangs of conscience of having harmed his best friend and a kind of empathy for the harmed friend. Said differently, he feels like he has betrayed him. He probably will feel remorse and a desire to repair his misdeed and immoral act. How are we to understand this experience? It is clear that this man feels he violated his most sacred moral principles and acted against the norms guiding his behaviour. But he will also most probably feel shame, a sense of deficiency of his whole self, mixed with a feeling of unworthiness.

This episode invites us to consider a key notion in guilt: guilt is clearly linked to the idea of sin and is based on the feeling that one has transgressed norms. It has to do with what is called in psychological ethics 'should-laws' and thus it raises issues of good and evil and of conscience. The feeling of guilt torments the one who has behaved in an unethical and antisocial manner and unless there is the possibility of atonement/rectification of the error, of repentance, the soul cannot be relieved and redeemed.

[7] Studies involving several hundred children and adults (Tangney et al, 1994) contradicted the anthropologists' viewpoint as they revealed that the frequency with which other people were *aware o*f the participants' behaviour did not vary as a function of shame and guilt. Another study conducted by Tangney and her colleagues in 1996 confirmed that shame could occur whenever one's defects are obvious to the individual, regardless of the presence of another. To corroborate this view, Kaufman has argued that "[...] only the self need watch the self and only the self need shame the self." (1989, p. 6)

Guilt lies at the heart of the human moral life as it establishes a kind of border between moral standards[8] and moral behaviour, and therefore it regulates unethical behaviour (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Guilt appraisal therefore stems from the perception that one has inflicted harm upon another person or did not intervene to lessen/avoid other people's sufferings, while shame appraisal arises from the perception of an unwanted identity, from being seen in a negative light by a real or imagined other (Olthof, 1996; Olthof, Schouten, Kuiper, Stegge, & Jennekens-Schinkel, 2000).

In this sense, the feeling of guilt can be positive as it is an incentive for a better (moral) life since the person experiencing it will appraise their values and lead their life in accordance with moral standards, motivating them in more positive directions. Individuals who experience guilt are focused on the offense done to others (in this sense they are directed towards the others, while shame-based individuals lack empathy or awareness of the 'other') and its consequences, feel regret and remorse over the 'bad thing done,' wishing to undo the harm that they have done. This emotion therefore engenders reparative behaviour in the form of confession, apology and desire to mend the situation. Findings across studies suggested that the feeling of guilt arising from the awareness that one has transgressed and hurt somebody motivates people in a constructive, proactive and future-oriented direction. This is where shame differs from guilt. Shame imprisons the individual in the here and now of the current situation because it is conducive to denial, escapism, defensive anger and/or aggression, while guilt motivates them to choose more moral paths in their life (especially after having committed a sinful and reprehensible action).

In sum, the ability to feel guilt is liable to engender enduring moral behaviour and to motivate persons to endorse responsibility for their misdeeds/transgression. One key notion expressed by Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007a) is that guilt is by essence a constructive moral emotion since it is associated with feelings of *control and agency.*

Another distinction which is worth noting is that of attribution. Guilt connotes an individual's emphasis on an untoward action but this experience is elicited by attributions of the unwanted outcome to causes that are of an internal and controllable nature (e.g. failure due to low effort) while in the case of shame the unwanted outcome is attributed to internal and uncontrollable characteristics of the individual (e.g. failure due to low ability) and this experience is felt to be more intense whenever these characteristics are perceived to be global and stable (Tracy & Robins, 2004, 2006).

[8] Moral standards are "an individual's knowledge and internalization of moral norms and conventions." (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007b, p. 22)

A last distinction between shame and guilt is based on Higgins's (1987) *self-discrepancy theory.* Shame can be seen as arising from a discrepancy between the *actual* self and the *ideal* self while guilt involves a discrepancy between the *actual* self and the *ought* self. In psychoanalytical terms, shame is related to ego ideal whereas guilt is about the superego (Levin R., 1997). In addition, "when the feeling of guilt is absent, the feeling of responsibility is also absent and there is therefore no humanity anymore. One mustn't erase guilt nor let ourselves be overwhelmed by it. It is our duty to situate guilt properly" (Lescanne, 2010, p. 139, my translation).

2.4.2 Shame and humiliation

Nelson Mandela has defined humiliation (1995) in the following terms: "I learned that to humiliate another person is to make him suffer an unnecessarily cruel fate" (pp. 11-12).

Etymology

'Humiliation' comes from the Latin 'humus', that is, earth or soil (Barnhart, 1988). Associated with the suffix 'ate,' it means 'cause to be soil,' in other words, to humiliate means to treat someone like dirt, to degrade a person. Feeling or being humiliated means 'to be made humble.'

Characteristics of humiliation

Wayne Koestenbaum, in his book *Humiliation* (2011), defines humiliation in the following way: "Humiliation's wounds are always intimate, pointed punctures" (p. 166). Humiliation can be defined as follows:

- Exposure of one's defects/lacks/failure or lowering of status/fall of pride by a (significant) other − a teacher or peer(s).
- Feeling/being *unfairly/undeservedly* belittled, degraded, debased, devalued or insulted, scorned at, ridiculed, 'broken' and rejected by someone who *thinks* he is or *is* actually in a position of power.
- Feeling/being isolated, ostracized, different and dis-connected from the others.
- Anger at the one who humiliates.

Commonalities between shame and humiliation

- Sudden belief in one's worthlessness and total defectiveness ("I *am* a failure"), loss of self-esteem.
- Feeling powerless to defend oneself ("I was frozen, paralyzed").
- Feeling distressed, anguished and fearful of future humiliation and shame.
- Behavioural and physiological responses like head down, gaze avoidance and blushing.
- Wanting to escape, disappear, avoid the situation and/or sink into the ground.

To sum up, for humiliation to take place, there must be: (1) a person who is in a position of domination/power, (2) a humiliated person and (3) an audience/witness while in the case of shame, one does not need the disapproving/depreciating gaze of another. However, one does not need to *be* actually humiliated to *feel* humiliated.

Differences between shame and humiliation

A number of theorists and scholars tend to make no clear distinction between shame and humiliation. Both emotions are conducive to similar behavioural responses (e.g. gaze avoidance, withdrawal and hiding). However, there are some significant differences between them. According to Gilbert (1998), both emotions focus on the self, yet humiliation is a less self-conscious and self-focused experience. He comments that humiliation involves the following attributes:

1) A focus on the other as bad rather than the self. The focus is on the harm done by the other.
2) Harmful events are attributed to external factors
3) A sense of injustice and unfairness
4) A burning desire for revenge (Frijda, 1994; Scheff, 1994)

It can be gathered from the above that individuals can feel humiliation when they have done nothing wrong. Humiliation has thus strong interpersonal characteristics. As indistinguishable as they may seem, since both are painful universal emotions, they are not one and the same thing. Both emotions focus on the whole self and have a negative/noxious effect on the sense of worth, but, while shame can be public or private, humiliation is elicited not only in the *presence* of another, but also − and this is the major difference between the two emotions − *at the hands of* another, that is, in shame there is self-blame while in humiliation there is real, perceived, or even imagined devaluation by another/external agent.

In shame, the individual feels somehow responsible for not living up to their own ideals, for not being competent, while humiliation is experienced when one fails to measure up to others' expectations/standards, it is a (significant) other who appraises them as unworthy, incompetent and/or incapable. In this regard, it can be assumed then that humiliation is more easily redeemable/curable since the source of debasement and degrading is *external* to the individual experiencing it while shame leads to *stable and uncontrollable* negative evaluation of the self and attribution of the deficiency of the self to *internal* factors. In line with Weiner's (1977) thought, it was found that the locus of causality for shame influences the way learners perceive themselves. Shame is "minimized when failures are attributed to external causes" (p. 183).

2.4.3 Shame and embarrassment

Compared to shame, embarrassment has been the focus of attention of a number of phenomenological and cognitive researchers in psychology. To start with, embarrassment is a 'lighter' and more transitory emotion than shame in the sense that it does not affect the sense of self the way shame does. While shame is deeply rooted in the psyche, embarrassment is not. To borrow R. S. Miller's (1995a, p. 322) words, embarrassment is "an aversive state of mortification, abashment, and chagrin that follows public social predicaments."

The feeling of embarrassment is experienced in everyday interaction. It can be elicited in case of mere infringement of etiquette or whenever one violates social norms, for example, whenever one burps or farts in front of other people or when a lady realizes that her skirt is tucked into the waistband of her tights. In any case, it is the presence of another which makes the situation embarrassing. Research (Edelmann & McCusker, 1986; Leary & Meadows, 1991; Miller R. S., 1995b; Modigliani, 1968) has shown that embarrassability is associated with neuroticism, high levels of negative affect, self-consciousness and a fear of being socially negatively evaluated by others and of a subsequent loss of self-esteem. People who are most sensitive to embarrassment are those who are highly preoccupied with social rules and standards/norms. The proximity of these two constructs comes from the fact that both reflect "a failure to present oneself in the way one would have wished" (Edelmann, 1987, p. 14).

In 1964, Gross and Stone collected a thousand descriptions of showing of embarrassment from students and others and identified three main types of embarrassment: (1) Failure to

confirm to the self-image, (2) Loss of poise due to failing to control self and (3) Disturbance of assumptions about other people or about the situation.

Commonalities

- They are both social/interpersonal emotions (i.e. both need the gaze/eye of the other to be elicited).
- They are both based on the negative evaluation/appraisal by others.
- Embarrassed and (a)shamed individuals show physical manifestations of their state: blushing, averting gaze, etc.

Differences

R. S. Miller (1992) analysed hundreds of personal accounts from high school students and adults and concluded that the most common sources of embarrassment were "normative public deficiencies" that is to say, situations in which persons stumble in front of a large class, forget someone's name, produce unintended bodily noises. This is what he calls the 'spotlight effect' (2007), which occurs when individuals are sensitive to potentially negative evaluation by others.

Shame and embarrassment differ as to their antecedents, feelings, somatic expressions and social and biological functions. They result from the violation of different types of internalized standards (Babcock & Sabini, 1990):

- Embarrassment is milder than shame because it involves a much lower level of responsibility or self-blame and as the action is unintentional, self-devaluation and self-derogation are less marked (Buss, 1980). Embarrassment is transient and linked with etiquette and minor flaws in the case of social slip-ups. It can inhibit prosocial behaviour (Babcock, 1988; Tice, Bratslavsky, & Baumeister, 2001) and may arise when one has violated their particular persona.
- Shame: is more deep-seated, pervasive and enduring, it is linked with severe defects and deals with moral value and worth. Shame can be regarded as the paroxysm of embarrassment. It arises from violating a shared, objective ideal (Babcock, 1988).
- Embarrassment: on the phenomenological level, and paradoxically, embarrassment can sometimes be associated with smiling (Lewis H. B., 1971), for instance, when a person receives a compliment, he/she may experience embarrassment, not shame ("Unwanted social attention," Leary, Britt, Cutlip, & Templeton, 1992).

- Another interesting distinction between shame and embarrassment was proposed by Shott (1979), who argues that shame arises whenever one becomes aware that others see them as deficient or inadequate, and thus is associated with perceived deficiencies of one's *core* self, while embarrassment is elicited when one realizes that others see their *presentation* of self as inappropriate, and Shott (1979) and Modigliani (1968) have advocated that shame is generally accompanied by a feeling of embarrassment but on the contrary, embarrassment is not necessarily accompanied by a feeling of shame. However, it is noteworthy that Indonesian and Pintupi use a single word for shame and embarrassment (Lutz, 1988; Wierzbicka, 1986).

2.4.4 Shame and anxiety

I will start this section with the definition of anxiety given by the American Psychological Association (APA):

> Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat. (2014, n. p.)

This definition provided by the APA is interesting as it seems to show the closeness of the two emotions as far as their cognitive and physical reactions are concerned. Traditionally, the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis were interested in 'anxiety' to a far greater extent than in 'shame.' Freud (1962) for instance saw it as 'the master emotion' and contended that shame and guilt derived from it. Likewise, Mead (1950), an American anthropologist, characterized shame as a form of anxiety.

Anxiety was long regarded as an essential emotion in the psychological apparatus and was assumed to be at the origin of a number of psychological and emotional diseases and disturbances. What is noteworthy is that there exist close relationships between the two phenomena and Wurmser (1997, p. 17) interestingly illustrates the intertwining of shame and anxiety: "[...] it is clear that anxiety is a cardinal part of it. Yet evidently shame is more than anxiety, and anxiety is more than shame." He further suggests (p. 49) that 'shame anxiety,' a particular form of anxiety arises from the "imminent danger of unexpected exposure, humiliation, and rejection."

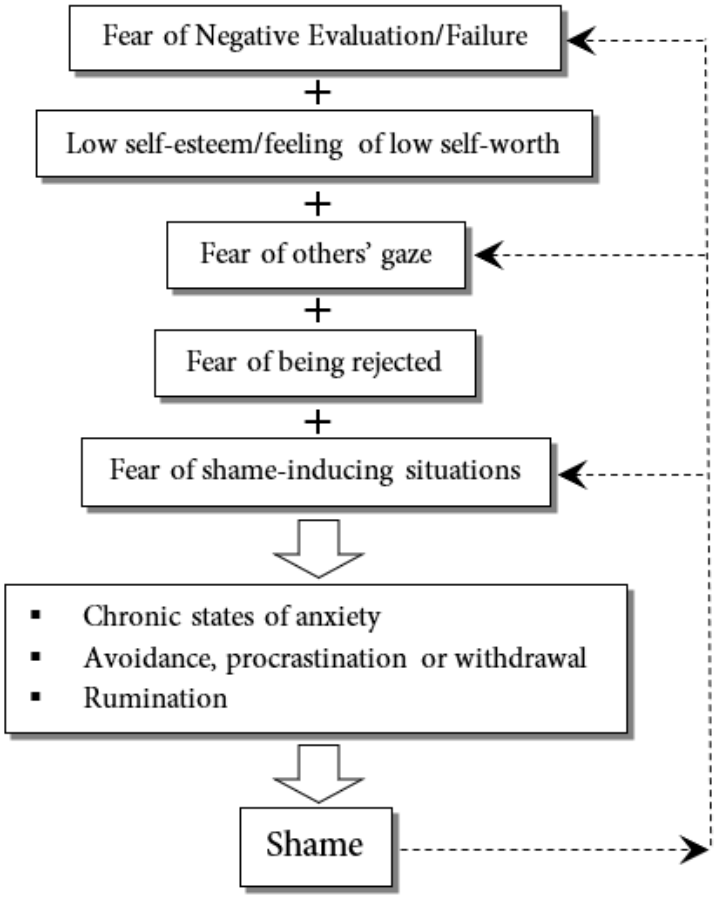
Thomas Cook (2006, PhD) reinforces this idea of a closeness between the two constructs, they go hand in hand as shame can lead to a chronic state of anxiety. The individual is afraid of being in a situation where he/she will be exposed, negatively evaluated/judged. Shame can be conducive to fear of ridicule or social disapproval or public humiliation. A shame-fear cycle can occur.

Gilbert (1998) also holds the view that anxiety arising from the evaluation by others is a key factor in the experience of shame. However, my contention is that the terms 'anxiety,' 'shyness,' and 'introversion' are used indifferently as a protection against the acknowledging of the more general fear of being evaluated in a negative way and appraised badly by others. In sum, the recurrence of shame episodes leads to a chronic state of anxiety and to the fear of being placed in situations where one will be appraised in a negative way.

The mere prospect of failure and of being appraised in a negative way, may contribute to individuals' feeling anxious about the possibility of being rejected by others and this pathological pattern becomes an integral part of one's identity and gives rise to a vicious circle. Anxiety is present in situations when we anticipate potentially shame-inducing situations (e.g. exams, speaking in public, job interviews) because the fear of not responding to one's own expectations or those of significant others may lead to self-deprecatory tendencies and anxiety. In order to better understand the interconnectedness of shame and anxiety, I have imagined a shame-shame cycle diagram (see Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1

Shame-shame cycle diagram



What appears from my diagram is what I call 'the shame-shame cycle,' a vicious circle in which shame begets shame.

Shame and social phobia

Also called social anxiety disorder or SAD[9], social phobia is a particular form of anxiety and a fear of social situations. It is often confused with shyness. It can cause significant distress and impair functioning and is triggered when one feels they are scrutinized by others. This disorder may be elicited by performance situations, as described by Clark and Wells (1995, p. 69) "the core of social phobia appears to be a strong desire to convey a particular favourable

[9] The results of a study conducted by Hedman and his colleagues (2013) revealed that shame was high in individuals with SAD while guilt was unrelated to social anxiety.

impression of oneself to others and marked insecurity about one's ability to do so." In most cases, SAD occurs in case of (actual or imagined) public exposure/performance. Why that?

In most cases, public performance (actual or projected/imagined) gives rise to acute states of anxiety. A number of social psychologists and interactionists have argued that the need for positive self-evaluation and for preserving or enhancing one's self-image in front of others are indispensable if we are to maintain a positive regard on ourselves. There is no need retelling that the opinion we have of ourselves is connected to the way we are *seen/perceived* by others.

The idea that the feedback individuals receive from others is a significant component of self-concept was highlighted by American sociologist Cooley in his theory of the 'looking-glass self' (1964). Interestingly, Cooley argued that the self-idea generated by the looking-glass self is threefold: how we imagine our appearance looks to others, how we imagine the others are judging our appearance, and finally a self-feeling arising from these two imaginations (e.g. pride or embarrassment).

Yet, shame is not one thing. There may be subtypes of shame that show differential links to psychopathological variables. Two such subtypes are external shame and internal shame (Gilbert, 1998):

External shame

External shame is a concern with the way one's self is *projected* in the mind of others, that is, the way one believes others will reject them if certain aspects of their personality is revealed to others. On a cognitive level, external shame refers to the way an individual thinks others see the self (Allan, Gilbert, & Goss, 1994; Gilbert, 2002; Goss, Gilbert, & Allan, 1994), and thus involves the social world, that is, exposure to the judging eyes of others (Lewis M., 1992).

Internal shame

Internal shame is experienced whenever individuals hold negative judgments towards their own attributes and evaluate themselves in a negative way (Keltner & Harker, 1998; Pinto-Gouveia & Matos, 2011). Internal shame involves global self-judgments of the self as bad, inferior and defective (Gilbert, 1998; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In this regard, internal shame can be seen as more detrimental to the sense of self than external shame (Misailidi, 2018).

2.5 THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SHAME

The Greek philosopher Aristotle remarked that emotions entail certain types of bodily reactions. Shame is no exception and its phenomenology is extremely distinctive and rich and there is a set of physical/physiological as well as psychological basic symptoms and characteristic/cognitive behavioural responses.

Physiological manifestations

The most widely acknowledged feature of shame is blushing (Cozolino, 2006; Nathanson, 1987; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney, Mashek, & Stuewig, 2005). Another typical manifestation of shame is the avoidance behaviours such as lowering the head, down casting the eyes, covering head and face, or 'burying' them in both hands. In some cases, increases in heart rate were also reported (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996).

Psychological manifestations

In 1992 (p. 34), psychologist Michael Lewis proposed a four-point summary of the psychological characteristics of shame:

- First, shame is internalised in an individual without their being fully aware of it and it may be triggered by certain events and then it becomes a feeling.
- Second, shame engenders an acute feeling of discomfort.
- Third, the individual experiencing shame feels a general sense of inadequacy and defectiveness (Brown, 2008; Tomkins, 1963; Young & Klosko, 1994).
- Fourth, the person experiencing shame is self-absorbed and self-focused (Kaufman, 1992; Nathanson, 1987; Parker, 1998; Tomkins, 1963).

Shame is accompanied by a sense of shrinking or of "being/feeling small" and by a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness, humiliation and embarrassment and fallen pride (Kaufman, 1996). Finally, it is noteworthy that the specific shame response (cognitive, affective and behavioural) may vary in a significant way according to the past experiences of the individual, the nature of the task and a number of situational factors.

2.6 STRATEGIES OF DEFENCE AGAINST SHAME

The question that comes to mind is how individuals experiencing a 'shame attack' (Brown, 2008) do to develop strategies of defence? Said differently, what can be the behavioural consequences spawned by shame-inducing situations? Clearly, the consequence of shame is to try to restore one's worthiness or reduce one's disgrace. In 1992, based on Tomkins' (1991) script theory, clinical psychiatrist Donald Nathanson proposed a conceptual model (see Figure 2.2), the Compass of Shame Scale (often referred to as the CoSS), which was then the first instrument specifically designed to assess shame-coping styles. To summarise, the instrument describes the likely four 'action tendencies' of a person experiencing shame, namely the way they either cope with or defend against shame. Nathanson's model describes four families of scripts[10], represented by the poles of the Compass and termed as follows: Attack self, Withdrawal, Attack other and Avoidance. Each set of shame-focused script is linked with a range of motivations, affects, cognition and behaviours. Nathanson's model has been widely used in psychotherapeutic practice.

- First pole: Attack self, the shamed individual will tend to direct anger towards the self and engage in self-deprecating comments. This is also called self-directed hostility.
- Second pole: Withdrawal, when individuals withdraw, they acknowledge the negative aspects of shame and try to hide from the painful situation.
- Third pole: Attack other, in order to diminish the feeling of shame, some individuals will externalize shame. This outward expression of anger (retaliative anger or other-directed hostility) can include rage and verbal or physical abuse towards others.
- Fourth pole: Avoidance is a state/reaction (an escapist response) in which individuals "attempt to distract, dissociate or disconnect the self and others from the painful emotion."

[10] Scripts are defined by Tomkins (1991, p. 84) as "sets of ordering rules for the interpretation, evaluation, prediction, production, or control of scenes."

FIGURE 2.2

The Compass of Shame (adapted from Dr D.L. Nathanson, 1992a, 1992c)



In 1987, Helen Block Lewis's model of shame also suggested that shame was composed of feelings of helplessness, *anger at others, anger at self*, self-consciousness and feeling of inferiority.

2.7 IMPACT OF SHAME ON PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

Shame can be so devastating that it affects the normal functioning of the psyche, as expressed in Kaufman's (1989) words: "[Shame is] acutely disturbing to the self. In fact, no other affect is more deeply disturbing. Like a wound made from the inside by an unseen hand, shame disrupts the natural functioning of the self" (p. 5). In some cases, the awareness of being ashamed leads to a deeper sense of shame, thus reinforcing the shame-shame cycle:

> [Shame] engulf[s] the self, immersing the individual deeper into despair. To live with shame is to feel alienated and defeated, never quite good enough to belong. And secretly the self feels to blame; the deficiency lies within. Shame is without parallel a sickness of the soul. (1989, p. 24)

The interest in the impact of shame and its sibling guilt on psychological disorders dates back to as early as the writings of Freud (1930/1962) although he focused more particularly on the role of guilt in the arising of melancholia, obsessional neuroses, masochism and depression and did not propose an elaborate theory about shame (see Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Despite the fact that there is still considerable debate about the extent to which shame disrupts mental functioning, a rich and varied literature emanating from social, developmental and clinical psychology has made obvious its significant role in a lot of psychiatric syndromes (Miller S. B., 1996, p. 151) and has shown that it can lead to a wide range of psychological disorders, psychopathologies and dysfunctioning of the self/psyche such as depression, chronic/trait-anxiety, anger, self-derogation, self-deprecating tendencies, negative self-evaluation, all kinds of addiction (sex, drugs, alcohol, work) or perversion, violence pathologies, eating disorders like bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, criminality, proneness to shame (also called internalized shame, see next section for more details).

Cognitive biases

The research conducted by Andrews (1995) and Tangney and Dearing (2002) has interestingly shown that individuals experiencing recurrent episodes of shame have a proclivity to make stable and personal attributions for negative events (i.e. they will be more likely to attribute the cause of their failure(s) to enduring characteristics) and will develop cognitive biases[11].

This idea of personal attribution is also expressed by Weiner (1985, 2010) who believed that the experience of shame was elicited by attributions of the unwanted outcome to internal and uncontrollable self-characteristics (e.g. failure due to low ability) and this experience of shame is felt to be more intense whenever these characteristics are perceived by the individual as global and stable (Tracy & Robins, 2004, 2006).

Connection issues

According to Brené Brown (2012), a leading expert on shame, this emotion breeds fear, blame and disconnection. She argued that, in a society in which belonging, fitting in and being

[11] Cognitive biases influence the way we think. They can lead to errors of judgement, reasoning and evaluating. As such, they may influence our decision-making and behaviour.

accepted are so valued, shame is the disclosure of our vulnerability and imperfection. Individuals are afraid of being seen as imperfect:

> We are psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually hardwired for connection, love, and belonging. Connection, along with love and belonging is why we are here, and it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. Shame is the fear that something we have done or failed to do, an ideal that we have not lived up to, or a goal that we have not accomplished makes us unworthy of connection. 'I am unlovable. I don't belong.' (pp. 67-68)

This idea of disconnection is backed up by Kaufman's remark (1989) that shame is conducive to ruptures in the "interpersonal bridge." To most people, shame is something that is felt when they have violated their most cherished values. Research done by Brown[12] (2004, 2007) suggested that shame is about who we are rather than what we assume to be right or wrong. She defines shame as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging" (2007, p. 30).

2.8 SHAME–PRONENESS

The lasting impact of shame and its reverberating consequences on the self are illustrated by Charlotte's (one of the participants) thought-provoking words:

> My former English teacher (I was 13 at that time) kept repeating that I was so bad at English, that I could do nothing against that. I felt these remarks were like an intimate wound. I felt like I was stabbed in the middle of my heart with a knife. I thought I was a total failure. Such a shame! It still affects me today, very deeply. I think I will never progress, whatever I do.

The feeling of shame can be experienced in everyday life, in most trivial situations and as such, is not something detrimental to the sense of the self. But, as in the case of Charlotte, it becomes problematic when the fear of being (a)shamed is permanent, whenever the whole self is entirely focused on and absorbed in the feeling of shame to the point that individuals who suffer from excessive and chronic shame exhibit social anxiety and phobic fearfulness, lack of self-confidence and experience extreme shyness, worry about personal inadequacies, hold self-derogatory attitudes, anticipate failure and will inevitably shrink away from any

[12] Brown (2004) conducted a four-year study with 200 women to understand the way shame affects females.

risk-taking public activity that might expose their imagined or real deficient self to ridicule and mockery.

Shame-proneness can lead to interpersonal difficulties and increased self-reproach, to the feeling that one is flawed at the core (Lewis H. B., 1971), to personality and eating disorders (Goss & Allan, 2009; Izard, 1991; Lee, Scragg, & Turner, 2001). In the case of Charlotte, the learning of English has resulted in negative emotional state and she manifests many of the features associated with shame. Her former English teacher's words affected her sense of self in such a way that she perceived herself to be a failure. She says these words still affect her today and the metaphor of the knife is very revealing of her state of mind. Every time she speaks about it, she relives a kind of trauma. To a certain extent, she considers herself to be unworthy. Charlotte's words are representative of the feelings expressed by students in interviews that I have conducted since December 2013, in which the feeling of shame is reported to be one of the main causes for learners' reticence to speak up. In these interviews, respondents reported serious blocks associated with worry about failure.

This state is called prototypical shame-proneness or trait shame, that is, an enduring tendency to a particular sensitivity to shame. It has become a property of the individual. Forcefully enough, Bradshaw, an American motivational speaker and educator, speaks about a shame-based identity (2005) and Buss (1980) argues that shame-prone persons have been "socialized to regard themselves as unworthy when certain kinds of wrongdoing are revealed" (p. 230) and Kaufman (1989) developed the idea of internalised shame, which is a pathology in which the individual experiences shameful situations as trauma that activate past traumatic experiences. When individuals experience repeated and acute shame episodes, they internalize shame, which becomes an indissociable part/trait of their (negative) identity. These high shame-prone individuals attribute negative outcomes, failures or lack of success to characterological faults, and this ultimately leads to chronic anxiety and to a very negative vision of the self. On the psychoanalytical level, shame-proneness is a pathogenic belief over one's unworthiness and inadequacy. Shame-prone persons feel defective at their very core.

This prototypical shame-proneness must be addressed since studies conducted with diverse age groups and populations have consistently established close relationships between proneness to shame and a wide range of interpersonal problems, psychopathologies and clinical disorders, including anxiety, eating disorders (e.g. bulimia, anorexia), social phobia, obsessive–compulsiveness, psychoticism, aggressive or addictive behaviours, reduced feeling of self-worth and self-esteem, schizophrenia, depression, suicide attempts, drug use, internalized shame and posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSD; Andrews, Brewin, Rose, &

Kirk, 2000; Bennett, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2010; Charuvastra & Cloitre, 2008; Saraiya & Lopez-Castro, 2016).

2.9 THE SOURCES OF PRONENESS TO SHAME

In their review of the research conducted on the role of shame in childhood, Galmiche and Oades-Sese (2020) wrote that repeated shame experiences and humiliations in childhood may impact a child's well-being, affect regulation and self–other schema, and, if these experiences are unacknowledged ("bypassed") may eventually lead to a state of shame proneness or a shame-based personality (Lewis H. B., 1971). Children are particularly liable to develop shame-proneness (i.e. the proclivity to experience shame across a range of situations), and this state must be addressed in earnest, as a shame-prone child has a proclivity to frequently feel emotional distress in a variety of challenging situations and is unable to function well in everyday life, experiencing low self-esteem, difficulties with speaking, thinking in a coherent manner, and interacting with others.

Children may develop prolonged anxious states because they anticipate failure, shame-inducing situations and others' negative evaluation, fear of being rejected (Feiring & Taska, 2005; Gibson M., 2015), and eventually withdraw from or avoid potentially shame-inducing situations, giving rise to a spiral of shame, that is, a shame-shame cycle in which shame loops back on itself and begets more shame. Following recurrent shame experiences, they may view themselves as flawed, damaged, unworthy and powerless to change their unwanted identity, and develop fears of abandonment and rejection by others (Deblinger & Runyon, 2005). To summarize, shame experiences that take place on a regular basis during childhood can be conducive to lasting traumatic memories and have far-reaching consequences on the child and through adulthood.

The work of Freud is illuminating in explaining how early experiences of shame may foster the propensity to feel shame and reverberate on the individual in a profound and lasting way. In his work, Freud (1964) associated the sense of inferiority accompanying shame to the love of the parent(s), arguing that a child feels inferior whenever he/she realizes/perceives that he/she is not loved by his/her parent(s). In other words, "shame is the most disturbing experience that a child can ever have about themselves: no other emotion feels more deeply disturbing because in the moment of shame the self feels wounded from within" (Kaufman,

1992). Psychologist Kaufman explains that the experience of shame is the sudden rupture of the interpersonal bridge which occurs whenever one feels debased, criticized or devalued. This experience may impact individuals' well-being in a serious manner.

In the same vein, Herman (2012, p. 158) summarizes "Schore (1998) conceptualizes shame as a toddler's response to a disappointed expectation of "sparkling-eyed pleasure" in the maternal gaze." In other words, the feeling of shame arises from a mother's or father's averting gaze and disapproval, something Jungian analyst (IRSJA-Austin, Texas) James Shultz (2006) calls a 'disconnection with the parent.' In sum, shame is experienced as a failure of the mirroring gaze. This clearly means that any lack of responsiveness or positive feedback from the caregiver is interpreted by the child as a breaking of the bond, a dis-connection, and this results in the feeling of shame, an internalized, chronic shame. Michael Basch (1988) gives a telling illustration of this feeling of shame in child and of how this early experience may have lasting consequences on the individual's behaviour:

> A baby […] has busied herself with tearing up a book accidentally left in her crib and scattering small pieces of paper all around her. When the child's father comes into the room, instead of responding to his daughter's excited, proud smile with facial and vocal expressions of admiration and praise for the girl's innovative productions, he scowls angrily and in exasperated tones complains of the mess that now has to be picked up. The little girl has lost contact with her father, has failed to elicit affect attunement: that is, the father gives every evidence that they are not on the same wavelength, and that he has no intention of participating in his daughter's excitement and pride. Unable to sustain eye contact with her parent, the child averts her gaze and hangs her head, displaying the basic *shame reaction*. Though the baby cannot conceptualize her experience as adults would, physiologically she is subject to the same inner turmoil an adult would suffer under similar circumstances. (pp. 136-137, my emphasis)

In the most telling incident described above, the baby was obviously expecting her father (the significant other) to respond to her joy for her 'achievement,' but was unexpectedly met with a lack of recognition, disapproval and anger. It is clear from this episode that having one's expectations suddenly disappointed is conducive to the feelings of shame and fear of experiences of disappointment in the future. Shame occurs whenever one's needs are not responded to in an appropriate manner by a significant other. The father, by refusing to answer his child's joy, has broken the interpersonal bridge (the emotional tie) that bonded them together (Kaufman, 1974) and disrupted the child's sense of security and well-being. However, he acted totally unconsciously, unaware of the inner emotional turmoil his child was experiencing, he did not mean to harm her and make her feel shame. It is worth noting

though that shaming (humiliation/disparaging) is sometimes used by parents or teachers to obtain good behaviour.

In a much more dramatic tone, Wurmser (1981, p. 83) posits that the basic archaic fears in shame are the total loss of the object and, with it, the loss of the self. The (significant) other turns his gaze in contempt, and Wurmser goes on saying that contempt removes the right of presence and even existence. He who is not loved stops loving himself. He feels he is "a nothing," "empty," "frozen" − "like a stone," "unworthy of love," "worthless."

This idea of not being admired/loved/affirmed in the eyes of the caregiver (be they a nanny, a parent, a teacher) leading to a sense of worthlessness is clearly illustrated by the notion of abandonment. A number of psychological and psychoanalytical studies have shown that the very feeling of being born undesired and unwanted brings unbearable shame and may be conducive to the lasting perception that one does not deserve attention and care from others. Lack of parental recognition/love/admiration can affect a child's sense of self-worth and self-esteem in a very profound and lasting way. Whenever a parent rebukes, ridicules, ostracizes, disparages or neglects a child because she does not correspond to the *ideal* image of the child they had in mind, this may resonate in the child's head for a long time and give a blow to her sense of worthiness and belonging because not being loved means that I am not *lovable,* I am flawed and incompetent at heart.

These ideas of rejection and unworthiness are corroborated by Buss (1980) who identified three parental socialization practices which could be held responsible for the arising of shame-proneness in individuals: (1) conditional love, which keeps individuals in a state of dependency on external evaluation, (2) high standards that the child perceives to be reachable yet that he/she regularly fails to meet and (3) parental reaction to the child's failures with contempt, disgust, ridicule and a moralizing tone, all resulting in love withdrawal.

Shame theorists have argued that shame-proneness can develop at two different stages in child:

1) Early childhood (18 months-three years).
2) The age of toilet-training (Harder A. F., 2002), which gives rise to a 'psychosocial crisis' autonomy versus shame (Yahaya, 2006). At this stage, the child becomes independent from her mother. If the parent(s) encourage(s) the child's independence, then she will become autonomous, but when they ridicule this wish for independence, the child will feel shame and doubt her abilities (Miller A., 1987; Yahaya, 2006).

Another explanation for shame-proneness has been proposed by D. W. Harder (1995) whose findings revealed that shame was a salient feature in children who had been severely

and recurrently abused during their childhood. This feeling of shame is reinforced by the perception that one is to be held responsible for the abuse. In any case, the most traumatic experiences of shame happen during childhood and their effects on the self may persist into adulthood and may impact individuals' adjustment in an enduring manner (Feiring, Taska, & Chen, 2002; Feiring, Taska, & Lewis, 1998).

In this part, we have seen that the genesis of shame can take many shapes, from abuse or neglect from significant others to negative message one receives about their race, sexual orientation or handicap or bad performance.

2.10 HEALTHY OR TOXIC SHAME?

"Men cannot live without shame. A sense of shame is the beginning of integrity." (Mencius, Chinese philosopher)

The quote above invites us to see shame not only as something unavoidable and useful but also as something highly positive. Can there be a way of making shame a healthy feeling, that is, one which is conducive to progress, redemption and regeneration? Can the experience of shame lead one to be desirous to repair their wrongdoing? However, I would like to mention that, whenever I use the word shame in this chapter, it carries no positive connotation, it is rather seen as an entirely noxious, debilitating and pathological affect one must do their utmost to get rid of.

My contention though is that one of the best ways to combat shame is undoubtedly to address it and face it, not to 'bypass' or ignore it. Moving through feelings of shame is very important if one wants to have a positive image of themselves since "shame, this poisonous feeling, this abscess of the soul, is not irredeemable" (Cyrulnik, 2010, p. 17, my translation). This idea is congruent with Helen Merrell Lynd's contention that "fully faced, shame may become not primarily something to be covered, but a positive experience of revelation" (1958, p. 20). The ambivalence of shame is also expressed in Ecclesiasticus 4:21, *King James Bible* (2015): "For there is a shame that bringeth sin; and there is a shame which is glory and grace." In order to illustrate this idea of ambivalence, I will take an example. Suppose a supervisor has told (gently but firmly) his supervisee that his/her work is not good enough, the student has two options: either ruminate over the failure or analyse the situation and take

constructive action in order to do everything possible to improve it. In the second case, what can make him/her want to *reduce* the gap between what *is* and what *ought to be?* Clearly the feeling of shame, which leads him/her to want to increase stature by undoing the wrong done (both to her and to the supervisor). If the student feels the supervisor's comments as a humiliation and a criticism of her identity as an individual and not as a criticism of her work, she will never manage to go through the negative side of shame and in this case, the shame episode may precipitate her to ruminate negative thoughts.

The anecdote provided above reveals that in such a case, shame can be an incentive to mend the past deeds, to repair the failure. It "allows us to make the change in attitude or action" (Shultz, 2006). From the example above, it seems that shame (moderate) could turn into a positive emotion as, in all likelihood, the student will avoid committing the same mistakes again in the future.

Finally, it is worth noting that in Arabian wisdom the 'sense of shame' is tantamount to a sense of self-respect, that is, something which guides us towards moral and ethical actions and helps us distinguish right from wrong. In the above section, we have seen that shame is the acknowledgement that we have behaved in a dysfunctional, inappropriate and sometimes disrespectful manner. In this sense, it can act as a steering wheel in our social and moral life. But shame can also turn into a noxious emotion whenever it leads an individual to focus on his/her shortcomings/defects instead of finding the means of mending their damaged self.

2.11 SHAME AND IDENTITY

The quest for a self-affirming identity is at the core of every human enterprise. Identity can be defined as a sense of self, of who we are and who we are not, and who we would like to be and it is also a sense of where we belong. Put simply, being self-affirmed answers our need for personal value/worth and it may appear somewhat tautological to say that individuals need high self-esteem/self-worth in order to feel good about themselves. Low self-esteem engenders dysphoric feelings and states of anxiety, anger and shame, to name but a few.

As has been shown in the previous sections, the experience of shame is not noxious in itself, but it is the recurrence of shame-inducing episodes − although one isolated episode of shame may also lead to a lasting feeling of low self-worth − which may raise a number of

ontological issues in individuals since it is conducive to feelings of low self-worth, inadequacy, inferiority and worthlessness, to name but a few.

In this regard, shame has a particularly close relation to one's sense of identity as it is the excruciatingly painful experience of being fundamentally defective as a person, as expressed in the following quote: "Shame is a threat to trust. In shame experience trust is seriously jeopardized or sometimes destroyed. This may result in doubts about one's adequacy or in questioning the values of the immediate world around oneself" (Broucek, 1991, p. 19). Shame is the "sudden experience of a violation of expectation, of incongruity between expectation and outcome" which is conducive to "a shattering of trust in oneself" (Lynd, 1958, p. 46). Shame becomes an integral part of a person's self-image and sense of identity. The exposure of one's defectiveness increases the feeling that one is not like the others, inferior to them, separated from the rest of mankind, unworthy of belonging. One feels diminished, lessened in the eyes of the others and in one's own intimate eyes and repeated exposures of one's defects/shortcomings and failures may lead individuals on the path toward an unwanted and shame-based identity.

The loss of the ideal ego

In shame, the idea of a 'grandiose' self and the 'fantasy of a perfect identity endowed with unlimited abilities' are thwarted, as expressed in the following quote: "The cause of shame is the sudden loss of the support of the ideal ego according to the imaginary representation one has of it. Its mechanism consists of the loss of the deceiving/deluding envelope of the ego ideal [...]" (Freymann, 2010, p. 73, my translation).

An unwanted identity

Shame has characteristics which make it extremely powerful in shaping beliefs about the self, and these beliefs are at the origin of certain types of behaviours. The most significant belief is that one is flawed at heart. Consequently, the desire of individuals is to preserve a positive image of the self, to 'save face.' A good way is to avoid possibly threatening and shame-inducing situations. The problem is that the individual won't take the risk to engage in a particular activity, for fear that his/her deficiencies should be revealed.

The experience of shame is based on an appraisal of personal failure. What is particularly painful about this emotion is that the failure is felt to be generalized to the whole self and not to a particular aspect of the self or a specific behaviour (Lewis M., 2000). Whenever

individuals experience shame, they make an attribution of personal causation (Weiner, 1985) of their failure and low self-worth ("I am a failure," Lewis M., 2000). However, it is to be noted that the appraisal focuses on one's *perception* of failure, not necessarily an objective deficiency. Due to this negative perception of the self, it appears therefore that "shame motivates an avoidance response" (Tangney, 1995, p. 1137).

2.12 SHAME AND MOTIVATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Research on self-conscious emotions (especially positive emotions such as pride) has considerably developed these last years, yet the role of a negative emotion such as shame in motivation has been largely under-researched. This should not be the case, as negative emotions like shame are important to investigate for two reasons:

- Negative emotions have a strong impact on individuals' specific action orientations (Bagozzi, Dholakia, & Basuroy, 2003).
- Negative emotions are more acutely felt than positive ones (Higgins, 1997) and among the negative self-conscious emotions (guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, shame), shame is the most intensely felt (Tangney, 1995).

The strength of the felt emotion has therefore a considerable impact on the individual's motivation, as expressed in Giddens' (1991, p. 64) assertion that shame is "the negative side of an individual's motivational scheme."

Shame and self-regulation

Shame has been identified as a key factor in social and self-regulation and in its capacity to influence individuals' behaviours and thoughts. The function of shame can be seen as maladaptive. Whether an emotion is adaptive or maladaptive depends on the way the individual *perceives* the situation and makes sense of it. We have seen in the preceding sections that shame affects the vision of the self and as such, it can influence the individual's motivation since they will spend most of their time avoiding potentially shame-inducing situations.

Self-conscious emotions such as guilt or shame are powerful in the sense that they lead to both anticipatory and consequential reactions to the self. Said differently, individuals will *anticipate* the way they may react emotionally (e.g. feeling of shame versus feeling of pride).

This emotion has therefore a significant impact on the moral choice and behaviour of individuals by providing feedback in the form of anticipatory shame and actual behaviour in the form of the consequences of shame.

The demotivational power of shame

The question that comes to mind is how can shame affect a person's intrinsic motivation? In 1987, Tomkins posited that shame was an emotion which inhibits interest, enjoyment or both and a number of educational psychologists have advocated that feeling shame can interfere with motivation and impact on students' academic goals and achievement (Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz, & Perry, 2007; Weiner, 1985) and appraisal of academic failure and subsequent feeling of shame may conduct learners to abandon their personal future goals.

Pekrun (1992) proposed that unpleasant emotions could impede on the dynamics of intrinsic motivation in two ways:

- Unpleasant emotions may reduce task enjoyment because pleasant and unpleasant emotions are incompatible.
- Unpleasant emotion may be conducive to negative intrinsic motivation. For instance, second language learners will escape/shrink from academic tasks because these tasks are associated with unpleasant emotions.

2.13 OVERVIEW OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON SHAME

Over the past decades, the field of emotion research has expanded in a dramatic way (Hébert, 2002) and the investigation of internal emotional states is now acknowledged to be indispensable for the understanding of the human condition and has recently received the attention of a significant number of experimental researches. Studies devoted to shame have burgeoned in a number of disciplines. Shame has been haunting the analytic and psychotherapeutic consulting rooms for some time and it is acknowledged to be at the core of a number of prominent theories (e.g. the regulation of moral behaviour or the developing of psychological symptoms). This recognition of the importance of shame in the human psychological apparatus is illustrated by the emergence of a new APA journal, *Emotion,* in 2001.

The literature reviewed here consists of empirical studies and my purpose was to examine the bulk of accumulated empirical knowledge about shame. For many years, the developing of quality measures of shame and guilt was seriously hampered by the lack of consensus among scholars, theorists and researchers about the definition of these emotions. Over the last decade though, a range of experimental and correlational studies using different methods such as qualitative case study analyses, content analysis of shame and guilt narratives, participants' quantitative ratings of personal guilt and shame experiences, analyses of attributions associated with shame and guilt, and analyses of participants' counterfactual thinking, developed. In 2006 for instance, the findings of experimental and correlational analysis conducted by Tracy and Robins revealed that shame correlated positively to internal, stable, uncontrollable attributions for failure, while guilt related positively to internal, unstable, controllable attributions for failure.

Measuring and assessing instruments:

Shame and guilt have been constantly redefined and reconceptualised and have recently been the subject of systematic empirical investigation and the interest that these feelings aroused gave rise to a number of measures of guilt and shame. The measuring instruments that have been largely used in the research on shame in educational settings – such as TOSCA − are mentioned in Chapter 3:

- Tangney, Wagner and Gramzow (1989) designed the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA), an instrument which measures individuals' shame-and-guilt-proneness in different situations.
- The Adapted Shame and guilt Scale (ASGS) designed by Hoblitzelle in 1982.
- State Shame and Guilt Scale (SSGS), by Marschall, Sanftner and Tangney in 1994.
- The Shame and Guilt Inventory (SAGI), by Eyre in 2004.
- The Emogram Shame Scale by McGinnis in 2008.

A broad consensus emerges in the literature concerning descriptions of shame. However, there is still considerable debate over the most efficient and accurate method to measure this complex emotion. Two approaches have also been used in the measurement of shame (and guilt):

- *The frequency-approach* (e.g. The Harder Personal Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ) developed by Harder and Zalma, 1990) towards the measurement of shame (and guilt). This method asks participants to rate the frequency at which they experience a number

of adjectives from a given list. These adjectives have been selected because of their representativeness of shame (and guilt) feelings.

- *The scenario-approach* (e.g. TOSCA, Tangney et al., 1989) in which respondents are asked to imagine themselves in shame (and guilt)-eliciting situations or scenari.

These two methods based on a large series of empirical studies conducted with adolescents, students and adults, have revealed that shame is associated with a wide range of maladaptive negative intrapersonal and interpersonal variables (e.g. Fontaine et al., 2006; Luyten et al., 2002; Tangney, 1998).

Shame in different research fields:

Empirical research on shame revolves around six main themes: addiction, eating disorders, abuse, abandonment/neglect, depression, and education (see Chapter 3). Of all the studies on shame, I have retained the most significant ones.

In the field of shame and alcoholism, several studies (Randles & Tracy, 2013; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989) revealed that shame did not prompt recovery but relapse. Shaming alcoholics is conducive to relapse, following a vicious circle. The relation between shame, guilt and alcoholism was also investigated by Dearing and her colleagues (2005) in a study which revealed that shame-proneness was generally positively correlated with substance use (alcohol and drug) problems while guilt was unrelated to substance use problems.

In the domain of addiction, eating disorders were heavily researched. A qualitative descriptive study conducted by Sanftner, Barlow, Marschall and Tangney (1995) underlined that shame-proneness was positively associated with anorexia and bulimia nervosa. Obesity in relation with shame was also the subject of close investigation in a study by Sjöberg, Nilsson and Leppert (2005) which showed that obesity is strongly correlated with shame experiences in 15-17-year-olds.

The relation between shame and sex is also interesting as shown in two studies by Feiring, Taska and Chen (2002) and Petersen and Hyde (2009). The findings of these studies revealed that shame from sexual abuse can be grouped into seven categories: a) family, b) emotions, c) body, d) food, e) self-image, f) sex and g) therapy.

Shame was also shown to play a significant role in the case of abandonment (Claesson & Sohlberg, 2002) and neglect (Bennett, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2010). It was found that shame-proneness was higher in neglected children than in non-neglected children. Interestingly, Claesson and Sohlberg revealed that individuals with high levels of trait shame spend so

much time worrying about whether their shame will be discovered and the fact that they will be rejected that their relationships dynamics is conducive to rejection and abandonment.

In the field of psychology and psychiatry, three studies stand out: (1) an exploratory study by Van Vliet (2009) investigated 13 individuals' attributions associated with recovery from shame. Results showed that shame involved stable dispositional attributions where the self was seen as flawed. Participants reported feeling powerless to change their unwanted identity, (2) a recent clinical study by Ritter and her colleagues (2014) established clear links between shame and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and (3) a clinical study by Chao, Cheng and Chiou (2011) devoted to shame and the means of repairing one's threatened social self, concluded that the experience of shame was conducive to a stronger inclination towards self-sufficiency and passive avoidance.

The links between shame, perfectionism and depressive symptoms were the subject of an investigation by Ashby, Rice and Martin (2006) which underlined that the path from maladaptive perfectionism to depression was partially mediated by shame. Interestingly, Mills, Imm, Walling and Weiler (2008) showed that shame is related to stress and poor coping with stress.

Finally, an empirical study by Elison and his colleagues (2006) and based on the Compass of Shame (Nathanson, 1992), investigated the way individuals cope with or defend against shame. The results provided empirical support for the CoS model.

2.14 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have summarized current and past theory and research on shame. I have delineated its contours, its genesis and its consequences on the psychological well-being of individuals and demonstrated that it is a most enduring and pervasive phenomenon which leads to a set of phenomenological, physiological, and behavioural responses and affects the whole self in many different ways. I also showed that, despite the fact that it was heavily researched, it still remains enigmatic.

The aim of the next chapter is to make a case that shame is of great significance and primary importance in the experience of second language learners and a common and pervasive feature in SLA. Language learning settings generate a number of situations in which learners experience shame. My purpose will be to show that, because the language

classroom is infused with intense emotional experiences which may influence learning and performance and also teachers' and learners' personal growth, these emotions must be seen as signals, symptoms and syndromes in the L2 classroom. I will be arguing that shame in particular is to be taken into account as it may damage learners' capacity to adapt to the academic environment and to face adversity. Current research has shown that this negative emotion influences student learning (Bond, 2009; Thompson, Altmann, & Davidson, 2004) since it leads to significant worry, intrusive thoughts and psychological/mental disturbance and is at the core of their fear of failure. Since the shame-prone individual loses control of his social behaviour and therefore is temporarily or lastingly incapable of interaction, it is assumed here that shame-proneness affects learners' level of perseverance in front of failure because they think/perceive, consciously or not, that their poor performance is a stable trait of their identity and therefore nothing can be done against this lack of ability.

Chapter 3

Shame and anxiety in education and SLA

"The affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure." (Oxford, 1990, p. 140)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

While interest in emotions as an antecedent of motivated behaviour has been on the research agenda of a number of researchers over the past decades in a variety of domains, the focus on the role of emotional experiences of learners of FLs has been more recent, and the study of the emotion of shame has been conspicuously absent until recently.

To my knowledge, except for Thomas Cook's doctoral dissertation (2006), Wilson's paper (2016), Wang's research (2016), Teimouri's research on shame in SLA (2018, 2019) and Immonen's recent MA dissertation (2020), there has been no systematic inquiry into the role of shame in second language learning and no study has endeavoured to illuminate our understanding of the complex issues underlying the acquisition of another language with a thorough and in-depth scrutiny of this concept.

The reasons why the phenomenon of shame has received virtually no attention from applied linguists and SLA researchers has already been implied in the second chapter of this thesis: investigating this phenomenon in relation with FLL may pose methodological and interpretation problems and raise some serious ethical issues. There may also be another significant explanation for this dearth of research into L2-related shame, namely that, for decades, there seems to have been a tendency to subsume under the rubric of 'language anxiety' a range of shame-related emotions such as anxiety, embarrassment, fear, shame and nervousness (e.g. Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Nevertheless, this "invisibility" of L2-related shame is surprising in view of the fact

that the language classroom seems to generate a number of situations for learners to experience a variety of different negative emotions, including shame.

As I have shown in the previous chapter, shame is a complex, multifaceted and often concealed phenomenon, and the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis have long battled with the enigmatic intricacies of this emotion and they have consistently shown its centrality in the human psyche and pervasiveness in the psychotherapy room and psychoanalytical discourse (Lewis H. B., 1971; Lewis M., 2000; Tangney et al, 1996, 2007; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Furthermore, it is to be noted that, in order to be better understood, shame has to be studied in relation with anxiety in the domain of L2 learning, as the two emotions are intimately interwoven.

This chapter offers therefore a concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the major theoretical and empirical studies which have provided insights into the role of the emotions of shame and anxiety, both in the domains of education and SLA. The discussion will start with the role of shame in educational (non-SLA) settings, then I will deal with shame in SLA, and finally, because an understanding of one of these constructs cannot be reached without an understanding of the other, I will devote the last part of the chapter to a concise literature review of the phenomenon of anxiety in relation with L2 learning.

3.2 PAST AND CURRENT RESEARCH ON SHAME IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

In the second chapter, I provided an overview of the psychological and psychoanalytical theories addressing the antecedents and the effects of shame. This overview enabled me to identify the nature, the causes, the antecedents and the consequences of shame which might be of relevance to the understanding of the emotions experienced by learners during their language learning journey and in particular the emotions that they encounter in the specific context of the language classroom.

Insights from academic and clinical psychology provided some clues about the role that the self-conscious emotion of shame might play in instructional settings and may be of use for educators and teachers who endeavour to understand the attitude and behaviour of learners in their classrooms. These insights enabled me to better analyse and interpret the findings of my study and to decipher the common tendency for a number of (French) students to persistently

feel/experience shame during their FL learning journey, as will be shown in the forthcoming chapters.

Students experience a variety of emotions in the context of the school, and their professional life is very much dependent on their academic achievement. Therefore, when one considers the functions of emotion for human development, there is no wonder that these emotions impact students' cognitive processes and performance, as well as their psychological and even physical well-being. With this in view, I hope to give some theoretical and empirical background information about the foundation of shame that follows the line of the analysis and discussion that will come later.

For a few decades, there has been a focus on researching anxiety in a variety of fields and for nearly four decades, L2-related anxiety has been widely and thoroughly investigated. But Pekrun (1992) warned against the generalized tendency to consider anxiety as the most determinant achievement-related emotion experienced in academic settings and in 2011, he argued that "negative emotions such as anxiety, *shame,* and boredom [...] can hamper students' motivation to learn and affect their performance" (cited in Oades-Sese, Matthews, & Lewis, 2014, p. 247, my emphasis).

It is to be noted that, while research on shame has been prolific in social and educational psychology, and despite the fact that a number of researchers/psychologists like Tracy, Robins and Tangney (2007), and Turner, Husman and Schallert (2002) showed the relationships between shame and motivated behaviour, interpersonal behaviours and academic performance, shame has not received/attracted as much attention as it should have.

The fecund research by Helen Block Lewis in 1971 revealed that, while shame involves a global negative feeling about *the self* resulting from some misdeed or shortcoming, guilt is a negative feeling about the *specific* event rather than about the self. In the same vein, the research by Tangney and Dearing (2002) is interesting as it establishes links between shame and guilt. Based on the idea that, most often, shame and guilt are used indifferently and undistinguishably to express negative feelings, these researchers asked a group of undergraduate psychology students to elaborate on the distinctions between the two constructs. The findings of the study were intriguing in the sense that the students offered differing definitions of shame and guilt, and the results of the study offer compelling evidence that these universally experienced affective constructs play a significant role in a number of aspects of human functioning, and have particular relevance for interpersonal relationships. Tangney and Dearing's (2002) results showed that shame and guilt are distinct constructs which have different implications for motivated behaviour and adjustment.

Recent research by Oades-Sese, Matthews and Lewis (2014) has shown that the feelings of pride or shame following respectively success and failure are dependent on the individual's/student's *appraisal* of the causes of their success or failure and also on the *perception*s that these causes are stable, internal and controllable. In this regard, their study investigated the effects of shame and pride on students and interestingly proposed some recovery solutions for shame in education. The authors argue that, as shame entails the loss of the ideal self, the solutions to move away from prolonged shame would involve repairing the injured self and refocussing from the global self to *specific* behaviours and tasks, and moving toward *unstable* attributions for failure. Their findings are drawn on Heider's (1944, 1958) theory of causal attribution. Attribution theory is a theory which tries to explain "the interpretive process by which people make judgments about the causes of their own behavior and the behavior of others" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). After studying how people explain others' behaviour, Heider proposed an *attribution theory*. Heider noted that people usually attribute others' behaviour either to their internal dispositions or to their external situations. In the domain of education, if a student does not succeed at a test, she will want to attribute the reason for her failure to external (e.g. the test is difficult) or to internal (e.g. I am incompetent/a low achiever) causes. Oades-Sese and her colleagues (2014) posit that "in order to move away from shame toward pride, parents and teachers must focus on making *specific* behavioural statements rather than *global* statements in reaction to both children' success and failures" (p. 259, my emphasis). Corroborating these views, a study by Van Vliet in 2009 concluded that recovery from shame "involved a movement towards specific and unstable attributions that enhanced self-concept and maximized a sense of power and control over the future" (p. 137).

Finally, a study by Turner, Husman and Schallert (2002), and Turner and Husman (2008), investigated the importance of students' goals in their emotional experiences of academic failure and in their subsequent recovery from shame. In her 2008 study on emotional and cognitive self-regulation following academic shame, she showed that students' descriptions of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours following exam shame were influenced by a) ongoing conditions, b) immediate appraisals and c) evaluation and assessment, and impacted on their subsequent response paths and future performance evaluation. Their findings revealed that goal-related processes can lead to shame resiliency. In 2012, Juan de Dios Martínez Agudo established links between corrective feedback on error and learners' embarrassment, frustration, inhibition and feelings of inferiority. A study by

Holodynski and Kronast (2009) established links between academic self-concept, self-esteem and achievement motivation and experiences of pride and shame.

In any case, what all these studies seem to suggest is that, if there is no magic recipe that would allow learners to get rid of their shame, addressing this negative affect once it occurs will lead to a better understanding of students' emotional and psychological needs and eventually encourage them to invest in their learning in a more enduring manner. A further idea behind the studies is that shame must be taken into consideration by different 'players'/actors, namely, the school environment, the teacher, the learner and the parents. (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004).

It can be argued that school-aged children may be exposed to shame around failure in the context of the school at one time or another, and research has shown that this negative affect can hamper students' motivation to learn (Oades-Sese, Matthews, & Lewis, 2014) and impact their performance (Pekrun et al., 2011), fostering negative self-appraisals about their abilities and performance, and affecting their level of perseverance in front of failure.

3.2.1 Shame in sports and mathematics

Recent years have seen a rising interest in the consequences of failure in young athletes (McGregor & Elliot, 2005; Sagar & Lavallee, 2010; Sagar, Lavallee, & Spray, 2009). Eight studies stand out in the domain of sports. First, an exploratory study conducted by Sagar and Stoeber (2009) investigated perfectionism, fear of failure and affective responses to success and failure as well as the central role of fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment in the sports domain. The findings revealed that fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment is determinant in the relationship between perfectionism and fear of failure, and that perfectionistic concerns over mistakes predict fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment after failure. What is of particular interest is that the researchers found that parents played a non-negligible role in the development of perfectionistic tendencies, of fear of failure and of the feelings of shame and guilt. More specifically, parents' high expectations and critical/negative evaluation of their child's performance coupled with the child's overconcern with their parents' evaluation when the latter's expectations are not met fostered perfectionistic tendencies.

The same year, an interview-based study by Sagar, Lavallee and Spray (2009) investigated the ways young elite athletes coped with the effect of fear of failure. The findings

revealed that the most frequently perceived negative consequences of failure were a diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement and the emotional consequences of failure. In the same vein, a study by Elison and Partridge (2009) investigated college students and found that perfectionism measures exploring concern over mistakes and rumination were linked with shame-based tendencies to attack the self, attack others as well as to withdraw from other people and threatening situations. These studies on sport-related shame confirmed Tangney and Dearing's (2002) contention that shame is frequently found among individuals with high levels of evaluative concerns perfectionism.

Another study by McGregor and Elliot (2005) examined the links between fear of failure and shame and showed that individuals high in fear of failure reported greater shame upon a perceived failure experience than those low in fear of failure. The authors have found a positive relationship between shame-proneness and fear of failure. They also evidenced that higher levels of fear of failure increased the generalization of shame experiences, which confirmed the idea of the centrality of shame in the experience of fear of failure. These findings were duplicated in Conroy's (2004) and Conroy, Willow and Metzler's (2002) studies.

Massey's (2007) thesis research investigated the differences in the shame-coping style and fear of failure of high school freshman athletes. His findings revealed that there existed three profiles of athletes, namely (1) Low Negative Affect profile (i.e. athletes who displayed lower levels of maladaptive shame coping and fear of failure), (2) High Negative Affect profile (i.e. athletes who experienced higher levels of maladaptive shame coping and fear of failure) and (3) Moderate Negative Affect profile (i.e. athletes who stood in the middle of the other two groups).

Finally, a study by Rose (2008) researched the self-objectification and body shame as predictors of sport participation. What is worth noting is that all these studies emphasize the link between the perception of ability (physical in the case of sports, and intellectual in the case of mathematics, as we shall see below) and shame.

In the field of mathematics, over the last two decades, research inquiring about the role of emotions in mathematics has expanded dramatically. A number of studies have provided insights into the ways the learning of mathematics may be influenced by emotional factors as well as by environmental factors. The results of these studies have been discussed in academic journals and book chapters. As regards mathematics-related shame, three studies stand out.

First, Vierling-Claassen's (2012a) study deals with anxiety and shame in mathematics. Second, a study by Bibby (2002) also focuses on the relationship between shame and

mathematics in a population of adult teachers. Finally, another study, by Helmane (2015), deals with mathematical shame. In Vierling-Claassen's study, the author is strongly convinced that mathematics is an intense emotional subject and she points out that the role of shame, in addition to that of anxiety, impacts the learning of mathematics. Regarding the relationship between shame and mathematics, the author expresses herself in the following terms:

> In addition to anxiety, many other emotions play a role in math avoidance and negative mathematical identities, and these emotions are linked to learning difficulties (Ashcraft & Krause, 2007; Lyons & Beilock, 2012). Over the past year, I have become increasingly convinced that shame is a primary emotion that negatively impacts mathematical identity, and that it is shame that gives rise to anxiety about, avoidance of, and disinterest in mathematics. (n.p.)

She highlights that the phenomenon of shame should be addressed by a number of people: "Because shame is a relational emotion, considering the role of shame in mathematics places mathematical difficulties in a larger context which includes not only the learner, but also parents, teachers, administrators, and the entire society surrounding the learner" (n.p.). What is interesting in her study is her insistence that mathematical competence be viewed as a reflection of *overall intelligence* and *ability* and she underlines the particularity of mathematics in generating the feeling of *vulnerability* in learners and in providing occasions for experiencing shame:

> Shaming experiences can happen in all school learning, but students learning mathematics may be *particularly* vulnerable to such experiences. In a traditional mathematics classroom, there is little ambiguity or room for interpretation in problems, and the learning is focused on products, procedures, and algorithms. (n.p., my emphasis)

She emphasizes the objective nature of mathematics, which leaves no space for interpretation, and she insists on the negative consequences of mathematics-related shame on the students' sense of self:

> This "right or wrong" nature of mathematics can prevent students from saving face, or otherwise deflecting shame experiences, and can trap students who are struggling in a repeated cycle of negative experiences that are eventually felt as a flawed self. (n.p.)

Vierling-Claassen's (2012b) opinion about mathematics is summed up in the following:

> Mathematics is seen as an objective judge, and this aspect of judgment may contribute to the experience of shame. Unlike other subjects, in mathematics there is often no room for other points of view. In science, the interpretation of data may

> lead to different conclusions, and theories change as new information comes to light. In history, there are some immutable facts, but there is plenty of room for interpretation through different lenses. In English, the interpretation and interaction with the subject is everything. School mathematics also generally requires the student to make a permanent record of their answers as well as the work behind those answers, both of which can make the student vulnerable to judgment. (n.p.)

Finally, Vierling-Claassen points out the importance of success in mathematics since "mathematical competence is seen as a stand-in for overall intelligence and ability" (2012a, n.p.), an opinion which is still widely held. One can therefore assume from her statement that not being good at mathematics may affect the individual's sense of self since being good at mathematics is equivalent to being clever, and an incompetence in mathematics may reflect one's global incompetence.

Her words are in line with Buxton's (1981), who goes as far as speaking about a "mind chaos" or "a paralysis of the mind." Vierling-Claassen further maintains that a lot of people "feel silenced by mathematics, lacking the vocabulary and voice to discuss their ideas and feeling" (2012b, n.p.) and she goes on arguing that "fear is the presenting emotion, but shame is the core emotion" (n.p.) since the fear, according to Bibby (2002), is that "through an unwitting self-disclosure, you will allow someone to see your ineptitude and so open yourself to ridicule" (p. 708).

In the same vein, Bibby (2002), in her study conducted at King's College in London, argues that mathematics may be conducive to the feeling of shame due to the "high regard in which maths is held by a wider society" (p. 706) and she further points out that "abstract logico-mathematical thinking is frequently taken to be the pinnacle of intellectual achievement − the most advanced form of thinking" (p. 706). She remarks that "as such a high value is placed upon logico-mathematical thinking, and it is acknowledged to be difficult to master; it is unsurprising that people seek to demonstrate their ability to use it" (p. 709). The results of her findings are interesting. She says that:

> For individuals to feel shame while doing mathematics, they must assume that there are shared/common standards and expectations that relate to this performance. But more than that, there needs to be a feeling that somehow their own knowledge is insufficient, inadequate, or unreliable while the mathematical knowledge of others is assumed to be consistent, reliable, complete and at a higher level. That fear of the other person is very important (Giddens, 1991); it would appear that inside our own heads and operating in isolation we are generally content with our mathematics. The level of shame we feel increases with some audiences and is non-existent with others. (p. 710)

Bibby's findings in the domain of mathematics are in line with Teimouri's (2018) and my own findings in the domain of linguistics (2018) and reveal that "the *anticipation* of an audience may be far worse than the *reality* of being watched" (p. 708, my emphasis).

Yet another empirical study, which was based on semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, was conducted by Helmane (2015) and investigated the emotions experienced by primary school pupils when learning mathematics:

> In most cases, the pupils experienced such negative basic emotions as fear, shame and sorrow in mathematics lessons. These negative emotions caused the situations related to a pupil's incompetence, failure in doing a certain mathematics task as well as the cases when pupils encountered with a negative assessment of their work and the comparison of their work with that of the other pupils. (p. 1197)

What one may wonder about is whether this "vulnerability" of students learning mathematics cannot also be found in FLL. There is all likelihood that we will find similarities between mathematics and language learning as regards the impact of shame on learners, because language learning success requires an ability component, that is, 'language aptitude' which is very much similar with what is required in mathematics, that is, 'mathematical ability.'

3.2.2 Measuring shame

Since the late 1980s, shame and guilt have been constantly redefined and reconceptualised and they have recently been the subject of systematic empirical investigation. This interest has led to the development of a number of measuring instruments of guilt and shame, some dedicated to children and adolescents. The following list offers a summary of some scales and measures:

- Tangney and her colleagues, Dearing, Wagner and Gramzow (1989, 2000) were the first to use H. B. Lewis's (1971) conceptualization of guilt and shame to devise the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA, TOSCA-3), an instrument designed to measure individuals' shame-and-guilt-proneness in different situations. It was used in 2011 by Giner-Sorolla, Piazza and Espinosa to distinguish between trait emotions of guilt and shame.

- The Self-Conscious Affect and Attribution Inventory (SCAAI) was designed by Tangney in 1990 to assess differences in characteristic affective, cognitive and behavioural responses associated with shame and guilt.
- The Internalized Shame Scale (ISS), developed by David Cook (1996, 2001), evaluates the extent to which the negative affect of shame becomes magnified and internalized. It reflects feelings of inferiority, worthlessness, inadequacy and alienation.
- The Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) was designed in 2011 by Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld and Perry to assess achievement-related emotions in academic situations. Based on Pekrun's (2006) control-value theory of achievement emotions, this instrument was developed in order to assess different achievement emotions experienced by students in academic environments, such as enjoyment, pride, hope, relief, anger, shame, hopelessness and boredom during class, while studying and when taking tests. The scales were found to be reliable and both internally and externally valid.
- The Guilt And Shame-Proneness scale (GASP), developed by Cohen, Wolf, Panter and Insko (2011) was designed to differentiate guilt from shame and to examine the way individuals differ in their propensity to feel guilt or shame.
- The Experiential Shame Scale (ESS) by Turner (2014) is a measure of physical, emotional and social markers of shame experiences, and it was developed to solve the difficulties of assessing shame-in-the-moment or state shame. It was found to have low face validity and was not linked with social desirability.
- The Test of Self-Conscious Affect for Children (TOSCA-C; Tangney, Wagner, Burggraf, Gramzow, & Fletcher, 1990) for children aged between 8 and 12, consists of 10 negative and 5 positive scenarios yielding indices of shame proneness and guilt proneness, externalization of blame, detachment/unconcern, and alpha pride and beta pride subscales.
- The Brief Shame and Guilt Questionnaire for Children (BSGQ-C; Novin & Rieffe, 2015), for children and young adolescents aged 8-14 years, consists of 12 emotion-eliciting scenarios, using simple grammar and syntax. Children are required to imagine themselves being in a described situation and rate the intensity of their anticipated feeling of shame and guilt.

- The Test of Self-Conscious Affect for Adolescents (TOSCA-A; Tangney, Wagner, Gavlas, & Gramzow, 1991) is aimed for the 12 to 20 age group. It measures guilt and shame-proneness in adolescents aged 12 to 20. The TOSCA-A scales consist of 15 scenarios, 10 negative and 5 positive, yielding indices of proneness to shame and guilt.
- The Adolescent Shame-Proneness Scale (ASPS; Simonds et al., 2016) is a novel 19-item semi-idiographic measure of shame-proneness in adolescents aged 11 to 18 years, evaluating 3 components of shame-proneness: negative self-evaluation, externalization and emotional discomfort.

As we have seen, there have been a variety of studies on shame in education and a significant number of scales for measuring shame have been designed. This profusion of shame-related instruments in education makes the paucity of research on shame in SLA even more surprising. It is worth noting that Teimouri (2018) designed a specific SLA-oriented shame and guilt-measuring instrument, the Second Language Test of Shame and Guilt Affect (L2-TOSGA), derived from the Test of Self-Conscious Affect, which enables to measure L2 learners' differences as regards proneness to the emotions of shame and guilt (see next section for further information).

3.3 PAST AND CURRENT RESEARCH ON SHAME IN SLA

The increasing interest in both cognitive and affective foreign language learner processes which determine the ultimate attainment of FLL led to prolific research exploring individual differences. It has been amply shown in an earlier part that motivation and the emotion of anxiety experienced by language learners have featured significantly on the research agenda within the field of applied linguistics for several decades while the emotion of shame has, until recently, been completely neglected. As I have explained in the first part of the thesis, the reasons for this neglect are multiple, but perhaps the most important reason is that shame is not an easily and reliably measurable variable. Because language and the self are so intimately imbricated, language shame may be one of the most detrimental emotions to the sense of self (along with, as has been shown earlier on, sport and mathematical shame).

To the best of my knowledge, research on the relationship between shame and SLA was initiated in 2006 with Thomas Cook's PhD dissertation (2006). Cook's seminal study is the first to have investigated the variable of shame and its relation with anxiety from the

perspectives of FL learners in the United States. Since his thesis research, no study investigating the impact of shame on FLL was conducted until recently, when interest in this emotion started to emerge and a few studies have been flourishing in different countries (USA, China, Iran, France, Poland and Finland), such as Wang's (2016) study, Teimouri's (2018, 2019) study, Galmiche's (2014, 2017, 2018, see Appendices C to F) study, Wilson's paper (2016) and Immonen's MA dissertation (2020).

Cook's pioneering work represents a major step towards a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional (and especially negative) factors found in FLL. In his research using a differential/discrete emotions approach Cook offers a nuanced view of the emotions that are experienced during the FLL process, and his suggestions to alleviate the negative emotions during the FLL process are interesting. His research focused on the role of several different negative emotions in SLA. The discrete emotions approach and the use of clear markers of each emotion allowed to identify the six following emotions: shame, guilt, distress, surprise, fear and anger.

Based on the clinical interviews of thirty foreign college students in the United States, his research, which used the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) in the L2 context, revealed that shame over English lack of competence was a key factor in the experience of the interviewees' FLL process, and instances of shame were reported to be prevalent in the descriptions made by learners of their foreign language learning experiences. Avoiding situations in which the likelihood of being ashamed is high was frequently reported.

Cook interestingly found that shame works in conjunction with other emotions such as fear and anger to impede FLL, and that shame was unacknowledged and hidden beneath anger and engendered avoidance and withdrawal behaviour. His findings also highlight that shame and fear were the most widely reported emotions in the students' remarks, and that guilt played a less significant role. The author concludes that "the root of much of what is called anxiety in a language learning context lies in shame and fear" (p. 275). Another interesting finding was the prevalence and pervasiveness of anger, which he found was a very common experience in FLL, and he found out that anxiety is an umbrella term for at least five discrete emotions. Some interesting relationships between guilt, shame and fear, and how they relate to avoidance phenomena were observed.

Cook's findings corroborate the results of Horwitz and her colleagues' study that foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) is a special type of anxiety which is different from other types of anxieties (Horwitz et al., 1986). He also concluded that what makes the learning of a FL different from the learning of other school subjects is that it involves particular demands

on the individual's sense of self and as a consequence, it may be conducive to shame reactions in individuals who would not naturally experience shame.

His findings revealed that the anxiety construct is an amalgam of different discrete emotions and that shame is a frequent precursor and component of anxiety. He also showed that the fear of experiencing shame could be conducive to anxiety. The most significant and far-reaching findings of Cook's study, as regards the appraisal of learners' mistakes, was the importance of *attributions*. He interestingly argues that "a good research project would be to use self-talk to attempt to change language learners shame experiences into guilt experiences then measure the outcome. This has potential to be an important educational intervention for many L2 learners" (p. 273). What Cook means is that, since guilt is not as detrimental as shame on the learner sense of self because it can be mended, one way would be to make students feel guilty rather than shameful. He further emphasises that it would be interesting

> to teach learners to use self-talks to make people attributions of mistakes as simply being mistakes instead of making global appraisals of the self as being deficient. A learner who is taught to change their self-appraisals in this manner might be able to decrease the number of shame experiences they have and thereby decrease their avoidance. (p. 273)

Cook concludes by saying that "such a technique, if valid, could be extended to many other areas of learning, such as learning reading instruction and so on" (p. 274). It can be argued that his findings are in line with those by Oades-Sese, Matthews and Lewis (2014), who posited that a good means of overcoming shame feelings in the educational field was to attribute the cause of mistake/error to external factors. The results of the authors' study revealed that, since shame is conducive to global and stable/fixed dispositional attributions where learners feel that their entire self is flawed and incompetent, recovery solutions would involve a movement towards specific and unstable attributions of failure and helping students develop a sense of power and control over their future actions, thus corroborating research conducted by Pekrun and his colleagues (2014). These recovery solutions have also the merit to promote their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Bandura provides a definition of self-efficacy:

> Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. (1994, p. 77)

What is interesting too is what Cook's findings reveal, namely, the positive function of guilt in opposition with shame, which is in accord with Teimouri's (2018, 2019) recent findings about the relationships between shame and guilt, as will be shown below. In Cook's research, students' reactions of guilt were the result of specific self-attributions concerning failure, whereas they felt inadequate following shame experiences. While guilt often engendered reparative behaviour, encouraging learners to become more engaged in their learning of a second language, shame would generally lead them to give up the learning or to avoid the FL.

In 2019, Cook conducted another study with students at the Nishiyamato Academy of California, *The Japanese way of strength-based correction*, in which he outlines Japan's positive use of red ink to grade children's homework in order to limit the amount of shame children experience over failures. The author underlines that:

> Japanese teachers minimize a child's shame over getting things wrong by circling all of the correct answers on tests and homework assignments with red ink. Incorrect problems are either not marked, receive small red checkmarks, or are underlined. So the bigger, positive red circles dominate the page to highlight what is right, while the uncircled mistakes yield the stage and tamely wait in the wings. The Japanese way of correction stresses strengths and leaves mistakes understated. When teachers first return students' work, the children see the positive red circles and these outweigh their errors. (p. 419)

He further argues that "the psychology of seeing and the psychodynamics of self-conscious emotions were used to explain the mechanism of Japan's positive versus America's negative shame-inducing grading practices" (p. 419). The comparisons he makes between the American and the Japanese systems of evaluation and correction are without appeal/irrevocable:

> Because the Japanese use less threatening forms of evaluation designed to shield children from the shame of being wrong, shouldering mistakes becomes easier. Everyone, including the child, assumes a child will rework the missed problems and get them right. This practice fosters the belief that learning is not about avoiding mistakes but working to correct them. (p. 422)

The findings of his study provide an explanation for "unconscious cultural grading practices that tend to differentially produce either pride or shame" (p. 419). He uncompromisingly maintains that:

> The diametrically opposed Japanese and American grading practices are culturally embedded and usually unconscious. Most teachers, including Japanese teachers, are surprised to learn there is another way to correct homework besides the one

> they know. When explained in terms of the laws of visual perception and the psychodynamics of guilt, shame, and pride, the different effects of the two systems become apparent. (p. 423)

Cook encourages teachers to treat "mistakes as stepping stones to knowledge" (p. 425), that is, students may learn from their mistakes. He concludes by saying that "we can easily adopt their [the Japanese] methods of positive reinforcement, indirect correction, and mastery grading by using our pens to circle what is right. Then we can say: Where shame was pride shall be" (p. 425).

While there was no research conducted on shame in relation with FL learning for one decade after Cook's initial study, interest in the relationship between the variable of shame and SLA has increased. Recently, Teimouri (2019) has used both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the effects of L2 learners' shame-proneness and guilt-proneness on their motivation and language achievements. He developed and validated an L2-specific measure of shame-proneness and guilt-proneness and a scenario-based questionnaire approach research on the role of shame and guilt in relation with FLL.

The aim of his study was to investigate the prevalence of shame and guilt and their effects on L2 learners' motivation and language proficiency. In the same way as Cook (2006), Teimouri (2018) utilized the emotions of shame and guilt as they are used in the domain of psychology to examine their effects on second language (L2) learners' motivation and language achievements. He posits that "a scenario-based questionnaire provides a more trustworthy instrument for assessing L2 learners' emotions. Each scenario presents a unique context" (p. 633). He further argues that:

> A context, though not real, is perceived as real by L2 learners through the power of visualization. Not only can L2 learners imagine themselves in the situations, but they can also *feel their presence in them* (e.g., Dörnyei, 2014, my emphasis). As a result, they may evaluate and express their emotional reactions in those situations more accurately. (p. 633)

He concludes that:

> A scenario-based questionnaire allows for the measuring of various emotions simultaneously; it also allows for the exploration of the dynamic interactions between different emotions within a particular context and examination of their combined effects. The use of scenario-based questionnaires, thus, advances research in line with the new complex, dynamic turn in SLA, which focuses on the interaction of learner factors within a particular context (e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). (p. 633-634)

Teimouri discusses the findings in the context of theoretical and practical concerns, and provides direction for future research. His findings reveal the pervasiveness of language shame and guilt and show that shame strongly but negatively affects learners' motivation to learn as well as their achievements, whereas guilt may have positive impacts on their motivation and learning achievements.

He found that, while some L2 learners may persist in learning a FL despite a number of different challenges and difficulties, other learners may simply give up trying after experiencing repeated failure. His findings further revealed that L2 learners with stronger obligations and duties (i.e. driven by an ought-to L2 self) to learn English were more liable to experiencing shame than L2 learners who were learning English because of their own personal ideals and wishes (i.e. driven by an ideal L2 self). His study showed that not all negative emotions can have deleterious impacts on the learning and acquisition of another language. Finally, he argued in favour of seeing emotions in a different way from 'the negative' emotions versus 'the positive emotions' approach.

Teimouri's (2018, 2019) findings corroborate those of Cook (2006) in SLA and of other studies conducted in the field of psychology, such as the one by Oades-Sese and her colleagues in 2014, by positing that the feelings of shame and guilt depend on the way individuals attribute failure to the *global self* or to their *behaviour*. Teimouri concludes that L2 learners will react to corrective feedback in a positive manner if they attribute failure to their *behaviour* rather than to their *self*.

Another interesting aspect of Teimouri's research is that he offers solutions for learners to struggle against the deleterious effects of shame such as helping them to create vivid visions of themselves as future proficient L2 users. This idea of visualization and of imagining oneself as a future successful user of the TL has been found in other studies on the relationships between emotion and FLL (Şimşek & Dörnyei, 2017). What he advocates is to help language learners create vivid images of themselves as users of the TL.

Still another point that Teimouri (2018) has made and I feel is worth mentioning is the difference between what he calls "anticipatory" and "consequential" experiences of shame and guilt, which corroborates the findings in Galmiche's study (2017, 2018). In a few words, Teimouri found out that learners of FLs may experience both *actual* shame and guilt but they may also feel the two emotions in *anticipation*, that is, they can imagine being in a potentially shame or guilt-inducing situation. The results of his research are in line with research by Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007a), who posited that *anticipatory* shame and guilt are different from *consequential* guilt and shame. The authors maintain that shame, guilt and

pride may play a significant role in the moral choice and behaviour by providing critical feedback on anticipated and actual behaviour. They further argue that people's anticipatory emotional reactions are based on their past experiences of shame, guilt and pride, which corroborates Teimouri's (2018) findings that anticipatory and consequential guilt and shame feelings are dependent on the learners' past experiences of shame and guilt. He says that:

> In other words, past experiences provide critical feedback for L2 learners to assess affective responses to similar behaviors in future events. For instance, a learner may anticipate shame reactions during an incoming phone conversation with a native speaker if he or she had shame reactions in similar situations in the past. Consequently, the learner may opt for other means of communication (e.g., email). (p. 635)

In 2016, Wang, using the shame scale of the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire, (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2006), conducted a research with 143 Chinese college students of English as a FL in China. The findings of the study revealed that the shame experienced by Chinese learners were positively correlated to feelings of hopelessness in the FL classroom. Moreover, shame was found to be negatively associated with students' positive feelings of hope and enjoyment in their L2 class. The results of interviews also highlighted that the antecedents of shame were diverse: meeting others' expectations (e.g. being unable to meet the teacher's expectations), social comparison (e.g. having the perception that the other students speak the TL better), personality traits (e.g. feeling reluctant to speak the TL in public), or L2 competence (e.g. failing to communicate successfully in the TL with native speakers).

Paul Wilson (2016), from Konin University, dedicated a paper on the impact of collaborative learning on shame in second language classes. Wilson's study deals with the debilitating impact of what the author of the paper calls "the threat that many students perceive to be present in the foreign language classroom" (p. 235). He identifies shame as being of central significance and as being a particularly "destructive force", and he offers the "tend and befriend" response as a means of fighting this perceived threat. He further argues that the usual responses to such a threat are *fight, flight* and *fright,* which in turn eventually give way to emotions such as fear, anger and depression.

Wilson maintains that shame has a deleterious effect on working memory capacity, which has long been identified as a paramount feature of FLL mastery. Finally, the author maintains that the *tend-and-befriend* response has the merit to enable students to overcome the negative and impairing effects which come from the fight, flight and fright responses −

which can be seen as defence mechanisms which aim at protecting the self from perceived threats − through inter-student cooperation and to "promote the protective interpersonal affiliations that have the potential to facilitate effective engagement" (p. 236).

Finally, Pinja Immonen's MA dissertation (2020) investigated the role of shame in six Finnish university learners of English. Immonen's study is an exploratory qualitative study based on learners' self-written autobiographies of their English language learning histories. The analysis of her research results revealed that proneness to shame in the context of FLL may develop through two different paths. One was found to be the discrepancy between learners' low self-esteem and their high standards or goals in English. The other was learners' past negative experiences of corrective feedback or their experience of traumatising treatment in the language classroom. Poor pronunciation in English and feelings of inferiority to others were also found to be a source of shame. Avoiding speaking English and English-speaking situations were reported to be two ways of coping with shame. The author concluded that there is a need for further investigation of the phenomenon of shame in relation with FLL since shame seems to have detrimental consequences (not only on university students' learning of English but also on their decision-making) and also to affect their overall academic performance.

By way of conclusion, the results/findings of the various studies conducted in different FLL contexts and among a variety of populations (USA, China, Iran, France, Poland and Finland) point to the fact that shame can be frequently observed in the context of the FL classroom. All the existing studies agree on the idea that the phenomenon of shame is deleterious and detrimental to the sense of self and may play a significant role in learners' ultimate success to learn a FL. The findings of previous research unanimously encourage to investigate further the construct of shame in relation with FLL in order to find concrete and lasting solutions for students.

3.4 PAST AND CURRENT RESEARCH ON ANXIETY IN SLA

Since anxiety is the closest emotion to shame, I will devote some space to the review of past and current research on anxiety in the domain of SLA. What I propose in the following summary is a selective review of the most significant trends in the research on language-related anxiety and of the seminal works that contributed to the advancement of knowledge in

the area of SLA and to a better apprehension of the issues at stake during the journey of learning another language.

Anxiety is a complex and elusive emotion which has been the subject of thorough empirical and theoretical investigation by second language acquisition researchers, teachers and teacher educators from all over the world. This research has led to a variety of studies which all highlighted the detrimental effects of this phenomenon on FLL and showed in which way it could deter learners from learning a FL and impact ultimate language achievement.

Following MacIntyre (2017), this review of the literature on anxiety in SLA will be divided into 3 parts corresponding to the different phases of the research that has been conducted on this construct: the Confounded Approach (i.e. the origins of the research), the Specialised Approach and the Dynamic Approach. According to MacIntyre, the Confounded Approach refers to the phase during which the measures of anxiety in relation with FLL provided inconsistent findings. The Specialised Approach corresponds to the moment when instruments were developed, the aim of which was to measure L2-related anxiety. During this phase, there was general consensus among scholars. Finally, the Dynamic Approach refers to the recent trend in research on anxiety which sees the experience of this emotion as being correlated with a number of different interrelated factors.

3.4.1 The origins of FL anxiety research: the Confounded Approach

It was after Scovel's (1978) call for scrutinizing with more scientific rigour the affective variables that are at play during the FLL process that L2-related anxiety came to be regarded as a significant potential factor accounting for differences in L2 achievement or failure. Since that time, language-related anxiety has become the most commonly studied emotion (MacIntyre, 2017), to the point that Scovel deemed it to be "second only to motivation" (2001, p. 127) when one considers the interest that this emotion triggered. For some time, studies investigating foreign language anxiety (FLA) and its relationship with language achievement have been flourishing, using data-collecting instruments such as learners' diaries, journals, interviews or teachers' observations.

However, Scovel, in his seminal review of the literature on anxiety in SLA (1978), drew attention to all the inconsistencies that existed in the early research findings. His conclusion was that the variability of findings and the confusion that arose then were due to a theoretical

and methodological lack of precision and he urged researchers to pay attention to the type of anxiety that was being studied. The author concludes:

> The research into the relationship of anxiety to foreign language learning has provided mixed and confusing results, immediately suggesting that anxiety itself is neither a single nor well-understood psychological construct and that it is perhaps premature to attempt to relate it to the global and comprehensive task of language acquisition. (p. 132)

In his view, the inconsistency in the results could be attributed to a lack of distinction between *facilitating* and *debilitating* anxiety and, following Spielberger's work (1966), he made another distinction between *trait* and *state* anxiety. Trait anxiety is the natural tendency to experience anxiety, while state anxiety occurs when one feels anxiety in a particular situation. Trait anxiety is a stable personality trait reflecting the tendency to respond with state anxiety when faced with threatening situations. State anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional arousal in face of threatening demands or dangers. In other words, an individual who has a tendency/proclivity towards experiencing anxiety in everyday life situations has 'trait anxiety,' while an individual who will feel anxiety at a particular moment is said to have 'state anxiety (Spielberger, 1983), and a situation-specific anxiety refers to a specific form of "anxiety that occurs consistently over time within a given situation" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87).

MacIntyre stresses the point that the problem that arose at that time was that "not all types of anxiety that can be defined and measured are likely to be related to language learning" (2017, p. 12). What is worth mentioning is that the distinction of state/trait anxiety proved sound while the facilitating/debilitating distinction was found to be useless in the years that followed.

The confusion that arose during what MacIntyre (2017) called "the Confounded Approach" is well illustrated in his following statement: "the ideas about anxiety and their effect on language learning were adopted from a mixture of various sources without detailed consideration of the meaning of the anxiety concept for language learners" (p. 32). The general consensus has been that anxiety is usually associated with "subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry" (Boudreau, MacIntyre, & Dewaele, 2018, p. 150). In 2014, Gregersen and MacIntyre described L2-related anxiety as being a manifestation of "the worry and negative emotional reaction when learning and using a second language and is especially relevant in a classroom where self-expression takes place" (p. 3).

Over the last decades, there has been sustained and vibrant interest in trying to clarify the concept of anxiety and to investigate the relationships between FLA and achievement (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre, 1999, 2002; Teimouri, Goetze, & Plonsky, 2019; Young, 1991, 1994), and it was found that negative emotions, including anxiety, may impact the learning of a FL in a significant manner, that is to say, anxiety is negatively correlated with performance and can be regarded as a strong predictor of failure in FLL.

For instance, MacIntyre (2017) offers a comprehensive and informative state of knowledge regarding research on anxiety in relation with FLL. MacIntyre's review concludes on the ideas that the learning of another language is generally negatively influenced by anxiety, that language anxiety is both a cause and a consequence of negative performance, and finally that this emotion has both internal and social dimensions.

3.4.2 The specialised approach

A number of studies have shown how foreign language anxiety differs from other types of anxiety and revealed that it is not a transfer of other sorts of anxiety but should be regarded as a type of anxiety typical of/specific to FLL and independent from other kinds of anxieties. In 1985, Gardner suggested that the concept of anxiety was specific to the learning of a foreign language and that there existed links between anxiety and second language achievement. The assumption that there is a specific type of anxiety that occurs when one learns another language was also presented in Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's seminal paper (1986).

Horwitz and her colleagues were interested in the effects of this variable on FLL and in its potential consequences on the learning of a FL. The authors' assumptions advanced thinking in the domain of SLA and contributed to a better understanding of what role anxiety plays in a unique and powerful manner. They developed the 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), an instrument which deals with the role of classroom interactions in the eliciting of FLA. They made a distinction between general anxiety and *foreign language classroom anxiety* (FLCA), which they defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128) and they argued that this "specific" anxiety was the cause of most negative attitudes on the part of the learners. Language anxiety was found to be a unique form of *state* anxiety (rather than *trait* anxiety), that is, learners who experience FLCA have "the *trait* of feeling *state* anxiety when participating in language

learning and/or use" (Horwitz, 2017, p. 33). This specific type of anxiety is called situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Horwitz et al. (1986) found out that this emotion could impact on language learning and impair ultimate achievement. FLCA consisted – among others – of three specific anxieties: Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation.

However, Horwitz (2010, 2017) argued that there were some misunderstanding and misleading interpretations in the following years regarding the nature and unity of the concept of language anxiety, which does not consist only of a combination of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The author argued that FLCA did not result from the addition of the three specific anxieties (i.e. communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation) and since Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's publication of their paper (1986), a number of researchers tried to determine the components of FLA by using factor analysis approaches.

Horwitz et al.'s theoretical model of foreign language anxiety shaped language anxiety research in the years that followed. However, it is to be noted that questions were raised by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), who investigated the role of anxiety in the language performance of L1 and L2 Canadian learners and concluded that:

> The potential effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language appear pervasive and may be quite subtle. 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. (p. 301)

In 2001, Spielmann and Radnofsky posited that "the most accepted working hypotheses themselves may need revising" (p. 261). It is worth noting that, in approaching the construct of anxiety, psychologists agree on making distinction between a variety of typologies, such as trait anxiety, state anxiety (Spielberger, 1966) and situation-specific anxiety.

In 2017, Gkonou, Daubney and Dewaele, talking about the ways FLA might impair language learning, offered fresh insights into language anxiety and ways of researching, analysing and addressing this issue. As they argued in the introduction to their edited book on the subject,

> Language anxiety can impede the learning of the target language and hinder academic success; lead learners to abandon their studies; engender negative attitudes towards the target language and its respective culture(s); diminish the willingness to communicate; create counterproductive tensions among a class of language learners; sow the seeds of self-doubt in the minds of learners regarding their identity, feelings of competence and degree of self-esteem; and have a

> corrosive influence on the very lifeblood of L2 learning itself – the enthusiasm and motivation necessary to engage and embrace another language other than one's own. (p. 1)

Facilitative anxiety versus debilitative anxiety

There has been a fierce debate in the literature over FLA being facilitative or debilitative. For instance, Ohata's (2005a) study on the potential sources of anxiety for Japanese learners of English revealed that a number of the experienced language teachers he interviewed were convinced that some amount of anxiety could help students. This kind of anxiety was called 'facilitative' by the teachers: Ohata found out that there were two kinds of anxiety, a devastative and a facilitative anxiety. It was also proposed that a little pressure would encourage learners to work harder. The author concludes that:

> The proclaimed goal of eliminating negative emotional elements from language learning is virtually impossible to achieve, or rather a misconception about the teacher's responsibility in the classroom. However, it is also undoubtedly true that the teachers' supportive attitude toward student anxiety, along with continuous efforts to understand affective needs that each student brings to the classroom can make a significant contribution not only to creating a student-centered and comfortable classroom environment, but also to further facilitating the students' learning processes in the long run. (2005a, p. 16-17)

In Ohata's view, 'facilitative' anxiety is a useful kind of anxiety which is conducive to greater attention, effort and performance, while 'debilitative' anxiety leads to a downward spiral of negative thoughts. He concludes that "anxiety can be either helpful or devastating, depending on the individual students. But in general, if they don't feel any pressure or anxiety, they would not do anything after all" (2005b, p. 144). Despite these arguments, anxiety is now consensually seen as being generally debilitating and teachers are encouraged not to seek to increase learners' FLCA. Horwitz argues that "a search for facilitating language anxiety is a huge step backwards" (2017, p. 39), and she even goes as far as to say that it is "a dangerous trend" (p. 40). She calls for a "need to balance anxiety research and the experience of anxious language learners" (p. 31) and she warns against the use of such terms as 'facilitative' versus 'debilitative' anxiety, because, in her view, anxiety has to be conceptualised as being exclusively a debilitative and detrimental emotion. She argues that "if we as language teachers want to speak of facilitative Language Anxiety, we would, at best, be walking a very fine line between *helpful* and *harmful* anxiety" (p. 40, original italics).

Foreign language anxiety and the self

There was a turning point in the research on language anxiety and another step towards the understanding of learners' FLL journey was made when the relationship between the self and FLL was established in Cohen and Norst's pioneering study (1989). The study − based on students' diaries − revealed that language and the self are so intimately interwoven that "a threat to one is a threat to the other" (p. 68-69). The results of their study provided a wealth of information for students and researchers alike and they showed that the students may be struggling with anxiety when learning another language and that this construct could have a detrimental effect on their sense of identity.

In the same vein, Ehrman established relationships between (1996) language anxiety and the self and saw anxiety as detrimental to the learners' sense of self, as expressed in the following statement: "anxiety relates to the response a student has to a perceived threat to his or her sense of security or self-esteem" (p. 137). Ehrman (1993) points out that a threat to learners' sense of self-esteem may lead to a reduction of their L2 use. Corroborating the idea that FLL plays a role on learners' sense of identity, and that anxiety or panic may be a significant hindrance to FLL− in particular whenever one wants to communicate ideas − Horwitz and her colleagues (1986) contend that:

> Because complex and nonspontaneous mental operations are required in order to communicate at all, any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's *self-concept* as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic. (p. 128, my emphasis)

A study by Szyszka (2017), which investigated the role of FLCA in relation with communicative tasks, revealed the importance of the relationship between language and the self. The study focused on the pronunciation learning strategies used by L2 learners exhibiting various levels of language anxiety while acquiring L2 phonetic features. The findings of her study revealed that the image of oneself as being evaluated by others is a significant source of language anxiety. The author found that learners perceive their language abilities (e.g. L2 pronunciation) as insufficient and they worry about the way they will be *evaluated* by others, which affects their level of foreign language anxiety. One of the author's findings indicated that a significant source of learners' anxiety was speaking in front of their peers, as it is a task which involves self-presentation.

Finally, Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) proposed a fresh approach to FLA research and offered an original conceptualisation of anxiety which is based on the self. They call it the 'anxious self,' thus focussing on the relationship between anxiety and identity. The authors argue that the study offers "a way to link anxiety research to other areas of SLA where the

importance of the self-concept has been recognised" (p. 66), and they point out that "an obvious link in this respect would be relating the anxious self to future motivational self-guides such as the ideal self" (p. 66).

The authors reframed anxiety as the 'anxious self,' and offered a new approach to the understanding of the nature, antecedents and consequences of anxiety by adopting McAdams and Pals' (2006) three-tiered framework of Personality. They used an exploratory qualitative study based on the analysis of the data collected from 20 highly anxious Turkish University learners of English. Their study explored the relationship among anxiety, identity and motivation and their findings highlighted the interconnectedness of FLL and the self and revealed the existence of three characteristic types of approach to language anxiety, which represented three reaction styles, namely "the fighter, quitter, and safe player" (p. 61). The fighters tried to combat language anxiety in a constructive manner, while the quitters felt that their language anxiety was insurmountable and chose flight. Another interesting finding was that the last category that they identified − the safe players − made everything possible in order to avoid potentially negative and anxiety-generating experiences by remaining silent and/or invisible. It is to be noted though that the authors underlined that their study leaves several questions unanswered, and they called for further investigation into the subject.

Foreign language anxiety and learners' personality traits

A number of studies (Dewaele, 2002, 2013a, 2017; Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008) also investigated the relationship between SLA and broader learner characteristics, such as learner personality traits – that is, extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, perfectionism and trait emotional intelligence. For instance, Dewaele (2002) investigated the role of extraversion (i.e. being outgoing, sociable), psychoticism (i.e. being cold, aloof) and neuroticism (i.e. being anxious, fearful) in French (L2) and English (L3) in Flemish learners. The study revealed that the learners' anxious reactions to FLL differed according to the language they studied, and that the links between FLA and personality may depend on the social context and on language use patterns.

In 2008, Dewaele and his colleagues extended their research on the role of personality characteristics in SLA to include emotional intelligence, which is "the ability to understand feelings in the self and others, and to use these feelings as informational guides for thinking and action" (Salovey et al., 2011, p. 238). Lower levels of FLA were found in adult speakers of several foreign languages who displayed higher emotional intelligence (Dewaele et al.,

2008; Dewaele, 2013b). Dewaele (2013c) also found that the level of anxiety was lower in adult users of the FL when these started to learn the FL at a younger age, or in those who were older at the time when they studied the FL, when they used the target language outside the context of the classroom, and when the learners used the TL in social interactions.

Learner-internal and learner-external variables

A number of studies showed that language anxiety may originate from both internal and external learner variables, that is, anxiety may arise from learner-internal characteristics and language learning context (Horwitz, 2017). Learner internal factors may include low learner self-esteem (Young, 1991), low levels of motivation (Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2009b) and negative self-evaluation (Liu, 2006; Mak, 2011). Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele (2018) explored the effect of both learner-internal and learner-external variables on levels of FLCA and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) of 189 secondary school pupils in London who were mostly studying French, German or Spanish as a FL. The results of their study indicated that levels of FLE were linked to higher scores on attitudes towards the FL, the FL teacher, FL use in class, proportion of time spent on speaking, relative standing and stage of development. Lower levels FLCA were linked to higher scores on attitudes towards the FL, relative standing and stage of development. FLCA thus seems less related to teacher and teacher practices than FLE. The authors argued in favour of investigating the positive as well as the negative emotions. The pedagogical implication of Dewaele and his colleagues' studies was that teachers should endeavour to boost FLE rather than worry too much about students' FLCA, and they highlighted the role of learners' perception of teacher characteristics (Dewaele & Dewaele,2020; Dewaele, Franco Magdalena, & Saito, 2019; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019).

Foreign language anxiety and the learning environment

A number of studies have revealed the importance of environmental factors in the learning of a FL and they agree that a positive classroom environment is crucial for learner wellbeing and progress (Dewaele, 2015; Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2018; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). Environmental factors may include teacher instructional practices and teaching style (Aida, 1994), the classroom atmosphere and the relationships between peers. Bailey's study (1983), based on students' diaries, explored learners' perspectives on language learning and revealed that there were a variety of potential environmental/external triggers of

language anxiety, such as competition between peers and feelings of tensions between students and their teacher. It is to be noted that bad relationships between teacher and students can cause anxiety (e.g. Gregersen, 2003; Horwitz, 2008; MacIntyre, 1999; Şimşek & Dörnyei, 2017).

A number of researchers maintain that promoting a positive learning environment will lower considerably the level of anxiety in language learners. Techniques that will contribute to reducing the level of anxiety in the FL classroom include focussing less on errors, "correcting errors gently" (Horwitz, 2008) and developing the willingness to communicate (WTC) in the TL (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) suggest that:

> As teachers reflect upon issues of language anxiety through the exploration of the following activities, they must remain cognizant that anxiety can manifest in physical, emotional, linguistic and social behaviors. *Teachers, individual language learners, and the class as a whole can pull together to create a network of support and collaboration*. (p. 13, my emphasis)

Gregersen and MacIntyre (2012, 2014) found that negative emotions cause a narrowing of focus and a restriction of the range of potential language input, and that, in order to counterbalance the negative effects of negative emotions, developing learners' positive emotions could help promote students' resilience when faced with difficult situations such as stressful learning environment. Their studies pointed out that the role of the teacher is significant in the eliciting of anxiety and other related emotions in learners.

Researchers agree that poor relationships between teacher and learners may have a detrimental effect on learners, and they all suggest that the language teacher/instructor should use non-threatening techniques, promote group cohesiveness and encourage trial and error (i.e. a teaching approach encouraging repeated attempts until success is reached) that aim at reducing anxiety levels in learners (Dewaele, 2015; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Olson, 2017; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004). The results of the different studies also encouraged teachers and instructors alike to foster positive emotions which go far beyond pleasant feelings. They maintain that these emotions allow students to develop their language input by flushing out the negative effects of negative emotions and encourage them to play and explore. A point which is worth mentioning here is that Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016) agree that teachers have no magical recipe/wand to reduce learners' FLCA, so in creating a

low anxiety and comfortable learning atmosphere, they allow anxiety-prone learners to manage their anxiety and not to feel paralysed.

Counterbalancing negative emotions

In 2014, Dewaele and MacIntyre argued that FLE and FLCA must not be seen as opposite ends of the same dimension, but rather as different dimensions. They argued in favour of a more holistic approach to classroom emotions. Following Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) Flow Theory, the authors argue that, to make learning enjoyable and not just superficially pleasurable, an element of challenge is necessary which might trigger some anxiety. The ability to meet the challenge with a beating heart in a positive environment is more likely to foster learning than a challenge-free environment where there is no language anxiety but no enjoyment either. Of course, while negative emotions need to be controlled because they cause a narrowing of focus and a restriction of the range of potential language input, the experience of positive emotions broadens people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn serves to build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2003). Corroborating this view of the importance of developing positive emotions to counterbalance the negative emotions, Oxford (2017) proposed a series of practices that can be used to overcome FLCA, such as developing 'flow' experiences, like fostering a feeling of agency, encouraging the use of humour, hope and optimism in the classroom.

Another means of counterbalancing negative emotions such as FLA has been proposed by Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) whose study revealed that offering students the possibility to narrate their language learning stories and to reconstruct the past and imagine the future allows them to turn their L2-related negative experiences into positive ones, and thus helps them to fight the deleterious effects of anxiety. Adopting McAdams and Pals' (2006) three-tiered framework of Personality, the authors' study throws light on the idea that verbalizing one's past experiences of anxiety or other negative emotions – an action which they call Integrative Life Narratives − might help the individual overcome negative experiences. However, Şimşek and Dörnyei call for caution and say that, as learner narratives vary significantly across different cultures, there might not be any universal strategy for helping language learners to combat their anxious self.

The results of their study are perfectly in line with findings in the domain of psychology from a brain imaging study conducted by UCLA psychologist Wolpert in 2007 which

revealed that verbalizing (i.e. the act of putting one's emotional experiences into words) produces therapeutic effects, and from another study by Kircanski, Lieberman and Craske (2012), which also showed the beneficial role of disclosing one's negative emotional experiences.

3.4.3 The dynamic approach

The latest phase of anxiety research (post 2014) is the so-called "Dynamic Approach" (MacIntyre, 2017). It fits with Dörnyei and Ryan's (2015) call for future research into language anxiety "to foreground a more *dynamic* conception of anxiety, highlighting aspects of change as well as types of adaptations that can lead the behavioural outcomes of anxiety both in the positive and negative direction" (p. 180, my emphasis).

The dynamic nature of anxiety has been widely acknowledged (Gkonou, Daubney, & Dewaele, 2017; Horwitz, 2017), and anxiety is now seen as resulting from a constant interplay between learner internal characteristics and contextual factors, such as learner personality traits, learner language learning history, classroom atmosphere, teacher attitude, interaction among peers and assessment/evaluation practices (Gkonou et al., 2017), and there are calls for developing further knowledge regarding the ways this variable affects the language learning process within diverse groups of learners and sociocultural environments.

Emotions are short-lived reactions to events and are therefore ideal candidates to study from a Dynamic Systems Theory perspective. In the Dynamic Approach, "learners attributes are neither stable nor context-independent, but interact with the context and over time" (Dewaele, 2012, p. 43).

What was put to the fore was that emotions, including anxiety, fluctuate over time in constant interplay with other systems and affect learners' motivation, perception of competence and willingness to use the target language in a negative way. Since emotions are an open system, they may be influenced by a number of internal and external factors. Dewaele's (2017) following quote encapsulates this idea:

> The effects of various psychological variables on levels of FLA/FLCA are not constant but dynamic and often language specific. On top of these complex interactions come other layers of sociobiographical, situational, and social variables, which could interact among themselves but also with a wide range of psychological variables. (p. 444)

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have reviewed the empirical and theoretical background to the research on shame in the field of education and SLA and offered an overview of the significant trends in the literature. I have also provided an overview of the literature on anxiety in relation with FLL and shown that there has been over the last decade increased interest in the role and impact of anxiety on FLL and its dynamic nature. A better understanding of the role of anxiety in FLL is crucial for the development of better pedagogical practices and for a better and more comprehensive understanding of the life of language classrooms. The consensus is that anxiety results from the perceived inability to present oneself in an authentic way and threatens individuals' sense of identity.

The review of the literature has also demonstrated that shame has not been researched in a systematic way in the field of SLA because of the tendency to situate it in the same broad rubric of negative emotions such as anxiety, embarrassment, fear and nervousness (e.g. Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). A growing number of linguists have been also seeking to find ways of overcoming the negative consequences of this emotion on the learning of a FL by imagining concrete solutions (Wilson, 2016; Teimouri, 2018, 2019).

All the research dealing with shame in relation with SLA concludes with the necessity to learn more about the role of this emotion and to use this knowledge to help language learners develop a sense of mastery and control over their self-defeating tendencies (Cook T., 2006). The results of different studies agree on the idea that helping students to counter the feeling of shame with positive emotions, such as some sense of pride over the progress made, will be conducive to them being more engaged and having a more balanced sense of self.

The review has also allowed us to understand the difference between shame and the emotion which is closest to shame, anxiety, but also their interconnectedness. It has shown that there is a keen scholarly interest in anxiety and has revealed how important it is to try to capture the complex relationship between these two emotions for a better and more comprehensive understanding of the issues at stake when one learns another language. The variety of studies conducted on this phenomenon point to the fact that research on emotion in FLL will without doubt stimulate further interest in the years to come.

All the investigations into shame and anxiety in relation with L2 learning concluded on the pervasiveness, ubiquity and destructiveness of anxiety and shame in the domain of SLL, and showed the usefulness of investigating these emotions and dealing with them in earnest. What is worth mentioning is that one will be able to arrive at a better, more comprehensive and more nuanced picture of FLL with a systematic and in-depth scrutiny of the interconnectedness of the emotions of shame and anxiety.

By way of conclusion, the few studies on L2-related shame call for deeper investigation into this phenomenon and researchers agree that, although things have started to change recently, and despite the fact that negative emotions continue to resonate with an increasing number of researchers and teachers/instructors alike, the paucity of research on shame in relation with FLL invites us to think that there is clearly still much room for further research in this area. It is hoped that future researchers will draw on the recent theoretical and methodological frameworks proposed in the literature to investigate further the emotions of anxiety and shame in relation with FLL, and will continue exploring both the positive and the negative, the enjoyable and the less enjoyable experiences during the FLL journey.

Chapter 4
The French Education System

"Consider, for a moment, how profound is an education: every human-made object in the world is the result of one. Every car, computer, particle accelerator, thatched hut, hairstyle, soufflé, piano concerto. These are the products not only of the skilled hands and nimble minds of their creators, but the result of whole traditions and systems of education. Change education, and you change the world." (Sherman, 2012, n.p.).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to contextualise the stories of the research participants and to obtain a better understanding of French language learners' shame, I will present a succinct, and necessary selective, analysis of France's system of education, with a focus on language education. The present chapter aims to show how such a system may produce learners who persistently shy away from using the target language by discussing the situational factors that may have contributed to classroom environments in which silent and shame-prone language learners seem to be the norm rather than an exception. After providing a general overview of language education in France, I will briefly touch upon the subject of how the successive reforms in language policies proposed by the different Ministries have not been followed by concrete lasting measures.

As shall be shown in the chapter, one of the key factors in French learners' tendency to experience shame is the system of grading and evaluation, with its emphasis on mistakes, which remains a deeply entrenched and popular instructional approach amongst French teachers. After exploring the ways in which this approach silences students and discourages them from taking risk, I will conclude by offering an appraisal of how humiliating practices within the language classes, which generally remain carefully concealed, may be conducive to learners' unwillingness to use the target language.

4.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING IN FRANCE

4.2.1 In mainstream education

Languages are at the heart of the French education system, and the Common Core of Knowledge and Skills, which describes the knowledge, skills and values that pupils must master, posits that pupils must master a foreign language by the end of the cycle of compulsory education (Coquidé, Godinet, Pastor, & Pincemin, 2008). The Common Core of Knowledge and Skills is organised, among other competencies, around the key competence of proficiency in a modern foreign language. It represents the set of values, knowledge, languages and practices that are required from students from nursery to secondary education, in order that they complete their schooling, build their personal and professional future and become active members of the society. It ensures a uniform approach to teaching across the country and that the national curriculum is applied in all schools. It is organised around seven key competences, to be mastered when students leave the college (i.e. lower secondary school):

- Mastery of the French language.
- Proficiency in a modern foreign language.
- Key elements of mathematics, science and technology.
- Proficiency in information, technology and communication.
- Humanist culture.
- Social and civic skills.
- Autonomy and initiative.

In order to obtain a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency used in Europe, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (hence CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) was designed by the Council of Europe in 2001.

Since its publication, the CEFR has inspired French governments in the field of language policies, particularly at primary level:

> For the past ten years, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) has had an increasing impact on foreign language teaching and learning in France including an emphasis on gaining intercultural perspectives. France was indeed the first European country to mention the existence of the CEFR and its action-oriented approach in its official school curriculum. (Tardieu & Dolitsky, 2012, p. 3)

The CEFR developed a grid of assessment of students' level in FLs, with different scales: A1, A2 (i.e. Basic User); B1, B2 (i.e. Independent User) and C1, C2 (i.e. Proficient User). This reference tool, which serves as a common point of reference for teachers and educators, aims to help learners and teachers of FLs to set clear goals as well as to help students to take greater responsibility for their learning.

In all the regions of France, students generally start learning a FL in their second year of primary school, usually at age 7. It is to be noted that English is the most widely studied language throughout France. Students are generally taught a FL one hour and a half per week. However, the learning of a FL at this age has not been generalized throughout France, and some French students still do not start learning a FL before the age of 11, that is, in their first year of secondary school. It is worth noting that, contrary to countries like Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Poland, or Hungary, which all implemented the teaching of FLs in the 1960s and 80s, the French system of education did not implement the teaching of FLs at the primary school level until 2002 (Télérama, 2019, p. 21). Since 2016, French school teachers have had the obligation to promote the learning of FLs and to motivate learners from a young age, that is, from age 6.

French students have also the opportunity to learn additional FLs, such as Latin and Greek, and, due to the variety of sociolinguistic situations in France, a range of regional 'minority languages' (e.g. Breton, Basque, Catalan, Corsican, Creole languages, Tahitian, Occitan, as well as Alsatian and Flemish in the areas of Northern France where these languages are traditionally spoken). These regional languages are not a priority though. It is to be noted that, although not all of the French students choose to study English as their first FL, every student will have the obligation to study this language at a time or another during their compulsory school years. The major reason for opting for English as a first FL is that English is regarded as an asset for economic success and job promotion. English, German and Spanish are the three FLs that are widely studied in France. It is noteworthy though that the learning of German has been declining for some time, except in regions such as La Moselle and Alsace, which are close to the German border. English is therefore the dominant FL that is taught throughout the system of education and throughout most of the country.

A particular case: Bilingual classes

In some schools and secondary schools, there exist bilingual sections in otherwise monolingual schools. In these classes, students are taught several school subjects in English. English is therefore a medium *and* a subject. In the so-called 'European' and 'Oriental' Sections as well as in the 'International' Sections there is also the possibility of learning some school subjects in a FL (i.e. English, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Russian in the European Sections). In the Oriental Sections, students can learn languages such as Arabic, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese. However, although they acknowledge that the learning of a subject through the medium of a FL can go a long way to achieving positive outcomes, a number of French teachers of FLs regret that they do not have the skills required to teach subjects such as Maths, History and Sciences in another FL.

English as a FL has also become significant through CLIL programs – that is, Content and Language Integrated Learning (Coyle, 2007; Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008). The aim of CLIL programs is to integrate content and language instruction, that is to say, pupils/students learn a school subject through the medium of a FL. In 2012, Tardieu and Dolitsky wrote:

> According to the European commission of languages, the main objectives of CLIL are threefold to allow students to broaden their knowledge of a subject, to improve students' abilities in a foreign language, to give students an intercultural perspective of the subject, thus stimulating their interest in and shaping new attitudes toward other cultures. In addition it is hoped that CLIL's multi-faceted approach will motivate students through more diversified teaching methods. (p. 4)

The authors further argue that "this type of integrated learning thus enables learners to use the language both as an object (during micro tasks for instance) and as an instrument (to communicate) while at the same time enlarging students' experience of the world" (p. 4).

From their first year of secondary school, students go on with the study of the FL that they took up at primary school, and they may start another FL, such as German, Spanish, or Italian if they are in a 'bilangue' class. It is noteworthy that the bilingual classes are to be distinguished from the 'bilangue' classes, in which students are taught two FLs from their first year of secondary schools (i.e. at age 11) but English is not a medium through which subjects are learnt. Students continue learning this FL until they take the French Baccalaureate (i.e. the French school-leaving national diploma, usually taken at age 18). At the age of 13, students may learn a second FL, mainly Italian, Spanish or German, depending on the region of France

they live in – that is, Spanish or Italian in the South of France, and German in the East of France.

4.2.2 Vocational classes/streams

Since most of the participants in the current study originate from the vocational and apprenticeship backgrounds (i.e. classes in which students/apprentices train to obtain a professional qualification through work combined with the learning of 'academic'/school subjects), it is important to obtain some understanding of the learning and teaching of FLs in vocational streams.

What is to be stressed is that FLs in the vocational streams are generally not given a prominent role. Most of the time, students do not have the obligation to learn a FL, and if they do learn one, the significance of this learning is not relevant. It can be therefore argued that the learning of a FL in the vocational centres remains in the background, and students have few hours of FLL (generally two to four hours every month, for a duration of one to three years) and it can be even said that FLs are generally not seen in a particularly positive light by the students themselves, who prefer to work rather than study what they often deem to be optional, abstract and difficult topics.

Ideally, the content of the FL courses that are taught in vocational/apprentice classes has a direct link with the students' professions, for instance, apprentice bakers will receive courses which revolve around bakery and they will learn the basics of English words in this area.

4.3 SOME OF THE REFORMS IN LANGUAGUE LEARNING AND TEACHING AND THE LACK OF LASTING CONCRETE MEASURES

The French National Education is allocated the most important budget of the State − in 2019, the money spent on Education amounted to 73 billion euros (Statista, 2019) − and the Government spends a considerable amount of money on educational reforms that aim at improving the learning and use of FLs. For years, every new Minister of National Education proposed ambitious teaching and curricular reforms to try to improve the level of French learners in FLs, but these successive reforms seem to have failed at reversing the poor

performance of French students in the domain of FLL, and these promises seem to be mere politicians' fads which are unable to lead to any enduring significant changes in the ways FLs are being taught.

However, it cannot be denied that efforts at changing things have been made, and the French education system did undergo some changes over the past decade as regards the teaching of languages. In this regard, the year 2002 seems to be a landmark in the history of early language learning in France insofar as political discourses and initiatives were taken which gave languages a new dimension and placed them in the spotlight. Indeed, the same year, France decided to make Modern Foreign Languages a compulsory subject for schoolchildren, following many years of experimentation.

In 2005, a scheme for the renovation of language teaching was set up, the aim of which was to develop students' skills in FLs, in particular oral skills. In 2008, French Minister of National Education Xavier Darcos declared that every French student should master the English language, and in the same year, the Eurydice Network Report stated:

> Since the beginning of the 2007/08 school year, it has in principle become compulsory for all pupils aged 7 to learn a foreign language. At 14, only the pupils who have taken the option 'découverte professionnelle' (initiation to professional life) (6 hours per week), no longer learn two foreign languages as compulsory subject. (Eurydice Network, 2008, p. 30)

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a worldwide study conducted every three years, French students' fluency in oral and written skills in FLs, in particular English, has slightly progressed, but they remain far behind other European countries. French President Emmanuel Macron therefore stressed the need for French learners to master several foreign languages, a mastery which is necessary for the future of Europe.

In 2018, Chantal Manès-Bonnisseau, Inspector General of the National Education, and Alex Taylor, a polyglot British journalist and former teacher of English who has been living in France for over 20 years, wrote a report on language education in France. The aim of the report was to take stock of the situation of FLL in France and its findings were published in September 2018. The authors concluded that there was an urgent need to improve the level of French students in English and in at least one other FL, and they found that the major issue was the mastery of oral skills.

Their recommendations were to re-shape the language classrooms organisation so that children may learn FLs earlier and be immersed in classes where the language that is used is English, and to use popular culture (e.g. cartoons, TV programs) in order to arouse and

stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity. They also advised teachers to have a more positive attitude, pointing out that to learn, one needs more fun and less punishment.

4.4 EMERGING RECENT CRITICISM OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Over the past few years, there has been growing dissatisfaction with some aspects of the French education system. Among these, I have decided to highlight the following two: (a) the grading and evaluation system and its negative impact on learners and (b) the attitude of teachers.

4.4.1 The grading and evaluation system and its negative impact on learners

In order to better understand the shame that the participants in the present study experienced during their FLL journey, I will discuss the system of grading in France in some detail, as it contrasts sharply with the practice of grading/evaluation found in other European countries, and which may explain why the overwhelming majority of French students report being fearful of failure.

France used to be reputed for its high cultural and educational standards. However, the grading system, which typifies the French education system (i.e. grades are given on a scale from 0 to 20, 0 being when the work done is worst, 20 being when the work is excellent), has often been the subject of severe criticism for its toughness from a variety of psychologists, educators, writers and journalists, both in France and in other countries, who tried to explain that such a 0-20 scale is unfair and does not reflect the value of students and their capabilities (see Gumbel's book, *They shoot school kids, don't they?*, 2010).

The grading system is standardized throughout the country and across the different schools. Tests, assignments, exams, are all graded out of 20, and to pass, students have to obtain a 10 out of 20. Its detractors argue that such a system puts a lot of pressure on the individual and often results in students' low self-confidence, low self-esteem, and may be generative of a high level of anxiety, because the 0 mark, which is still widely used by

teachers in the current system, is very traumatizing for students, who think that it is not their work which is judged and evaluated as deficient, but it is themselves who are 'null' or worthless and won't be able to progress. This type of grading is also humiliating, as students are ranked from the worst to the best.

At primary school level, the system goes from 0 to 10, or letter grades (A to E) are used in some schools. Hardly anyone ever obtains a 20, or even a 19 or 18, and 0 or 'null,' is still widely used. The French word "nul" − meaning "zero" or "nothing" − is still largely used on students' copies or shouted at them in order to put them down and supposedly make them progress. Students progress to the next year of study if the combined average of their grades amounts to at least 10 out of 20. There is also a hierarchical system of distinction that is represented by 'acceptable' (*assez bien*), 'good' (*bien*) and 'very good' (*très bien*).

At the end of every trimester, students receive reports with their marks and teachers' comments on them. Grades and comments are often read out loud by the teachers when handing back copies. It is to be noted that the French government started to envision a possible change in the grading system in recent years, by converting from the current 0-20 to a 0-5 grading scale, but has not taken effect yet.

It is generally assumed that the existing French practice of grading aims more at sanctioning and punishing learners for their errors and failures than at encouraging and praising them for their progress, and it can be said that the prevailing classroom culture is a culture that discourages children and destroys their confidence by focussing on their errors, rather than helping them to overcome their difficulties and encouraging them to succeed. Hélène Hagège (2019) argued that:

> Obviously, the use of the terms "bad score", "bad student" and the corresponding implicit attitudes of teachers are probably not foreign to the exclusive logic of French schools, which leads more than 100,000 pupils to leave the school system each year without any qualifications. In addition, studies have shown that fear of error is related to learning difficulties, dogmatic thinking and violent behaviour. (p. 50)

There have been several reforms but they all failed at changing a system of sanctioning and criticizing which seems to be ingrained/entrenched in the French society. Some of these reforms even prompted strikes, protests and demonstrations. The French education system has a record of failures in Education reforms for a variety of reasons. One of them is that the French are reputed to be resistant/reluctant to change and the system of Education tends to be

impervious to major changes and seems to always bounce back into its former shape after each attempt at overhauling the whole system. In 1988, Weiler claimed forcefully that:

> There are few places […] where this resistance to change is more striking than contemporary France where, over a period of now almost 30 years, an enormous proliferation of reform proposals has more or less peacefully coexisted with an extremely limited degree of actual change in the education system. (p. 251)

It is interesting to note that the French educational system is renowned for its unreformability and the French are reputed for their taste for going on strike for any reason, which explains why the education system has been termed 'The Mammoth.' One of the reasons for this is that French unions protect forcefully the interests of teachers. In 2015 for instance, History and Language teachers went on strike to protest against the then Minister of National Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem's project to re-organize the language curriculum from September 2016. The project led to a strong criticism from a number of teachers, unions, French intellectuals and researchers.

It needs decades to implement reforms in France while in some other countries, it would need only a couple of years. Teachers are usually very conservative, but this is not specific to the teaching body, it is a characteristic/specificity of the French, who are generally resistant to change. In a visit to Romania in August 2017, President Macron insisted that France was "not a reformable country," and he concluded that "many have tried and failed, because the French hate reforms." In a discourse to the Queen of Denmark in August 2018, he overtly criticized the French, whom he called "the Gauls," and argued that the French were "resistant to change." Whenever the Ministries want to propose reforms, people (students, teachers) quickly go on strike and protest against the future reforms. Another reason why the reforms failed may be that the French national education system is centralized, highly hierarchized, and decisions about curriculum, school hours, allocation of finances, are decided by bureaucrats who are generally in Paris (*The Local*, 2016, n.p.).

The French system of education, and in particular the grading system, has often been severely criticized for its harshness and pitilessness on students. A number of papers and books have been published in order to debunk such a system which does not benefit the students. Peter Gumbel, a Paris-based American journalist and Professor at the School of Sciences Politiques in Paris, reinforces these ideas by saying in a newspaper article on *Why are French schools pupils so afraid of answering in class?* that "it [the education system] goes against everything we know today about effective educational practices, because it destroys kids' self-confidence" (*The Local*, 2018, n.p.). He gives the main reasons why,

according to him, the French educational system as it is today is generative of anxiety due to bad teaching practices:

> The risk is that they will be penalized for a wrong written answer: in other words, have marks deducted or, worse still, be mocked or humiliated in front of the class if they give an oral answer that is incorrect. Putting down children is unfortunately still quite deeply rooted in French teaching culture. (*The Local*, 2018, n.p.)

The system of grading has also been severely criticized by Alex Taylor. In an e-mail, he wrote to me:

> I did a report on improving language learning in France for the Minister of National Education and, having been a teacher myself in the 80's I was interested to see if the "taking marks off for mistakes" approach had changed in France. Things have got a bit better but it is so ingrained in the system that they don't realize it. It was number one of my recommendations to the Minister that they abandon the "if you make a mistake, we'll deduct a mark" approach. So happy to discuss this as my experience last year, in France, compared to other countries we visited for the report was very much in concurrence. (personal communication, February 1st, 2019)

In a recent newspaper article (*L'Est Républicain*, 2019), Taylor says that he "was very shocked to see the extent to which the French education system is based on punishing the fault" (p. 11, my translation). He concludes that:

> After ten years [of teaching], I couldn't cope any more to knock marks off for mistakes! It is totally different from the way I was taught foreign languages when I was in Great Britain, where the teaching was very positive, making faults didn't matter. (p. 11)

This may explain why the language education system in France has been struggling to produce learners who are able or willing/desirous to use the TL. The French education system is strongly exam and evaluation-oriented and still generally focused on structured learning, and traditional teaching techniques, such as rote memorization of grammatical and lexical items and drills persist in some schools.

Tests are frequent at school and school children will regularly have a couple of 'interrogations' or tests, planned or unexpected, the aim of which is often to check if they know their lessons well. France places a strong emphasis on memory-based learning at the detriment of imagination and creative thinking. These tests count in the students' final grades. While it might be hard to get an idea of the problem just from these statistics, Peter Gumbel maintains in a newspaper article *Why are French schools pupils so afraid of answering in*

class? (*The Local*, 2018) that there is an explanation for the French students' reluctance to respond: "French kids don't like to give answers if they're not sure they'll be right" (n.p.). He further underlines that the "risk is that they will be penalized for a wrong written answer: in other words, have marks deducted or, worse still, be mocked or humiliated in front of the class if they give an oral answer that is incorrect" (n.p.).

4.4.2 The attitude of teachers

A particular feature of the French system of education is the authority of teachers, who "don't regard childhood as an age of innocence but see it as an age of ignorance. Children must be set straight and corrected" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2003, n.p.). It is generally known that France's system of education is rigid, especially in subjects such as Mathematics, reading and writing, and one of the toughest systems around the world (Gumbel, *The Local*, 2016).

While researchers and pedagogues have been venting the merits of pair and group activities in the language classroom and of a learner-centred approach, French language classes are still widely teacher-fronted, thus limiting students' possibility for interaction with peers and teachers. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is an approach to FLL and FLT (Foreign language teaching) that lays emphasis on the importance of interaction and communicative competence rather than the mastery of lexical and grammatical structures, has not been applied widely throughout the country yet. Also, there is little supervision of pair or group work by teachers, who speak most of the time in class. The teacher is regarded as the ultimate authority, and competition between peers is encouraged.

Although hidden from view by the majority of teachers and instructors and students themselves, the practice of downgrading and humiliating is still a serious and widespread phenomenon in France's authoritarian education system. The extent of the problem is such within the country's schools that Gumbel, in his examination of French schools, makes an alarming observation. He reports in a newspaper article:

> For foreigners, one of the most striking aspects of the French school system is its sheer nastiness. Nursery schools are where you learn to sit down and shut up. Being creative is frowned upon. Making mistakes is unforgivable. The notion of positive reinforcement − that children will do better if they are encouraged − is long-established elsewhere but seems largely unknown here. Of course, there are exceptions: some teachers are nurturing and very good. But the pitiless nature of French schools is baked into the system. For example, a preferred course of action for children who are having trouble keeping up is to make them repeat the year. (*The Local*, 2016, n.p.)

He summarizes his ideas as follows: “stop being horrible to the kids” (n.p.), and he explains in another article, *A foreigner in the French education system*:

> I wrote this essay because I believe that France is missing a key element of what’s wrong with the school system, an element that is immediately apparent to any foreigner who comes into contact with it: the harshness of the classroom culture. It’s a culture you can sum up in three words: “t’es nul.” (“You’re worthless”). You hear these words all the time in France. (*La Péniche*, 2011, n.p.)

Gumbel describes this as a manner in which failure is highlighted so as to prevent it in the future. However, the consequences are that the majority of French students are terrified of failure, become less confident, and feel themselves inhibited by the stigmas set by their teachers. He further stresses that “the system’s goal is to fish out the ‘*elite*’ and wash away the rest, which is why exceptional work is taken with the highest regard and the rest are ignored or given no chance” (*La Péniche*, 2011, n.p.). Gumbel strongly argues that:

> One of my biggest difficulties has been how to translate a word that is a key to my analysis and characterization of French schools. It is the word *nul*. Its literal meaning is “zero” or “nothing,” and it is used frequently in French conversation, especially at school, to put something or someone down. *C’est nul*, children and teachers will say, “that’s useless;” *t’es nul*, “you’re an idiot,” or more painfully, *je suis nul*, “I’m stupid.” There are even exotic superlatives, such as *archi-nul* and *nullissime*. The word carries a sting in French that “dummy,” or “dunce” barely convey in English. (2011, n.p.)

In the same vein, Boulton, Chateau, Pereiro and Azzam-Hannachi (2008, n.p.), speaking about the way FLs are taught in France, argue that:

> In particular, the French school system focuses on language rather than learner, product rather than process, performance rather than mastery, extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation (Bernardini, 2001). Language is either right or wrong and the teacher is the ultimate expert on this; her role is to dispense that knowledge, while the learner is a passive unit to be taught, to memorise and reproduce knowledge. This is of course a caricature, but there may be relatively little space in traditional French educational culture for focus on the learner as an individual, for autonomy, and for the construction of knowledge in a personalised way compared to some other cultures. At the end of the day, the only question is, “how can I pass?” The common perception that a university, department or teacher in France has to have a high failure rate to be taken seriously is totally at odds with the Anglo-Saxon model.

Finally, Pierre Merle, a Professor at the Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres in Brittany, asked 500 of his students to fill in a questionnaire on their school memories. He was

so struck by the students' answers that he wrote *L'Elève humilié* [The humiliated student] (2005). The majority of the students reported having been "disgusted," "ridiculed," "discouraged," or "broken" by such or such teacher, whom they deemed to be "disagreeable," "nasty," "unfair," or "humiliating." The author's study corroborates findings by the first PISA study − *PISA 2000 Technical Report*, OECD (2002) − in which students in different European countries were asked to answer questions regarding their school life. A broad majority of the French students reported that they did not feel supported by their teachers, or that they felt abandoned, as compared with their European counterparts. It is therefore no wonder that the majority of French learners of FLs display a particularly strong fear of making mistakes and are not willing to take the risk of speaking the TL in their language classes, partly due to the attitude of teachers, which leads them into silence.

A dramatic consequence of teachers' attitude is the developing of school phobia, and several children and students of all age have reported having been or being school phobic and developed lasting fears of going to school due to the climate of harassment, perpetual competition and devaluation that often reigns in French schools. In 2016, a fiction entitled *Marion, Forever 13*, featured the case of a 13-year old adolescent student, Marion Fraisse, who committed suicide because she had been the object of repeated bullying, verbal and physical humiliation at school. Her case alerted the public opinion to the plight of hundreds of French students who experienced what the adolescent had been experiencing for years and her story prompted intense debate about the ways to make classrooms safe places. It has been found that 700,000 pupils are bullied each year in France. The country has been trying to develop awareness of bullying in schools and support for the victims. In 2014, the anti-bullying law was adopted, but it is said that France is still not dealing with this issue in an effective manner.

It is now generally acknowledged that the way students consider themselves may have a significant impact on their academic performances. Simply said, if they are happy and believe in their capacities, they will succeed more easily than if they are anxious and lack self-confidence. Barry Zimmerman, a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology at New York Graduate School and University Centre, has shown that students who believe in their capacities will be more engaged in their learning, succeed more than students who doubt their capacities, and engage more easily in self-regulated learning (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). It has also been shown that an educational system may have a significant impact on the personality of the individuals (Dahmann & Anger, 2014).

It is also worth noting that, contrary to some other countries (e.g. US), the French National Education has not implemented a system of evaluation of the teachers by their students who, as a consequence of getting no feedback, do not put themselves or their methods of teaching into question. However, teachers are evaluated by the Inspector of Education, and also by the Head of the school they teach in.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided a brief overview of language learning and teaching in France and explored the characteristics/specificities of France's language education system, with a particular focus on the grading and evaluation system, in order to better understand why such a large proportion of the country's learners feel reluctant to take part in communicative activities and volunteer to give answer. It has been shown that teaching approaches and the focus on what is wrong rather that what is good/better may severely inhibit learners' use of the TL. Also, humiliation may be used as a tool (a 'stick') for making students progress and work harder. This phenomenon, although still widespread, is voluntarily silenced. Its persistence has led an increasing number of researchers to dig deeper to understand this phenomenon. Successive reforms at developing students' communicative abilities have failed, and there seems to be a discrepancy between the realities of the classroom and the French government vision for language education and a significant gap between the fundamental principles of the French nation State and the principles driving the education system. Certainly, what unfortunately still often takes place in some classrooms in France does not chime with the hallowed national motto/principles of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.'

Although it is not generalized, the pervasiveness of humiliating and shaming practices within (language) classrooms has led to the creation of a teaching environment where the majority of the students feel, at best uncomfortable and unwilling to use the TL, at worst, devalued and downgraded, and generally underestimate their capacities for progress, all this potentially leading to self-fulfilling prophecies. Also, I would like to mention that, all these years, I have met with teachers who seem not to be desirous to put themselves or their methods of teaching into question.

Even if it goes beyond the confines of the thesis, I would like to conclude on the idea that the authority that is granted to teachers in France can also be found at home, as parenting is

quite authoritative. French kids are generally asked to respect rules to the letter and to obey from a young age, which has led a number of expats to notice that French children have usually good manners, as compared with their European counterparts (Nadeau & Barlow, 2003).

In a society where individuals' chances of climbing up the social ladder/escaping from their socio-economic background have been shown to be the smallest among 71 other countries (OECD, 2018), it can be argued that changing things will not be an easy task. However, it is clear that the education system is changing, and there is a growing awareness that students must be educated with a view to being prepared for their future, as it is the case in countries such as Finland or Denmark. Richard Descoings, former director of Grande Ecole *the Institute of Political Sciences*, described the whole French education system as "unfair, unequal and undemocratic" (cited in *The Guardian*, 2012, n.p.) and he underlines that French schools are "training generations of anxious youths, who worry about their future, feel treated like numbers [and] distrust one another and the system" (cited in *The Economist*, 2010, n. p.).

But, despite the attempts that have been made at changing the system, it is regrettable that French schools are generally not seen as places for thriving, and according to Gumbel again: "Putting down children is unfortunately still quite deeply rooted in French teaching culture" (*The Local*, 2018, n.p.), and he strongly argues that he has never met "a French person who says 'school was the happiest time of my life.'" (*The Telegraph*, 2010, n.p.)

I would like to end on a positive note. Recent studies (Frenchly, 2019) have shown that French students are making progress in the learning of FLs and in particular in English, and mainly in the understanding of *spoken* FLs. This is partly due to the practice of English on-line games. According to France's National Council for the Evaluation of the School System (Cnesco, 2019), France is one of the countries in which students are taught the highest number of FLs hours, which amounts to a thousand of hours at the primary and middle school altogether. The question of *how* FLs are being taught remains.

It is worth noting that the French have realized (at last) that it is better to start learning a FL from a young age. For years, there has been a strong and profoundly anchored assumption that the learning of another language generates confusion in the minds of young and developing brains. The idea that learning a FL would add to the difficulties that these young people are experiencing when learning their own mother tongue was tenacious. Recent research in the domain of neurosciences have interestingly shown that "there are temporal windows during which the neurons circuits display particular capacities" (Marti & Dehaene,

2017, n.p.). The French have also come to realize that the learning of a FL cannot be exclusively done within the confines of the language classroom.

By way of conclusion, another issue is that of the primary school teachers' confidence in their ability to initiate teach FLs. The Taylor and Manès-Bonnisseau report (2018) mentions that there is a significant number of primary school teachers who do not trust their capacities to teach FLs, because they say they do not master the basics of these FLs (p. 37).

Chapter 5

Methodology, research approach and procedures

"We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy, 1968, p. 5).

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will first offer a discussion on qualitative versus quantitative research by defining and comparing the two approaches and explain my own rationale and ideological assumptions for using a qualitative design for collecting data. Then I address the issue of research ethics. Finally, I describe the data collection and data analysis methods that were employed in the qualitative in-depth interviews.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGNS

5.2.1 Two complementary approaches: Qualitative and Quantitative

Conducting research on such a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon as shame necessarily requires that one reflect upon the appropriateness of the research method that will be used in order to explore the research topics. In the following sections, my aim is not to cover all the aspects of qualitative and quantitative designs, but to provide an overview of these research methods and to highlight some of their fundamental features before explaining the particular relevance of a qualitative approach to gathering data in my own study.

Many works have been devoted to characterizing the features which distinguish qualitative from other types of approaches and to highlighting their relative merits. In 1995,

Paul Atkinson warned against the polarisation of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms since one should see qualitative and quantitative approaches as something essentially not exclusive from each other, but rather as two complementary approaches because using both of these approaches provides researchers with a more comprehensive picture of a phenomenon through the triangulation of data (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

In the same vein, a number of scholars have been highly critical of using *only* quantitative means (e.g. questionnaire surveys) of data collection (Barcelos, 2003; Benson & Lor, 1999; Dufva, 2003) because questionnaires usually ask participants to choose from a series of pre-determined ideas and may lead them to select the 'right' answer (i.e. according to the 'social desirability bias,' the answer which portrays them in a favourable light or that they think the researcher expects from them).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is widely used in fields such as education, psychology, anthropology, marketing and in the social sciences. It enables researchers to create knowledge about new phenomena or yield novel interpretations of known phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and to establish relations that have not been highlighted before (Seipel & Rieker, 2003). This method of inquiry allows to do justice to all the diversity and richness of the human behaviour (Atkinson D., 2005) and welcomes "always-in-process, always-in-flux individuals-in-society and social situations that it attempts to study" (p. 63).

Thus, as expressed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17), "qualitative methods are appropriate in situations where one needs to *first* identify the variables that might later be tested quantitatively, or where the researcher has determined that quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation" (my emphasis). The same authors further argue that qualitative methods are "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification."

The features of qualitative designs are as follows: qualitative research is regarded as naturalistic, inductive, flexible (i.e. the direction of the study has the potential to change at any moment, new informants can be added according to the changing views in the research, and hypotheses can be formulated or old ones can be altered), it is cyclical, holistic, subjective and concerned with interpretation (Cassell & Symon, 1994; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Patton, 1990). It is sensitive to the context (Cassell & Symon, 1994; Patton, 1990) and relies on small numbers in order to thoroughly explore the uniqueness and labyrinthine, kaleidoscopic nature of individual cases. On the other hand, the features of quantitative research are as follows:

> It employs categories, viewpoints and models as precisely defined by the researcher in advance as possible, and numerical or directly quantifiable data are collected to determine the relationship between these categories and to test the research hypotheses. (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 14)

Quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into statistics, relies on large numbers and tends to achieve objectivity and generalization by the use of specific information-gathering tools such as standardised tests and statistical analysis. But it can be easily argued that questionnaire/survey data, which consist of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviations, give only a 'snapshot' of language learner intricacies and multifacetedness and of the complexities of the language learning process. In order to compensate for the weaknesses of each approach, some researchers, like Seipel and Rieker (2003), or Dörnyei (2003, 2007) have endeavoured to bridge the 'irreconcilable' gap between the two designs through the combination of the two approaches.

5.2.2 Rationale for choosing a qualitative design

The first step towards choosing an appropriate method of inquiry was to think through my goals and my intended outcome. The task was to examine the intimate experience of my participants as regards the learning of FLs, and in particular to assess whether they had been experiencing shame during their FLL journey, and if they did experience this emotion, how they had been dealing with it. My choice of the approach was in line with my conception of qualitative inquiry, which I regard as a way to "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3).

One of the most compelling reasons for opting for this method of inquiry was the idea that what was needed was an understanding of the *process* of language learning rather than of the *product* and of some cause-and-effect explanation for the emergence of the shame emotion. My purpose was therefore not to arrive at generalisations but to reach some "quality of what is being studied from the actors' point of view" (Atkinson D., 2005, p. 50) and I assumed that my research should be "maximally grounded in the everyday social world of those being studied" (p. 50).

My own choice of a qualitative-method design was guided by the following research topics:

- The main sources of foreign language classroom shame (FLCS)

- The consequences and manifestations of linguistic shame
- Learner characteristics and FLCS
- Shame and other emotions
- Reasons why learners succeed or fail to override the feeling of shame

The choice of the method was also guided by the uncharted and intricate nature of the research topic:

> *An uncharted territory*. The role of different learner characteristics has been largely validated by a variety of different studies, with motivation and anxiety being two of the most investigated psychological variables in SLA research, serving as significant predictors of performance and achievement in a FL (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Nonetheless, despite the fact that the coexistence of positive and negative emotions has long been acknowledged in the foreign language learning process, there is a dearth of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted to examine the impact of the negative emotion of shame on second language acquisition and use and more particularly in the instructional context of the foreign language classroom.
> Based on my own experience as a FL teacher, I decided to look for the ways in which shame may impact the FL learning process of French learners of English as a second language (ESL) in a vocational school and in a GRETA (public educational school for adults). Thus, the qualitative strand of my project was aimed at, first and foremost, *exploring* the psychological and emotional processes underlying the acquisition and use of a FL and more specifically at examining if and how the participants experienced shame and coped with this emotion during their learning process.
>
> *An intricate phenomenon*. A review of shame research in the domain of psychology (Chapter 2) provided me with some background knowledge on how to approach shame in SLA and guided me to the choice of the research method I should adopt to explore French language learners' shame. My resulting feeling was that such an intricate, multi-faceted and complex emotion could not be fully investigated by using quantitative methods, but rather by using a qualitative design. Accordingly, the approach applied in the current study will aim at broadening the depth of the investigation by means of semi-structured interviews.

To summarize, the main reasons for opting for a qualitative method approach to gathering data were centred on the idea that shame is an extremely abstract concept and is not

readily observable, and therefore data collection through the self-report measures of real learners of FLs was deemed to be the most appropriate to address the complexity, dynamicity and kaleidoscopic nature of this phenomenon.

5.3 DATA COLLECTION: COLLECTING DATA THROUGH QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS/NARRATIVES

The choice of a research approach is guided by the nature and aims of the research investigation. The main objective of my research was to explore the experiences of my participants as regards the learning of FLs and to listen to their voices and the meaning they attributed to these experiences. This involved that I should opt for a methodology that allowed for a thorough and detailed examination of the complexities involved in the learning of FLs and enabled to probe into questions of meaning and purpose.

Therefore, I intuited that a qualitative approach through the means of in-depth interviews would be an appropriate means of processing the multifaceted, kaleidoscopic and dynamic nature of language learners' experience and the multidimensional aspects of their individual endeavours, values, beliefs and choices.

Narratives collected through the means of conversations with learners have been regarded as a trustworthy source of information for some time and as a means of obtaining valuable insights into learners' perceptions of their experiences (Benson & Nunan, 2005). The narrative mode enables the researcher to arrive at a deeper understanding of the affective and psychological factors that may impact the learning of a FL.

In this research, I will understand narratives as a means of using the language in order to *construct* stories (Bruner, 1990) and organize individuals' experiences into stories. Narratives can also be envisioned as a means of defining and re-creating oneself through what Martínez-Roldán calls the "discursive construction of identity" (2003). Narratives can therefore be seen as a meaning-making activity in which individuals make sense of who they are and reflect on their past experiences and ascribe meaning to them (Casanave, 2005). In sum, "they [narrative approaches] can be useful to develop a more dynamic portrayal of learner characteristics in general" (Şimşek & Dörnyei, 2017, p. 65).

In this study, two types of interviews were used: the semi-structured individual interview and the focus group interview.

5.3.1 Individual interviews

The primary instrument used in qualitative research is the qualitative interview. Interviewing refers to a wide range of practices (structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, think-aloud protocols) and consists in *listening carefully* to others and "investigat[ing] participants' identities, experiences, beliefs, and orientations" (Talmy, 2010, p. 128), making sense of the mass of data provided by individuals. This qualitative approach allows for a deep analysis of shame to be carried out at the level of the individual and considers the learner from a situated, holistic perspective and, in line with "a person-in-context relational view" of the construct (Ushioda, 2009), has the potential to yield rich data which provide insights into learners' psychological, emotional experiences as well as into individual variations. In-depth interviews are conducive to probing into questions of meaning and purpose. This idea is beautifully summarized in Maxwell's following excerpt:

> Understanding the *meaning*, for participants in the study, of the events, situations and actions they are involved in and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences. I am using 'meaning' here in a broad sense to include cognition, affect, intentions, and anything else that can be included in what qualitative researchers often refer to as the 'participants' perspective [...] In a qualitative study, you are interested not only in the physical events and behaviours that are taking place, but also in how your participants in your study make sense of this and how their understanding influences their behaviour. (1996, p. 17, original italics)

These individual histories provide insights into, among other aspects, the emotional stance of French FL learners' trajectories as they offer their own explanations of the way they have learnt FL and how this learning has changed their self-perceptions. They include the students' 'baggage' (i.e. their learning experiences covering the past, present and even projections into the future), as well as the "antecedent condition of the learner" (Gorham & Millette, 1997), that is, all the psychological and affective variables that englobe learner goal orientations, their expectations of success, attitudes and values, and their self-concept.

The significant role of interviews is expressed by Seidman (1991, p. 3): "At the root of interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." In the same vein, Spradley explains the way interviews give access to the meanings individuals attribute to their lived experiences:

> I want to understand the world from *your* point of view. I want to know what *you* know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of *your* experience, to walk in *your* shoes, to feel things as *you* feel them, to explain things as *you* explain them. Will *you* become my teacher and help me understand? (1979, p. 34, my emphasis)

One could thus define qualitative interviewing as an appropriate way of understanding the experience of others as it clearly aims at gaining insiders' view of a particular issue. These interviews require a very active role from the interviewer/researcher who explores the lives of individuals thoroughly, and they must be regarded as "conversations with a purpose" (Webb & Webb, 1932, p. 130). This kind of research inquiry gives great importance to "participants' narrative reconstructions of aspects of their lives and experiences, such as the connection between their affective or emotional states or their identities and their experiences of language learning" (Duff, 2008, p. 133).

My personal inclination towards listening to people

As expressed by Dewaele (2005), "the [foreign language] learner is not only an object of scientific curiosity but also a crucial witness of his or her own learning process" (p. 369). Obviously, interviewing others requires that the interviewer/researcher be deeply interested in individuals' stories. Qualitative research suits my personality. Interviewing people has always been part of my life. I have always had a particular inclination and, I would even say, a passion for talking with others and listening to their stories and how they made sense of their experiences, and I have also discovered in myself a kind of 'gift' to elicit intimate information from the people I meet about all kinds of subjects, and I have never been daunted by sensitive issues such as a person's lack of success or their emotional experiences.

I am deeply interested in individuals' particular life stories, and acknowledge the value of narratives as sources of information about a particular subject, and, to the risk of appearing somehow presumptuous, I have always had a capacity for deep listening and understanding which "has profound implications for how one studies human beings" (Patton, 2015, p. 52). Accordingly, from a young age, I have interviewed many people in different places around the world, and every time felt the excitement and joy of being invited to listen to people's experiences and enter their inner world. I have enjoyed discovering that individuals are to be seen as multifaceted social beings. A particularly moving remembrance is in Germany in 1989, I was 21 then, when I interviewed people in the street to tell me about their feelings about what was taking place at the time, that is, the fall of the wall of Berlin, and, with a pen

and paper in my hand, I interviewed a Russian soldier who had been helping me to break the wall. I was not daunted by the reticence of some of these German people to answer some of my questions.

Last but not least, I am deeply convinced about the significance of Rogers' (1957) invitation to adopt an 'unconditional positive regard,' and 'empathy' with the people I interview, and my study has benefitted immensely from constant dialogues with my students, whose critical insights helped sharpen my thinking about the emotional and psychological aspects of FL learning.

The interview sessions I have conducted are, to some extent, and proportionately guarded, not unlike psychotherapeutic interviews (although their primary purpose is to obtain knowledge about a particular phenomenon), in which my role as an interviewer is to allow participants to speak as freely as possible while at the same time imposing limits and direction through questions. The participants in the study were therefore not regarded as mere means of gaining knowledge about the shame phenomenon but as 'flesh and blood' individuals whose experiences beyond the realm of the language classroom I took into consideration as well.

The conversational relationship

Interviews can be seen as an interactive process in which interviewee and interviewer *converse.* In this sense, the knowledge that is gained is co-constructed, thus illustrating Nunan and Choi's statement that "the opportunity for learners to tell their own stories, and the control that they have over those stories, is empowering" (2011, p. 228). Learners become active participants in the study as they are "no longer individuals who have research *done* to them. They are *collaborators* in an ongoing, interpretive process" (p. 228, my emphasis).

In order to allow topics and themes to emerge freely, my interview sessions were based on a mutual trust between the interviewer-researcher (myself) and the participants (the students), and they were conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. A ritual was established at the start of each interview session: I always went through a 'warming up' stage with the participants before the audio recorder was switched on.

This warming up stage consisted in reiterating the ultimate aim of the study (i.e. to make the life of students more comfortable) and the ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality (through the use of pseudonyms). I also thanked them warmly for volunteering to participate in the study and insisted that their insights were valued. I reiterated that they could stop the interview or the recording at any moment, for any reason. Opportunity was

given for interviewees to ask questions about the study. However, it is to be noted that these were not cognisant of the exact topic of my research, so as not to orient their answers.

Fully aware that interviewing in a qualitative approach is a meaning-making enterprise between the researcher/interviewer and the participant, and that the quality of the interviews is dependent on the relationships between the storyteller/the respondent and the listener (in the case of the present study, the researcher, whom I will refer to in the interviews as 'D'), I spent some time establishing good rapport and developing relationships based on confidence and mutual understanding with my students before interviewing them and I was deeply convinced that this closeness would prove invaluable at the analysis stage and that it would help me interpret some aspects of my data.

Another reason why I proceeded this way was that, when discussing such a sensitive issue as shame, building good rapport with the prospective participants and developing a sort of intimacy/closeness with them is vital as it may allow them to reflect, open up and describe their inner feelings and articulate their concerns more willingly and honestly. Having nurtured good relationships with the students also encouraged them to provide me with more nuanced, detailed and thorough data. The relation of confidence and trust that I built with my students was particularly useful during the interview sessions, and, as will be seen, it fed into the analysis and presentation of my data as well.

Interview protocol

My understanding and perception of the educational situation in France, shaped by my 30-year experience as a language teacher in different institutional settings, enhanced my sensitivity to the circumstances French students of FL work in and helped me conduct my interviews in an efficient and respectful manner.

The interview sessions − which were 15 to 45 minutes long − were based on the following characteristics:

1) A fluid and free conversation between me − the interviewer/researcher in the study − and the interviewee.
2) The questions in the interviews were both prepared and spontaneous. They were formulated in a different way in the course of the same interview in order to make sure that I understood the message the interviewee wanted to convey and that I cleared up inconsistencies in answers. The interviews included leading/topical questions, probes, follow-up questions and closing questions. The topic was regarded as exhausted when

(a) the questions asked had been used at least twice, (b) the interviewee talked about the same experiences over and over, and (c) new data did not emerge anymore and there appeared to be nothing new to explore.

3) Behavioural observations: the observation of external expressions of emotions and paralinguistic information was part of the interview process in this study. Some of the participants re-experienced the emotion of shame and other emotions when they were relating the experience that elicited them. This re-experiencing of shame and correlates was expressed in terms of gestures and facial/phenomenological manifestations and bodily postures that I was able to recognize thanks to my literature review on the topic. I was particularly alert to expressions of (dis)stress and recorded them in my notes or added them in my verbal records whenever they occurred. I systematically offered the interviewee to stop or postpone the interview whenever I felt that the recall/remembering and recounting of shameful experiences was too painful.

Follow-up interviews

Whenever it was felt that the topic was not exhausted, and provided that the participants agreed on the principle, I interviewed them a second time, with the questions asked being shaped by what had been said in the earlier interview. Follow-up interviews enabled me to further explore particular issues, to clarify or elaborate on some points which had emerged from earlier interviews and to check consistency in accounts. See Table 5.3 in Section 5.6.

5.3.2 Focus group interviews

I have also used focus group interviews as a means of collecting data for the present study. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) have interestingly defined focus group interviews as moments where "participants are encouraged to talk to another, asking questions, exchanging anecdotes, and commenting on each other's experiences and views, and thus generating data through interaction" (p. 4).

Focus group interviews are flexible, economical and generate rich data (Tynan & Drayton, 1988), they are convenient for the participants since they allow them to share ideas in a convivial atmosphere. Finally, they enable to "tap a different realm of social reality from that revealed by one-to-one interviews" (Sim, 1998, p. 351) and to bring up issues in a short

time. However, focus group interviews require leadership, a good understanding of group dynamics and interpersonal skills.

Six focus group interviews were conducted from January 2015 to June 2016. There were 5 to 14 participants in each group, and a total of 55 participants. Participants in the focus group were selected on the ground that I felt that they would provide useful information regarding the topic of shame and would be comfortable to talk with each other. Focus group interviews were used in order to see if the same kind of issues emerged as in the face-to-face interviews.

Given that there were several participants in the group, sensitive issues had to be handled with utmost care, and the respondents were asked to keep confidential everything that was revealed during the sessions. It is to be noted though that I have not written down in the thesis the findings of the focus group interviews because they covered the same issues as those found in the face-to-face interviews and the most sensitive and personal experiences of shame were narrated only in the face-to-face interviews.

5.4 ETHICAL CONCERNS

Going and asking people to speak about their experience, and then looking in detail at what they tell you is "the most intrusive and ethically charged of social research approaches" (Richards, 2015, p. 16). Any qualitative research should be guided by the principle that it implies "researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena" (Birch, Miller, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2002, p. 1) and consequently, no one should be harmed in the process. The voices of research participants must be explored in a most respectful manner. Dealing with such a sensitive issue as shame required that I should make sure that the way the research was conducted protected the well-being of my participants and that the research would benefit them. I was fully aware of the potential sensitivity of the topic under study and that asking certain questions could cause a certain degree of discomfort or uneasiness. Disclosure of painful language learning experiences could lead to the interviewees' feelings of distrust and vulnerability and cause or increase their anxiety. Research ethics approval forms were obtained from the School of English, and these emphasised that the opportunity to participate in the study was strictly on a voluntary basis and participants were allowed to withdraw at any time.

Having in mind that emotional issues might surface at any time during the interviewing process and hurt the dignity of my respondents, my main concerns were (1) to remain as unobtrusive as possible, (2) to know how to react if the interview touched sensitive issues, to the point that the interviewee(s) would refuse further inquiry.

I was sometimes faced with an ethical dilemma: to go on interviewing and try to obtain more insight into the topic investigated or to respect the respondents' feeling of uneasiness/distress. That is, should I − following the benefit/risk principle − consider it more important to obtain knowledge than to respect the interviewee's desire for privacy? I was always careful to assess respondents' emotional states and whenever the participant showed particular annoyment at being questioned about a particular topic − for instance, whenever I could notice uneasy smiles or a shift in body posture or even gaze avoidance − I offered him/her to have a break or to stop the interview straightaway.

Finally, it is noteworthy that I received ethical approval for the study from the School Ethics Office at the University of Nottingham (see Appendix A including the template of the Informed Consent Form signed by the participants).

The issue of deception

Another ethical issue which I was very much concerned about from the start was that of *deception*. Deception includes a voluntary disguising of the exact purpose or nature of an inquiry on the part of the interviewer/researcher. The information which is withheld from the participants may be total or partial. The question of whether or not to give the participants complete information about the research topic is highly controversial.

Congruent with Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) argument, I thought that it was important "not to prejudice the research by signalling, in the framing of the information, [my] expectations" (p. 86). So, the interviewees were blind to the exact purpose of the study and I simply said that it was about the process of L2 learning and the ways to improve learning and teaching and make learners and teachers feel more comfortable in the language classroom.

As I wanted the topic of linguistic shame to emerge naturally in the students' accounts of their FL learning experience, my PhD study was referred to as a research investigating students' feelings about FL learning. To my pleasure, the topic of shame emerged naturally and the overwhelming majority of the participants talked freely about their FL-related shame, without me having to steer the conversation in the direction I wanted.

The issue of translation

Once the interview data are collected, a researcher can be faced with what I regard as the important ethical issue of translating the participants' life stories and experiences as accurately as possible. The process of translation was taken very seriously and was particularly time-consuming because I wanted to convey the participants' expressions, words and concepts in a way that their meaning would not be 'lost in translation.' The difficulties in translating reside in the danger of not representing what the interviewees say in an accurate/fair manner, resulting in a loss of/reduction in the validity and trustworthiness of the qualitative study.

Translating is a challenge especially when concepts are different from culture to culture and involves interpretation and awareness of meaning differences across languages. In the case of "shame" in particular, as the word tends to be overused in the common parlance in French, as compared with its use in the English language, it was regarded as indispensable to carefully scrutinize the use of the term to make sure that it was not used instead of other related concepts such as embarrassment, humiliation or anxiety.

Finally, it is worthy of note that there is a certain semantic and conceptual difference in the word/concept of shame between the French and the English usages, with talking about shame being more ingrained in the French culture. It is to be noted that, whenever I had some difficulties or doubt about the translation of an interview passage, I asked the collaboration of my former supervisor, Alex Boulton, an English Professor of English and Applied Linguistics at the University of Nancy. His help in matters of translation has been invaluable.

5.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE PARTICIPANTS

5.5.1 The research sites

At a very early stage of this study, the question arose regarding the type of sample I was going to investigate. Due to the complexity and multifacetedness of the research topic under investigation, I assumed that choosing several different samples of participants would help me provide a thicker description and understand better the L2-related shame phenomenon

because this variety would provide insight into a wide range of L2-related shame experiences in France. Contending myself with only one category of participants would certainly have provided a partial understanding and a limited vision of the role of shame in L2 learning. The sampling strategy therefore ensured that learners of varying levels of proficiency were heard.

1) A vocational school: a unique and unexplored setting

In the first stage of sampling, I chose my first sample purposefully and wanted to include in my study *only* the individuals whom I intuitively felt had experienced or were still experiencing shame during their language learning journey. The first place I gathered data from was an Apprentice Training Centre (also termed 'vocational school') in the north east of France. This sample (eleven students) was also chosen for reasons of convenience (I had easily access to the participants since I was their English teacher and spent extended periods of time at this site). I was able to secure eleven participants without difficulty.

The population, which to my knowledge has never been investigated before, is composed of apprentices (aged 16 and over) who combine on-the-job learning and off-the-job acquisition of skills and knowledge. The training centre works in partnership with local companies and apprentices obtain recognised qualifications in different professions such as pastry chefs, chocolatiers, bakers, butchers, beauticians, hairdressers and dental prosthetists.

The English courses are compulsory but the oral exam is not mandatory for some of them and they have English classes only one to three hours every month. Some of the participants reported having learnt other foreign languages in addition to English, most often German (due to the closeness of the German border) and Spanish, and, due to the fact that the region is one in which different waves of migrants have come to live, a few Italian or Arabic and Turkish. Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), the students' level of English knowledge is between A1 and B1, with a few at B2 and C1.

Most of the students in the present study were early school-leavers who had lost contact with the English language for several years. They define themselves as 'failing' or 'non-successful' students in English learning and generally bring negative attitudes to the foreign language classroom or do not see the usefulness of the language courses. Some of them have learning difficulties, including dysorthographia, dyscalculia and dyslexia. For a lot of reasons which I am not going to give here, many of them show some dislike or even mistrust for school.

The students chose apprenticeship or vocational training in order to learn a trade, either out of passion for a particular work or because they were 'forced' to work for subsistence need or simply because they were not star students and were shunted off into an educational siding/dead end (i.e. apprenticeship/vocational training is often seen as a last resort/second-best, but things started to change recently and apprenticeship is no longer seen in a negative light). An apprenticeship may last 2 to 4 years, depending on the type of profession and qualification. There are female-dominated classes such as Hairdressers, and male-dominated classes such as Butchers and Bakers.

The specificity of this population lies in its heterogeneity as far as academic standards are concerned: most of the students have a lower qualification than the *Baccalauréat*. A few of them have the *Baccalauréat* or a higher qualification such as a technician diploma (*BTS*), a *Bachelor's degree* or a *Masters' degree*. They are taking the '*Brevet Professionnel'* (professional certificate), the '*Bac Professionnel'* (vocational Baccalaureate), or the '*Brevet de Maîtrise'* (certificate of competency). They have spent between 4 to 10 years studying English. Some characteristics of the students in the present study are worth mentioning here. The majority of the students generally exhibit some lack of concentration and involvement in their classes and particularly in the English course, which may be due to the following:

1) They are fully involved/implicated in their on-the-job training, and thus they may not perceive the relevance of (language) studies.
2) Some of them may have experienced, at one time or another or repeatedly, failure in academic learning and in particular in language learning.

The interviews I have conducted with these students show that the majority of them had little interest in language learning and suggest that they suffer from a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, especially in *speaking* the FL. Due to the fact that they are adolescents or young adults, they may be more sensitive to criticism from others or afraid of being ridiculous, and are constantly worried that their classmates might be more competent in language learning than themselves and consequently their self-image may be threatened. Notwithstanding the fact that some of these students do recognize English as a universal subject to be taught from an earlier age, they show little interest in education in general and in language learning in particular and attend courses just to fulfil an exam requirement. However, they are skilled workers and some of them are amongst France's best craftsmen ('Meilleurs Ouvriers de France' or 'Meilleurs Apprentis de France'), which are the most prestigious awards in craftsmanship.

The main objective of the English teacher is to give them the basic communication tools to answer their immediate needs (an examination at the end of the second year) and their future needs (their job). In order to maximize learners' participation in the L2, the teacher selects materials relevant to the students' interests/needs and experiences (i.e. linked with the learners' fields of trade), encourages role-plays or other interactive activities and focuses on meaning rather than form.

2) A public educational school for adults (i.e. GRETA)

So far, I have been talking about the sample at the vocational school. For reasons I am going to detail in the lines further down, another population took also part in my research. The sample that was investigated was students at a GRETA. 'GRETAs' are public educational centres which are grouped together to offer people training programs in different field. The population is mainly composed of unemployed and jobseekers, adults and adolescents of diverse educational and social backgrounds, but also of a few retired people aged 60 and over, who had never learnt English or had stopped learning it for decades. It is to be noted that a few of them come from foreign countries and have other languages than French as their mother tongue. The students' level of English is between B1 and B2.

With a view to obtaining knowledge from a variety of learners, I deliberately chose this sample as participants in the present study because I wanted to target a different sort of language learners from those in the apprentice training centre/vocational school. In fact, I assumed that if they had all come from the same educational sector, the study would not have done justice to and reflected the kaleidoscopic nature and multifacetedness of the human experience. My choice of this sample was based on the following criteria:

- They demonstrated a particularly high level of motivation to learn English as a foreign language. Learning English was not mandatory for them, they had no examination to take, and so I assumed that they would bring a new insight into my study.
- They had a different and more positive experience of FL learning than the students at the vocational school, and none of them brought negative attitude to the language class. On the contrary, they exhibited an exceptional interest in the English-speaking world and in the language.
- Those of the students who were retired had no pressure to be good at English and said they were coming to my classes for the pleasure. In this sense, I felt that they could

have a different approach to English learning since their experience was not tinted with negative L2-related episodes.

- I have been teaching at GRETA for 10 years and have established an especially good rapport with these students.

5.5.2 The participants

The research context was chosen for practical reasons, since most of the participants came from my own teaching environment, but also because I was desirous to understand the way French students approached FLL. I also approached individuals outside the schools where I was teaching, who were just as open and receptive to my research project and proved to be some of my best informants. Virtually all of the participants were receptive to my requests for interviews and did not express any kind of reluctance or distrust. On the contrary, and to my pleasure, they showed an exceptional eagerness and pride to participate in my study, and reported being excited about the idea of sharing their ideas and feelings about their language learning experiences.

The sample that was investigated in the present study was composed of miscellaneous participants, most of them apprentices in a vocational school, but also secondary school, university students, a school principal, working mums, unemployed people and a football player. The participants were of different gender, age, nationality and ability. The sample inhabited a very wide L2 proficiency spectrum. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), their level of competence ranged from A1 (Breakthrough, that is, basic user) to C2 (Complete mastery, that is, proficient user).

As already said in an earlier section, the sampling procedure was such that it included a number of participants who were not in mainstream education. These students had less than optimal circumstances for learning languages (some of them had only one hour of English every month) and followed unusual learning paths. It could be also said that a few of them carried with them heavy emotional baggage, and a long history of personal failures and struggles, family breakdowns and academic setbacks.

To a certain extent, for this kind of learners, who were no star students, FLL represents more of a face-threatening activity than for the majority of learners who are usually found in the research literature. What is also worthy of note is that, in a country which tends to lay greater emphasis on the core school subjects such as French and mathematics, and to devote

less time to imaginative and creative subjects, manual jobs like the ones most of those students were doing − butchery, bakery, pastry, chocolatery, hairdressing, aesthetics, or dental techniques − tend to be still seen in a not so favourable light as more 'scholarly' works and are somehow a tangible sign of academic failure, especially for those of the apprentices who did not actually *choose* this job as a genuine vocation but 'could not do anything else' because of their lack of academic success.

Also worthy of note is that this sample was a normal language learner sample in which more individuals from the fringes were represented than in a usual applied linguistics study. This specificity was very interesting for the uncovering of the shame issue and made the shame-related messages more powerful and easier to emerge. To summarize, this special sample allowed me to tap into feelings and emotions that a normal study would normally not achieve because it included a number of 'unusual'/out of the mainstream education students.

The particular respondents in the study were chosen at the end of the first semester of 2013 because they displayed three characteristics I was looking for: (1) most of them had negative feelings and emotions *in* and *about* their English classes and acknowledged to be reticent to speak the target language in the classroom; (2) they reported to have had motivational ups and downs during their FL learning process; and (3) as the overwhelming majority of these students were 'mature,' I intuitively felt that they would be able/desirous to reflect upon their experience and motivational disposition, talk about the trajectory of their motivational changes and express their affective states all along the process of FL learning. The interviews started in December 2013 and ended in September 2016.

It is noteworthy that, out of the 34 interviewees, I selected 19 for the reason that the others did not report having experienced shame during their FLL journey. Out of the 19 I selected (see Table 5.1**)**, I decided to keep the data coming from four participants on the grounds that their FLL journey was very rich and these participants were able to describe in depth of details the emotions they had been experiencing during their FLL journey. It is also worth mentioning that these four participants provided particularly rich data and embodied the key issues and patterns which I wanted to highlight, and I decided that the most effective way of making my point was through presenting the data coming from these four case studies.

TABLE 5.1

19 shame-prone participants' characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years of English study	Level of proficiency	Place of interview(s)
Jacques	17	M	6	Low	CFA
Lucie	42	F	7	Intermediate	Home
Paul	20	M	9	Low	GRETA
Axel	21	M	8	Low	CFA
Maria	20	F	8	Low	CFA
Emilie	22	F	10	Intermediate	GRETA
Claire	13	F	4	Intermediate	Home
Pierre	20	M	8	High	CFA
Mélanie	34	F	8	Intermediate	Home
Elodie	17	F	5	Intermediate	Home
Annelise	23	F	8	Intermediate	CFA
Gabriel	20	M	8	Intermediate	CFA
Maximilien	20	M	7	Low	CFA
Linda	15	F	Native speaker	High	Home
Charlotte	22	F	7	Low	CFA
Clémence	21	F	9	Intermediate	CFA
Marc	21	M	7	Low	CFA
Nadia	39	F	7	Intermediate	Public Place
Robert	19	M	6	High	CFA

However, useful data were also generated from the other participants. The thesis therefore also includes excerpts which complement and extend the insights gained from the four focal participants. Please refer to Table 5.2 below for more information about the background and the characteristics of the focal participants:

TABLE 5.2

The four interviewees' most significant characteristics

Prototypical Participant pseudonym	Age	Gender	Background	Shame-related episodes
Linda	15	F	A secondary school girl. L2 English, L3 German, L4 Spanish. Her first years of life spent in the US.	Strong L2 self. One single acute episode of shame in L2 classroom, which she overcame through powerful visualisation of her past and future successful L2 self.
Lucie	42	F	A working mum who has been dreaming of going to Australia since her childhood, and is actively planning to go to Australia on a family trip soon. Committed to re-learning English to go to Australia. L2 English.	Used to be humiliated and to feel shame at school/secondary school. Powerful vision of her future successful L2-user self abroad.
Maria	20	F	A dental technician trainee. L2 German, L3 English.	An unsuccessful female learner, who shows lack of self-confidence and a general feeling of worthlessness. A history full of humiliation and repeated shame episodes. A proneness to feel shame in a variety of situations.
Annelise	23	F	A pastry chef and chocolatier. Very desirous to progress. L2 German, L3 English.	Many instances of shame in her narrative.

5.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The main objective of this study was to assess French students of English-as-a-foreign-language experiences of shame, to inquire into the workings of English class shame and to gauge how importantly this phenomenon influenced their learning experience and impaired their future investment in FL learning.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I obtained agreement from my principals to conduct my study in their schools. I explained the purpose and potential usefulness of the interviews to the students, and made it clear that there was no good or bad answer. Due to the particularly sensitive nature of the research subject, the participants were blind (except for two, the school principal and the football player) to the exact purpose of my research and therefore they were

asked to simply share their language learning experiences with me (with a focus on English), with an aim to making the learning of a FL more comfortable.

The main reason why I chose not to disclose the exact topic of my study was that I wanted the participants to bring up the issue during the course of the interviews. Letting the topic of shame emerge naturally in their personal accounts of their language learning experience meant that the data obtained would be more trustworthy and not polluted by my own bias. For reasons already mentioned, the participants were not required to give their names, and were promised confidentiality, as I was the only person to have access to the data. They were informed of the procedures and that their identity would not be disclosed in the reporting of the research findings.

The one-on-one interviews were carried out in French and lasted between 15 to 45 minutes. They were audio recorded and were conducted in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, with me being alert to any sign of uneasiness and/or embarrassment on the respondents' part. They included a few circumscribed, pre-established basic questions to obtain background information (e.g. number of years of English learning, first FL, mother tongue) and to establish rapport with the participants. It also included a number of open questions. Towards the end of the interviews, the questions were more detailed and focused, aiming at funnelling the discussion in one direction and at narrowing the topic with a few leading questions to ensure that the required subjects were covered. In some cases, the participants were asked to rephrase certain aspects which I felt were not clear or elaborated enough.

I wrote down my initial insights, feelings, ideas and understanding as well as all the cues (e.g. participants' body gestures, hesitations or uneasiness) immediately after conducting the interviews, that is, when the details were still fresh in my memory. This process of recording allowed me to reflect on the data at a very early stage of my research and to assess the characteristics of each participant.

The following Table 5.3 mentions the number of interviews, their duration and dates, and provides information about the follow-up interviews of the 4 focal participants.

TABLE 5.3

Focal participants' interview details

Focal participants' pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Number of interviews	Total duration	Dates of interviews
Linda	15	F	3	121 min	Jan 2016 – July 2016
Lucie	42	F	4	139 min	April 2014 – Sept 2016
Maria	20	F	4	115 min	Dec 2013 – June 2016
Annelise	23	F	2	149 min	Jan 2014 – Feb 2015
Total			12	524 min	

5.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis and interpretation of the data started while the details of the interviews were still fresh in my memory and a preliminary analysis gave me the opportunity (1) to assess the importance of certain themes and generate new concepts and (2) to go back and forth constantly between the data obtained and the theory/literature on the topic. It also allowed me to decide which interviews were informative enough to justify the work of producing a proper transcription.

The analysis of the data was done in two steps. The *first step* consisted of familiarising myself with the data, transcribing them and reading them several times, making brief notes, identifying keywords, highlighting important points with highlighter pens. I immersed in the data, re-listened to the tapes, and looked minutely at my field notes. The process of transcribing was very interesting as it allowed me to pay close attention to details I had not noticed in the course of the interview sessions. The dynamic nature of my study required that I should constantly go from the data collected, to my field notes, and to the literature again, until a kind of 'balance' was reached.

To my surprise, the overwhelming majority (i.e. 19 out of 34) of the interviewees' narratives revolved principally around the topic of 'shame' and other related emotions, such as humiliation or embarrassment. Most interviewees related shame episodes, from relatively minor to more severe shame experiences. I therefore discarded all the accounts which did not deal with 'shame' and its associates.

A thematic coding analysis was the *second step* of the data analysis. In the first part of the thematic coding analysis, I translated the interviews verbatim, including hesitations, pauses, as well as the participant's emotional reactions (e.g. giggles, gaze avoidance, blushing, intonation, stress on particular words, etc.) in order to capture the very essence of what the participants expressed. I wrote initial notes on general patterns and meanings that were emerging. The clerical process of translating was very tedious and time-consuming, yet it gave me the advantage of becoming familiar with my data.

Using different highlighter pens, I underlined recurrent words, expressions and phrases in the participants' stories and grouped them into categories and themes associated with the research topic of the study. I also looked at the commonalities and differences across participants (Gibson & Brown, 2009) to identify overarching patterns and possible links between learner types. During this phase, I read a lot on the topic of shame and other related constructs in psychology. Initial categorising and grouping were modified and/or refined and new categories were created as new themes emerged.

This second step of the data analysis involved an interpretive rather than a purely descriptive approach to the findings with the aim to identify the role L2-related shame episodes might have played in French language learners' experience of FL learning. It is worthy of note though that there was some overlap amongst the categories and themes and that categorizing and analysing entail a certain degree of subjectivity, which means that another researcher might have categorised an instance in a different way.

The themes which emerged from the data were investigated against the research literature in the domains of psychology and language learning theories and according to the research topics. Just to give an example, it became clear that the broad themes of 'vision,' 'emerging/changing identities,' self-beliefs and 'Ideal/Possible L2 Selves' would be useful in interpreting my data. Each broad theme was then submitted to a more detailed analysis which resulted in distinguishing specific categories under each theme (e.g. self-perceived competence, fear of negative evaluation). I also looked for trends, similarities and differences within and across individual cases.

Research journal

Because I wanted to make my hesitations, doubts, setbacks, opinions and progress a visible part of the research process, I decided to keep a research journal which would help me in the writing up of my study. This journal was used to document my personal thoughts and

concerns, and to reflect on the research process and progress rather than a means of collecting data *per se*.

It reflected the ongoing, iterative and emerging nature of the interpretation of my data and it also allowed me to write down, immediately after the interview had taken place and was transcribed, all the unspoken details, paralinguistic and kinaesthetic features and cues of the interview sessions such as the participants' reaction to a particular question or his/her bodily posture, his/her uneasiness, throat clearing, gaze avoidance, as well as the possible contradictions in his/her narrative(s). This reflective enterprise led to my becoming more aware of my own approach towards the narratives and it became a "sense-making activity on its own" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 35).

Chapter 6
Data analysis:
Burdened by shame

"Shame, depart, thou art an enemy to my salvation!" (John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678, p. 73).

6.1 MARIA'S STORY

The section below deals with the data generated from the individual interviews with a 21-year old French female participant, who will be called Maria. Maria's testimony in the following sections will show how early repeated, unprocessed and unrepaired experiences of shame may take on a powerful life of its own as chronic shame and will illustrate the role of interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors in the arising of a shame-prone personality. It underlines the way this participant has battled all these years to recover from her legacies of shame-related trauma and constructed her self/personality around core chronic shame, and how this noxious emotion developed in several walks of her life, including the learning of a foreign language.

6.1.1 Maria's background

Maria is a 20-year old single woman at the time of our first interview. She is one of my students at the vocational school, is studying dental prosthesis and has a part-time job as a dental technician trainee. She is shy and introvert/withdrawn and seems extremely taciturn. She always sits at the back of the classroom, and appears to be reluctant to socialise with her classmates. I also noticed that she seemed to be mentally absent from some of the courses. Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), and despite a high number of years of English study (twelve years), her level of English is A1, that is, she hardly possesses the basic skills to communicate and exchange information in a very simple

way and understand very simple answers. But what struck me most during the classes is that she displays a higher level of anxiety about using English in the classroom than most of her peers, and an apparently lower than average motivation for learning the TL.

English is Maria's second FL (German being her first). I taught her English for a duration of three years, for four hours every month, and interviewed her four times in three years. The interviews covered a period from December 2013 to June 2016, lasted 115 minutes altogether and the last interview took place towards the end of the final year, in order to roundabout the data and confirm the pattern obtained from the first interviews. The interviews were conducted one on one, and took place at the vocational school. It has been my privilege to discuss with her the role of chronic shame in her life, and about the potential damage of repeated shame experiences on her psychological and emotional well-being as well as on the learning of another language.

It is to be noted that, while at the beginning stages of the interviewing process she proved to be rather reluctant to disclose her shame-related experiences, and seemed to be on her guard, as time went by, and with each meeting, my relationship with her became closer, and our exchanges became less constrained by the research interview format, allowing for the disclosing of more personal and long-concealed information. Maria's shame experience was so painful that the exploration of this construct required that each of us be present to the other and entirely engaged in the moment of the interview and, as an interviewer, I had to provide a safe enough environment to talk shame freely and to become an 'expert' at finding the ways to connect with her underlying chronic shame.

Finally, although she volunteered to take part in my study, she was one of the interviewees who proved to be particularly moved when remembering their FLL journey and the emotional experiences associated with it. The emotion was palpable in the interviews to the point that I had to interrupt them on several occasions.

6.1.2 Initial shame-generating episodes

In the course of the second interview, when talking about her FLL journey, Maria seemed to be flooded with particularly overwhelming painful memories and used the term 'shame' no less than six times, and a cognate, 'humiliation,' three times, without me having to guide her, which reveals how importantly these emotions featured in her life as a language learner. There is also in the data set a plethora of closely related and overlapping concepts regarding shame,

such as anxiety, feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, incompetency, or embarrassment. Her recollection of her first steps with English learning is not a happy one, and she says the memories of the first encounter with this language are "*as sharp and vivid, as if it happened yesterday*."

What is particularly interesting in the following quote is that Maria locates her L2-related disinterest in English in the first courses with her first English teacher and she identifies the relational affective responses with this teacher and the reflected appraisals as being at the origin of her disinvestment from English learning. As she reports:

> It all started with Mr X, my first English teacher. He was also the director of our school. I remember he was rather old, perhaps nearing the final years of his teaching career. I think, when your first contacts with the foreign language are [hesitates]… rotten, it's for ever, it won't change. I had a very very bad start with English, in fact, I came to hate this language, and it is still painful today! These first encounters with this language left an indelible imprint on my memory, it has damaged my learning of English. I gave up.

What I found particularly intriguing was that Maria was aware that shame had been damaging her life for many years and made her FLL journey a particularly taxing endeavour. More particularly, she insists that it was the repetition of shameful and humiliating experiences which was conducive to her current personality. She remembers:

> I have been aware that something was wrong with my life. I think the feeling I had in a lot of situations, I feel that the way I was shamed, I was always on the lookout for not making mistakes. The recurrence of humiliation episodes has shaped my personality. I feel that it is the repetition of humiliations that led me to fear shame all the time.

Also noticeable in the data is the recurrence of terms belonging to the same family of emotions, that she uses to depict her character, such as 'shy,' 'introvert,' or 'embarrassed,' and she has a wealth of code words for shame to describe the way she feels in the language class: "*I have always felt extremely uneasy*," "*backward*," "*foolish*," and "*inferior to the others*." The following extract illustrates this well:

> When I was in the classes, I felt like I was so uncomfortable. I always compared myself to the others, who I thought, and still think, did much better than I did. And it was especially so in the English classes, where I felt…backward, behind the others, I made a fool of myself whenever I was forced to go out of my comfort zone. In particular with this accent.

During our exchanges, I noticed somatic cues, and verbal, nonverbal and paralinguistic cues, like a stammering voice, Maria's head tilting down, or her avoiding my gaze, and tears would emerge more often than not, revealing the intensity and pervasiveness of this emotion, which may wreak havoc even years later. Maria remembers that she has "*never been a smart student at school*," and all of her classes seem to have been tinted with distressing memories, but it is the English classes whose memory evokes Maria's most alive pain, even when the events took place years before. The remembrance of this time is particularly painful:

> I was not a good student, kind of disinterested in what was going on at school. But I think that where I felt most uncomfortable was in the English classes. Many bad memories are associated with this language. When I think about it [pause], I can only remember the bad experiences of humiliation, embarrassment and stress, which were numerous. And remembering all this makes me feel bad.

In the third interview, Maria embarks − with particular precision and vividness − on an explanation of her deep-seated fear of and unwillingness to speak English, of her lack of interest in the subject, and the analysis of the data clearly suggests the role of significant others, including family members, teachers and peers in the eliciting of a deep-seated language shame and the significance of their appraisals in the developing of a shame-prone personality. She interestingly claims:

> The relationships with my parents, with my teachers, and with <u>that</u> teacher were just a pain. I remember I was always put in a lower position, I was ridiculed and mocked by my classmates. I was always compared with the others. He shamed me all the time, so I was very stressed, I feel I kind of always looked out for not being seen in a negative light. [her emphasis]

It was not only the English teacher himself as an individual, but also his teaching style that were significant in Maria's perception of herself as a poor language learner, and she regrets that the critical experiences with this teacher extended over several years. When I asked her to elaborate on the reasons why her first encounters with English had been so damaging, she responded in a rather straightforward manner:

> This teacher was a nightmare, going to his classes was just a pain, I was paralysed at the thought of being humiliated, I was dreading being ashamed, because he was such an ass, and that teacher taught me English for 3 years! It was damaging because it affected my self-image, it impacted my very identity. [Shoulders stooped]

The following excerpt shows how Maria's teacher's motivational tactic, which consisted in recurrently comparing her work with that of her peers who were outperforming her, was a significant source of ingrained L2-related shame, and his overuse of shame as a disciplinary tool predisposed Maria to feelings of de-humanisation and long-standing psychological difficulties and low self-esteem:

> "You stupid, what have you got in your head! You're useless, yes, that's what you are, unworthy of being on earth. You blockhead, haven't you seen your peers' performance? You will go nowhere, you will make a mess of your life! Perhaps it will be nice for you to become a cleaning lady! You're useless, that's what you are." [long pause] All this resulted in my feeling lower in status. I was a mess! There has always been something wrong with me. [cries]

The teacher's humiliating attitude was also expressed in more subtle ways, such as a condescending glance: "*He* [Mr X] *glanced at me with disdain and contempt, I remember, as if I had been shit*." [Fidgets on her chair, looks embarrassed] And the following harrowing quote is telling of the fact that Maria carries her shame like a brand:

> The language classes are those in which your vulnerabilities are the most exposed and revealed. I felt really stigmatized for my failure at English learning, it was like a wound exposed, in fact, a brand. It was the shame of being humiliated in front of the others that was most taxing.

The data show how Maria felt she was seen in a woefully diminished way, and the feelings of exposure and heightened self-consciousness, two essential aspects of shame, are obvious in the following, revealing that Maria developed a panic-like fear of drawing undue attention to her perceived vulnerabilities and inadequacies:

> I felt exposed, and my deficiencies became visible, I felt the others' gaze on me, their disapproving gaze, like I was suddenly naked, and they saw how deficient I was as a language learner, with my accent, with my poor grammar, unable to make a simple sentence without babbling like a kid, but also [hesitates] as a human being. Yes, it made my feeling of worthlessness even worse! The expectation of being exposed made me feel very apprehensive, and it follows me into now, it will never go!

But what evoked a particularly acute pain is the memory of a particular moment when the English teacher said that it would be "*good for you to go to a Segpa, these special classes for intellectually deficient pupils*." [she cries] "*You see, going to a Segpa meant that there was no hope for me. I was categorized and stigmatized as null, intellectually deficient*."

Even when Maria was proud − on rare occasions, as she reports − of her accomplishment in a particular task, her teacher's devaluing remarks would ineluctably lead to an interruption of pleasure, a reaction usually associated with shame in the literature. These findings corroborate Tomkins' (1963, 1987) contention that shame is elicited whenever one's anticipated feeling of enjoyment/pleasure is suddenly turned off. Let us listen to Maria's voice:

> I remember once, I was quite proud of my work, but the teacher, he said in front of the others that it was rubbish, he added that it was no wonder, that I was not capable. I was really disappointed, frustrated and so ashamed. All my joy and pride were suddenly dampened by his words. I was frustrated because he didn't see all the efforts I had put in this work! I have always needed to feel valued [cries]. All the bad memories of my childhood came back to my mind in this moment, when my father was saying that I was null.

She says she remembers the verbal aggressions and the "*humiliating gaze of the teacher*" like it was yesterday and how her body had too often "*stiffened*" and her mind "*frozen*," "*paralysed by fear and shame*," from the teacher's frequent violent remarks, leaving her no possibility to escape and defend herself by answering back. As the only way to retaliate and survive, she developed an "*invisible personality*," and she created for herself a "*bubble*" which separated and protected her from the others, and was a self-preserving manoeuvre:

> I built a shell around myself that protected me from the others, from their repeated attacks on my identity. I could retreat to this shell when I needed it. I became invisible, didn't speak, I hid myself behind the back of my peers, in order not to be asked to speak and be ashamed.

The following excerpt are evocative of the fact that shame is evoked when one's aspects of the self that one judges to be particularly sensitive, intimate and vulnerable, have been exposed, and the data contain explicit evidence of Maria's vigilant appraisal, that is, she is constantly on the lookout for any signs of disapproval from others and displays an overpowering wish to protect herself against ridicule:

> I refused to speak English in the classroom because I was afraid of making a fool of myself, of being ridiculed and ashamed. I was afraid that the teacher would humiliate me, belittle me in front of the others. Speaking in public is so embarrassing, it makes you feel like you expose what you want to keep secret, and it made me very nervous and anxious, because I spoke very badly. I was panic-stricken when the teacher asked me to speak. I preferred to keep quiet. I preferred to give up.

It is interesting to see how the experience of shame was conducive to the girl's constantly thinking she has created a negative, unattractive image of herself in the eyes of others, to a condemnation of the whole self, and to her incapacity to think in a rational manner:

> I would feel my mind going blank every time he [the teacher] would ask me something I didn't know. I displayed such a negative image of myself, I wished the ground would open and I would slip out of sight or flee for good. I had a bad image of myself! The slightest criticism at school or in my life evoked shame and the feeling of being devalued.

Throughout the data, it is possible to see the potential influence of others' feedback, reflected appraisals and others' low expectation, on Maria's motivation. To cite one example: "*I was repeatedly told that I was null, a good-for-nothing, so I eventually thought it was true, I was actually worthless*."

Her FLL journey seems to have been permeated with a diversity of negative emotions, such as humiliation, nervousness and shame, which acted in "complete interconnectedness" (de Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2007) to prevent her from enjoying the TL, and she was regularly put into a lowly, debased and powerless position by the teacher, which ultimately perpetuated the belief that she was different and irredeemably defective, in some way.

She remembers with particular vividness an incident when she had been put in a particularly humiliating position and had felt intense shame:

> The teacher asked me to read a passage from a text, and he said I had a faulty pronunciation of a few words, and he asked me to repeat them a number of times, laughing. The more I read, the worse it was. I ended muttering and my voice became inaudible. At that moment I felt so debased and devalued! I was suddenly struck with shame, and felt like my heart would explode. [hand on breast]

It is to be noted that, at a particular point, I had some doubt that the feelings of humiliation and shame were not used interchangeably by Maria and, in order to dissipate any ambiguity, I asked her what she thought was the difference between shame and humiliation, and she answered unhesitatingly:

> Humiliation comes from someone who looks at you with disdain and treats you in a lower position, thinks and says, or makes you feel that you are inferior to them, inferior to the others. You feel debased and devalued through their regard. Shame comes from within, it's your personal regard on yourself, you see? Shame, I feel is much deeper, it's <u>you</u> who think you have no value. [her emphasis]

6.1.3 Chronic shame

We have just seen that Maria experiences shame in *specific* situations. For a better understanding of Maria's case, it may be interesting to make distinction between two kinds of shame. On the one hand, there is a shame that is *situational* and *temporary* in nature and comes as an outcome of *specific* situations of failure or rejection by others. The thought that one has when they experience this shame is "*I am disappointed by what I have done right now, but I will do better. I think I have learnt from this*."

But when one looks closely at the data, one sees something different as regards Maria's experience with shame. Hers is a shame of a totally different nature. She experiences her shame recurrently and in several walks of her life and as a signal of total defectiveness, inadequacy and worthlessness. She does not seem to have learnt any lesson from the repeated shame episodes she has been experiencing from young.

On the contrary, she reports to have been burdened by this affect. Hers is a maladaptive, characterological, chronic shame that does not lead to any redemption of the self and does not pave the way for a better future and mending of the situation. Her perception of herself as an individual of "*little worth*," which originated in her early relationships with others, permeates the data, and all her characterisations, such as "*I am bad at the core*," "*I was null, am null, and always will be*" or "*I am not good enough to belong*" are indictments against her entire person. In sum, Maria seems to be imprisoned in a cycle of shame from which it is impossible to get out and she does not see hardships as problems that can be solved, but as insurmountable obstacles.

What Maria experienced on a regular basis, that is, humiliations and shame, led to the feeling that she failed in other subjects and to the developing of a shame-prone self and a chronically- shamed self. Let us listen to what she says:

> I feel I am incompetent at the core, this is part of my identity, you see. […] This shame is rotting my whole life. I experience it, I feel it in a lot of domains. It's here [hand on heart], this vulnerability, this inadequacy.

The data contain ample proof that Maria's shame is a dispositional trait and is the source of a number of complex and debilitating inner states such as depression, self-doubt, loneliness, hopelessness, a deep sense of inferiority, inadequacy and failure, all which are termed 'borderline conditions' in psychology and usually associated with shame. Let us listen to Maria:

> I remember I was lonely as a child, and even later, when I grew up, my cousins would go out and meet socially, but I wouldn't, I preferred to stay by myself. I doubted that I was a person who would be of interest, I felt somehow [hesitating] inferior. I also remember that I got depressed, very very depressed at some time, and I strongly believed that nothing could be changed. I was a failure, [hesitates] I am a failure.

She was therefore conditioned into regularly feeling ashamed, even when there was nothing or little that she should be ashamed of, thus illustrating the spiral of shame. Maria expresses forcefully how each shameful episode that occurs in the context of the classroom mirrors and re-activates many other repeated previous shame episodes, in the more private and intimate sphere of the family, but also in other school subjects. As she remembers: "*Every time I was shamed in the English class, it brought me years back, when I was a little girl…When my father would humiliate me for no reason*." And her words are very much suggestive of the idea that shame may be carefully concealed and re-emerges years later, even more potently than before, thus illustrating the secretive and cyclic nature of this emotion:

> I hid what happened at home for years, and whenever the teacher would shout at me that I was a good-for-nothing, this was reminiscent of my past shames, all those memories of an incompetent me that I had tried to hide. But in the classroom, it was suddenly revealed in the open. It was unbearable.

The data sets are permeated with the idea that Maria attributes negative outcomes, failures or lack of success to characterological faults or personality characteristics that she regards as being fixed, and they are suggestive of the idea that there is no single-cause explanation for Maria's proneness to shame. Let us listen to her:

> I think I was kind of brought up with this fear of being ashamed. I have always been used to experiencing anxiety and shame in a lot of situations. My dad used to humiliate me when I was a child, and this teacher, he kept repeating I was null, that I was useless. I feel…well, I am sure that my education, I mean the way I was reared has had a considerable influence on the way I feel in school. It does have an influence on your engagement in the learning of some school subjects…and more particularly the learning of languages. There is nothing I can do to change this. I feel that some were born with particular gifts, for instance, the gift of foreign languages or playing an instrument, but I was born with no gift. Everything I do is doomed to failure. I make shit, I have made a mess of my life!

From a Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) perspective, her shame emerges through multiple routes, and has fossilised into a semi-permanent attractor state in her life. The data put to the fore that shame has become internalized, to the point of becoming chronic, and Maria experiences and fears to experience shame in several walks of her life. Shame has

become "*a second nature*," as she says repeatedly: "*I am afraid of being shamed all the time, it's been so frequent in my life* [this feeling of shame], *like it has become a second nature. Whenever I try something new, I inevitably think to myself that it's going to fail*."

The following excerpt highlights the links between her early experiences of shame in the English classes and her perception of herself as incompetent in other school subjects, and it shows how her negative first experiences may have coloured her attitude in the following years and impacted on her lack of interest in other foreign languages:

> I feel the way I started learning a foreign language, all these horrible experiences with that teacher kind of…coloured my experiences in other school subjects in a negative way, and in particular the learning of other languages. These first encounters with this language left an indelible imprint on my memory, it has damaged my learning of English, but also of other languages!

She constantly refers to herself as being lacking and defective, "*a poor wretch, stupid and useless*," which is revealing of tendencies towards developing self-objectifying thoughts and faulty self-images. She feels she is responsible for her failures, and condemns her whole self:

> But anyway, my life has been a nightmare, you see, the way I was brought up, my parents' absence, all this had an influence on my studies, for sure, and particularly my study of English. Somehow, I feel that I have always expected to be devalued and incompetent. I am a poor wretch, they say that I am stupid and useless, it's true. It's within myself. [Shakily voice]

When I asked her to elaborate on this, she answered: "*Well, what I mean is that if I had had a good start with learning English, I am sure that it would have influenced the learning of other languages in a positive way*." What she says corroborates what was argued by a number of participants in the study: "*The first experiences with the foreign language is of absolutely primary importance…And the teacher is also a major factor in this*." The data contain the following features of internalized, chronic shame:

The shame-nervousness cycle

The data show that the feeling of nervousness seems to be central in Maria's experience of shame, and that there is an almost panic-like quality to experiences of shame, to the point that the two emotions seem to be indistinguishable in Maria's data set. The anticipation of being shamed creates nervousness in the student, and Maria explains how she was troubled by

chronic expectation of failure, shame, intrusive thoughts and hypervigilance, as is made clear in the following statement:

> It was a kind of vicious circle, I was expecting to fail, and thus to experience shame, so I was always nervous, imagining myself in a situation where I would be the butt of criticism. Avoiding shame was my principle preoccupation, everything revolved around this, which made me feel very tensed and apprehensive. I was always alert to any sign of weakness, like I had eyes at the back of my head, you see? So, I was not really present to the course, focused as I was on avoiding being ridiculed at all cost. I was invisible. And whenever I was compelled to go out of my comfort zone, I would feel my mind going blank, I was panic-stricken.

The spiral of shame

Maria's data illustrate the dynamics and spiral of shame, where shame begets shame, creating repetitive cycles of shame, and each shameful episode that occurs in the context of the classroom re-activates many other previous shame episodes, and is conducive to fear of experiencing shame again. Her words are telling of her state of mind:

> It was a kind of vicious circle. The more shamed I was, the more nervous I grew, and the more fearful I was of experiencing shame again and again. And when I finally was ashamed, it confirmed my feeling that I was null, and this made me feel even more ashamed.

It is interesting to see how she refers to "*a little inner voice*," like an echo to the teacher's humiliating phrase, which would recurrently whisper that she was worthless. Let us hear what she says: "*I thought to myself, you see, it was a sort of little inner voice saying 'well, you are just a poor wretch, you are of little worth and you won't go anywhere!'*"

Anticipatory and actual shame

The anticipation of shame is a strong theme running throughout the data set. The fear of experiencing shame in the future influences the way Maria behaves in the present. Maria has a propensity to anticipate failure and her likely emotional reactions and the consequences attached to them. The data stress the role of *anticipatory* shame − the shame that takes place in presence of imaginary audiences − which does not serve positive outcomes, as it does not keep learners on their toes:

> I wouldn't sleep all night because I was ruminating about the course, remembering what happened the last time I had been in the course, and imagining future shame-inducing situations. I could hear the others giggling, I could feel the teacher's evaluating gaze on me, I could hear his humiliating words.

The excerpt above is indicative that Maria was always scanning for signs of danger, anticipating the next sets of threats and/or criticism. It is interesting to see the strong influence exerted by shame on Maria's behaviour by providing critical feedback in the form of anticipatory shame. "Anticipated or forecasted affective responses to behaviour not yet enacted are inferred from past consequential shame to similar behaviours and events in the past" (Tangney, Youman, & Stuewig, 2009, p. 194), and it is interesting to see how *anticipatory* shame and failure were as detrimental to her sense of self as *real/actual* shame and failure, and the following quote shows how both anticipatory and consequential shame work hand in hand in a recursive feedback loop:

> I was always expecting that things would go wrong, I was anticipating failing and that shame would ensue all the time, and when it actually happened, I mean, when I was shamed in real, it was just a confirmation that I was null.

The data reveal the existence of two types of moral emotional states, that is, anticipatory and consequential shame, which corroborates findings by Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007a), which showed that shame may influence individuals' behaviours even before they *actually* engage in negative behaviours, and these individuals may anticipate their likely emotional reactions (to failure or transgressions). Seen from this angle, shame may exert a powerful influence on one's moral choice/attitude by providing critical feedback concerning *anticipated* behaviour (i.e. feedback on anticipatory shameful situations) and *actual* behaviour. Anticipatory and actual shame work hand in hand in a recursive feedback loop.

It seems thus that Maria experiences both anticipatory and consequential shame, which is in line with the contention by Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007b) that "shame-prone individuals would be more susceptible to both anticipatory and consequential experiences of shame" (p. 22). Theoretically, shame-prone people are inclined to anticipate shame in response to a range of potential behaviours and outcomes. In turn, shame-prone individuals also are inclined to experience shame as a consequence of a range of actual failures or transgressions. The authors further argue that "people's anticipatory emotional reactions are typically inferred based on history − that is, based on their past consequential emotions in reaction to similar actual behaviors and events" (2007a, p. 347).

6.1.4 Factors reinforcing the shame mentality

A number of factors concur in reinforcing Maria's shame personality:

A fixed mind-set

When looking closely at the data, it may be hypothesised that Maria possesses a fixed mind-set, that is, she believes that personal characteristics cannot develop. Individuals with a fixed mind set believe they are born with a certain number of fixed traits or talents. The following extract highlights how Maria believes that intellectual abilities cannot be developed with hard work, and how she assigns responsibility for her repeated failures and shame to *internal* and *stable* factors:

> I believed what the teacher said, that I was bad at learning languages, I believed I was a good-for-nothing, as he said. There was nothing I could do to improve the situation. I was born a blockhead and would remain so for ever.

Based on previous language learning experiences and repeated negative feedback from the teacher, this learner seems to have developed the conviction that learners possess a natural talent/gift for language learning that cannot develop with time. As she ponders:

> Perhaps if I had had a talent for language learning, things would have been different. I would have devoted more time on learning. But I was not born with a particular gift, I don't have a knack for that, or for anything actually. Perhaps I have a knack for making shit of my life.

This conviction that she had no gift may have had a strong influence on this participant's self-concept, attribution beliefs and motivation. Such conviction about a natural ability/lack of ability for language learning is revealing of a fixed mind set towards language learning or intelligence. This set of beliefs removes the learner's sense of agency and is conducive to a feeling of hopelessness, as it restricts their belief in a potential for progress (Dweck, 2006) and prevents them from learning from their failures or setbacks.

Maria seems not to use her mistakes as stepping stones to progress nor as opportunities to grow, but rather as impediments to her flourishing and burdens to get rid of. The following excerpt illustrates the way failure can create a demotivating downward spiral of low self-esteem and hopelessness/helplessness which is impossible to combat:

> I have always felt powerless to change things, felt like being stuck in the same place. I have never been allowed to spray my wings. My wings were cut from the start. No possibility to progress. Always felt like overwhelmed with failure.

It is to be noted that the word ‘wings’ was repeated several times in the course of the different interviews.

The absence of a guiding vision

A strong theme running throughout the data is the absence of vision 1) as an English user and 2) in her everyday life. Vision “possesses potent orienting capacities” (Levin I. M., 2000, p. 92) and “sparks transformation by inspiring motivation and providing direction” (van der Helm, 2009, p. 97). It is therefore a key element in the motivating function of possible selves. A clearly articulated vision has therefore a motivational value. As regards the absence of a language-self vision, the following extract from Maria illustrates this point well:

> I don’t see the use of speaking another language. I don’t see myself using it in the future, anyway, I will never go to a foreign country. Learning foreign languages was not my choice, it was imposed on me because it was in the curriculum.

What struck me in her narrative is that she never talked about her future, and seemed to be stuck in the past, unable to move on. It can be assumed that the initial conditions (family environment) in which she lived as a child and her first unsuccessful and shame-ridden experiences with English did not allow the development of the vision of herself as a successful English user and she was not moved to achieve a goal or another. She seems to be only motivated by the vision of negative consequences if she fails to achieve a particular task. In sum, there was no availability of her possible selves, and she does not possess the sufficient motivation to reduce the discrepancy between her current and her possible selves.

The family and the social/academic/school contexts may not have facilitated the construction of possible successful selves and she may not have benefitted from adequate models of possible selves to achieve her personal goals. This context may have impacted on the development of Maria’s negative identity, and the vision of a *feared self* appears to have been significantly more accessible to her than a vision of herself as a good language learner, and she has been essentially focused on *prevention* (avoiding showing a bad self) rather than *promotion* (showing a competent, successful self) strategies. The following extract summarizes these points:

> My attention was focused on avoiding mistakes. I was always on the alert not to fail and be seen in a negative light much more than I was motivated to perform. Anyway, performing was not for me. Avoiding making a fool of myself, that was what occupied my mind, not speaking the language well.

Low academic self-esteem

Maria's data sets contain all the features usually associated with shame in the literature, as she feels that her mistakes, her lack of proficiency and her failures are the result of who she is at the very core and that these traits cannot be changed. In other words, she ascribes her failures to an "*innate incompetence*." Through her repeated shame experiences, Maria has endorsed a core belief of incompetence and thinks that she will never get it right during an academic task. There is ample evidence in the data that Maria has a natural proclivity to focus on her global self and to use such evaluative phrases as "*I am a poor learner of English. In fact, I was a bad student at school. Because I wasn't interested in school, I was really a bad student in every school subject. It's in me, this worthlessness*."

She shares an interesting insight into the connections between language, shame and identity, her words revealing that she views her failures as unfixable, unsolvable and unredeemable:

> Whenever I received a bad grade, I would think that it was me who had a problem, you see, it was not a question of being good or bad in English, it was a question of being bad as a whole, of innate incompetence. So, nothing could be done against that. I was born bad, and so I would stay for ever. And I still feel this way today, when a test is handed back to me, and it's bad, I think 'my god, you have got a problem, you are the problem. You have made such a mess of your life!' [her emphasis]

6.1.5 No narrative identity

The interviews with this participant led her to a personal investigation of how shame had been permeating all the facets of her life since her childhood. Although she did not enjoy reminiscing about her FLL journey, Maria stressed the fact that she had been aware that shame had played a significant role in her personal and academic life, but regretted that she had never been offered the opportunity to talk about her multifarious experiences of shame to anyone. She confided that she had needed to speak directly and openly about her shame experiences for a long time, and understand how this affect had governed and burdened her whole life. Let us listen to what she says: "*I buried all my experiences deep in my mind. But I have often been thinking that I needed to talk to someone that would understand me, and listen to me without judging me*." It is undeniable that these interview sessions helped this participant to disclose her shamed, vulnerable self and to draw personal emotional meaning from her unique, subjective experience of shame.

But, if it is true that Maria experienced a more conscious, integrated sense of self while speaking to someone who listened deeply, and although I provided a safe enough environment to talk shame freely, I could not feel that she benefitted from the interviewing process, thus contradicting McAdams and Pals's (2006) theoretical framework. The authors underline that being interviewed may lead individuals to redemption and healing from their past negative experiences and may even involve a change in their whole mind set. McAdams and his colleague Pals (2006) interestingly assert that alongside the dispositional characteristics that are the basis of individuals' personality, the story that individuals craft about their lives represents a distinct level of personality. This evolving story has been termed 'narrative identity,' and a considerable amount of research has been devoted to trying to understand it (McAdams & Adler, 2010; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Singer, 2004).

In McAdams and Pals's view (2006), the interview encounter may offer pathways for the development of a happier and more fulfilled life through the processing of difficult life experiences via narratives. From what can be observed in the data, Maria's narrating her past and present shame states seems not to have led to healing and personal growth, and not to have enhanced her self-esteem, nor does it seem to have provided any insights into future possibilities (Atkinson R., 1998).

In sum, it may be assumed that the storying of her shame and other negative experiences in relation with English learning did not facilitate the emergence of a new self. It seems to me that Maria presents some difficulty with creating a coherent self-narrative that includes the past, present and future, and she seems to be stuck in the past. As she reports: "*I am stuck in the past. I am unable to move on*."

Contrary to some other participants, her emotional disclosure, her "life story", may not have provided her life with unity and purpose (McAdams & McLean, 2013) and may not have offered a lasting therapeutic effect, and she eventually reported that it did not result in an improvement in her psychological well-being, except during the time of the interviews, which she said "*liberated her a little from the weight of the past*." At the academic level, I could not see any noticeable improvement in her communication skills in the classroom either.

To summarize, although the process of narrating her many different shames enabled her to liberate herself from her past shamed selves to a certain extent, she finally returned to her initial low level of self-esteem, high state of anxiety and fear of being ashamed again after the interviews were over.

What is striking in Maria's data is that, contrary to a number of the participants in the study, although she acknowledged to feeling better and experiencing some sense of relief

through the process of being interviewed, as she exclaims enthusiastically: "*It does me so much good, Madam, you listen to me, and being listened to happens very rarely. Being taken care of, being looked after, taken under somebody's wings, is something I have never been used to*," and although being interviewed did prompt some reflection, she seemed not to have been able to explore the meaning of her life storying. She seemed not to have gained a balanced sense of self, and she reported continuing feeling worthless when the interviews were over, which is suggestive of a shame-based personality/dispositional characteristic.

Rather that resolving her shameful past, Maria seemed to be flooded with overwhelming painful memories and traumatic reactions, and rather than gaining some peace of mind, she re-lived these shameful experiences, thus experiencing more shame during the interviews. Towards the end of the third year, she came to see me in private and confided with deep regret and with tears in her eyes:

> It did me good to speak to you, yes! [hugs me], but I feel I am hopeless, I mean, I will never be happy in my life…I feel that I had too rough a start in life. I ruminate all the time, the images that come to my mind all the time are those when I was ridiculed and criticized. I wish somebody had taken me under their wings…I need to be taken care of, I need to be loved and admired, but unfortunately, this has never been the case… I don't even have a boyfriend, I have never had any…I am not lovable, I am not worthy of attention from the others. I am ashamed of my life, my failures. [Tears]

Maria's story seems to let us think that there is no redemption nor cure for chronic shame. She did not find coping skills that would have been effective in the long run. It can be assumed that, in her case, the interviews could not erase the effects of shame experiences. She says repeatedly that she has given up hope for healing from this feeling, and the interviewee-interviewer relationship, based on mutual understanding and connectedness, may not have led this shame-prone student to experience profound positive and enduring changes in her life, and may not have enabled her to move through in a constructive manner. While she has named shame, she was not capable to build shame-resilient strategies. As regards English learning, our exchanges did not stimulate the growth of L2-related possible selves.

In sum, it seems that some individuals are impervious to the possible benefits of narratives and do not take advantage of them. While other students reported being personally transformed through the process of interviewing and through the development of techniques of resilience, Maria reports with regret that she continues to feel that she is "*unworthy*," "*unlovable*," and "*incapable of change*," and she relapses to her former shamed self.

6.1.6 Discussion

The main goal of this analysis was to investigate the dynamics of shame in relation with FLL through the voice of Maria, a French student of EFL. There is no space in this thesis to address all the questions that the topic invariably raises, but Maria's narrative depicts a shame-prone personality and furnishes an interesting insight into the role of language shame in impacting the learning of a target language in a negative way, but also in influencing the individual's vision of their self. Maria's shame is frequent, toxic and ubiquitous, seeping into every nook and cranny of her life, infecting her thoughts, images, feelings, and ultimately her behaviour and attitude to FLL. What can be said is that language shame is a negative emotional experience that occurs in certain L2 learning situations.

The findings highlight the way a pervasive sense of shame − which is part of Maria's daily experience and the lens through which she seems to see everything − generalizes to her experience of English learning, conducing to a negative language self-image. Persistent and repeated criticism in several domains of her life has led to an internalisation of the self as being flawed, inferior to the others, worthless and unlovable.

What is particularly enlightening in the data is the existence of two kinds of shame, *anticipated* and *actual* shame, which act in a recursive feedback loop. Anticipated shame was reported to be as detrimental for Maria's involvement in FLL as it led her to feel nervous and very much apprehensive of experiencing shame in the future, and prevented her from focussing on the task at hand and taking risk in the FL classroom. Anticipated shame can be seen as an antecedent of behaviour and leads Maria to adopt a flight response to shame and feel paralysed rather than encouraging her to envision solutions to fight it.

There is also ample proof in the data sets that there exists a shame that can be seen as a personality-related characteristic, or a trait, which is evoked *across a range of situations* and denotes a particular sensitivity to shame, and another shame, which occurs in *specific* situations. Finally, from the analysis of the data, it appears that language shame could also be seen as a significant motivational component, since it was reported by Maria that the repetition of shame experiences is at the origin of her disinvestment from and disinterest in English/FL learning.

The data highlight that the interviewing process – corresponding to the third level of McAdams and Pals's (2006) framework of personality − seems not to have allowed this participant to initiate changes in her language learning nor did it lead to an improvement in

her sense of self. Her narrative/life storying seems not to have had any developmental impact on her life. In sum, the interviewing process seems not to have been conducive to identity creation nor to have led to shame redemption. It did not instil a sense of confidence in her potential for improvement. I must admit I was expecting her to gain some enlightenment on her FLL journey and on her shame, and I hoped that she would, if not heal from her shame-ridden past, at least, be alleviated from her burden of shame. Helen Block Lewis (1971) posits that it is "bypassed" shame that wreaks havoc in individuals' lives, and the recognition of a shame-prone personality is a first step towards resilience.

However, from what I could see and from what she claimed, it seems that the healing never came. She said she would never recover from her past shame experiences, and that her sense of identity would stay the same for ever, "*stuck in the past*" and "*paralysing*" her. I would like to add that dealing with the data from this participant proved to be problematic, as her experience of shame seems to be indistinguishable from that of humiliation. The two emotions are referred to as being very close to each other. Writing her story turned out to be an emotional roller-coaster, because her story is permeated with negative emotionality, and leaves no hope for a better future. The questions that can be raised here is why did Maria's narrative not provide her life with unity and coherence? Why did not she gain substantial benefit from narrating her past and present FLL experience?

It is to be noted that Maria was only one of the students who reported experiencing shame on a regular basis. One must be alert when they encounter such a powerful pattern of shame/shame-proneness across a diverse sample of learners, and be careful not to provide a single-cause explanation for students' proclivity/sensitivity to shame. Learner behaviour is shaped by a number of interconnected variables, and a DST perspective offers an interesting non-linear cause-effect explanation of their behaviour. Language shame should be viewed as a phenomenon emerging through diverse routes (i.e. attractors), which exert influence at different levels (individual, institutional and societal).

One of the important lessons to be drawn from Maria's case is that it seems that these routes/attractors are so multiple and so powerful within the French language classroom that shame has fossilised into a semi-permanent attractor state. What was expected was that there seems to exist a massive attractor state of shame within France's language classrooms (see Chapter 4). The qualitative approach enabled to arrive at a flexible, individual-level analysis of French language learner shame(s) and to move away from simplistic and reductionist rationalisations of classroom shame.

Maria's data seem to confirm the ample anecdotal evidence of the French tendency to fear and experience shame in a variety of domains/situations, and the study highlights the need for developing potentially fruitful future research on the multiplicity of causes underlying French learners' multi-faceted shame.

Certainly, the causes of shame are multiple, but, although it goes beyond the confines of this thesis, it may be assumed that the family/environmental context, such as specific child-rearing practices (often based on punishment and reward, devaluing and humiliating), as well as the French educational system (with its emphasis on accuracy, perfection of utterance and 'eloquence'), can lead to the developing of this negative emotion and produce individuals who do not dare to take the risk of being seen in a negative light.

This system may explain why the overwhelming majority of the French students opt for silence in the (language) classroom rather than run the risk of being seen in an unfavourable light by others. This reticence to take part in communicative activities, for instance, is even truer in the language classes, where the risk of being negatively evaluated, and hence of being shamed, is high.

6.2 ANNELISE'S STORY

The section below reports on the analysis of the data generated from a 23-year old female participant, who will be called Annelise. Annelise's testimony will show how early repeated experiences of language shame may take on a powerful life of its own as chronic language shame and will illustrate the role of interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors in the emergence of a language shame-prone personality. Hers is a unique experience of language shame, and a significantly different experience from that reported by the other participants in the study, as her testimony reveals how shame was transferred from one language to another and interfered with the learning of the other language in a significant way. The section below shows how, although Annelise has a positive disposition towards the learning of other FLs, there was some "*contamination*" of her shame from one FL to another FL that had negative and detrimental enduring consequences on her demeanour and also on her whole mind set. Annelise's story highlights the way shame, like a gangrene, may deteriorate or corrupt the whole system and affect learners' core identity.

6.2.1 Annelise's positive experiences with FLL

Annelise's background

Annelise is a 23-year old single French woman at the time of our first interview. She is one of my students at the vocational school where I teach. A creative pastry chef apprentice, she is passionate about her job, and very successful in it. Her apprenticeship masters say she is very much dedicated to her work, and they can sense that her future is promising. She works very long hours and is very much engaged in her occupation, which she reports she has been "*dreaming of since the age of ten*." She is one of the most brilliant apprentices of the school in the pastry section.

It is noteworthy that, after eighteen years of studying English, her level of English is intermediate, that is, in terms of CEFR standards, she can produce simple texts on topics which are familiar or of personal relevance. English is the first FL that she learnt at school, German her second, Czech, which she learnt on a voluntary basis, her third. I taught her English for a duration of two years, for three hours every month. I interviewed her twice in two years, and we also discussed a variety of topics − mainly the learning of FLs − whenever she wished to, during informal conversations. The interviews were conducted one on one, and took place at the vocational school.

They focused on the learning of FLs, and on the differences in the ways she learnt and felt with the different languages she had been learning at school, and those she had "*inherited*"; that is, the interviews were the opportunity for her to reflect also on her "*family linguistic heritage*," which she claimed to be very proud of. Although I provided Annelise with a relaxed environment, the interview sessions were emotionally-loaded and generated sadness and tension on several occasions, but they also offered her the opportunity to reflect in depth on her past experiences with FLL. I could feel that the topic of FLs was at the same time an extremely cherished subject and a particularly sensitive issue for her.

Annelise's family environment

The younger of two girls, Annelise was born in a multilingual family. Due to their living in a French town in Moselle, a region situated just a few miles away from the German and Luxemburgish borders, the members of the family speak languages which are very close to German and are used to codeswitching from one dialect to another. Additionally, Annelise's late grandmother, an Ashkenazi Jewish lady who originally came from Lithuania, taught the

girl the basics of Hebrew and Lithuanian, two languages that Annelise learnt as "*a precious heritage*" through the songs and nursery rhymes that her "*beloved Bubi*" sang as Annelise was a child.

Throughout the interviews, Annelise stressed the particularly "*affective*" quality of Hebrew, and how she enjoyed listening to the sounds of this language and speak it. She revels in telling how learning this language was for her "*a very positive experience*" and allowed her to establish *"a deep emotional connection*" with her grandmother. The following excerpt illustrates these points well, reveals how the learning of a FL is a particularly positive enterprise, and underlines that Annelise has a positive disposition towards learning other FLs, a disposition which developed through her family heritage. It is interesting to see how, from a very young age, she associated the learning of a language with extremely positive experiences, and the following excerpt encapsulates the idea that a language can be a vehicle for emotion:

> Hebrew is the language of my heart, it's the language of my ancestors, but it's above all the language that was spoken by my beloved Bubi [she looks suddenly sad]. I had a deep emotional connection with her via this language.

It can be gathered from what Annelise claims that the learning of another FL was a pleasurable and natural experience and the remembrance of these moments still procures her a lot of joy. Said differently, as regards the learning of FLs, Annelise does have a general positive background coming from her family heritage.

Annelise's school environment

The data convey the idea that, in the same way as Annelise's first experiences with FLs during her childhood were positively tinted, Annelise's first encounters with a FL in an academic environment were extremely rewarding. The learning of English was a positive emotional experience. Annelise's words below reveal how a FL may be generative of satisfaction and pride, all the more so as she could establish links between the English language that was taught in the classroom and the English that was used by natives. As she reports:

> I started learning English when I was 5 or something, and it was really great. The teacher was passionate and was very tolerant of our mistakes, especially when we mispronounced the words. She let us try, even if it was not perfect. Anyway, we were all on the same level. I hoped that I would continue learning this language at middle school. […] It was a language that nobody spoke in my family, I was the

> first to have learnt it at school. It somehow made me feel extremely proud, as they regularly asked me to translate such or such a word. And when I was going to foreign countries with my parents, say, in Scotland or in Ireland, I could talk a little with people who spoke this language. You see, it kind of gave me some … importance, a sort of positive aura or something [smiles].

6.2.2 The emergence of a negative German-self

The family background

We have seen that FLs were seen in a positive light by Annelise's relatives, which enabled her to enjoy using other FLs in the context of her family. It may be argued that her multilingual family environment favoured the emergence of a positive FL self and fostered the desire to learn and use a variety of different FLs. The family codeswitches from one FL or dialect to the other and they regularly go to places where Annelise enjoys learning the basics of the language of the countries they visit during their holiday. She joyfully reports that "*It was fun to pick up the rudiments of the language of the countries we visited*." She further adds that "*I could also practice my English, at least, the little that I knew, with the natives that I met during my stays abroad*."

Yet, when looking closely at the data, there is a FL that Annelise reports to have been a source of particular discontentment. In Annelise's family, German is seen as "*the language of the oppressor*," and Annelise's grandmother in particular refused to speak it "*unless she was forced to*." It can be therefore argued that Annelise's family environment did not favour the emergence of a positive and successful German-self. In other words, her family background somehow sowed the seeds of her future disengagement from and dislike of the German language. The following excerpt summarizes the idea that German is seen in an unfavourable light:

> My parents and my Bubi in particular didn't like the language [German]. I remember she never spoke it unless she met people speaking this language and she hadn't got the choice. Whenever she spoke German, I remember that I could feel that she didn't enjoy that. I could feel that she was kind of reticent, speaking it was something painful, or something disagreeable anyway. My parents, they speak languages which are very close to German, but it's a bit different, and when it comes to speaking German proper, they try to avoid speaking it.

The school environment

If Annelise's family background did not favour the emergence of a positive German-self, it was the learning of the German language *in class* which led to an enduring negative German-

self and reinforced the negative aspects of this language. As regards the learning of FLs, while Annelise's experience with English − which she started learning at the age of five, that is, when she was at kindergarten − was a positive one, her memories of learning the German language are not happy and she reports that her journey with the learning of this language, which she started at the age of 14, was pregnant with a lot of "*challenging and disagreeable experiences*."

While Annelise had been so far open to the learning and use of other FLs, due to her family practicing a variety of different languages and to their seeing FLs in a positive light, the data convey the idea that a few months spent in the German classes were conducive to some significant change in her perception of FLs. The following excerpt shows how the learning of German, instead of being a positive experience, turned into a difficult and painful endeavour:

> German was in the curriculum, it was imposed on us, no other choice. […] As I live in a region situated next to the German border, I had no choice but to learn that language. But I didn't like going to the German classes, in reality I hated being in the German class. I remember the courses like it was yesterday … The teacher was German. I felt extremely bad when I was going to the German classes, I was always trying to hide behind somebody, hoping that somebody would give the answer. It made me feel really awful. It changed the way I had felt so far as regards speaking other foreign languages. I mean, it had been a really enjoyable experience, especially Hebrew, because, you see, speaking this language was like an invisible emotional bond, something like a bridge or something which made me feel closer to my granny. But German, it soon turned awful. She [the German teacher] was really nasty. Learning it brought me back to the old feelings I had when my granny refused to speak that language. The way it was taught was far too strict. Try as I might, I never managed to get correct marks. The German courses were a source of repeated humiliations.

The following excerpt is illustrative of the idea that the learning of a FL may be a taxing experience:

> The learning of German was extremely chaotic for me. Although the language that is spoken here [in her region] is very close to German, I found it extremely difficult to learn it at school. I made a lot of mistakes, and speaking with an accent was intolerable. I experienced failure all the time, and I ended up feeling extremely embarrassed, and the teacher downgraded me for my incompetency.

It is interesting to see how she compares her German and English selves:

> I started feeling really bad when I was going to the German classes. It was really different from the way I felt in the English classes. I had been loving this language [English] since the start. But it was different with German. Just anticipating being in the German course would make me feel extremely uneasy and nervous, even

> sick. I thought I was going to vomit out of fear and disgust. I couldn't breathe well, kind of stifling. I hated her [the German teacher]. The way she taught was just like … you know, it was as if she was constantly saying "You know nothing, you stupid, *I* know how to speak well." [Annelise's emphasis]

It seems that the topic of German learning was particularly sensitive and evoked a variety of negative and painful memories during the course of the interviews, but Annelise did not name 'shame' overtly/openly in the first interview, although she used a number of cover terms for it, such as humiliation, embarrassment, and feeling of inferiority. The words she used to describe the way she felt in the German classes are cover terms for shame, such as "*extremely embarrassed*," "*devalued*," "*downgraded*," or "*incompetent*," and the sense of vulnerability and exposure that goes with shame is palpable throughout the interview sessions. The following extract give a hint at how the learning of German is associated with extremely negative experiences: "*I felt inferior to the others because I was the only one who had difficulties with the German grammar. It made me feel very much embarrassed to realize that I had difficulties with that language*."

The following extract is illustrative of the way she felt in the German classes and is revealing of the way she had been engaged for a long time in a deep reflection on FLL, and more particularly on the impact of German learning, on her motivation and on her sense of self:

> I felt really bad and uncomfortable in the German courses. The teacher humiliated us regularly, it was a kind of sport, you see [looks sad]. It was so embarrassing when she asked me to stand in front of the black board, all these gazes on me. It's as if she was expecting me to fail. She never asked the others to stand up in front of the black board, although she could be harsh with them too. But I felt that she really wanted me to ridicule myself. She knew that I was very shy. Her attitude affected my mental and my inner self very deeply.

The interviews were the occasion for Annelise to engage in a reflection on the sources of her discontentment with the German language and of her disinvestment from the learning of this language. The data are pregnant with indications that Annelise experienced shame in particular situations. Among the negative experiences in the German classes, it is the remembrance of grammar which evokes the most acute and painful memories. She reports:

> What made me go nuts was the weak and strong verbs. I don't know why, but I learnt them by heart, but I didn't understand anything, how to use them correctly in sentences. And the teacher said "Annelise, this is not the right tense, have you learnt them by heart as I asked you to? Are you lazy or stupid? I explained hundreds of times how to use them in sentences. Even a dunce can learn them! You

> will have to copy them ten times each, Annelise! Verstanden, Du, dummes Mädchen?" I felt so ashamed! Her words still resonate in my head!

Annelise remembers her learning of the German language in class − which consisted in reading aloud and translating chunks of sentences − as being "*devoid of interest*," but, among the problems experienced by Annelise during her German-learning journey, the grammar-related issues have been identified as being a particularly significant source of language shame and associated with critical memories. The memory of the shameful experiences − which took place when she was 14 − is still vivid in Annelise's mind, and the mere remembering of these experiences evoked in the young woman the same feeling of shame and uneasiness during the interview sessions. She claims: "*I can still feel the pain of shameful experiences in the German classes* [hand on heart] *like it left an indelible mark on my mind. I feel so ashamed of speaking about all this today*." The topic of the weak and strong verbs is a particularly sensitive one, and the mere re-telling and remembering of past shameful experiences in relation with this grammatical aspect evoked tears and other physical manifestations, such as the receding of her shoulders or gaze avoidance during the time of the interview session, thus revealing the vulnerability that underpins shame, as expressed in the following:

> The problem was the conjugation of the verbs, you see. The verbs, I learnt them by heart, but to no avail, I still got bad marks … And she asked me to stand up and recite them. Not knowing these f.....g verbs was a proof that I had a problem. My friends didn't have problems with the verbs, they learnt them by heart, and they made no mistakes. I would spend hours repeating them, those verbs such as singen sang gesungen [giggles nervously, seemingly ill at ease], and I knew them, but when I was in class, with the others' gaze on me, with the teacher evaluating me, I kind of forgot everything, like I had a void in my head. I was always expecting her to criticize me, all of a second, everything was gone, I had a kind of a blank, a gaping void, and was unable to remember the right forms, I mixed everything, I was saying nonsense, I was confused and inevitably, I was the centre of attention. I was freezing, paralysed with fear. I felt devalued, because I wasn't able to recite the verbs, and because *she* was always degrading me, debasing me. [her emphasis, seems very much angry].

In the data set, there appears to have been a particular type of experience which seems to stand out and to possess an especially rich and detailed narrative quality, and to which Annelise seems to have given some salient significance and around which she crystallized her dislike of this language:

> I remember a particular episode in the classroom. She [the teacher] had asked us to revise the verbs for a written test. But she changed her mind and asked us to recite

> the verbs orally. When my turn came, I babbled, my utterances became inaudible, I could see her disapproving gaze on me, like she was judging me in a negative way. And then, [seems deeply moved], well, then, she … I can remember that like it's yesterday, she shouted at me "You're really stupid, nothing good will come out of you. Everybody who is sensible can learn the verbs. Well, it means you've got a real problem, girl." I remember I was unable to say a word, I was like paralysed.

The following telling words corroborate the testimonies of other participants who claimed to have been deeply affected also on the physical level, thus illustrating the interconnectedness of body and mental. Annelise's words beautifully illustrate the enduring psychosomatic effects of the shame emotion: "*I can still feel the pain that I experienced at this particular moment, it was both physical and mental*" [hand alternatively on heart and head].

The following excerpt is illustrative of the impact of teachers' expectations of and beliefs about learners' abilities and competencies on their sense of self and how these can be conveyed directly or indirectly/implicitly or explicitly through their interactions: "*I felt her despising gaze on me, I could imagine her thinking that I was null, that there was nothing that could be done, and that's what happened, she always ended up shouting that I was hopeless*." It is interesting to see how Annelise's teacher's reflected appraisals – that is, an individual's presumptions about what others think of them − and implicit or explicit feedback, are conducive to self-fulfilling prophecies:

> She [the teacher] expected me to fail every time I opened my mouth, and in fact it was true, I failed. She kept repeating that I was null, so I ended up believing that it was true. I was incapable of understanding the use of the strong and weak verbs.

The words above are not only a clear indication of the taxing consequences of a defective grammar and of not mastering the verbs, but also of the role of others' beliefs in instilling in learners doubt about their capacities for improvement. Repeated criticism and negative feedback from the teacher led to Annelise's condemnation of her whole self as defective and to her perception that the situation was helpless:

> I felt utterly hopeless as regards the strong and weak verbs. There was no hope for improving. I would spend hours repeating them, writing them down hundreds of times, but to no avail. My father, he helped me memorize them, he asked me to recite them, and it was ok, but I was unable to recite them properly when I was in class. The situation was helpless.

It can be argued that learning the German language in class represented a period of transition and adjustment that Annelise claims to have been particularly sensitive. She insists

that it was a time marker in her memories of language learning, a time when she started "*disliking learning another language*."

> All my experiences with learning another language had always been extremely enjoyable so far. You remember, I told you, learning Hebrew and Lithuanian with my granny was really good and these are moving memories. I cherish these moments like a treasure. Learning a language was long associated with positive emotions. As to English, well, I loved learning this language, it was new and made me feel extremely proud, because I was the first to have learnt this language in my family, and when we went on holiday and I was able to translate what people said, well, it gave me a sort of confidence, you see? But the accumulation of bad and humiliating experiences in the classroom made me dislike learning another language.

Annelise's words show how the learning of another language, instead of being a rewarding and positive emotional experience, may turn into something extremely taxing and threatening for the sense of self, and the following excerpt encapsulates the idea that the learning of a FL may be generative of negative images of ones' language self in the present but also in the future, and the first contacts with German in the classroom were not favourable for the emergence of a successful, vivid and elaborate possible/ideal German-self. *I hate that language* [German], *and I will never turn back to it, never* […] *I don't care about speaking it or not.*

The following quote reveals how potent shame is in interfering with Annelise's actions, and in leading her to the perception of a bad self:

> I was dreading going to the German classes, it put a lot of pressure on me. I was struggling not to display too negative an image of myself, but in fact I failed, the only image of myself I could display was one of a stupid girl. It's the way I felt and it's the way *she* [the teacher] made me feel, with her devaluing gaze, with her downgrading comments. Yes, I felt I had a lot of pressure on my shoulders, as I was living in a region where the language that is spoken is very close to German … You see, I think I thought, unconsciously, that I *had to be* good at that language. But I eventually gave up trying. [her emphasis]

The negative aspects of German were so consuming that it seems that they took up Annelise's entire emotional space at the time, to the points that a variety of different detrimental emotions and negative affect were dominating and threatened her sense of self in a profound way:

> I was always on the lookout for mistakes, I was dreading that someone would laugh at me, of making a fool of myself. And if it turned out that I was ridiculous, I was suddenly extremely angry, angry at the teacher for ridiculing me, humiliating me in front of the others. I would ruminate over and over, remembering the scene

> where I had felt so humiliated and ashamed, and I resented her having done that. I was feeling very angry at her. Everything revolved around this!

Annelise's thoughts are a reflection of a judgement of the self as stupid, amiss and unworthy, and how she sees herself through the eyes of others, and they reveal the importance of her perception of how the others see her: "*I felt lower in status when I was in the German class, it made me feel unworthy or lacking in something. I was thinking to myself 'What do they think of me? I look like an idiot.' I felt vulnerable*." She further reports: "*I was always feeling very uncomfortable at the time, a kind of inferiority complex or something akin to this. I was always dreading the judgement of other people, be they my friends or my teachers*."

What is suggested in the data is that Annelise assigns responsibility for failure to internal factors − "*I am stupid*" − but as time passes, as her grades did not improve despite hard work, and because her persistence but lack of success may have been particularly painful given the implications for her self-concept, she ended up externalising the causes for her lack of success onto the teacher, who was "*incapable of helping me with my difficulties*," and "*too strict, and unfair*." Annelise's words underline that language learners are social beings whose emotional reactions and perceptions about the language they learn but also about their self largely depend on their relationships with their teachers/instructors within the instructional milieu. The following extract illustrates these points well:

> Well, I feel this is not the right way of doing things. They should let us say what we want to say without interrupting us, because, you see, it puts you to shame, because ... when you are repeatedly told that what you say is "not right" or "nonsense," you end up feeling that you are null, and you give up, you shut your mouth, you stop trying in the foreign language. It made me feel bad, because, I think … I cannot, well … I don't remember any moment when I wasn't interrupted by the teacher. Sometimes I was asked to repeat a word ten times. And this happened in front of my peers. Such a shame!

It is noteworthy that, in an attempt at preserving her self-esteem and feeling of self-worth, Annelise eventually preferred to pass for a lazy student, as laziness enables to save face and is not as threatening for one's sense of self as incompetency/inability:

> I was so fed up with telling her that I spent a lot of time revising the verbs, that I ended up saying that she must be right, I was lazy, and I eventually pretended not to have learnt them by heart. You see, saying that you spend hours learning something and not being able to remember or understand how it works, is really bad for your sense of self, well, it means that you are a blockhead. It's a shame! But when you say you are lazy, well, it's much better, or at least, far less damageable. You're safer, you're not regarded as someone stupid. It means that you can make progress. The situation can be mended.

After some time, Annelise's hidden shame was disguised under and transformed into expressions of anger, self-righteous rage and bitter feelings of being unappreciated and humiliated in the German course. The following lines describe the hypervigilance that usually accompanies fear about being shamed, and how the emotional pain of shame turns into anger and resentment, two protective emotions. Those were her ways of keeping shame at a distance, but they were never fail-safe. The following excerpt is illustrative of the idea that anger and resentment were never a good way for keeping shame at a distance and for fighting all the negative emotions she experienced during the German classes:

> I was extremely infuriated by her [the teacher's] attitude with me. I felt very angry at her, angry for not being able to retaliate by answering back. I resented her attitude. I was very angry at her, but it didn't help me to feel better. I feel it must have been a way to keep my head up, a way to avoid collapsing. But it wasn't of any good to me.

6.2.3 Chronic German-language shame

As was made clear in the former sections, Annelise's language shame occurs in *specific* situations, that is, she experiences shame when she fails to use the verbs in a correct way, and when her failure is exposed to the gaze of her classmates. This feeling of shame is reinforced whenever her teacher humiliates her in front of her peers.

It can be argued from what she says that her language shame seems to affect her person as a whole in a profound and enduring way. She expresses: "*My failure in speaking German fluently still corrupts my life. I am really tired of all this*. *It's really painful to remember all these shameful episodes*. […] *it's like I hadn't digested all this yet, like it was forever on my mind*…"

One may assume that, although she seems to enjoy the learning of other FLs, her shamed German-self regularly comes to the foreground. So, Annelise's words highlight the predominance of the shamed German-self, which seems to impact her current self. The shaming scenes that took place on numerous occasions in the German language class led to a shame-prone German-language self and to the internalisation of an unsuccessful language self and they have become part of her very identity, thus influencing the developing of her language-self images.

I sense that she is like a puppeteer trying to pull the strings of her different language selves, in an attempt to put at a distance the unsuccessful, shamed German-language self, but she seems to be unable to do so. She claims to have been burdened by this affect, to the point of thinking that "*I was null in German, and will always be. I will never go back to this language, never!*" In the course of the second interview, she alludes to the fact that, at a particular point in time, she "*got extremely depressed because, though hard I tried to progress, it was useless. I was a Blockhead. I will never be successful*." The data contain the following features of internalized German-language shame:

The shame-nervousness cycle

Annelise regrets that her learning of German was affected in a negative way by the fear of experiencing shame in the future:

> I was always expecting to be ridiculed by the teacher. I felt extremely nervous and I was therefore always on the lookout for mistakes. I was dreading being shamed all the time, because I thought that it was *me* the problem, I was incompetent at the core. [her emphasis]

Anticipatory and actual shame

The expectation/anticipation of humiliation and shame maintained Annelise in a state of "*frozen mind*," imagining herself failing in front of an imagined audience. She reports: "*I was paralysed with fear. I would remember the past shame experiences that took place in class and would see myself making a fool of myself in the future courses*." Both *anticipatory* shame and failure were as detrimental to her sense of self as *real/actual* shame and failure, and the following extract shows how both anticipatory and consequential shame work hand in hand in a recursive feedback loop: "*When it actually happened, I thought to myself: 'Well, you're just incapable of making progress. You're null!'*"

Ruminations, brooding and negative repetitive thoughts

The data are indicative of the fact that Annelise engages in ruminative thoughts, as if she was caught in a ruminative cycle. Rumination is a maladaptive form of self-reflection that provides individuals few or no insights into their attitudes and deeds. It seems that recalling her past experiences with learning German intensifies the emotional and psychological distress that Annelise was experiencing at the time.

Shame and fear of failure

Annelise explains how afraid she was of experiencing failure which, in her own words, would "*make me feel extremely* ashamed." The link between shame and failure is obvious in the following:

> I was afraid of showing a bad self in German, expecting to fail at any moment. It was especially the case with the verbs, I knew that it would be wrong, that I would be the object of criticism from the teacher, I knew that they would look at me, with their gaze on me, expecting me to fail. I remember all this, I can feel their gaze on me, I can hear their giggles…

Impossibility to visualise a successful German-self

Annelise's repeated shame experiences in the German classroom were fertile ground for the shaping of an unsuccessful German language learner, to the point that she is unable to visualise herself as a successful German user in the future: "*I have given up any hope to speak German fluently in the future. I am not interested in speaking that language anymore*."

Negative images of the German language and of the German-speaking community

The negative images of the German language – "*The language of the oppressor*" − that her parents conveyed during Annelise's childhood did not facilitate the emergence of an ideal/possible German-self (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009a, 2009b), and, given the familial context she was brought up in and her parents' reservations about using the German language, she had little reason, if any, to engage in the learning of this language, nor to invest in an undesirable community (Norton, 2001).

In short, the German-speaking people who live in Moselle did not symbolise the model of a German-speaking self that she could strive to achieve in the future. As she says:

> I have never dreamed of speaking German fluently, it's just a language that is imposed in the curriculum. I have never had any choice but to learn this language. I have never had any affinity with German nor with the people who speak it.

To conclude, the data have revealed the existence of situated and chronic shame, as well as external and internal shame.

6.2.4 The consequences of Annelise's German shame-proneness on her attitude and sense of self

The data sets convey the idea that repeated shame experiences were conducive to Annelise's developing particular attitudes to FLL:

Perfectionism

What struck me in Annelise's data is the way she depicts herself as "*someone who is obsessed with perfection and flawlessness*." The following excerpt illustrates this point well:

> I feel somehow that it's in me, this desire for flawlessness. I am never satisfied. You see, I am a successful pastry chef and chocolate maker, I have received the title of Best Worker of the year, it was an obligation for me, you see?

To the question "Why do you think that you never want to be taken as 'defective,' that you always want to perform?," she answered, after pondering for some time "*I feel it's because I don't want to be regarded as inferior to the others. I have to be on top, you see, on top of all things I do*." She adds the following interesting point, revealing that her perfectionistic tendencies can be interpreted as being the consequence of her fear of being negatively evaluated:

> I was so afraid of being ashamed and being seen in a negative light that I always wanted to be perfect. I so wanted to avoid being mocked or ridiculed, this feeling of downgrading and worthlessness, that I wanted to be perfect all the time.

These data are interesting in that they reveal an obsessional drive for perfection, a kind of straightjacket of perfectionism that Annelise seems to have imprisoned herself in for a long time, in order to avoid experiencing shame. Although it goes beyond the confines of this thesis, and although this cannot be generalized to every human being, it is noteworthy that striving for flawlessness and setting oneself excessively high-performance standards have been shown to be central characteristics of shame (Ashby, Rice, & Martin, 2006; Brown, 2006, 2009; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), and perfectionism and shame to be two sides of one coin, and that perfectionists would be particularly vulnerable to feeling shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). What is obvious is that Annelise's strive for perfectionism inhibits the use of the FL. As she reports during one of the classes when I asked her to answer a question "*I never volunteer to speak* [English] *unless I' m certain that I am a hundred percent right*."

The prominence of a dreaded/feared language-self

When looking closely at the data, it appears that, contrary to other domains, where she makes her best to be on top (in the pastry domain for instance), as regards German, Annelise may be more motivated by *avoiding* showing/displaying a bad German-self than by trying to reach/achieve a successful German-self. Let us hear her: "*I was obsessed with the idea of avoiding being ridiculed in the classroom. Spent hours revising my verbs. I was very much afraid of being seen as defective. Being good was not my priority*."

6.2.5 The transfer of shame

Annelise's own perceptions of how shame was transferred

Annelise's experiences of shame with the learning of German were so negative that they impacted not only the way she felt when learning German and her perception of this language but also the way she learnt and used the English language. What she says is very much revealing of the way a shame may be transported from one domain to the other:

> Every time I was having a new teacher, I always dreaded that, like a contagious disease, the bad things that took place in German would somehow corrupt the learning of the other language, and that the same things would happen in the new course. It's still the case today. I remember, the first day you came in the classroom, I thought to myself "Well, it's going to happen again, all these humiliations, all these feelings of inferiority, the feeling of being incompetent." I was dreading being shamed again.

She also reports how she had been dreading that:

> All the negative aspects of the learning of German, the humiliations, the feeling of incompetency and shame and inferiority would also be present in the English course, especially when I used the verbs, and the grammatical tenses which have always been a problem for me.

She further added:

> I was expecting the same bad things would happen in the next German course, and also in other courses such as the English courses. For instance, if I knew I would have an English test in grammar, I feared that I would fail the test. I was always thinking that nothing good can come out of the language classes.

It is interesting to see how she started to view other aspects of her life as being extremely negative as well, as if she dreaded her failure in learning the German verbs would contaminate/generalize to the learning of other school subjects: "*I was somehow expecting, or*

rather dreading that my problems with the German verbs would also be found with the irregular English verbs, or that I would also have problems with Maths."

Unsurprisingly, it was a particular domain of FLL that she was dreading would contaminate the learning of English:

> These problems with the weak and strong verbs in German, I was convinced that I would have the same difficulties with the English verbs [the irregular verbs]. Whenever I use the English verbs, when I make mistakes with, say, the present perfect, or the preterit, I fear to be again in a situation where I would be ridiculed and mocked. It would mean that I am null everywhere. Every time I make mistakes in English, it brings me back then, in the bad old days of my learning German, I can remember her gaze on me, like I was rubbish.

The following excerpt highlights how she experienced the learning of German as such a negative endeavour that she was afraid of experiencing its negative aspects in other domains too, showing the gangrenous nature of shame:

> I don't know why, but when you are bad at something, it's as if this badness would somehow [hesitates] contaminate other domains. You see, I told you I used to be humiliated in the German courses, I hated learning this language, and this disliking of German, somehow, well, I don't know how to put it, but I feel that it kind of influenced negatively the learning of English, although my first experiences with English were extremely positive and joyful. [...] I loved English from the start, I had a lovely teacher to start with, and I found it rather easy. But then, this German teacher really ruined everything ... She spoilt everything, I mean, her attitude was so humiliating that the feelings I experienced in the German classes, I was dreading that I would also experience them in English.

Annelise's words beautifully illustrate how negative affect, such as the feeling of inferiority or incompetency may be also transferred from one domain to another:

> I thought that the feelings of inferiority, of being different, like the feelings of incompetency, of being bad, would contaminate the learning of English. The feeling of shame and inadequacy in German still corrupts my academic life, I always go back to it whenever I fail at doing something. It reverberates on the present day, even if I am competent in my job. You always think of yourself "Well, you're going to display an incompetent self, it's in your genes, learning a language is not for you." It somehow changed my way of thinking, not only my attitude.

She also provides an insightful description of the way a FL is connected with identity and may impact on one's sense of self in a profound and enduring manner:

> I have always felt that a foreign language has something to do with the self. It has to do with the most intimate, but also the most vulnerable sides of you, it reveals your weaknesses, it betrays what you want to keep hidden in the most intimate

> parts of your mind. But I think it's a personal opinion. […] Some will feel devalued when they fail to learn a language while others won't, they don't care. [sobs]

My own perception of how shame impacted on Annelise's in-class attitude and behaviour

Annelise's negative and shameful memories of what had happened during her learning of German, all these bad and shame experiences impacted on and interfered with the learning of English in such a way that I could feel that, during the English classes, she was at times completely stressed and panicky at the mere thought of being asked to answer questions in English.

What was noticeable during the classes is that she displayed a high level of anxiety about practicing particular tasks, such as answering questions in the TL, and I noted a particularly higher level of anxiety related to the use of the irregular verbs, something which made her feel a little uncomfortable every time she failed at using the appropriate form and correct grammatical tense. Her face would become red and her shoulders would recede. She did not seem to be disinterested in the learning of this language, yet displayed a certain level of lack of confidence in her abilities. She was always sitting at the back of the classroom, and never volunteered to give answers, unless she was solicited, and once she was, it was obvious that she was doing her best to produce "*perfect*" sentences. During one of the courses, she said that "*I never volunteer to speak unless I am certain that I am a hundred percent right*." This attitude piqued my curiosity, and is at the origin of my desire to interview her regarding her FLL journey.

In other words, the bad memories of the experiences of shame that took place in the German classes had a negative influence on the way she approached the learning of English and behaved in class.

6.2.6 My role as an interviewer

In the course of the first interview, Annelise spoke about all sorts of things related to her FLL journey and described with a wealth of details the way she felt in the different language classes. Yet, she did not provide any further details regarding the shame that she experienced during her FLL journey. She used a number of cover terms for shame. I had to wait until some closer relationship between her and me was built before both of us used the term 'shame' during the course of the second interview.

What struck me is that, in the course of the first interview, she said she had problems with stress, nervousness, anxiety and lack of self-confidence, all emotions closely related to shame, but she did not name shame as an issue, as if she had been struggling to articulate this feeling. As an interviewer, I have grown aware that it can be profoundly shaming just to admit to feeling/having experienced shame on a regular basis. But, even if she did not speak of shame, I could nonetheless feel that a pervasive sense of shame was part of her experience as a language learner.

Shame was underlying her narrative. I have had ears for the quiet humiliation and shame-related trauma hidden in other participants' early relationships with humiliating teachers, and Annelise told me about her deep-seated anxiety and debilitating nervousness with an insistence that I found rather suspicious. Her anxiety and lack of self-esteem seemed to be cover terms for something deeper. Shame, because of its association with vulnerability, suffering and exposure, demands to be concealed.

In the course of the second interview, Annelise acknowledged that her feelings of humiliation and embarrassment, which she had experienced many times in the German courses, might have been cover terms for shame. The following quote illustrates this point well:

> I think I dreaded [pauses, hesitates] being excluded from the others, perhaps fear of being seen as someone different. Fear of feeling defective as a whole. And whenever I failed, I was experiencing something much deeper than embarrassment. […] When I think about it, you may be right, shame [whispering], yes, that's it! Especially when she [the teacher] was repeating that I was "dumm" [she cries].

However, it is to be noted that no change in Annelise's motivation to improve her level in German occurred, and she did not seem to draw profit from our conversations. Contrary to a number of participants, I felt that I did not manage to contribute to the emergence of a more positive German-self. As regards the learning of German, she seemed to be stuck in the past, unable to move on. The following excerpt summarizes the idea: "*I will never go back to the learning of German, never! It's a real pain in the a…, it really sucks!*"

Shame-based individuals want to keep shame hidden, avoid looking at it, let alone talking about it. Although there is ample evidence in the research that shame draws much of its power from being kept in the dark, and that bringing it into the light and share it is conducive to disempower it (Tangney & Fischer, 1995), the data reveal that, for Annelise, naming shame and engaging in a retrospective analysis of her German-related experience of shame is not the path to its resolution, although it may have been essential in liberating her

from it, and although the interviewing process allowed Annelise to engage in self-soothing, it seems that it did not lead to resilience nor healing. I was hoping that, through our conversations, she would reach new insights or some understandings that could have eventually reduced her German-related discomfort and sense of failure. I hoped that our conversations would be conducive to Annelise being less fearful of experiencing shame in the future, but it was clearly visible that being interviewed made her re-live the same distressing shaming scenes over again, making her feel angrier, sadder, and even more agitated. Many a time I could feel her lack of self-esteem and confidence regarding the learning of German and English.

Shame could be expressed, revealed, but not expiated. The interview session – in all modesty, a form of therapeutic encounter − enabled Annelise to reconstruct new meanings from her past experiences with FLL and to bring to the surface the unacknowledged emotion, but it seems that the process of disclosure, which inevitably involves the possibility of showing a vulnerable self and the risk of being rejected, led to more shame in Annelise. Even if she regularly alludes to her success as a pastry chef and repeatedly puts her pastry-chef self to the fore, she reports with some regret:

> It's good to talk about all this, it somehow … liberates me from something very painful that I kept hidden for a long time. But unfortunately, it doesn't do anything else, what happened still affects me today. Although I am very successful in my job, I think the painful experiences with German will remain vivid. […] I am always on the lookout for mistakes, always dreading to fail at something.

While some interviewees undertook a new life path after the interviewing sessions and the processing of difficult experiences with language learning, Annelise did not embark on a journey of self-discovery, and she left me with the feeling that she remained incapable of handling her emotional states in a healthy and forward-pointing manner. The awareness of her proclivity to experience shame in the German classes and that this feeling had contaminated the learning of English did not open the gateway to her healing.

Expressing herself enabled her to share and explore shame at a deep level but did not allow her to be redeemed from this lasting invading feeling. Her "life story" may not have allowed her to endow her life as a language learner with unity and purpose (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Her shame imprisons her in the past, preventing her from moving on as regards the learning of German. She does not draw lessons from her past experiences with language shame. Instead, she ruminates and re-lives constantly the episodes that led to her feeling of language incompetency. The mere reminiscence of what happened in the German

classes is a source of stress, and inevitably triggers feelings of profound sadness. As she reports:

> I can't forget what happened in the German classes. I think I will never forget it. It makes me feel bad. The way the teacher looked at me with disdain, the way she asked me to stand up and recite the verbs by heart, I was so embarrassed, not being able to utter a single word, a babbling child, I was panic-stricken. I would have loved to disappear into a mouse-hole. […] All this has left an indelible imprint.

The initial negative state in which she found herself in for so many years is not redeemed nor "*cured*" (her own word) or salvaged through the interview process, and the interview process did not offer her pathways for the development of a happier and more balanced language self, and failed to lead to a sense of psychological well-being deriving from a feeling of progress and coherent positive resolution through the processing and narrating of difficult language-related life experiences.

To conclude, the question that remains is how much time would have been necessary to implement positive changes in her motivation but also in her language self-image and perception of herself as a German language learner/user? It seems that the time frame of the research, although it enabled to instil some reflection in her, was not sufficient to initiate transformation. A longitudinal data collection may have therefore been more suited to such a transformation and maybe redemption from her past shamed language self. Perhaps a different research context and listener/interviewer would have produced a different account.

6.2.7 Discussion

The objective of the section was to investigate the role of shame in influencing Annelise's learning of FLs. Part of the difficulty in analysing the data comes from the overlapping of data. Another researcher might have organised the findings in a different way. The analysis of the data has shown the complexity of Annelise's different language selves, and this complexity lies in the fact that Annelise seems to put her different language selves alternatively to the front.

Sometimes, it is the moderately successful English-self that she puts to the fore, at other times, it is the successful and positive Hebrew and Lithuanian selves that are prominent, and finally, she remembers numerous painful memories related to her German language-self.

But certainly, one of the most interesting findings has been the gangrenous nature of shame, that is to say, what takes place in one domain may affect profoundly and in an irredeemable way what takes place in another domain, and shame, like a gangrene, may spoil, deteriorate or corrupt the whole system. Hers was a unique case of the transferability of shame from one language to another language.

When one looks closely at the data, they can see the importance of 'critical experiences' in the developing of language-learning interest or disinterest, and also in the contamination of an emotion. These critical experiences may include critical events/experiences, but also critical persons (Kelchtermans, 1993). These critical experiences (the shaming experiences arising from a humiliating teacher) that took place in the past have been assigned particular significance by Annelise, who regards them as being the source of a change in her attitude towards the learning of a FL. The data have interestingly revealed that narratives that capture the process of learning another language may prove useless for certain students like Annelise, who do not exploit the sense-making function of narratives to work through a better understanding of what happens during the long and often taxing journey of learning another language.

Annelise's language shame comes from internal (e.g. perceived feeling of low proficiency, feeling of hopelessness) and external factors (e.g. the pressure of living in a region where German is a language that is frequently used, family distaste for and distrust of German, teacher's and peers' attitude to mistakes, system of evaluation and error correction). It may also be hypothesised that human behavioural responses to shame are largely shaped by genetic and cultural heritage, as well as the critical role of the family and the academic context.

It is worth noting though that Annelise's story constitutes an enigma. A well-balanced young woman brought up in a loving multi-lingual family, and used to codeswitching from one language to the other from a very early age, it appears surprising that she should have been so much affected by her negative experiences with the learning of German, to the point of fearing that her feelings of humiliation and shame would also be found when she was learning English, and that these feelings were also clearly visible during the interview sessions, which is a proof, as she interestingly says, that she has not "digested all this."

It seems to me that, from a social constructionist conceptualisation of the self, although Annelise understood the learning of FLs as a path through which she could make sense of herself and others (Bruner, 1990; Ricoeur, 1984), she seemed to be still deeply moved by her failure at learning German. To put it simply, German seems to be Annelise's Achilles' heel

and the shame that she experienced in German was so powerful that it contaminated the learning of another FL.

6.3 CONCLUSION

What have Maria's and Annelise's stories taught us about language shame? In both cases, the data have shown an overlapping of shame and a number of other emotions, such as embarrassment, feeling of low self-esteem, and humiliation, which made the analysis of the data rather daunting. There is no doubt that the present project calls for further investigation of language-related shame and of its detrimental effect on learners' engagement with FLL.

The data has made clear that, in Maria's and Annelise's own words, participating in the research and being interviewed enabled them to reach a more conscious understanding of their language learning process. But, while Maria has been cognisant of her reasons for disinvesting from English learning and of the role shame played in her academic life and in her everyday life, it was the very process of interviewing − which was emotionally ridden − which enlightened Annelise on the detrimental impact shame had had on her learning of German, and on her fear of experiencing the same situations in English. All the years before the interviews, Annelise's shame remained silent, carefully concealed under her strive for perfectionism and flawlessness, and this emotion proved difficult and painful to unmask, while Maria had been cognisant of her shame personality and was able to talk about it freely.

However, while it is undeniable that narratives may be useful in constructing a narrative identity, they may not serve as "meditational tools" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011) that enable interviewees to make sense of their lived experiences. What is discernible in the data is the idea that the interviewing process, which corresponds to McAdams and Pals's framework of personality (2006), seems not to have been conducive to changes in their attitudes to the learning of certain FLs.

The initial conditions in which the two participants used to live as children, and their 'affordances' were totally different. While Maria was not provided with the opportunity to envision herself as a successful language user of *any* FL in the future, Annelise was brought up in a family background in which, except for German, FLs are not only used on a daily basis, but they are also valued and seen in a positive light. Her family environment has

provided her with opportunities for encounters with and practice of a diversity of FLs, and has been influential in terms of the development of the woman's different language self-concepts.

As regards Annelise, compared with Maria, there is clearly an additional dimension to the learning of a FL, that is, the affective level, and some languages are seen as an affective heritage. Yet, although provided with extremely favourable family conditions, Annelise was not able to fight her German-related ingrained shame. It can be said that, to some extent, her family was the cradle for her future disengagement from German learning, as the members of her family, in particular the person she reported to have been particularly close to, her grandmother, conveyed − consciously and unconsciously − the idea that German was not a good language. Said differently, and although it may be far-fetched, her family environment may have sowed the seeds for the problems she experienced later in the German classes, and still later, as a result of contamination, in the English classes. In a similar way, Maria's family background also instigated her future disengagement from the learning of all FLs.

To conclude, it can be said that both participants were good storytellers, yet it seems that the interviewing process did not enable the development of resilient egos, nor did it seem to have allowed their language selves to evolve. In other words, they were unable to adapt to challenging situations and restore positive affect in response to their difficult emotional experiences (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). The interviews were just a means to tell about their past shameful language shame, but their lives as language learners seem to be a repetition of negative experiences that they are unable to process.

Chapter 7
Data analysis: Combating shame

"You look and you see one fascinatingly complex pattern, the light changes, you accidentally move, or deliberately shake the kaleidoscope, and you see − composed of the same elements − a somewhat different pattern" (Stanley, 1992, p. 87).

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the following sections, I present the most significant findings to emerge from the data of two of my focal participants' FLL stories. My main goal in this chapter is to understand the reasons why some learners manage to overcome shame experiences, develop strategies of resilience, and keep a sustained interest in FLL despite setbacks, while others do not. What the two participants, Linda and Lucie (their pseudonyms) have in common is a clear vision of their L2 self, and, in contrast with the other participants in the study, they cultivate an English identity and relate to the wilder world, and thus have developed a clear and elaborate vision of themselves using the target language. The main themes that emerge in their stories is the way they promote this vision in the international community of English speakers, maintain it and sustain it through to the fulfilment of their dream and how this vision helps them become resilient in shameful situations.

Their narratives provide an interesting insight into the way past experiences and sociocultural context (including the home, the institutional settings, the activities in which students engage, and the wider contexts of the family and society) may influence present and future learning, and their stories reveal links between vision, identity and shame. Linda's and Lucie's stories teach us that the language learning experiences the students have had can positively or negatively influence the way they react to shame. The stories of the two participants demonstrate that there are ways of fighting negative and demotivating emotions like shame or other crippling emotions.

Finally, what is remarkable in both stories is the acknowledgement by the participants themselves of the transformative and developmental role of interviews in fostering the emergence of a more positive self-image and in the forming and reinforcing of a successful L2 self that is necessary for the resilience to shame. Let us hear Linda's voice first.

7.2 LINDA'S STORY

The section below deals with the data generated from the interviews with a fifteen-year old French female participant, who will be referred to using her pseudonym, Linda. The choice of this participant was made because, as a result of her extended retrospection and introspection, she yielded precious information about language shame and other crippling emotions. I conducted three interviews with the recorder on, and just as with the other participants, I sought to build warm and empathetic relationships with her, in order to encourage disclosure and ensure prolonged participation in the study.

It is noteworthy that the interviews took into consideration other aspects of her life than L2 learning, like her relations with her parents (which I had the opportunity to observe during my weekly visits to her home), the hobbies she had, the sports she practised, in order to allow the complexity of her L2-related self-concept to come to the surface, and to gain a more holistic understanding of her language-learning history. The weekly meetings with this participant in her home (as I was giving Linda private tuition, for a period of nine months, I met with her every week for two hours) enabled me to obtain not only a rich view of her as a FL learner from her own perspective and from the perspective of her relatives, but they also allowed me to gain a more intimate picture of her as a multidimensional and complex human being.

For a better understanding of this case, it is to be noted that, although Linda's FLL journey may appear as a successful one, and permeated with exceptionally positive experiences, her attitude to academic English changed significantly following a salient, isolated and unique episode in the classroom, and we will see how her story offers insights into the capacity of conscious vision/visualisation in contributing to developing resilience and fighting L2-related shame and other debilitating emotions.

7.2.1 Linda's background

Linda is a fifteen-year old French teen ager. She is the younger of two girls. On my first visits to her home, I notice that there is a warm and inviting atmosphere in the house. Linda is an extravert and eloquent girl, always smiling and looking at the positive sides of life, and her parents depict her as being joyful and optimistic. She practises different kinds of sports, like horse-riding and golf, and she is particularly proud of her swimming and drama skills. For a duration of nine months, I gave her two-hour private tuition (French grammar and spelling) every week. I interviewed her three times with the recorder on, and on several occasions, she discussed matters regarding her most intimate thoughts and very willingly confided her foreign language learning journey during our numerous informal conversations. The first interview with her took place when she was fifteen, that is, two years after she experienced a shame episode in the English classroom, an episode which she reported to have had lasting negative consequences on her 'current' self (i.e. her self at the time of the first interview).

Linda recalls happily that from her early childhood, she has been "*immersed*" in an English-speaking environment, and has been given the opportunity to experience a different culture. Her father's duties as an engineer took the family to the United States when the girl was one, and they stayed there until she was eight, before returning to France, where the family originally comes from. From the age of five to the age of eight, she went to an international private school in which the medium of instruction was English and where there were a lot of overseas students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. During this time abroad, the adolescent was exposed to a considerable amount of spoken English, and she vividly remembers that "*learning and speaking English was fun and natural*," and these years remain a fond memory of her childhood, as she reports:

> When I was living in the US, I spoke English with my friends at school or when we were playing together. I heard my parents and sister speak this language, my friends spoke it too, you see, I was kind of immersed in this language. It was very natural and fun. [...] It was not like when you learn a language at school. [...] It was easier, I didn't think about the rules or worry about mistakes like in class.

7.2.2 A sustained and vivid vision of her successful L2-using self

Linda's house is full of English resources, and crammed with English or American books and magazines. Additionally, both English and French are spoken in her home, and the members of the family constantly codeswitch back and forth between the two languages. Based on the

Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), her level of English is high B2, that is to say, she is an independent/proficient user, also characterized in the Council of Europe nomenclature as having vantage/effective operational proficiency, and it is noteworthy that speaking this language procures her a lasting feeling of personal contentment and fulfilment, and a sense of a direction and meaning in her life. As she reports enthusiastically:

> I wouldn't live without FLs, and especially English, it's what gives a meaning and a sense to my life. [...] It's a part of myself, of my identity. [...] I have got this goal you see, living there, speaking the language, being a part of these people.

It is interesting to see that the girl knows the value of possessing English language skills for her future life and the data show that she had this purpose very early in her life. Undoubtedly, this prolonged stay abroad sowed in her a seed of thirst for practising the TL, was the trigger for her enduring investment in FLL/English learning and impacted her learning trajectory positively. Linda has a strong interest in English and in the English-speaking world, an interest which she has developed through extremely positive, pleasant and rewarding experiences early in her language learning journey, and which led her to form a vivid, elaborate and detailed vision of a positive future self (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013). This vivid elaborate and detailed vision of her English-using self in the US is illustrated as follows:

> I started to imagine using English as an adult when I was 8 or something... I imagined that English would be my working language. I was dreaming of marrying an American someday [giggles]. I have always had very clear images of myself living in the US. I visualise myself there, it's more than a dream actually, it's concrete, you see.

What Linda seems to be particularly interested in is the 'authenticity' of her out-of-class L2-using experience. This is expressed in the following:

> The way I learnt English was all natural, [...] it's different from the way students usually learn languages, they learn them at school. I think the way it [this language] is taught at school is not a good way. [...] I was lucky because I was from very early on provided with *authentic* English experiences since my infancy, while in class, well, I think that the teachers of English don't have the proper accent, and what they ask from us is too artificial. I was placed in genuine situations of communication, real exchanges with my friends. In class, you see, it's artificial. (my emphasis)

When referring to her first contacts with the English language, the data transpire with positivity and she seems to display a profound sense of well-being and self-esteem and her

discourse evinces great certainty about her future, leaving me with the impression that, from very early on in her life, Linda had been experiencing a powerful sense of authenticity with the FL, which had inspired her school years and FLL experience and had even permeated every aspects of her daily life, giving her a sense of connectedness, mindfulness, and even endowing her life with a cosmic dimension, as illustrated in the following:

> Mastering English makes me feel good and procures me such a joy! I feel somehow that it is what gives me a sense of being and meaningfulness. I feel connected to the people who speak this language in the world.

What is particularly striking is that, contrary to the overwhelming majority of the French students, who regret that they are unable to present their 'true' self when using a foreign language, speaking English is for Linda the best expression of what she *is* at the core, as illustrated in the girl's forceful words, which reveal that she equates *speaking* the TL with *being*, once more illustrating the intertwining of language and the self*:* "*When I am the most me is when I speak English.*"

Furthermore, there are many instances in Linda's story that speaking the TL is not a mere unrealistic and unattainable fantasy in Linda's life, it is a sensory experience rooted in reality, as she uses this language in conversations with her parents, and also with international students the family recurrently entertains through the Rotary Foundation, and she has gained a sense of confidence with the language and delights in recalling her parents' and sister's words: "*my dad and my sister, they say I speak English with mastery*" [big smile]. Not only does she use English, but she does so successfully and speaking English with her loved ones revives pleasurable memories of using this language long ago. It is noteworthy that she has been provided from early on with the opportunity to authenticate her current self to a desired/ideal future self. Intensive early exposure to communicative, meaningful English and the successful role models represented by her father and quadrilingual sister, played a key role in the forming of a clear, powerful, and sustained vision of an ideal/successful L2 speaking self. These models were concrete/tangible templates that helped Linda craft her own ideal L2 self (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014), and they were instrumental in her perception of her future L2 self guide as "plausible and within her reach" (Oettingen & Thorpe, 2006). It is interesting to see how her goal of using her ideal/desired English-self in the United States, from a nebulous dream, becomes tangible, precise and detailed as time goes by: "*I am closer to my goal as time goes by. I see myself there. […] It's more than a dream. […] I visualize*

myself there, I see myself doing my shopping, I imagine having children, it's concrete, you see."

7.2.3 Writing-related shame

A striking feature of Linda's data, which I have rarely found in learners of this age, is her tendency to discuss her sense of self in respect to specific EFL domains, to make cross-skill comparisons across the domains of writing and speaking, and to hierarchize between the two. She has developed a complete mastery of the English language in oral skills through her prolonged stay in the US and her regular contacts with English-speaking people from all over the world (her parents regularly entertain students originating from different parts of the globe), and she has therefore developed a strong *speaking* L2 self, and is very proud that she is passing for a native but, after some time, she confides − somewhat reluctantly − that she has some difficulties with *writing* it, since she "*learnt English orally, in an unconscious manner, in the United States,*" that is, she developed a good passive knowledge of the language as she was there. On one of our exchanges, she acknowledges with regret*:* "*But the writing is not so good, I make a lot of spelling mistakes. Sometimes I am really ashamed of all the mistakes I make. I wish I was able to be as proficient in writing English.*"

In contrast to her speaking self-concept, Linda's writing self-concept seems to be not so positive, and many of her doubts about her ability and efficacy in writing English come from a comparison with her ability in speaking the TL. I would like to stress here that Linda is one of the rare participants to have reported on the experience of shame when *writing* another language, as the overwhelming majority of the participants in the current study confided their *speaking*-related experiences of shame, and focused on the role of accent in the eliciting of this emotion and on the heightened risk of showing a bad self when speaking the TL.

There is ample evidence that she is conscious of the existence of two clearly distinct linguistic selves, namely the 'English-speaking self' and the 'English-writing self'. These comments left me with the impression that, in a Janus bifrons manner, there were two persons in Linda, one successful English-speaking self, and the other, not so successful, English-writing self, which it seemed to me that she was somehow putting at a distance, in order to preserve her self-esteem and linguistic confidence. It is her English-speaking self that she constantly puts to the fore, in order to maintain a sense of confidence in her linguistic abilities and the prominence of her English-speaking self is obvious in the following: "*What matters is*

how you speak English, not how you write, especially when you are abroad." Yet, it is noteworthy that, on several occasions, Linda expressed deep regrets at being unable to be as proficient in writing English. An interesting instance of a reference to this dichotomy between the two skills can be found in the following excerpt:

> I am not really proficient in written English. The problem is I write as I pronounce, I make a lot of spelling mistakes, and it puts me to shame to realize that I write the words like I pronounce them. I wish I was able to be as proficient in writing English!

7.2.4 The shamed writing-L2-self exposed

There appears to have been in Linda's successful FLL journey an isolated, yet salient experience to which she seems to have attributed some particularly negative affective significance, and when she started reporting on this particularly taxing episode, the emotion was palpable and the narrative triggered a number of mixed negative emotions. I have decided to give this experience the term of 'critical/pivotal experience/event,' or 'turning point,' that is, an incident in her journey as an exceptionally successful English learner that led to some change in her self-perception as a proficient English user and in her vision of her L2 self, and to a reassessment of her self-concept.

Linda's joy at L2 learning, and her sense of fulfilment, achievement and accomplishment with English were overshadowed for two years by an episode which took place in class when she was in her third year of college (i.e. at the age of thirteen), and which she claims has left an indelible imprint in her emotional memory (as evidenced by her tears during the interviews). Let us hear her:

L: […] Yes, an episode which I remember very well, like it took place yesterday [sobs]. This teacher behaved badly with me. It happened just once, but I remember it very well because, you see, after that episode, things were no longer what they had been before. [...] I felt really bad, and disgusted by her attitude, and very angry at her.
D: Can you develop please?
L: We had a home written assignment in English, and I spent some time to write it, and I managed to write something good for once, and all by myself, but the teacher, she gave me the copy back, and shouted: "You have cheated, Linda. you *can't* have done that alone! You *can't* have written this by yourself, Linda. Next time, don't ask your sister to do your homework! You are not capable of expressing yourself the way you do in the work!" (Teacher's emphasis, as reported by Linda).
D: You say you still remember this episode like it was yesterday… Do you mean it still affects you today?
L: Yes, it's still in my memory, and it had and still has an impact on the way I feel in the English classes today. […] I have no pleasure in the classroom, I just go there. I have

> become detached in some way, although the teacher now is fine. I attend the courses, I don't take part, you see? I love to speak English with friends, with my parents and sister, but not in the classroom, I think I have lost the enjoyment in the English classes.

It is to be noted that Linda first did not use the word 'shame,' and it is when I asked her what she really experienced at that moment, that she developed further:

> First, I felt really bad, when she handed the copy back to me. It was so humiliating. And it was so unfair, I had done it all by myself, I was sort of proud you see, it was a progress! But her gaze on me, the way she gave me the copy back, the way she shouted at me, and the others' gaze on me, it was so hard! I felt so ashamed!

When I asked her to reflect on the way she felt at this particular moment, she seemed to ponder and the following excerpt reveals how shame is associated with self-perceptions of unfavourable social devaluing:

> Well, at the beginning, I felt downgraded, belittled, and humiliated, because the others were looking at me, they heard her say that I was not able to write good English. I remember I felt ashamed, frustrated, disgusted, and very very angry.

As I did not understand why an isolated episode had evoked such negative feelings in her, I asked her to dig further into her feelings at the moment, and she said after a while:

> You see, all the shame I had felt all these years, the shame at not being able to be proficient in writing English, all this came up to the surface again. It was something that I wanted to keep hidden, and suddenly, my incompetence was revealed.

The data seem to indicate that the episode re-activated something that she had managed to put at a distance, and to conceal for some time, that is, it disclosed not only her incompetent L2-writing self, but also the shame that she felt all these years when she realized that she was not competent at writing:

> I felt the others' gaze on me. It was so shameful to have this incompetency at writing English revealed, it was so intimate you see, nobody knew I felt ashamed of my writing, nobody knew in the class that I had a lot of difficulties with writing, they all thought I was proficient in both skills, but suddenly I lost my [hesitating] status as the best student in English, you see […] I had managed to hide the difficulties with writing all these years.

The following excerpt is very much suggestive of a state of psychological confusion and the autonomous neurophysiological and behavioural reactions usually associated with shame:

"*I was paralysed when she shouted at me, I was unable to answer back or to think clearly, it was like I had a fog in my head, I could feel my heartbeat and my face blushing.*"

The words above reveal the complexity of what she experienced, which can be regarded as a mixture of different negative and taxing emotions, such as humiliation, shame, frustration, anger and disgust. But what they also interestingly highlight is Linda's loss of status, and the shame of feeling ashamed of her perceived lack of proficiency in written English, and having this shame suddenly exposed was undoubtedly an excruciatingly painful feeling. The event directly challenged the grandiose public image of her competent English-using self that she had had for a long time. The following quote shows how she perceived she lost her social status in the language class and her fear of losing her peers' admiration for being the best-in-class performer:

> I felt utterly desperate, angry and felt the situation so unfair! All of a sudden, I lost all the admiration and respectability I had acquired thanks to my proficiency in English. I felt so ashamed that the others could see that I was not proficient at writing English, […] I think I was ashamed that they could see my incompetency!

What I feel is that what happened was a signal that Linda's positive feeling and pride of having been able to write her assignment alone have been interrupted, and this disruption of joy is a feature that can be found in descriptions of shame in the literature (Nathanson, 1987). This is particularly evident in Linda's words: "*I knew I had done well in my written assignment, you see, I was so proud of what I had accomplished alone. I had spent pretty much time on the work. But suddenly, I felt all my pride collapse.*"

Her narrative reveals that external sources of evaluation/feedback can be significant for learners' sense of self and identity, and it illustrates the way Linda perceives she is seen by the teacher and her peers:

> I lost the admiration in the eyes of my peers, not in my own eyes, because I knew that I had not cheated, I knew that I had done my work alone, I knew that I had absolutely nothing to reproach me with, nothing to be guilty about. But At that moment, I felt so ashamed, diminished, devalued and degraded. It affected my vision of myself very deeply. How she behaved was really devaluing, like saying to you that you are just... rubbish [giggles nervously]. You can't do that to somebody, it's such a shame!

Linda's reaction to this episode leaves no doubt that, mingled with other negative emotions, it was shame that she experienced at that moment, as this debilitating feeling generalised (momentarily) to her whole self. Linda feels that it is not *the action* of cheating

(asking her sister to do the job), which she actually did not do, that the teacher criticizes, but her *entire self*:

> Her [the teacher's] reaction meant that she doubted my capacity at being good at English because she attributed my good work to the fact that I had been helped by my sister. Actually, it meant that *I* was null (her emphasis), I was incapable of improving, it threatened my dignity and affected my self-image and my sense of identity very deeply because it meant that I was naturally bad. She challenged my identity. [I had to interrupt the interview for a while because her narrative was interspersed with sobs].

The words above corroborate H. B. Lewis's (1987b) argument that shame arises out of the disapproval from a significant other and highlight that the source of the shame is the individual's thoughts about their selves, that is, the stimulus that leads to the shame feeling is negative thoughts about the self.

To conclude, Linda's reaction to this episode is reminiscent of Markus and Nurius' contention that:

> When a self-concept is challenged, there is likely to be a sudden and powerful flood of bad feeling. The negative feeling that wells up at such times, whether shame, embarrassment, fear, or anger, may be a direct consequence of the activation of a variety of negative possible selves and their associated fears and anxieties. (1986, p. 964).

To the question of how this shame materialized and impacted the learning of English, she replied:

> I refused to take part in conversations in the classroom. I stepped back. I didn't want to invest in the learning of classroom English anymore. I still loved to speak it with my dad, my sister and my friends, but she [the teacher] didn't hear the sound of my voice anymore, unless she forced me to speak. In fact, I think I had a grudge against her. Yes, I think that I was just making an appearance, and that's all.

7.2.5 External versus internal shame

It might be interesting to wonder if Linda, although she unequivocally refers to what happened as being a taxing episode of *shame*, experienced shame proper or another shade of a demotivating and painful emotion, such as embarrassment or humiliation. It is noteworthy that she feels that the criticism she receives from the teacher generalizes to her whole self. Remember she said that "*Actually, it meant that I was null (her emphasis), I was incapable of*

improving, it threatened my dignity and affected my self-image and my sense of identity very deeply because it meant that I was naturally bad."

However, a thorough perusal of the data invites us to understand that what happened was the exposure of her not so proficient/competent language self in front of her classmates. She was humiliated/shamed but perhaps one may wonder if she felt really *ashamed*. In order to understand better what she experienced, it might be interesting to make distinction between two kinds of shame (see section 2.4.4). It is evident that what Linda experienced is criticism and put down from her teacher, that is, external shame.

The feeling evoked is a perception of being criticised, devalued, and disapproved of by her teacher for an action – cheating − that is regarded as undesirable and unattractive (Gilbert, 1998; Tangney, 1996), but an action which she did not actually do. What is revealed to her peers all of a sudden is her lack of competence in writing English, and being under the evaluating gaze of teacher and peers is undoubtedly a most taxing experience for the adolescent.

However, on re-reading Linda's data over again, I could not feel that she experienced the feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, and disconnection usually associated with shame, feelings that a number of non-resilient participants reported having experienced during their FLL journey.

From what Linda claims, there is all likelihood that what she experienced this time in the classroom was actually shame, but not toxic, pathological shame, that is, the shame that involves the permanent internalization of the feeling and becomes a part of the individual's negative identity, a dispositional trait, and leads to shame-proneness (the tendency to feel shame in diverse situations), as expressed in John Bradshaw's words:

> Toxic shame, the shame that binds you, is experienced as the all-pervasive sense that 'I am flawed and defective as a human being'. Toxic shame is no longer an emotion that signals our limits, it is a state of being, a core identity. Toxic shame gives you a sense of worthlessness, a sense of failing and falling short as a human being. Toxic shame is a rupture of self with the self. (2005, p. 29)

7.2.6 Fighting shame back

Linda was able to fight shame back thanks to several factors:

Linda's initial conditions

Living in the United States was an extremely happy time of Linda's life, "*perhaps the happiest moment of my life,*" and this prolonged stay in the US was a solid foundation in her life and developed in her "*the desire to go back there one day, for good,*" and the yearning of the happy time there, although it might appear as slightly idealized, is palpable throughout the data: "*It was a wonderful time there, I long to be there again, it's my dream!, it's been my dream all these years!*" [sighs]

These positive experiences abroad and her relationships with her loving and caring parents can be seen as having been significant in her resilience to what she experienced as language shame, as they can be regarded as solid foundations which enabled her to bounce back and to envision re-gaining a positive image of her former English-using self.

Anger, humiliated fury and other-blame

In one of the interviews, it struck me that Linda was repeating the word 'angry' several times, showing that it was the feeling of anger that dominated after the classroom experience. Let us hear her: "*The way the teacher behaved made me feel very angry. […] I was angry at her, yes, very very angry. She should have told me that in private, not in front of my classmates!*"

It may not be unreasonable to assume that what Linda actually experienced was 'humiliated fury'. The term humiliated fury refers to the shame-based anger individuals may experience when they feel ashamed (Lansky, 1987; Lewis H. B., 1971; Lewis M., 1992; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991; Thomaes, Stegge, Olthof, Bushman, & Nezlek, 2011). It might not be unreasonable to assume that, because shame is so painful, Linda represses this feeling by a less self-threatening emotion, anger-at-other and humiliated fury. By experiencing anger, Linda turns shame inside-out, and in so doing, deflects shame-induced self-condemnation, downplays the ego-threatening feeling of shame, and directs her self-blame towards the teacher, thus protecting her self-esteem.

We have seen that the experience in the language classroom occurred when Linda was in her third year of college, that is, when she was thirteen, a developmental period at which self-consciousness and concern about how one is viewed by others matters significantly. It is also a time when adolescents are particularly prone to experiencing negative emotions such as shame. Because they are more vulnerable to criticism by others, and especially by *significant* others, young adolescents may respond to shameful experiences by repressing the feeling and becoming angry at others, thus 'turning the tables.'

The data are very much suggestive of the fact that she re-appraises what she perceives as a shameful event as being externally caused, and therefore she replaces self-blame ("*I am so bad at writing English*") with other-blame and external sources of shame ("*The teacher was so unfair, the way she behaved was not acceptable*," or "*The French system of education, which tends to criticize and devalue students*").

Said differently, this cognitive re-appraisal enables her to shift from feelings of self-directed shame/blame to feelings of other-directed anger. This process, known as process of externalization, is a strategic manoeuvre used by shamed individuals in order to distance themselves from the feeling of shame. It is to be noted though that this self-saving strategy is unproductive, as it may damage learners' motivation to improve. Linda's histories of past successes eventually conducted her to envision this unhappy episode as an isolated and unique experience that had nothing to do with her inner capacities or her competence, but only as an unfortunate external event, and just that. As we have seen before, Linda has formed a positive sense of self derived from the perceptions she has of how she feels she is seen by significant others (e.g. parents, sister, peers and friends), and from her own self-perceived communicative competence, and this strong sense of self helps her move on when she is faced with unpleasant situations.

Attribution beliefs

What is worth noting is that, as regards her lack of proficiency in writing English, Linda eventually finds a sound and self-preserving explanation for this lack of competence, as she blames her perceived difficulties on this: "*I don't practise written English, you see, I am not used to writing it.*" And she is convinced that "*with some practice and hard work, I will be able to be as competent as in spoken English.*"

Linda's attributions about the reasons underlying her lack of success in writing English (lack of practice) is a proof of a growth mind-set about her abilities in written English. There is ample evidence in the data sets that Linda believes in her potential to improve her written skills. For her, FLL is malleable and abilities in a specific skill can develop positively with time and practice. In terms of attribution theory (Weiner, 2000), Linda attributes this lack of success to an educational feature of "*the French system of education, which tends to criticize and devalue students, and puts too much emphasis on accuracy,*" that is to say, to an unstable and external factor, and she knows she is still intrinsically good in English, and that her not so competent writing-self will improve in the future.

A stable sense of a competent L2-using self and a resilient personality

It is not unreasonable to assume that the episode that took place in the classroom did *not* trigger shame, but, as Linda explains, "*it made all this come up to the surface again.*" In other words, if this episode did not involve shame proper, it is through this episode that Linda re-lived/re-experienced shame, as she was reminded of her writing lack of proficiency, something she tried to conceal.

However, the episode did not affect her in an enduring manner, as she never felt her self/identity as being enduringly threatened, defective or flawed. She realized after a while that her incompetent L2-writing self is not an indictment of the whole self, and she directs her anger at the teacher. This episode does not reveal a defective identity, as she finally thinks to herself: "*There is nothing wrong with me.*"

Linda's narrative shows how, through a conscious process of explanation, rationalization and distancing of past shame events, and by dealing with this emotion in a constructive and forward-pointing manner, she compares with other participants who preferred to opt for a 'flight' response to the phenomenon. Linda's data highlight that she seems to have a more stable and balanced sense of self than a number of adolescents of her age, who generally depend on *external* social sources of self-esteem and on *reflected appraisals*, which is a process by which individuals perceive they are seen by others. Sociologist Cooley, with his model of the 'looking-glass self' (1964) suggested that a person's sense of self is dependent on how he or she thinks others see him or her, and individuals usually form their self-concepts on the way they believe others perceive or judge them.

Non-resilient individuals are more preoccupied with self-evaluation based on how they feel they are seen by others, and may not find in themselves the necessary resources for overcoming negative feedback from others. Linda's sense of self did not deteriorate, as she was perfectly able to dichotomize between two selves, that is, the academic L2 self, and the more 'global' L2 self that she is using with friends or relatives, and it is the latter which remains stronger. Linda's comment reveals her belief in the stability of her EFL self-concept, and throughout the data it is noticeable how confident she is in her linguistic abilities: "*What matters is how you speak English, not how you write it. My friends and my parents can understand me when I speak English. Anyway, I pass for a native.*"

If it first appeared that she did not go out of this shameful episode totally unscathed, at least on the academic level, yet she seems to have had the necessary resources − internal

factors such as her past speaking successes, self-perceived communication competence, a strong linguistic self, the vision of herself living in the United States, as well as external variables such as parental support − to overcome this attack on her language self. The following extract puts to the fore a resilient personality and Linda's capacity to bounce back and to learn from life's setbacks and use this knowledge to cope more effectively in the future:

> Well, it's [fighting obstacles] in my nature, I move on, I never look back in a negative way, I always act in a forward-pointing manner, I never give up, what happened in the past can only serve as a springboard for the future and helps redress what was wrong. I always bounce back from failure. I always overcome setbacks that come on my way.

What the data seem to reveal is "the importance of learner self-concept in affecting motivated behaviour" and "that self-regulated behaviour is hardly possible unless students have a positive image of themselves as *users* of another language" (Csizér & Kormos, 2009, pp. 109-110, my emphasis). Linda's words once more provide an indication of her forward-going personality and affirmed self:

D: How did you feel after the shame episode?
L: First I was demotivated to work in the classroom, and then, after some time, I thought to myself, well, there is nothing wrong with me. She [the teacher] had not a very good accent, after all, and I knew I spoke English better than she did. I was convinced that with some work, I would be able to improve my writing.

The above remarks are enlightening in that they reveal that the feedback she received from her teacher might not have been regarded as worthy of attention by Linda, that is, the feedback-giver, here, the teacher, was perceived by Linda as not being a credible source of information/feedback as *"she* [the teacher] *had not a very good accent, after all, and I knew I spoke English better than she did.*"

The way Linda attributes shame to an external factor (the teacher) is revealing of her buoyant personality and emotional stability and positivity, and the data show that her frame of reference changes when she works with other teachers, revealing the dynamic nature of shame. The following excerpt illustrates how a change in teachers or, more specifically, a change in teaching style, is conducive to a re-assessment of one's self-concept and language identity, leaving space for a positive image of the self:

> This shame episode never happened again. I have had new teachers since that happened, and they were far more understanding. This [shame feeling] was only due to this teacher's attitude, I think she was very narrow-minded and stupid. It was not a problem with me. [...] I was a good language learner, after all. […] Well, the way languages are taught here [in France] ought really to be improved! It's really nonsense!

Finally, all this is reminiscent of Kernis' (2003, 2005) characterization of individuals into two groups, those who possess more "fragile" levels of self-esteem, and those with more "stable" levels of self-esteem, and of Harter's (2006, p. 553) contention that for some individuals, "self-esteem remains quite constant over time and context" while "for others there is considerable variation" across settings.

The significance of early positive experiences with the target language and the role of successful vision

As was demonstrated, Linda had extremely positive experiences with English in her first encounters with this language. Born in a multilingual family where FLs are valued and used on a regular basis, she knew from the start that English would be useful in terms of professional advancement and travels, and she feels joy and pride at being able to use the language with expertise. Linda's data corroborate those of many other participants in the current study who argued that how one approaches FLs and how one reacts to challenging situations highly depends on their very first encounters with the FL:

> I feel that the very positive experiences when I was there [in the USA] did have an influence on the way I approached the learning of this language in the years that followed. […] There was a kind of [hesitating] hierarchy, you see, anyway, that's how I saw it, between the way I learnt English and the way it is taught here [in France]. And the vision of me living there is always pushing me forward, it keeps me going. [radiant smile]

What certainly helped Linda fight shame or humiliating experiences is the fact that she formed plausible, almost tangible images of her L2 using self in the very early steps of her FLL journey, and she had a concrete and sensory experience of "being there", an experience that she has yearned to re-live all these years. Once more, the findings regarding the FLL experience of Linda seem to suggest that learners' capability to overcome L2-related shame and other crippling emotions is dependent on their ability to generate a strong mental imagery and sustain it through to the fulfilment of their dream.

Other domains of competence

On several occasions, Linda reports how proud she is of having developed other skills, and insists on the importance in her life of other non-academic domains of performance: "*You know, I am very active, I practise tennis and golf, I am a stand-up comedian in a local theatre, and I am a very good swimmer.*" It is noteworthy that possessing other domains of competence has been reported by other participants as a determinant factor in the struggle against L2-related shame and other negative emotions, such as anxiety.

The benefit of interviews

As was the case with some other participants in the study, Linda told me that her involvement in the study had positive outcome for her sense of self. Linda acknowledges the role of narrative in fostering a more positive image of her (language) writing self:

> It did me a lot of good to be interviewed, although at the beginning, it hurt me to recall the episode in the classroom. It was there in my memory, carefully buried because it was so painful, but you helped me dig that out and analyse what happened. It helped me re-envision myself in a more positive light. I became aware that with work, I could become as proficient in writing.

The following extract is but another proof that shame and other potentially negative emotions need to be openly explored and discussed. This process of introspection eventually led to a deeper self-awareness and brought unconscious material into consciousness:

> I think this should be generalized, I mean these interviews with students. This way, if something goes wrong with a teacher, things can be sorted out. These interview sessions allowed me to become aware of what exactly happened in the classroom, to put words on things which were painful but which I kept at the back of my mind, like a secret wound. Now they have come to the surface and I can now deal with them.

Linda claims to have undergone a process of transformation and self-affirmation through the use of narratives/interviews. As she reports in the last interview:

> Being interviewed was first painful. Remembering this episode was not particularly exciting. It brought me a few years back, and forced me to think about what happened then. But, thinking over it, I must acknowledge that it has done me a lot of good to talk to you like that, like I was confiding to a Psy. I feel somehow that something happened within myself. I feel much better you see. Your listening ear has been really useful. I have never opened myself to anyone like that before, not even to my parents. I think I buried all this deep. I feel today that it is not me who had a problem, it's true I had, and still have, some difficulties with the writing of words in English, but still, I was excellent at speaking.

Through a process of deep reflection, and thanks to the interviewing, she eventually dichotomizes between her academic/language self and her more 'general' self, and she feels that it is the academic self that has been criticized and devalued by the teacher and her incompetent writing self exposed to her peers' gaze, but the more general self remains unscathed.

It is clear that, through interviewing, Linda cultivated new habits of thinking, and consequently, felt different about herself. Linda shows a certain plasticity of her mind, that is, she has the capacity to engage in new thoughts. As she reports: "*I feel much lighter after these exchanges with you. I have an entirely new approach to what happened, my vision has changed!*"

As was the case with some other participants, the stories that Linda tells and re-tells allowed her to craft a more positive identity. Through the narrative, she re-frames her past experiences as well as her emotional baggage, and finds her potential abilities with English in the future. Talking shame enables her to be in control of her academic life, and the rare obstacles she has encountered during her FLL journey have been redeemed in the end. As she forcefully reports:

> I know now that what happened at the time will never happen again. And if it does, I will be able to fight back. I have grown conscious of that through our conversations. They have been conducive to a better understanding that I cannot be destabilized by isolated, single negative episodes in the classroom. What matters is the way I speak English in my everyday life. What happened then has nothing to do with my competency.

Linda reports that the benefit of the interviews reverberated on her behaviour in the language classroom, where she said she "*decided to be more engaged, involved in the activities. I took some distance with academic English for two years, but now I will move on. All that is behind*."

7.2.7 My role as a researcher-interviewer

The relationships between me and Linda were of utmost importance during the interviewing process, as I feel that the building of a sound and trustful rapport has contributed to the disclosure of sensitive material, to the re-framing and re-interpretation of what happened and to a co-construction of her identity as a language learner. I understand interviews as privileged

places for the making of meaning and the developing of knowledge through the collaboration of interviewee and interviewer and regard the participants as co-researchers in the research project. In this sense, the interview sessions can be seen as caring and empowering dialogues. As she repeated on several occasions, Linda felt "*empowered by our conversations*," and "*motivated to change her frame of mind regarding the writing of English*."

Linda was one of the participants with whom I have kept in close touch during the time of the interviews but also for some time after the end of the school year. I have grown very fond of her and her family. This relationship enabled her to go beyond what adolescents of this age usually reveal to adults and therefore to provide some particular insights into FLL and language shame.

My work as a researcher was to help her to re-write her stories in a more positive tone. Through re-interpreting her stories and re-organizing them into a coherent whole, she may have gleaned some meaning from her experience, and the stories she tells are pregnant with personal growth and agency. The narrative that the interviews enabled Linda to tell led her to a higher degree of self-understanding and may have helped her to develop strategies to fight potentially shame-inducing situations in the future. Although it might seem presumptuous, I feel that it was this collaboration, this inter-viewing, this deep listening and meaning-making process that initiated some change in her.

7.2.8 Discussion

The analysis of Linda's data has revealed an extremely complex, elaborated and multifaceted (language) self-concept. The data from this participant are particularly interesting as they demonstrate that shame can be found at high levels of proficiency as well, and they revealed once more an interplay of individual characteristics and social context in the eliciting and fighting of shame. The findings confirm that the classroom is a kaleidoscope of emotions, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish one from the other.

What was really striking and hard to grasp was why she seemed to be still very much affected at the time of the interviews. But after a while, it became clear that the data could be seen from a variety of angles and I thought that, as a result of my own deep interest in this emotion, shame might be something I tend to afford more attention than it deserves, to the point that it may have permeated all aspects of this participant's data. After a while, Stanley's (1992, p. 87) words rang true. I shook the kaleidoscope and looked again, and I saw a

"somewhat different pattern," with other shades of nuances and meaning appearing. I suddenly had this 'aha' moment when I eventually realized that what Linda had been experiencing in the classroom was actually shame, yet it did not give me the feeling that it was as crippling and debilitating as it was in the case of other participants who had reported that such experiences had impacted their FLL journey in an enduring manner and had acted as deterrents from language learning. What can be assumed is that the shame episode impacted *only* her language/academic self, and not her very identity.

My investigation into shame in the domain of psychology (Galmiche & Oades-Sese, 2020) led me to intuit that what she experienced was certainly not toxic, pathological shame, but rather an experience that did not affect her sense of self the way a number of participants had reported it did. The kind of shame she experienced was certainly *external* shame.

Furthermore, according to what she claimed, Linda did not experience *internal* L2-related shame (or any kind of shame) on a regular basis, contrary to most of the participants in the current study. As we have seen, the shame she reports having experienced on this particular occasion was *external, non-toxic* shame, as it originated from a concern with the way her self was projected in the mind of others (teacher and peers) and as such, it did not entail an enduring feeling of a diminished self, and it has been shown that she regained her initial level of self-esteem after a period of psychological turmoil.

What her testimony reveals is that the shame that she experienced in the classroom, although it is reported as a very disagreeable moment in her life as a student of English, did not involve a *permanent* feeling of shame in her, and nor did it develop shame-proneness − the tendency to experience shame in diverse situations − as it did not become part of her identity. It occurred just once, and the humiliated fury/anger at other/other-blame feelings that she experienced was a way of escaping from the ego-threatening effects of shame.

When analysing Linda's data, one can notice that, although she referred to this classroom episode as being one that involved the feeling of shame, I could not feel that she felt worthless or unworthy of others' love and attention. Her report does not let us think that she felt *totally* and *enduringly* inadequate or defective, and it was certainly the *language self* that was hurt. As she has been brought up in a caring environment that provided for her emotional needs, it can be gathered that her family background may have played a significant role in her academic life and in her resilience to negative experiences, as they have helped her create a positive mind set, build effective coping strategies to overcome challenges and obstacles that may get in her way, and showed her to use a broad repertoire of problem-solving skills.

These solid family foundations may have helped her to develop a balanced and strong personality and to dichotomize between criticism of the person *as a whole* and criticism of what the person *does*. Linda's data confirm that of other participants (e.g. Maria), who argued that if they had not been criticized at home, and had had a supportive family environment, they would have undoubtedly felt stronger when facing failure in FLL and L2-related shame or other debilitating emotions, they would have thought unfortunate experiences could be mended.

7.3 LUCIE'S STORY

"The stories we hear and the stories we tell shape the meaning and texture of our lives at every stage and juncture. Stories and narrative, whether personal or fictional, provide meaning and belonging to our lives" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 1).

The next lines present the story of Lucie, which shows that, despite repeated L2-related shame experiences, failures and setbacks which did not facilitate the emergence of an ideal L2 self in the early steps of her FLL journey, she could later move beyond the pain and "*trauma*" (in her own words) of her language shameful past, fight the image of herself as a poor English learner/user and imagine resilience strategies to override her deep-seated shame. The present study explores the role of vision and narrative in this process, and how her future L2-self image was accompanied with relevant procedural strategies directed towards the concretisation of her ultimate goal of "*going to Australia*" and "*getting rid of her past shamed L2 self*." Finally, the following sections highlight Lucie's capacity for growth-promoting interpretations of past shameful events.

7.3.1 Lucie's background

Lucie is a 42-year old mother of two girls, aged 18 and 9, and works as a secretary in an international company. She is a very active woman, committed to her career, to her family, and to "*making a positive difference in the world she lives in*," as she expresses it convincingly. She describes herself as optimistic, zestful and having an energetic and positive approach to life, and says she is curious and open to new experiences. For a duration of eight

months, I taught her English every week at her home for two hours. Additionally, we would regularly meet outside her home for outings, which allowed me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of her language ego and to gauge how importantly shame figured in her language learning journey.

I interviewed her four times, twice before she went to Australia, once on her return from Australia, and the last time one year after her trip. To my pleasure, Lucie was particularly eager to participate in the study and to reflect in depth on the process of FLL, and, like the other participants, she was not cognisant of the topic of research. It was clear from the start that the subject of language and FLL was particularly dear to her, and linked to her sense of self in a way that I found extremely enlightening for the current research.

Lucie was not provided with English language resources as she grew up in a monolingual family that had minimal, if no exposure, to FLs, and to English in particular. She did not receive English education prior to her first year of college (at the age of eleven), and she joyfully remembers that her first encounters with the English language were "*nice and exotic*." As she reports:

> Well, at the beginning, in my first and second year of college, I can say that it was nice and really fun, because it was all new to me, and I was very, very proud of learning this language. I felt good with it. It was a very nice start, and it was rather easy, we had to learn by heart, the words, the figures, the vocabulary, all that stuff. Nobody in my family spoke that language, so it was somehow … exotic.

When I asked her how this pride of learning English materialised, she answered enthusiastically:

> I was proud when I realized that when there were words in English in songs, I knew them, and I was able to say to my parents, "you see, I understand these words, I can say what they mean." Yes, it made me feel extremely proud.

7.3.2 The development of a L2-related shame-prone personality

Lucie identifies the moment when she changed classes and started learning English with a new teacher as a significant point of change in her appraisal of EFL:

> There were a lot of new students, I didn't know them, and some of my best friends had moved, so I felt alone in this class. Before going to this class, I had known my fellow students for many years, some of them since kindergarten, we were like a family. And for two years I had had the same English teacher, she was great and understanding. But this new teacher was very strict.

She interestingly reports that her interest in English started to wane because of "*extremely painful and traumatic experiences*":

> Later, we had to change teachers, so we had to adapt ourselves to new methods, to new teachers, to new personalities. So, things changed for the worst as I was in my third year of college. My whole little world collapsed, and gone were the comfort and safety of my first years of English learning! My marks dropped. I became unsure of myself, doubting all the time. My fear of and apprehension at speaking English date back to this period of my life you see. I was an adolescent then, and I was confronted to extremely painful and traumatic experiences.

It is to be noted that as an interviewer, I did not have to steer the conversation to 'shame,' as Lucie very naturally and willingly confided her many anxieties and shame experiences in the language class, and the experiences she relates remain salient in her memory: "*I remember these shameful moments like it was yesterday. It's still in my memory, and deep inside, it stays here* [hand on heart]."

It seemed that the topic of FL acquisition triggered a diversity of associations with shame-related experiences in the classroom, as though this affective state had been an integral part of her language learning journey, and of her English self-image all these years, and her remembrance/recalling of English-related shame led to behavioural responses during the time of the interviews, like avoiding my gaze, lowering her head or fidgeting on her chair at the mere retelling of certain episodes, showing the pervasive and enduring nature of the shame feeling, and that it is shameful even to feel ashamed:

> It was really hard to go to English classes, I was dreading something bad would happen all the time. I was afraid of being ashamed, of being seen in a negative light by my friends, it spoilt my pleasure. […] It's really painful to talk about all this today!

7.3.3 Accent-related L2 shame

The data are rich in indications that Lucie experienced shame in particular situations and specific domains, like the speaking skills:

> While in class, I would dread being called upon to speak up because I was afraid of making a fool of myself, with this accent, you see, I was always nervous, afraid that it would put me to shame, and I felt like I was [hesitating] ... freezing, was kind of paralyzed. And when I was forced to speak up, I was always on the alert

> not to make mistakes, being forced to go out of my comfort zone made me feel extremely tensed and stressed. It was really painful and traumatising to speak.

Throughout the data, accent-related issues have been identified as being associated with the most painful memories, since they are perceived as being critical for her sense of self:

> The problem was the accent, you see, I had a French accent when I spoke English, it was really a shame, so that was what stigmatised me, and the teacher was … teasing me with this, repeating the words like I said them, ridiculing me, and the others, woah, they were giggling or worse, looking at me and laughing, and some of them would talk about what happened days after. They said I had the accent of a farmer. I was traumatised by all this. The accent you have reveals most of yourself I think, much more than when you, say, forget an 's' third person singular.

Lucie's words above are a clear indication of the taxing and shame-provoking proprieties of a too strong accent and an inadequate pronunciation, which she regards as a marker of identity:

> The accent you have says a lot about who you are. Having a bad or too strong accent is very much diminishing and downgrading. It puts you to shame to realize that some of your classmates have the right accent when *you* struggle with it. (her emphasis)

Throughout the data, it is obvious that, if the emotional state of shame disappears for some time, the memory of the shameful experience does not, and the more intense the shame, the greater the possibility that it will leave a pervading and lasting impression on the individual's body and mind:

> The episodes when I was mocked in front of the others because of my strong accent are still here in my memory, it's aching, to the point that sometimes, when I make mistakes, it brings me back then, and I feel the pain of the past again. I can feel the gaze of the others on me. These memories are like a throbbing hammer in my head.

It is surprising that when Lucie recalled such shame memories, these memories evoked the same shame experience as they did the first time they occurred:

> You see, it's a pain to remember all this, it's like I was experiencing it all the time, even today, years have passed, but I can still feel the pain of all this, the gazes on me, the giggles, the teacher's mocking. It's still shameful [eyes cast down].

What struck me on my first interview with Lucie was that she had a very poor image of her communication competence in English, using derogatory terms like "*I was a bad student,*

you see, I had a pitiable accent, I was really trying hard, but couldn't speak two words of English without hesitating. This poor image of myself still persists today."

Accent-related stigma was claimed to have psychological and behavioural consequences on the way Lucie approached interactions in the TL, thus impairing her willingness to communicate. Let us hear her:

> I never volunteered answers, I preferred to stay in my shell, because every time I gave an answer and it was wrong, and they were mocking my accent, what a shame. Sometimes I would pretend to be sick. I remember I had a very bad image of myself back then. But it never left me. I still doubt my abilities [sighs].

It was the disclosure/exposure of her incompetency and vulnerability which was particularly taxing for Lucie, as it affected her sense of self in a profound way:

> He [the teacher] would ask me to stand up and repeat a hundred times. I felt like … exposed, scrutinized, like being naked all of a sudden. Yes, exposed to the others' gaze. Self-conscious as one can be at this age, it was like a torture, being put on the grill like that! And thinking back about it, I was not living up to my ideal, I wanted to show a good image of myself to the others and to myself, but I could only display a shameful and incompetent image!

The data highlight that Lucie also developed an ingrained tendency to experience/feel shame in a number of different situations in her everyday life. The following excerpt reveals stable characteristics or traits of Lucie that act like the foundation for her individuality and provide an explanation for her deep-seated sense of shame, which affects different dimensions of her life:

> I was kind of used to being ridiculed and criticized every time I opened my mouth. When I was trying to formulate my sentences in English, I was always mocked or ridiculed. You see, I am a very anxious type of person, always on the lookout for mistakes, always afraid of being ashamed. It's somehow in my nature, there is nothing I can do against it, not only in the language class, but in all kinds of situations when I feel judged or negatively evaluated.

This tendency to feel shame in a variety of situations was also found during her FLL journey, and the long interviews with this participant revealed that she displayed negative feelings and emotions *in* and *about* her English classes, which resulted in psycho-somatic symptoms like the ones she describes reluctantly:

> I remember that sometimes, I would stifle in the English classes, like I was lacking some air, and could feel my heartbeat. My legs became weak and I could hear my voice trembling when I started to speak English in the class. I felt really bad. I feel

> it was the fear of being exposed to the others' gaze, the fear of feeling shame, all this was very crippling. I thought about the past classes all the time, kind of ruminating, and I was dreading to go to the classes the days after.

7.3.4 The development of a positive vision of EFL

Lucie's perception of EFL changed again in a dramatic way as she was sixteen, and this new perception tinted her whole language journey positively in the years that followed. Here is how she expresses herself:

> At the age of sixteen, I remember a particular moment, a kind of Eureka moment, as I was watching a serial on Australia, all of a sudden, I formed the wish to go there someday in the future. It was a kind of evidence, you see, Australia appealed to me in such a way that I intimately knew that I would go there someday, and since that moment on, I have had this dream, you see, I am very much aspiring to go to Australia. Suddenly, my life achieved meaning, yes, my life was filled with a sense. I would go there someday. I never stopped dreaming of going there. This dream has filled my life since then, orienting it, giving me a kind of direction, you see. I am kind of obsessed with Australia, with the way of life. It's the land where everything can come true. It's my land of dream come true. All this wildlife, you see, this wilderness. I was kind of hooked to this serial, I watched it every week, it was a sort of appointment I would have missed for nothing you see.

She confides with delight that this Australian serial was certainly the factor that triggered her ensuing sustained involvement in English learning and is at the origin of her positive relationship with English in the following years. Certainly, this serial portrayed the 'imagined community' of Australia that she aspired to participate in, and belong to someday, and her viewing of this serial increased her sense of belonging through alignment to this community. As she enthusiastically reports:

> I loved the heroine in this serial, she was a model for me, I wanted to live like an Australian girl at that time, and all these years, I have been yearning to go there. It was *cool* to see how they lived in this country, I wanted to become fluent in this language, it started being at the back of my mind, going there some day, strange how this country appealed to me, it was a part of my life. This program was a springboard for my later interest and investment in English learning.

Lucie's vision of Australia coincides with Kanno and Norton's (2003) concept of 'imagined communities,' which refers to "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination" (p. 241). And she continues further:

> I found these Australians so cool. I was kind of mesmerized by all this. This dream never left me, but it has been asleep for all these years, because you see, I got married, I had my children, I work a lot for my company. But somehow, deep inside, I have always known that I would turn back to this dream I had when I was sixteen, and I want to fulfil this dream now, going there, and English is a means of reaching my ideal.

It is interesting to see how she associated this serial with the possibility to escape from the banality and tedious uneventfulness of her everyday life:

> When I was watching them [the actors], I was like transported to a new world, a world where everything was possible. My life then was banal, nothing much happened, just going to college, nothing exciting. So, watching them enabled me to dream that I myself was Australian. I would say that it kind of … empowered me. You know, most of my friends dreamt of America, but *I* was dreaming of Australia, you see. And this vision has been part of my life since then, although at the back of my mind for some time, but I feel the prospect of going there with my little family for the Summer holiday next year is re-igniting my dream, it's more concrete, I have got this goal you see, it's within my reach, almost tangible, yes, I am excited about it all! [radiant smile]

It is clear that English became a means for travelling, something Lucie had never had the opportunity to do, but it also represented a means for escaping the banality of her life, as she was dreaming of more adventurous and "*exotic*" (a term she keeps repeating) paths and of a more ideal life. The way her love for this country filled every aspect of her life is interesting: "*I would watch every fiction and every documentary on Australia, kind of focused, even obsessed*." And the data transpire with the idea that Lucie imagined that this serial and English would change her life and give her access to identities she was craving to achieve: "*I wanted to dress like them, watching them made me feel like I was an Australian girl. I knew that English would allow me to go there. I was dying to go there, I had never been anywhere!*" Lucie's words are very much reminiscent of Kramsch's (2006, p. 102) contention that:

> Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms and meanings, and by the 'coolness' of native speakers, many adolescent learners strive to enter new, exotic worlds where they can be, or at least pretend to be, someone else, where they too can become 'cool' and inhabit their bodies in more powerful ways.

It is obvious from her narrative that, via the Australian fiction (although her depiction of Australia may seem unrealistically positive), Lucie reconceptualised English in a different light, as she realised that English could be used to fulfil her desire to "escape from a state of tedious conformity with one's present environment to a state of plenitude and enhanced

power" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 14) and her dream of "*going there*" arose from her love of this TV programme and her imaginary participation in the Australian customs and habits that were portrayed on screen.

Lucie reports that she is so much in love with Australia that her fondest hope and most cherished dream is not only to speak the TL, but also to *assimilate* with the Australians:

> I have wanted to become a part of these people since that time, I have always known that this dream would come true, deep inside my heart [hand on heart], that someday I would turn back to English to fulfil my dream.

7.3.5 Fighting shame back

Over a period of two years, I interviewed Lucie four times with the recorder on, but it is noteworthy that on numerous occasions, our free conversations outside of the research context led her to reflect in depth on the process of FLL and on what she had been experiencing for some time, in particular the metamorphosis she was undergoing and that I was privileged to witness. The following lines illustrate the way Lucie develops strategies to override shame, notably by explaining and rationalizing her FLL journey. There were several turning points or moments of "*revelations*" (as she reports) in her life as an English learner. But certainly, the most significant one was when she realized during her 3-week stay in Australia that she was able to communicate and that nobody criticized her. As she reports joyfully: "*It was a revelation, you see, being there, exchanging with the locals in shops. I also had a puncture and was able to ask for help! Yes, I did it! The concretization of my dream!*"

In an attempt to make sense of her past shame-prone self, Lucie engages in explaining and rationalising her past experiences via the interview process. Lucie's life story provides her with unity and purpose over her life course. What is worth noting is that I felt somehow that narrating her FLL journey, and taking courses provide Lucie's life with unity, purpose and meaning. In so doing, she uses narratives to raise her spirit, and guide her future actions. As she reports joyfully, a new sense of happiness is invading her and this is clearly derived from the vivid vision of her in Australia and a sense of meaningfulness and purposefulness in her life, and a positive self-view that she has developed through interviews:

> Everything makes sense now, I am confident in my abilities. I see myself in a much more positive light than before, I have found a direction in my life. I work all day. I am so proud of myself, I am capable, I have made so much progress in English within a few months, people understand me when I speak English. I am not only

> able to understand better what people say, but I can formulate more complex sentences now. And I can imagine myself in Australia, it has become tangible!

It is not unreasonable to assume that it is a sense of empowerment and a restoration of her sense of self and self-worth that she draws from narrating her past experiences:

> I feel that nothing can resist me now, I am capable of everything, like I had super powers. I have changed so much, I feel I have value today, and this thanks to the courses, and to this process of interviewing. Being interviewed has allowed me to dig into my most profound memories, the shameful experiences, those that I kept hidden for all these years! It helped me to erase my trauma [giggles].

She further reports:

> All this has meaning. The ordeals I have gone through in my life, these issues with the language, these humiliations, I think have paved the way for a happier and more fulfilled self, I am not the one I used to be and somehow, I feel I had to go through this.

The statement above demonstrates that the interview process led to a positive resolution of her past shameful events, which eventually is conducive to higher levels of happiness, self-fulfilment and psychological/emotional well-being. The statement below is a clear indication that she gains insight into her human nature, values and goals:

> I know better who I am, my feeling of self-worth has considerably increased lately, I have been able to talk in English on the phone and order things abroad at my workplace. I know what I will do in the future. I will no longer doubt my capacities, I will look at things differently, and will no longer be reluctant to use English to communicate.

The data suggest deep exploration, autobiographical reasoning (McAdams, 1993, 2001; Pals, 2006; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007; Singer, 2004), and the development of a richly elaborated understanding of the self and of the reasons that led to a shame-prone and anxious self all these years, and through the lens of her life story accounts, she appraises the role past events have played in shaping her into her present self. It is obvious that the knowledge she gains from reasoning about her narrative memories "yields a life story schema that provides causal, temporal, and thematic coherence to an overall sense of identity" (Singer, 2004, p. 442) and is at the heart of meaning making.

7.3.6 Integrative life narratives and the redemptive power of life stories: putting language shame into words

Adopting an interview-based approach has proved a useful and productive methodology in pursuing my research inquiries. But, more important than anything else, it allowed Lucie to initiate changes in her language learning process, at a later stage, to re-create herself through discourse, and to re-interpret and make sense of her past shame experiences by trying to assess the complexity of the learning of a FL. The role of interviews/storying in building bridges between the past, the present, and the future is significant here, and the data offer a broader view of interviewing as being not restricted only to recounting past events, but also, thanks to the collaboration between participant and researcher, as a way of meaning making, projecting oneself into possible futures, and as a process of identity creation and even redemption. Lucie underlines the healing power of narrative/interviews, and it is interesting to see how shame seems to have melt away like snow exposed to sunlight:

> Talking to you did me a lot of good. It allowed my *former shamed self* [my emphasis] to dissipate and leave space for a proud self. I understand now why I behaved this way when I was at school. I have put all the bad experiences at a distance. I feel really empowered, like I was cured from some disease. I am ready to go for other interviews, if you need it. And it does me so much good!

What psychological characteristics individuals like Lucie seem to possess is the faculty to turn difficult/negative/shame experiences into transformative experiences via narratives and to gain new insights about the self in the process. Lucie's story highlights her capacity for buoyancy and resilience. After many years of negative thoughts not only about English learning, but also about her overall self, Lucie manages to fight her shame-proneness in a way that I have rarely seen. Important in this process was, as she herself acknowledges, the role of interviews, which, by allowing her to voice what she had kept hidden for many years, enabled her to reflect on the role negative emotions like anxiety or shame had played during her FLL journey, to reflect on her identity metamorphosis, and to eventually move from a past anxious and shamed self to an enhanced, if not grandiose, self.

The following excerpt brings to the fore the transformation of interviews into therapeutic experience, suggesting the transformative, even redemptive power of interviews:

> It does me a lot of good to talk to you like that, it's like I was talking to a Psy. I have never confided that to anybody. I feel transformed, a new me is coming out, like a butterfly coming out of a chrysalis.

This idea of storytelling as a source of identity creation is to be found in Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2000) contention that students who engage in a process of telling their FLL experience are also constructing their identities as L2 users. This very process of telling her stories through interviews led to a change in her vision of herself not only as a language learner/user but also in her everyday life identity, thus illustrating the potential healing and self-generating power of interviews/narratives, which can be seen as privileged places for making sense of one's experiences and for reinvesting one's identity.

This is clearly echoed by Nunan and Choi's statement that "the opportunity for learners to tell their own stories, and the control that they have over those stories, is empowering" (2011, p. 228). In this sense, they become active participants in the study as they are "no longer individuals who have research *done* to them. They are *collaborators* in an ongoing, interpretive process" (Nunan & Choi, 2011, p. 228, my emphasis).

Lucie's testimony appears highly revelatory of the fact that being interviewed had a transformative impact on her identity as an English learner, and corroborates Şimşek and Dörnyei's (2017) contention that, through interviews, students gain a "narrative identity" (p. 57): "People regularly produce narratives to create cohesion in their experiences and perceptions so that the unified narrative can become a kind of guide" (p. 57). These "integrative life narratives" (McAdams & Pals, 2006), refer to a highly personal organisational framework that helps people make sense of their lives and which makes an individual's "narrative identity."

All this is congruent with Helen Block Lewis's (1987a, 1987b) findings that bypassed shame is damaging for the self and at the root of a number of psychological disorders. So, it can be said that being allowed to acknowledge and voice this feeling may have opened up the way to recovery and healing. There is no doubt that the stories here tell us about meaningfulness, ego development and self-transformation. The following words are interesting in that they reveal that Lucie's engaging in narrating her lived experience of English learning is central in re-shaping her identity, giving way to a new self:

> What's happening to me is marvellous! I don't know why, but I feel there is a new me coming! Thanks to this interviewing, because it gave me the opportunity to reflect upon myself, upon my past experiences in the language classroom, I am no longer the student I used to be, and English has now become an integral part of my life.

What Lucie underwent was a change in her perception of EFL, and a "*transformation*," as she puts it with delight. As she felt more and more confident in using English, she gained new perspectives on English through the reconceiving/reframing of her past (negative and shameful) experiences in the classroom and she discovers now that she is able to use the TL for communicative purposes, and is confident that she will be able to use it in the future again, in particular in Australia. On one of my visits to her home, Lucie enthusiastically says the following words, thus illustrating the power of narratives in self-creating:

> The more I study, the more I want to study, I really want to speak like a native. I spend a lot of time checking words from songs, I am never satisfied, I have to look words in the dictionary! I have done all the homework you asked me to do, and even more! I don't go out anymore, everything is directed towards this goal, going to Australia, and speaking English to communicate there. I have become bulimic, yes, that's it, BU-LI-MIC of English! [she repeats the word and stresses it, shouting it aloud and giggling]. All this has given way to a new me! It's great to feel this way!

Her testimony highlights the role of narratives/interviews in the process of generating a new identity, and her life is now filled with a sense of unity, purpose and meaning: "*Putting words on all this, my past negative experiences in the language classroom, has done me a lot of good! It gives me a direction in my life!*"

Her narrative suggests the redemptive and healing power of being interviewed, as the emotionally negative aspects of her past L2 self lead to a good and emotionally positive outcome through words, and the initial negative state in which she found herself in for so many years is "*redeemed*" (her own words) or salvaged by the good that follows the interview process, which offers pathways for the development of a happier and more balanced life and personality, and leads to a sense of psychological well-being deriving from a feeling of progress and coherent positive resolution through the processing of her difficult L2-related life experiences through narrative. Asking her to cast her mind back to her earlier years of English learning, and to reflect on her affective state of that time and on the metamorphosis she has undergone, she says convincingly:

> Lu: When you are young, you have a lot of pressure on your shoulders, especially when you are an adolescent. Today, I have enough self-esteem to think that whenever I want to accomplish something in my life, there is nothing that can hold me back. And anyway, you don't have to be perfect when you speak another language. So, there is no problem when I make mistakes.
>
> D: Why do you think that some students with the same negative experiences and negative self-appraisals about FLL will overcome these negative feelings while others won't?

Lu: Well ... I think it's a question of character. You are resilient or not. […] And I feel it would be good to generalize this kind of experience.
D: What experience?
Lu: These interviews, it can be very useful to students, especially to all those who doubt their capacities, it allows them to express their inner feelings, their intimate wounds.

To summarize, Lucie's story illustrates the following points:

1) Bad things/negative or shameful experiences may eventually lead to positive outcomes or at least, teach forward-pointing lessons. In other words, lessons can be drawn from the past, and suffering may be redeemed in the end.
2) One can make progress, become resilient to adversity and recover from setbacks and challenging situations through the use of coherent narratives. Psychological resilience refers to effective coping and flexible adaptation and ability to bounce back although one is faced with loss, hardship, or adversity (Block & Block, 1980; Block J. & Kremen, 1996; Lazarus, 1993).
3) Lucie seems to possess a fascinating tendency to think that having a positive perspective on life can make a difference in this world.

7.3.7 Discussion

The main goal of this chapter was to investigate the shame-related experiences of Lucie, a French student of EFL. The data have clearly shown that attending language shame is crucial to the psychological comfort and well-being of individuals, as this emotion can lead to the generalization of this feeling to the entire self. However, Lucie's story of her FLL journey reveals that there are ways of fighting shame back. Through the story of this student, it has been made clear that her changing attitude to, and relationship with EFL impacted the way she perceived herself as a L2 user and learner. It could also be observed that her self-concept developed, and the interviewing process, her progress with the English language, the concretization of her dream in Australia, and her transformation from an English learner into an active and successful English user, all gave way to an enhanced image of the self, which is no surprise when one envisions the interconnectedness of language and the self.

What is noticeable is that Lucie's first encounters with the English language were extremely positive, and her narrative includes numerous references to "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) that she regards as valuable and whose

membership she regards as being worth dreaming of. This sustained dream and the vision of her ideal self (in the community of Australia) have undoubtedly helped her move forward and imagine ways ahead and strategies to overcome this debilitating emotion, even at a later stage (as she was an adult). The visions Lucie had of her life in Australia, her adventurous mind and her personality are bridges that propelled her into a successful L2-using future, and enabled her to link the boring and sometimes demotivating shame-inducing classroom activities to the visionary realm of a life "*there*," and the prospect of settling in Australia for ever has offered her vitalizing power and resilience to language shame experiences.

Her testimony shows the role of future-oriented components of the self and how the vision of the self we wish to become in the future is a powerful incentive to engage in self-regulatory learning that will be conducive to the accomplishment of this wish and help combat language shame. Said differently, the vision of an ideal self can be the driver of intentional change (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006) that ultimately leads to language attainment and shame resilience.

Lucie's data have shown a change in the vision of herself and described the emergence of her successful L2-user self through a growing sense of efficacy and an increasingly empowering refined, confident and concrete vision of her future English-using self in her "*land of dream*," Australia, and her narrative highlights her metamorphosis from a shamed/shame-prone to a proud/empowered and successful EFL learner.

By way of conclusion, I would like to highlight that Lucie described herself as an extremely positive woman, and the data suggest that she cultivates her positive emotionality and optimistic thinking by the use of humour. It might not be unreasonable to gather that positive emotionality is a significant factor in the development of ego resilience and in the fighting of negative and crippling emotions like shame and anxiety. Further studies are needed to confirm these findings.

7.4 CONCLUSION

What have Linda's and Lucie's stories taught us about L2-related shame? Due to the exploratory nature of the study and to the overlapping of the self-conscious emotions of shame and humiliation, one may have the feeling that they have not arrived at definitive conclusions on the shame one may experience during their foreign language learning journey,

and the present project certainly calls for further research on the phenomenon. However, this chapter has highlighted the following interesting points:

The power of narratives and autobiographical reasoning in initiating change

It was made clear that, in Linda's and Lucie's own views, participating in my research and being interviewed led them to become more aware of their language learning process, impacting their motivational development, helping them fight their ingrained shame tendencies by reframing their past in a more positive light, and eventually led them to a sense of metamorphosis and the gain of a new identity, thus confirming the inherent healing and redemptive power of narratives and their capacity to restore individuals' sense of self-worth.

All the years before the interviews, Linda's and Lucie's shames were silent, carefully (consciously or unconsciously) concealed, nobody around them suspecting that they had experienced shame in the language classroom, because they appeared outwardly as very positive and proactive women, and this emotion proved painful to unmask. The integrative life narratives have helped them move forward and re-organize their past life in a more coherent whole, to put at a distance the shamed self, and to document the changes in their language learning progress.

Like a number of the participants in this study, Linda and Lucie were excellent storytellers, telling and re-telling their stories, in the kaleidoscopic way illustrated by Stanley's quote at the beginning of the chapter, and their stories corroborate findings in the domain of personality psychology which maintain that (a) identity develops through the lens of a coherent narrative or life story that integrates interpretations of past events/experiences with that of the present and endows life with meaning and purpose and (b) the processes of constructing, revising and living in accordance with this narrative identity over time are keys to the functioning, developing and to individuals' well-being (McAdams, 2001; Singer, 2004).

The developing of a resilient ego through narratives

The participants' stories also stress the role of interviews and narratives of difficult experiences in developing and strengthening ego resiliency – that is, the extent to which individuals adapt to challenging life circumstances flexibly and restore positive affect in response to difficult emotional experiences (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004) − and the function of coherent positive resolution in positive self-transformation. Linda and Lucie have used narrative to tell about their difficult and painful L2-related life experiences.

This process of telling/re-telling, interpreting/re-interpreting and co-constructing knowledge with the interviewer-researcher allowed them to reframe their identity from a self-perceived incompetent and shameful English learner to an active and proud user of English, and to move on and take important decisions for their future life.

This L2-related ego resiliency may be seen as a reminder that one is able to overcome negative experiences in their lives, provided they are able to re-organize their past emotional life through the use of coherent narratives. Lucie becomes resilient by using positive emotions to bounce back from the repeated negative and shameful emotional experiences of her past, while Linda engages in a deep reflection of the meaning of the shame episode. The memory that one has been able to fight adverse circumstances becomes part of narrative identity and can be used every time a new challenging situation occurs (Singer, King, Green, & Barr, 2002).

Lucie in particular was able to find positive meaning in establishing connections with her repeated past negative experiences. By engaging in narrating, exploring, reflecting on, analyzing, learning from, and incorporating difficult experiences into her life story – that is, exploratory narrative processing − Lucie reframes her painful L2-related shame experiences in a positive way, which is conducive to her feeling more satisfied and happy in her everyday life, and she interestingly makes meaningful connections between different parts of her past, present and future life, and the change in her personality – that is, autobiographical reasoning − in a coherent life story. Coherent positive resolution leads to positive self-transformation within the narrative of difficult experiences.

From Linda's and Lucie's data, it seems not unreasonable to conclude that when individuals face challenging situations, the way they tell their stories about these unfortunate events may have a positive impact on their well-being, and it appears very likely that those individuals who are open to reflecting on their positive and negative past experiences, and to seeing in the negative experiences the positive aspects, may be more equipped to struggle against future challenging situations. Narratives may be used to make sense of the adverse and challenging experiences one has been through and eventually lead to a higher degree of self-understanding and the development of a new personality and a regenerated self. In other words, processing negative and shameful experiences in a more positive light through the use of narrative may be the pathway to healing and redemption.

The results in this study seem to corroborate McAdams's (2006a, p. 17) contention that "midlife American adults who score especially high on well-validated measures of

generativity […] tend to see their own lives as narratives of redemption." He further argues that:

> These caring and productive midlife adults − men and women who are typically deeply interested in their own family and work lives and who tend to be very involved in community, civic, and/or religious institutions − tend to construct life stories that feature redemption sequences, which we define as scenes wherein the protagonist is delivered from suffering to an enhanced status or state. (p. 17)

McAdams's research shows that the individuals who are highly "generative" are those who embrace the negative experiences and transform the bad into good, and in so doing, they are able to move forward and leave something positive behind. These individuals seem to be able to make their lives into redemptive, self-generating stories, contrary to other individuals whose lives seem to be a repetition of negative events that they are unable to proceed, making their lives contaminated by vicious circles. As expressed by McAdams (2006b, p. 5), "Highly generative adults tend to tell a certain kind of story about their lives, a story that emphasizes the themes of suffering, redemption and personal destiny."

The first-person accounts have provided the participants with insights, not only into their foreign language learning histories and trajectories, but also in their knowledge of themselves as complex and multifaceted human beings who experience a diversity of contradictory emotions during their journey. It can be seen that the two participants' self-concepts seem to have evolved across the 9-month research period and their vision on shame changed, suggesting a dynamic nature to the construct. Through the telling and re-telling of their language learning histories, Linda and Lucie were given the unique opportunity to re-frame their past experiences and somehow alleviate themselves from their (sometimes overloaded) emotional baggage, and eventually find solutions and new perspectives for the future in the process of disclosing their concealed shame experiences.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this concluding chapter, I will first recapitulate the main findings of the current study, focusing on the principle themes which emerged from the analysis of the data. Following this, I will summarise the limitations of the study and eventually proceed to provide some tentative practical pedagogical strategies which could prove effective in combating learner shame and reluctance to use the TL in the language classroom.

It has been shown that, previously to the current study, very little empirical research had been conducted on the role of shame in SLA, and to my knowledge, no research has been conducted to date in the context of the French language classroom. My findings revealed all the complexity of the role of shame in FLL and suggest the need for more studies in order to build on the first steps that have been taken in this research.

As the title of the thesis indicates, the current project is based on French learners' accounts of their FLL experience. The interview-based approach used has been extremely valuable as it provided me as a teacher of FLs with rich insights into not only the lives of my students within the school context but also outside their learning environment.

8.2 SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

Using a qualitative approach to analysing the collected data, the present research investigated the role of shame in French learners of FLs within the context of the classroom. It was motivated by the gap in the research literature regarding baseline data on L2-related shame. The initial findings help us to obtain a more balanced view of the emotions that may hamper FLL and confirm what was said in earlier studies on the significance of psychological and emotional factors in SLA. The aim of my research was to examine the role of FLCS in the

language learning process and the willingness to communicate of French L2 learners. It was hypothesized that shame was a factor which could be at the origin of their reluctance to speak the L2 and a predictor of learner's disengagement from FLL.

It is worth noting that, as an interviewer, I did not have to steer the conversation to the topic of my research, as the overwhelming majority of the students who participated in the study confided their language-related shame very easily. They brought up the issue themselves, which clearly indicates that shame has become an integral part of their FLL history as well as their identity, as evidenced by the self-descriptions they provided. All the stories were interesting in their uniqueness. From what the participants claimed, shame interferes with FLL in a significant way and it may be assumed that this phenomenon accounts for differential success in L2 learning.

A narrative approach has been productive in the pursuit of my research enquiries in two particular contexts, an Apprentice Training Centre (a vocational school) and a GRETA (a public educational school for adults). By relying on in-depth, face-to-face interviews with French learners of FLs within the context of the language classroom, I could obtain data that allowed me to (1) explore the presence of shame in French learners of FLs in France, (2) assess the relationships between shame and learner behaviour, as well as the consequences of this emotion on the students' engagement and (3) arrive at a deeper understanding of the effect of learners' shame experiences on their L2 identity. The themes which emerged from the data were investigated against the research literature and language learning theories, and according to the research topics.

The analysis of the data of the four focal participants has provided a number of intriguing findings and interesting insights into the shame patterns within French L2 classrooms and it underlines the prevalence of this emotion within this particular educational context. Certainly, one of the most crucial messages of my investigation is that shame is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon which may emerge via diverse routes, in particular during oral tasks. The interviewees regretted that their FLL journey had been so stressful and devoid of enjoyment, as they often used words such as "awful," "stressful," "uncomfortable," "ego-threatening," or even "devastating" to describe their FLL journey.

Viewed from a dynamic systems theory perspective, it clearly appears that single cause-effect explanations for the reasons why a significant number of French students are likely to experience shame during their FLL journey are not sustainable. Affective statements and shame-related issues appeared to have permeated nearly all the aspects of the data which

emerged from this study, suggesting the significant influence, persistence and severity of this emotion in FLL.

The analysis of the results suggests that shame is such a widespread experience in France that French learners seem to be drawn towards a 'natural' tendency to experience this emotion in many domains. Said differently, shame is a paramount feature of the French language classroom, but my dataset revealed that it also features in French students' lives outside of the FLL context; it was found that, when experienced regularly, this emotion may be conducive to the internalisation of shame, that is, this tendency to experience shame recurrently and in several walks of their lives results in a stable personality trait and a settled disposition.

The shame-prone language learner is a student who perceives FLL as an uncomfortable, destabilising and ego-threatening experience. The analysis of the data allowed me to propose a tentative definition of language shame: Foreign language classroom shame can be seen as a complex, dynamic, self-evaluative and particularly debilitative and paralysing emotion arising in the specific context of the FL classroom, found at all levels of proficiency, and composed of a diversity of interrelated factors such as learner beliefs, self-perceptions, feelings, emotions, personality traits, as well as contextual variables (e.g. teacher, peers), and leading to enduring anxious states, avoidance of, or disengagement from FL learning and use, to a persistent diminished sense of self and perception of a flawed identity.

In the following section I synthetize the main findings concerning my five research topics:

1. The main sources of foreign language classroom shame (FLCS)
2. The consequences and manifestations of linguistic shame
3. Learner characteristics and FLCS
4. Shame and other emotions
5. Reasons why learners succeed or fail to override the feeling of shame

The overarching hypothesis at the beginning of the research project was that shame might be a factor contributing to learners' reluctance to use the TL and a predictor of their disengagement from FLL and of their ultimate achievement.

The four focal participants, Maria, Annelise, Linda and Lucie, experienced shame, but while Maria and Annelise were burdened by shame, Linda and Lucie were able to develop strategies of resilience to shame.

8.2.1 The main sources of foreign language classroom shame (FLCS)

The first research topic concerned the sources of FLCS. When one tries to analyse the sources of learners' language shame, one can easily get lost in a mosaic of factors which make synthesising the research findings particularly challenging. However, there are some particularly significant sources of language shame that have been identified and selected in the dataset which may account for learners' proclivity to experience shame. It was noticeable that the shame that students experience in the context of the classroom may have its antecedents in experiences that took place outside the classroom context and at early periods of their life, and resurfaced later at crucial periods of their language learning journey. Maria's narrative is particularly enlightening as it is full of these instances where past experiences may impact the way one experiences shame in the language classroom.

The findings concerning this shame-prone participant revealed that shame was supported, both on the social and cultural levels, which explains why she reported having been drawn towards such a pattern and why she should have been so open to reveal her language-related shame experiences. With the word 'shame' being used on a regular basis in the French every day parlance, it is no wonder that she should have spoken willingly and openly about her language-related experiences of shame.

I have identified both learner-external and learner-internal factors at the origins of shame experiences:

1) Learner-external factors

The family background

The analysis of the data concerning the two shame-prone participants, Maria and Annelise, has identified the 'shame-prone self', that is, the fact these participants tend to experience shame broadly, in a variety of situations, including during their FLL journey. The example provided by these two participants point to the existence of chronic shame, that is, a shame which occurs in individuals' several walks of their lives, and the findings indicate the emergence of a negative language self in the case of these two participants. In both cases, the role of the family environment seems to have been of particular importance. As has been amply demonstrated in psychology, the impact of the family may be significant in the emergence of a shame-prone personality and the internalisation of shame in individuals. The findings in the current research are congruent with the research conducted on the role of family in promoting a shame-prone personality in their child (Bennett, Sullivan, & Lewis,

2010; Galmiche & Oades-Sese, 2020; Stuewig & McCloskey, 2005), and showed that family relationships may induce shame and be detrimental for individuals' sense of self.

From the participants' narratives, it seems reasonable to deduce that experiences of shame that took place during the childhood may follow individuals into their adulthood and impact their emotional and motivational reactions to FLL. The participants with histories of family shame have reported to be always alert to and on the lookout for mistakes. They reported to have grown with a deep sense of hopelessness and helplessness, and with the idea that nothing can be changed. Their testimonies point to the idea that shame may originate in the way parents bring up their children, instilling in them a sense of mistrust or a feeling of doubt about their capabilities, and leading them to feel uncomfortable and lacking self-esteem. In this case, shame has become an internalised part of the individual's identity and as a consequence, the shame that is experienced in one domain may *contaminate* other domains, infecting every aspect of individuals' lives like a contagious disease, as has been reported by Annelise. Her language shame was so powerful that she transferred to other domains of her life. Shame can therefore be understood as a personality trait which has made these students more liable to experiencing high levels of shame in the language classroom and in a variety of domains.

Teacher attitude and behaviour

The findings of the current study support the notion that language learners' attitude to FLL, to failure and to shaming experiences may be considerably influenced by the instructional context, of which the teacher is a significant part. The attitudes that their teachers adopted during their FLL journey seem to have had a direct link with Maria's and Annelise's thoughts, beliefs, emotional reactions and motivated action. Most of the critical remarks made by the interviewees concerned the teacher, who was held responsible for their disengagement from L2 learning and for their tendency to feel ashamed when they make mistakes and fail.

It may have been an important factor in the stories of the participants that they regarded language learning in classroom settings as an evaluative situation. Courses were often perceived by these students as an ongoing exam in front of an audience in which they felt their vulnerabilities exposed. They reported feeling that they were evaluated − often in a negative way − by their teachers, which may explain the reason why they came to have feelings of discomfort, tension and fear of experiencing shame over failure when they were

learning the L2 in class. The attitude of their teacher to errors in particular has played a significant role in their apprehension about using the TL in class.

Comparison with peers and negative peer evaluation

The self-conscious emotion of shame is a social and other-oriented emotion and therefore it involves an individual's evaluation of other people's thoughts and judgements. A theme that would resonate with many shame-prone learners concerns the daunting and evaluating presence of others/peers, which was often claimed to be an explanation for learners' proclivity to experience FLCS. As the frequent occurrences of the word *gaze* testify, learners in the study expressed great concern over their peers' opinions and reactions to their mistakes, and some of them reported being more apprehensive about negative evaluation on their peers' part rather than on the teacher's. A striking finding was that the majority of the informants claimed that they *perceived* themselves to be less able and competent than their peers. A salient feature in the narratives is the students' conviction that they cannot compete with their group mates as they perceive that their performance in the TL compares unfavourably with that of their peers. Because of the social and evaluative nature of the (language) classroom, the feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that students experience seem to be intensified in this context. Feeling of social devaluation and fear of negative evaluation was a recurrent theme in the narratives. It is worth noting that the feeling of shame may be triggered even if there is no audience and when learners *imagine* others hold damaging beliefs about them.

2) Learner-internal factors

Language learning histories

Students generally enter the language classroom with their unique memories of past emotional and psychological experiences, that is, their 'emotional baggage.' This 'emotional baggage' is "the feelings you have about your past and the things that have happened to you, which often have a negative effect on your behaviour and attitudes" (Collins Dictionary, 2020). Maria's case is interesting as she was convinced that her first FLL experiences had a significant impact on her current attitude to FLL and to her proneness to feel shame in a variety of situations. An interesting finding was that some students reported that past language shame experiences were still vivid in their memory. Maria's story shows how negative experiences shape the formation of learners' future L2 selves.

An important aspect of the interviews with the students was that they explained their language learning development and their current attitudes to FLL and FLs (engagement or disengagement from L2 learning, interest or lack of it) and the emotions they were/had been experiencing, such as anxiety, shame, or pride, in relation to their language learning histories. This is a significant point to consider if one is to gain insight into students' experiences of and perspectives on the language learning process.

This factor may account for learners' high level of shame-proneness and anxiety, as the negative experiences that these participants encountered at one point or another of their FLL journey may have an impact on how they react to a particular situation in the present moment. Past negative and shameful histories may have *disposed* these informants to feel shame more frequently and easily in the current situations and to be fearful of experiencing shame again in the future.

Lack of vision of a successful L2-using self

The narratives of the students who were shame-prone contrasted with those of others who reported to have been able to bounce back after failure and repeated episodes of shame. The findings of my study suggest that Maria and Annelise were unable to develop strategies of resilience because they failed to form the kind of visions of themselves as successful language learners in the future as the fighters did. Thus, cultivating an identity and visions of oneself as a successful L2 user may be conducive to a positive self-concept and higher levels of self-esteem, which in turn makes the individual more apt at fighting shame. This role of self-concept is consistent with the general role of the notion in FLL (see Csizér & Magid, 2014).

Self-perceptions of low-proficiency and underachievement

The present study did not measure the participants' *actual* proficiency level, but it was found that learners' *perceived* lack of competence in the L2 was a source of shame as important as their *actual* lack of competence in the L2. Many comments revolved around the idea that learners' *actual* linguistic ability or a lack of it mattered as much as their *perception* of their competence.

Discrepancy between the current self and the Ideal self

Corroborating Dörnyei's theoretical framework (2009b) of the L2 Motivational Self System, the participants feel that there is a huge discrepancy between their desire to express

themselves in a clear and comprehensible manner and their perceptions of their poor command of the TL. As evidenced in the interviews, this discrepancy causes considerable stress, frustration and shame, especially when the students feel that their desired self is out of their reach, despite their hard work. In other words, they usually felt a gap between their *ideal* L2 self and their *actual* L2 self, and this gap may be a significant source of internal shame.

Learner characteristics and dispositional traits

The interviewees argued that it is due to one's personality and various dispositional traits that a student experiences shame in the classroom or in other contexts. The individual's attributes that occurred most in the focal interviewees' accounts included shyness, introversion and inferiority complex.

8.2.2 The consequences and manifestations of linguistic shame

The participants provided detailed and vivid descriptions of the workings of FLCS. Among the participants who experienced shame, three profiles of learners/reaction styles have been identified: 1) those who do everything possible to escape from shame, 2) those who are resigned and quit L2 learning and 3) those who develop strategies of resilience and fight.

The following Table 8.1 contains the number of participants who could be assigned to each of the categories. Some excerpts from the participants' stories are provided in order to illuminate the significance of each profile and to characterize their response to shame experiences.

TABLE 8.1

19 shame-prone participants' profiles

Type of Profile		Number of Participants	Pseudonyms	Excerpts
1	Do everything to escape from shame	8	Jacques, Paul, Axel, Mélanie, Elodie, Maximilien, Clémence, Marc	"*I often pretended to be sick, I did everything possible not to experience shame again.*" Paul "*All these gazes on me, I wanted to hide. I decided not to speak English anymore. I even pretended to be ill and I played truant.*"

				Elodie
2	Resigned and quit L2 learning	5	Maria, Annelise, Charlotte, Nadia, Robert	"*I felt degraded, devalued, I was a failure because the teacher made me believe that I was bad at the core, useless. It even affected my whole life. I had always been null and nothing could change this. I gave up studying.*" Maria "*I thought I was a total failure. I still think I will never progress whatever I do.*" Charlotte
3	Develop resilience and fight strategies	6	Lucie, Emilie, Claire, Pierre, Gabriel, Linda	"*I don't regret working hard for going abroad, all the negative experiences are now behind. The Australian people said I spoke well. All this had a very positive effect on my self-esteem, it boosted my confidence.*" Lucie "*When I came back from Swansea, my attitude towards English changed. I was far more motivated because I knew that I was able to speak English.*" Pierre

The analysis of the findings in the present study has identified a number of consequences of shame, of which I have retained five:

On learner behaviour

The recurrence of shame experiences may have detrimental consequences on learners' attitudes towards the FL, in particular on their willingness to communicate. Confirming my hypothesis, the findings have revealed that the speaking skill was one of the most powerful mediators of shame. Students may take measures to circumvent potentially shameful experiences. The data regarding Maria, Annelise, Linda and Lucie revealed that there is a robust inclination towards reluctance/reticence to speak the TL within the French language classroom, and this reluctance/silence was claimed to be an efficient means of coping with and escaping from potentially shame-inducing situations in which learners will run the risk of losing their face.

The pronunciation in particular has been reported to threaten learners' sense of self, as having a bad or strong accent is regarded by French learners − and by some teachers − as a reflection of their inability and/or lack of intelligence. This is an important finding, as the *use*

of the TL is a significant predictor of language achievement. The interviews with the students present us with a picture of French learners who are constantly endeavouring not to be in the spotlight or singled out to give an answer to a question.

The vicious circle of shame-anxiety

From the analysis of the dataset, one of the main findings is the existence of a vicious circle of shame and anxiety (see also Figure 2.1 Shame-shame cycle diagram for further details) in the shame-prone respondents. Maria's narrative is very much evocative of the noxious effects of shame on individuals, and it illustrates the spiral of shame and anxiety. The narratives of the focal participants are full of instances where students experiencing recurrent episodes of shame feel anxious about experiencing failure and potential shame-inducing situations in the future. It is worth noting that *anticipated* failure and shame was reported to be as deleterious for learner's self and on their motivational behaviour as *actual* failure and shame.

On learner identity

The findings confirm that learner's investment in the TL is also an investment in a new identity, as language shame was found to be bound up with the construction of learner identity and to entail enduring negative self-appraisal and feelings of vulnerability. Lucie's story is a forceful illustration of the interconnectedness of shame and identity as the data reveal that the prototypical reaction to shame is the students' concern with their global self as persons, and with how they are seen in the eyes of others. Global negative evaluation of the self, rumination over failure, self-scrutinizing, self-deprecating tendencies, inclination to anticipate failure rather than success, and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness are common features among shame-prone learners. Feelings of belittlement, of being seen by others as incompetent and undesirable L2 speakers, and feelings of worthlessness and uselessness were frequently reported. These feelings were found to impact learners' behavioural decisions and to lead them to flee from situations which were seen as being potentially damaging for their sense of self. It has been found in the dataset that shame affects learners' level of perseverance in front of failure because they think/perceive, consciously or not, that their poor performance is a stable trait of their identity and therefore nothing can be done against what they often referred to as an innate lack of ability.

The factor which was recurrently associated with learner identity is the accent, as having a bad accent in the L2 is perceived as being "not good enough," "null," or "useless" (these

words came up in most interviews). To summarize, the repetition of failures and of language-related shame-inducing situations may lead learners to feel that they have an unwanted/undesired and flawed identity. In other words, the data seems to identify some reciprocation between language self-esteem and general self-esteem.

Imagining self-protecting strategies

A number of motivational behaviours have been identified as a means of coping with potentially shame-inducing situations. The typical coping mechanisms that are used by the shame-prone participants were characterised by *flight* behaviours. In other words, such students flee from certain tasks they deem risky.

Refusing to take part in communicative activities was reported to be a means (subconscious or voluntary) of avoiding potential shame-inducing situations. The findings in the current study confirm the link between teacher attitude and students' motivated behaviour, since disengagement from L2 learning was found to be a means of avoiding potentially shame-inducing experiences. Another set of self-protecting strategies was playing truant, pretending to be sick or that the work had not been done.

Students' over concern with mistakes, grammatical accuracy and bad pronunciation

The most often mentioned factor accounting for the consequences of fearing experiencing shame and negative evaluation was students' concern (and for some of them, obsession) with mistakes. Participants expressed ingrained fears of speaking with a strong accent, of making grammar or spelling mistakes, of not using the right word, of making themselves ridiculous and of being the object of mockery, downgrading and belittlement on the part of the teacher or the peers. Fear of mispronouncing English words or fear of speaking with a French accent appeared frequently in the narratives, as it was reported that having a bad accent was perceived to be the sign of a deficient self (see section above on learner identity).

8.2.3 Learner characteristics and FLCS

One of the main findings was that, contrary to my expectations/assumptions, shame is not exclusively the result of poor language learning ability and L2 proficiency, as it was also found at more advanced levels of L2 proficiency, and it seems that shame increases as learners become more competent in the TL and with the numbers of years of study.

Linda in particular provided some interesting insight into the way the feeling/perception of a gap between the speaking skill (in which she was proficient) and the writing skill (with which she had some difficulties) could be conducive to shame. The explanation that she provided for this unexpected result was that she felt heightened expectations put on her to speak the L2 fluently, while at the beginning stages, she felt that mistakes are allowed. Also, shame was reported to occur more frequently when the TL is English, because of the universality of English. Participants argued that they felt more pressure to be good at this language than at other FLs, because, as this FL is widely spoken, they feel that one ought to speak it. Shame was also found to be experienced at all ages.

8.2.4 Shame and other emotions

As the repetition of the terms ‘anxious,’ ‘anxiety,’ ‘humiliated’ and ‘humiliation’ testifies, the emotions of humiliation and anxiety were claimed to be occurring on a regular basis in conjunction with shame, thus confirming research on the interconnectedness of shame and anxiety. It is worth noting that the terms ‘shame’ and ‘anxiety’ being used so often, I had to make sure that they were not used interchangeably by the respondents. Anxiety was reported to occur every time the students were fearing experiencing shame in the future. As regards the experience of humiliation, it was claimed that the repetition of humiliating episodes was conducive to the internalisation of shame. Maria’s example is a good illustration of the way one may feel overwhelmed with particularly painful memories. She used the term ‘shame’ no less than six times, and a cognate, ‘humiliation,’ three times, without me having to guide her, which reveals how importantly these emotions featured in her life as a language learner. The feelings of humiliation and shame may turn into or be repressed by a less self-threatening emotion, anger-at-other and humiliated fury, as is the case with Linda. By experiencing anger, Linda turns shame inside-out, and in so doing, deflects shame-induced self-condemnation, downplays the ego-threatening feelings of shame and humiliation, and directs her self-blame towards the teacher, thus protecting her self-esteem.

Annelise and Lucie’s data are also full of allusions to feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and anxiety. In the case of Annelise, the experience of repeated humiliations and shameful episodes led to an infuriated sense of self and anger and resentment at the teacher. As regards Lucie’s data, she reports having been so afraid of displaying such a bad image of

herself and of being ashamed that she manifested psychosomatic symptoms such as stifling, feeling her heartbeat or her legs trembling.

8.2.5 Reasons why learners succeed or fail to override the feeling of shame

To end on a positive note, I would like to mention that two focus participants, Linda and Lucie, have found ways to fight shame. The following features can account for learners' ability to develop resilience to shame:

Clear and elaborate visions of the L2-using self

A crucial feature of Lucie's experience is that, as she had sustained and concrete positive intercultural contacts with speakers of the L2 community, she seems to have been able to fight shame more easily than those of the students who have had rare or no contacts with, or knowledge about, the cultural environment and habits of the L2 communities. It seems that shame can be more easily redeemed when speaking the TL in meaningful interactions features in learners' dreams and visions, while shame may not be redeemed when speaking/learning the TL is only equated with obtaining good marks or passing an exam. Another interesting point was that the resilient students were *intrinsically* motivated to learn the TL.

The participants who reported being 'open' to other communities throughout the world and those who chose to learn a FL for themselves (i.e. a FL which is not imposed in the curriculum) were found to be more resilient to the taxing experiences of shame and other related emotions because they have less pressure to become competent, just as those of the participants who claimed to be integrated into the L2 community seem not to experience shame or, if they do, are able to bounce back more easily after failure.

Yet, although staying in a host country and having genuine contacts with the people from the L2 community, or nurturing the dream of living there at a time or another in the future, does not necessarily guarantee that students will be able to resist the shame feeling or fight it when it happens, it can be assumed that having positive experiences with the speakers of the L2 community during stays abroad for instance, or sustaining the vision of a successful L2 speaking self in the future may facilitate the emergence of a shame-resilient identity.

However, it seems that what matters is not so much stays abroad in themselves which guarantee that students will not experience shame during their FLL journey or be able to fight this emotion when it appears, but it seems rather that it is *what* students do with their

experiences with the FL abroad, how positive their perceptions of the people from the L2 community are, and how they use the contact opportunities with these communities. Linda's and Lucie's visions for the future as L2 users were largely shaped by their contextual resources, that is, their family and academic backgrounds.

Having a growth mind-set

The analysis of Linda's and Lucie's data suggests a capacity for bouncing back after years of shame experiences and their developmental paths seem to have a lot of commonalities. It appears that, in contrast with Maria and Annelise, Linda and Lucie were able to override shame because they seem to possess a growth mind-set, that is, a spirit which conceives of ability/competency as being liable to change with the years of learning and effort, rather than something that is fixed once for all. These students do not think that their ability is dependent on a natural gift or a knack for FLs and they are confident that things may evolve positively with effort. They envision learning and life events in a forward-pointing manner.

8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

All research has its limitations, and the current study is no exception. Caution should therefore be taken for generalization of the implications of the current research, because they are solely based on the particular classroom settings in which the learners' experiences took place. Therefore, we need to see other data-based studies, situated in different contexts, which would account comprehensively for the factors and mechanisms involved in the triggering of FL shame.

The first limitation to be mentioned lies in the use of interviews, because of potential issues such as self-deception, fatigue effects and reluctance to disclose and speak at length about such a devastating emotion as shame. The second limitation is related to the sample that participated in the research project. Most of the participants were low-proficiency students, who came from only two French schools; because they were taught only a few hours of FLs each month, caution should be used as regards the generalisability of the results.

Another limitation is that events were seen in retrospect, and the participants may have been tempted to be selective about what they talked about (i.e. memory bias). Therefore, further research is needed to explore the experience of shame in other learning and teaching

contexts, for instance in environments where students have higher levels of engagement with FLL and higher levels of proficiency. A final potential problem concerned my dual position of being both the researcher in the study *and* the teacher of the majority of the informants. This may have brought about issues of social desirability bias.

It is worth noting that, as a result of my own experience with L2-related shame, this emotion may have been a variable which I tended to search out in the dataset in a systematic way and I acknowledge that I may have given it more attention than another researcher might have.

The final limitation relates to the presentation of the data. Although the participants' narratives generated a lot of data in support of the claims that have been made throughout the analysis part of the research, limitations of space and time did not allow me to go into as much depth in presenting the data as I would have wished.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With shame being so detrimental and devastating for one's sense of self-esteem, trying to establish relationships between theory and improved classroom practice is important. Lessons drawn from the accounts of the participants in the study can benefit our students through encouraging them to develop positive FL self-concepts and help them to combat, or at least minimize the effects of shame if it happens. The results confirm the belief that students' engagement is related to their teacher's motivational practices and attitudes, and they highlight the significant role of negative emotions, including shame, in the students' willingness to pursue or give up the learning of a FL.

With its focus and approach, this study addresses a number of current issues in language teaching and suggests several possible future directions. The following section will briefly outline the main directions that both future studies on FLL and students may benefit from. I will mention the participants' and my own recommendations.

8.4.1 The participants' recommendations

The method used here allowed learners to voice their concerns but also their hopes as regards the learning of another language. I will summarize the most significant of the participants' recommendations, which revolve around the following points:

1) External factors

The teaching methods and the teacher

A significant number of the interviewees, including the four focal participants, regretted that language classes in France were places in which they feel insecure and their identity threatened. Interesting in this regard is Maria's feeling that the classroom is generally regarded as a place where students are taking an ongoing exam. The dataset reveals that the role of the teacher is predominant in the arising of the shame feeling and in the developing of a shame-prone personality, but also in the fighting of this debilitative emotion. The participants unanimously affirm that providing a low-anxiety and psychologically comfortable teaching atmosphere is one of the most efficient ways of counterbalancing or at least minimizing negative emotions that inevitably take place during the learning of another language. All the participants insisted that teachers take into consideration their students' emotional experiences in a more systematic way.

A running theme in the participants' accounts was the importance of taking students' language learning histories and trajectories into account, since our language students come to our classroom with their own unique language learning history. As has been shown in an earlier section, this idea is in line with Dörnyei's (2009b, 2019) third component of the L2 Motivational Self System, that is to say, the L2 Learning Experience is a major feature in the histories of language learners. It has shown how former learning experience impacts learners' current self and attitude to FLL. Accordingly, taking into account their past experiences of FLL through the means of interviews was claimed to help learners to process negative and shameful episodes and eventually to move on.

Most of the interviewees also recommended that FLL should be a stress-free and an enjoyable experience. Foreign language enjoyment (FLE) was found to produce relaxed learners. This aspect is interesting, as the experience of enjoyment has been demonstrated to broaden FL learners' mind and thus facilitate their absorbing more during FL learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) maintain that FLE is the "emotional key to unlocking the language learning potential" in FL learning by creating an enjoyable and "safe psychological base from which to explore an unfamiliar linguistic and

cultural world" (p. 261). There is all likelihood that keeping a safe classroom atmosphere will be conducive to learners feeling less fearful of experiencing shame.

Interviewing students on their emotional experience

A number of the participants reported feeling happy with being given the opportunity for the first time in their life to express themselves on their language learning history and argued in favour of teachers taking the habit of interviewing them at a time or another during their FLL journey in order to make them reflect on language-related issues and on their attitude towards language learning. The positive role of interviews has been made clear in Lucie's and Linda's narratives, as they gave them the opportunity to reframe their past experiences with FLL and in particular see in a new light all the "critical incidents" (Benson, 2011, p. 548).

It is worth mentioning that some of the informants said that being interviewed about their experiences as language learners allowed them to evaluate their past emotional experiences and to set themselves goals for the future in the light of what had been revealed − and in some cases disclosed for the first time − during the interview sessions. If one looks at Linda's and Lucie's data for instance, they can see that participating in the research and being interviewed enabled them to become more aware of their FLL process and their language-related shame. It seems that they were able to reframe their past experiences in a more positive light and gain a new L2 identity, thus confirming the redemptive and regenerating power of interviews. Both seem to possess a growth mind-set and move in a forward-pointing manner and to have benefitted from the developing of a narrative identity through the interview sessions.

This finding is in line with McAdams' third level of his framework of Personality (McAdams, 2006a; McAdams & Pals, 2006), which highlights that verbalizing one's past experiences of anxiety or other negative emotions – an action which they call Integrative Life Narratives − might help individuals overcome negative experiences, reconceive their past FLL experiences in a new light, re-interpret them in a forward-pointing manner and envision possible abilities in using the TL in the future. By creating a cohesive narrative regarding their shame experiences, learners may develop resilience to this emotion and turn their negative personal histories into more positive ones.

Narratives can be seen as a "meditational tool" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011) thanks to which learners re-create themselves through discourse/conversation, make sense of their lived experiences by making connections between past, present and future, and try to decipher the complexity that lies at the heart of human life. The narratives of memories, of past, present

and future events achieve "autobiographical relevance" (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) for the narrator. Autobiographical relevance marks aspects of one's past that have meaning for one's life, and it is through telling and re-telling their lived experiences that individuals interpret and re-interpret these experiences in ways that change and evolve over time. The term "autobiographical reasoning" was coined by Habermas and Bluck (2000) to explain how individuals create connections between remembered events and other distant parts of their life and to the development of their self. Connections between past, present and even possible future experiences may shape the ways individuals interpret their life and orient to the future, and the knowledge/enlightenment gained from the process of telling and re-telling, interpreting and re-interpreting the story is not stable and fixed once for ever. Said differently, the understanding that the storyteller obtains from the process may be subject to changes, every time the story is being re-visited and re-told (Nelson, 2010).

Smaller classes

According to what the participants reported, smaller classes favour group cohesiveness and allow students to get to know each other better and not fear their peers' judgemental regards. Students stand a better chance to regard the use of the L2 as an opportunity for expressing themselves rather than a threat to their identity, as most of the participants argued that it was particularly daunting to express oneself in front of mates they barely know.

Encouraging stays abroad

Encouraging students to spend some time abroad was claimed to be a good means of making them feel confident and develop a sense of mastery with using the TL, and therefore less liable to experiencing the shame feeling, as the learners whose desire is to attain native-like fluency seem to be more motivated to reduce the gap between their perceived lack of competence and their ideal/imagined future L2 self. The students who have had concrete experiences of living abroad and being exposed to the TL on a regular basis found the necessary resources to fight their shame experiences. The participants regretted that study abroad programs are not systematically proposed to language learners. The idea of encouraging learners to go abroad and to take opportunities for genuine and meaningful interaction with members of the L2 community and not exclusively take part in what is generally perceived as face-threatening situations (i.e. classroom) is congruent with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of 'community of practice.' By being engaged with the L2 culture

and by developing a sense of belonging to a community and interacting with others, they develop a sense of identity. “Learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: they are aspects of the same phenomenon” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 115).

2) Internal factors

The participants recommended that teachers encourage students to make internally-oriented comparisons by focusing on their *progress* rather than their *failure*. In other words, they argued that teachers should encourage learners to make internal comparisons rather than compare their progress with that of other students. They regretted their lack of confidence in their ability to make progress and suggested that teachers help them believe in their capacity for improvement.

8.4.2 My own recommendations

The findings of the present research make a strong case for developing teachers’ concern for their students’ emotional states. The scarcity of empirical studies in this area and the implications of the phenomenon and its connectedness with a number of variables make it an absolute necessity to investigate into it further. This project attests to the role played by affective factors, including shame experiences in learners’ engagement with the learning of another language. The obvious implication of the current study is to provide teachers with training concerning the role of emotion in FLL and teaching. Given that students’ lack of motivation to learn a FL and their reticence to use the TL within the context of the language classroom is a major issue in France, finding ways to raise teachers’ awareness of their students’ language learning histories and training them to detect in their learners those who may have suffered from shameful experiences at early stages of FLL should be a prominent concern.

By establishing links between teacher attitudes, the emergence of a shame-prone personality and student motivation, this study provides a first step toward putting the topic of shame on the teacher education agenda. Of course, teachers cannot do wonders, but it is my conviction that if one manages to consider the students’ emotions (positive and negative) in a more systematic manner, this may result in tangible positive changes in students’ perception of FLL and may thus translate into higher motivation to learn and use the TL.

Although there is no single and straightforward solution to enhance learners' self-esteem, teaching approaches can be found which create a comfortable and anxiety-free learning environment. Such an environment may lead learners to feel more secure, to be more motivated to take the risk of making mistakes and be less fearful of losing face. It should be kept in mind though that the following suggestions may not be appropriate for every teaching context, or for learners of other FLs, from other cultures and countries, or with higher levels of proficiency.

It is worth noting that my recommendations are congruent with the participants'. Before providing some recommendations and making some suggestions, I would like to underline that, before any claim can be made about effective teacher pedagogical attitudes, further research is clearly needed on the role of shame in FLL. My recommendations revolve around the following points:

Teaching practices and seating arrangements

FLL takes place in a social context and failures and challenges of all sorts are unavoidable. Yet, there is all likelihood that the attitude of teachers may represent a defining variable in classroom language learning and in learners' success. The findings of the current research leave no doubt that the attitude that teachers adopt permeates all the aspects of their work as FL teachers and may impact their teaching in a significant way. The participants' harsh comments on the language teaching practices in France indicate that French learners regard teaching practice as one of the most salient causes for shame, in particular, the focus on *accuracy* rather than on *fluency*. They reported (and regretted) having received principally repeated negative and shame-inducing feedback when they made mistakes and got bad grades. Participants make a distinction between two types of feedback, corrective feedback and negative feedback. While the former conveys messages of ways to improve after one has failed, and thus focuses on the *process*, the latter stresses the *end result*, and more specifically failure to achieve, and contains information about one's underperformance (Amorose & Weiss, 1998).

Teachers play a significant role in facilitating learning and in fostering positive emotions in the classroom. There has been ample evidence in the literature that there is a relationship between teachers' motivational practices and caring attitude to their students and students' motivated behaviour and higher level of proficiency. Affective factors like learners' fear of experiencing shame or related negative emotions such as embarrassment or anxiety have to be

reckoned with. The long interviews with the most shame-prone students have made it clear that certain teaching approaches may contribute to creating a safe and positive learning environment in which learners will thrive and take the risk of making mistakes. The classroom atmosphere, teaching practices, teacher attitudes towards learners, and ways of dealing with errors have been claimed to be factors which may have considerable impact on how much shame they experience in the language classroom.

A good means of avoiding stress and shame would be for teachers to help students learn from their mistakes and envision error as a necessary step towards progress. L2 learning should be seen as a process in which learners, after making mistakes, obtain feedback and make new attempts and whenever feedback is provided in a respectful and tolerant manner, learners are likely to receive it as legitimate, less threatening and less demotivating.

Teachers may want to direct corrective feedback on students' *behaviour* (e.g. lack of work) rather than on their would-be 'innate inability' to progress and on their selves. They should be aware of the self versus behaviour distinction, since in most of French learners' minds, being bad at FLL is tantamount to being bad at the core (this has been a recurrent reflection in the participants' accounts). Helping learners develop clear visions of their (future) successful L2 self may also be a powerful way of making them committed and engaged in their learning. As the power of visualisation has proved useful in the developing of a positive L2 self in the research literature, teachers may wish to help students see the practical use of a FL as a means of communicating in genuine situations. However, it is worth noting that, in order to have their desired self activated, visions of their successful L2 selves need to be seen by students as realistic and reachable. Linked to the point mentioned previously, perhaps useful in fighting language shame would be the designing of programs aimed at teaching visualisation techniques that enhance learners' visions of themselves as successful users of the TL.

Finally, on the practical level, what would certainly contribute to reducing learner shame is paying attention to group membership and cohesiveness. One of the salient factors that could influence students' participation is the spatial organisation of the classroom (i.e. seating arrangements), which should be made in such a way as to favour learners' active participation.

Developing learner self-efficacy

Developing learner feeling of self-efficacy would be generating of more involvement in FLL and be conducive to learners' feeling of progress. Self-efficacy is students' judgement that they have the capability to perform a task. The more they think that they have the ability to perform a task, the more they will exert effort and accomplish the task. Teachers may want to focus on the sense of progress made rather than on the goal to attain/the ultimate level of proficiency to achieve (i.e. focus on process rather than outcome) and help learners develop a sense of pride when they make progress. Ideally, teachers' aim should be to help learners believe that they can overcome failure and refuse acceptability attributions (i.e. "I am not good at language learning") and envision mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.

Encourage learners to develop a growth mind-set

From the dataset, it may be useful to help learners gain a growth mind-set, that is, a spirit which conceives of ability/competency as being liable to change with the years of learning and effort, rather than something that is fixed once for all. Said differently, since most French students feel helpless in face of failure, they should be encouraged to think that their ability is not dependent on a natural gift or a knack for FLs and to be confident that things may evolve positively (i.e. they can make progress or become fluent) with effort.

8.4.3 Tentative suggestions for future research

I can identify seven research directions for future investigations into the role played by shame in SLA:

First, it would be interesting to see if the emerging of a language shame-prone personality is culture-specific or language-specific. For instance, a question that should be raised in future research is whether the propensity to experience shame depends on the FL that is learnt, that is to say, the more widely spoken the FL (e.g. English), the more likely/liable it is to lead learners to experience shame. We may want to know now whether there is a specificity of the English language, since it is generally perceived as a universal language that is/should be normally spoken by everyone. The status of the English language as a language that is widely spoken imposes heavier demands on learners and lack of competency in this FL may be conducive to shame. Teachers and researchers may want to identify what FLs are more generative of the shame feeling in learners. The participants in the current study gave the beginning of an answer, as some interviewees reported that they did not experience shame

when they were learning FLs which are not compulsory, or when they learn a FL on a voluntary basis.

Second, it may be of interest to explore whether shame is a cause or a consequence of being low-proficient. Adopting a longitudinal design would allow to explore the effects and the stability of shame on low proficiency over a period of time within a variety of academic settings.

Third, further research is needed into the relationships between shame, motivation and achievement. The power of vision in stimulating motivation to learn another language has been explored in a number of studies, but the relationship between shame, vision and motivation may be interesting to investigate further.

Fourth, teachers may be interested in knowing whether shame experiences can be counterbalanced by positive experiences of success, enjoyment, feeling of accomplishment and pride. It may be interesting to investigate if the students who experience a sense of progress and achievement are able to fight the deleterious effects of language shame.

Fifth, as allowing students to gain a narrative identity seems to be efficient in helping them to envision their past shame experiences in a constructive, proactive and forward-pointing manner, it might be interesting to understand in greater depth the redemptive impact of interviews on learner sense of self. Further studies could explore whether interviewing students regarding their past and current FLL shame experiences alleviates their language shame.

Sixth, conceptualising the 'shame-prone self' and imagining a potential conceptual framework that might accommodate this new conceptualisation might be a fruitful approach to shed new light on the subject.

Finally, further research is clearly needed into the mechanisms by which the family background, repeated humiliating and shaming experiences, and early shame-inducing teaching environments may influence students' tendency to experience shame in the field of SLA. It is therefore suggested here to investigate in greater depths the relationships between family shame and language shame.

8.5 FINAL THOUGHTS

I very much hope that the stories that have been related in the current study will resonate with the experiences of a number of students across the globe, in particular all the students who do not even dare to think that what they are experiencing when learning a FL is shame. Although the focus of this study has only been on *one* aspect of FLL, that is, the role of shame − the Cinderella of SLA emotions − I have gained a better understanding of the variety of the emotional facets of language learning and of the kaleidoscopic nature of language learners' selves. It is my conviction that shame was the missing piece in the tapestry of FLL and I hope that the recommendations that I and the participants have made will be useful in designing teaching programmes that take into consideration learners' emotional needs, in particular their fear of experiencing shame.

I would like to mention that the writing of the thesis has been a humbling experience as I have become aware of all the complexity that is inherent in FLL and realized how presumptuous it would be to think that a single study can capture this complexity. The present study is far from being exhaustive and it is hoped that it will serve as a starting point for future studies.

To offer possible guidance for future research, it is hypothesized here that shame-reducing techniques would involve training students to become aware of their shame and "capitalize on the positive-broadening power of facilitative emotions" (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014, p. xiv). It has long been acknowledged that teachers and learning environments can have a notorious effect on learners' emotions. Having an 'unconditional positive regard' (Rogers, 1957), that is, seeing students in a caring and non-judgmental manner, can be seen as a useful ingredient that contributes to turning FLL into an enjoyable experience.

By way of conclusion, and on a more personal level, it is noteworthy that I have benefitted from the writing of this thesis and the very act of writing these lines has revealed spaces within my inner life where shame lurks and thrives. But, if healing from shame required this hard work of investigation into the quagmire and meanders of this deleterious emotion, I can tell it was worth it, and I am glad I now have companions on this road, who are keen to explore shame further. They remind me that I am not alone in this journey. Interviewing students about their shames allowed me to create my own narrative identity.

Also worthy of note may be the fact that I was lucky that my identities as a language learner and as a language teacher have changed over the years, but certainly the most significant and positive evolution came in my life as a researcher through my engagement with the data obtained from my research project and through the most precious collaboration

of a number of wonderful people. I can say that, in writing this thesis, I have experienced something life-changing, which resulted in my desire to see language teachers teach vision-based courses which would help students visualize their competent and successful L2 selves rather than fear their shamed selves.

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Appendix A: Signed Arts Ethics Approval Form of this thesis including the template of the Informed Consent Form signed by the participants

I received ethical approval for the study from the School Ethics Office at the University of Nottingham, including the template of the Informed Consent Form signed by the participants.

Section Two – Student Report	
1. Does your project require ethics approval? If you have circled yes, please confirm that ethics clearance has been given, with further details.	Circle one: Yes/No
The data have been collected following the ethical principles required for qualitative research. All the interviewees have completed an Informed Consent Form prior to the interviews. Faculty of Arts Ethics Approval Form sent 17/10/2015, Noted by Gareth Carrol (School Ethics Officer) 20/10/2015, Confirmed by Neil Sinclair (Second School Ethics Officer) 21/10/2015.	

Faculty of Arts Ethics Approval Form

Researcher name	Dominique Galmiche
School/Department	School of English, 3rd year PhD
Project Title	Shame in Second Language Acquisition
Date	17th October 2015
Email address	dominique.galmiche54@orange.fr

(1) Researcher Information – please tick as appropriate

☐ Member of Staff

☒ Postgraduate Researcher

Supervisors: Professor Zoltan Dörnyei, Dr Kevin Harvey

☐ Member of staff obtaining approval for a module

Module Code:

Module Name:

Is the research funded by an external body or part of an external funding bid?

☐ Yes Funding Body: ☒ No

If yes, does the funding body require proof of ethics approval?

☐ Yes ☐ No

(2) Research aims/questions

Provide a brief summary of the research aims/questions [max 100 words]

The study aims to explore the nature and sources of shame in the context of the foreign language classroom from the perspective of learners of English as a second language in French classes, and to provide evidence of the relationship between shame and difficulties in second language learning. To this end, a qualitative-oriented approach was used through in-depth, semi-structured interviews.
The research questions are:
- How is shame triggered in the classroom?
- What are the consequences of shame on foreign language learning?
- Are there any possible remedies against shame experiences?
- What are the pedagogical implications?

(3) Methods

a) Please indicate which methods you will be using:

- ☒ Questionnaire
- ☒ Focus groups
- ☒ Interviews
- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Psychophysiological measures (e.g. response time, eyetracking, ERP etc.)
- ☐ Data found online
- ☐ Data produced by students (e.g. their essays)
- ☐ Other; please specify:

b) Please give brief details of how you will be employing these methods [max 200 words]

So far, I have been working on qualitative data. In order to triangulate the data, explore the distribution of the findings and test their consistency and generalisability across a larger sample, I will later use paper questionnaires. The questions will be focused on shame in order to answer the research questions (see §2).
About focus groups interviews, this procedure of data gathering was chosen because they provide greater coverage of different emerging themes than would allow the exclusive use of individual interviews. However, regarding the sensitivity of the research topic, I was cautious to respect strictly the participants' intimacy. All the participants of the focus groups signed informed consent forms, and those who were not willing to sign did not participate.
Concerning interviews, they were conducted face to face, in French, mainly at schools and some were conducted at the participants' homes. A digital voice recorder was used and I took no notes during the interview so as to not interrupt the flow of participants' narratives.
Prior to the learners' interviews (focus groups or individual) I obtained a written agreement from the school principals.

(4) Research Location

Please confirm where the research will take place:

- ☐ On Campus
- ☐ Elsewhere in the UK
- ☒ Outside the UK
- ☐ Online

If you are conducting your research outside of the UK, please state where:

Research takes place in France, region Lorraine (East).

(5) Research topics

a) Please confirm if your research involves any of the following:

Yes ☐	No ☒	Procedures likely to cause participants distress
Yes ☒	No ☐	Misleading participants about your research or withholding information
Yes ☐	No ☒	Investigation of sensitive issues (e.g. sexual, racial, religious or political attitudes, illegal activities etc.)
Yes ☒	No ☐	Investigation of personal topics (e.g. personal health, learning disabilities etc.)
Yes ☐	No ☒	Online data that requires a password to access

If you have ticked YES to any of the above, please provide more details below. Indicate any potential risk to participants, justify this risk and what steps will be taken to minimise it. For online data please provide details of the websites and how you will ensure consent is given.

The participants were unaware of the exact topic of my research, so as not to orient their answers. I just mentioned the fact that I was working on affect in language learning and that I was trying to find ways to make language learning and speaking more comfortable. This was clearly indicated on the informed consent form they signed. I assumed from the start that revealing the exact nature of my research on shame would be detrimental to the research outcome and its neutrality.
Speaking about their difficulties in foreign language learning is a personal matter, especially when learners relate emotionally-loaded experiences in the language classroom, and they may be reluctant to disclose very personal occurrences of shame and embarrassment. To my knowledge, the research topic on shame has been unexplored so far and thus this void in the literature justifies the collection of interview data. At the start of the interview was reiterated the possibility for the participant to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms were used for data analysis. The overwhelming majority of the participants were eager to take part in the study.

(6) Participants, access and inducements

a) Please confirm if your sample will involve any of the following:

Yes ☒	No ☐	Participants under the age of 16
Yes ☐	No ☒	Adults of limited mental capacity
Yes ☐	No ☒	Participants recruited from special sources (e.g. educational institutions, prisons, hospitals etc.)

If you have ticked YES, please provide more detail information and justification:

Among the participants, two were college [secondary school] students, aged 13 and 15. I asked for their parents' consent to their child being interviewed. Both parents and children signed the consent form, and the interviews took place at the parents' homes. The parents were offered the possibility to attend the interview session. The information provided by these two participants was accurate and interesting since it gave insight into the role of shame at the beginning of foreign language learning.

b) Please confirm if you will be offering inducements for taking part:

Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, please provide more detailed information and justification:

c) Please confirm if there is a risk of participants being identified in any form of dissemination

Yes ☐ No ☒

If you have answered YES please provide more detail information and justification
If you have answered NO please confirm how you will protect participants' identities

Pseudonyms are used for data analysis. When mentioning participants in the thesis, there is no identifiable personal data.

(7) Data Storage & Dissemination

a) Please confirm that you will be storing your data in password-protected files

Yes ☒ No ☐

b) Please confirm if you will be destroying the data seven years after publication

Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have answered NO, please provide a justification and give details of where the data will be deposited

b) Please provide an indication of any intended dissemination or impact activities (if such activities are planned after the project is approved, please inform your School Ethics Officer of these changes and update consent procedures appropriately)

The current thesis aims at gathering data to possibly implement new approaches to foreign language learning in France which would take shame into consideration.

(8) Declaration

Signed: Dominique Galmiche, PhD, School of English

Date: 17th October 2015

Office use only:

Noted: Gareth Carrol Date: 20/10/2015
(School Ethics Officer)

Confirmed _____Neil Sinclair_____ Date_____21/10/15____
(Second School Ethics Officer)

Informed Consent Form

Project title: Affect and Second Language Acquisition
Purpose and brief description: How to make L2 learning and speaking more comfortable for learners?

Les affects et l'acquisition d'une seconde langue
Comment rendre l'apprentissage et la prise de parole en L2 plus agréable ?

Please, read the following information and circle a response as necessary:

SVP lisez les informations et entourez une réponse :

- I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it. YES / NO
  Je certifie que le but de cette étude m'a été expliqué et que je l'ai compris.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered. YES / NO
  Je pouvais poser des questions et on m'y a répondu de façon satisfaisante
- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence. YES / NO
  Ma participation à cette étude est volontaire, je suis libre de ne plus y participer à quelque moment que ce soit, sans en donner la raison et sans conséquences
- I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data. YES / NO
  Je reconnais que toutes les données sont anonymes, mes informations personnelles ne seront pas dévoilées
- I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study. YES / NO
  Je reconnais qu'il n'y a aucun risque ou danger connu associé à la participation à cette étude
- I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study. YES / NO
  Je reconnais avoir lu et compris les informations ci-dessus et suis d'accord pour participer à cette étude
- I consent to my data being transcribed and wish to be referred to anonymously. YES / NO
  Je consens à ce que mes données soient transcrites et exploitées de façon anonyme
- I consent to an audio file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. my name to be removed) from any presentation of my data. YES / NO
  Je consens à ce que soit utilisé un document audio, mais sans permettre de m'identifier dans une présentation
- I consent to a video file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. face covered and name removed) from any presentation of my data. YES / NO
  Je consens à ce que soit utilisé un document vidéo, mais sans permettre de m'identifier dans une présentation
- I consent to an audio/video file of my participation to be used with any available identifying factors. YES / NO
  Je consens à ce que soit utilisé un document audio ou vidéo auquel j'ai participé, avec tous les éléments disponibles permettant de m'identifier

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name (in block capitals / *en majuscules*): _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Paper presented at the conference Multidisciplinary perspectives on creation and innovation in foreign languages, LAIRDIL international symposium, Toulouse, France, 2015



Learner motivation:
Impact of Shame
on L2 learning and use

Dominique Galmiche
3rd year PhD student
School of English
Z.Dörnyei's research team

Colloque international
« Regards pluridisciplinaires sur la créativité et l'innovation en langues étrangères »

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

LAIRDIL international symposium
Toulouse 11th and 12th December 2015

L2 learning: Impact of Shame

- What Shame is
- What Shame is not
- Consequences of Shame
- Why research on Shame in SLA?
- Research questions
- Methodology - Participants
- Initial findings
- Imagining new pathways



The current thesis aims at gathering data to possibly implement new approaches to FL learning in France which would take shame into consideration

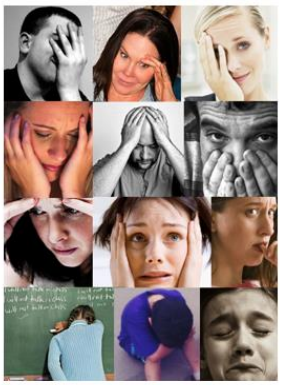
What Shame is

- Definition:
  - A complex and multifaceted emotion
  - A psychological construct
  - A moral emotion
  - a hidden emotion
  - A self-conscious emotion
  - A noxious emotion
- The phenomenology of shame:
  - Physiological manifestations
    - Blushing
    - Gaze avoidance
    - Lowering of head, Covering of face
  - Psychological manifestations
    - Confusion of thoughts
    - Focus on the badness of the self
    - Wish to escape, to flee, to disappear into a hole or under the ground
    - Inability to speak



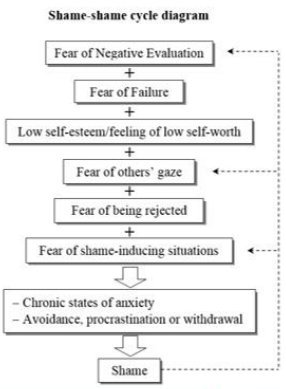
What Shame is not

- Shame and other constructs:
  - Shame ≠ Embarrassment
  - Shame ≠ Guilt
  - Shame ≠ Anxiety
  - Shame ≠ Humiliation



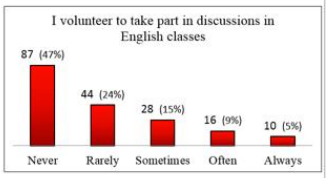
Consequences of Shame

- On the emotional and psychological functioning:
  - Feeling of isolation
  - Feeling of belittlement, of downgrading
  - Feeling of hopelessness, helplessness
  - Feeling of vulnerability
  - Shame-proneness
    becomes a characteristic of the individual
  - Rumination over past shameful experiences
- On identity:
  - Feeling of worthlessness
  - Feeling of general inability and inadequacy
  - Shame affects the *whole* Self as the individual perceives his identity as flawed
- Fear of future shame-inducing situations
- Can lead to a shame-shame cycle

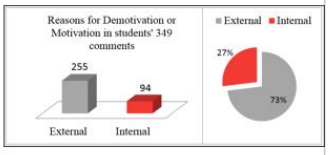


Why research on Shame in SLA?

- Origin of the study:
  - Master2 study with 185 students
  - on motivation, affect and L2 learning
  - in low-proficiency English classes
  - 47% never volunteer to speak L2 in class
  - Lack of motivation was significantly attributed to internal factors



- Apart from anxiety there must be another variable which comes into play during L2 learning, especially when *speaking* the TL
- From my experience, I intuited that the largely neglected and unexplored variable of Shame could interfere with FL learning



Research questions



- How is shame triggered in the classroom?
- How does one feel after a shame episode?
- What are the psychological symptoms of shame in the L2 classroom?
- What are the consequences of shame on FLL?
  - in particular on oral performance,
  - and the subjective experience of communicating in the TL
- Are there any possible remedies against shame experiences?
- What are the pedagogical implications?
  - How can teachers help learners override the feeling of shame?
  - How can teachers avoid the shame feeling in their classes?

Methodology

- Qualitative-oriented study: interviews of EFL students
- Data collected with a digital voice recorder
- Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews
- Focus-group interviews
- Voluntary participation
- Participants' consent forms signed
- School principals' agreement



- Follow up interviews when need for further investigation
- Participants unaware of exact research topic because
  - Sensitive topic
  - I didn't want to orient their answers ('desirability bias')
- To triangulate the data, design of questionnaires for quantitative analysis (to come)

Participants

- n=34 (20 females, 14 males)
- Age range 13 - 42
- 4 to 10 years English learning
- Interviews 15 – 45 minutes
- Low/Intermediate proficiency
- CFA (Vocational school)
- Greta (Public education centre)
- College, Secondary school
- Pseudonyms are used

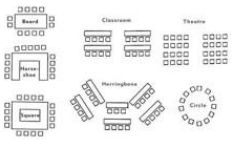
Participants' characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years of English study	Level of proficiency	Place of interview(s)
Jacques	17	M	6	Low	CFA
Lucie	42	F	7	Intermediate	Home
Paul	20	M	9	Low	Greta
Axel	21	M	8	Low	CFA
Maria	20	F	8	Low	CFA
Emilie	22	F	10	Intermediate	Greta
Claire	13	F	4	Intermediate	Home
Pierre	20	M	8	High	CFA
Mélanie	34	F	8	Intermediate	Home
Elodie	17	F	5	Intermediate	Home
Annelise	23	F	8	Intermediate	CFA
Gabriel	20	M	8	Intermediate	CFA
Jean-Claude	42	M	10	High	School
Maximilien	20	M	7	Low	CFA
Charlotte	22	F	7	Low	CFA
Clémence	21	F	9	Intermediate	CFA
Marc	21	M	7	Low	CFA
Nadia	39	F	7	Intermediate	Public Place
Robert	19	M	6	High	CFA

Initial findings

- 3 origins of shame feeling:
  - Teacher
    - Humiliating remarks, gaze
    - Corrective feedback (harsh & unfair)
  - Student
    - Self-perceived competence
    - Past shameful experiences
  - Context
    - Peers (mocking, laughing, giggling)
    - Seating arrangements
    - Size of class
    - Lack of group cohesion and intimacy with peers



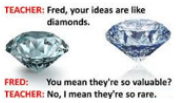


Initial findings

- Shame has unexpected negative effects
- No hesitation to speak about shame in SLA during interviews
- Very few students report not being affected by shame episodes
- 2 even found shame experiences stimulating (resilience)
- Benefits of interviews:
  - some participants reported change in their approach to L2 learning
  - Less apprehensive of speaking in class
  - More desirous to communicate with natives
  - Less fearful of getting poor results



Teacher





- his/her expectations of student ability
- his beliefs in his students' competence
- his humiliating remarks/attitude
- his corrective feedback and treatment of errors
- Repeated humiliation episodes leads to shame-proneness
- Less fear of shame when face to face with teacher (no peers)

"I was making mistakes out of fear that the teacher might mock me, ridicule me and shout at me, I was stressed all the time because I knew that, despite all my effort and hard work, whatever I said was subject to criticism or mockery on his part." (Maria, 20)

"At College the English teacher left me aside, she judged me negatively from the start and asked me to sit at the back of the class because I had difficulties with the irregular verbs. She ignored me. I felt like I was physically and psychologically... isolated. The teacher was so focused on the correctness of the verbs that I was ashamed every time I got them wrong. As a result, I shut myself to English learning, like an oyster." (Annelise, 23)

Student

- Feeling of shame is higher with the number of years of FL learning
- Fear of shame is also present in intermediate & high proficiency learners
- Recurrent shame episodes lead to anxiety and apprehension
- Shame fluctuates over time, is a dynamic phenomenon



"The learning of an L2 is like a jump into the emptiness, you are afraid when you speak English for the first time. It's like swimming, water is an unfriendly place for those who can't swim, you feel uncomfortable at the heart, afraid of sinking, you are ashamed when you make mistakes, afraid that someone might see you. You lose your self-confidence, your self-esteem, and after a series of shame experiences, you become anxious of making mistakes again." (Axel, 21)

Student

- Ontological consequences: low sense of self-worth
- Shame undermines learners' self-esteem, self-confidence and feeling of self-efficacy
- Fear of showing a bad self
- Communication apprehension, social phobia
- Strategies of defence: desire to escape, to avoid, to withdraw



"My former English teacher (I was 13 at that time) kept repeating that I was so bad at English, that I could do nothing against that. I felt these remarks were like an intimate wound. I felt like I was stabbed in the middle of my heart with a knife. I thought I was a total failure. Such a shame! It still affects me today, very deeply. I think I will never progress, whatever I do." (Charlotte, 22)

Student



- Saps learners' enjoyment at L2 learning
- Feeling of having "one's wings cut"
- Leads to a vicious circle in which learners' shame experiences leads to fear of shame, which in turn increases anxiety levels and may eventually impair their WTC and ultimate achievement
- Impacts long-term motivation and engagement: an insecure sense of self-worth and capability decreases motivation
- Repeated past shameful L2-related experiences lead learners to higher levels of fear of failure and fear of being negatively appraised
- Impacts the L2 Self and the *whole* Self

Context, Peers

- Comparison with peers may lead to shame
- Peers mocking leads to lasting feeling of shame
- Speaking activities are more conducive to shame feeling
- School trips abroad contribute to forging positive image of linguistic self and global self: "I am able, I can speak the L2" and help overriding past shame episodes. Being successful in TL speaking leads to enhancing the self-image





"I remember, I was speaking in class. I had a blank so I felt ashamed, but what is worse is that the teacher asked me to stand in front of the others, all these gazes on me, I felt blushing, I wanted to hide. I felt his remark unfair, he said I was lazy, so I decided not to speak anymore." (Elodie, 17)

Imagining new pathways

- Take fear of shame-inducing situations into consideration
- Counterbalance negative emotions
- A more holistic approach to L2 learning
- Develop teacher empathy with students
- Speak about topics related to the students' everyday experience
- Correct errors gently (Horwitz)
- Stress learner progress instead of errors
- Favour fluency over accuracy
- Help learner to dedramatize error and envision it as a necessary step
- Encourage opportunities to speak the TL in other contexts









Appendix C: Award for the most innovative paper in science and pedagogy, international symposium, Toulouse, France, 2015

COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL
Université de Toulouse
11-12 décembre 2015

Université Fédérale Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées

UNIVERSITÉ TOULOUSE III PAUL SABATIER

PRIX

De la meilleure communication Doctorants

Le Prix de la meilleure communication Doctorants est attribué par le Comité Scientifique du LAIRDIL

A Dominique GALMICHE

Pour sa communication intitulée :

Learners motivation : Impact of Shame on L2 learning and use.

La Présidente du Congrès

Françoise RABY
Directrice du LAIRDIL
La Directrice du LAIRDIL et Professeure [illegible]
0033 (05) 5 62 25 81 26

Appendix D: Paper presented at the conference Individuals in Contexts: Psychology of Language Learning 2, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2016





Shame and
Second Language
acquisition and use

Dominique Galmiche
4th year PhD student
School of English
Z.Dörnyei's research team

Individuals in Contexts:
Psychology of Language Learning 2
August 22-24, 2016, Jyväskylä, Finland

Appendix E: Paper presented at the conference Focus on the learner 2016: Contributions of individual differences to second language learning and teaching, Konin, Poland



