

# **Foreign language learning in the age of the Internet**

**A comparison of informal acquirers and  
traditional classroom learners  
in Central Brazil**

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*To the memory of Cortright McMeel, who helped teach me the  
power of language*

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## Abstract

Several recent studies (e.g., Benson and Chik, 2010; Sockett, 2014) suggest that as a result of changes in technology and the concomitant emergence of a globalized culture, highly effective out-of-class, informal English acquisition is becoming more common.

The present study compared high-level, well-motivated Central Brazilian classroom-trained learners (CTLs) with fully autonomous self-instructed learners (FASILs) of similar backgrounds. Using linguistic tests, a questionnaire and a structured interview, the study analysed group differences as well as individual differences in language proficiency, learner histories, behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes.

The key research question asked whether there existed, in more than rare circumstances, FASILs who attained levels of proficiency at least as high as highly-motivated, well-trained CTLs? Furthermore, if the knowledge and skills of FASILs were, in some respects, superior to those of CTLs, what variables accounted for the advantage?

FASILs significantly outperformed CTLs across a battery of linguistic tests measuring a range of knowledge and skills. Test results indicated that while CTLs tended to plateau at upper intermediate levels, FASILs generally improved through advanced levels, often achieving native-like levels of knowledge and use. The strongest contributing factor to proficiency was found to be self-determined motivation driven by a personalized relationship with English often marked by a transnational identity. The evidence suggests this type of motivation, significantly more associated with FASILs than CTLs, led users to engage deeply with the linguistic details of informal sources.

The findings challenge dominant paradigms in several fields of SLA which prioritize expert regulation over independent discovery and controlled, collaborative environments over real-world contexts of use entered into for personal reasons.

A hoped for consequence of this study is that SLA research and teaching practice will begin to recognize and promote rather than regulate or dismiss the unique learning arcs that more and more English learners experience in their everyday lives.

# 1. Introduction

In the fall of 2010 I went through many threads of computer-mediated communication (CMC) between me and Brazilian friends whose English learning histories I was aware of. The chats showed that despite strong motivation to learn and years spent learning at expensive and well-respected Brazilian language schools, my chat partners had acquired grammar only to a low-intermediate level and had unsophisticated vocabularies that did not seem to go beyond one-to-one form-meaning mapping of Portuguese to English. As an experienced Portuguese-to-English translator and a near-native speaker of Portuguese, I was able to recognize the majority of lexical mistakes as L1 transfer errors or errors related to polysemy in one of the two languages. For example, a frequent mistake was the misuse of “have” in situations that required “there is” (e.g., “Here have a lot of pretty girls”). This was a direct translation of spoken Brazilian Portuguese, which, in spoken, non-formal contexts that in English would require “there is”, uses the verb “ter” or “have” – “Aqui tem muitas meninas bonitas”. Most of my Brazilian chat correspondents had not learned nuanced variants of grammatical structures. For example, the modal verb “will” was used indiscriminately regardless of future use contexts while other variants including “going to”, “ll”, and the present continuous tense were almost never used. These observations made me curious about what held back experienced, highly motivated classroom-trained learners (henceforth referred to as CTLs), from progressing to more advanced levels of English proficiency.

In April 2011, I went to Goiânia, Brazil, to conduct informal exploratory research, which focused on the use of future forms by fluent Brazilian speakers of English. There I arranged interviews in which I first asked participants questions designed to elicit future forms. These same questions had been asked to 40 native speakers from several different English-speaking countries. In the second part of the interviews I asked the Brazilian participants about their English learning histories.

The research had the unintended result of uncovering a second group of English users, who I would go on to label fully autonomous self-instructed learners or FASILs. Despite the fact that these learners had little to no formal training in English, nor had ever lived abroad, they used future forms in patterns that closely followed those of the native speaker participants. This was in contrast to CTLs, most of whom, as was the case with my CMC correspondents, indiscriminately used the form “will” in all future use contexts. Interviews conducted with FASILs hinted that they shared several characteristics aside from the fact that they had never attended language school:

- They were almost all young, most between 18 and 22;
- they were, in fact, not primarily self-instructed, and did not report engaging in conscious learning behaviour beyond using a dictionary;
- They had developed a knowledge of English primarily while engaging with informal sources of English that they highly valued;
- They enjoyed using English in their spare time and participated in activities in which English was the shared language, especially in online environments.

The discovery of this sort of learner in relatively large numbers was unexpected since research on independent or self-directed naturalistic learners living in non-English speaking countries is something that has been limited to only a number of case studies (e.g., Benson and Chik, 2010). Furthermore, such sophisticated, primarily naturalistic language acquisition has been considered nearly impossible for post-pubescent learners (Dekeyser, 2001; Doughty, 2003; Ellis, 2006). The evident disparity in terms of learning approach and acquisition between the FASILs and CTLs brought to mind the Krashen “learner versus acquirer” distinction, a theory which has been criticized by many in the mainstream second language acquisition (SLA) research community (Wheeler, 2003) as unsupported by empirical research. I became interested in investigating the two groups of learners in order to systematically probe differences between them in terms of language proficiency, and, if the preliminary observations in terms of superior acquisition

by FASILs held, to attempt to understand what factors give these “acquirers” the advantage.

An overarching goal of this thesis is to highlight growing trends in the informal use of English that have gone largely unnoticed in mainstream SLA literature. Despite the fact that English has become a *lingua franca* through the advent of the Internet and interactive social media with concomitant changes in the role and influence of English in the global community, SLA continues to be dominated by studies centred on classroom learning. The impact of informal contact with English that is not connected to the classroom or intentional formal learning has not yet been studied in depth (Benson, 2011a: 139). Little is known about how learners interact with informal sources of the language, encountered as part of their daily routine. In fact, we are only just starting to look into the nature and frequency of learning that takes place through these interactions (Sockett, 2014). In an age in which informal sources of English are considerably more accessible than at any time in the past, it is important that this context of acquisition be properly addressed. Comparing the linguistic knowledge and skills, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, behaviour and learner histories of FASILs and CTLs could be a step towards turning the attention of mainstream SLA research back to the individual learner. A hoped for result in educational practice would be recognition and promotion rather than regulation or dismissal of the unique, unpredictable personalised learning arcs that more and more English learners experience in their day-to-day lives.

The thesis begins with a literature review which argues that though the SLA landscape is still quite classroom centred, historically and currently there have been a number of important theories and empirical findings that point to both the constraints of the formal language learning context on second language acquisition and the unique potential of naturalistic contexts of use, including affordances linked to today’s globalized environments, to lead to successful learning. The literature review is followed by Chapter 3, Methodology, which details the mixed-methods approach the study utilized to compare advanced informal learners (FASILs) in Central Brazil with traditional classroom learners (CTLs). Chapter 4 reviews quantitative findings comparing the performance of CTLs and

FASILs on linguistic tests and presents statistical analysis of possible contributing factors to participant language proficiency. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the results of detailed responses to several structured interview questions in an attempt to better understand distinguishing patterns in attitudes, beliefs, learning behaviour and learner histories of FASILs and CTLs. In Chapter 7, the findings are reviewed and discussed with reference to how they break new ground in SLA, offering evidence that informal use, unsupported by formal study, can lead to very high levels of English proficiency. Chapter 8 concludes by suggesting avenues for future research, arguing that new models of SLA that take into account new contexts of learning are necessary at a time when many non-native English speakers use English in very different ways and for very different reasons than they have in the past.

### **1.1. Introduction to literature review**

Our understanding of SLA has traditionally been limited by a focus on environments in which acquisition is constrained and controlled, and in which practice use situations bear almost no resemblance to target use situations. Cynthia White, a prominent researcher on distance learning and self-instruction, wrote in 1995 that, “Our understanding of the varied means learners use to learn a second or foreign language has been artificially limited by an almost exclusive focus on learners in conventional classroom environments” (White, 1995:218). This continues to be the case. Phil Benson, a leading researcher in language learner autonomy states: “the overwhelming dominance of classroom-based studies in the field of language education creates the impression that foreign languages are mainly learned in classrooms” (Benson, 2011a: 77). To come to a more complete understanding of how learners acquire a new language there is a need for research that looks beyond the traditional classroom environment to investigate the factors and motivations that underlie SLA in the full range of contexts in which it occurs.

Arguably, a number of current, widely accepted theories in a variety of fields in SLA, which make generalizations about acquisition, autonomy, motivation, learning strategies and even computer-assisted language learning (CALL), are in fact “second language

acquisition in a formal classroom” theories. Indeed, for the most part these theories are even more limited in scope, in that the participants who have been researched are classroom learners and the environments in which the research has taken place are schools -- elementary school, high school or university -- in which English is one of several assessed subjects that students are required to take. The following are some examples of influential research that has been conducted from a classroom perspective, focusing on students who study English as part of a larger school curriculum and then applied to the SLA process in general (either by the researchers themselves or by theorists using the studies as support):

- Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system (2005), a system now considered by some researchers as an understood and empirically proven concept (Cziser and Magid, 2014), was based on a very large sample of data derived exclusively from 13-14 year-old state school students.
- Masgoret and Gardner (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 75 studies dealing with Gardner’s hugely influential socio-educational model of motivation and its central tenet of “integrativeness”. The results of all 75 studies were based on data from students of English as an academic subject – namely university, high school and elementary school students.
- Norris and Ortega (2000) conducted a meta-analysis on 49 unique classroom learner samples, with results that found explicit language instruction is effective and more successful than implicit instruction in the classroom. The results have been used by several researchers, such as Nick Ellis (2006), to justify the necessity of instruction for second language acquisition, and the limits of naturalistic instruction, despite the fact that purely informal naturalistic instruction was not reviewed in the study.
- Yashima’s (2002) influential concept of international posture was developed based on data from Japanese secondary school students studying English as one of many academic subjects.

- Macaro et al.'s (2011) review of CALL studies in primary and secondary school does not include studies that also probe out-of-classroom CALL by primary and secondary school students.

The overrepresentation of studies and theories rooted in data from students studying English as a formal subject and the scarcity of studies on private or out-of-classroom informal learning (Hyland, 2004; Bidlake 2009: 94) has led to an incomplete description of the language acquisition process in the literature. Informal language use, whether as a supplement to in-class learning, or as the principal means of acquisition, is largely understudied and needs to be understood as a mode of learning with its own set of affordances and with a social dynamic that is fundamentally different from that of the classroom. Furthermore, while many prominent researchers perceive explicit instruction as playing a crucial role in mediating language learning and contributing to acquisition (DeKeyser, 2001; Doughty, 2003; Norris and Ortega, 2000) such arguments are hard to evaluate. Though they point to the effectiveness of explicit intervention in the classroom, relative to acquisition that takes place in the classroom with limited or no explicit instruction, it is possible that the same explicit instruction that leads to improved acquisition for classroom learners would not lead to any advantage in acquisition by naturalistic learners who have been immersed in certain naturalistic environments. In fact, it is possible that explicit instruction in certain contexts may well prove to impede to full native-like competence for certain learners, as language acquisition could become constrained by the artificial and imposed limitations inherent to such methods.

In addition, the SLA community has been slow to embrace 'English as a second language' learning as it occurs out of the classroom in modern society. Nowadays, informal learning and immersion take place in more contexts and offer very different affordances than have been available in the past. Naturalistic environments are no longer principally made up of speech, but they are now heavily textual. Present day independent learners can control their learning and input in ways that they could not in the past (see Lam and Kramsch, 2003, for an example of such control by a naturalistic learner). Furthermore, motivations for learning outside the classroom have changed, as the role of English in the everyday

lives of foreign language learners (FLL) and second language learners (SLL) has become more immediate, personal and constant (e.g., Kuure, 2011). Everyday use of English for practical and leisure needs has become the priority for many non-native English users. Modern day English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) acquisition cannot be understood without serious and in-depth study of how learning takes place naturalistically, beyond the classroom.

Despite the fact that standard positions in SLA have been heavily influenced by an arguably skewed sample of classroom-centred research, there are several influential educational and SLA theories, as well as a number of revealing empirical studies, that provide a theoretical basis for why in today's world highly motivated independent users of English possibly have advantages in acquisition over highly motivated classroom-trained learners. The following chapter, Literature Review, further explores the body of literature related to this topic.

## 2. Literature review

### **2.1. Important theories and empirical studies relating to classroom and out-of-class environments**

Stephen Krashen's (1978, 1981) influential learning-acquisition hypothesis offers an initial theoretical basis for potential differences in FASIL and CTL acquisition. For Krashen, "acquisition" is the sub-conscious process that occurs through use of the language in personally relevant, meaning-making situations, whereas "learning" is a conscious process that occurs when a learner actively uses logic and reason to attempt to understand and study the rules of the grammar and vocabulary of a second language. According to Krashen, only acquisition results in intake of knowledge that can later be used for spontaneous language use. Language that is "learned" is useful as a monitor to check errors and revise when production is not spontaneous and there is time to use learned rules to refine output.

Krashen's theory has been criticized for, among other things, leaving no role for the language teacher (Gregg, 1986). Indeed, for Krashen, the critical role of a classroom is to provide comprehensible input and thus involve the acquirer in meaningful use (Krashen, 1981: 46). Importantly, Krashen says that although this is possible in a classroom, it is difficult to design natural and meaningful tasks (104). However, according to Krashen well-designed classroom input can be more efficient than real world input up until the intermediate level as it can be calibrated to approximate input that is "comprehensible" because it is just beyond the learner's current knowledge level, a level that Krashen refers to as  $i+1$ . Though the  $i+1$  idea has been criticized as being difficult to gauge or plan for (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 209) it should be noted that Krashen himself admitted the difficulty classroom teachers face in creating classrooms with this sort of comprehensible input. Another advantage Krashen saw for early beginners is that, as opposed to some naturalistic environments, classrooms could be controlled to be less intimidating and could thus lower potentially inhibiting affective factors.

However, at this point, online naturalistic environments are perhaps be more readily manipulated than the classroom to be less intimidating for the language learner/acquirer. This leads to a final aspect of Krashen's (1981) theory, which offers a possible explanation for acquisition benefits for informal learning over classroom learning: a learner's affective filter (22). One of the key factors in the development of a high affective filter is an overactive monitor: in other words, so much conscious attention to rules and the possibility of errors is paid that unmonitored language is rarely produced. On the other hand, participants with a low affective filter will more likely seek out comprehensible input and are not hesitant to use it. Krashen theorizes that learners who are too rule-centric may become so preoccupied by a conception of language as rule-based that they become discouraged from using the language spontaneously and consequently fossilize in their progress (77). However, learners who are motivated to use language frequently for personalised reasons are more open to comprehensible input and likely to continue progressing. Following Krashen's logic, learners who are too dependent on teachers or mediated input may then seek out naturalistic input less often, and may be less open to it when they encounter it. Independent informal learners who have not been encouraged to view language through an abstract lens may gain more from out-of-class, informal use situations.

Krashen's learner/acquirer dichotomy provides an initial basis for why FASILs may gain language knowledge and skills in a manner that is distinct, and perhaps more effective, from the way in which CTLs do. His theories also provide one possible explanation for why modern conditions for out-of-class use of English as a second or foreign language, with more readily available motivational input and less intimidating, virtual use contexts may make highly efficient naturalistic acquisition more common. Nevertheless, Krashen's theories have become unpopular in the SLA field (Wheeler, 2003). His ideas have been viewed as unscientific: speculative and without systematic, empirical support (Mclaughlin, 1987).

Krashen's work implies that naturalistic second language acquisition is in fact close to first language acquisition as a process (Loewen, 2014). One aspect of the 'first language

learning environment' that he mentions is often lacking in classroom environments is an initial silent period that precedes spoken production of the language. The researcher, Valerian Postovsky (1974), carried out studies that provided empirical support for the potential benefits of a silent period over the common classroom practice of immediate speaking activities before grammar and pronunciation has been acquired through exposure to authentic input.

Postovsky notes that it has been subjectively observed that classroom learners often acquire fluent speaking ability without a corresponding ability to understand normal native speaker utterances. According to Postovsky (1974), the unnatural order in most language classrooms of participants speaking and practicing structures before they have had the chance to acquire them leads to several disadvantages. Among them is exposure to and consequent acquisition of classroom dialect "rich with all the distortions that are peculiar to the beginning students' speech input" (231). Conversely, by not requiring learners to speak before they are ready, a silent period frees their minds up to attend to authentic native-like production, resulting in better grammar and pronunciation.

Postovsky (1974) reports on empirical studies he conducted to test the effects of an initial silent period. In one study he compared the results of two groups of beginner-level Russian learners. In the study, the control group initially passed through four weeks of heavy speaking and listening practice. The experimental group experienced an initial silent period, in which speaking activities were replaced by written dictation activities. The groups were then merged and followed the same instructed courses, which featured speaking, listening, reading and writing. The experiment lasted for twelve weeks with participants taking tests to evaluate these four skills after the sixth and twelfth weeks. Results of the study showed that the group that had gone through the silent period outperformed the control group on all four skills, after both six and twelve weeks. Among the important findings were highly significant differences between groups in grammatical accuracy in speech and in listening skills.

The Postovsky study has at least two important implications:

1. Participants benefit by being exposed purely to precise native speaking grammar rather than input infused with copious amounts of classroom dialect, and,
2. In initial learning, written response to aural input (especially dictation exercises) promotes better attention to aural input than spoken response, which recruits energy and attention that could otherwise be devoted to the perception of surface features of aural input.

Importantly, Postovsky's work provides possible explanations for why learning that begins with solitary, receptive contact with informal media sources of English may provide advantages over learning in communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes speaking from basic levels. Immersion in the aural production available online is often supported by other modes of communication, not only written text, but also video featured on lyrics sites, subtitles, linguistic and contextual cues of video games, etc. (Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne, 2008). As suggested by Postovsky's study, the textual nature of online communication promoted by Web 2.0 technologies would seem to offer advantages in grammatical acquisition.

An empirical study conducted by Ellen Bialystok (1981) also suggests advantages informal *acquirers* might have over classroom oriented *learners*. Bialystok investigated how high school French students' use of strategies correlated with their scores on proficiency tests. The study compared formal and functional strategies: the purpose of formal strategies was to reinforce knowledge of structure and rules, while the purpose of functional strategies was communication. The study found that functional practice, and specifically the use of informal sources of English such as film, radio, newspapers and music due to "interest in the content" (28) was the most significant contributor to overall performance at both intermediate and advanced levels, across tests measuring writing, listening, grammar and reading proficiency. Importantly, while formal strategies were shown to positively influence the scores of the intermediate level (10<sup>th</sup> grade) on tests measuring explicit knowledge, functional practice was the most significant contributor to tests measuring both explicit and spontaneous knowledge at intermediate levels. At

advanced levels (12<sup>th</sup> grade), formal strategies were not shown to have a positive relationship to test scores, even those measuring explicit grammatical knowledge.

The Bialystok study is important for a number of reasons. First, it provides evidence that the explicit study of formal structures may cease to be effective at higher levels of language learning, a point that backs up claims by Krashen. Secondly, the Bialystok study provides evidence that interaction with informal sources motivated by personal interest in the content is effective at promoting explicit knowledge of grammar, as well as productive and receptive skills at both lower and higher levels. The study therefore implies that classroom-trained learners who are overly oriented towards rules-based learning may miss out on valuable resources that would help them in achieving native-like mastery of a second language. On the other hand, naturalistic acquirers who interact with everyday sources for practical reasons may be engaging in efficient strategies that allow for their continued progress.

Bialystok's (1981) study offers empirical evidence that communicative activities motivated by interest in content are more often associated with acquisition than activities focusing on structure and form. Her final suggestion is that classroom teaching should focus on the acquisition of structures through communicative use activities rather than a focus on form. However, despite the fact that the informal strategies discussed in her study involve personal rather than structured communicative strategies, she explicitly states that naturalistic communication does not have an advantage over more structured classroom communication in that they both must to some extent involve a focus on form (24). She does not consider that there may be a qualitative difference between communication for the purposes of meeting the personal needs of the speaker and communication that is simulated in a classroom for the purposes of learning.

Bialystok is not alone in equating the benefits of classroom communication activities with naturalistic communication. As will be seen throughout the literature review, there is no shortage of prominent theorists in SLA who, while embracing the idea of a student-centred classroom that focuses on communication, do not factor in obvious limitations of

the classroom environment. Postovsky highlighted one of these limitations: classrooms are full of classroom dialect. Another possible limitation that is rarely considered in the literature is that the simulated tasks that students know have been created for the purpose of learning are not as motivating as use situations that arise within the context of a learner's everyday life. Krashen, directly refers to the limitations of self-conscious use when discussing the constraints on acquisition posed by a high affective filter (1981:76-77). Interestingly, in Krashen's theory, input becomes intake precisely because learners view the language as something relevant to their lives. However, what is key for Krashen is not the context of use which may elicit motivated interaction with the language, but instead personality factors the learner is already equipped with: extroversion, empathy, and motivation. A question not directly answered in Krashen's theory is whether language experienced as a part of a learner's everyday life, rather than something presented in an artificial context, will encourage a learner to be more engaged and more empathic, and hence more open to input. In fairness, personalised motivation and empathy generated by a global English community in which native and non-native speakers share contexts of English use has only recently become a realistic possibility in the lives of FLLs.

One possible reason the functional practice described in Bialystok's study was more effective in promoting acquisition than formal practice is that learners were self-motivated to do it. Two more recent studies support this possibility. Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) used questionnaires to ask 508 university students to evaluate their own motivation, and to comment on what activities they engaged in outside of the classroom. The study found that if the purpose for language use grows out of a learner's everyday life and personal interests, the learner is more likely to engage with the input or, in Krashen's words, "go out and get [it]" (Krashen, 1981: 37). It was found that students used the language when engaged in an activity outside of the classroom that was personally meaningful to them. These results led the authors to suggest teachers devote "more time to engaging in activities and working with materials and syllabuses which learners wish to engage in for their own sake", a suggestion that goes beyond Bialystok's more generalized suggestion that teachers promote meaning-making activities. Spratt,

Humphreys and Chan, however, do not offer proposals for how teachers can plan tasks for whole classes that allow each individual learner to engage in their personal interests. This would seem to necessitate a certain degree of alchemy on the instructor's part.

A study conducted by Wong and Nunan (2011) came to very similar findings. In their study, the authors used surveys to measure the extent to which university students in Hong Kong engaged in certain strategies and behaviours while learning English. The results revealed that more effective learners, those who had scored an A on a standardized Hong Kong test of English ability, were active and communicative and tended to seek out informal, out of class sources of practice such as newspapers, television, and conversations with native speakers, while ineffective learners, those who had scored E's or F's on the examination, were classroom oriented, dependent on teacher instruction and textbooks. Though it is not clear from Wong and Nunan's study whether good learners are attracted to informal use environments or whether use of the language in personally meaningful environments generates good learners, the data indicate no association between effective learners and classroom based practice. Rather, the study shows that effective learners generally engage in language use and practice situations that they control.

A central concern of SLA researchers has been to understand why second language acquisition is less successful than first language acquisition, and to try to bridge that gap (Doughty, 2003). Curiously, while obvious differences in the age of first language and second language acquirers have been at the forefront of comparisons between the two types of learning, differences in the environments of first language and second language acquisition have not been focused on to the same extent, and differences in purpose of use are often only looked at superficially. Children acquiring their first language use the language informally for personal reasons that arise as they go through day-to-day life. As the studies by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002), Wong and Nunan (2011) and Bialystok (1981) suggest, acquisition of a second language may benefit from use in similar naturalistic contexts. Nevertheless, there are constraints on second language acquisition that would apply to any contexts of use. For example, there are constraints due to

inherent difficulties in the structure of the second language, as well as due to interference from the acquired first language that is structured in a different way.

Two related studies emphasize that classroom learners often do not acquire the nuances of an L2 due to complexities in target language that are not shared by the L1. Laufer's (1989) study of 100 high-level university students learning English for academic purposes in Israel deals with learner acquisition of deceptively transparent vocabulary items. Deceptively transparent items are words and expressions that seem "to provide clues" to their meanings, but really do not. Such items include:

1. "False friends": words that approximate the form, but not the meaning, of a word in the L1. For example "notice" gives the incorrect impression that it is a cognate of "noticias", which in Portuguese means "news";
2. Words with multiple meanings such as "leave", which can mean "to not take something when you go", or "to depart";
3. Expressions that seem to be the product of their parts but are not, such as "react".

The study's results found that learners were less likely to have acquired deceptively transparent words than words that could be understood literally, and that learners were much more likely to mistakenly believe they understood unknown deceptively transparent items than unknown literal items. As Laufer argues, this mistaken belief is important as it leads learners to go on to misinterpret and "distort" the meaning of the larger passage that the deceptively transparent word is a part of (16). It was not surprising therefore that the study found that learners who were aware that a deceptively transparent item was unknown achieved higher comprehension scores.

Importantly, the Laufer study shows that long-term learners often fail to acquire the nuances of the language or go beyond one-to-one form-meaning second language competence. This gap in knowledge may in fact limit communicative competence more than ordinary vocabulary deficits since misinterpretation of deceptively transparent items compounds the effects of lack of knowledge and leads to a misunderstanding of contextual clues. Deceptively transparent items are particularly relevant to the present

study which was inspired by observations of long-term classroom learners whose vocabulary knowledge rarely went beyond one-to-one form-meaning mapping despite their intrinsic motivation to learn and years of exposure to comprehensible input. Since deceptively transparent items are numerous and sometimes quite basic to the language, a lack of awareness of their true meaning may result in fossilized incomplete knowledge of the language, which could lead to the type of incomplete language users, mentioned by Postovsky, who are perhaps capable of fluent learner language speech, but are unable to comprehend native-like speakers. Thus, with the fossilization of learner language, learners are not “liberated” to interact with authentic sources of native talk (Belasco, 1984). In today’s age of the Internet and Web 2.0, this means such learners may stall in their progress before reaching a level at which they could enjoy a great variety of accessible authentic L2 content that they would find personally meaningful and which could provide input leading to a more sophisticated, native-like proficiency.

A study by Martinez and Murphy (2011), builds on the Laufer study by investigating classroom learner acquisition of formulaic expressions, a category of deceptively transparent items. The authors point out that formulaic expressions – in which words are combined to make a new meaning that is often very different from the sum of its parts, e.g., “pull out all the stops” – make up a greater percentage of lexical items than is generally acknowledged, even by linguists (272). Learners may be unaware of these forms, viewing them as the sum of their parts, rather than as discrete forms with specific meanings.

In the study, two reading passages made up of the same words, one in which they were used literally and one in which they were combined into idiomatic expressions, were given to adult Brazilian learners of English who learned at private language schools. Participants read the passages and were then given comprehension tests. After taking the tests, they were asked to estimate what they thought their scores were. Results indicated that students achieved significantly lower scores on the tests that substituted multi-word expressions for non-idiomatic language. Furthermore, learners significantly overestimated their comprehension of the texts of formulaic expressions while giving

much more accurate estimates of the texts made up of single, literal forms. Finally, the data showed that advanced groups of learners at the school did not have more knowledge of formulaic expressions than intermediate students did.

Along with the Laufer study, the Martinez and Murphy study (2011) strongly supports the contention that classroom learners often do not acquire native-like structures despite years of experience learning in communicative classrooms. They also suggest that classroom learners' experience in school and, especially their accomplishments, e.g. "advanced level speaker", may give them a false sense of confidence. Even so, an important question is, why do so many learners not progress beyond literal translations to a more nuanced, native-like appreciation of structures. One possibility is that they do not have sufficient motivation to decipher classroom input that is not personally relevant. Schmitt, in his extensive review on instructed vocabulary acquisition, states that engagement is the most important factor in acquisition (Schmitt, 2008). Arguably, it is difficult for classroom learners to be sufficiently motivated to engage with the details of structured and scripted input enough to decipher and acquire deceptively transparent items. Personally motivated use in the real world, on the other hand, may motivate more concentrated engagement since accurate understanding really matters. Studies comparing long-term informal learners' knowledge of deceptively transparent items with that of long-term advanced classroom learners have, to my knowledge, not been carried out. However, a 2012 study by Kusyk and Sockett found that FLLs who were frequent viewers of television were more likely to have knowledge of everyday 4-word chunks of language used in popular television series than FLLs who were only occasional television viewers.

Several researchers (e.g., Norris and Ortega, 2000; Spada, 1997) have conducted studies and meta-studies that suggest explicit focus on form (including deceptively transparent structures) would help learners to overcome deficits in acquisition that second language classroom learners would otherwise face. One drawback to these studies, as pointed out by Truscott (1998), in an extensive review on focus on form research related to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, is that they often base positive conclusions about the effect

of form-focused interventions on results that measure meta-knowledge as opposed to acquisition applied to true communicative contexts. Doughty (2003) points out that this drawback is one that needs to be addressed with the development of new assessment tools. Another weakness of studies arguing for the effectiveness of explicit instruction is that they rarely attempt to show that form-focused interventions result in long lasting acquisition (Truscott, 1998). Perhaps more importantly, even if form-focused practice does have positive benefits for SLA, it seems quite unlikely that a classroom could ever explicitly cover more than a fraction of the myriad intricacies of the English language. For this reason, Rod Ellis (2008a), in an article reviewing current accepted principles in instructed language learning, states that significant out-of-classroom practice is necessary to complement formal instruction and that reading programs that use graded readers are the “easiest way” to provide learners with out-of-classroom input (Ellis, 2008a: 4).

Though Ellis’s suggestions for out-of-class use are intended to address the limitations of classroom input, his suggestions omit exciting new online opportunities for practice, which would add to what traditional resources such as graded readers offer by enabling personally controlled access to authentic, multi-modal materials as well as to a variety of target language (TL) user communities. Furthermore, it is likely that many English online informal resources, such as video games and subtitled television, already are part of the lives of students, and their appeal could be exploited by creative teachers. Studies conducted by Pickard (1995) Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) and Wong and Nunan (2011) have shown that learners tend to be drawn to use English in activities that are authentic and that they have chosen in their day-to-day lives.

As Loewen (2014) points out in his volume on instructed second language learning, it is generally assumed in SLA that the main objective for language learners is to be able to communicate spontaneously in the L2 (12). It is an interesting paradox that many researchers concerned with enabling learners to gain this real-world ability rarely prioritize communicative practice in the real world for real motives. Prominent researchers such as Terrell (1986), Long (1996), and Pica (2005), who have all been concerned with the limits on SLA when compared to first language acquisition and who

have promoted interventions that attempt to approximate natural use, have generally limited these interventions to non-spontaneous use in classroom contexts that do not equate to actual English user-communities. In the task-based activities described by Pica (2005) and Keck et al. (2006), or in classroom interaction described by Long (1996), learners engage in communication that is planned and controlled in order to gain information that is often not relevant to their lives; they are making meaning in situations that are not meaningful. Furthermore, the input they are receiving is largely made up of impoverished learner language. Simulated communication may be useful in some classroom contexts, but if its proponents do not acknowledge its limitations, it may be that creative ways to expand on it with new opportunities for authentic communication online go unexplored.

The language learning theory, CREED (Ellis, 2006), is particularly interesting because it provides, without intending to, an excellent model for why informal use in today's global English community may lead to first language-like efficiency for second language users. To Ellis, the human brain is a well-tuned, perfectly calibrated machine for language acquisition, sorting through massive quantities of unpredictable data to construct, based on the probability of co-occurring structures, a "remarkably native-like competence" (108). The system establishes patterns based on exemplars of structure order that are prioritized based on frequency and then applied as grammatical rules to guide original language production. The learning process is "as efficient as it conceivably could be" (203), a natural consequence of the brain's ability to adapt to the frequency and salience of input. Importantly, as Ellis emphasizes, language is a complex dynamic system which has emerged based on chance, and which the brain rationalizes and puts order to.

It is interesting to compare how classroom environments and the global English community linked by technology relate to the CREED theory. Ellis describes language systems as built by the chaotic, varied interactions of "a large community of players" (108), who interconnect with each other in unpredictable ways. Importantly, all of these people have different motivations, different patterns of speech, different backgrounds. The acquisition system unconsciously weighs not only the frequency with which

structures are used in different combinations, but also the contexts, social and linguistic, in which they occur. Independent, naturalistic learners, immersed in informal use of English, experience complex, unpredictable worlds, both on and offline; such worlds share many similarities with the complex and unpredictable world in which a first language emerges. Personalised online learning environments consist of many different players in many different contexts that interconnect in unique and unpredictable ways to produce rich, differentiated data. As Ellis explains, the brain is uniquely set up to adapt to such varied, unsystematic data and is able to naturally process it into a rational system, creating rules out of chance occurrences. He states, “The brain does not process information by some imaginary rule-following any more than the gut does” (108).

The classroom, in which learners are exposed to impoverished linguistic input, systematized and predictable, produced in controlled situations and a very limited number of contexts, cannot be expected to prime the learning system that Ellis describes. Nevertheless, Ellis does not refer to these limitations of the classroom environment. Rather, he asserts that, based on prior research, L2 naturalistic usage is likely to “fall far short” of a native-like end state principally due to L1 interference (110), and that L2 explicit instruction, through proceduralization (DeKeyser, 2001) in classrooms, is the best way to overcome this. This seems optimistic. Though some L2 rules may, in fact, be acquired in this way, it would be impossible for an SLA classroom to approximate the input necessary for an exemplar-based rational representation of the native-like system to emerge, as CREED asserts it does for first language acquirers. Furthermore, in a classroom that features explicit focus on form, learners may be conditioned to think of a complex, chaotic system as a rule-based map, something Ellis specifically says the brain is not designed to follow. It seems likely that attempting to do the job of super computers through conscious problem solving would interfere with the natural language processing system Ellis describes so eloquently.

Indeed, Ellis’s arguments regarding explicit instruction seem quite speculative and somewhat counter-intuitive. He states that it has been demonstrated that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction, citing a meta-study by Norris and

Ortega (2000) that the authors themselves admit has limitations, and which has been critiqued as “suggestive rather than definitive” (Han, 2004: 129) and methodologically unsound (Shin, 2010). Moreover, the relative merits of explicit versus implicit learning are very controversial within the field, an issue which has not been resolved (Macaro, 2010), and one that has been hotly contested in careful reviews of the literature (Truscott, 1998, 2007). Furthermore, Ellis never mentions that classroom environments throw a wrench into the system in the form of copious amounts of the flawed, undiversified learner dialect that Postovsky (1974) refers to. Ellis’s dismissal of the potential of naturalistic learning is also problematic and seems unfounded when it is considered that naturalistic learning, especially in today’s Internet context, has rarely been studied (Hyland, 2004).

Ellis’s CREED model of acquisition is important in that it, along with other accounts of complex, dynamic systems (e.g., Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008), offer contemporary confirmation of the advantages of “acquisition” through exposure to highly contextualized, rich, functional input in a complex and dynamic environment. It also suggests the disadvantages of “learning”, particularly if learners have fossilized in their identities and now favour formal communicative language learning situations where the problem of impoverished and undifferentiated data is compounded by large amounts of “learner dialect” that creates unsophisticated, non-native like exemplars. The fact that Ellis fails to note his theory of acquisition is in effect less compatible with the classroom than it is with today’s technologized naturalistic use environments suggests that within the SLA research community there is still a lack of awareness regarding the potential of new modes of naturalistic learning in today’s acquisition conditions. It should be noted that though Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) discuss how, from the complex system perspective, different contexts of learning have differing effects on the way second language acquisition occurs and, unlike Ellis, do not imply deficiencies of naturalistic acquisition compared to explicit instruction, they also do not consider the context of naturalistic through technology and how it lends itself to the dynamic systems acquisition model. Rather, in discussing how situational differences may affect SLA acquisition, they refer to Leather and van Dam’s (2003) list of four different learning contexts: first

language acquisition, early SLA, instructed SLA, and SLA by adult migrants (155). This list of learning contexts is clearly incomplete and does not take into account naturalistic acquisition as it takes place today through technology.

In fact, the limitations of a traditional classroom have been recognized by several prominent educational theorists, including Lave and Wenger (1991) and Gee (2007), who point out that traditional classrooms decontextualize learned behaviour from its real-world function. In terms of SLA this disadvantage would seem to be magnified, since, in the present day, learners are likely to experience English in its natural habitat and use it in the real world, but can be pushed away from seeing this informal use as legitimate if they are used to conceiving of second language primarily as something formal. Benson and Nunan's (2005) argument that effective learners see language as a communicative tool rather than a school subject is logical because that conception of language conforms to language's real-world purpose.

In his book *What Video Games Have to Teach us About Learning and Literacy* (2007), James Paul Gee uses video games as a model for the advantages of learning through contextualized authentic use of target knowledge and skills. Gee discusses why video game users are compelled to learn all the skills necessary to do well in video games. Unlike in a traditional classroom, video games offer repetitive practice that is compelling, because practice and failure, flexible, active adaptation, more practice and success are all necessary to a player's achievement in the game's world, one which has become personally valued and an extension of the player's real life (or has become an alternate reality). According to Gee, the effectiveness of learning that takes place while playing a video game is due to the "embodied experience" nature of video game play. Players learn while doing. According to Gee, the formal instructions only become of use later when players already understand the video game to be something of their world, rather than apart from it (98). Gee's premise is that classroom learning would be more successful if the subject (he frequently uses science as an example) were not decontextualized from its real-world significance.

The process of mastering a complex video game universe through playing and the process of mastery of a complex language through using it in a naturalistic environment have clear similarities. In fact, Gee's description of emergent video game mastery is similar to Ellis's explanation of emergent, native-like language acquisition. Both occur within highly complex, unpredictable environments through exposure to frequently repeated elements. First language learners are similar to video game users in that they are active learners, learning from doing and from repeated contextualized practice that is meaningful. For the most part they are not overtly aware of their learning. The fact that video games are seen as an extension of real life is clearly a motivational advantage that drives the player on. It seems quite possible that if second language use were necessary to accomplish valued real goals within the complex real world, it would lead to many of the same learning advantages as those described above. It would also be "an embodied experience" driven by personal needs.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral practice provides strong theoretical support for the effectiveness of learning that is situated within the target community of practice rather than a decontextualized classroom (86). In their book: *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991), Lave and Wenger describe five studies of apprenticeship (note that by apprenticeship the authors do not mean the typical one-to-one, apprentice to master relationship). The studies examine people from diverse backgrounds learning diverse skills, for example, Yucatec midwives, U.S. naval quartermasters, and supermarket butchers. Through their examination of the learning involved in these apprenticeships, Lave and Wenger present a theory of successful learning that involves participation by newcomers in authentic communities of practice that feature "access to a wide range of on-going activity, old-timers (experts) and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation" (101). The key feature of the theory is that "newcomers", or learners, participate within the real-world community in which the skill is authentically used. With time, newcomers engage in more and more sophisticated tasks, eventually becoming full participants in the community.

Lave and Wenger's theory can be applied to many of the key skills we acquire throughout our lives. A similar sort of progression occurs when we learn to dance, drive, socialize, play a sport, or use our cell phones. Though instruction may have an important role in many of these activities, active use for real reasons within authentic contexts is essential to progression nearly from the start. For example, while tuition is often an aspect of learning to drive, a student driver doesn't practice on motor racing tracks alongside ten other student drivers. One practices on real roads (at first, small less frequented ones) making real decisions with regard to cars driven by licensed drivers (experts) going about their everyday lives.

The process of legitimate peripheral practice also can be applied to first language acquisition. As children we observe members of the community using English in their real lives. Our "peripherality" to the community is "multiple, varied, and more-or-less engaged...in the fields of participation" (36). In the end, through our proximity to the community, we "develop a view of what the whole enterprise is about, and what there is to be learned." The community members we interact with are the population of users with varied levels of skill rather than a largely homogeneous group of learners. In all cases, we are involved in the real world of English speakers and its huge variety of contexts. We are continually drawn into more sophisticated, legitimate practice until we are no longer at the periphery and English first language use has become a new, natural facet of our identities.

Lave and Wenger make the point that classroom learning is in many ways not legitimate practice since it does not take place within the community where that skill is practiced but rather within a community that views the skill from without, engaging in practices and contexts that are not the same as what they would be in the real world (108). The result of learning in such a context may be "learning how to do school" (107).

Many SLA researchers evaluate their classroom interventions on the basis of how confidently learners come to use the language and collaborate within their constructed learning environments (e.g. Mideros and Carter, 2014). Their justification for

investigating such activities is that they are socially mediated and require peer-to-peer collaboration just as English use in the real world is socially mediated and demands interaction with others (151). Researchers, however, rarely make the effort to show how willing and active use of language in a controlled classroom setting with homogeneous groups of learners prepares students to actively use English in the real world in unpredictable situations with a heterogeneous group of language users.

Lave and Wenger's work is sometimes seen as related to sociocultural theory (SCT), an approach that views learning as something that emerges as learners participate, or exercise their agency, within the bounds of a social world. Since the turn of the century, SCT has strongly influenced SLA research and pedagogy (Macaro, 2010: 221; Benson, 2011a; 45). Importantly, though, within SLA, SCT is rarely applied to contexts other than the classroom and, indeed, is often applied to learning through highly structured interaction controlled carefully by a teacher (e.g., Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). In this way, much SCT-based research in SLA has done exactly what Lave and Wenger warned against: present the skill as an object to be learned through circumscribed participation outside of the skill's natural context of use (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 97).

Notably, in some of the field's most often cited literature (e.g., Van Lier (2008) and Lantolf and Thorne (2006)), top SCT researchers who consider the ultimate aim of learning to be self-regulated use and learner agency, focus on controlled, programmed classroom contexts without attempting to show how these contexts are relevant to target contexts of use where learners will use the language independently. Lantolf and Thorne state that self-regulation can only be judged by concrete use of the language performed on either assessment activities that "parallel" everyday tasks, or by classroom-designed project work (208). This suggests that "simulated" everyday tasks and classroom tasks with no relation to the real world are essentially equivalent: the key variable is that the language is used in a social context, not that the context itself is authentic. When Van Lier (2008) discusses different classroom manifestations of agency, the example he chooses as most self-initiated is a lively, spontaneous student debate on the nature of language (164). While in the example students do initiate their use of language, it does not show that they

have begun to view language as something other than an abstract academic subject to be used in a school, or that they have developed language-user identities relevant to the real world.

Lave and Wenger note that in all of the case studies they refer to as examples of legitimate peripheral practice, “researchers insist there is very little observable teaching” (93) and that “preoccupations with teaching and intentional learning” have been replaced with the need to have access to the “means and grounds of membership” in the real-world community of practice (85). A notable aspect of SCT research in SLA is the contention that expert guidance and structured support are required to learn (Lantolf, 2013). There is no acknowledgement that formal learning has built-in limitations and may not always be relevant to the goals of learners.

The essential element of teacher control to SLA is emphasized in Lantolf and Thorne’s (2006) book chapter on SCT. To Lantolf and Thorne, not only is teacher (and peer) mediation central to learning, but it is also highly circumscribed. Using the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) as a basis, they describe how “other-regulation” (200) is necessary to bring learners to the stage where they have internalised the skill (203) enough to self-regulate it. For Lantolf and Thorne, the key to effective “other regulation” is careful manipulation of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the distance between what learners can do independently and what they can do in collaboration with experts. Lantolf and Thorne go on to describe how “intentionally designed learning environments” (207) that precisely diagnose how much other-regulation is needed are crucial to leading a learner to internalise a particular skill. As they say, “This process [...] entails continuous assessment of the learner’s ZPD” (211). This assessment must be exactly “tailored” to the needs of each learner. There are 12 different levels of engagement open to the “expert”, which are employed based on the expert’s assessment of where a particular aspect of the L2 is located within the learner’s ZPD.

The Lantolf and Thorne (2006) explanation of how teacher manipulation of the ZPD can bring a learner to internalization of a second language, though decidedly more complex, is

reminiscent of Ellis's proposal to use explicit instruction to fill in the gaps of what learners have not acquired through exposure to classroom input. Neither is feasible due to the complexity of the system that needs to be internalised. How classroom teachers could so precisely measure where each property of each student's L2 exists in each of their zones of proximal development is, unsurprisingly, not revealed by Lantolf and Thorne. Another commonality between the Lantolf and Thorne (2006) and Ellis (2006) explications of their learning models is that they do not consider the possibility, as Gee, Krashen, and Lave and Wenger do, that extreme reliance on a teacher may condition formal learners to be passive and unable to take control of language learning in real-world contexts.

A recent study by Murray, Fujishima and Uzuka (2014), influenced by Lave and Wenger's legitimate peripheral practice model as well as SCT, does in fact explicitly address how learner perceptions of specific contexts of use, or learning "space", can shape what and how they learn. The study describes interaction within an English Café, designed at a university in Japan to give students a place to use English informally in an uncontrolled context. The study found that how learners imagine a space shapes what they do there. The informality of the space as well as affordances that encourage social interaction lead to the users' conception of the café as a place where they can speak as themselves about topics that interest them (92), and where they exercise agency, setting their "own rules" (93).

The authors suggest that research building on the study could involve a rethinking of the classroom context (95). Significantly, they observe that to transform an actual classroom into a place in which students speak as themselves and use the language for real life purposes would be difficult, as many students have been conditioned by prior experience to think of the classroom in a traditional way.

Though the café offers an alternative to a controlled formal classroom setting, it also reinforces a conception of English as an object to be learned rather than a tool to be used in the activities of daily life. All the services and resources offered at this "informal space"

are academic in nature. There is no encouragement given to the use of informal, online resources. While we learn that the café offers advice to students regarding opportunities for study abroad, it does not offer advice about accessing TL user communities online. Furthermore, the authors note that the English Café encourages independent *study* by providing “graded readers, DVDs, TOEIC/TOEFL preparation materials, English learning magazines, newspapers, and laptop computers with language learning software programs” (85). The café, however, does not offer materials that encourage independent *use* of authentic informal sources of English for leisure. The authors do not report the café offers authentic books in addition to graded readers, authentic magazines in addition to English learning magazines, video games in addition to language learning software. Workshops are offered for TOEIC/ TOEFL preparation and improving oral communication, but not for improving textual communication online or for teaching learners to use Internet tools to scaffold online English leisure activity.

### **2.1.2. Summary**

Thus far we have looked at theories and studies that can explain potential limitations of a classroom-dominated formal approach to language learning and possible benefits to acquisition that arise in naturalistic settings while the learner uses the language as a communication tool in the course of everyday life. We have underlined that SLA research has focused on classroom learning environments to such a degree that other contexts of learning and use have been under-investigated and, in some cases, ignored.

Krashen’s distinction between acquisition and learning provides a basis for the present study as it proposes that there are limits to the value of learning that occurs through conscious attention to rules rather than through use in meaning-making situations. He states that if a learner is conditioned to be self-conscious when using a language, his/her identity can fossilize into that of a “learner” and he/she may become closed to opportunities for acquisition that come with spontaneous use, building up an affective filter that puts up an artificial barrier to input. Significantly, Krashen places more

emphasis on the learner's own predisposition to use the language spontaneously than he does on how a learning environment could impact the development of learner attitudes.

In contrast, educational theorists Lave and Wenger emphasize the importance of the context of use. Not only is use of the target skill important for learning, but use of it for authentic reasons within a target community of practice is also vital. Such a theory makes intuitive sense. It is rather surprising that though SLA researchers frequently point out that SLA is generally much less successful than first language acquisition, they rarely consider the vast difference between the richly contextualized naturalistic environments of first language acquirers and the simplified, input-impooverished environments of formal classrooms as a factor in the inferior SLA success rate. Classroom-based environments clearly differ markedly from real environments of use in terms of input (Postkovsky, 1974), as well as purpose for and conditions of learning.

Prominent approaches to SLA, such as connectionism (Ellis, 2006) and socio-cultural theory, with an emphasis on the regulatory tool of the zone of proximal development (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006), present models for learning language that seem to be ideally suited to complex real world contexts that furnish the necessary variety of input and social contexts needed for their intricate models to function. That researchers who promote such approaches affirm they are best applied through structured pedagogical interventions within highly constrained, artificial classroom contexts seems inconsistent, and underlines how dominant classroom perspectives have become in SLA. Approaches to acquisition that recognize the complexity and dynamism of linguistic systems would seem to be best suited to develop within complex, dynamic environments.

SCT, one of the most influential approaches in SLA today (Macaro, 2010), claims that learning is necessarily constrained by its social context. Van Lier, one of the fields leading theorists, makes the familiar SCT statement that humans are social beings and, therefore, a learner's agency cannot take place in "a void or an empty wilderness" (2008:164). This seems to be stating the obvious. Just what does take place in a void is not easy to imagine. It is, however, not difficult to conceive that learning would be constrained if it only

occurred within a very specific and undifferentiated social context of use. However, leaders of SCT in SLA strongly imply that the expert-led collaborative classroom is the *only* viable context for SLA, concentrating on its potential affordances with no recognition of its inherent constraints.

When viewing the impressive theories and approaches to SLA that have gained prominence in the field from a non-classroom perspective, it seems one limits their power to explain language learning by confining their application to the classroom.

## **2.2. Motivation**

Self-determination theory or SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci 2000) is an influential theory of motivation developed by the social psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. It has been researched in relation to a range of contexts (Ryan and Deci, 2002) and has influenced several different academic disciplines including education and SLA. With its focus on the positive motivational aspects of self-determination and autonomy, and the negative effect of perceived external control, the theory is quite relevant to the present study.

SDT asserts that internalised motivation will lead to effective and healthy behaviour. When an activity or behaviour is basic to one's sense of self, it is self-determined. Intrinsic motivation is seen as ideal because when a behaviour is intrinsically motivating a person performs it because he/she naturally enjoys the activity. Extrinsic motivation is contrasted with intrinsic motivation. When people are motivated for extrinsic reasons, they perform an action for a purpose other than simply the enjoyment of it. However, it is important to note that in the SDT model, some forms of extrinsic motivation are considered as self-determined as intrinsic motivation.

Ryan and Deci (2000) describe the subtypes of extrinsic motivation in SDT in their explanation of a process they call organismic integration (61), which refers to a continuum of extrinsic motivation based on how internalised it is. The least internalised

type of motivation is amotivation: when people are either not motivated to perform a behaviour because they do not value it or because they feel incapable of performing it. The next category is called external regulation. Behaviour that is externally regulated is entered into because the person feels pressured from outside forces to perform it. Slightly more self-determined is introjected regulation, which is internalised to the extent that the person feels a social obligation to engage in the behaviour, and gains self-esteem or status from avoiding the shame associated with not performing the action. Such behaviour is not considered self-determined because the actor would not perform the behaviour if external forces did not promote it. The final two types of extrinsic motivation refer to behaviour that has been internally generated rather than imposed. Identified regulation refers to a person's motivation to perform a behaviour or learn a skill because it is instrumental to achieving goals or performing tasks the he/she personally values. The most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Behaviour characterized by such motivation has become integrated within a person's sense of self and is now an aspect of his/her identity. Integrated regulation is as self-determined as intrinsic motivation, with the only difference being that behaviour motivated for integrated reasons is not done because it is enjoyed for its own sake, but rather because it enables a person to be the kind of individual he wants to be, and to achieve or do things that he considers fundamental to his self image.

SDT is often mistaken to be a theory that centres on the superiority of intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation. It is not. Rather, it affirms that behaviour that is self-determined is more effective and healthier than behaviour that is externally controlled.

According to SDT, in order for motivation to be self-determined and for a behaviour to be internalised, it must have a perceived internal locus of causality (Deci and Ryan: 1985: 68). Learners must feel that it is their choice to enter into the activity and that it is not performed as a result of external pressure. Thus, in order for self-determined behaviour to happen, an individual's need of autonomy must be met. Deci and Ryan state that for a person to have an autonomous orientation *he/she* must be the one who makes the choice to do something (Deci and Ryan, 1985: 156). Crucially, a choice need not be consciously

determined: it can occur spontaneously or intuitively (155). A second necessary support for self-determined behaviour is the feeling of competence. When people perceive themselves to be competent at an activity, they will be more likely to engage in it. In order for an activity to promote competence it must be perceived as challenging. Furthermore, it must be entered into because the participant endorses it. If the activity is imposed, competence is irrelevant to the learner (59). Finally, behaviour can only be self-determined when the psychological need of relatedness is met. For people to feel relatedness, they must feel a personal bond with others who value the activity. It is important to note that needs of relatedness aren't fulfilled simply by collaborating with others. If a person does not feel a sense of belonging to the group he/she is part of, or if a person does not endorse the group activity, the person is likely to feel alienated from the behaviour and will subsequently become amotivated (Ryan and Deci: 2000: 56).

SDT is vital to this literature review because it closely relates to the key aspects of the present study. It places behaviour motivated by personally valuable, instrumental reasons – “internal extrinsic motivation” – on an equal footing with intrinsic motivation in terms of effectiveness. At the same time, the theory highlights the negative motivational effects of behaviour that is externally imposed or controlled. Such external control extends to rewards (such as grades or a diploma or a job offer), which, according to the theory, result in an external locus of causality.

Several studies have been conducted that show the negative effects of controlling environments on second language learning (SLL) motivation. Nearly all of these deal with young people in classroom situations, usually learning English in primary school, secondary school or university as a required academic subject. Few studies have been conducted to show how learning in non-academic contexts outside of the classroom for self-determined, functional reasons relates to acquisition of a second language. Nevertheless, the classroom studies support SDT with findings that indicate the level of autonomy (self-determination) in a language classroom, and the resulting external or internal motivation, affects how active and effective learners are.

Ushioda (2001), for example, conducted a study of Irish university students learning French and found that more successful students tended to be intrinsically motivated and less successful students tended to be driven by external motives (108). In a study of elementary school students and their behaviour and attitudes towards homework, Ryan and Connell (1989) found that the more students were externally regulated, the less they demonstrated “interest, value, or effort” towards their learning. In another study on children, Grolnick, Deci and Ryan (1997) showed that children of parents who are more supportive of autonomy are more likely to seek challenges and be creative in their learning. Ushioda (2003) points out that language classrooms dominated by external forces tend to result in a negative, demotivating tension that suppresses individual motivation. In a review of past research on motivation, Dörnyei (2001) also discusses how the majority of instances of demotivation occur in classrooms where the teacher asserts too much control on learning.

Several studies underline the negative effects of a controlling classroom environment that does not allow students to take control of their own learning. Nikolov (2001) in a study of young adult Hungarians who had been unsuccessful language learners in primary and secondary school, used data from interviews to reveal how language-learner potential can be undermined by controlling classroom practices that do not cater to the individual. Nikolov found that negative feelings about the classroom situation, particularly regarding rote learning, assessment, and focus on form (167), had alienated students with initially positive attitudes towards learning a second language. Without the conditions necessary to create personalised motivation, students had lost interest, motivated only by externally imposed concerns (163).

In a study on British middle school students, Chambers (1999) found that classroom situations can demotivate potentially successful learners. The findings showed that despite the efforts of teachers to vary content and method, students tended to lose a great deal of motivation from the onset of their language training in Year 7 to Year 9, eventually calling second language learning “boring and irrelevant” (2-6).

A study by Noels (2001) of first year Spanish students at a California university supported the importance of promoting a personalised connection to language. Using questionnaires to measure factors including the Deci and Ryan subtypes of motivation, Noels analysed correlations between various forms of extrinsic (both external and internal types) and intrinsic motivation with feelings of autonomy, competence and attitudes towards teaching styles. She found that students had less internal motivation and felt less competent if the teacher was too controlling, did not allow for choice and independent learning, and did not share informative, supportive feedback (135). She also speculated that classroom motivation and motivation within legitimate social groups may be distinct, and that intrinsic motivation in a classroom does not necessarily translate to motivation to use the language in a target community (138).

Attribution theory, like SDT, holds that when students feel they are responsible for their learning they are more motivated to learn. Writers on attribution theory claim more effective learners attribute their success to their own efforts rather than to uncontrollable external factors (e.g. teachers), or stable, uncontrollable internal factors (e.g., innate ability) (Dickinson, 1995; Dweck, 1999). Such learners believe in the controllability of their success (Weiner, 1986), and, therefore, have a high “locus of control” (Rotter, 1975). According to Dweck’s (1986) review on motivational processes affecting learning, children with an internal locus of control will more likely gain motivation from their success and persist in the face of failure, an idea that has some similarities to the association of “competence” with “self-determination” described in SDT. In a review of the literature with relation to autonomy and motivation theories such as attribution theory and SDT, Dickinson (1995:173-174) claims that learners who believe their success has been a product of their own efforts have more motivation and achieve more success in learning than those who attribute success to external factors.

A study conducted in Belarus by Golovatch and Vanderplank (2007) on adult university English language-learners’ and their teachers’ attributions of success in the classroom revealed obstacles classroom learners who attribute success and failure to external factors may face in their development as active learners. Students and teachers were

given two questionnaires. In the first, students gave themselves ratings in terms of their progress with the four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking – and aspects of learning – pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In the second, students and teachers rated which factors influenced student success. The study found that both students and teachers viewed student achievement as just satisfactory. Students generally attributed their progress in learning to factors beyond their control, primarily teacher competence in language and methodology, as well as to participation in in-class activities. Teachers attributed student success to both internal factors – e.g., their own teaching competence – as well factors external to them such as student motivation and classroom atmosphere. However, in subsequent, face-to-face interviews students placed the heaviest responsibility for student learning on themselves, specifically on their effort, attitude and motivation. Teachers also attributed student failures to the students, blaming student laziness and lack of effort, negative attitudes and psychological problems, e.g. “complexes” (143).

Teacher attribution patterns in the study, as well as interview responses, supported the conclusion that teachers did not encourage students to become active, independent learners. Teachers did not consider that students had unique perspectives and potential that could help them to self-regulate their language learning, generally recognizing only how a student’s professional knowledge could be connected to externally chosen discussion themes (145). Thus, students were not encouraged to go beyond what may have been culturally ingrained, passive-learner identities. This had negative consequences for students, whose passivity and externally regulated motivation, e.g., motivation to achieve career rewards, was reinforced throughout the course (146). The study, furthermore, pointed to the important issue that teachers might not be inclined to promote student independence because they believe in traditional student-teacher roles, and may feel they would become marginalized and less popular if they allowed students more control (146). This conclusion is relevant to recent research that shows classroom teachers may be unwilling to accommodate students’ developed real-world language-user identities because they feel threatened by them (Stevens and Shield, 2010).

The question of how classroom-trained students can overcome the challenge of ingrained beliefs about learning as the passive reception of formally presented knowledge is a matter of debate. Some researchers advocate helping students to take control of their own learning by strategy training in which students are guided to be more autonomous, to use metacognitive strategies, and to identify their own learning preferences (Dickinson, 1995; Chamot, 2008: 270). Depending on the learners involved, this may be a pragmatic solution. However, there may be inherent drawbacks to “learning how to learn” projects, in that they reinforce the idea that a second language is an object to be tamed in a systematic way rather than internalised through experience.

Ushioda’s (2011:13) person-in-context relational view presents a somewhat different perspective. Ushioda asserts that teacher interventions based on models of effective versus ineffective learning are largely controlled by the teacher in a sterile environment in which a student’s unique identity does not have the space to develop naturally. This idea can be related back to SDT, which makes it clear a choice that is limited to imposed options is not self-determined (Deci and Ryan, 1985:157). Ushioda believes that learners construct a personal relationship with the target language (TL) through authentic expression of their inner selves or “transportable identities” (Zimmerman, 1998). When learners are allowed to interact with each other using their unique identities rather than through the situation-dependent identities of language-learners in an institutional environment, they become more likely to internalise the skill. By expressing their inner selves, learners become more deeply engaged. This position is consistent with Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan’s (2002) finding that rather than pursuing strategy training, teachers would be better advised to create learning environments that are linked to students’ out-of-class interests.

Several studies point to the complications that may arise when a language classroom does not cater to a student’s private purpose for learning. Norton’s (2000; 2001) studies on Canadian immigrants indicate that when a formal learning environment does not match students’ personal attitudes towards the language, learners may feel marginalized and choose not to participate in the formal learning experience. Norton’s suggests that when

students have already formed a language-learner identity based on their personal lives, they expect the formal experience to support that identity. Norton notes that several of her case studies had dropped out of formal learning situations altogether when teachers did not attempt to understand their individual stories and motivations for learning (163).

Legenhausen (1999a) explored the advantages that young students beginning language classes gain by bridging their worlds inside and outside the classroom. In the study, the in-class conversations of two groups of students, aged 12-14, from different learning backgrounds were compared. One group consisted of German students who studied English in traditional communicative language classrooms. The other group consisted of Danish students who studied in Danish comprehensive schools that focused on giving students control of the learning process and opportunities for informal, personalised, non-grammar-focused use. The study found that the conversations between Danish students were natural, featuring creative engagement with language, as opposed to impersonal conversations in the German classrooms. Significantly, a separate corpus analysis by Legenhausen on the same group of participants (1999b) suggested German traditionally-taught English students were less proficient in terms of acquired grammatical accuracy than the Danish students, despite the fact that they, and not the Danish group, received guided, structured support in this area.

In another study supporting the importance of personal connection to the TL, Richards (2006) analysed excerpts from four classroom conversations taken from four different international formal contexts to show that when teachers and students personalise conversations, moving away from their traditional pedagogical roles in institutional situations – teacher (authority, controlling)/student (dependent, compliant) -- classroom conversation is more likely to produce the sort of engagement that will lead to true negotiation of meaning and more intense learning (71-72).

Seedhouse (1996) wrote that truly natural in-class conversation is pedagogically impossible (18). One reason for this, according to Seedhouse, is that the teacher is always, in some sense, an evaluator. This implies an important point: although certain studies

such as Dam (1995) and Legenhausen (1999a) suggest that classrooms can be made authentic and autonomy-supportive through the encouragement of students to be co-constructors in the learning process, these often deal with learners who have learned language this way from the beginning of their studies. Language learners who are used to traditional teacher-student roles, or who are in class because they are obliged to be, may not be comfortable taking control of their learning. Instead, they may feel a need for guidance from the teacher. Furthermore, as Richards (2006: 72) points out, there may be issues of discipline in certain required language classes.

Murray (1999) explored ways to make self-directed study more effective for learners who were not autonomous enough to seek out a personal connection with the language on their own (1999). The study examined the reactions of 14 participants studying French at a Canadian University to a computer program called “à la recontre de Philippe”, a French-language virtual world for learners to interact in. Interviews showed that the authentic nature of the world engaged students on a deep level, resulting in more attention to and subsequent recall of certain aspects of language (302). Murray hypothesized that the authentic nature of the game improved participant motivation to continue learning. This study provides an early example of how interactive media can allow students to connect with the language independently of classroom peers, but nevertheless with a sense of belongingness to an imagined community. The virtual world Murray reports on has similarities to contexts of English use such as online video games and Internet forums that, as discussed in the final section of this review, are popular today with many non-native speaking English users.

I will now turn to three theories, prominent in the SLA learner motivation field, that touch on the effective, internal motivation that results from a learner’s personal identification with the language. As is the case with Ushioda’s person-in-context relational view, discussed above, these theories support the idea that deep, personal connections result in internalised motivation, which leads to engaged and effective learning.

Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model, one of the most influential models of language-learner motivation advanced over the past 50 years (Dornyei, 2005: 72), divides motivation into three principal components: integrativeness, positive attitude towards language learning, and motivation, which concerns effort and desire to learn (Gardner, 1988: 104). Though the motivation component is thought of as the component that directly influences language learning, the unique feature of the model is "integrativeness" and its hypothesized positive impact on motivation. According to Masgoret and Gardner (2003), integrativeness consists of an admiration for the TL culture, a desire to interact with members of the TL community, and a general desire to learn foreign languages, which Masgoret and Gardner associate with xenophilia or a lack of ethnocentrism (172).

Masgoret and Gardner (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 75 independent samples of data from studies, conducted mostly on Anglophone and Francophone Canadian learners, by Gardner and associates which used the Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985) to analyse the relationship between various motivational factors key to the Socio-Educational Model, including integrativeness, and at least one aspect of second language achievement. The results supported the theory that motivation, impacted by "integrativeness" and positive attitudes towards the learning situation, promotes second language acquisition (Masgoret and Gardner: 2003: 156).

Notably, the Socio-Educational Model and research involving it are clearly centred on formal learning. For example, the component of SLA, "positive attitudes towards the leaning situation" is measured by attitudes toward the course and teacher, thus precluding informal "learning situations" (173). Furthermore, all 75 studies that were part of the meta-analysis investigated language students in elementary schools, high schools or universities. Therefore, we are again faced with a major SLA theory that seemingly assumes the classroom to be an essential aspect of SLA. Nevertheless, "integrativeness" is measure of a personal attitude towards the second language as something situated in a real-world context. For this reason, its positive relationship to language-learner motivation is relevant to this study.

In recent years, a common criticism of Gardner's concept of "integrativeness" has been that it may not apply to modern foreign language learning situations where there is not a readily accessible, and potentially motivating TL culture such as in bi-cultural Canada. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2009) points out that the Socio-Educational Model is less relevant now that many EFL learners no longer associate the language with one specific culture (24). Such criticisms, however, are not necessarily valid. Though Gardner and his associates did conduct most of their studies in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Canada, their description of an integrative orientation as identification with a TL community (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003: 174; Gardner, 2005) does not require such a community consist only of native speakers. In the modern world an English TL speaking community may be made up of people who have various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and who, in fact, may live in many different places. Identification with TL communities may be more relevant than ever since access to such communities through the Internet is much more possible for foreign language learners (FLLs) and SLLs than it was in the past. Motivation spurred by identification with modern TL communities has been noted in several studies as key to successful learning for both FLLs (Chik and Breidbach, 2014) and SLLs (Lam, 2006). Rather than dismissing "integrativeness" as out of date, perhaps it is best to think of it as a concept that, at least with regard to English learning, must be applied in a more intricate way now that English is the world's *lingua franca*.

Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system (2009) reconceptualises integrativeness within the context of the global village of English speakers, as well as with reference to recent and influential research related to the "self" concept in the field of psychology. It is based on data from studies Dörnyei and associates conducted in Hungary with adolescent FL learner participants, who filled out attitude/motivational questionnaires measuring a variety of variables. Quantitative analysis of the data, which included responses from more than 13,000 participants, led Dörnyei to believe that integrativeness could more accurately be described with reference to a learner's conception of "self".

The L2 motivational self-system is made up of three components: the L2 *ideal self*, which refers to a person's idealized vision of who he would like to be in the future; the L2 ought-

to-self, which represents the characteristics and accomplishments one feels external pressure to achieve; and the L2 learning experience, specific factors in the language learning environment. Key to having positive motivation to learn a language is having an ideal L2 language-speaking self (Dörnyei, 2009: 33) to aspire to. Dörnyei suggests that creative teachers can play an important role in guiding FL learners to access English-speaking role models that could spark their imaginations and help them to generate an ideal future self. If resources were available, the Internet, with its great flexibility and range of uses, would seem to be a valuable 'ideal-self' generating resource for teachers to exploit, something which Dörnyei seems to recognize when he mentions opportunities provided by the "global village" (34).

The L2 motivational-self system has had a great impact on SLA, leading to a paradigm shift in the motivation field away from concepts of "integrativeness" (Csizér and Magid, 2014) and toward the ideal self-system. However, while the emphasis on self represents a recognition of the motivational importance of a personal connection to a TL, the system as presented by Dörnyei is limited in that it is a classroom-oriented system, that does not seem relevant for those learners whose relationship with English develops informally outside of class and is driven by current needs rather than future goals. For Dörnyei (2009), the key to reaching an ideal self is having a road map, and an explicit plan to get there, generally with the help of a teacher (32). The *ideal-self* system describes motivation to assume an idealised future identity, something that learners consider distinct from their present reality. As McEown, Noels and Chaffee (2014) point out with reference to learners who, based on SDT's standards, have integrated a second language into their current self-image, "It may be that this ideal self is integrated into a person's self concept, but it might not be" (26). Thus, though the *ideal self* system may be relevant to many traditional learners, a future orientation towards language learning may not be relevant, or, at least, not central to the motivation of other learners, including students who primarily see English as a tool to achieve things in their current out-of-classroom lives.

Tomoko Yashima (2002) has advanced another motivational concept, "international posture", which can be seen as an evolution of Gardner's integrativeness. "International

posture” comprises “inter-group approach tendency”, “interest in international vocation and activities” and “interest in foreign affairs”. The development of the construct was partially influenced by results from an earlier Yashima study that found Japanese high school students to be significantly more motivated to learn English in order to join the broad international community than to integrate into the British or American culture (Yashima, 2000). The construct is an attempt to shift from the idea of desire to integrate within native speaking cultures to a generalized appreciation of the global community.

In a study of Japanese secondary school English students, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) investigated the extent to which contextualizing language use within a simulated international community might help students to develop *international posture*, more willingness to communicate and greater proficiency. The study first compared students who had previously studied abroad (SA) and those who had stayed at home (AH). It was found that during secondary school the (SA) group improved in proficiency and willingness to communicate above the (AH) group’s level.

The second part of the research compared a group of students who participated in traditional English classes to prepare for college entrance exams to a group of students who participated in a number of content-based English classes, including the school’s model UN (MUN). In the MUN, students assumed international identities and communicated in English with peers. Results showed that students who participated on the MUN track, as opposed to the traditional students, developed profiles of proficiency, international posture, and willingness to communicate that paralleled the SA students. These results were seen as supporting the idea that use of the TL for communication purposes rather than simply to acquire rules, will improve learner motivation by helping students to see the real world of the language and its international significance.

Yashima (2013) conceives of international posture as motivational because it frames language as something contextualized and engaged in for personal reasons. Nevertheless, as defined by Yashima it is a very broad construct that can be applied to learners with very different attitudes towards English and the international world. International

posture does not necessarily draw a distinction between a learner who values English as a means of international communication in order to tap foreign markets and gain lucrative business deals and a learner who sees English as essential to personal growth through connection with the global community. Looking at international posture from an SDT perspective, one can have an international posture primarily generated by externally granted rewards, such as financial gain or social status, or as a deeply personal skill integral to one's transnational/multi-lingual self-image.

In this section I have described theories of motivation that have been influential in SLA. Central to all of these theories is the importance of the individual's personal connection to the language. The theories diverge, however, in terms of factors regarding choice and control. In SDT and attributions theory, the key factors supporting motivation are control and independence. SDT goes a step further, emphasizing that learners are most motivated when the skill is seen as an essential aspect of their identity. If learners feel the second language is somehow distinct from their own reality, they will not feel that their learning is completely self-determined.

From this point of view, Dörnyei's *ideal self* system seems to be a compromise. While it emphasizes the importance of connecting to the language on a personal level, it also presents language as something apart, an object to be achieved with the support and guidance of teachers.

### **2.3. Autonomy**

The FA from FASIL stands for "fully autonomous", a term borrowed from the prominent autonomy researcher Leslie Dickinson (1987), who used it to refer to a learner of English who learns independently of a teacher or formal materials. Notably, Dickinson refers to learners who learn independently but approach language learning as an aim in and of itself. For the FASILs encountered in the pilot study and referred to in the introduction, learning English was not the primary aim of activities in which they used English.

Nevertheless, FASILs are conceived here as “fully autonomous” in that they learn independently of formal resources.

Importantly, some within the learner autonomy field might question whether FASILs, based on the preliminary observations, are even autonomous, as they do not learn in a classroom and may, to a large extent, have learned incidentally. In recent decades, prominent researchers in the learner autonomy field have come to view autonomy as necessarily classroom-based. Little (1995) goes so far as to state that “the promotion of learner autonomy depends on the promotion of teacher autonomy” (179). Nevertheless, there is little doubt that many researchers within SLA, and education generally, would consider people who learn on their own through use and not conscious study to be autonomous language learners. In fact, some have argued that even within the language classroom, most acquisition takes place incidentally (Krashen, 1981; Truscott, 1998; Rieder, 2003). Additionally, self-directed learning, which has been tied to the language learner autonomy field from its beginnings in the 1970s (Benson, 2011a: 10), “can be planned in a very deliberate way or it can be stimulated with no prior intent” (Livingstone, 2006: 217). Finally, as mentioned in the motivation section, according to Deci and Ryan’s SDT, self-determined, autonomous behaviour need not be planned; it can be spontaneous and intuitive.

Early researchers within the SLA field, in fact, looked upon learner autonomy as a way to free learners from the constraints of the classroom. Henri Holec, a prominent proponent of autonomous learning, defined autonomy in his project report to the Council of Europe as, “The ability to take charge of one’s learning is to hold the responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of the learning [...]” (Holec, 1981: 1). This definition continues to be extremely influential (Murray, 2014: 233). Leslie Dickinson (1987) defined autonomy in a similarly rigorous way, focusing on the individual: “the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of these decisions” (11). Helping language learners to study independently was, in fact, a key goal of researchers dealing with autonomous language learning in the 1980s, and self-access learning centres came about partly due to the idea

that giving high-level language learners access to “raw authentic material” would be a great help to their self-directed learning (Riley and Zoppis, 1985:207).

Since the late 1980s, however, as SLA has become more classroom-centred, collaboration and interaction within the classroom have come to be seen as vital aspects of SLA (Ellis, 2008a) and learner autonomy (Benson, 2011a: 15). In fact, researchers in learner autonomy have moved away from the idea of independent learning in favour of a construct known as “interdependence”, which combines the ideas of independence with social interaction and, within the learner autonomy field, tends to refer to interaction between classroom teachers and peers in the pursuit of common aims. It has become perhaps the key concept in the learner autonomy field. Reinders and White (2011) state, “it is now better understood that autonomy is very much about *interdependence*, not merely about *independence*” (2) [authors’ emphases]. Little, one of the original proponents of “interdependence” in language-learner autonomy, states that “learning arises from interaction and interaction is characterized by interdependence” (1995:175). This quote was in part a response by Little to early autonomy definitions such as Dickinson’s, which Little interpreted as promoting isolated learning. In the same article, Little states that total independent learning – without peers and teachers – is not “autonomy but autism” (Little, 1995:178).

On one level such a quote makes a lot of sense. We use language in order to interact, and we cannot hope to learn a second language (or, for that matter, a first) by ourselves in a cocoon or a “void”, repeating Van Lier’s term (Van Lier, 2008: 164). On the other hand, the idea that independent learning is equivalent to withdrawal from the social world must certainly be an overstatement. Nevertheless, “independence” and, even, “individuality” seem to be viewed negatively by many in the learner autonomy field. At times in the literature there even seems to be a bit of one-upmanship taking place regarding how far learner autonomy can be taken away from an emphasis on the individual learner. For example, Lewis (2014) comments on the following description by Little (2007) regarding the historical shift away from “independent” learning in learner autonomy: “... learner autonomy now seemed to be a matter of learners doing things not necessarily on their

own but for themselves” (14), by stating, “... there remains something disquieting about even this [Little’s] last formula, which might be read as condoning egoism” (38). In fact, Lewis’s statement may be seen as “disquieting” by some in the sense that it pushes SLA away from its essential purpose, which is to describe how second language acquisition takes place, rather than to enforce a moral stance. Similarly, the well-known Bergen definition of autonomy - “a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social, responsible person” (Dam et al. 1990: 102) seems to be stretching the limits of learner autonomy to contexts that have more to do with citizenship training than SLA.

There is a clear reason why a consideration of the learner as a social being is so important: learners learn for purposes embedded in particular contexts. Lam and Kramersch (2003) make the importance of the social nature of language clear when they state that SLA is a process that “is impoverished if considered only as an input/output or ... information processing endeavour” (155). However, just as one should not discount the social context of English use, one should not discount the unique perspective of each individual learner. As Benson (2013) writes, “We need to find ways of situating research on individual learners in its social contexts that neither treat the social context as background nor erase the individuality of the learners within assumptions of social and cultural conditioning” (89).

For Benson (2011a: 58), learner autonomy is the “capacity to take control over one’s own learning”. He specifically notes that it is not necessary to further define the concept as the capacity is not static and is highly dependent on context. He does, however, link control to three basic dimensions: cognitive processes, learner management, and learning content.

The Benson definition is especially relevant to this thesis since the notion of control is central to SDT, the theoretical model of motivation that informs this study. According to SDT, a key aspect of control is that the learner himself has endorsed the skill to be learned, the practices associated with how it is learned, and whom it is learned with (Deci and Ryan, 1985). This leads to self-determination. Benson also connects control to self-

determination when discussing why control over content and goals is, most likely, the key dimension of learner autonomy:

“If the goals and content are self-determined, subsequent phases of learning become aspects of the solution to learning problems that are authentic in the sense that they are the learner’s own. If goals and content are other-determined, self-direction at the level of methods may be reduced to a choice of the most appropriate method of completing tasks that lack authenticity in terms of the learner’s own perceived learning needs.” (Benson, 2011a: 113).

With this in mind, Benson offers a “holistic” definition of language learner autonomy which is highly relevant to the present study: “a broad capacity to control those aspects of learning that are particularly salient to the learner, the learner’s goals and purposes, and the context of teaching and learning” (118).

Of the different elements that theorists claim to be essential to learner autonomy, some of the most commonly mentioned in the literature are particularly suited to the classroom, a context which would seem to bring with it a constraint on learner control. This limitation of the classroom often goes unmentioned in learner autonomy theory, though, as Lewis and Vialleton (2011) point out: “members of self-managed learning groups must, by definition, be prepared to share control in some way. This necessarily involves ceding it to others, as and when appropriate” (209).

Critical reflection and peer collaboration are frequently referred to in the literature as essential elements of learner autonomy. These are often connected to the classroom and the essential role of the teacher in regulating them. For example, David Little, perhaps the most cited and influential theorist in language learner autonomy, states that learner autonomy is dependent on teacher support (1995), that for learners to be autonomous they must be encouraged by teachers to reflect on language both as a means of communication and as a grammatical system (Little, 1997: 101), and that learner autonomy necessarily “develops out of the interactive (and thus linguistically mediated)

experience of shared responsibility for collaborative learner projects” facilitated by the teacher (Little, 2004: 22). Ironically, Little states that these principles of learner autonomy are “universally applicable” to all formal language learning situations (2004: 22), essentially barring the promotion of individualization and independent discovery from all levels and contexts of language classrooms, framing learner autonomy in such a way that it becomes inimical to learner self-determination in the SDT sense or to the development of a truly internal locus of control. Little does not even suggest a concrete exit point when a learner can begin to make personalised, unsupported decisions regarding the language. Significantly, Little’s ideas have had a substantial influence on the learner autonomy field. For example, a large number of research projects, using Little’s ideas as primary theoretical support, have measured how highly structured learning activities promote learner autonomy through enforced group collaboration and conscious reflection (e.g., Murphy, 2008; Lee, 2011; Hafner and Miller, 2011; Mideros and Carter, 2014). Little’s influence is apparent in how often he is cited in these articles. For example, he is cited 11 times by Murphy (2008) and 9 times by Lee (2011). His influence also extends to related fields such as SCT. In Lantolf’s (2013) book chapter discussing SCT and L2 learner autonomy, he cites Little fourteen times. In the chapter, in which Lantolf strongly supports the necessity of other regulation by the teacher (20) and peer collaboration at all levels of formal language learning, he states, “I want to make it clear that ... individuals become independent agents toward the very end of the learning experience” (20). Though Lantolf veers from Little in important ways, and, in fact is sceptical of the term “autonomy”, preferring “agency”, the chapter underlines the point that the dominant current paradigms in SCT and language learner autonomy both consider “other regulation” essential.

The idea that teacher-supported reflectivity and collaboration are essential to autonomy is repeated by Dang (2012) within a paper detailing a theoretical construction of autonomy based on a synthesis of many different perspectives on autonomy. Despite this all-encompassing approach, Dang sees unsupported learning endeavours as complicating factors for learner autonomy. For instance, he describes virtual collaboration with peers online as being potentially problematic due to the fact that some learners may interact

more with computers than peers and complete tasks independently rather than collaboratively (59). His implication is that “unsupervised”, unreflective, and independent learning is a threat to learner autonomy.

It has been argued that a tension exists within the learner autonomy field between pedagogies that teach autonomy and pedagogies that allow it to develop. As Smith (2002) writes, autonomy pedagogies can be divided into strong and weak versions. Strong versions take it as given that learners are inherently autonomous and simply need to be placed in the right learning circumstances for that autonomy to emerge. Weak versions of autonomy assume that learners need to acquire the capacity to be autonomous. Interestingly Smith, who supports strong pedagogies, considers that teachers are required to foster autonomy or “develop students’ ability to learn for themselves” (7). Arguably both strong and weak versions could be considered “weak” in that they both generally assume the need for expert mediation. Smith’s description of the strong/weak “dichotomy” provides evidence that SLA researchers rarely consider that their “table setting” could, for some learners, hamper autonomy by intruding on their self-determination. Schweinhorst (2003), whose work with tandem learning would likely be considered a “strong pedagogy” by Smith, nevertheless states:

I consider the provision of a motivating and authentic learning environment to be important for learners to become more autonomous, but these alone are not sufficient. Reflective, social-interactive, and experimental-participatory learner behaviour needs to be fostered by an appropriate manipulation of the learning environment. (Schwienhorst, 441).

The key word in the quote is “need”. Such uncompromising perspectives on autonomy do not even consider that though many learners may value structured support, other learners may be impeded from reaching autonomy by such control.

It is interesting that in learner autonomy, a field of SLA in which so many researchers refer to Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral practice as a basis for

their work (e.g. Murphy, 2014; Dang, 2012), the key lesson from that theory -- learning will be effective if it occurs through normal day-to-day activity within the target community of practice -- is almost never acknowledged. Researchers who emphasize elements of autonomy that are necessary to function autonomously within the artificial community of the classroom rarely go into detail about how such preparation will lead learners to function autonomously in real-world contexts for their own purposes. The sea change in modes of communication, and the role of the Internet and the global community in the daily lives of non-native speakers seem clearly to be positive developments for autonomy, allowing more learners to access English and experience it in authentic, target communities of practice (e.g. Rindal, 2010; Benson and Chan, 2010). Nevertheless, many of the most prominent theorists in learner autonomy state that such access can lead to negative consequences if not mediated by the careful support of an expert. Hayo Reinders and Cynthia White (2011, 1) state that unlike in the 1990's, researchers in learner autonomy "now better understand that unrestricted access to information, without proper guidance, and feedback can in fact inhibit learners from taking responsibility and thus developing themselves as autonomous learners."

It must be noted here that there are several researchers in learner autonomy who have avoided the "instructional" view of autonomy while making important contributions to our understanding of how independent, personalized, informal relationships to English can spur effective self-directed learning. A researcher whose work is particularly relevant to the current study is Garold Murray whose (1999) investigation of how a French language video game/virtual environment bolstered self-directed learning was detailed in the previous section of this chapter. Murray has also conducted a number of case studies on learners who have much in common with this study's FASILs, having acquired language successfully without reliance on a teacher or language learning peers, largely through contact with informal sources. In a notable study (2004), Murray used detailed qualitative interviews to reconstruct the learning histories of two fully autonomous learners, One of these learners, Shinji, learned English as a foreign language in Japan. The other learner, Cami, learned Japanese as a second language. The learning histories of both Shinji and Cami strongly imply that a key to success for autonomous

learners is their personal identification with it. For example, Shinji's language learning was tied to his lifelong interaction with a "virtual target language community" made up of what were for him highly-valued fictional worlds of English language television and films. In a separate study (2008), Murray used in-depth qualitative interviews to reconstruct learner histories of Japanese English learners who, though often uninterested in English as a school subject, were driven to learn English by the importance of English language pop-culture to their private identities.

Other researchers in the field of learner autonomy have demonstrated how too much teacher control can interfere with learners forming an independent, informal connection to the language, which might in fact be their principal learning aim. In a study of American university Russian learners engaged in cultural exchange on a Russian social network site (SNS), Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) found that learners enjoyed unrestricted, personalised interaction with their Russian counterparts but resented teacher control and teacher interference in the form of structured activities. As the researchers state, these activities were incompatible with the user identities the learners wanted to fulfil. They considered themselves "legitimate speakers of Russian as opposed to L2 learners or foreigners." (82).

Several theorists and researchers have referred to the contradictions inherent in the development of language-learner autonomy through teacher-initiated, highly structured practice. For example, Kenny (1993) states that true autonomy consists of learners expressing "who they are, what they think, and what they would like to do in terms of work they initiate and define for themselves" (440). He sees the work of Kohonen (1992), a key figure in strategy training in learner autonomy, as valuable in that it seeks to give learners choice in learning methods, but limited in that learners are required to deal with imposed linguistic content and to see language as a set of rules, disembodied from personal life experience. He notes that Kohonen proposes learners be given a number of mnemonic vocabulary learning techniques that they can choose from based on their own learning styles and, subsequently, apply to set linguistic content (Kenny: 1993: 435). Though Kohonen, as a teacher trainer, may have been attempting to apply learner

autonomy as best he could to contexts in which teachers must negotiate set curriculums, Kenny believes that curricula which require students to learn imposed linguistic content distort language's true purposes and necessarily constrain autonomy. He proposes that curricula allow language learners to choose content related to their own interests that they research and explore, using the language to achieve their personal goals (137).

Other theorists in the social sciences have highlighted the fact that successful learning, even learning marked by attention, need not be focused on learning for its own sake. As stated earlier, Livingstone (2006) asserts that successful learning need not be planned nor consciously recognized as taking place while it is occurring. Within SLA, the tension between implicit and explicit learning has been on-going since at least Krashen (1978), who has stated that learning happens as a by-product of spontaneous, learner-endorsed behaviour such as reading for pleasure (Krashen, 1989), and that conscious attention to the learning process may well impede learning (1981). Furthermore, as Tomlin and Villa point out (1994: 193) in a summary of research on "attention" from cognitive and neuroscience perspectives, conscious awareness is not a prerequisite to attention. Thus one can attend to language without being aware that one is learning from the experience. One may also be reflective about language learning without being aware of it, and may use strategies that have been acquired unconsciously, much as we do while driving (Ryan and Deci, 2006: 1573).

#### **2.4. Self-instructed learning**

Self-instructed learners, or "teach-yourself learners" (Jones, 1998: 378), are learners who are independent in the sense that they learn in isolation from peers and teachers. In actuality, though, they are dependent in that they do not choose their own resources, tasks and activities, but follow very detailed syllabuses in contexts such as distance-learning programs or private use of packaged courses (Jones, 1993). This is important as "self-instructed" and "self-directed" are often confused, and research on self-instructed learners has been mistakenly applied to highlight drawbacks of independent learning (e.g., Nielson, 2011).

Self-instructed learners, in fact, may be very similar in attitude to traditional classroom learners such as those discussed in the Golovatch and Vanderplank (2007) article – heavily reliant on the teacher with an external locus of control. As several studies point out (Jones, 1993; Umino, 2005; Bown, 2006; Zhang and Cui, 2010), students who enter such learning situations generally do so due to convenience, the difficulty of finding time to go to class, or because it is required at their university rather than because they prefer to learn on their own.

It should be noted, however, that learners who use packaged learning materials may still take charge of their learning in an autonomous way, using packaged materials as simply one resource they control along with a variety of others that they choose based on their own evaluation of their learning progress and their needs. A study by Jones (1998) comparing the success of British university classroom-only learners, self-instructed learners, and mixed learners found that students learning with specially prepared distance or teach yourself materials can be successful if they use a range of resources, employ the right self-regulatory strategies, and are flexible enough to creatively engage with materials (403). Flexibility and self-regulation, are also seen as key in a study by Roswell and Libben (1994), which found that adult self-instructed learners who did best with packaged self-instruction courses were those who could add to the coursework by creating communicative, contextualized practice situations for themselves and, in general, treating the language as a communication tool rather than a subject to be learned. A drawback of both the Roswell and Libben (1994) study and the Jones (1998) study is that they do not measure learning success and acquisition of linguistic knowledge through objective criteria, but through simplistic subjective questions (e.g., “Given the time you put in, do you think you were successful”, Jones, 1998: 384).

Although the literature on self-instructed learners is not extensive (Benson 2011a: 137), a number of studies have shed light on difficulties faced by learners who are not naturally autonomous or pro-active, but who nevertheless find themselves in the situation of learning out of the classroom. These studies also provide evidence that certain strategies,

techniques and belief systems may help learners to be successful without teachers and peers.

Several studies give weight to the idea that students need strong self-management skills to do well in semi-autonomous situations, and that many learners, especially those with busy lives, may require the scaffolding and support provided by teachers and peers. Umino (2005) used qualitative data from semi-structured interviews to reconstruct the experiences of Japanese undergraduate university students attempting to learn English through English educational radio and television broadcasts in Japan (134). The study found that students who persisted learning in this manner were those with regular schedules, who could mitigate the effects of isolation during self-instruction through support by family members (143). The study also found that students who began self-study later in life were more likely to drop out of their self-instructed courses, partly because, as adults, their work lives were too hectic to maintain a regular schedule of self-instruction. The study offers insight into the difficulties that adult, traditional learners face studying alone without a fixed study schedule and strong family support. Umino does not point out another possible factor that unites her study's participants and might prevent them from succeeding: learners approach the learning of English as a task in itself, decontextualized from the context in which they would use it in the real world.

Another type of self-instructed learning, one that is increasingly popular as the Internet's reach expands, is distance learning. Zhang and Cui (2010), investigating distance language learning at a university in China, also found that lack of teacher and peer support was a critical factor that led to dropouts, and that the majority of participants found distance learning more difficult than teacher-led instruction. A study by Nielson (2011) on highly motivated employees of United States Government Agencies who volunteered to study second language through the use of popular packaged software programs (Rosetta Stone and Auralog's TELL ME MORE) had similar findings: the packaged materials did not motivate students. In fact, amongst the participants there was an extremely high attrition rate, with nearly 50% of participants never even logging in to

use the software (117). The number of participants who finished the courses was so low that no significant findings in terms of acquisition could be made (118).

Given the difficulties inherent in self-instruction, it is useful to know what characteristics and strategies are associated with learners who persist in such programs. A study by White (1995) compared distance learners and traditional classroom learners in terms of strategies. The study found that distance learners used more metacognitive strategies, particularly self-management, than did classroom learners. The study could be used as an argument that independent learning leads learners to develop their autonomy, but, in fact, this may be misleading. A learner in a distance program is forced into managing his learning on his own. This does not necessarily mean that he will master strategies or become comfortable with them. Several researchers maintain that despite the fact that learners are put into independent learning situations, they do not necessarily take ownership of their learning. White (2003) later concluded that distance learning does not necessarily lead to autonomy, and Jones (1993) found that teach-yourself courses rarely lead to autonomy or the development of self-regulatory strategies.

With respect to this thesis, perhaps the most relevant studies on distance learners have compared learners within the same course and looked at which learner characteristics are most often associated with success. Using a range of qualitative data, both White (1999) and Bown (2006) found that an internal locus of control, i.e. a belief in one's own power to determine a successful outcome, was associated with learners who achieved success in self-directed university language courses. Unfortunately, these studies, like the Jones (1998) and Roswell and Libben (1994) studies mentioned above, measured learning success in very basic ways. In the White and Bown studies, success was judged by the fact that students did not drop out of the programs.

## **2.5. Learner autonomy and technology in the classroom**

Within the learner autonomy field, technology-based social contexts of use that have emerged within complex and dynamic systems of everyday, real-life communication have

remained largely unexplored as mainstream SLA has concentrated on one favoured context: the collaborative language classroom. This section focuses on how researchers in SLA, particularly those influenced by learner autonomy and SCT, have tapped the affordances of CALL while at the same time remaining focused on classroom autonomy.

Recent applications of CALL in the second language classroom have varied from projects that restrict student choice with teacher-imposed content and methods (Reinders, 2007) to interventions that attempt not only to bring student-chosen content into class, but to prepare students to use the language in real-world contexts (Thorne and Reinhardt, 2008).

In their article on bridging activities, Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) recognize the growing gap between formal school contexts of use and out-of-classroom informal, online English communication practices. For example, traditionally advanced classes for foreign language tend to use literature as reading material that is not only distinct in its register from everyday English, but, in its content, is often far removed from the personal interests and real lives of most students (559). Furthermore, the English literacy practices most relevant to many learners/users are now to a large extent multi-modal and multi-register, as well as highly interactive (560). Bridging activities in which classrooms focus on content relevant to students' everyday lives are seen by the authors as a way to make the classroom more consistent with the communication practices of students. However, a key goal of bridging activities is to, in effect, formalize informal use practices of students by facilitating collaborative reflection and planned academic tasks.

One possible difficulty in implementing bridging activities, which the authors do not mention, is a lack of teacher expertise regarding technologically based informal contexts of use. This problem has been noted by several researchers who have suggested the need for teacher training in modern literacy practices and how to apply these to the classroom (e.g., Stevens and Shield, 2010, Fuchs, Hauck and Müller-Hartmann, 2012; Chik and Breidbach, 2014). Another drawback to bridging activities is their potential to obscure the inherent motivational qualities of naturalistic, informal language use by turning it into

something “academic”. The ultimate goal of bridging activities according to Thorne and Reinhardt is to “foster critical awareness of the anatomy and functional organization of a wide range of communicative practices ...” (Thorne and Reinhardt, 2008: 567). It is not clear why the authors believe that such a goal, even if it were realized, would match the goals of foreign language students not interested in the study of linguistics. In fact, this theme persists through much SCT theory (e.g., Lantolf, 2013), which has not shown how second language learners would gain by acquiring a formal and intricate understanding of everyday linguistic practices that surpasses that of most first language learners.

Reinhardt and Zander (2011) put bridging activities to the test in a study conducted with two cohorts of adult, intermediate-level intensive English program (IEP) learners at an American University. The study focused specifically on social network sites (SNSs), attempting to bridge the SNS out-of-class practices of the students with the formal instructed context of the classroom.

The intervention was meant to foster classroom learner identities that enabled students to better self-regulate their out-of-classroom use. There were several complications, however, one of which was noted by the authors:

the instructor’s very act of asking students to volunteer risks their loss of agency, especially if they are required to do so for a class activity (334).

In fact in several ways the study demonstrated built-in difficulties involved in promoting student “agency” in structured classroom group activities, regardless of whether they focus on activities engaged independently out of the classroom. For example, a complication with the study’s social network game (SNG) group activity was that play did not arise organically, as a result of each individual’s interests. Rather, groups were “other directed” to decide on a game together, play it, and present their experiences to the classroom. Taste in video games is highly specific (Gee, 2007) and it is doubtful that each member of a group felt the same degree of choice and control in the activity.

Indeed, one of the key findings in the study was the difficulty in catering to students who shared the same classroom but who had different orientations towards language learning. For example, the attitudes of Chinese learners in the class, whose purposes were to learn rules for the TOEFL test, clashed with the attitudes of class members interested in communicative practice. Thus, the study demonstrated a logical constraint of collaborative language learning. One cannot assume that artificially bringing classroom peers together to pursue externally endorsed group activities will foster agency or lead to successful peer-to-peer “other regulation”.

In related research, Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne (2008) directly focus on the affordances of new technology and their unique potential to promote successful acquisition. They state:

Web 2.0 tools...foster attention to aspects of language use that span from appropriate lexical choice to syntactic accuracy and from rhetorical style to textual cohesion and genre specificity (530)

Taking their cue from research on the effectiveness of massively multi-player online games (MMOGs), which have been shown to promote good learning principles through the committed, active engagement that comes with an emotional connection to an alternate world (Gee, 2007), the authors discuss the possible effectiveness of synthetic immersive environments (SIEs) as materials in formal language education settings. They are particularly concerned with the potential of *Croquelandia*, a virtual Spanish-speaking realm that they are investigating in a long-term research project.

While the authors mention the language-learning affordances of video games, they do not address the most obvious drawback of games made for the classroom or used for overt language-learning purposes: such games cannot reproduce the motivational power of naturalistic gameplay, in which the player’s chosen video game world is experienced as a self-determined alternate reality shared by a large authentic, varied community of TL users. Rather, the authors express the perspective, already referred to in this review, that the language-learning potential inherent in new technologies can be dangerous if not studied and harnessed by experts in order to put them to “wise use” (539-540). For example, the researchers state that along with the language-learning affordances of

virtual worlds comes the disadvantage that the particular communication norms of the genre do not necessarily transfer to the real world (539). This statement is particularly interesting in that this disadvantage can equally be applied to the language classroom, which has unique communication norms that cannot be assumed to transfer to the outside world.

The research considerations of the authors, who are firmly based in the SCT perspective, show the limitations of entering into SLA research with a firm classroom-centric approach. Without in-depth research of personal, naturalistic use of media it is difficult to put the potential of classroom, formalized use of SIEs into perspective. For example, the danger of acquiring unnatural communication practices in a video game may be diminished if that play is nested in the real world within a range of naturalistic activity, rather than within the controlled classroom, a virtual world in itself.

Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) also conducted a classroom-based study focusing on the use of technology (in this case SNSs) to promote language acquisition. Their study followed American University learners of Russian as they engaged in exchanges over the Russian social network site, VKontakte. The authors found there were inherent difficulties in facilitating students' personal connection with the TL through scripted tasks. Learners, co-constructing L2 identities through valued cross-cultural friendships developed through free conversation with keypals, found that mandatory assignments "interfered with the naturalness" of the newly formed relationships (Klimanova and Dembovskaya, 78). According to the researchers, their study confirmed the power of naturalistic CALL by allowing knowledgeable learners "to take advantage of social affordances that the Internet provides in order to legitimise his or her social power as an L2 speaker beyond the socially limited setting of the L2 classroom" (70). The study is an important counter to SCT research that often assumes L2 classrooms support agency simply because a social context and collaboration are provided without considering that brokered learning may be inconsistent with the purposes of learners. Furthermore, it updates Norton's ideas of investment by suggesting that affordances of Internet

technology give learners new power to manipulate contexts of learning that are compatible with their emerging L2 identities.

Thus far in this section I have discussed research concerned with the possibilities that technology offers to connect classroom learning to new out-of-classroom L2 use contexts. The following studies are different in that despite their use of technology, they are mostly focused on improving classroom performance.

Reinders' (2007) article reports on a university in New Zealand that, according to the author, has improved on traditional self-access centres (SACs) by developing ELSAC, an electronic learning environment that better supports students for what the author refers to as "self-directed learning". The system described is an excellent example of an intervention in which "interdependence" seems to consist mostly of "dependence" on experts with little provision for independent discovery. The article's title, *Big brother is helping you: Supporting self-access language learning with a student monitoring system* (93) is an appropriate introduction to ELSAC as described by Reinders.

In ELSAC, students are given extremely explicit guidance as to what represents good learning. They are taken through a "learn to learn page" (102) with extensive links to formal, support material, including learning strategy pages. Reinders states that an important advantage of ELSAC is that it encourages learners to be reflective. He describes the reflection-promoting system in the following way: "If a student does not work according to his/her list of priorities then the mismatch is fed back through a prompt that might say something like:

*'Dear Student X, [...] You have used many resources that help to improve Grammar but this is not one of your top priority skills. Please look at your Needs Analysis and think about what skills to work on and what materials to use.'*(103)

There is not a credible explanation of why being told to be reflective by following expert guidelines builds reflectivity. Reinders emphasizes that the electronic software offers suggestions rather than direction (104), and that the final choice is left with the student

(101). However, the student's own personal needs have had no impact on what choices he is given.

Though the ELSAC is presented as an improvement over traditional SACs in the promotion of self-directed learning, the major innovation of the ELSAC seems to be that student activity is now more controlled and material is now more formal. In fact, the article makes no mention of authentic informal materials or of the possibility of any active introduction of source content by the learner.

In a 2003 article, Schweinhorst reports on a "learner autonomy" intervention in which learner use of technology is once again strictly controlled. Schweinhorst describes a tandem learning program developed at an Irish university. The program paired learners from the university taking a required foreign language course with English learners at universities in Belgium and Germany. Learners participated in computer-mediated communication (CMC) exchanges with the help of a software device that gave them a report of their relative use patterns of their L1 and their TL, along with other descriptive statistics of the exchanges.

Schweinhorst makes it clear throughout the article that learning must be focused, conscious, formal, and regulated by the teacher. According to the author, collaboration and reflection, specifically reflection about language as a system, are the chief benefits of the tandem learning program, but these are dependent on close teacher manipulation of the learning environment (441). Constraints on learner independence are considered essential. Indeed, "pressure" is explicitly noted as a necessary component of successful tandem learning (439). Schweinhorst stresses the need to give tandem learners highly structured tasks which they know will later be assessed (439).

In fact, Schweinhorst does not even seem to consider that personalised motivation related to naturalistic use might have any potential learning benefits. For example, the possibility of spontaneous, friendly communication with authentic native speaking partners is not seen as an affordance of the technology but as a potential drawback. For Schweinhorst, a

danger of tandem learning is that learners might “trivialize” the association as simply a pen-pal relationship rather than a “learning partnership” (432).

Thus, there is no consideration that naturalistic experience could actually contribute to acquisition through the development of personally meaningful connections to the language, as occurred in the exchanges described by Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013). The implications of this study are important. Schweinhorst, one of the leading advocates of interdependence, emphasizes teacher control while only making token references to learner independence, such as the opportunity to choose from a list of possible tandem learning partners.

Recent studies that consider attempts to build learner autonomy through classroom CALL are common (Hamilton, 2013, Mideros and Carter, 2014, Hafner and Miller, 2011). These studies generally present highly structured tasks to students who collaborate using CMC technology, and are then requested to reflect on the experiences. An example is Lee’s (2011) work with American university Spanish students on a study-abroad course. In the study, student participants were given tasks that required them to keep three blogs: a personal journal blog on which students reflected about their experiences on a weekly basis; a class blog on which students posted public entries regarding their experience; and a project blog on which students posted or uploaded intercultural project work on a topic of their choice. Importantly, the students’ course grades were entirely based on these tasks, thus their work was in fact a requirement. At the end of the course, students wrote evaluations of their learning experiences. Since their experiences were all unique and documented in their blogs, it seems likely that anonymity could not be protected in such evaluations. Overall, learners were very positive about their learning experiences through the blogs as well as in the face-to-face interviews.

The study’s major finding was that “blogs as a mediated tool for intercultural learning outside of class have the potential to create a stimulating online community that is conducive to collaborative learning and reflective thinking” (103). Such a finding appears to require a very low standard of support. While the use of CALL in the study was

creative, featuring affordances for learning inherent in the technology that were quite likely motivating, the fact that the course was part of a degree requirement at a competitive university, and that collaboration and reflectivity were the chief required elements of the assessed tasks makes it impossible to judge the validity of the finding. It is considerably easier to evaluate the author's suggestion that the study cannot be generalized to other settings (103). In fact, it seems likely that assessed tasks at competitive universities that require collaboration and reflectivity, whether or not in association with a blog, will lead to collaboration and reflectivity. Studies by Mideros and Carter (2014) and Hafner and Miller (2011) are quite similar in their approaches, with nearly identical theoretical bases as the Lee study, and similar results. Nevertheless, whether mandatory conscious reflection and collaborative learning projects through the use of CMC technologies truly promote learner self-reliance has to my knowledge yet to be proven conclusively in the literature.

## **2.6. Informal learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and naturalistic CALL**

In an article reviewing what he learned while writing the 2011 edition of his comprehensive review of autonomy research in SLA, Benson states that “the shift towards more social ways of thinking about language teaching, learning, and use has perhaps been the most important development in the field of language education in the last decade” (Benson, 2011b: 16). He goes on to refer to tensions within the learner autonomy field that I have highlighted in the previous two sections of this review. He mentions the tendency in the field to focus on the classroom as *the* social context of learners, and associates this with research that has tended to discount the individual's unique learning trajectory in favour of classroom collaborative efforts (17). Benson, however, goes on to note that “new technologies are providing opportunities for language learners who lack immediate access to the TL to bypass classrooms and go directly to TL texts and users” (17), and implies that such unprecedented access has brought about conditions that may lead to the need to reassess key SLA ideas developed at a time when such access was not a possibility (17). He adds, “Perhaps after a period in which the pendulum of autonomy has

swung towards the classroom, we may be entering a period in which it swings back towards out-of-class learning” (18).

Although these sentiments are largely in line with the premises of this thesis, as can be seen in the literature reviewed thus far, if the pendulum is beginning to swing away from the classroom, it is swinging very slowly. It also must be noted that though there has been a recent rise in interest in learning beyond the classroom with several books dedicated to the subject (e.g., Benson and Reinders, 2011), much of this research sees out-of-classroom learning as important principally as a complementary resource for learning English as an abstract subject or for academic purposes. For example, research by Chun Lai and associates (e.g., Lai, Yeung and Hu, 2015; Lai, Zhu and Gong, 2014) while recognizing the great potential of meaning-focused, out-of-classroom use of English to contribute to a language acquisition, never veers from the perspective that the purpose of learning English is the mastery of an abstract subject rather than the ability to use it in everyday life. In the Lai, Zhu and Gong (2014) article, which uses quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse how informal contact with English affects the achievement of Junior High School EFL students, acquisition is measured by performance on a standardized, academically-oriented test as well as by two Likert scale items, dealing respectively with confidence and enjoyment in “learning English”. It is still rare to encounter research that measures how out-of-classroom learning impacts the ability to use English out-of-class. Furthermore, the field of SLA appears to be slow to recognize that as the role of English becomes more prominent in the everyday lives of many non-native speakers, their motivations for acquiring the language may also be becoming more centered on everyday matters.

Geoffrey Sockett and Denyse Toffoli (2012), leading researchers of informal language learning, point out that there is still a tendency to apply modern technologies like Web 2.0 to classroom social contexts without recognizing that such contexts of use are unlikely to translate to the personalised English learning trajectories of users who have been motivated by real-world communication purposes:

“Much of the current research into virtual communities and foreign language learning seeks primarily to bring social networking and Web 2.0 tools into the classroom rather than acknowledging that learning is more likely to take place in virtual communities outside the classroom where available time, existing virtual communities and intrinsic motivation are already in place. (149)

Nevertheless, as Benson alludes to, there are a growing number of studies that document successful acquisition in modern naturalistic settings. These show that ready access to authentic materials and the everyday relevance of English in non-English speaking countries has substantially changed the way many acquirers/learners orient themselves towards the language. In the final section of this review I will go over key studies that document naturalistic language learning as it takes place today, informally, largely online, often in connection with virtual TL user communities.

Geoffrey Sockett and his associates at the University of Strasbourg have been at the forefront of what may be emerging as a new field in SLA: out-of-class learning that takes place largely through the pursuit of leisure activities in everyday life. In his book *The Online Informal Learning of English* (2014), Sockett describes the practices of online informal learning of English (OILE), offers theoretical bases for its effectiveness, and reviews studies undertaken by his research group that have led to a greater understanding of how learners use out-of-class informal English sources in the age of the Internet. He also gives empirical evidence for the effectiveness of OILE, and shows how widespread the practice of informal learning has become. To my knowledge, the Strasbourg group led by Sockett are the only researchers who have used empirical studies to show that regular users of informal sources of English in virtual, naturalistic environments acquire significantly better knowledge of common English constructions than non-regular users with otherwise similar language-learning backgrounds.

Socketk's research touches on the way students use English in their free time, focusing primarily on television viewing, music listening and use of the Internet. According to Socketk, OILE generally happens incidentally, while learners use English for enjoyment

without consciously attempting to acquire structures, though a secondary reason for using the materials may be to practice their English. For Sockett, the learners are autonomous: their learning marked by a high degree of agency and choice (121). Indeed, one strength of OILE is that learners develop highly personalised learner identities based on their own tastes and preferences. He notes that changes in the way informal sources are accessed (e.g., music streaming and downloaded television) have allowed users to have unprecedented choice over music and television content. Learners also have access to people all over the world who share their particular tastes, and who interact online using English. As Sockett states, due to rapid changes in technology, as well as the huge worldwide popularity of Anglo-American pop-culture, informal learning trajectories are intricately individualized in a way that was not possible before the advent of such technology, the result being that “in all likelihood, no two online informal learners of English will be exposed to the same contents at the same time.” (13).

Analysis of questionnaires given to French university students studying non-language related degrees (Toffoli and Sockett, 2010; Kusyk and Sockett, 2012; Sockett, 2011) as well as a diary study (Sockett and Toffoli, 2012) confirmed the popularity of Anglo-American pop culture as well as the huge variety of television and music that informal users of English sources listened to. In the Toffoli and Sockett (2010) study, 122 learners were asked to name their five favourite singers or groups. These learners named 299 different artists, with only five artists mentioned by more than ten learners (Sockett 2014: 43). The data also showed that watching English language television and listening to English language music is extremely common. A 2012 study of 208 learners at the University of Strasbourg found that 100% (Sockett, 2014) of participants listened to English language music with 30% (41) listening more than three hours a day. Furthermore, 75% listened primarily to English language music, with 33% (42) affirming that they only listened to English language music (Sockett 2014). Data from the Kusyk and Sockett (2012) study on television viewing found that nearly 50% of Information Technology (IT) students watched English television weekly (Kusyk and Sockett: 2012: 51). These numbers were similar to the findings of an earlier study of 225 Strasbourg liberal arts students (Toffoli and Sockett, 2010).

According to Sockett (2014), individual choice and participation in authentic contexts lead to committed engagement with English. He quotes a diary study participant as stating that informal use of English represents “a serious attempt at communication, we do not simulate a situation of communication” (86). This is not to say that acquisition is not social. Rather, as Sockett states, OILE is characterized by learners choosing, “which online communities they belong to” (121). For Sockett, this represents a substantial advantage over traditional classroom learning, which cannot possibly guarantee such “affinities” (145). Sockett and Toffoli (2012) mention that early focus in the field of learner autonomy on the formal use of SACs is now out of step with current practices of many language-learners, who view English as a part of their everyday lives and thus create their own personalised learning environments at home and on the move (139). What Sockett does not mention is that his account of OILE also challenges current views in learner autonomy that see expert regulation as vital to autonomous use of technology (Reinders and White, 2011), the formal classroom as the central context for the development of an English speaker identity (Yashima, 2014), teacher-controlled conscious reflection (Dang, 2012) and collaboration with peers (Lewis, 2014; Little, 2004) as essential, and live rather than virtual communities as primary (Palfreyman, 2011).

Kusyk and Sockett (2012) carried out a study which attempted to corroborate television viewers’ beliefs that they acquired vocabulary while watching television for leisure purposes. (Sockett, 2014: 94). The study of 45 IT students compared frequent viewers of English language television (weekly) with non-frequent viewers in their knowledge of commonly occurring 4-gram<sup>1</sup> constructions on television. The authors used a corpus, called HHOLD, created by Sockett (2011), made up of the transcripts of one season of episodes for five different television series, representing a range of genres, that had been found to be popular in earlier surveys of student viewing habits (Toffoli and Sockett, 2010). The corpus corresponded to 70 hours of television viewing a year, a number that previous surveys on viewing habits had shown to be typical. An analysis using

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<sup>1</sup>A gram is a linguistic unit. In the case of the Kusyk and Sockett (2012) study, it refers to words. Thus 4-gram=4 word.

concordance software identified the 50 most commonly occurring 4-gram chunks in the corpus. These were then compared to the 50 most common 4-gram chunks in the British National Corpus (BNC), spoken section. The study found that there was a significant correlation between both lists of most common chunks in terms of ranking order and frequency of occurrence (Sockett, 2014: 70). This was an important finding in that it showed that television transcripts are a good representation of real life speech.

In order to quantitatively judge differences in vocabulary knowledge between frequent and non-frequent viewers, participants listened to contextualized recordings by native speakers of the 50 most common 4-word chunks. Using the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) developed by Paribakht and Wesche (1993), participants reported how confident they were that they knew the item. If participants indicated they were sure they knew an item, they then had to translate the sentence into French. If the translation was correct, they were judged to have acquired the term. The two groups' knowledge of the most common chunks was then compared using t-tests, which found a highly significant difference between the groups, with frequent viewers more likely to have acquired the commonly occurring chunks. A follow up study using the same HHOLD corpus was carried out with liberal arts students at the University of Strasbourg. This study asked participants to write fan fiction based on a favourite show. Corpora of these writing samples by frequent (more than one show per week) and non-frequent (less than one show per week) television viewers were then compared statistically with the HHOLD corpus. The study found that there was a statistically significant relationship between frequency of television viewing and use of the 50 most common chunks on the HHOLD corpus. In the corpus of fan fiction written by frequent viewers, chunks appeared at similar frequencies to their frequencies in the HHOLD corpus. This was not true of the corpus of fan fiction by non-frequent viewers.

The Kusyk and Sockett (2012) study empirically shows that contact with informal sources of English – in this case television – can result in acquisition benefits in terms of vocabulary and multiple word constructions. However, it does not empirically show that use of informal sources results in the acquisition of grammatical accuracy or in the

development of skills such as reading comprehension and written construction of sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Future research is needed to address these points.

Sockett (2014) specifically refers to Ellis's CREED system as a theoretical basis for the effectiveness of OILE. As he explains, research shows that online learning often involves exposure to various forms of input, representing a range of samples and registers that interact in unpredictable, chaotic ways characteristic of dynamic systems (21). What Sockett doesn't mention is that his studies actually dispute Ellis' claim that the best way to overcome constraints on the L2 is explicit focus on form. As shown in the Kusyk and Sockett study, frequent incidental exposure to chunks results in acquisition of structures that would normally have substantial L1 interference, such as "I want you to" (67), an expression that would be written with a completely grammatical basis in French (as well as in Portuguese).

The OILE model and the data that Sockett presents are supported by other key theories in SLA that have been mentioned in this review. One of these that Sockett refers to is Krashen's (1981) Monitor theory, and specifically the idea of the affective filter and the input hypothesis. Using language in CMC or in other online leisure contexts does not involve the risks associated with face-to-face contexts, and is likely, therefore, to lead to a lower affective filter. Furthermore, heavy exposure to a vast amount of naturalistic input is highly desirable according to Krashen. Though Sockett does not explicitly refer to Krashen's learner versus acquirer distinction, the system he describes, which emphasizes incidental learning through communicative use, supports Krashen's claim that acquisition happens through spontaneous meaning-making use. Furthermore, though Sockett does not include Lave and Wenger's ideas on situated learning in his theoretical construct, throughout his book there is the implication that the effectiveness of OILE is at least partially due to the advantages of using the language in target communities of practice rather than in traditional classrooms, which decontextualize English and may be out of step with modern students' real purposes for learning.

Though the work of Sockett and his associates provides an excellent starting point for the examination of learning that takes place out-of-class, in online environments, as he readily admits, it represents only the tip of the iceberg (149). Sockett's work is limited to French learners who are also current formal learners of English. French learners have the benefit of growing up within the cosmopolitan European Union, where intercultural exchange is common (for example, in Strasbourg, on the German border, inter-cultural exchange is a way of life). Similar data to Sockett's gathered in a culture with less traditional, live access to English speakers would be valuable in establishing that the use of online environments, largely unsupported by live access to native speakers, can lead to highly motivated engagement with the language. Furthermore, studies of learners who have mixed learner and acquirer orientations may yield valuable data, but a comparison of "learners" and "acquirers" may lead to a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages associated with each mode.

Additionally, rich qualitative data from larger and more neutral samples than the diary studies reported by Sockett – there were nine participants in the Sockett and Toffoli (2012) study, all applied linguistics majors – are needed to develop and further validate Sockett's contentions about FLL attitudes towards informal sources of English in today's globalized English speaking environment.

An example of an OILE related behaviour that may need clarification is subtitling. Sockett (2014) presents a model for how the use of English language television develops (54). The model shows that learning from television proceeds in a very definite sequence: from dubbed shows to English language shows with foreign language subtitles to, in some cases, English subtitled shows, and finally to television shows without subtitles. Recent work by Vanderplank (2013), who Sockett cites as a pioneer in the study of subtitles, suggests that the use of subtitles and its advantages are probably more complex and varied than data from Sockett's research alone can elucidate. An important factor in the use of subtitles is the amount of effort that the learner puts into watching the material. Classroom learners typically do not put in the effort necessary to learn from subtitles, seeing television viewing as a purely leisurely activity. However, this may be changing

now that some learners are more personally motivated to not only enjoy the content but to fully understand it. Vanderplank suggests longitudinal studies that examine use of television with subtitles in depth as a beginning towards understanding their role in acquisition in today's contexts where non-native viewers may have disparate motivations for watching subtitled television (13).

The work of the Sockett group underlines the popularity of online informal sources of English and some of the advantages they give to English acquirers. However, in order to better understand SLA in today's global village, it is necessary to investigate more deeply how different types of motivation, such as those discussed with regard to self-determination theory (from personally relevant, internalised extrinsic motivation to externally regulated motivation to purely intrinsic varieties), are related to the acquisition that takes place, with and without modern technology, in formal and informal learning environments. One of many questions to be investigated, for example, is whether informal use environments lead to the development of an internal locus of control. A related question is whether ingrained classroom-dependent views of language learning interfere with the link between informal use and the development of a personalised relationship with a second language.

In a European commission report on the effect of information and communications technology (ICT) on the learning of English, based on qualitative and quantitative research in eight European countries, Stevens and Shield (2010) conclude that informal out-of-class learning is growing and that while students may themselves not be aware that they have been operating in personalised learning environments (PLEs), they nevertheless are often highly-skilled, sometimes surpassing their teachers both in their informal linguistic knowledge and in their technological know-how (10). The authors recommend the development of informal language-learning environments that put control over content in the hands of students. They, furthermore, advocate classroom access to informal web content and popular culture such as video games (11). Their report points out that European classroom environments do not adequately address the English speaking identities that learners have developed outside of class. The report has

a different perspective than much of the classroom-focused SLA research reviewed in this chapter, which generally does not recognize the potential of learners to guide and scaffold their own out-of-class learning and does not consider possible motivational disadvantages involved in a disconnect between classroom learning contexts and real-world English use contexts.

Despite mainstream SLA's continued focus on the classroom as the context of acquisition, in recent years there have been several important studies on naturalistic learning in virtual environments that have recognized the value of personalised relationships with English that develop outside of the classroom. In a 2006 article, Lam presents two case studies. The first is a study of two young female high school students. These students felt isolated and lost motivation in school where they were marginalized due to their poor language skills and immigrant status. They, however, made significant progress with their English through their use of chat rooms, where they interacted informally and made friends with other chat room members in a global immigrant Chinese community. Lam describes how their identities developed as users of a dialect of English co-constructed with members of their chat community. The two learners reported that they had gained confidence in using English and developed their skills through the use of language in environments where they felt accepted and comfortable (181).

The second case study in the article describes the English learning history of another young Chinese immigrant, Lee. Lee felt unmotivated in school due to the fact that assignments were not personally meaningful to him. He also felt disconnected to classmates who did not share his interests. Online, however, Lee was an avid user of English with English speakers from a variety of backgrounds. He increased his English proficiency as he developed a respected identity as the web-master of a site devoted to anime. According to Lam, as was the case with the girls in the previous case study, Lee gained motivation to use English as it became integrated with his personal interests and identity. His English learning was supported through using the language in activities that he himself endorsed with people to whom he felt connected.

In an earlier case study, Lam (2000) described a young Chinese immigrant, Almon, who, similarly to the learners discussed above, was able to develop his English online by developing a personal connection with the language. Previous to his experience online, Almon had looked at English as something external: a series of decontextualized definitions and grammar charts used in activities that held no personal meaning for him. Lam describes her perception of his development as follows: "I was away from the field site for the spring and summer of 1997 and, on my return in fall 1997, found that the student was actively involved in the Internet and that his ability to write in English had improved dramatically," (465). Almon's fluent writing ability had developed as he created and managed a website devoted to a Japanese pop star. According to Lam, Almon, online, was able to feel confident and became a fluent writer, aided by a low risk environment in which he did not feel constrained as he might in face-to-face contact with people he did not feel related to. Lam states, Almon's learning is indicative of a powerful trend in which learners develop "a global identity that gives them a sense of belonging and connectedness to a global English-speaking community." (476)

Lam's studies reveal the motivation learners feel when they connect with English on their own terms. The studies also show the pull of popular culture, in the cases above, the pop culture of Japan. A study with great similarities to the Lam studies is Black's (2006) case study on Nanako, a Chinese immigrant to the United States. Nanako, like the learners who Lam describes, felt constrained in her English development by formally taught rules and her externally imposed artificial student/immigrant role at school. Her motivation to use English, and her proficiency, grew through her strong interest in Japanese pop culture, specifically anime, when she began to write fan fiction and developed into a very popular writer with many online followers. These followers provided a community with similar interests who supported her through CMC. Through her role as fan fiction writer and her interaction with the anime fan community, she developed a personalised, multi-lingual, transnational identity. According to Black, Nanako's developed as an effective English user due to her control of why and how she used the language.

The studies above reveal how Internet technology allows for unprecedented access to users of English with a great variety of interests. This, as Benson and Chan (2010) report in their study on the practice of *fansubbing* (amateur subtitling of foreign language texts) frees learners from dependence on the classroom as a resource, giving them a greater ownership of the language and the possibility to explore and interact in English for personalised reasons rather than in pursuit of “set learning goals” (2).

Though there are a huge variety of practical purposes for using English, Lam and Black’s case studies are rather unusual in that they focus on learners who were motivated by interests in Japanese pop culture. Most recent studies dealing with out-of-class language learning are similar to the Sockett studies in that they reveal the strong pull of Anglo-American pop culture. In a study with similarities to the Kusyk and Sockett (2012) study on acquisition through television, Kuppens (2010) investigated the English proficiency of Flemish speaking primary school students. The study, which tested participants on their ability to translate Dutch to English and English to Dutch, found that students who frequently watched subtitled English language television and movies as well as those who played English language computer games performed significantly better on translation tests than students who didn’t. Though the study could not prove media use led to proficiency rather than vice versa, it seems likely that it was the media use that came first considering that none of the students had yet learned English formally. Kuppens notes that positive feelings which learners hold towards English learning, as indicated by questionnaire data, may well be linked to their association with leisure activities, and that the very act of controlling such activities by assigning them may inhibit such learning. This opinion is consistent with the Lam case studies, in which out-of-class learner initiative led to valued English learner identities while formalized, externally controlled English activities were shown to be demotivating.

The effect of English language popular culture use on acquisition is supported by several empirical studies that reveal acquisition patterns that would otherwise have little explanation. Housen, Janssens, and Pierrard (2001) compared the French and English language proficiency of a large sample of native Flemish speaking secondary students.

Despite the fact that they had studied French for significantly more time than English, students had significantly better English proficiency. A more recent study by Rindal (2010) tested 17-18 year-old Norwegian secondary school students on their pronunciation of four phonological variables that had different standard British (RP) and American English (GenAM) variants. It found that for all variables, American English variants were more commonly used. This was despite the fact that questionnaires indicated that British English pronunciation was the more common pronunciation aim of students. According to Rindal, though the L1 may have led to the more common American pronunciation of two of the phonological variables, in the other two cases the L1 was neutral or favoured British pronunciation. Rindal's conclusion was that, "It is difficult to avoid the impression that learners' pronunciation is influenced by spoken media, seeing as there is little access to AmE elsewhere" (256).

As shown in Sockett's studies, technologically mediated language learning in today's world often goes beyond one type of media or connection to a TL user community, to use in a complex mix of multi-modal genres and contexts. Kuure's (2011) case study, examined the technology-mediated complex, informal use environment of Oskari, a Finnish teenager. For Oskari, the original media that drove his private-life English use was video games. These led to interaction with a great number of people, avatars, fictional characters, from all over the world in games, websites, and forums, all of which were accessed in the privacy of his own room. Within the video game worlds themselves, "Oskari encounters a multitude of special vocabulary and concepts related to cultural geography, historical events, administrative structures ... among others," (46). Thus, the complexity of the video game world is one of its affordances. As Benson and Chik (2011) found in interviews with Hong Kong gamers, such a complex world tends to engross learners as a true alternative universe. This leads to a desire to understand the story and all the language that makes up the story (8). The repetition of linguistic items involved in the playing of the games as well as re-enactment of the games with peers, has been noted as another affordance of video games (Marsh and Tainio, 2009; Benson and Chik, 2011).

Outside of the actual video games, Oskari communicated with other gamers through Internet Relay Chat (IRC), telling jokes and stories, sharing links, giving advice (41). On his own he browsed the web, read information related to his interests, posted on forums, etc. (40). Significantly, the varied real-world communities of practice he participated in were not limited to a single age group of schoolchildren, but consisted of people from multiple cultural backgrounds with a wide range of ages and professions. Thus, Oskari was exposed to a range of authentic input.

Kuure emphasizes that Oskari is not an anomaly but an example of many young people who due to the strong presence of English language media in their daily lives become active users of English for real purposes from a young age. She points out, referring to Oinass-Kukkonen and Kurki (2009), that in that year nearly all children in Finland were regular users of the Internet while half used the Internet daily (35-36). Leppänen et al. (2009) describe how four Finnish young people gained complex multi-lingual identities through use of the Internet, connecting to a range of global English speaking communities. The sophistication of both English and technological ability combined with complex and individualized English user identities that develop out-of-class, corroborates the Stevens and Shield (2010) findings regarding the effective learning that takes place in PLEs. In Kukulska Hulme's (2009) article on mobile technology and its affordances, which she argues lead to even greater learner control of the language, she refers to the disconnect, noted by Stevens and Shield (2010), between the traditional classroom and common trends of English use out-of-class. One of her conclusions is that mobile technology offers clear benefits to language learning in contexts in which the "needs and preferences" of today's learners are taken into account (164).

In a 2014 book chapter, Chik and Breidbach, echoing Kukulska-Hulme (2009) and Stevens and Shield (2010), emphasize the need to re-evaluate the role of the formal classroom in light of the increased role English plays in non-native speakers' everyday lives. In their study, qualitative data from CMC exchange projects between German teachers in training and Hong Kong undergraduate students of English were reviewed. The study once again found that popular culture is a crucial factor in the development of highly motivating

transnational identities. As one participant noted: “*Prison Break* and *Gossip Girl* allowed me to see the world differently ... ” (110). Additionally, the exchange made German teachers more aware of global learning practices, including the affordances of informal Internet use.

Benson and Chik (2010) also address the need to re-evaluate foreign language learning in light of increasingly common, content-driven English use by non-native speakers in their everyday lives. According to them, as opposed to the classroom mode of learning, out-of-class learning through technology is especially autonomy supportive, allowing learners to be in control of personally meaningful, authentic content (74). The authors briefly discuss two case studies they conducted which are notable for their depiction of how out-of-class learning can develop over time through personalised motivation. One learner, CK, became interested in the video game *World of Warcraft* slightly before the advent of the Internet. This led him to personally research ideas involved in the game such as “weaponry”. Through this, his reading skills developed. Afterwards, with the arrival of the Internet, his English further developed as he became involved in interactive online communities. The second case study is similar in that the learner’s interest in English was sparked by an interest in the *Shopaholic* series of English language books and subsequently developed through involvement in online fan fiction sites devoted to the series on which she exchanged ideas with other fans. Benson and Chik describe such learning as “self-directed naturalistic learning” in that while the learning is principally driven by a naturalistic interest in the content, there is also a conscious desire to take advantage of the sites to improve acquisition (74). While in both case studies learners do report consciously manipulating the environments in order to improve their English, as the authors note, the participants were current foreign language students. It remains to be seen how much learners who do not also have classroom learner identities actively seek to improve their linguistic knowledge while engaged in offline English use.

Benson and Chik end their chapter noting the implications of increasingly common “self-directed naturalistic learning” for classroom approaches. They suggest that out of class, individualized learning contexts are perhaps best seen as primary learning moments,

with formal classrooms functioning in an auxiliary fashion as a place where learners can share their experiences. Their conclusions are extremely relevant to the present study and I quote them below:

“It is possible that people who are intensely involved in FL communities or the pursuit of some interest through an FL may neither need nor benefit from FL instruction. This remains a researchable question but if it proves to be the case, FL education systems may need to switch to more responsive roles supporting learners’ autonomous forays into globalized online spaces” (75).

## 2.7. Research Questions

Based on small scale empirical research and case studies of independent learners in the literature (Lam, 2000; Benson and Chik, 2010, Black, 2006), studies that examine acquisition of structures through contact with informal sources (Sockett and Toffoli, 2012, Kuppens, 2010), as well as preliminary research conducted in Brazil, it seems likely that recent changes in technology and the concomitant emergence of a global community with English as a *lingua franca* have created ideal conditions for highly motivated, naturalistic acquisition of English. It is therefore more possible than in previous generations for learners living outside of an English native speaker community to acquire the language in a manner similar to what Benson and Chik (2010: 75) speculate is now possible: without formal study, through intense naturalistic engagement with the FL.

The present study follows on from the issue that Benson and Chik identify, with the following research questions:

1. What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?
2. Do there exist very successful FASILs who have attained at least as high levels of proficiency as self-motivated highly experienced CTLs?

If the knowledge and skills of FASILs are, in some respects, superior to those of CTLs, it is important to know what variables might account for the FASIL advantage. The principal

variables that this study focuses on, variables connected with motivation, autonomy, learner behaviour, and learner beliefs, are important sub-fields in SLA with a body of supporting literature. The literature, however, has mainly looked at these factors in terms of classroom learning rather than as concepts applied to out-of-class acquisition environments. By comparing FASILs and CTLs, the present study hopes to shed light on major questions discussed in the literature from a broader perspective.

This leads to the third research question:

3. Is there a difference between groups FASILs and CTLs with regard to any of the following factors that might account for differences in language proficiency?

*A. Types of motivation*

- External extrinsic motivation
- Internal extrinsic motivation
- Intrinsic motivation

*B. Aspects of Autonomy*

- Reflectivity
- Interdependence (collaboration with peers and teachers)
- Control of materials and activities in language acquisition contexts
- Personal identification of purpose for language learning

*C. Learning behaviour*

- Productive versus receptive activities using English
- Interaction with informal sources of English
- Use of intentional learning behaviour/strategies

#### *D. Learner beliefs and attitudes*

- Attributions of Success (locus of control)
- International Posture/International Focus
- Beliefs about the centrality of formal instruction to language learning

Although the primary focus of this study is to characterize and understand the FASIL group, their ability to acquire English proficiency and the motivations, beliefs and behaviour that factor into their language acquisition, this study can also be viewed as a good-learner study (Rubin, 1975; Wong and Nunan, 2011) in that it has attempted to determine what characteristics are shared between the most successful learners from the FASIL and CTL groups. Importantly, although the present study hypothesizes that mode of learning (formal learning versus informal acquisition) is a key variable in the acquisition of English, it is possible that other variables which apply to participants from both groups contribute to learner proficiency. By considering a range of independent variables, we can make more informed judgments about whether FASILs do in fact gain an advantage from their unique acquisition environment and whether CTLs, even when they seem to have the best of both worlds (long-term instructed learning and regular exposure to informal sources) perhaps face a sort of 'fossilization' or 'plateau', as has been suggested in the literature (Postovsky, 1974; Krashen, 1981; Bialystok, 1981).

The following questions address these issues:

4. With respect to all participants, which variables, including those dealing with motivation, learning behaviour, learner beliefs, mode of learning, time spent learning, as well as demographic variables, gender and age, contribute to English language proficiency?
- 4a. With respect to each individual mode of learning group (FASILs and CTLs) which variables contribute to English language proficiency?

**Table 1: Research questions, and methods of data collection and analysis**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
1. What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?	<p>Screening form for basic demographic information and learning history</p> <p>Structured Interview for confirmation of demographic information and more in depth information on learner histories.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis of screening forms as well as qualitative data analysis of the structured interviews.</p>
2. Do there exist very successful FASILs who have attained levels of proficiency at least as high as self-motivated, highly experienced CTLs?	<p>Battery of linguistic tests.</p>	<p>Mann-Whitney U tests conducted for each of the numerical linguistic tests to determine significance of differences between groups. Chi-squared test for non-numerical “there is” test.</p>
3. Is there a difference between groups (FASIL group and CTL group) with regard to any of the following factors that might account for differences in language proficiency? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Types of motivation</li> <li>b. Aspects of autonomy</li> <li>c. Learning behaviour</li> <li>d. Learner beliefs and attitudes</li> </ul>	<p>Quantitated qualitative data from structured interviews.</p> <p>Quantitative data from structured interviews.</p> <p>Quantitative questions (Likert scale items) from beliefs and attitudes questionnaire.</p> <p>Qualitative data from structured interviews.</p>	<p>Chi-squared tests to compare groups based on categorical variables</p> <p>Mann-Whitney U Tests to compare groups based on continuous variables</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis of structured interviews.</p>

**Table 1 (continued): Research questions, and methods of data collection and analysis**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
4. With respect to all participants, which variables, including those dealing with motivation, learning behaviour, learner beliefs, mode of learning, time spent learning, as well as demographic variables, gender and age, contribute to English language ability?	Linguistic tests measuring lexical and grammatical range and accuracy, writing and reading skills.  Quantitated qualitative data from structured interviews.	Factor Analysis to reduce linguistic tests to one underlying dependent variable
4a. With respect to each individual mode of learning group (FASILs and CTLs) which variables contribute to language proficiency?	Quantitative data from structured interviews.  Quantitative questions (Likert scale items) from ID questionnaire.	Pearson's product -moment correlations coefficient analysis  Multiple regression analysis with key independent variables

## 3. Methodology

This study is a mixed-methods study that uses a range of linguistic tests to compare the current language proficiency of two types of learners, FASILs and CTLs, who were categorized as distinct based on their reported learner history. The study is not experimental as no intervention is involved. Rather, the study takes into account detailed self-report data regarding current and historic learner behaviour, attitudes and beliefs in an attempt to understand what factors may have led to differences in learning outcomes between the two groups.

### 3.1. Participants

The study sample was taken from a population of upper intermediate to advanced English language learners between ages 18-24 in two large Central Brazilian state capitals: Goiânia and Belo Horizonte<sup>2</sup>.

Participants were judged to have reached upper intermediate-advanced levels of English based on self-assessment and, in the case of CTLs, their number of years spent learning English in private language schools. Proficiency was further checked through a self-report protocol of skills (Brantmeier, Vanderplank and Strube, 2011) associated with each level, which was completed by all participants.

In total, five institutions participated in the study. These included three universities -- The Federal University of Goiás, in Goiânia, and Ibmec and The Federal University of Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte -- and two post-secondary schools, elite Brazilian university entrance exam prep schools (“pre- vestibulares”) in Goiânia. In total, 84

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<sup>2</sup>Goiânia, with a metropolitan population of just under 2 million people, is the capital of Goiás state. Belo Horizonte, with a metropolitan population of about 2.5 million, is the capital of Minas Gerais state.

participants (43 female and 41 male<sup>3</sup>) took part in the first stage of the data gathering (linguistic tests and questionnaire) with 71 participants continuing on to the second stage (structured interviews and “there is” test). 13 participants dropped out before their interviews. 43 female and 41 male participants took part in the study.

These academic institutions were selected as a source for participants for several reasons. Firstly, it was predicted that FASILs would be less numerous in older populations since FASILs represent a new category of learner that has emerged as a consequence of recent changes in technology and communication. Support for this was additionally provided by findings from interviews conducted during the preliminary study. With one exception, all participants who fit the FASIL profile were 24 years old or younger.

As will be noted throughout the study, Brazil offers an especially advantageous situation which lends itself to the purposes of this study. Within Brazil it is common knowledge that English class in primary and secondary schools, even at high-level private schools, is a fringe subject, which, at maximum, does not bring students to more than basic levels of proficiency. A report sponsored by the British Council explicitly confirms this (Data Popular Institute, 2014: 12). It is also known that for this reason many young people attend well-funded private language schools in order to acquire the language (17). If a Brazilian English speaker has not lived abroad or gone to private language school, there is a high probability that he has acquired the majority of his non-basic English knowledge out-of-class.

In addition, selecting the sample from pre-vestibular schools and universities was intended to establish a reasonable uniformity of backgrounds between the FASILs and CTLs with regard to demographic variables -- age, economic status, education – and professional goals. Regarding professional goals, students who enter elite pre-vestibular schools such as the two schools that participated in Goiânia – Colégio Ávila and Millenium Vestibulares – are, in most cases, attempting to pass the most difficult university entrance

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<sup>3</sup> For the gender composition of each mode of learning group, see Quantitative findings section 4.2.6.

exams in the country<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the universities that participated in this study had the most competitive entry in their respective states. From this, it can be reasonably supposed that all participants were academically oriented in that they had the goal of gaining professional degrees. Aside from their professional goals, participants generally came from similar cultural backgrounds, in that they came from the same regions, and had been educated in similar schools. A pre-requisite of participation in the study was that all students must have attended private primary and secondary schools without supporting scholarships. This ensured that participants came, not only from similar educational backgrounds, but also from middle-class to upper class economic backgrounds with parents who were, by and large, business owners or white-collar professionals. Equivalent economic status could not be assumed between all participants, but the potential effects of this variable was reasonably controlled by taking students from similar schools/universities who had been trained in similar primary and secondary schools to help ensure an equivalency between the groups. Given the stratified nature of Brazilian culture and socio-economic class consciousness, school directors strongly advised not to ask participants direct questions about their parents' economic status or educational background, as this could have been stressful for participants and would not necessarily have led to accurate responses. Just as importantly, such data collection could have interfered with the relaxed and collaborative interview atmosphere that was an essential part of the methodology.

### **3.1.2. Distinction between groups**

The present study attempted to draw as clear a distinction as possible between the two modes of language acquisition (FASILs and CTLs). A screening form (See Table 2) and subsequent interview questions were used to assign participants to the correct group or to rule them out of the study. To qualify as a FASIL, a student could not have had more than a total of one full year of formal study, through a combination of classroom study, private tuition, and independent study with online or packaged self-teaching materials. Furthermore, FASILs were not allowed to have lived abroad, or to have lived with an

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<sup>4</sup>Directors of the pre-vestibular schools that participated in the study emphasized this fact when they were asked about their students' professional goals.

advanced or native speaker of English. These conditions were established to ensure that FASILs had gained the bulk of their knowledge through informal, independent contact with informal sources within Brazil. In order to qualify as a CTL, a learner had to have studied in a private language school for a minimum of four years. Unlike FASILs, CTLs were allowed to have lived with an advanced or native speaker of English and to have lived/studied abroad for up to 3 months. CTLs could also have had unlimited contact with informal sources of English. Indeed, it would be almost impossible to find a learner of English in today's society who hadn't acquired at least some of their English from out-of-class informal English input (Sockett and Toffoli, private correspondence: 2013). CTLs who had extensive contact with informal sources of English (self-reported contact of two or more hours per day) are referred to in this study as hybrid CTLs.

**Table 2: Screening Form**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	<b>CTL</b>
1 Have you studied English as part of a general curriculum in paid private secondary and primary school?	Yes	Yes
2 How many years have you been enrolled in private language school (including private tutor)?	Up to one year	Four or more years
3 Have you ever learned English in an out-of-class prescribed distance learning or self-taught course using set, pre-produced materials and following a set curriculum? For how long have you/did you learn this way?	Up to one year (total, combined with other guided learning modes)	No limit
4 Do you own a personal computer with internet access?	Yes	Yes
5 Do you own a television with satellite or cable access?	Yes	Yes
6 Have you learned English as a result of out-of-class contact with the language, using informal sources of English with personally selected content without following a curriculum produced by an institution, company, or another person? How many years have you done this?	Two, or more years	No limit

**Table 2 (continued): Screening Form**

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	<b>CTL</b>
7	How old are you?	18-24	18-24
8.	Have you ever lived with an advanced/native English speaker?	No	Permitted
9.	Do you study, or intend to study, “letras”, at university?	All subjects allowed except “letras” (language and literature)	All subjects allowed except “letras” (language and literature)
10.	Are you currently learning English?	Yes	Yes
11.	At what age did you start progressing in your English from a basic level?	11 and up	11 and up
12	Have you ever lived abroad?	No	Up to 3 months

### 3.1.2.1. Notes on the screening form

Table 2, above, lists questions from the screening form along with corresponding response criteria for FASILs and CTLs. The rationale for each question on the screening form is given below.

*Question 1:* Have you studied English as part of the general curriculum in a paid private secondary and/or primary school?

This question was crucial in helping to ensure equivalency between groups for several reasons. Although even in private primary and secondary schools in Brazil, English education is a fringe subject that does not go beyond basic levels of linguistic knowledge (Data Popular Institute, 2014: 12), private schools generally have superior resources to those of public schools. Additionally, private primary and secondary schools tend to have higher academic standards when compared with public schools, emphasizing academic achievement and, especially, university entrance.

This question was also vital as a way of gauging participants' socio-economic status. Although private schools do not have the elite status in Brazil that they have in the United States or Great Britain, a relatively small percentage of Brazilians (middle class and above) are capable of paying for private primary and secondary schools, and therefore the question established a level of similarity both in terms of educational background and in terms of social class, without asking sensitive questions about parental income.

*Question 2:* How many years have you been enrolled in private language school (including private tutoring)?

Determining the number of years of study required to qualify as a CTL had to be somewhat subjective. However, a cut-off value of four years was chosen since this is the point at which most Brazilian private language schools (e.g., Brasas, Cultura Inglesa, Fisk) promote

their students to advanced or conversational levels, and four years of study at these schools would correspond to an upper-intermediate level based on accepted international standards<sup>5</sup>. FASILs were permitted to have studied English formally for 1 year. This decision was guided by an understanding that students at most private language schools in Brazil are considered beginners during their first year of study.

*Question 3: Have you ever learned English in an out-of-class prescribed distance-learning or self-taught course using set, pre-produced materials and following a set curriculum? How long have you learned/did you learn this way?*

The present study considers self-study and distance learning to be formal language training. Although FASILs were permitted to have had this sort of training, their total formal training, including private language school education, was not permitted to exceed one year. For the purposes of the study, CTLs were permitted to have supplemented their classroom learning with formal, out-of-class learning.

*Questions 4 and 5: Do you own a personal computer with Internet access?*

*Do you own a television with satellite or cable access?*

These questions were devised to ascertain, and keep consistent across groups, participants' potential access to out-of-class English input via the media.

*Question 6: Do you learn English as a result of out-of-class contact with the language, using informal sources of English with personally selected content without following a curriculum produced by an institution, company, or another person? For how many years have you done this?*

This question helped to establish whether a student was a fully autonomous self-instructed learner (Dickinson, 1987)/self-directed naturalistic learner (Benson and Chik, 2010).

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<sup>5</sup>Four years in Brazilian private language schools amounts to approximately 500 guided learning hours, which corresponds to a B2 level in the CEFR ("International Language Standards," 2013)

Participants qualified as FASILs if they met the minimum of two years constant language acquisition through contact with informal sources. This time period was arrived at based on piloting, when it became apparent that two years was sufficient to bring a learner, without formal learning experience, to an upper-intermediate level.

*Question 7: How old are you?*

An age limit was put in place to ensure equivalence among participants. The maximum age of 24 reflected the assumption, based on earlier research, that it would have been unlikely for older Brazilian learners to have fully benefitted from recent changes in the role of English in everyday life due to advances in technology and the effects of globalization.

*Question 8: Have you ever lived with an advanced or native English speaker?*

The experience of having lived with an advanced or native speaker was considered to be a rich source of input, unrelated to the contexts considered in this study.

*Question 9: Do you study, or do you intend to study, “letras”<sup>6</sup> at university?*

Volunteers whose major area of study was “letras” were not accepted as participants since the study of language and literature might lead to a learning advantage that could be a potential confound.

*Question 10: Are you currently learning English?*

In order to ensure equivalence between learners, it was necessary for all learners to consider themselves current learners of English.

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<sup>6</sup>“Language and literature”

*Question 11:* At what age did you start progressing in your English from a basic level?

It is commonly accepted in SLA theory that learners have an advantage when they begin their acquisition process as children. For this reason, it was sought to guarantee as much as possible that all participants had begun progressing from basic levels of knowledge from adolescence or older.

*Question 12:* Have you ever lived abroad?

It was necessary to ensure that FASILs had acquired their language through contact with informal sources within Brazil and to limit other possible contexts of acquisition. Thus, they were not permitted to have lived abroad, which would have provided a context of acquisition unrelated to the purposes of this study.

### **3.1.3. Sampling**

Sampling was purposive in that a learner profile was decided on and sites where that profile would be met were selected. The study sought participants who had come from similar economic, cultural and educational backgrounds, who were young adults, and who had professional aspirations. Thus, in addition to having very similar demographic characteristics, the participants in the study would also be learners of English who had not faced significant financial obstacles to learning English and who were academically oriented enough to be seeking a professional degree. It was for this reason that top vestibular schools in Goiânia<sup>7</sup> were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Due to the difficulty in gaining access to pre-vestibular schools, top ranked universities were also contacted and administrative directors were asked for permission to conduct the study. The three universities mentioned above were then added to the two vestibular sites.

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<sup>7</sup>The research limited the search to the neighborhoods of Bueno, Marista, and Oeste, neighborhoods which school directors advised are where the city's most competitive schools are located.

It was not possible for participants to be randomly selected, and therefore the study had to rely on volunteers, thus there was a volunteer bias built into the study. It should be noted, however, that participants were encouraged to volunteer if they had a strong interest in English, and were informed that their participation would involve a significant time commitment. For this reason it is possible that the volunteers actually helped create a participant pool of similarly motivated learners.

For more on participant recruitment see Section 3.4, Data Collection.

### **3.2. Design instruments**

The present study compared two groups -- fully autonomous self-instructed learners (FASILs) and classroom-trained learners (CTLs) -- from the same population using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study attempted to discover whether the FASIL group had an advantage in acquiring native-like English proficiency compared to the CTL group. The study also investigated, using questionnaires and interviews, group and individual differences in motivation, out-of-class learning behaviour, learner beliefs, learner attitudes, and time spent learning to determine what factors might contribute to proficiency.

All aspects of the study, from instrument design, to sampling and data collection, were planned with the following criteria in mind:

1. Ensure that, aside from mode of English acquisition, FASILs and CTLs have as similar backgrounds as possible.
2. Obtain broad and accurate information about the linguistic knowledge and learning histories, backgrounds, beliefs, and motivations of the two groups.
3. Keep attrition down by:
  - Emphasizing the collaborative nature of the interactions between the participants and the researcher
  - Using data collection instruments that participants find engaging

- Limiting the time commitment of participants
4. Make data collection instruments relevant to Brazilian advanced intermediate to advanced learners.

The three main sources of data generated for the purposes of this study were tests of English proficiency covering a broad range of knowledge and skills, a questionnaire that surveyed learner attitudes and beliefs about language learning, and structured interviews. In order to satisfy predetermined design criteria (2-4, mentioned above), it was necessary for many of these instruments to be created specifically for the study.

In choosing and devising the instruments for data collection, I relied not only on academic training in applied linguistics, but on nearly a decade of experience living in Brazil and 16 years of experience working for Brazilian, Portuguese, and Angolan institutions as a translator and English education consultant.

The linguistic tests used in this study were designed to assess both lexical and grammatical knowledge as well as reading and writing skills. These tests specifically examined participants' automatic, deep knowledge of grammatical and lexical structures. For this reason, vocabulary and grammatical automaticity were built into all tests using strict time limits that were developed during piloting. The importance of automaticity is fundamental to this study's conception of acquisition and has been discussed, with relation to spontaneous use in the literature review. According to Schmitt (2010:26) with regard to automaticity, "As the essence of vocabulary mastery is the ability to use it fluently in communication (not the ability to talk about it meta-linguistically), measures which tap into fluent and accurate usage are crucial" (17-18). According to Loewen (2014), most instructed language learners hold the ability to use language spontaneously in communication circumstances as their primary learning goal. Judging from my own extensive personal experience with Brazilian learners and schools as well as data from the preliminary study in Goiânia, such a goal is consistent with the aims of most Brazilian language school students.

As mentioned in the introduction, a key observation in preliminary research was that CTLs did not seem to nuance their understanding of English or go beyond a simplistic one-to-one form-meaning mapping of Portuguese to English. Furthermore, studies discussed in the literature review by Laufer (1989) and Martinez and Murphy (2011) underlined the difficulty that intermediate classroom learners have in progressing to a deep understanding of formulaic language, polysemic words, and other deceptive vocabulary. For this reason, items on tests measuring grammatical and vocabulary knowledge were contextualized to the point where an understanding of the nuances of a word's meaning (Anderson and Freebody, 1981) was generally required to respond accurately. Knowledge of collocations and associations (Nation, 1990: 31) and knowledge of deceptively transparent items was a built in aspect of all tests in this study, specifically to address questions of depth of knowledge. Finally, productive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary was an aspect of several tests. Many studies show that productive knowledge of grammatical/lexical items lags behind receptive knowledge (e.g., Laufer, 2005).

The study sought to distinguish between participants, who, according to the initial screen, were similar in that they had already reached relatively high levels of English proficiency. To ascertain the level of sophistication of participant knowledge of grammatical and lexical structures of standard English, test items were chosen that – based on IM chats, extensive private lesson notes, plus my own experience with advanced Brazilian learners – presented difficulty specific to advanced Brazilian learners of English. Tests were designed to last for a maximum of 15 minutes in order to allow time for several tests covering a range of skills and structures. Content was chosen to allow learners to engage with it on a personal and emotional level. This was done to encourage continued participation and positive feelings about the research experience despite the challenging nature of the linguistic tests.

### 3.2.1. Linguistic tests

#### 3.2.1.1. Tests 1 and 2: Reading comprehension of literal meaning (Test 1) and formulaic expressions (Test 2), (Martinez and Murphy, 2011).<sup>8</sup>

The first linguistic tests given to participants were paired tests of reading comprehension. These were taken (with permission) from a study by Martinez and Murphy (2011), which had been designed to test the knowledge of formulaic expressions of private language school student participants in Brazil, students who were similar to the CTLs who participated in the present study. These tests were designed to measure reading comprehension of passages made up of figurative expressions and to compare it with comprehension of passages made up of words used with their literal meanings<sup>9</sup>. For the literal and figurative reading comprehension tests, passages were written using the same words, the difference being that the words in the first set of passages were used literally whereas the words in the second set of passages were used figuratively. All words in the texts were taken from the most common two thousand words of the British National Corpus (BNC). For each test (literal and figurative), there were four small passages followed by comprehension questions. The tests were separately marked for the purposes of this study.

The reading comprehension tests were an important contribution for several reasons: first, unlike other tests, these were not made especially for the present study, but had already been used and validated. Comparisons between tests could help establish validity by showing that tests meant to measure similar types of knowledge (e.g., knowledge of deceptive vocabulary) produce similar results. The reading comprehension tests were also important in that they added to the breadth of skills covered.

The reading comprehension tests were administered to provide several important insights. In terms of the literal comprehension test (reading comprehension of words used literally) one might expect CTLs to have an advantage over FASILs since in their training they had

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<sup>8</sup>See Appendix B

<sup>9</sup> The Martinez and Murphy study also examined how aware participants were of deficits in their comprehension. The present study did not delve into participant awareness of their comprehension due to time constraints.

already completed many similar reading comprehension exercises. In addition, they had explicitly studied the literal meanings of many vocabulary words. Thus, Test 1 gave insight into whether the FASILs' use of informal sources of English and the motivations and beliefs that may accompany that mode of learning compensated for their lack of explicit learning of vocabulary and lack of test-taking experience.

The second of the paired tests, reading comprehension of formulaic language, was valuable for another reason. As Laufer (1989) observes, deceptively transparent vocabulary items tend to present difficulties, specifically in terms of comprehension, for classroom-trained learners. Martinez and Murphy (2011) detail how on the figurative reading comprehension test, classroom-trained learners who had reached higher levels in their formal education, did not have an advantage over lower-level learners with less formal learning experience. This is consistent with the present study's preliminary research on Brazilian classroom-trained learners, which provided some evidence that CTLs do not tend to advance in their vocabulary knowledge past one-to-one Portuguese-to-English word translation. These tests were therefore important in that if they provided evidence that FASILs had a better understanding of passages made up of multiple word expressions than did CTLs, it would suggest the benefits of informal, functionally-motivated contact with English as well as the possible need to explicitly teach certain deceptive vocabulary that might not ordinarily appear with enough frequency in formal learning environments to familiarize classroom learners with the nuances of their second language.

### **3.2.1.2. Tests 3 and 4: Chaplin retelling test – Timed narrative writing lexical resource (Test 3) and Timed narrative writing grammatical range and accuracy (Test 4)<sup>10</sup>**

The narrative writing test was designed specifically to test productive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In order to do this, a time limit was established through extensive piloting of the writing prompt with native speakers and a range of second language speakers. This was done to give participants a sufficient time period in which to

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<sup>10</sup> See appendix C for the written instructions for the task.

finish the task, but to restrict time enough to ensure that participants would have to rely on their automatic and intuitive knowledge of language structures.

As part of the test, participants were shown a 90-second clip from the Charlie Chaplin film, *City Lights*, twice. Prior to being shown the clip they were told that they would be asked to write a full description of everything that happened on the screen. Participants were informed the scene would be played twice in succession and that they could take notes in any language they wished. They then used these notes to help remind them of details in the scene as they wrote their narrative descriptions. In order to keep descriptions objective and facilitate scoring, participants were directed to retell what happened in the scene without commentary or analysis. They were asked to include all aspects of the scene. The researcher modelled the task by showing a brief ten-second scene in the film, which immediately precedes the scene used for the test, and reading a detailed description of it.

This writing exercise was a key addition to the linguistic tests for several reasons. First it simulated the skill of accurately and coherently describing or telling a story with a strict time limit. In doing so, it measured automatic and active linguistic knowledge. As has been shown in previous studies (Klein and Perdue, 1997) Charlie Chaplin physical comedies can elicit full, rich descriptions. This allows the test to cover a variety of grammatical and vocabulary structures that go beyond simple picture recognition tasks. By stipulating through clear instructions that participants were required to describe everything they saw and by modelling such full descriptions ahead of the task, the test attempted to differentiate between participants with a sufficiently sophisticated knowledge of structures to describe what they saw accurately and fully and those who had too many gaps in their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to quickly and accurately describe what they had seen.

Importantly, the task was intended to be interesting. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this was an important criterion for the design instrument, since it was necessary for the participants to remain positive about the research project despite being faced with tasks that could make them identify deficiencies in their knowledge that they might not

previously have been aware of. Practically, this was important to help ensure participants would return for the interview sessions.

To score the Chaplin narrative writing task, professional teachers and test assessors were hired. They used the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test band descriptors for the following two IELTS writing test categories: grammatical range and accuracy; lexical resource. These bands cover a 1-9 point scale. The IELTS test bands were chosen in part because they were the products of extensive reliability testing in 2005, providing raters with more specific criteria to make fine distinctions between the linguistic knowledge of the individuals tested (Falvey and Shaw, 2006). The rating rubric, therefore, was considered to be a good fit for the present study's goal of measuring fine distinctions in the proficiency level of participants who were already fairly high-level English users. For the purposes of the present study, the mean rating participants received for the grammatical range and accuracy category is referred to as "Test 3" and the mean rating participants received for the lexical resource category is referred to as "Test 4".

The assessors were normed with the help of more than three dozen narrative essays describing the same Chaplin scene, written during piloting by both native speakers from a range of nationalities, ages, and educational backgrounds and second language learners. Pilot participants were given the same directions and similar time limits to the study participants (the final time limit was ascertained through the piloting process). The native-speaker essays, in particular, helped raters to be objective when judging participant word choice and native-like sophistication of structures. More details about the norming of the raters and how inter-rater reliability was assessed will be covered in the data analysis section of this chapter.

### **3.2.1.3. Test 5: Productive knowledge of the grammatical structure "there is"**

The present study chose to test productive knowledge of "there is". It was considered a key structure for several reasons:

- It is an extremely common English multi-word expression with both grammatical and lexical properties.
- It is a structure that is taught explicitly multiple times from early levels in the top English schools in Brazil.<sup>11</sup>
- In the preliminary observations, it proved to be a very common, though basic, problem structure for several fluent CTLs who did not use the word in obligatory contexts and instead used the verb “have” without a subject, which sometimes resulted in communication breakdown.
- The item is deceptively transparent (Laufer, 1989) and if understood as simply the sum of its parts could lead to misunderstandings.

In preliminary testing, the most common mistake observed with regard to “there is” was an L1 transfer error in which “have” was used without a subject, e.g., “Have a cup on the table”. This error could logically be traced back to the literal translation of the English word “have” for the Portuguese “ter”. Although “ter” means “have” as in “possess”, it has many additional uses. One of them corresponds to the English term, “there is”<sup>12</sup>. An example mistake that was identified through preliminary research is “have a cup on the table”, literally “tem um copo na mesa”.

Since “have” and “ter” are among the most frequently used verbs in English and Portuguese, respectively, this translation is one of the first pieces of second language knowledge that Brazilians acquire and practice in classrooms<sup>13</sup>. As discussed in the literature review, a possible advantage of naturalistic learning is that there is generally an initial silent period of exposure to authentic input as opposed to early productive practice of “learner language” (Postovsky, 1974). Given the basic level of the “there is” structure and its common use, it was deemed that how FASILs compared to CTLs in their productive acquisition of “there is” could possibly shed light on benefits or disadvantages of classroom versus naturalistic practices.

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<sup>11</sup>Cultura Ingles, Brasas, Wizard, CCAA and Fisk all teach this structure multiple times in their courses.

<sup>12</sup>The verb “haver” corresponds to “there is”, but this formal term is rarely used in spoken Portuguese.

<sup>13</sup> A fact confirmed by the English staff as well as introductory textbooks at the private primary school Educandário Goiás, Setor Bueno, Goiânia, Goiás.

The “there is” productive knowledge test was administered in individual sessions on the second day of testing, prior to the interview. Learners were given 90 seconds to verbally describe their house, prompted by the question: “What is in your house? Use complete sentences to answer.” Although other methods could have been chosen to test this structure, the current approach tested spontaneous production of the structure without large time demands. Crucially, this prompt was piloted on 40 native speakers of various nationalities and proved extremely effective, eliciting the target structure “there is” an average of 7 times per 90 seconds (Not including elliptical use).

Participants were either judged to have acquired productive, automatic knowledge of the structure, “there is”, or not. They were only judged not to have acquired the structure if they did not use “there is” at any time in their response while producing at least one incorrect grammatical variant of “there is” (e.g., “have” without a subject) in a required context of use. Participants were given every possible opportunity to use the correct structure. For example, if participants persisted in using subject + “have”, which piloting showed was a possible, though relatively rare, variant response by native speakers<sup>14</sup>, they were asked to continue answering the question without using sentences with subject + “have”. If, despite being pushed away from using variants of “there is”, after 90 seconds the participants hadn’t used the structure and had also made at least one mistake, they were judged not to have acquired productive knowledge of “there is”. Though the test did not attempt to assess whether participants have receptive, passive knowledge of the structure, the test, in only 90 seconds, provided evidence of whether there was a deficit in productive knowledge of the skill in a realistic, communicative situation.

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<sup>14</sup> Every native speaker pilot participant used “there is” multiple times. A small number also used subject + have and were advised not to use this variant.

#### 3.2.1.4. Test 6: Knowledge of contextualized meanings of deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures<sup>15</sup>

In this test, participants were instructed to read a passage and to choose, at various points in the passage, which of two words or phrases was correct given the context of use. All items were “deceptive” and required students to go beyond simple L1 to L2 Portuguese-to-English translation.

In order to create the test, IM chats, lesson notes and notes from the preliminary study were used to find vocabulary or surface grammatical items that advanced intermediate to advanced Brazilian learners tended to have difficulty distinguishing between. The items included the following types of structures:

- Verb + preposition combinations (e.g., *call to* versus *call up*)
- Commonly confused words (e.g., *lend* versus *borrow*)
- Surface grammar mistakes (e.g., *other* versus *another*)
- Words that express subtle differences (e.g., *get* versus *take*)
- Countable/uncountable/plural (e.g. *a new* versus *news*)
- Parts of speech mistakes (e.g., *truth* versus *true*)
- Immediate versus stative verbs (e.g., *find out* versus *know*)

Items were chosen to represent everyday spoken English that was basic to communication. The passage was designed so that incorrect responses would show that a participant had a deficit of common linguistic knowledge that could lead to communicative breakdown.

Piloting was conducted to ensure that the test validly measured native-like sophistication of vocabulary and surface grammar structures. Forty native English speakers of mixed nationalities, ages and educational backgrounds took part in the piloting. Each native-speaking participant answered all items on the final version of the test correctly. As with most other tests used in the study, piloting with native and non-native speakers established

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix D

a time limit that was intended to be fair yet strict enough to make automaticity of knowledge a factor.

### **3.2.1.5. Test 7: Grammaticality judgment/text editing test<sup>16</sup>**

A grammaticality judgment test was included in the battery of tests in order to widen the range of knowledge and skills covered on the linguistic tests to include more grammatical knowledge and also to cover the skill of text editing. Aside from grammar items, the test included one lexical item, “stay”, a difficult item for participants because Brazilians generally think of it as a direct one-to-one translation of “ficar”, a Portuguese word that is highly polysemic, and which, in actuality, only corresponds to “stay” in very specific contexts.

For this test, participants were given a text to read, written in the style of an informal personal essay. Although the passage was written in standard, non-academic English, it included complex grammatical structures. Participants were given ten minutes to read the text, to find instances of what they judged to be grammatically incorrect writing, to mark the mistake, and, on the bottom of the sheet, to re-write the error in grammatically correct English. The test thus tested both receptive and productive knowledge.

Provided that participants correctly identified a grammatical error in the text and rewrote the phrase so that it was error free, they received a point. The test did not require that grammatically incorrect phrases be re-written in what piloting suggested was the most common native-like phrasing. It was necessary only that the edit preserve the meaning of the text and be grammatically sound. Learners did not lose points, or gain them, for choosing to edit writing that was already correct or for incorrect edits.

The test was designed to be very challenging for high-level learners. For this purpose, the text was made up of structures, used correctly and incorrectly, that preliminary research had shown to be problematic for intermediate-advanced Brazilian learners. Nevertheless,

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix E

all grammatical structures on the test are commonly covered in intermediate-advanced grammatical textbooks. The structures featured on the test were the following:

- Subject/verb word order in embedded questions
- Verb + preposition combination
- The past tense versus present perfect to refer to an occurrence at a specified time in the past.
- *Was going to* or any other acceptable variant to refer to future plans in the past
- Phrasal verb that require gerund complement
- Multi-word verb + preposition combination
- *It*, as a dummy subject pronoun
- *It*, as a dummy object pronoun
- Frequently confused lexical items (“stay”/“ficar”)

The test was added to the linguistic test battery for several reasons. As mentioned above, it was a further measurement of grammatical knowledge. The test was a practical communicative task, measuring functional reading and writing skill, by requiring participants to locate errors and edit them. Finally, the test required participants to have enough working knowledge of grammatical accuracy to allow them to locate incorrect items within a text and correct them. Thus, the test examined active linguistic knowledge, as opposed to tests that examine more passive knowledge; e.g., require test takers to indicate which items on a list are correct or to correct items which had already been indicated as incorrect.

This test was piloted on native speakers (N=20) of a variety of nationalities, ages and educational backgrounds. Of the ten items that survived to be included on the final version, only one item was not located and correctly edited by all native speaker pilot participants. This item, the present perfect versus past tense item, was omitted by two of the native speaker pilot participants.

In contrast to the majority of the other tests, piloting this test with non-native speakers was carried out to ascertain a time limit that would allow participants to access explicit grammatical knowledge that had perhaps not become fully automatized.

### **3.2.2. Other instruments**

Although evaluation of language proficiency (see 3.3.1) was purely quantitative, all other variables were assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively (for details of the study variables, see section 3.3).

The main method of data collection was by structured interview (See Appendix E), which generated the primary source of data for analysis of the independent variables. Interviews provide a deeper understanding of the subjective perceptions of individual learners than Likert scales and numerical questionnaires (Ushioda, 2011: 11-12). Furthermore, interviewing participants allowed for more detailed instructions, the opportunity to clarify questions the participant found ambiguous, as well as the chance to ask previously set follow-up clarifications in the case of vague participant responses.

Additionally, structured, systematic interviews were chosen in order to obtain broad and accurate information about participants' learning histories, backgrounds, beliefs, and motivations (methodology criterion 2), and to make data collection instruments engaging to Brazilian learners (methodology criterion 3). Based on preliminary surveys and past experience of interacting with Brazilian learners, structured, interactive interviews helped ensure that participants interpreted questions consistently. Furthermore, it seemed probable that questionnaires would be met with a response bias, where closed and open questionnaire items were likely to be treated as formal tests in which participants would choose the answer (believed to be) expected of them. In Brazil, tests in the form of pen and paper are closely associated with formal schooling (secondary school and the vestibular (university entrance examination)) where students are expected to perform well. The expectation of response bias was corroborated when many participants during the piloting stage made it clear that they had assumed the questionnaire was a test with set correct and

incorrect answers. Therefore, although questionnaires are often chosen as a quantitative instrument to obtain data on individual differences, it was deemed that structured, systematic interviews would yield more accurate data for the purposes of this study, by eliciting candid responses not only to open questions designed to elicit qualitative data but also to questions whose responses could be quantified.<sup>17</sup> Quantification of qualitative data is a common technique in mixed methods studies (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 269-270).

Interviews were conducted in Portuguese and used a highly structured guide (see Appendix E) to ask the same questions in the same order (with planned follow up/clarification questions) to ensure interviews were conducted in a reproducible manner with all participants. A conscious attempt was made not to lead participants and to ask a mixture of open and closed questions in order to create an atmosphere that, despite the structured nature of the interview, had at least some measure of conversational feel.

It should be noted that both questionnaires and interviews involve commonly understood limitations of self-report data. In the present study, this became apparent in the piloting stage for the questionnaire, which it appeared could lead to social desirability bias: deliberate distortion of the truth either to please the researcher or simply to gain a more positive evaluation (Segrin and Flora, 2011: Appendix Page 1). However, this did not seem to be the case in the piloting of structured interviews. In a Brazilian context, where participants are generally forthcoming regarding most personal issues, face-to-face interviews offer an advantage over questionnaires which were more likely to be considered academic “bureaucratic” forms. During the preliminary study, interview prompts seemed to encourage students to collaborate in an honest fashion, with participants often openly discussing weaknesses such as poor study habits or lack of effort.

A 7-point Likert scale learner attitudes and beliefs questionnaire (Appendix G) was, however, used as a more traditional quantitative measure and support for the interview. Questionnaire items were, for the most part, adapted from items used in previous studies

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<sup>17</sup>Such as questions about time spent with a particular resource, and yes/no questions regarding a particular learning strategy/behaviour.

on beliefs and motivation, e.g. Noels et al.'s (2000) language learning orientations scale. The questionnaire was considered useful for the purposes of the current study for several reasons. Firstly, it allowed for the comparison of results between independent studies. From piloting it seemed likely that there would be ceiling and floor effects for several adapted Likert scale items designed to measure positive and negative forms of motivation as well as attitudes such as attributions of learner success and failure. Adapted questionnaire items that were unable to show distinctions between groups were potentially valuable in establishing that CTLs and FASILs were similar in that they had motivations and beliefs previously associated with successful learners. Furthermore, adapted questionnaire items from previous studies were a means to reveal whether the participants in the present study represented groups of learners that were distinct from participants in previous studies in terms of motivation, beliefs, strategies and autonomy, a finding which was thought likely given that the previous studies focused on populations of learners who studied English as a required course in primary/secondary school or as a pre-requisite/degree requirement in university.

The attitudes and beliefs questionnaire also included a number of original questions devised specifically to evaluate target variables of this study. These included items to probe intentional learning behaviour, one item that addressed beliefs about the centrality of the classroom to language learning, and one item that dealt with autonomous behaviour in non-language learning situations.

### **3.3. Variables**

#### **3.3.1. Linguistic knowledge (Dependent variable):**

- 1) Reading comprehension of literal meaning.
- 2) Reading comprehension of figurative meaning.
- 3) Timed narrative writing -- Lexical resource
- 4) Timed narrative writing – Grammatical range and accuracy
- 5) Automatic, productive knowledge of the grammatical structure “there is”

- 6) Knowledge of subtle differences in use of contextualized, paired lexical and grammatical structures.
- 7) Productive and receptive grammatical knowledge as judged by ability to recognize and edit contextualized grammatical errors.

Language proficiency was quantitatively analysed using scores from the linguistic tests described in section 3.2.1. For the purposes of RQ 4.a, principal components analysis was conducted which found the tests loaded onto a common factor that explained approximately 71% of variance in test scores (See Chapter 4, Quantitative findings). This factor is referred to in the study as Language Proficiency.

### **3.3.2 Independent variables**

#### **3.3.2.1. Motivation**

The present study used categories of motivation based on Ryan and Deci's (2000, 61-62) typology of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation types, first developed as part of Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT) (1985). SDT was described in detail in the literature review and represents a key aspect of the theoretical framework that underpins the present study.

Ryan and Deci (2000) define four types of extrinsic motivation. Two of these, *external regulation* and *introjected regulation*, are collectively referred to here as "external extrinsic motivation", motivation associated with non-internalised, externally controlled behaviour. The other two types of extrinsic motivation, *identified* and *integrated regulation*, are self-determined and linked with autonomous, self-regulated behaviour. Here, these are referred to as "internal extrinsic motivation". The final type of motivation in SDT is intrinsic motivation, the motivation to learn for the pleasure of it, rather than to gain an instrumental benefit, even one that is personally valued. For the purpose of clarity, in this study, "motivation" will substitute "regulation" in the names of the SDT categories. Thus "introjected regulation" will be referred to as "introjected motivation", and so forth. The SDT motivation subtypes are defined below:

- a) **External motivation (external extrinsic motivation)** – the pursuit of learning because it satisfies an external demand or will bring with it an externally imposed reward.
  
- b) **Introjected motivation (external extrinsic motivation)** – the pursuit of a skill or knowledge because it is valued by society and therefore increases the learner’s social status or self-esteem.
  
- c) **Identified motivation (internal extrinsic motivation)** – the pursuit of a skill or knowledge because it is an essential part of an activity or life goal that is highly valued by the learner.
  
- d) **Integrated motivation (internal extrinsic motivation)** – the pursuit of a skill or knowledge that is valued because it is viewed as an essential aspect of the learner’s self-image. This type of motivation is distinct from intrinsic motivation in that it is tied to the real life experiences of the learner. However, it is just as self-determined.
  
- e) **Intrinsic motivation** – the pursuit of knowledge or of a skill for the pure joy of learning, unrelated to any instrumental value.

In the Likert scale attitudes and beliefs questionnaire (Appendix G), items dealing with the SDT motivation sub-types were based on Noels et al.’s (2000) language learning orientations scale, which itself is an adaptation of Deci and Ryan’s SDT. As previously mentioned in this chapter, questionnaire items allowed comparison of present study participants with participants in previous studies, and also the attempt to establish a baseline similarity between FASILs and CTLs in terms of positive and autonomous motivation.

As previously noted, structured interview questions were designed to allow for analysis of fine-grained distinctions between self-motivated, successful learners. Specific questions on motivation were asked to all participants in a systematic fashion and answers analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Responses to the key interview question, “*What is your number one motivation for learning English*”, were classified into the broad categories of intrinsic, internal extrinsic, and external extrinsic motivation and thereby quantified and used in statistical analyses. The details of responses to this and several other interview questions dealing with motivation were analysed by qualitative methods, to support and supplement the quantitative findings.

### **3.3.2.2. Learner behaviour**

#### **3.3.2.2.1 Use of informal sources of English**

Previous research has shown that the use of informal sources is often associated with effective learning (Bialystok, 1981; Pickard, 1995; Wong and Nunan, 2011; Sockett, 2014) and autonomous learning behaviour (Spratt, Humphreys and Chan, 2002). New technologies and the means of communication that go along with them, specifically Internet technology and computer mediated communication (CMC), have afforded deeper engagement with syntactic and lexical structures than was available previously (Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne, 2008; Toffoli and Sockett, 2010) and have been shown to lead to the development of personalised transnational English user identities (Black, 2006; Lam, 2006; Kuure, 2011; Sockett, 2014).

The present study looked broadly and in-depth at participants’ use of informal sources, including Internet news sites, blogs, video blogs, social media, and other Internet sites, English language music, English language television and film (both downloaded and watched on televisions/in cinemas), books and video games.

A number of interview questions regarding specific behaviour with informal sources were designed to lead to responses that could subsequently be quantified into dichotomous (yes/no) variables or which were numerical, and therefore already quantitative. Below are

several example questions that provided data that could be quantified for the purpose of statistical analysis. The questions have been translated from Portuguese and are therefore in italics.

- *Do you sometimes watch English language television/films in the original without subtitles?*
- *Do you sometimes sing while looking at lyrics?*
- *Are you a member of a social media site?*
- *Are you a regular (at least once per week) player of any kind of English language video games?*

The following questions were developed with the goal of supplementing the quantitative data by eliciting focused but elaborated responses regarding use of informal sources:

- *Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it?*
- *How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English?<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>18</sup>These two questions were asked five times in modified form after sets of quantitative questions about each of the five media sources the study focused on.

### 3.3.2.2.2 Productive versus receptive activities in learning English

As was the case with other variables, relative experience with productive and receptive activities was evaluated with both quantitative and qualitative data. The productive versus receptive variable was considered important to explore based on piloting of the structured interview, work on the silent period by Postovsky (1974), evidence from the Sockett group studies (2014) and from the Benson and Chik (2010) case studies. These suggested that when modern learners use informal sources, they often begin their learning trajectories with receptive, non-interactive activities. If this were the case with the FASILs, it would likely mean a fundamental difference between FASILs and CTLs in the way they begin learning and practicing English. Most language school franchises in Brazil – including CCAA, Yazigi, Brasas, Fisk, and Cultura Inglesa – not only advertise themselves as communication driven, but also emphasize speaking from the earliest levels.

With regard to SLA theory, as was noted in the literature review, Postovsky (1974) referred to the early practice of spoken structures before they have been acquired as potentially problematic for L2 learning. Postovsky suggested that an initial “silent period” (Postovsky, 1974) may result in more accurate and native-like acquisition, in part because of a diminution of learner dialect in input. Nevertheless, several influential theories hold productive use of the language (e.g., The Output Hypothesis: Swain, 2005) and face-to-face interaction (e.g., The Interaction Hypothesis: Long, 1996) to be vital to effective language learning and do not place any restriction on these in terms of early learning. According to Ellis, the idea that “opportunity to interact is central to developing second language proficiency” (2008a: 4) is generally accepted in SLA. If FASILs and CTLs indeed report different levels of productive and receptive practice it may lead to insights into the importance of early interaction with peers and/or whether an initial “silent period” may be advantageous for learners.

The following interview question was used to evaluate the relative use of productive versus receptive activities by the two groups:

*During your English development, what approximate percentage of your practices involved receptive activities (reading, listening) and what percentage involved productive activities (writing, speaking)?*

There are clear limitations involved in using such estimates as data. However, the study did not intend to gain an exact measurement of productive versus receptive practice. This would be impossible in any context except, perhaps, acquisition that goes on in the classroom. Nevertheless, comparing two relatively large samples of learners, significant statistical differences in answers to this question would provide evidence of group differences. Other interview questions that touched on types of practice in formal and informal learning were also taken into account when evaluating this variable.

### **3.3.2.2.3 Use of intentional learning behaviour**

The structured interview investigated whether participants intentionally attempted to improve their English out of class, and how they did this. It should be noted, however, that measuring intentional learning behaviour is problematic in that the distinction between intentional – involving a “deliberate attempt to learn” -- and incidental learning -- involving “an absence of intentionality to learn” -- is not cut and dried (Ellis, 2008b: 444-445). With regard to the hazy distinction between intentional and incidental learning, as touched on in the literature review, learners may engage with informal sources of English primarily for pleasure without employing any conscious learning strategies, but may still be aware that such behaviour results in learning (Sockett, 2014; Benson, 2011a). Furthermore, a potential problem with self-report data is that learners may not realize they are engaging in intentional learning behaviour if that behaviour has become second nature to them. Similarly, according to Tomlin and Villa (1994) one may pay attention to linguistic details without being aware of this. At the same time, when learners are engaged in intentional

learning, they may incidentally acquire structures they are not paying attention to (Krashen, 1981).

The aim of the study with regard to this variable was limited to finding out what learners consciously did out-of-class with the purpose of practicing and learning English and, in particular, what specific conscious and/or planned behaviours/strategies learners engaged in with informal sources with the purpose of acquiring linguistic knowledge.

The following questions were analysed quantitatively to assess the intentional learning behaviour variable. The first five were part of the structured interview and the final three were included in the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire:

1. *What do you do most often when you come across a new vocabulary item while reading or listening?*
  - a. *Skip it*
  - b. *Either write it down and find out the meaning later or find out the meaning right away*
  - c. *Try to understand it by the context*
2. *Do you sometimes use Internet English teaching sites (either written material, video material or podcast classes)?*
3. *Do you sometimes watch English language television/films with English subtitles?*
4. *Do you regularly (several times a month) look up the lyrics to English language music?*
5. *Do you regularly (several times a month) use an English language music translation site or look up the meaning to music lyrics in a dictionary?*

6. *When I learn a new vocabulary item, I try to find out all its different uses and if it is formal or informal. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating “never” and 7 indicating “all the time”.*
7. *I write down new words I hear or read and look at them regularly to try to learn them. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating “never” and 7 indicating “all the time”?*
8. *I purposefully look for the opportunity to practice new words. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating “never” and 7 indicating “all the time”?*

In addition to the above questions that were analysed quantitatively, the following question was devised to generate qualitative data related to intentional learning behaviour:

1. *Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?*

### **3.3.2.3. Learner beliefs and attitudes**

#### **3.3.2.3.1 Beliefs about the controllability of learner success**

Variables relating to language learner beliefs were measured both by Likert scale questionnaire items and by structured interview questions.

The first variable that the study evaluated were beliefs about the controllability of learner success (Weiner, 1986), or participants’ “locus of control” (Rotter, 1975), a variable, introduced in the literature review in relation to Attributions Theory, which has been associated with active, successful learners (Dickinson, 1995). Two items on the questionnaire were used to quantitatively assess this variable:

1. *How much do you agree with the statement, “anybody can learn a language well if he puts in the right amount of effort?” Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree*
2. *Language learning ability is crucial to be able to succeed at learning English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

As with other items on the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire, Likert scale items tapping beliefs concerning the controllability of learner success, while potentially limited in their ability to make distinctions between relatively successful, self-motivated learners, also served the purpose of establishing that the participants in both groups of the study were relatively active, independent learners. Structured interview questions were used to more specifically gauge participant beliefs. The following question sought to directly address beliefs about the controllability of language learner success:

*In your opinion, what is the most important reason that some learners of English in Brazil who are not limited by time and money have great success in learning English?*

Answers to this question were assigned to one of two categories: **Internal** or **External**, where the former corresponded to beliefs that success in language learning is controllable and internally driven (effort, motivation) and the second corresponded to beliefs that success in language learning is dependent on factors that are beyond the control of the learner (innate ability, quality of instruction). These data were quantified into a dichotomous variable (Internal/External).

### **3.3.2.3.2 International posture/international focus (internal/external)**

International posture and international focus are too separate, but closely related variables. International posture is a construct introduced by Yashima (2002). It was measured quantitatively by two questionnaire items adapted from two items from Yashima and

Zenuk-Nishide's (2008) own diagnostic tool. As was the case with other questionnaire items, items regarding international posture served not only to test possible differences between FASILs and CTLs, but also to verify similarities compared with previous study samples. In the case of international posture, the items were originally created to use with Japanese secondary school English students.

As noted in the literature review, international posture as defined by Yashima is a broad concept that refers to a general "desire to relate to the international community" (Yashima, 2009). Its constituent parts: 1) an interest in or (openness to) interaction with foreigners, 2) interest in international vocational or leisure activities, 3) interest in foreign affairs may indicate different types of connection with the international community that in fact vary from highly personalised (e.g., a transnational identity – see Lam, 2006) to purely instrumental and externally imposed. However, despite the construct's broad meaning, international posture, as theorized by Yashima (2009), is connected with higher motivation and more active learners, regardless of the specific nature of the learner's international perspective.

Therefore, to supplement the international posture questionnaire items, a variable influenced by international posture, but referred to here as "international focus", was assessed through interview questions. Like international posture, it deals broadly with participant focus, or interest, in life abroad, but, unlike international posture, it is not conceived of as necessarily demonstrating positive motivation to learn English. The purpose of investigating international focus was simply to be able to draw a distinction between participants who showed, in their responses, some interest in the international community and those who did not. For quantitative purposes, participants were judged to have an international focus if in at least one of their answers to the following three interview questions they explicitly linked English learning to contact with non-Brazilians abroad, understanding of foreign cultures, the desire to live or work abroad, or the desire to transcend national identity.

The questions that were used in evaluating international focus were the following:

- *What is the best thing about knowing English?*
- *In what situation in the future do you imagine yourself speaking English?*
- *What is your number one motivation to learn English?*

All three questions elicit responses revealed learners' feelings about achievement and benefits gained from English-language acquisition that could be focused locally or globally. Responses to only one of these three questions needed to be focused globally to qualify a participant as having an international focus. Thus, the threshold for international focus was purposely set low.

The present study considered that there was a qualitative difference between an international focus generated by a personally generated interest in the world outside Brazil (e.g., the desire to transcend national identity) and an international focus resulting from an interest in obtaining externally granted rewards (e.g., financial benefit from international clients). In the qualitative analysis of questions dealing with primary motivation and perceived benefits of knowing English, responses that showed an internally generated international focus were categorized differently from those that suggested an externally generated international focus. Responses that suggested an internally generated international focus were associated with integrated motivation. Responses that showed an externally generated international focus were associated with external motivation.

#### **3.3.2.3.3 Beliefs about the centrality of formal language learning to second language acquisition**

The above variable has not previously been studied in the literature on SLA to the same extent or depth as the preceding variables. One possible explanation for this, as discussed in the literature review, is an implicit acceptance by many researchers in the SLA field that formal language learning is indeed central to second language acquisition. Nevertheless, several studies including Murray, Fujishima and Uzuka (2014), Wong and Nunan (2011)

and Lam (2006), demonstrate that the belief that language learning is not restricted to the classroom may be associated with more effective and/or autonomous learners. In addition, Benson and Chik (2010: 75) suggest that as learner interaction with informal sources becomes a key aspect of the learner identity, the future role for classroom learning may become more auxiliary to “autonomous forays” online. For the purposes of the present study, measuring learner beliefs about the centrality of the classroom to acquisition was important, not only to distinguish between the two groups, but also to distinguish between participants within the separate groups. For instance, some FASIL participants may have considered the classroom to be the most important domain of language learning regardless of whether the bulk of their learning had occurred independently of this context.

One item was included in the Likert scale attitudes and beliefs questionnaire to measure this variable. It was created specifically for this study:

*Good teachers, textbooks, and other resources are necessary to achieving success in learning English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

This variable was also analysed using information that emerged in the interviews. The following question was also informative regarding participant beliefs about the centrality of formal learning to English acquisition:

*What is the most important resource for learning English including all informal (television, internet, reading, music, etc.) and formal (school, teacher, etc.) sources?*

The responses were analysed quantitatively in terms of a dichotomous variable (formal versus informal). Specific details of the responses were considered in the qualitative analysis.

The final question of the interview yielded rich qualitative data that, while it did not directly probe participant beliefs regarding the centrality of formal education to language

acquisition, was intended to give key insight into the psychological impact of formal versus informal learning experiences:

*What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?"*

#### **3.3.2.4. Aspects of autonomy**

As discussed in the literature review, the many different models of language-learner autonomy can be divided into two broad categories: strong and weak versions (Smith, 2002). Smith proposes that strong versions of autonomy consider that learners are naturally equipped to be autonomous and only need to be placed in the right learning context to exercise that autonomy. This study sees the strong version of autonomy as linked to aspects of language-learner autonomy emphasized by early theorists in the field such as Holec (1981) and Dickinson (1987) that consider control, independence, and personalization of the learning experience to be essential. The weak version of autonomy emphasizes the need for explicit autonomy training. This study likewise makes the distinction between strong and weak models, but further considers those, which hold the role of the teacher in facilitating autonomy to be essential, to be weak versions since they to some degree assume that the student must yield control of his learning in order to eventually become autonomous. Thus, this study sees views of autonomy which advocate "interdependence", conceived of here as the need for collaboration with peers and structured guidance by teachers, as associated with weak rather than strong versions.

Reflectivity is a feature that has been emphasized by a large number of theorists in autonomy including Little (2007) and Dang (2012) for whom it is a vital aspect of the construct. Several recent studies that deal with autonomy and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (e.g., Lee, 2011; Mideros and Carter, 2014) have considered reflectivity an essential aim of autonomy-generating interventions. The present study sees the view that reflectivity is necessarily tied to expert facilitation/training (Little, 2004; Schweinhorst 2003) as weak whereas the belief that reflectivity emerges naturally through use of and independently developed interest in the language as strong.

As Benson (2011a) highlights in his review of learner autonomy in SLA, autonomy is a difficult concept to measure. The present study looked at aspects of collaboration, reflectivity, control, and personalization in a holistic way drawing data from several open questions in the interview that elicited rich responses.

#### **3.3.2.4.1 Collaboration and reflectivity**

Participant responses to open questions concerning learner behaviour with informal sources of English help to clarify the extent of collaboration and reflectivity involved in out-of-class use of English. CTL responses to questions dealing with their formal language learning were helpful in measuring the extent of communicative and collaborative elements that many language schools in Brazil advertise as being central to their methodologies.

#### **3.3.2.4.2 Control of activities and learning acquisition contexts**

Control of activities and learning acquisition contexts was difficult to measure as FASILs, almost by definition, control their learning to a greater extent than do CTLs. Responses to open questions that touched on how self-determined participants' motivation was as well as how they interacted with informal sources gave some clarity to differences between groups in terms of control. One way to measure the autonomous practices of participants was to ask them to estimate the percentage of language acquisition that had been derived from personal, self-directed activities, as opposed to activities that were directed by others. The following question was asked to all participants:

*About what percentage of your knowledge and ability in English comes from contact with English outside of courses, directed by yourself, and what percentage comes from contact directed by schools, private language courses and teachers?*

Clearly data from an estimate question like this was not intended to generate precise, accurate responses. However, piloting showed that the question did elicit ready responses. Thus, the question was seen as providing useful information to compare the groups, providing a measure of verification to the assumed distinction between modes of learning.

In addition, the interviews probed whether learners expanded the number of personal activities that involved English as their learning progressed, thereby indicating independence with English and the confidence to broaden and deepen their use of materials independently.

Participant scores were computed by summing positive responses to questions concerning regular use of the respective media mentioned above.

The final item of the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire dealt with autonomous behaviour in non-language learning situations. This question was designed to further investigate whether FASILs behave autonomously because it is an aspect of their skill set/personality or whether their language learning behaviour is more likely context dependent:

*In my life, not including English learning, I choose my own materials and depend on myself, instead of a teacher, textbook or course (school, university). Answer between 1 and 7 with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

#### **3.3.2.4.3 Personal identification of purpose for language use**

Personal identification of purpose for language learning was assessed by various interview questions. To an extent this variable is linked with the internalization of participant motivation, discussed above.

Qualitative data analysis also looked at how motivation to learn changed over time and whether this motivation seemed to have been influenced by personal experience. Further insight into the latter was gained by looking at the degree to which learning goals and motivation, as measured by responses to the interview question, “*What is your number one motivation to learn English?*”, were linked with real-life benefits of knowing English, as

measured by responses to the interview question, “*What is the best thing about knowing English?*”

### **3.3.2.5 Time spent learning English**

Students were asked both how many years they had been studying English and how many (estimated) hours they had contact with informal sources.

To verify time spent learning, which was initially checked on the screening forms (see table 2, section 3.1.2.) participants were asked the following questions in their interviews (translated from Portuguese):

*How old were you when you began to progress in your learning from the basic level?*

*How many years have you spent learning English since you began to progress from a basic level?*

The total number of years spent learning English was analysed quantitatively on the basis of responses to the interview questions rather than the screening form. If there was a discrepancy between the screening form response and the interview response, this was clarified during the interview.

All participants were asked the following question to gauge their contact with informal sources:

*Estimate how many hours per day (or per week) you have contact with English outside of school or your English course (this can include speaking, watching television or listening to music, using the Internet, playing video games, and reading books?)*

As previously noted with other questions involving estimates, this question was not intended to generate precise, accurate responses. Instead, the question was seen as

important in gaining useful information with which to compare groups and individuals by their use of informal sources. The question was asked to all participants at the same point in their interview. Such self-report questions on time spent with informal sources are common (e.g. Kusyk and Sockett, 2012; Sockett and Toffoli, 2012), most likely because, as was the case in this study, they are arguably often the only viable option to gather such information.

### **3.3.2.6 Learner histories**

This variable is associated with RQ 1: *What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?*

To answer this question, analysis was made of qualitative data from interview questions that asked participants directly about the conditions that led to their language learning. The present study considers differences in learner histories between the two groups as important information in uncovering any possible peculiarities regarding the learning paths of FASILs.

### **3.3.2.7 Gender and age**

Gender and age were also considered as independent variables in the present study.

Participants' age was first verified on the screening form and then confirmed with interview questions. The gender of participants was recorded on the first day of testing.

## **3.4. Data collection**

Participant recruitment followed the same procedure at each institution. First, the researcher contacted at least one director of each school/university. A date and times were set for the researcher to come to the school/university and meet with two separate groups

of student volunteers (day and evening groups) who had indicated interest in the study<sup>19</sup>. The researcher then, in Portuguese, briefly explained the purpose of the study, and that he was looking for volunteers who were current learners of English and who considered themselves to be, at least, advanced-intermediate-level users of English. He explained that English users who had learned English outside of a formal learning environment were also welcome to participate. Participants were given the self-report evaluation protocol to check their own estimates of their level against the standards of the protocol. From each initial group at each institution, a smaller group of volunteers, who believed that they were qualified participants, returned on a specified date to fill out the written part of the study in a classroom/lecture hall provided by the institution. All classrooms were equipped with audio-visual equipment, which was necessary for the narrative writing test. Instructions were given in Portuguese. This written testing phase consisted of the CTL/FASIL screening form, the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire, and the written linguistic tests. The total time for this phase of testing was approximately 75 minutes. All participants left contact information, including email address, *Facebook* names and phone numbers on their screening forms so that interview times could be arranged later with qualifying participants.

The second phase of testing consisted of the structured interview plus the 90 second oral production test of the grammatical structure “there is”. The total time for the second day of testing per participant was between 40 and 75 minutes, with an average completion time of about 50 minutes. Interviews were conducted individually. The participant entered a classroom in which the interviewer was stationed with an interview guide and an audio recorder. Generally, interviews took place in the same week as written testing; but in some cases interviews were given the following week. Since there were often too many participants and insufficient hours in one day to accommodate every participant, classrooms for interview sessions had to be booked for two or three days at most of the institutions.

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<sup>19</sup>Group sized varied from approximately 30-50 volunteers

32 FASILs and 39 CTLs participated in the interview phase of the research. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese by the interviewer. Interviewees were asked to respond in Portuguese. If participants insisted on responding in English, this was permitted; however, the interviewer continued to ask questions in Portuguese. This was done in order to ensure the uniformity and clarity of interview questions.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. In order to facilitate data analysis, the transcript of each interview was used to create a participant interview file in which participants' full original statements were written under the relevant interview question headings. Each participant was given a pseudonym.

### **3.5. Data analysis**

#### **3.5.1. Dependent variables – Linguistic ability (Tests)**

In section 3.2.1, all linguistic tests were described in detail. In this section their respective scoring systems will be described. All quantitative data were entered into the IBM SPSS 21 software program.

##### **3.5.1.1. Tests 1 and 2: Comprehension of literal (Test 1) and formulaic expressions (Test 2)<sup>20</sup>**

For each of these tests, participants had to answer a total of 28 items. The number of items participants answered correctly out of the 28 total items was entered into the SPSS software program for each of the tests.

##### **3.5.1.2. Tests 3 and 4: Chaplin retelling test – Timed narrative writing lexical resource (Test 3) and Timed narrative writing grammatical range and accuracy (Test 4)**

As explained in section 3.2.1.2, these tests were scored from 1-9, based on the descriptor bands 1-9 for two categories: Lexical resource (referred to in this study as test 3) and

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<sup>20</sup>Martinez and Murphy, (2011)

Grammatical range and accuracy (referred to in this study as Test 4), taken from the writing portion of the IELTS general test version. Two experienced, professional IELTS assessors participated in a three-hour norming session, using the descriptors as a reference to mark approximately three dozen essays that had been written by both native English speakers and non-native English speakers during piloting. In the norming session, assessors compared marks, discussing why they thought their marks matched the descriptor bands. By the end of the three-hour session, assessors believed they were interpreting the bands similarly (inter-rater reliability was calculated at the data analysis stage – see below). Throughout this process, the researcher observed and attempted to encourage discussion between the raters. However, the researcher did not give his opinion on the sample essays.

Each assessor took copies of the essays home, which were coded with a number to represent each participant. The essays were separately marked by each rater and then returned to the researcher. Thus, there were two sets of marks for the lexical resource category (one from assessor 1 and one from assessor 2); and likewise, two sets of mark for the grammatical range and accuracy category. The mean of the two assessors' marks was then calculated for each category using SPSS software. These means served as the participants' total scores for Tests 3 and 4 and were later used as data in statistical tests to address the research questions. Inter-rater reliability was calculated for the assessors' marks. This procedure will be described in the quantitative data analysis section of this chapter.

### **3.5.1.3. Test 5: Knowledge of contextualized meanings of deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures**

For this test, participants had to answer a total of 22 items. The number of items participants answered correctly out of the 22 total items was entered into the SPSS program for analysis.

#### **3.5.1.4. Test 6: Grammaticality judgment/text editing test**

For this test, participants had to locate as many mistakes as they could find within a passage. Participants were directed to mark these mistakes and then, at the bottom of the sheet, rewrite them so that they would fit correctly within the text. Participants were given a point for every mistake they found and successfully edited. In the text, there were a total of 10 errors, as determined through piloting with native speaker participants (discussed in sub-section 3.2.1.5). Participants gained a point for every error they found and successfully edited. Their total number of points was entered as their score for this test into the SPSS software for analysis.

#### **3.5.1.5. Test 7: Productive knowledge of the grammatical structure “there is”**

The test of productive knowledge of the structure “there is” was assessed in a different way to the other tests. As discussed in sub-section 3.2.1.3, participants were judged either to have productive knowledge of “there is” or not. Participants, therefore, were not given a score, but rather a yes or no, with “yes” indicating that they had productive knowledge of the structure and “no” indicating that they did not. The “yes” and “no” responses were quantified as numerical values and entered into the SPSS software for analysis.

### **3.5.2. Data analysis – Independent variables**

As discussed in section 3.2.2, independent variables dealing with learner motivation, learning behaviour, learner beliefs, and learner autonomy, as well as variables relating to time spent learning, gender, and age, were assessed using three instruments:

- A structured interview
- A 7-point Likert scale attitudes and beliefs questionnaire
- A screening form for demographic information

#### **3.5.2.1. –7-point Likert scale attitudes and beliefs questionnaire**

A 7-point Likert scale learner attitudes and beliefs questionnaire was used as a support for the structured interview. As explained in section 3.2.2, the questionnaire was used as a

secondary source of data, with the structured interview being the main method. The majority of items on the questionnaire were sourced from previous studies<sup>21</sup> by well-known researchers who administered the items on participant samples from a different population to participants of the present study. Additionally, the questionnaire included a number of original questions written specifically to measure key variables in this study. These included items that probed intentional learning behaviour, one item that addressed beliefs about the centrality of the classroom to language learning, and one item that dealt with autonomous behaviour in non-language learning situations. For the full attitudes and beliefs questionnaire see Appendix G.

Participant scores were entered into SPSS software. Statistical tests conducted with this data will be discussed in section 3.5.3.

### **3.5.2.2. Structured interview**

As discussed in depth in section 3.2.2., the structured interviews were of primary importance in evaluating the independent variables. The interviews were used to gather both numerical data, such as time spent with informal sources and quantified qualitative data, such as yes/no questions regarding learning behaviour with informal sources, and also qualitative data that provided a deeper understanding of the quantitative data including detailed information about interaction with informal sources, learner history trajectories, and the development of learner beliefs.

A structured interview guide (See Appendix E) was used in the interview. The interviewer followed the order of questions as listed in the guide as closely as possible, although in rare cases the flow of the interview necessitated a different order. Based on piloting, follow-up/clarification questions were also set. Although many questions in the interview elicited short answers and the interview could sometimes take on an official, staccato tone, care was taken to make the participant feel that a genuine response about his/her experiences

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<sup>21</sup> Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide, 2008; Dörnyei (2005); Taguchi et al. (2009); Noels et al (2001)

was valuable to the research. Open questions were interspersed with short answer questions. A full transcript of a structured interview can be seen in Appendix F.

### **3.5.3. Quantitative data analysis**

#### **3.5.3.1. Quantitative data analysis: RQ 2**

RQ 2 asked whether there was a significant difference between FASILs and CTLs in terms of language proficiency. Both groups were assessed using the seven different linguistic tests described earlier (Section 3.2.1).

One of the most common ways to statistically analyse difference between groups is the independent samples *t*-test (Morgan et al., 2012). This test may be used to determine whether or not the means of the two groups are statistically significantly different from each other. Two main assumptions when carrying out *t*-tests are that the dependent variable (test result) is normally distributed and the sample size is large enough (generally 30 or larger) (Field, 2013). Both sample sizes in this study were greater than 30. The assumption of normality was tested for each group using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results are presented in Chapter 4 (Table 3). The test showed that most of the linguistic tests had a non-normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ).

Considering these factors, the Mann-Whitney U test was chosen as the method of analysis instead of the *t*-test for all continuous dependent variables, which represented six of the seven linguistic tests applied. The Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test, considered to be the best alternative to the independent samples *t*-test when one or more of the assumptions are not met (Pallant, 2010). In addition, non-parametric tests are robust techniques that are generally preferred in situations where outliers are expected (Ramsey and Schafer, 2002). Within the Mann-Whitney U Test, the scores for the dependent variables are converted to ranks. The test then determines whether there is a significant difference in ranks between groups.

Unlike the other linguistic tests, the “there is” test was not scored numerically but as a dichotomous (acquired/non-acquired) categorical variable. The chi-squared test, considered to be a good statistical test for analysing two categorical variables (Morgan et al., 2012), was therefore used to indicate whether there was a significant association between mode of learning (FASILs or CTLs) and productive acquisition of the “there is” structure. In order for the chi-squared test to be significant, the significance ( $p$ ) value must be smaller than .05 (Morgan et al., 2012). Since the data were assessed by a 2x2 contingency table, Yates’ Correction for Continuity, which compensates for the overestimate of the chi-squared value when used in a 2 X 2 table (Pallant, 2010), was computed.

Finally, an inter-rater reliability analysis was assessed for the Chaplin Retelling Test scores -- “Lexical Resource” category and “Grammatical Range and Accuracy” category – given by two raters for category. The analysis provided a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, as well as an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC). Cronbach’s Alpha is a measure of internal consistency while the ICC coefficient represents the proportion of variance owed to the differences in the participants as opposed to differences related to the raters (Wuensch, 2013).

### **3.5.3.2. Quantitative data analysis: RQ 3**

The third research question was aimed at establishing whether there was a significant difference between FASILs and CTLs in terms of variables relating to motivation, autonomy, learning behaviour and learner beliefs.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used for continuous and ordinal data because there was a likelihood of outliers and, as already noted, non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U test are robust techniques that are generally preferred to  $t$ -tests when outliers are expected (Ramsey and Schafer, 2002). Also when compared with the independent samples  $t$ -test, the Mann–Whitney U test is recommended when the data are ordinal, as was the case for the majority of the target variables of this study (Hair et al., 2007).

The Chi-squared test was used to assess differences between FASILs and CTLs in their responses to questions measuring categorical or dichotomous variables dealing with learning strategies/behaviour, motivation, beliefs and aspects of autonomy. The analysis was carried out in the same way as the analysis of scores on the *there is* test, discussed above. The most important assumption for the chi-squared test is that the minimum expected cell frequency is not violated: at least 80% of cells must have frequencies of 5 or more for this assumption to be satisfied. For analysis of the scores on the tests addressing this research question, when the minimum cell frequency assumption was violated, Fisher's Exact Probability Test, the general recommended alternative in such situations (Ramsey and Schafer, 2002), was used.

The results of the tests used to analyse data relating to RQ 3 will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Quantitative findings.

#### **3.5.3.3. Quantitative data analysis: RQ 4**

The fourth research question asked which factors most contribute to the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills for all participants, as well as for each group (FASILs or CTLs) considered separately. Factors considered as possible predictors of language ability were mode of learning, time spent learning English, gender, age, as well as sub-variables related to motivation, learner behaviour, and learner beliefs.

In order to answer RQ 4, a factor analysis was necessary in order to obtain an overall language proficiency score. This was necessary to reduce the test data of the six linguistic tests scored on a numerical scale to a smaller number of factors, with minimum loss of information (Hair et al., 2007). For the factor analysis carried out in this study, the goal was to reduce the tests down to one factor.

An important aspect to consider when running a factor analysis is correlations between variables; in this case correlations between the different tests used in this study to determine language proficiency. Given that the variables were all intended to measure

aspects of the same underlying ability – language proficiency – relatively strong correlations between variables were expected (Field, 2013). The minimum value of the correlation coefficient for related variables should be at least .3 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). While correlations between tests were to be expected, very high correlations were not desirable, as they would imply that the tests did not measure distinct aspects of overall English knowledge and skills. Such high correlations could lead to problems of multicollinearity (Field, 2013). There is no standard value to indicate a high correlation coefficient; however, various statisticians including Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) state that values close to 1 are generally not desirable.

Before running a factor analysis it was necessary to check the suitability of the data for the analysis. Two statistical measures were conducted. These were Bartlett's test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. A KMO measure that is close to 1 indicates good adequacy of data. The minimum value of the index should be .5 (Field, 2013). Bartlett's Sphericity test calculates a  $\chi^2$  coefficient to verify existing correlations. The test is considered significant if the statistical significance value is smaller than .05 (Pett, Lackey and Sullivan, 2003).

After verifying that the results of these two tests were satisfactory, the factor analysis was carried out. In order to do this, it was necessary to decide on a method of factor extraction. Principal component analysis was chosen as it is generally considered an effective tool for simple data reduction (Field, 2013). The procedure for determining the number of factors that would be retained was based on the Kaiser criterion, which recommends factors that have eigenvalues greater than 1 (Field, 2013). The factor rotation method that was chosen was orthogonal rotation, a method that minimizes the complexity of the components and simplifies the interpretation of results.

Following the factor analysis, SPSS was used to generate a Pearson correlation coefficients matrix between the dependent variable of overall language proficiency and the independent variables evaluated quantitatively to address RQ 3. Correlations were calculated for the entire group of participants, as well as for each individual group (FASILs

and CTLs). There were two purposes for these analyses: Firstly, they guided the multiple regression analysis by indicating which variables had high correlations with language proficiency and therefore would be good choices to explore in the multiple regression. Secondly, bivariate correlations between the dependent variable of overall language proficiency and independent variables was the best method to look for within group correlations between variables and language proficiency. This was because multiple regression analyses could not be carried out separately for the two groups (FASILs and CTLs), due to the fact that the sample sizes within each group were too small given the number of variables involved (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2012).

The next step in the data analysis was to carry out a multiple regression to determine which independent variables best predicted language proficiency for the full group of participants.

Several assumptions had to be met before running the regression analysis. The most frequently mentioned in the literature is the absence of multicollinearity (Morgan et al., 2012; Pallant, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). This assumption was checked through the examination of correlation coefficients.

Sample assumptions had to be met before running the regression analysis. The most frequently mentioned in the literature is the absence of multicollinearity (Morgan et al., 2012; Pallant, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). This assumption was checked through the examination of correlation coefficients.

Sample size is also considered to be an issue when carrying out multiple regression analysis (Field, 2013; Hair et al., 2007; Pallant, 2010). The rule of thumb is to have at least 10 cases for each independent variable included as a predictor in the model (Field, 2013). Thus, for the analysis carried out in this research, eight independent variables were considered for the 84 participants. These variables were chosen based on significant values from the Pearson correlation coefficients matrix with regard to the overall group.

Before proceeding with the regression analysis, it was also necessary to check for unusual data points, which often indicate outliers (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012,) as well as influential and leverage cases (Field, 2013) which may affect the precision of the regression model (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). Outliers represent extreme scores, which can influence the parameters of the model. These are indicated by cases with standardized residuals higher than 3 (Field, 2013). Influential and leverage cases were checked with reference to Cook's distance and leverage point values using SPSS software. To indicate that there is negligible influence of the cases on the analysis, the leverage values should be close to 0, and Cook's distance should be smaller than 1 (Field, 2013). The data satisfied these requirements.

A final set of assumptions deals with normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals (Pallant, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). Normality refers to the normal distribution of the residuals and was assessed for this study using both a histogram and P-P Plot. Linearity implies that the independent variables have a linear relationship with the dependent variable. This relationship was checked by plotting unstandardized predicted values against studentized residuals, and analysing the graph. Homoscedasticity was checked by analysing the plot described above, and verifying that the residuals were equally distributed over the predicted values of the dependent variable.

#### **3.5.4. Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data findings are presented in chapters 5 and 6. Findings in Chapter 5 address RQ 1: "What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?"

Chapter 6 presents qualitative data that address RQ 3: "Is there a difference between FASILs and CTLs with regard to variables relating to motivation, learner beliefs, learner behaviour, and autonomy that might account for differences in language proficiency?"

These data support and supplement the quantitative findings regarding RQ 3, which are presented as part of Chapter 4.

### **3.5.4.1. Qualitative data analysis: RQ 1 -- What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?**

An important issue for this research is whether there are special circumstances or innate abilities that make FASILs more likely to engage in effective autonomous learning, and that other learners must be taught, or whether the ability to learn independently with informal sources is possible for most learners given the right conditions. By examining the motivations and circumstances behind the initial progress of FASILs and CTLs, we may better understand how their learning identities take shape, to what extent they are conditioned prior to the onset of learning, or whether it is more likely they develop as a result of the specific learning paths that individual participants follow. A better understanding of the circumstances that lead individuals to become FASILs or CTLs would begin to resolve the question of how relevant the phenomenon of successful, informal acquisition with informal sources is for classroom learning, and how it might be applied or encouraged.

Several specific sub-questions follow from the overarching RQ 1 (and are addressed in Chapter 5, Findings related to RQ 1):

1. When compared to CTLs, is there reason to believe that FASILs begin their learning with different sorts of motivation to learn language?
2. When compared to CTLs, is there reason to believe FASILs begin their learning with unusual intellectual skills or personality traits that may be responsible for their independent learning?
3. Is there a difference between the groups in terms of family encouragement and/or other situational factors present in the lives of participants at an early age?
4. Is there a reason to believe there are differences between groups in attitudes towards learning in general and, specifically, towards foreign cultures at the outset of learning?

### RQ 1 Data Collection

In order to address RQ 1, the analysis looked at the answers to questions formulated with the goal of investigating the conditions that led to initial progress in English language acquisition, from the basic level<sup>22</sup>. Because the study was largely focused on the present, data on the conditions and motivations that originally led to FASIL and CTL learning were limited to responses to a few focused questions specifically formulated to address that particular issue. Furthermore, the data for this section are necessarily self-reported and retrospective. With this in mind, the goal of the data analysis conducted to address RQ 1 is less to reach firm conclusions than to find evidence that will help focus future research on conditions that encourage or discourage acquisition through informal, personalized use of a second language.

The key interview question that addressed RQ 1 was:

***How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?***  
(asked to all participants)

Other questions pertaining to RQ 1 included:

- *Why did you not go to language school?/Why did you stop going so soon?*(question modified depending on participant's information on screening form)

Participants were free to answer these questions with as short or as detailed answers as they wished. After participants responded clearly to the questions the only prompt they were given was “alguma coisa mais?” -- “*anything else?*”.

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<sup>22</sup>The word “basic” corresponds to “um nivel basico” – “a basic level”, the description school administrators who were consulted for this research chose to refer to the level that secondary schools cover with the English classes that are part of their curriculum. This low level of English education in primary/secondary schools is generally accepted. A report by the British Council explicitly confirms this (Data Popular Institute: 2014: 12).

For the principal question related to RQ 1, *“How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?”*, responses were categorized based on motivation subcategories from the SDT typology of Ryan and Deci (2000), described earlier in this chapter and in the literature review. Added insight that influenced category building came from pilot study interviews, my more than a decade of experience with Brazilian language schools and CTLs in Brazil<sup>23</sup>, as well as insights into informal language learning in today’s global environment, as described by Sockett (2014) and others (e.g., Benson and Chik, 2010). Categories were designed to be mutually exclusive, following the guidance of both Weber (1990) and Kuckartz (2014). The present study further followed the guidelines of Kuckartz (2014) in establishing a category of “other” to cover any participants whose reasons for initial progress with English did not fit within planned categories and subcategories. The categories related to the above question are described in detail in Appendix H.

In addition to the categorization of responses into the SDT categories, the details of responses were examined to identify shared common themes; thus, facilitating a more fine-grained understanding of factors connected with motivation to begin learning English.

Categories for responses to the second interview question that addressed RQ 1, *“Why did you not go to language school or, if you went, why did you stop going so soon?”* were informed by the pilot study findings and also by the researcher’s knowledge of the role private language schools play in Brazilian society and, specifically, the lives of middle- to upper-class, professionally oriented young people. Categories were later modified inductively upon review of the transcripts. Once again, categories for responses to this interview question were strictly delineated and intended to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The categories for responses to the interview question regarding reasons for not attending language school are described in detail in Chapter 5, Findings related to RQ 1.

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<sup>23</sup> Kuckartz asserts that previous knowledge of the context of the study is crucial to deductive-inductive category building (2014).

### 3.5.4.2. Qualitative data analysis: RQ 3

RQ 3 was addressed through quantitative and qualitative strands. The findings for the quantitative strand, detailed in Chapter 4, analysed participant responses to questionnaire items and the quantified responses to structured interview questions in order to identify variables that were significantly more associated with FASILs or CTLs (see Tables 11,12, 13, and 14 in Chapter 4, for all the factors that were measured and their p-values).

The qualitative strand addressing RQ 3 assessed in detail the responses to six structured interview questions. These were the following:

1. *What is your number one motivation to learn English?*
2. *What is the best thing about knowing English?*
3. *What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?*
4. *Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books)]<sup>24</sup>? Tell me any details about how you use English language music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books], what you like about it?*
5. *How do you think contact with music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books)] may help you to learn English?*

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<sup>24</sup>This and the following question were asked five times in modified form as the last questions in a set about each of the five media sources the study focused on. The previous questions in the set were short answer and analyzed quantitatively.

6. *Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?*

Responses to other structured interview questions were additionally used to inform the analysis of the above questions. For example, details of responses to the question “*What is the most important resource for learning English including all informal (television, internet, video games, music, books etc. and formal (school, teacher, textbook) sources?*” provided extra insight for the analysis of questions 4-6 above.

The key structured interview question that addressed participant primary motivation was:

*“What is your number one motivation for learning English?”*

In the quantitative analysis, responses to this question were quantified by being placed into three broad categories: intrinsic motivation, external extrinsic motivation, and internal extrinsic motivation. The qualitative analysis examined responses to the “number one motivation” question more closely than did the quantitative analysis by using, once again, the Ryan and Deci (2000) sub-categories, which split the internal extrinsic category into identified and integrated motivation and the external extrinsic category into external motivation and introjected motivation. In the qualitative analysis, the intrinsic motivation category was split into sub-categories: *intellectual* and *aesthetic appeal*, sub-categories that were identified a posteriori during the coding process and that were also used in the analysis of data relating to RQ 1. Responses by participants were categorized as intrinsic motivation (aesthetic appeal) if they emphasized the beauty of language, the fun of learning, or commented on a generalized “love” for the language. Responses were categorized as intrinsic motivation (intellectual appeal) if they emphasized enjoyment or satisfaction in gaining knowledge. The details of responses were analysed to identify common themes within responses and so allowed for a more fine-grained understanding of factors connected with each category of motivation.

The categories used to analyse participants' primary motivation at the time of the interview were the same as those used to address aspects of initial motivation in the analysis of RQ 1. This permitted an analysis of motivation change over time by comparing how participants' motivation to begin learning English had changed by the time of the interview. The categories were ideal because they distinguished between several different types of motivation while bridging two of the key learning factors under investigation -- motivation and learner autonomy.

All participants were asked the interview question on primary motivation in Portuguese at the same point in their interviews. Responses were often as short as one word – “curriculo” – “CV”, though some participants went into considerably more detail. If a participant answered with two separate motivations, the interviewer emphasized that the question asked for “*the number one* motivation” and requested that the participant choose which was indeed the number one or “principal” – “*primary*” motivation.

Several questions were asked in the structured interview to explore participants' practical relationship and attitudes towards English. The key interview question analysed qualitatively was:

*What is the best thing about knowing English?*

The principal goal of this question was to better understand participants' perceptions of the place of English in their day-to-day life, and how these perceptions might be related to what Sockett refers to as the “swift and profound changes” in the role of informal English in the lives of non-native speakers (Sockett, 2014: 6). A related goal was to clarify whether English had a similar relevance to the lives of CTLs as it had to the lives of FASILs. Finally, the question allowed for an analysis of the relationship between the primary motivation of participants to learn English and what they perceived as the real perceived benefits and/or usefulness of knowing English. It was hoped that this would lead to further clarification on whether the practical value of knowing English in the real world influences motivation to learn for FASILs versus CTLs. If the perceived real world benefits of knowing English for

veteran high-level classroom learners did not match their primary motivations to learn the language, it would provide further support for the learner versus acquirer distinction by implying the possibility that some learners compartmentalize English learning and English use.

### **Categories**

The categories for the qualitative analysis of CTL and FASIL responses to the question, “What is the best thing about knowing English?” were the same as those used for the qualitative analysis of primary motivation for learning English and motivation to begin learning English. There were several reasons for this. The first was that the subtlety of the Ryan and Deci (2000) categories adapts well not only to motivation to do an activity, but also to benefits or perceived usefulness of that activity. Secondly, retaining the same categories used for the “primary motivation” question was useful in that it facilitated comparison of responses to the two questions.

Once again, the analysis of this question followed the guidance of Kuckartz (2014) in using categories that were both mutually exclusive and exhaustive. As was the case with category building for other questions, to ensure categories were exhaustive, several sub-categories were again created a posteriori and added to the original skeleton deductive framework. Also, to ensure that there was no overlap between categories, strict classification criteria were followed. A more detailed explanation of the categories used for this question can be found in Chapter 6, Qualitative findings regarding RQ 3.

### **Attitudes towards English and English learning - “Most important learning experience”**

All participants were asked the following question:

*“What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?”*

This interview question and the analysis of responses to it were informed by the principal theories underlying this study. CTLs and FASILs correspond roughly to learners and acquirers in Krashen's (1981) acquisition-learning dichotomy. CTLs correspond to learners who consciously study rules and grammar. FASILs correspond to acquirers who learn through use, generally in naturalistic settings. Participant responses were categorized principally along these lines: whether most important learning experiences happened spontaneously in naturalistic environments or occurred within learning environments that featured conscious learning behaviour which was directed, scripted or programmed. The analysis was further influenced by Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral practice and their assertion that effective learning happens when learners participate in proximity to legitimate communities of expert practitioners (1991: 110). The analysis also looked at how variables associated with learner autonomy and motivation featured in the reported learning experiences. For example, the analysis examined whether participants exerted a degree of "control", mentioned by Benson (2011a) as the key aspect of learner autonomy, in their learning experiences. Additionally, the analysis examined the roles of interdependence and collaboration (Little, 1995), self-reliance (Holec, 1981), and internally generated motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000) in the participants' learning experiences. Finally, Sockett's research (2014), which points to the importance of online and informal learning as well as the global influence of English, influenced the evaluation of responses.

The "most important English learning experience" question attempted to go beyond participants' abstract conceptions of ideal learning, to recollections of learning that had had an impact on their lives. It was hoped that answers would clarify several issues, including the following:

- With regard to CTLs, were out-of-classroom use moments sometimes considered important learning events? If so, what were the features of such moments?

- Which in-class moments did CTLs benefit from that were closed to FASILs? Were conscious learning activities often cited? Were simulated/scripted use experiences seen as impactful? Were classroom moments of unpredictable spontaneous use of the language noted as important learning experiences?
- Though FASILs were not formal learners, did their most important learning experiences demonstrate that they were conscious of their English learning development and that it was important to them?
- What types of out-of-class experiences arise that make positive impacts on English learning?
- With regard to both groups, how often is the use of new technology, i.e., the Internet, involved in the most important experiences?
- With regard to both groups, is there evidence that collaborative learning with peers and guided support by experts make an impact?

The word “*moment*” was chosen to help participants to focus on a specific learning event or activity and to encourage participants to report real-life experiences rather than generalizations. The adjective “*important*” was chosen because it was suitably neutral to apply to either formal or informal learning moments, yet it conveyed the idea that the event should be thought of as consequential.

If participants requested clarification of the question, the adjectives “*signficativo*” – “*significant*” and “*influyente*” – “*influential*”, were used to clarify “*important*”. If participants gave general responses, such as “*English school*” or “*watching television*” rather than the requested specific moment, the interviewer repeated the phrases, “*Estou pedindo um momento específico*”; “*uma coisa que aconteceu só uma vez*” – “*I am asking for a specific*

*moment*”; *“something that happened only once.”* If the participant once again gave a general response, the interviewer accepted this and moved on to the next interview question.

All responses were assigned to one of the following two major categories:

- **Controlled Use**
- **Naturalistic Use**

These categories, along with sub-categories, are explained in more detail in Chapter 6: Qualitative Findings for RQ 3.

### **Learner behaviour with informal sources**

The qualitative analysis of learner behaviour with informal sources examined data from responses to three principal interview questions asked in Portuguese to all participants at the same point in each interview. These questions were the following:

1. *“Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books)]? Tell me any details about how you use English language music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books], what you like about it?”<sup>25</sup>*

*1.A. How do you think contact with music [television/film, video games, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books)] may help you to learn English?*

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<sup>25</sup>Question 1 and its follow up, question 1A., were asked five times in modified form as the last questions in sets of questions for each media source the study focused on. The previous questions in the set were short answer and analysed quantitatively.

2. *Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?*

In contrast to the short answer interview questions analysed quantitatively, questions 1 and 1A were open-ended and designed specifically to elicit a variety of responses. The planned follow up instruction for question 1 was: “*Any details you can give me concerning how you use English music*”(or the particular media source referred to). If the respondent asked for further clarification, the final clarification was, “*Anything you can think of about your relationship with English language music?*”. During responses, the interviewer’s conversation turns were limited to polite neutral conversation markers, e.g. “OK”, clarification requests if the response was unclear, and, when the response was finished, “*Alguma coisa mais?*” – “*anything else?*”

The questions were deliberately open for two reasons: (1) A primary consideration in conducting the interview was not to lead participants and to gain a wide variety of knowledge about a very under-researched type of language learning, which could then be explored with more specificity in subsequent research. Though leaving the question vague may have been responsible for some short and, most likely, incomplete responses, it also encouraged willing participants to “open up” and go into detail about behaviour that would have been difficult to predict given the scarce amount of literature on informal learning and the cutting edge nature of technology connected to informal sources of English in the modern world. (2) Asking detailed questions about specific use of each informal source would have been impossible due to time constraints.

The purpose of questions 1 and 1A was to gain insight into the following aspects of learner behaviour with informal sources of English:

1. In what ways do participants use informal English sources? What differences and similarities are there between groups, FASILs and CTLs, in use of informal sources?

2. Is there evidence of collaboration with peers? Is there evidence of reflectivity? Is there evidence of personalization?
3. What is the emotional pull of informal sources for participants?
4. How do specific informal learning sources promote or lead to acquisition of grammatical structures and/or language skills?
5. What motivates participants to use English informal language sources? How self-determined is their use of the sources?
6. How does use of a particular informal source lead to or connect to use of other sources?

The interview questions regarding learner behaviour with informal sources were among the most exploratory in the study as they were intended to gain insight into an area that had not been substantially researched before. Thus the goal was to gain a broad understanding of how participants related to informal sources, paying particular attention to behaviours or attitudes that were mentioned repetitively and showed group differences with regard to the principal factors under consideration. Details of data tabulation with regard to each source are discussed at length in Chapter 6: Qualitative Findings with regard to RQ 3.

Unlike questions 1 and 1A, question 2, *“Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?”*, was asked once, with reference to all sources at the same time. The question was asked immediately following the individual sets of questions regarding behaviour with each informal source. As with questions 1 and 1A, it was expected that this question would lead to requests for clarification. Follow-up clarification simply repeated the phrase, *“things that you do to learn”*, and subsequently, if necessary, added the word *“strategies”*. If participants were still having difficulty understanding the question,

using English subtitles with television was used as an example of something that could be done specifically with the intention of learning. This was a convenient example since a yes/no question regarding use of English subtitles had already been asked. As with the other questions in the interview, participants were not prompted beyond these follow-up questions when they gave short answers or could not think of something to say.

The purpose of question 2 was to find out in more detail than was permitted by the closed questions of the interview if and how participants consciously attempted to learn language they encountered while using informal sources. As with questions 1 and 1A, since the data obtained for this question were difficult to predict due to the lack of literature on naturalistic learning with informal sources in today's modern foreign language acquisition environments, categories and themes were identified a posteriori. Details of data tabulation are discussed at length in Chapter 6, Qualitative Findings with regard to RQ 3.

## 4. Quantitative findings

### 4.1. RQ 1: Linguistic knowledge and skills of FASILs and CTLs

#### 4.1.1. Linguistic tests 1-6: results

Language proficiency of participants was assessed using the seven linguistic tests discussed in the previous chapter. The results for the two groups were compared for each individual test. Six of the seven tests were scored as continuous variables. For these tests, Mann Whitney-U Tests were performed to analyse the difference between the groups. The seventh test (the productive knowledge of grammatical structure, “there is”) was not scored numerically, but dichotomously (yes/no), and was therefore investigated using a chi-squared test. Tables 3 and 4 on the following page show the descriptive statistics, including number of participants, means, and standard deviation, for the two groups for the six linguistic tests that were scored numerically.

In order to carry out t-tests, several assumptions must be satisfied. Firstly, the variable should have a normal distribution (Field, 2013). This assumption can be checked with the Shapiro-Wilk test. Table 5 shows the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test for all of the six continuous linguistic test variables.

Since the null hypothesis of the Shapiro-Wilk test is a normal distribution, a test with a p value less than .05 indicates the test is statistically significant and that there is a non-normal distribution. Table 5 shows that for each linguistic test, based on the Shapiro-Wilk test, at least one of the two groups had a p value of less than .05 and thus was not normally distributed.

**Table 3: Group statistics for first linguistic tests 1-4**

	Mode of Learning	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Literal Reading	FASIL	34	26.06	1.434	.246
	CTL	50	24.52	2.468	.349
Figurative Reading	FASIL	34	20.38	4.008	.687
	CTL	49	14.08	3.746	.535
Vocabulary/ Grammar	FASIL	34	18.71	2.877	.056
	CTL	50	15.10	4.042	.071
Grammatical Judgment	FASIL	28	4.25	2.188	.413
	CTL	40	1.375	1.580	.250

**Table 4: Group Statistics for the Chaplin retelling test**

	Learning Mode	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Grammar (rater one)	FASIL	34	6.41	1.653	.284
	CTL	48	4.58	1.350	.195
Grammar (rater two)	FASIL	34	6.68	1.804	.309
	CTL	48	4.67	1.449	.209
Vocabulary (rater one)	FASIL	34	6.50	1.656	.284
	CTL	48	4.56	1.428	.206
Vocabulary (rater two)	FASIL	34	6.88	1.431	.245
	CTL	48	4.58	1.541	.222
Grammar (mean)	FASIL	34	6.54	1.662	.285
	CTL	48	4.825	1.335	.193
Vocabulary (mean)	FASIL	34	6.69	1.492	.256
	CTL	48	4.77	1.448	.209

**Table 5: Normality tests**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Literal Reading</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.857	.000
	<b>CTL</b>	.898	.000
<b>Figurative Reading</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.949	.113
	<b>CTL</b>	.926	.004
<b>Lexical Resource<sup>26</sup></b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.914	.011
	<b>CTL</b>	.969	.240
<b>Grammatical Accuracy<sup>27</sup></b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.922	.018
	<b>CTL</b>	.942	.020
<b>Vocabulary/ Grammatical Structural Knowledge</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.262	.000
	<b>CTL</b>	.133	.028
<b>Grammatical Judgment</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	.956	.284
	<b>CTL</b>	.812	.000

The results of the six different Mann-Whitney U tests are presented in Table 6. The table shows that for all tests there was a highly significant difference between group scores, with the FASILs scoring higher on all tests ( $p < .01$ ). These results will be reviewed in detail later in the chapter.

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<sup>26</sup>mean score for Timed Narrative Writing(Lexical Resource)

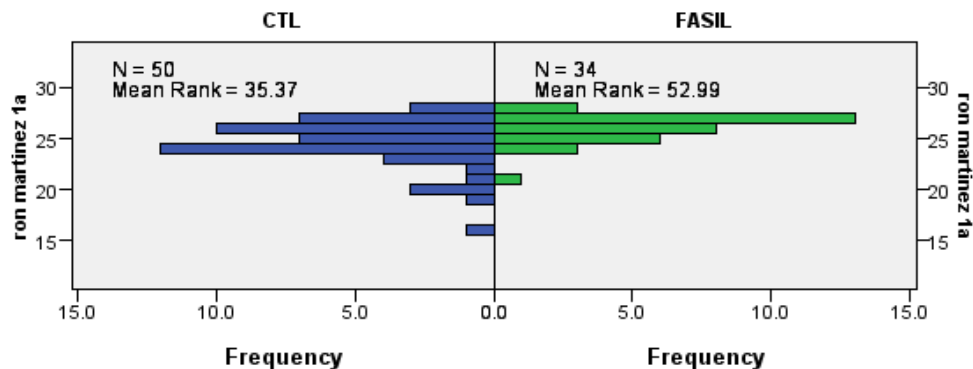
<sup>27</sup>mean score for Timed Narrative Writing(Grammatical Range and Accuracy)

**Table 6: Mann-Whitney U Test Summary**

	Literal Reading	Figurative Reading	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Accuracy	Lexico-Grammatical	Grammatical Judgment
Mann-Whitney U	493.500	223.500	256.500	310.500	396	163
Standardized Test Statistic - z	-3.304	-5.662	-5.287	-4.787	-4.162	-5.015
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

#### 4.1.2. Test 1 – Reading comprehension of literal meaning

The Mann-Whitney U test compares the medians of two groups as well as their mean ranks. The null hypothesis for this test is that the distribution of scores for the FASILs and CTLs is equal or that their mean ranks are equal. In order to interpret the test based on difference in medians, it is necessary to compare the shape of the distributions for the two groups. If the distributions are differently shaped, the mean ranks of the two groups are compared. For the reading comprehension test of literal meaning, the distributions for the FASILs and CTLs were differently shaped (See Figure 1), thus it was necessary to analyse the difference between mean ranks.



**Figure 1: Population Pyramid of FASILs and CTLs for Reading comprehension of literal meaning**

For the Reading comprehension of literal meaning test the scores obtained by FASILs (mean rank = 52.99) were significantly higher than those obtained by CTLs (mean rank = 35.37) ( $U=493.5$ ,  $z=-3.304$ ,  $p=.001$ ).

#### 4.1.3. Test 2 – Reading comprehension of formulaic expressions

For the Reading comprehension of formulaic expressions test, the distributions of the scores for both groups were similar based on visual inspection of the population pyramid. The test showed that the median score obtained by FASILs on the reading comprehension of formulaic expressions test was significantly higher (median = 20.0) than the median score obtained by CTLs (median = 13.0) ( $p < .001$ ).

#### 4.1.4. Test 3 and 4 – Chaplin retelling test – Inter-rater reliability

The Chaplin narrative writing retelling test was assessed by two different raters. For this reason, inter-rater reliability had to be established before continuing with the analysis.

Inter-rater reliability for both the lexical resource category (Test 3) and the grammatical accuracy category (Test 4) was evaluated with reference to the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC). For the lexical resource ratings, Cronbach's Alpha had a value of .956, and the ICC was .913. For the grammatical accuracy ratings, Cronbach's Alpha had a value of .935, and the ICC was .875. These results indicate a high degree of consistency between the two raters and thus a high degree of reliability for the final data.

**Table 7: Inter-rater reliability analysis for the Chaplin retelling tests**

	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Accuracy
Cronbach's Alpha	.956	.935
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC)	.913	.875

#### 4.1.5. Test 3 – Chaplin retelling test – Lexical resource

For the Chaplin test (Lexical resource variable), the Mann-Whitney U test showed that the median score obtained by FASILs was significantly higher (median = 7.0) than the median score obtained by CTLs (median = 5.0) ( $p < .001$ ).

#### **4.1.6. Test 4 – Chaplin retelling test – Grammatical range and accuracy**

For the Chaplin test (Grammatical range and accuracy variable) the Mann-Whitney U test showed that the median score was significantly higher for FASILs (median = 6.5) than for CTLs (median = 5.0) ( $p < .001$ ).

The significant difference between groups in both categories of the Chaplin test is noteworthy as it indicates FASIL superiority in terms of mastery of both lexical and grammatical structures while engaged in the challenging communicative task of timed writing. The implications of the results of this test are looked at in detail in Chapter 7, discussion.

#### **4.1.7. Test 5 – Knowledge of contextualized meanings of deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures**

A Mann-Whitney U test showed that the median score obtained by FASILs on the Contextualized Meaning of Deceptive Structures Test was significantly higher (median = 20.0) than the median score obtained by CTLs (median = 15.5) ( $p < .001$ ). Results of this test confirmed preliminary observations that showed FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to go beyond one-to-one literal translation to master subtle difference of meaning and use as they advanced in their English language development.

#### **4.1.8. Test 6 – Grammaticality judgment test**

To evaluate the results of the Grammaticality Judgment Test, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. A visual inspection of the population pyramid showed that the distributions for the two groups were differently shaped, so the test had to be interpreted based on difference in mean ranks. The mean ranks of FASILs (mean = 48.68) were significantly higher than the mean ranks of CTLs (mean = 24.58) ( $p < .001$ ).

The Grammaticality judgment test required knowledge of very advanced grammatical structures. While both groups struggled with the task, FASILs found and corrected three times as many errors – 4.3 FASILs versus 1.4 CTLs (See Table 3). This result implies that

informal practice by FASIL participants helped them acquire sophisticated grammatical knowledge in comparison to dedicated classroom learners. The implications of these results will be gone over in detail in Chapter 7, Discussion.

#### 4.1.9. Test 7 – Automatic productive knowledge of “there is”

The “there is” linguistic test was examined using a chi-squared test to determine if there was a relationship between mode of learning and productive knowledge of the “there is” structure. For this test, all cells had a minimum expected frequency of at least 5 thus the main assumption was not violated. The value of the Pearson chi-squared was 10.24, and the Continuity Correction was 8.76, which represented Yates’ Correction for Continuity, the value taken into account when dealing with a 2 by 2 table (Pallant, 2010). A value of  $p=0.003$  indicated that the proportion of FASILs who had obtained positive results for the “there is” test was significantly different from the proportion of CTLs with positive results and, therefore, there was a relationship between mode of learning and productive knowledge of the grammatical structure “there is” (See table 8).

**Table 8: The relationship between FASILs/CTLs and their results on the “there is” test (chi-squared test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
<b>Pearson chi-squared</b>	10.243	1	.001		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	8.761	1	.003		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	11.151	1	.001		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.002	.001
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	10.120	1	.001		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	83				

The size of this association is indicated by the Phi and the Cramer V coefficient. In the case of 2 by 2 tables, the appropriate value for judging the effect size is the Phi coefficient (Morgan et al., 2012). Table 9 shows that the value of Phi was -.351 and that the effect was

statistically significant ( $p=.001$ ). The value of Phi =-.351 indicates a medium to large sized effect according to Cohen (2013).

**Table 9: The effect of the association between mode of learning and knowledge of “there is”**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal	by Phi	-.351	.001
Nominal	Cramer's V	.351	.001
N of Valid Cases		83	

Table 10 shows the proportion of FASILs and CTLs that demonstrated productive knowledge of the “there is” structure. The great majority of FASILs (88.2%) obtained positive results for this test, with only 11.8% showing lack of productive knowledge of the “there is” structure. For the CTLs, percentages were more balanced. 55.1% of the group acquired the “there is” structure while 44.9% had not.

**Table 10: Comparison of the results of FASILs and CTLs on the “there is” test**

		“There is” oral test		
		Acquired	Unacquired	Total
Group	FASIL	88.2%	11.8%	100%
	CTL	55.1%	44.9%	100%

Overall, the results of the linguistic tests overall show that for a variety of linguistic skills and knowledge, both formal and informal, FASILs seem to have an advantage in acquisition. The implications of these results will be reviewed thoroughly in Chapter 7, Discussion.

## **4.2. RQ 3: Variables that might influence group differences in linguistic knowledge**

### **4.2.1. Summary of results**

To address RQ 3, differences between groups regarding variables relating to motivation, learner behaviour and learner beliefs were statistically evaluated. Sub-factors relating to autonomy were examined in a holistic fashion and are discussed with reference to the qualitative data analysis in Chapters 5 and 6.

Categorical variables relating to RQ 3 were investigated using chi-squared tests. Mann-Whitney U tests were carried out for continuous variables. All tests were conducted at the 5% significance level. Notably, of the variables that were found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), a large proportion were found to be highly significant,  $p < 0.01$ .

The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted for all continuous variables, and the test was found to be significant in each case, indicating a non-normal distribution. Although the normality assumption was not necessary due to the sample size of each group (Pallant, 2010), the high likelihood of outliers made the Mann-Whitney U test a more appropriate choice than t-tests.

The questionnaire consisted of items evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale. Table 11 shows a list of questionnaire items based on items from previous studies. Of these items, only one showed a significant difference between groups. The exceptional item, which was borrowed from Noels et al.'s Orientations Scale (2000), is meant to measure external extrinsic motivation. In table 11 we can see that its p-value was .012, the only variable in the table that falls under the .05 value. This item will be discussed below in section 4.2.2.

Table 12 shows questionnaire items developed especially for this research. These will be discussed in relation to the factors they were designed to measure later in this chapter.

**Table 11: Significance of the variables from the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire (Mann-Whitney U test)**

Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)
External Motivation2	.012	Ideal Future Self	.615
International Posture	.069	Intrinsic Motivation	.631
Introjected Motivation	.185	External Motivation	.650
International Posture	.315	Ideal Future Self 2	.702
Identified Motivation	.423	Intrinsic Motivation2	.749
Introjected Motivation	.451	BeliefLocusCont	.929
BeliefLocusCont2	.497		
Identified Motivation	.517		

**Table 12: Significance of continuous variables specifically developed for the study (Mann-Whitney U test)**

Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)
Belief in the CentClass	<.001	AuthVocPract	.399
Vocab. List	.051	Expl Dictionary Use	.977
Autonomy Non-lang. Learn.	.199		

Tables 13 and 14 present the results of statistical tests for variables measured by responses to the structured interviews. Table 13 lists results from Mann Whitney U tests conducted on continuous variables. Table 14 shows results from chi-squared tests conducted on categorical variables. Results are discussed below.

**Table 13: Significance of the Mann Whitney U tests for continuous variables**

Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)
Product Percent	<.001	EstSelfDirLearn	<.001
Number Informal Sources	<.001		

**Table 14: Significance of the chi-squared tests for categorical variables**

Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	Variable name	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)
Primary Motivation	<.001	Regularly watch TV with English subtitles	.073
Language of search engine	<.001	Read at least 2 English books/year	.099
Most important English learning resource (formal or informal)	<.001	Vocab. Learning Strategy (explicit strategies)	.125
Write on the Internet weekly	.001	Use of English Education websites	.136
Language of social media site	.002	Play multiplayer online games	.141
Hours/day with informal sources	.003	Sometimes watch TV with no subtitles	.143
Read articles, blogs in English	.006	Spoken or online conversations in English	.430
Best thing about learning English (IntPost)	.015	English film/TV mult. times/week	.491
Play English video games	.020	Regularly look up lyrics	.835
Weekly participant in a forum	.022	Regularly use translation site	.843
Most important reason learners have success	.024	English music mult. times/week	.927
Subscribe to news sites	.042	Regularly sing while looking at lyrics	1.000

#### 4.2.2. Motivation

Primary motivation was assessed based on a question from the structured interview, “What is your number one motivation for learning English?”. The question yielded a categorical variable, which distinguished between three broad types of motivation based on SDT: external extrinsic, internal extrinsic and intrinsic. A chi-squared test was carried out to establish whether there was an association between mode of learning and the three categories of motivation. For this test, all cells had a minimum expected frequency of at least 5, hence the main assumption was not violated. The value of the Pearson chi-squared was 15.286, with a significance level of  $p < .001$ , which indicated that the result of the test was significant and that there was a relationship between mode of learning and the three categories of motivation (see Table 15).

**Table 15: The relation between mode of learning and type of primary motivation (chi-squared test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson chi-squared</b>	15.286	2	.000
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	15.883	2	.000
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	.123	1	.726
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	71		

The size of the effect of this association was indicated by the Cramer’s V coefficient. The value of .464 for Cramer’s V is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), and suggests that the effect was strong.

Table 16 shows the percentages of FASILs and CTLs for each category of motivation. These percentages show a great difference for each type of motivation between the two groups. The great majority of FASILs (74.2%) had a primary motivation that corresponded to internal extrinsic motivation, while just 16.1% had external extrinsic motivation, and only 9.7% reported a primary motivation that could be categorized as intrinsic. The CTL group was more balanced in type of primary motivation with 42.5%

having a primary motivation that could be classified as external extrinsic motivation, 27.5% internal extrinsic motivation, and 30% with motivation that could be labeled intrinsic.

**Table 16: Comparison of FASILs and CTLs: type of primary motivation**

	Primary Motivation							
	External extrinsic		Internal extrinsic		Intrinsic		Total (%)	
	%	ASR	%	ASR	%	ASR		
	<hr/>							
<b>Group</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	16.1%	-2.4	74.2%	3.9	9.7%	-2.1	100%
	<b>CTL</b>	42.5%	2.4	27.5%	-3.9	30.0%	2.1	100%

To further examine the association between FASILs and CTLs and the three types of motivation, Adjusted Standardized Residuals (ASR) were computed and interpreted (see Table 16 above) for each cell. The ASRs indicated whether there was a difference between the expected and observed frequency in each cell. To analyse the ASRs, a probability value was calculated by taking significance level (.05), dividing it by the degrees of freedom (2) and then applying the probability formula NormSINV in the Excel word sheet program. The probability in this case turned out to be 1.95. Any ASR higher in absolute value than 1.95 indicated a difference between observed and expected frequency. Table 16 shows that all cells have ASRs higher than the p value of 1.95. FASILs had negative values for external extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (-2.4 and -2.1), which indicated that these types of motivation were less common in the group than would be expected. They had a positive value for internal extrinsic motivation (3.9), however, which indicated that this type of motivation was more associated with the group than would be expected. The results for CTLs showed the opposite. They had a negative value (-3.9) for internal extrinsic motivation, which indicated they had a significantly lower frequency than expected for this category, and positive values for external extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (2.4 and 2.1).

These results show that FASILs are distinguished from CTLs in terms of motivation because they are more likely to have internal extrinsic motivation as opposed to intrinsic motivation or external extrinsic motivation.

As mentioned earlier, the one Likert scale item from the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire -- borrowed from the Noels motivation scale (Noels et al, 2000) -- that showed a significant difference between groups is meant to measure the SDT motivation sub-type, external motivation. The item is the following: "I don't particularly like learning English. I do so because I might need it one day," with 1 indicating complete disagreement and 7 indicating complete agreement. The item was similar to most other borrowed items on the questionnaire in that it was fairly transparent and did not seem well-suited for the present study's sample, which was more homogeneous in terms of motivation and proficiency than the samples studied by Noels et al. (2000). In the present study, every FASIL responded 1 to the question, and nearly every CTL did as well. The answers of just three CTLs who strongly agreed with this statement resulted in a significant difference between groups.

### **4.2.3. Learner behaviour**

#### **4.2.3.1. Use of informal sources**

The present study analysed the difference between FASILs and CTLs in their use of a range of informal sources, including Internet news sites, blogs, video blogs, social media, and other Internet sites, English language music, English language television and film, book reading and video games.

The analysis investigated variables dealing with informal sources of English by using the chi-squared test for categorical variables. The test was conducted at the .05 significance level. Eight categorical variables related to the use of informal sources of English were found to have a significant association with mode of learning ( $p < 0.05$ ). Table 17 shows the results of the chi-squared tests for the eight significant categorical variables. As mentioned in Section 3.5.3, Quantitative data analysis, the Yates' Correction significance

value, which compensates for what may be an overestimate of the chi-squared value is used for simple 2 X 2 table. This value was calculated for all of the variables except hours/day with informal sources, which consisted of five different possible categorical responses, rather than two.

**Table 17: Results of the Chi-Squared tests for variables related to the use of informal sources of English**

	<b>Pearson's Chi-Squared</b>	<b>Yates' Correction</b>	<b>Continuity Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>
<b>Hours/day with informal sources</b>	15.700	-	.003
<b>Language of preferred social media site</b>	11.015	9.332	.002
<b>Use of English language news sites</b>	5.230	4.138	.042
<b>Reading English content on the Internet</b>	9.245	7.619	.006
<b>Writing on the Internet weekly</b>	12.827	11.018	.001
<b>Writing on Internet forums</b>	6.588	5.227	.022
<b>Language of preferred search engine</b>	29.198	26.454	.000
<b>Play English language video games</b>	6.598	5.393	.020

*Hours/day with informal sources*

The first significant result was related to the number of hours per week that participants spent with informal sources of English. Pearson's chi-squared coefficient had a value of 15.7 and the results of the test were significant at ( $p < .05$ ). The results revealed there was a statistically significant relationship between mode of learning and the time spent using informal sources of English.

The size of the effect of this relationship was indicated by the Phi coefficient, which had a value of .470 and suggested a medium to large effect.

Table 18 shows that all FASILs spend at least 3.5 hours every week using informal sources of English, and the majority of them (54.8%) spend more than 2 hours every day. Only 25% of CTLs spend more than 2 hours per day with informal sources, while 22.5% spend three hours or less a week, and 5% spend less than an hour per week using informal sources of English.

**Table 18: Time spent with informal sources by FASIL and CTLs**

		Hours/day with informal sources					Total (%)
		< 1 hour/ week	1-3.5 hours/ week	3.5-7 hours/ week	More than 1, less than 2 hours/ day	> 2 hours/ day	
<b>Group</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	0.0%	0.0%	19.4%	25.8%	54.8%	100%
	<b>CTL</b>	5.0%	17.5%	35.0%	17.5%	25%	100%

*Language of preferred social media site*

The results of a chi-squared test showed a significant relationship between mode of learning and the language with which participants configured their preferred social media site. The value of the Pearson chi-squared was 11.015, and the Continuity Correction was 9.332. The results indicate a significant difference between the proportion of FASILs and CTLs who configured their preferred social media site in English ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The effect size of the association between mode of learning and social media site language was verified on the strength of the Phi coefficient. The value of Phi was .405, which indicated a medium to large effect.

A comparison of the two groups revealed that 51.6% of FASILs configured their social media site in English, while only 13.9% of CTL participants did so.

### *Use of English language news sites*

Significant differences between groups were found with regard to several other Internet related activities. There was a significant relationship between mode of learning and the use of English language news sites online. The results of a chi-squared test revealed that the main assumption was not violated. The value of the Pearson chi-squared was 5.230 and the Yates' Continuity Correction was 4.138. The  $p$  value of .042 ( $<.05$ ) indicated that the test was significant and therefore there was a relationship between mode of learning and the use of English language online news sites. The effect of this association was indicated by the Phi coefficient. The value of Phi was -.271, which indicated a medium sized effect ( $p<.05$ ).

FASIL responses were rather balanced with 48.4% using news sites. 22.5% of CTLs used online news sites.

### *Read English content on the Internet*

Based on the results of a chi-squared test, a significant relationship was found between mode of learning and whether the participants read English articles (non-news), blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week. For this variable, Pearson chi-squared was 9.245 and Continuity Correction value was 7.619. All the expected cell frequencies were greater than 5 therefore the main assumption was not violated. The Sig value in this case was  $p=0.006$  ( $<.05$ ), which indicated a relationship between mode of learning and reading of English articles, blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week.

The value of Phi was -.361, which was statistically significant ( $p=.002$ ), indicating a medium to large effect.

Table 19 compares FASILs and CTLs in terms of their reading of English articles, blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week. Nearly all FASIL participants (93.5%) reported reading English content on the Internet multiple times per week, while 62.5% of CTLs did so.

**Table 19: Reading English articles, blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week by FASILs and CTLs**

		Reading English content on the Internet		
		NO	YES	Total
Group	FASIL	6.5%	93.5%	100%
	CTL	37.5%	62.5%	100%

*Writing on the Internet weekly*

There was also a significant difference between FASILs and CTLs with regard to regularly writing in English on the Internet. A chi-squared test was significant ( $p < .05$ ), with the value of Pearson chi-squared at 12.827 and Yates' Continuity Correction at 11.018. The main assumption was not violated, as all expected cell sizes had a frequency greater than 5.

The size of the effect of this association was indicated by the Phi coefficient value of -.425, which suggested a medium to large effect ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 20 shows that only 12.5% of CTLs reported that they wrote on the internet weekly, while in the FASIL group the results were more balanced, with 51.6% reporting that they wrote on the Internet weekly.

**Table 20: Writing on the Internet weekly by FASILs and CTLs**

		Writing on the Internet weekly		
		NO	YES	Total
Group	FASIL	48.4%	51.6%	100%
	CTL	87.5%	12.5%	100%

*Active participation in Internet forums*

In the interview, participants were asked whether they actively interacted (writing as well as reading) on Internet forums. The results of a chi-squared test showed a significant

relationship ( $p < .05$ ) between mode of learning and weekly active participation in an Internet Forum. The value of Pearson chi-squared was 6.588 and the Continuity Correction value was 5.227.

The value of Phi was  $-.305$  which was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) and indicated a medium sized effect.

Considerably more FASILs (38.7%) than CTLs (12.5%) answered that they were active, weekly participants in forums.

*Language of preferred search engine*

A chi-squared test found a significant relationship ( $p < .001$ ) between mode of learning and the language (English or Portuguese) in which a participant’s preferred Internet search engine was configured. The value of Pearson chi-squared was 29.198 and the Continuity Correction value was 26.454.

The effect of this association was verified based on the value of the Phi coefficient. The value of Phi was  $.670$ , which indicated that the effect was strong and statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 21 shows that the majority of FASILs (70%) configured their search engines in English, while the majority of CTLs (94.3%) configured their search engines in Portuguese.

**Table 21: Language of preferred search engine – FASILs versus CTLs**

		Language of preferred search engine		Total
		English	Portuguese	
Group	FASIL	70.0%	30.0%	100%
	CTL	5.7%	94.3%	100%

### *Play English language video games*

Finally, a chi-squared test showed that there was a significant association between mode of learning and playing English language video games ( $p < .05$ ). Pearson's coefficient had a value of 6.598, and the Continuity Correction was 5.393.

The size of the effect of this association was indicated by the Phi coefficient. Phi had a value of .305, which was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) and indicated a medium to large effect.

Responses by FASILs were balanced, 54.8% played English language video games at least once a week, and 45.2% did not. Of the CTLs, only 25% played weekly.

### *Number of informal sources used regularly*

A final variable which gives an overall picture of participant use of informal sources sums the positive responses to each of the questions about regular use of the five main informal sources: television/film, music, the Internet, video games, books. This variable is crucial because it measures whether English permeates a variety of different aspects of the participants' lives. Since this is a continuous variable, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. The results of the test showed that the mean ranks of FASILs (mean = 45.71) were significantly higher than the those of CTLs (mean = 28.48) ( $p < .001$ ).

Quantitative data on informal sources showed that while both groups use informal sources regularly, FASILs are more likely to use a variety of sources than are CTLs, and that they use several of these sources, particularly Internet sources, with more frequency. Furthermore, English appears to be considerably more integral to the virtual lives of FASILs than to those of CTLs, with the FASILs using English on the Internet in more varied ways, frequently opting for English as the default language of their search engines and social media sites while CTLs almost always choose Portuguese.

#### **4.2.3.2 Productive versus receptive practice with English**

For this variable, participants were asked to estimate the percentage of English practice during their English language development that involved receptive activities (reading, listening) and the percentage that involved productive activities (writing, speaking). The variable was analysed using the Mann-Whitney U test.

The test showed that the median percentage of productive activity by the CTLs was significantly higher (median = 45.54) than that of the FASILs (median = 23.58) ( $p < .001$ ). This result indicated that the FASILs and CTLs were significantly different regarding their estimation of how much productive use of the language was involved in their development of English language ability, with FASILs reporting that they engaged in significantly less productive practice. Considering that FASILs performed significantly better on all productive linguistic tests than did CTLs, the fact that they estimated their productive practice significantly lower than did CTLs, is surprising. The implications of this result are reviewed in Chapter 7, Discussion.

#### **4.2.3.3. Intentional learning behaviour/strategies**

The present study primarily used qualitative data to compare participants' intentional learning behaviour/strategies with informal sources. However, two questions from the structured interview directly addressed intentional learning behaviour. One of these dealt with new vocabulary learning strategy and the other dealt with use of language educational sites on the Internet. Neither of these showed a significant difference between groups (See Table 14). In addition to these questions, three original questions dealing with intentional learning behaviour were included on the attitudes and beliefs Likert scale questionnaire (See Table 12 items – “VocList”, “AuthVocPract”, “ExplDict”). None of these questions showed a significant difference between groups though “VocList”, which asked whether participants wrote down new vocabulary words showed a nearly significant difference ( $p = .051$ ). Notably, it was the CTLs who were more likely to use the intentional learning strategy of writing down new words.

## 4.2.4. Learner beliefs and attitudes

### 4.2.4.1. Beliefs about the controllability of learner success

The first variable related to learner beliefs deals with beliefs about the controllability of language learning success. This belief was measured by two items on the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire and by quantified responses to a question in the structured interview. Neither of the questionnaire items showed a significant difference between groups.

A question in the structured interview asked students what they thought was the most important reason for second language learning success. For this question, responses were categorized by whether the most important factor was within the learner's control (e.g., effort) or whether it was beyond the learner's control (e.g. quality of teacher). Locus of control was quantified with a dichotomous variable (Internal/External). A chi-squared test produced a value for Pearson's chi-squared of 6.337 and a Continuity Correction of 5.069. The value of  $p = .024$  ( $<.05$ ) indicated that there was a significant relationship between mode of learning and beliefs linked to internal/external locus of control. FASILs were more likely to say the most important factor in language success was controlled by the learner.

**Table 22: The relation between mode of learning and attributions of learner success (chi-squared test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
<b>Pearson chi-squared</b>	6.337	1	.012		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.069	1	.024		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	6.742	1	.009		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.016	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	6.248	1	.012		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	71				

For the chi-squared on locus of control, the value of the Phi coefficient was .299 ( $p<.05$ ), which indicated a medium effect (see Table 22).

Table 23 shows the proportions of FASILs and CTLs who believed the primary factor for language learning success was internally controlled. The majority of both groups (87.1% of FASILs and 60% of CTLs) gave a response indicating an internal locus of control.

**Table 23: Beliefs about the controllability of learner success of FASILs and CTLs**

		Most important reason for success		
		Something learner can control	Something learner can't control	Total
Group	FASIL	87.1%	12.9%	100%
	CTL	60.0%	40.0%	100%

#### 4.2.4.2. International posture/focus

The international posture of participants was evaluated based on Likert scale items adapted from previous measurement tools (Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide, 2008). As with other questionnaire items originally developed for more heterogeneous samples, Mann-Whitney U tests showed no significant difference between FASILs and CTLs.

Three questions from the structured interview were considered together to indicate whether a participant reported at least some international focus<sup>28</sup> based on whether they indicated in any of three items that their English learning was linked in some way with interest in life beyond Brazil.

The value of the Pearson chi-squared was 7.196, and the Continuity Correction was 5.967. There value of  $p=.015$  ( $p<.05$ ) indicated that there was a relationship between mode of learning and international focus with FASILs showing more global orientation (see Table 24). The size of the effect between FASILs and CTLs and international focus was indicated by the Phi value of  $-.318$  ( $p<.05$ ), a medium effect.

<sup>28</sup> (a variable developed for the purposes of this study, based on international posture – see section 3.3.2.3.1)

**Table 24: The relation between mode of learning and international focus (chi-squared test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
<b>Pearson chi-squared</b>	7.196	1	.007		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.967	1	.015		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	7.304	1	.007		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.009	.007
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.095	1	.008		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	71				

Table 25 shows the proportions of FASILs and CTLs that reported some international focus. While the majority of FASILs (64.5%) showed some global orientation, the majority of CTLs (67.5%) did not express an interest in the world outside of Brazil.

**Table 25: International focus of FASILs and CTLs**

		Local Focus	Global Focus	Total
<b>Group</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	35.5%%	64.5%	100%
	<b>CTL</b>	67.5%	32.5%	100%

#### 4.2.4.3. Beliefs about the centrality of formal language learning to second language acquisition

Beliefs about the centrality of formal learning to second language acquisition were assessed using two questions. The first was an item specifically developed for the purposes of this study, and included in the Likert scale attitudes and beliefs questionnaire. The question asked participants how much they agreed that the teacher and formal resources were necessary to achieving success in learning English (1, completely disagree - 7, completely agree).

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate this item. The test showed that the median response by CTLs was significantly higher (median = 4.50) than the median response by

FASILs (median = 1.99) ( $p < .001$ ). This result indicated that CTLs were significantly more likely to believe formal resources such as teachers and textbooks were necessary to learn English than were FASILs.

A structured interview question relating to this variable asked FASILs and CTLs which source was most important in their language learning development. Answers were categorized dichotomously (formal or informal resource). A chi-squared test yielded a Pearson's chi-squared value of 27.842 and a Continuity Correction of 25.362. The test was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Thus, there was a relationship between mode of learning and beliefs about whether a formal or informal resource was most important in language learning, with CTLs significantly more likely to believe a formal resource was the most important resource for learning English.

The value of the Phi coefficient was  $-.626$  ( $p < .05$ ), which indicated a strong effect of the association between mode of learning and beliefs about whether the most important language learning resource was formal or informal.

**Table 26: Relation between mode of learning and beliefs about most important learning resource (chi-squared test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
<b>Pearson chi-squared</b>	27.842	1	.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	25.362	1	.000		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	30.970	1	.000		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.000	.000
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	27.450	1	.000		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	71				

Table 27 shows the proportion of FASILs and CTLs who believed a formal rather than an informal learning resource was most important in language learning. While the great majority of FASILs (90.3%) believed that an informal resource was most important for their language learning, only 27.5% of the CTLs shared this belief.

**Table 27: The relation between mode of learning and beliefs about most important learning resource**

		<b>Most important English learning resource</b>		
		<b>Any formal resource</b>	<b>Any informal resource</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Group</b>	<b>FASIL</b>	9.7%	90.3%	100%
	<b>CTL</b>	72.5%	27.5%	100%

The results implied the two different groups had not only learned differently, but also had very different beliefs about the necessity of formal learning. Data from Chapter 5, qualitative findings with regard to RQ 1, explore whether differences between the groups in beliefs about the centrality to language learning arise through learning experience or exist prior to the onset of language acquisition.

#### **4.2.5. Autonomy and mode of learning**

Aspects of learner autonomy relating to each group were primarily evaluated qualitatively based on responses to several open questions. However, two questions that were analysed quantitatively – one item from the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire and one from the interview -- touched on autonomous language learning.

The final item of the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire dealt with autonomous behaviour in non-language learning situations – *“In my life, not including English learning, I choose my own materials and depend on myself, instead of a teacher, textbook or course (school, university). Answer between 1 and 7 with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.”* A Mann Whitney U analysis (see Table 12) found that there was not a significant difference between groups in responses to this question.

A question from the structured interview offered some insight into differences between groups with regard to control of activities and learning acquisition contexts. The question asked participants to estimate the percentage of English knowledge that was acquired through self-directed activity rather than through activity directed by teachers or schools.

A Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to examine and interpret the results. The test showed that the median percentage estimated by FASILs (median = 75.44) was significantly higher than that estimated by CTLs (median = 22.26) ( $p < .001$ ). The results further support the fundamental difference between FASILs and CTLs, and the conclusion that most acquisition by FASILs comes from autonomous activity that they control whereas acquisition by CTLs, at least as far as they believe, is a result of formal guidance.

#### **4.2.6. Gender and age**

Two chi-square tests were used to analyse the relationships between gender and age and mode of learning (FASILs and CTLs).

The tests showed that there was no statistically significant association between either of the variables and mode of learning ( $p > .05$ ). However, it is important to mention that though there was not a significant relationship between mode of learning and gender, there was a clear distinction between the two groups in terms of gender composition. The CTL group had 29 (58%) female and 21 (42%) male participants. For the FASIL group the percentages were almost the opposite with 14 females (41.2%) and 20 males (58.8%). These findings suggest a number of areas that could be explored in future research including whether women are more likely than men to choose traditional modes of learning or less likely to be attracted by out-of-class English use contexts.

#### **4.3. RQ 4: Relative contributions of variables to language ability**

The purpose of RQ 4 was to identify which factors most contributed to the acquisition of language proficiency for the entire sample. The sub-research question expanded on this, by looking at which factors most contributed to language acquisition within each individual group (FASILs and CTLs).

To facilitate the analysis, six of the seven tests were further analysed through principal component analysis (PCA) to reduce test data to a unique factor regarding participants'

English language proficiency. The “there is” test was not considered, since categorical variables cannot be considered for PCA.

The first step in carrying out the PCA was an examination of correlation coefficients in order to address the issue of multicollinearity. All coefficient values were higher than .3 and smaller than the .8 maximum value recommended by Field (2013). This suggested a good correlation between the linguistic test variables while ensuring the analysis was not affected by multicollinearity. The fact that the variables did not have multicollinearity provided a degree of validation of the individual tests as measures of distinct aspects of language ability.

The value of the KMO coefficient was .847 ( $p > .5$ ), and the value of  $\chi^2$  calculated by Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was 430.051 ( $p < .05$ ), both of which indicated the adequacy of the data and their compatibility with the analysis. The Kaiser criterion was used for determining the number of factors that would be retained (Eigenvalue > 1). One single factor was extracted, which explained 71% of the total variance. The scores for the six variables were computed into a new variable, designated *language proficiency*.

The next step in the analysis was to identify the eight factors that seemed most likely to contribute to the language proficiency outcome. Factors were chosen based on correlations with language proficiency and are shown in Table 28, together with their Pearson’s correlation coefficient. The correlations were analysed for the total group, and also separately for each mode of learning group.

**Table 28:Correlations between language ability and the variables that influence this score**

Variable name	Pearson's <i>r</i>	Pearson's <i>r</i> - for FASILs	Pearson's <i>r</i> - for CTLs
Mode of learning	.518**	-	-
Number of informal sources	.442**	.309	.338*
Time spent/ week with informal sources	.385**	.182	.289*
Reading Books (regularly)	.394**	.342*	.380**
ExtInt Motivation	.565**	.408*	.448**
Beliefs in the controllability of language learning	-.303**	.151	-.276
Language of search engine	-.386**	-.203	-.090
Years spent learning English	.067	.447**	.061

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson correlation coefficients table above (table 28) shows the variables that had highest correlations with proficiency for the all participants or for either individual group. Variables with no significant correlations are not including in the table.

The table shows that, though for the entire group, “years spent learning English” did not correlate to overall language acquisition, the variable was the most significant predictor of language ability for the FASIL group with a Pearson’s *r* of .447. Given that the low-end proficiency level of group participants was fairly high (at least intermediate level) the finding is important. The results suggest the possibility that CTLs, whose proficiency, unlike the FASILs, did not correlate with years spent learning English, plateau in their language proficiency after they reach intermediate levels. The results also show that FASILs generally improve in their language ability through advanced intermediate level as they continue to have contact with the language. Future research with a longitudinal element is needed to further investigate whether experienced CTLs in fact face a barrier

that FASILs do not which may impede them from improving to advanced levels of proficiency despite continued formal and informal contact with the language.

The variables shown in Table 28 were further tested using multiple regression analysis to gauge their relative contribution to the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills.

For the regression analysis, the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals were met. Furthermore, no outliers or unusual points were identified.

The level of prediction for the model was indicated by the R coefficient. For this analysis the value of R was .715, which indicated a good level of prediction. The coefficient of determination (R square) value of .511 indicated that 51.1% of the variance in language ability could be explained by the independent variables. The R<sup>2</sup> value, however, is considered to be an “optimistic” estimate of predictive power for relatively small samples such as the one in this study (Pallant, 2010: 158). For small samples, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is considered a more realistic estimate of predictive power. For the variables listed above, the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> was .428, which means that the model predicted 42.8 percent of the variance in language proficiency for the sample. According to Cohen (1988), this value represents a medium to strong effect.

**Table 29: Model Summary**

	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted Square</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<b>Model coefficients</b>	.715	.511	.428		.756

An ANOVA analysis (See Table 30) showed that the model was statistically significant as a predictor of language ability (F (12, 71)=6.179, *p*<.001).

**Table 30: ANOVA analysis**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Regression</b>	42.4	12	3.533	6.179	.000
<b>Residual</b>	40.6	71	.571		
<b>Total</b>	83.0	83			

**Table 31: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis**

<i>Variable name</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Mode of learning	.739	.251	.365	.004
Number of informal sources	.112	.152	.103	.462
Time spent/ week with informal sources	.010	.022	.047	.649
Reading literature	.247	.249	.123	.325
ExtInt Motivation	.769	.223	.380	.001
Beliefs in the controllability of language learning	-.011	.052	-.020	.838
Language of search engine	.033	.233	.015	.889
Time spent learning English	.083	.039	.192	.038

*B* – unstandardized regression coefficient, *SE<sub>B</sub>* – standard error of the coefficient,  $\beta$  – standardized coefficient

The Beta values shown in Table 31, above, indicate the relative unique contributions of the individual variables in the multiple regression model. Three variables in the model made a statistically significant unique contribution to the equation. These were internal extrinsic motivation ( $\beta=.380$ ), mode of learning ( $\beta=.365$ ) and the number of years spent learning English ( $\beta=.192$ ) ( $p<.05$ ). This information is crucial to the study in that it establishes, along with Pearson's correlations, mode of learning, in particular the type of learning that FASILs experience, as a unique and independent predictor of language acquisition success. The regression, along with Pearson's correlations, also suggests that internal extrinsic motivation is highly effective in language learning for both classroom and independent learners. The contribution of the internal extrinsic motivation variable

suggests that when traditional classroom learners are motivated to learn because English represents something authentic and internally valuable to them, they are likely to obtain greater language proficiency than otherwise.

#### **4.4. Summary of quantitative findings**

RQ 2 asked whether FASILs and CTLs had achieved similar levels of language acquisition. Quantitative analysis using Mann Whitney U tests and a chi-squared test<sup>29</sup> found for all seven linguistic tests, covering a range of skills and knowledge, FASILs achieved significantly higher scores than CTLs did.

RQ 3 compares FASILs and CTLs with regard to a range of variables that could possibly account for the statistically significant difference between them in terms of language knowledge and proficiency. The variables were primarily measured by quantified qualitative data from structured interviews, but also with Likert scale questionnaire items. Variables measured included aspects of motivation, learning behaviour, learner beliefs, and time spent learning English.

Quantitative analysis showed significant differences between the groups with regard to several of these variables. The groups differed significantly in external extrinsic motivation, internal extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation. The analysis found that FASILs were more likely to be primarily motivated by internal extrinsic motivation, a highly personal, but functional motivation, while CTLs were more likely to be primarily motivated by either external motivation or intrinsic motivation.<sup>30</sup> The implications of these findings are discussed at length in Chapter 7, Discussion.

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<sup>29</sup>A chi-squared test was used for the non numerical “there is” acquisition test

<sup>30</sup>As expected due to participant screening, nearly all participants in both groups had high degrees of motivation, as measured by the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire compared to participants in prior motivation studies which were made up of participants who took English class as part of secondary school or university degree programs.

In terms of learner attitudes, CTLs and FASILs differed significantly on several factors, especially those connected to attitudes towards formal language education. FASILs were significantly less likely to consider formal learning resources of primary importance with regard to their language learning. They were also significantly less likely than CTLs to believe that the classroom was central to language learning.

The quantitative analysis found significant differences in how the FASIL and CTL groups used English outside of the classroom. Use differences extended beyond hours spent using informal sources, to actions that would indicate that the language had become integrated into the life of the participants outside the classroom context. Besides significant differences between groups in the regular use of certain media such as English language video games, books and English language Internet sites, there were highly significant differences between groups regarding the language in which computer search engines and social media sites were configured, with FASILs significantly more likely to configure their computers in English rather than Portuguese. There were also differences in the number of informal sources<sup>31</sup> used regularly with FASILs using a significantly higher number of sources compared to CTLs. This finding suggests the unanswered question of whether there is some reason associated with classroom learning that constrains students from becoming more deeply involved with English in their everyday lives.

The study used Pearson's correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis to investigate what variables, with respect to all participants as well as within each mode of learning group, contribute to English language proficiency. The analysis found that the two principal predictors for the entire sample were internal extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and mode of learning, i.e. whether a participant was a CTL or a FASIL. The third biggest predictor, which was much weaker than the first two, was the number of years spent learning English. Importantly, unlike internal extrinsic motivation, which the analysis found to be significantly correlated with language proficiency within each

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<sup>31</sup>The sources counted were television/film, music, the Internet, books, and video games.

mode of learning group, the number of years spent learning English only significantly correlated with language proficiency among FASILs. The results of the regression analysis support the idea that for highly motivated, intermediate learners, personalised, functional motivation is key to continued improvement. The regression analysis also suggests that “acquirers” have advantages over “learners” in mastering a second language.

## 5. Qualitative findings: Research question one

### ***Research Question One:***

**What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?**

#### **5.1. RQ 1 data collection**

In order to address RQ 1, answers to specific questions by both FASILs and CTLs were analysed. These questions were formulated with the goal of investigating the conditions that led to initial progress in English language acquisition, from the basic level<sup>32</sup>. Because the study was largely focused on the present, data on the conditions and motivations that originally led to FASIL and CTL learning are limited to responses to a few focused retrospective questions specifically formulated to address that particular issue.

The key interview question that addressed RQ 1 was:

*How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?*(asked to all participants)

A second question pertaining to RQ 1 was the following:

*Why did you stop going to language school?* (posed to FASIL participants who went to language school for up to a year)/*Why did you not go to language school?*

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<sup>32</sup> The word “basic” corresponds to “um nivel basico” – “a basic level”, the phrase administrators who were consulted for this research used to describe the level that private secondary schools reach as part of their curriculum.

## 5.2. Categories

### 5.2.1. Categories -- reasons and circumstances for initial progress from a basic level

For the principal question—“*How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?*”—the categories below were used to differentiate between participants. The categories were based on Ryan and Deci’s SDT categories (2000), with added insight coming from preliminary study interviews and the researcher’s more than a decade experience with Brazilian language schools and classroom-trained learners in Brazil<sup>33</sup>.

Categories:

- Amotivation
- Internal Extrinsic Motivation
- External Extrinsic Motivation
- Intrinsic Motivation

Below I define these types of motivation, and their sub-types as they have been described by Ryan and Deci, but with an emphasis on how they relate to each other and the present study. Categories were designed to be mutually exclusive, following the guidance of both Weber (1990) and Kuckartz (2014).

#### 5.2.1.1. Amotivation

##### **Amotivation (Incidental learning)**

Amotivation is defined by Ryan and Deci (2000) as: “The state of lacking an intention to act. When amotivated, a person’s behaviour lacks intentionality and a sense of personal causation” (61). This kind of motivation was not used to evaluate participants’ primary motivation at the time of the interview, because, by the time of the interview, all

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<sup>33</sup> Kuckartz asserts that previous knowledge of the context of the study is crucial to deductive-inductive category building (2014).

participants were aware that their personal actions had enabled them to reach a high level of English proficiency. According to Ryan and Deci, amotivation is common among students who learn subjects in a mandatory course in school. This is a possible explanation why previous questionnaire items, made by researchers to distinguish motivation of secondary school and university English students, were not able to differentiate between the groups in the current study, both of which consisted only of self- motivated participants.

However, RQ 1 is concerned with the motivation of participants at the start of their learning. With regard to the FASILs, both earlier research on similar learners (Sockett, 2014) and preliminary research suggest that they often learn English unconsciously, or incidentally, as a by-product of participation in personally valued activities. Hence, at the onset of their learning, I anticipated some FASILs had been amotivated, not valuing English knowledge or even aware that their actions would lead to learning.

#### **Amotivation: Parental insistence**

A second kind of amotivation likely to apply to CTLs refers to participants whose parents insisted on their going to language school against their will. This sort of scenario would qualify as amotivation rather than external extrinsic motivation because external extrinsic motivation involves some volition on the part of the learner (as opposed to coercion). If participants chose to attend school in order to please parents, this would qualify as the type of external extrinsic motivation referred to by Ryan and Deci as “introjected motivation” (described below). It should be mentioned that if FASILs were obliged to learn language through informal sources by parents, this would also qualify as amotivation -- parental insistence.

#### **5.2.1.2. Internal extrinsic motivation**

Ryan and Deci (2000) internal extrinsic motivation types refer to motivation that is autonomous, self-regulated, and to some extent internalized. There are two sub-categories of internal extrinsic motivation:

### *Identified Motivation*

Identified motivation is characterized by the pursuit of a skill that is prized by the learner, not because of externally imposed values, but because it is an essential aspect of an activity or goal that is valued for personally generated reasons. With regard to participants' initial motivation to learn, it was possible that some participants had strongly identified with, or wished to participate in, certain activities, such as watching cartoons, that would be enhanced by knowledge of English; participants would then make the self-determined choice to learn English in order to satisfy their desire to participate fully in such activities.

### *Integrated motivation*

Integrated motivation in the SDT sense, not to be confused with Gardner's (1985) construct of "integrativeness", is more internal than identified motivation in that the learned skill has become integrated into the learner's behaviour and sense of self, and is now an essential aspect of his or her identity. For participants at the onset of their language learning, having this sort of motivation would mean that they already saw English as essential to their sense of self, possibly because they had a strong desire to have access to and to be a part of international cultures and communities. Again, participants in this category are distinct from amotivated participants because they, themselves, make the conscious decision to learn/acquire English.

#### **5.2.1.3 External extrinsic motivation**

External extrinsic motivation categories in the SDT paradigm involve the motivation to learn because such learning fulfils the values and demands of an outside authority and leads to external rewards. As with internal extrinsic motivation, there are two SDT sub-categories that fit into this category:

### *External Motivation*

External motivation is a desire to learn because such learning fulfils values and demands that come from an outside authority. External motivation was further divided for the purposes of this research question into:

- 1) **general/professional** - external motivation having to do with CV/getting a job.
- 2) **academic concerns** - the need to pass a year of secondary school, which would indicate inability to learn the most basic English (vocabulary such as colors and clothes, the verb 'to be', pronouns, etc.). This division of external motivation was not anticipated and was added inductively.
- 3) **external international focus** - the desire to connect to the international community in order to gain external rewards, e.g., to be able to earn a larger salary. This division of external motivation was not anticipated and was added inductively.

### *Introjected Motivation*

Introjected motivation, the other kind of external extrinsic motivation in the Ryan and Deci (2000) typology, is also driven by external endorsement or approval, but is considered slightly more internal/self-determined in that it involves motivation to learn in order to gain prestige as a result of social acceptance. If a participant chose to learn a language in order to impress friends, colleagues, or parents or in order to gain social prestige this would be considered introjected motivation.

#### **5.2.1.4. Intrinsic motivation**

According to Ryan and Deci, intrinsic motivation is motivation to engage in an activity for the "inherent satisfactions" (2000: 56) connected with the activity itself. When one experiences intrinsic motivation, the activity is thought of as something enjoyable for its own sake, not because of any rewards or growth, whether internal or external, that the activity leads to. For the purposes of classifying the conditions of initial progress in

language learning by the study's participants, intrinsic motivation was divided into the following sub-categories, arrived at inductively through examination of the data.<sup>34</sup>

- 1) Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic appeal) Satisfaction derived from the aesthetic beauty of the language and/or fun associated with the learning context.
- 2) Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual appeal) Satisfaction connected with intellectual curiosity or the pleasure of gaining knowledge.
- 3) Intrinsic Motivation: (role models) Satisfaction influenced by parental role models.

The role model sub-category relates to intrinsic motivation if parents or other immediate family members who speak fluently and, possibly, work with English are responsible for making English-learning appealing to CTLs on an abstract level without connection to any extrinsic rewards or the desire to impress parents themselves.<sup>35</sup>

#### *5.2.1.5. Other factors that initially motivate learners' language acquisition*

The present study followed the guidelines on category construction by Udo Kuckartz (2014) in establishing a category of "other" to cover any participants whose reasons for initial progress with English did not fit within the above categories and subcategories.

#### **5.2.2. Categories – Why did you not go to language school? (FASILs)**

This question was considered pertinent based on knowledge gained through the preliminary study in addition to my own understanding of the important role private language schools play in Brazilian society and, specifically, the lives of middle to upper class, professionally oriented young people. I based categories on this knowledge, and then added categories inductively upon review of interview transcripts

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<sup>34</sup> According to Kuckartz (2014) it is often necessary to ensure categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive by complementing deductive categories with inductive ones.

<sup>35</sup> It is quite possible that a CTL participant could have a parent or immediate family member who is fluent in the language and yet, not have been influenced to have intrinsic motivation. Such a participant would not fit into this category. Note that this sub-category was not relevant to FASILs since they were not allowed to have had experience living with a fluent English speaker

#### **5.2.2.1. FASILs who did not go to language school because of dislike of the school environment**

Participants qualified for this category if the reason they did not go to language school was that they disapproved of the language school format or did not like academic environments in general.

#### **5.2.2.2. Cost as a reason not to attend language school**

A participant would qualify for inclusion in this category if he/she indicated that language school had been out of the question due to expense. Language school costs are high, and could conceivably be prohibitive even for the participants of this study who were from high socio-economic classes. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, however, it is likely that Brazilian participants, especially those who have attended private schools and have professional aspirations, would feel awkward about referring to financial limitations. Thus, it is possible that some FASILs who could not afford private language school did not admit this in their interviews.

#### **5.2.2.3. Lack of time as a reason not to attend language school**

This category corresponds to participants who claimed to be interested in going to language school but who could not start and/or continue due to a lack of time to spend on the activity. For the participants in this study who had gone to competitive private secondary schools in order to prepare for intimidating college entrance exams, such a response would be quite possible.

The final two categories were arrived at inductively when, after looking through transcripts, I realized that the category “no need” was not specific enough. I divided the category into two: “no need” and “no interest”.

#### **5.2.2.4. No need to attend language school**

This category refers to FASIL participants who did not begin or stay at language school because, though, at some point, they considered it an option, they realized— either upon

entering the school, or previous to entering—that, despite an interest and an open attitude towards language class, the classes were not necessary due to the skills they had acquired informally.

#### **5.2.2.5. No interest in attending language school**

This category specifically refers to FASIL participants who indicated *they never considered language school as a possibility. Although such participants may also have felt at the time of their interview that schools were of no use to them, unlike participants in the previous category, they never considered language schools as an option.* Participants in this category are distinct from participants who did not like the school environment, since participants in that group considered attending language school but did not attend (or stopped attending) due to negative feelings about the process.

(See Appendix F for a summary of category definitions and illustrative examples from interviews).

### **5.3. RQ 1 -- Qualitative analysis of learner answers to interview questions**

#### **5.3.1. How and why did you start using English and progressing from a basic level (FASILs)?**

##### **5.3.1.1. Amotivation – Incidental (n = 17; 53.1%)**

Of the 32 FASIL interviewees, 17 claimed to have begun their progress from a beginning level unintentionally. These learners advanced from a basic level of proficiency in English, gradually and unconsciously, through engagement in valued activities that required English. At the outset of acquisition, the learning of English for these participants was not a conscious goal in itself, not even for the reason that learning English would have better prepared them to enjoy and succeed at activities that they valued and that required English. According to their responses, it was only after using

English and becoming gradually more immersed in personally valued activities<sup>36</sup> that they became aware they had acquired significant English language skill.

The following quotes from FASILs in this category touch on how they began to acquire English unintentionally as they pursued their favourite activities. In these examples, language learning was an unforeseen by-product of engaging in a highly valued activity.

Though the questions were asked in Portuguese, if participants insisted on responding in English they were permitted to do so. Words in italics have been translated from Portuguese to English, whereas words that have not been italicized were spoken in English.

(Miguel)

“So, like I said, I ride BMX. In BMX, it’s not the famousest [sic] sport in Brazil, in Brazil that’s football. BMX was created in California, San Francisco. So to-to ride BMX I watch videos, videos BMX. The most-most of the pilots in BMX are from California. So, watching those videos, I’m also reading some pages of BMX online, oh, *let me see* I was traducing [sic] and trying to understand, what is it they are saying. [...] involves reading, too, because they make some notes-some news about the BMX contest, about the new tricks, new-new-new parts so I read the sites. [...] this is how it [learning] started for me.”

(Pedro)

*“I had just started and stopped the private language school as well. But at that time I came across a game that I liked very much [...] It was a very different, unique set up, and I thought the story was so cool that I just said, “Man I need to get everything they are saying to understand what is*

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<sup>36</sup> How they used English will be covered in qualitative analysis section that deals with RQ 3

*happening in this game". And so I played and I had a problem because I had a trial version and you could only play the first stage of it. But it was OK because I was a child, so I didn't really care about that. So I must have played the first stage about sixty times because I needed to understand everything that happened in it. And after these sixty times I believe I was already improving well at English, but only then, did the first small desire to, in truth, learn the language begin."*

(Carlos)

*"[...] But the English development began completely at random because I had the operating system that came with the Compaq computer in Portuguese, and I think, I have the memory, that I was really attached to this operating system. It was easy for me to use. But then my friend installed Windows 98. It was in English and a completely different interface. So, I thought, I am fucked. You know, I had to press "start". I said, what is 'start'. I don't know. And so, I had to figure it out, which was a pain in the ass. It was how I started, figuring out the system a little at a time. In the beginning I didn't like it. I thought, 'Jesus, this guy fucked with my computer, this jerk,' and I don't know what else, and only much later I said to myself, "Wow, he has no clue how much he ended up helping me."*

### **5.3.1.2. Internal extrinsic motivation (n = 10; 31.3%)**

#### **Identified motivation (n = 6; 18.8%)**

This group was distinguished from the first in that they claimed that at a very early point in their acquisition they made the conscious choice to learn English because of its practical value in helping them to get the most out of activities that were valuable to them. It should be emphasized that the nature of the self-report data makes it hard to say with assurance, despite the participants' claims, whether learning for these participants had not already begun incidentally (through contact with informal sources) before they

were aware that they wanted to learn English to have more enjoyment or success in these activities.

An example of a learner whose response fit this category is Paula, who became interested in English due to her passion for English and American literature and her desire to read this type of literature in its original language. A second participant who began her learning due to identified motivation is Marina, who was the only FASIL participant who reported that her initial progress was influenced by a parent's relationship with English<sup>37</sup>.

(Paula)

*"I very much liked 'Harry Potter', and the Portuguese translations of 'Harry Potter' are just horrible. So, someone suggested, "look, you like them so much, why not begin to read them in English." [...] I began to read these books with a lot of concentration to understand exactly what these books I loved were saying in the original language. And there was just a dictionary and ... the Portuguese translation by my side."*

(Marina)

"Yeah, my mom's ... uh's, kind of a rocker<sup>38</sup> [...] So I, I kind of got that from her and I grew up l-listening to that music, and not understanding it, and then I, I start [sic] to think I want to understand what these people are saying and I wanted to learn it so I started to look for translations of songs. That's where my English started [...]."

### **Integrated motivation (n = 4; 12.5%)**

The learners in this category claimed that their initial motivation to use informal sources was a direct result of the importance of English to their sense of self. As was the case with

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<sup>37</sup> The parent did not speak English, thus the participant was not disqualified as a FASIL.

<sup>38</sup> To have a parent who is "a rocker" is not rare in Goiania, which has in recent years held large-scale concerts for major rock stars of the past such as Paul McCartney and Elton John.

participants in the identified category, participants in this category stated that they had the goal of learning before their progress from a basic level actually began. As with participants in the identified motivation category, it is quite possible that participants in this group had already begun to learn incidentally without being aware of it before they consciously decided to learn.

The participants from this category all felt what I have termed above an internal international focus, and, in most cases, specifically expressed a desire to transcend the limits of Brazilian culture. All participants connected their incipient trans-national identities with a fascination for Anglo-American cultures, and some referred to the specific desire to integrate into native speaker cultures -- an attitude that fits not only Ryan and Deci's Integrated Motivation category (2000), but also Gardner's construct of "integrativeness" (1985), which was discussed at length in the literature review chapter.

Roberto's response was typical of responses that fit this category. He claimed to have recognized English language acquisition as a goal prior to the onset of his learning due to a strong desire to access American pop culture and belong to it. Roberto was the highest scoring participant in the study, and a FASIL participant who never attended language school. Particularly noteworthy is his ability to speak spontaneously in the formal interview environment while maintaining native-like grammatical accuracy.

(Roberto)

"[...] because all the movies I liked, they were in English. All the songs I liked, they were in English. Uh ... some books I wanted to read, they were in English, so I realized that there was some part of the culture that I needed to have access to and not knowing English would be a problem [...] And I guess this thing of belonging ... of really knowing another culture, mainly the American culture ... I was really connected to the American culture at that time. And, and then I just started getting song lyrics and concentrating on the words in films [...]"

### 5.3.1.3. External extrinsic motivation (n = 4; 12.5%)

#### Subcategories:

1. External motivation (n = 0)
2. External motivation (international focus) (n = 1; 3.1%)
3. External motivation (academic concerns) (n = 3; 9.3%)
4. Introjected motivation (n = 0)

Participants in this category began to learn English to meet externally imposed/valued standards or to gain externally granted awards.

Crucially, the only FASIL participants in this category were also the only FASILs who fit Krashen's (1981) conception of "learners" in the sense that they consciously engaged, at the outset of their progress, in learning the rules and vocabulary of the language. In two cases, they did this with formal resources: textbooks or Internet language teaching websites. Though all four participants also used informal sources, initially they used these with the goal of improving their English to meet externally imposed standards. It should be noted that by the time of their interviews, these participants rarely, if ever, engaged in self-directed formal learning.

Both participants quoted below began learning due to a need to do better at school. Denyse began practicing English with flash cards, though her orientation towards learning quickly changed as she became involved with online video games. Mauricio was also motivated to do better at school. He is unique in the study, in that at a basic level he specifically chose to consciously study the English used in informal sources in order to learn the rules and grammar of the language.

(Denyse)

*"I was doing badly with English in school and I knew I would need it for the vestibular. My father gave me the idea to write down words in Portuguese and on the other side of the paper put down the English meaning, and put the papers in my pocket. All the time you take out a word, you look ... if you see*

*the English side, try to figure out the meaning in Portuguese. And then I began to play that game that I told you about, "Enemy Territory". And everybody who I played with online was a foreigner who spoke English."*

(Mauricio)

*"It was when I had to retake English in my final year of high school because I knew nothing at all of the language. So, I began to learn. I started to use the language, to listen to music and try to get the structure from that. I tried to know what words meant. I watched films with English subtitles in order to learn and mark down those words, study them. It was like a decision that came from nowhere."*

Notably, no FASIL participant was initially motivated by introjected motivation, the desire to learn in order to gain social status or to impress others. Thus, even externally motivated FASILs did not seem to feel any initial pressure to learn in order to meet and fulfil the traditional values of parents or society.

#### **5.3.1.4 Intrinsic motivation**

##### **Subcategory: Intellectual appeal (n = 1; 3.1%)**

One FASIL participant's response to the question of how and why he began to progress from the basic English level was classified as intrinsic motivation. This person, Davide, began learning English at the age of eleven by studying an English-Portuguese dictionary in his home. He was intrigued by the idea of learning languages and found it interesting that languages other than Portuguese existed. Notably, Davide believed the majority of his progress in English was unconscious, and came after this initial stage, but it was studying the dictionary when, according to him, he advanced from a basic level.

#### **5.3.1.5 Summary of analysis – Initial progress from a basic level –FASILs**

Here I will discuss how FASIL initial motivation to learn English relates to RQ 1 and its sub-questions. I will refer to Table 32, below.

**Table 32: Summary of FASIL motivation categories**

<b>Motivation category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Proportion of total (%)</b>
Amotivation	Incidental	17	53.1
Intrinsic	Intellectual appeal	1	3.1
	Aesthetic appeal	0	0
Internal extrinsic	Identified	6	18.8
	Integrated	4	12.5
	Category total	10	31.3
External extrinsic	Introjected	0	0
	External (general/professional)	0	0
	External (international)	1	3.1
	External (academic concerns)	3	9.3
	Category total	4	12.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

**Academic skills or study orientation as conditions that may lead to FASIL learning paths**

As stated in the Methodology chapter, some basic English instruction began for all participants at approximately age 10 in their primary schools. Although these classes only covered elementary material, relative enjoyment or success in the classes could conceivably have influenced participants to learn English in their private lives. It is notable that no FASIL participant claimed to have been motivated to begin learning English or to have had regular contact with informal sources of English because they felt that they were good at English or because they enjoyed the academic class in their regular schools. Furthermore, no participant claimed that their initial drive to learn was

the result of an observation by them or others that, in the course of their everyday lives, they demonstrated unusual foreign language skill.

Based on the answers to the initial progress question, the only FASIL participants whose progress was influenced by their school experience with English as an academic subject were 3 participants who turned to English because they could not pass the tests of rudimentary English knowledge required by secondary schools.

The one participant whose initial progress appeared to have been influenced by an intellectual orientation was Davide, who began learning English due to his curiosity about the abstract idea of foreign languages.

### **Special circumstances in the home as conditions that may lead to FASIL learning paths**

There are at least two types of home circumstances that would normally be considered as possibly providing advantages to a learner of English. One is living with a family member who speaks the language. As has already been noted, to qualify as a FASIL a participant could not have such a family member. A second advantageous circumstance would be to have people in the immediate family who encouraged the English learning. In the case of the FASIL participants, none identified this circumstance as a major reason for their initial progress with English. One participant did note that she was influenced by her non-English speaking mother's love of rock music, but the parent did not actually push the child to learn the language. Rather, the child was exposed to an informal source and gained an interest in the language on her own. Two other participants did receive small bits of advice on interacting with English for functional purposes. One was given the idea of flashcards as a way to pass basic school tests while the other was told that she might enjoy her favourite author better if she tried to read her books in the original language rather than translated. Crucially, there were no FASIL participants who started to learn because their parents insisted on it or because of social pressures (introjected motivation).

### **Specific Motivations that may lead to FASIL learning paths**

For the majority of the FASILs (those in the amotivated category), initial progress in learning happened unconsciously and unintentionally, as a by-product of engaging in personally valued activities. For most of the other FASIL participants, learning English was initially a conscious goal, but only due to the instrumental role it played in enjoyment and success in personally valued activities that required English or due to the fact that it allowed them to fulfil a multi-cultural self-image. Motivation to learn English for its own sake, considered by many theorists as the most effective learning motivation (Dornyei, 2009), was the initial driving force to learn English for only one FASIL, Davide, who represented 3.1 percent of the FASIL sample.

### **Attitudes that may lead to FASIL learning paths**

Almost all FASILs were similar in that, from the beginning of their learning, informal sources of English – video games, books, television, the Internet and music – were important to them on a personal level. According to the 12.5% of FASILs with integrated motivation, interest in these sources of entertainment arose as a result of a desire to be a person with a global identity, a citizen of a virtual, international world that transcends national boundaries. We cannot be sure whether it was the international nature of informal sources that attracted those in the amotivated and identified motivation categories. However, considering the nature of informal sources, it is possible that many more FASILs than those in the integrated motivation category began learning with a strong internalised international focus.

These ideas lead to an important issue that could be explored in future research: are learners more likely to find themselves on a FASIL path if they, or their parents, hold attitudes (e.g., non-conformist, anti-authoritarian, non-ethnocentric or xenocentric) that might lead to a personal interest in foreign cultures? In other words, does an internal international focus, unfettered by prejudices relating to national identity and tradition, improve learners' language acquisition by making the foreign language seem less abstract, less apart?

### 5.3.2. Why FASILs did not attend language school or stopped attending within a year

Understanding why FASILs didn't enter and stay at private language schools, although many of their peers did, was important to help clarify whether FASIL attitudes towards education were distinct from those of CTLs before they began to learn as FASILs. All FASIL participants were asked why they did not attend private language school, or, if they did attend, why they discontinued their studies. The categories for responses to this question have been defined above. Here I will discuss the findings for each category in more detail.

Table 33, below, presents the different reasons why FASILs did not attend/continue language school, and the number of FASILs in each group.

**Table 33: Summary of FASIL reasons for not attending language school**

Category	N	Proportion of total (%)
Cost-prohibitive	0	0
Did not like the environment	9	28.1
No need	4	12.5
No time	4	12.5
No interest	15	46.9
Total	32	100

#### 5.3.2.1 FASILs with no interest in going to language school (n = 15; 46.9%)

The most common reason why FASILs did not go to language school was a lack of interest. These participants did not criticize school methodologies, but stated that language school had never presented itself as relevant to their lives. Denyse's response is typical of responses that fit this category:

*‘I just never ever thought about going to a language school. Maybe my mom, because my mom never said something like this, “I’m going to put you in a school.”’*

In fact, most FASIL parents appeared to take the same hands off position that Denyse’s mother did. No FASIL stated that a parent had insisted on them going and/or staying in language school (or, for that matter, learning language independently).

#### **5.3.2.2. FASILs who did not continue with language school because they did not like it (n = 9; 28%)**

A large group of FASIL participants quit language school after a short time because they did not like the language school environment.

Some of the participants in this group developed a dislike for English itself as a result of their abbreviated language school experience. These participants claimed to have learned almost nothing from language school and only later warmed to English, often incidentally, while using informal sources. Eugenio is an example of a FASIL who had a short, negative early experience with English at a language school. Based on his experience and his later successful independent learning, Eugenio claimed to strongly disapprove of how English was taught in both regular schools and private language schools.

(Eugenio)

*“I started, but stopped English when I began to dislike it, mainly because of the methodology. Even contextualized practice wound up seeming mechanical and didn’t permit you to go beyond certain basic limits.”*

Several participants in this category experienced language school after they had already begun to learn on their own through informal sources. The majority of these were disappointed in the inauthentic quality of materials and classroom language. Diego, who

quit after taking one semester of classes because both students and teacher didn't speak what he termed authentic English, is a typical example:

"I started taking class because I wanted to practice what I had learned on my own. But I stopped after two semesters because I didn't think I got enough practice speaking ... and I didn't want class with Brazilian classmates who didn't, you know, speak authentic English, and also with teachers who spoke like Brazilians."

Only one participant, Jorge, claimed to not like language school specifically because he did not like school environments in general:

(Jorge)

*"I went to school for two semesters. I really did not like the atmosphere. It took me out of my comfort area. It was like any other subject to me and I didn't like the classroom, didn't like academics at all."*

### **5.3.2.3 FASILs who did not attend language school because they did not see the need to (N = 4; 12.5%)**

FASILs in this category are distinct from those in the previous category in that they claimed by the time they considered going to language school they recognized there was no need for it as a result of the learning they had already acquired informally. Melissa is an example of a participant who, as a young person, gave up on language school quickly, believing, once she had started the experience, that it was not worth the time or money. She is distinct from the participants in the "did not like the way language was taught" category because she did not criticize her language school or language school in general in any way.

*“I did not continue with language school because I quickly realized it wasn’t worth it. I did study for a month, but it was all things I knew very well. I thought to myself this isn’t going to be of use to me, the subject matter is already below my level so why bother.”*

#### **5.3.2.4. FASILs who did not attend language school because they did not have enough time (n = 4; 12.5 %)**

Several participants claimed that the crucial factor in not going to school was a lack of time, rather than a lack of interest or need. One such participant, Thiago, attended school for eight months before stopping because of time factors. Others in this group never attended language school but made the point that with more time they would have strongly considered it.

(Thiago)

“I stopped private classes because I just did not have enough time after 8 months.”

#### **5.3.2.5 FASILs who did not attend language school because it was too expensive (n = 0; 0%)**

No FASIL stated that the language schools were too expensive to attend.

#### **5.3.2.6 Why FASILs did not attend/continue with language school: insights**

An examination of why FASIL participants did not attend or continue with language school yields more clues regarding psychological or situational factors that may start FASILs down the path to independent learning, or interfere with their acquiring a learner identity.

There is no evidence that FASILs were pushed by parents to learn in classrooms. Those that did go to school were allowed by their parents to discontinue their studies. This suggests the possibility that as they were not pushed to become classroom learners,

FASILs may have been more open to English input from informal and authentic environments that matched their personal interests.

### **5.3.3 How and why did you start using English and progressing from a basic level (CTLs)?**

All CTLs and FASILs were asked the same question about how and why they started using English and progressing from a basic level. In this section I will go over the details of CTL responses regarding their initial motivation to learn English, referring to the table below, which shows the number and percentage of CTLs that corresponded to each initial motivation type.

**Table 34: Summary of CTL Initial Motivation Categories**

<b>Motivation category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Proportion of total (%)</b>
Amotivation	Parental insistence	18	46.2
	Other (convenience, accident)	3	7.7
	Other <sup>39</sup>	0	0
	Category total	21	53.9
Internal extrinsic	Identified	4	10.3
	Integrated	0	0
	Category total	4	10.3
External extrinsic	External (professional)	2	5.1
	External (international)	2	5.1
	External (academic)	3	7.7
	Introjected	1	2.6
	Category total	8	20.5
Intrinsic	Role models	3	7.7
	Aesthetics	2	5.1
	Intellectual	1 <sup>40</sup>	2.6
	Category total	6	15.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>39</sup> One participant began learning with informal sources as a result of intrinsic motivation (intellectual appeal). She then began language school due to parent's insistence. She was placed in the intrinsic motivation category rather than the amotivation category.

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 38

### 5.3.3.1. Amotivation (n= 21; 53.9%)

#### **Amotivation – parental insistence (n = 18; 46.2%)**

The great majority of CTL participants claimed that they had begun learning at language schools, which they attended not because they wanted to but because they were told to. Of these, ten of the 18 CTL participants mentioned that the motivation of one or both parents was connected with the importance of English to their child's future professional life. No participants mentioned any other motivation on the part of their parents to send them to language school.

Though 6 of 18 participants in this category mentioned, without being prompted, that they originally protested against attending language school or wanted to discontinue their studies, half of these went on to say that they ended up enjoying language school. Suanna's response refers to what could be described as intrinsic motivation, which developed after her initial disinterest:

*"In the beginning I only did it because my mother wanted me to do it. But later I began to like it. Now I really enjoy learning languages and I want to learn lots of them. I want to learn French and Japanese also."*

Only one participant in the amotivated (parental insistence) category and only three CTLs in total, criticized the learning experience to some extent when asked if there was anything to criticize about their schools later in their interviews<sup>41</sup>. The response of Rodrigo, a hybrid CTL, was a rare moment in which a CTL expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the formal learning experience:

*"It was because of my parents. Only much later was I motivated. I mean I always knew it was important. I never thought it wouldn't be useful. But despite that, I would go to class and I would stay there without anything to do. It was only when I began to read books in English on my own that I*

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<sup>41</sup> All participants were specifically asked in their interviews if they had anything to criticize about their language schools.

*began to learn English well and, after that, I began to get something from the classes. I think when you read and learn it's easier. I think you learn a language by using it in your life."*

The eventual approval by CTLs of their language schools, as well as their belief in the necessity of the classroom for acquisition and the primary importance of formal resources<sup>42</sup> is not surprising if we take into account initial parental influence as well as the fact that chain language schools in Brazil in their advertisements promote the necessity of the pedagogical experience and the unique effectiveness of their methods. Besides the price of school, the price for one year's worth of textbooks can reach 1000 Reais<sup>43</sup>. It is a reasonable possibility that many CTLs whose parents have insisted on expensive formal language education, and who have steadily achieved (gotten to the next level/book) and, in many cases, enjoyed themselves in the process, are, in a sense, conditioned to believe formal settings are essential to language learning.

**Amotivation: Other (convenience or accident) (n = 3; 7.7%)**

The three participants in this category are further examples of initially amotivated learners who did not come to English because they chose to or valued the language, but, rather, by accident or because of convenience. All three participants asserted that they had no interest in English when they began to learn. One of the three began because he had won a raffle that gave him an initial first semester scholarship and he decided to give it a go. Another began because it happened that a well-known language chain offered classes in a partnership with her secondary school, after school hours, which, she said, made language learning too convenient to turn down. The story of the third participant in this group, Sofia, and her language learning beginnings was one of the most unique of any of the participants and is related below:

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<sup>42</sup> See Section 4.2.

<sup>43</sup> About 200 pounds -- price estimate provided by Lesa Bruss, director of GO English, Goiania, Brazil, former director of Cultura Inglesa, Setor Bueno branch, Goiania, Brazil.

(Sofia)

*"It's funny, because I hadn't done a language course until then. I had no interest. I only had had the little they offered at school. But then, a friend of mine took classes in this place and as I didn't do anything outside of going to school, I decided to try English just so I could spend more time with my friend. So she told me the place and I took my father and arriving there I asked if there was a space in the same class as my friend, but there weren't anymore, the spaces were all taken. But as I had already taken my father, I wasn't going to leave just because there was no space with my friend. So I ended up registering and I began to do it."*

Though none of these three participants had an interest in English or a motivation to learn before accidentally becoming involved with language learning, by the time of their interview they all spoke positively about their schools, believed strongly in the centrality of formal learning to their acquisition and thought that the classroom was their most valuable language learning resource. Hence, all three of these participants developed strong learner identities despite the fact that they initially had no desire to go to school. This evidence offers more support for the hypothesis that deeply set learner identities and beliefs are shaped by the initial circumstances of language learning. Additional evidence comes from the stories of CTLs, Felipe and Julia, who had both begun learning as amotivated students in formal Brazilian language schools. Both Felipe and Julia, after several years of studying in Brazil, went abroad to live and study English in English speaking countries alongside international students from a variety of backgrounds. Despite the intercultural experience of both of these participants, the only ones in the study who had lived abroad, they continued to be primarily motivated to learn English as a key to professional success, maintaining strong formal learner identities with little motivation to connect to the language or to TL users on a personal level.

#### **5.3.3.1.1. Analysis of the amotivation data for CTLs and FASILs**

Based on the data from initially amotivated participants, there is no reason to believe that had FASIL participants been obliged to go to language school and to stay there before

they had begun to progress in English, they would not have developed the same enthusiastic attachment to formal learning as CTLs did. There is also no evidence that CTLs would have gone to language school and continued had they not been obliged to do so. On the other hand, the stories of a number of FASILs who began learning incidentally, two of whom, Diego and Melissa, have already been quoted, and the story of the one CTL, Eduarda (quoted below), whose progress began with informal sources, show that if participants begin to progress in English with informal sources and then move onto formal language training, they may, even at a young age, question the necessity and/or quality of school materials and methodologies.

While it may or may not be the case that some FASILs in this study had a predisposition to become independent acquirers and that some CTLs had a predisposition to become learners, the data indicate that for the most part, preference for one mode of learning or another develops after participants find themselves in the learner or acquirer environment. We already know from the data that the majority of CTLs and FASILs develop their language learner identities based on circumstances they've been placed into: most CTLs and most FASILs did not take control of their learning or set goals for learning English at the beginning of their progress as learners. Rather, the majority of FASILs (at least 53.1%) stumbled into their identity as English acquirers, acquiring the language incidentally as a by-product of their participation in highly valued activities. The majority of CTLs (53.8%) did not choose to become classroom learners, but were either obliged to assume this role by parents or stumbled into classroom learning accidentally. Thus, the initiation of language learning for the majority of members of both groups was not an autonomous choice. Crucially, when the opportunity and motivation arose, FASILs had nothing to impede their personalised relationship with English. On the other hand, the relationship of nearly all CTLs with English was already mediated by formal training by the time they experienced English in the real world.

### 5.3.3.2. External extrinsic motivation (n= 8; 20.1%)

#### Subcategories:

1. External motivation (n = 2; 5.1%)
2. External motivation (Need do better at school) (n = 3; 7.7%)
3. Introjected motivation (n= 1; 2.6%)

The next group of CTLs chose to go to language school for themselves as a result of external extrinsic motivation. Four participants in this group chose to go to language school for career motives (two with standard external motivation; two with external motivation -- international focus<sup>44</sup>). It is notable that in their responses all four of these participants used the word “profissional” (“professional”). Caroline’s response is typical:

*“I began to learn because I realized myself that it would be very useful for my professional life in the future.”*

Leia gave the most unique response by participants in this category. She described how her primary motivation to learn language was the desire to live up to social norms and to gain social prestige. Her response was the only reported example of introjected motivation as the driver of initial learning.

*“It was because my friends speak in English sometimes. And the majority of them take courses. Others even have lived abroad. So sometimes we would talk about something, or even about the importance of learning English and the process. And, if you didn’t know anything you got lost or you didn’t understand. So what I think is learning English is a form of inclusion, and because today it is very natural for people to have a second language.”*

Three CTL participants stated that they began English study to do better at school where they failed to learn even the most basic English. Ruy is an example:

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<sup>44</sup> These two participants are discussed in the following sub-section

(Ruy)

*“I didn’t like English at first because when I had English in the regular school it was so bad and I just didn’t do well at all. That’s because the English in regular school is just awful. But I really needed to learn English for school. [...] So I decided that I would go to language school.”*

### **Subcategory – External International Focus (n=2; 5.1%)**

Two CTLs were initially motivated to learn by potential, externally granted professional benefits/rewards, as opposed to personal ones, that would come with being able to live/travel abroad or to communicate in English with people who cannot speak Portuguese. The following response by Romano is an excellent example of motivation due to external international focus:

(Romano)

*“English, as the most important language worldwide, gives someone who speaks it many more professional opportunities not just in Brazil but internationally. If you like the fact or not, English is the key to being a part of international markets.”*

#### **5.3.3.2.1. Summary of CTLs’ external extrinsic motivations**

It was noted in Chapter 4, Quantitative Findings, that there was a correlation between external extrinsic motivation and mode of learning, with CTLs significantly more likely than FASILs to report this kind of motivation at the time of their interviews. Self-report data from both CTL and FASIL participants regarding initial motivation to learn English add to the picture by supporting the idea that an impersonal motivation for status or success, on the part of the learners themselves or their parents, often leads to a formal language learning approach rather than informal language use. The possibility exists that strongly connecting English with professional/material goals makes it less likely that learners will develop a personal relationship with the language as they progress in language learning. Whether or not classrooms reinforce external extrinsic motivation is a question for further research.

### 5.3.3.3. Internal extrinsic motivation (n=4; 10.3%)

**Subcategory: Identified motivation (n=4; 10.3%)**

**Subcategory: Integrated motivation (n=0; 0%)**

As was the case with the FASILs, a number of CTLs reported that they started learning English in order to better enjoy their favourite activities, which involved English. Participants, such as Katerina and Ingrid, asserted that their initial interest in English was personal rather than professional. The motivation development over time of these participants was quite different from that of FASILs in the same category. Participant motivation change over time will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

(Katerina)

*"I always was interested in English but I don't know how to explain why. I think it was the songs I listened to and I wanted to understand. Cartoons in English that although I watched with subtitles I wanted to learn what it was and not need subtitles. So, [...] I really wanted to study English. I tried to learn about English at normal school but the classes were awful. And so I went to language school, CCAA."*

(Ingrid)

*"I think that it had to do with things like reading a book in its original language without needing to translate. I could travel to foreign countries and have no problem. It was more for this that I began, personal rather than professional reasons."*

An obvious question that arises is why CTLs who claimed, just as the FASILs in this category did, to have initially begun learning English due to their motivation to improve their ability to use English informally, did not continue to develop their personal relationship with the language outside of class once they had begun to learn formally. The most important distinction we know between the FASILs and CTLs in this category is that the CTLs chose to improve their English (for the purpose of informal use) in language

school (thus becoming CTLs) while the FASILs with the same initial motivation did not choose to learn formally (and thus continued to be fully informal learners). One explanation why the CTLs with initial identified motivation did not continue to develop their out of classroom relationship with English once they entered language school is that their private relationship with the language was not nourished and may have been in some way discouraged by their formal training. Another possibility is that although the CTL participants in this category were initially interested in learning English to improve their ability to use English outside of class, their initial attraction to informal sources was simply not as strong as that of the FASILs, and thus they were not carried along the FASIL learning path. All FASILs who began learning in order to enjoy valued activities more, such as Paula, the avid reader quoted earlier, expressed a deep personal attraction to these activities from the beginning. The CTLs with initial identified motivation did not express as strong an emotional attachment to the activities.

The more internal of the two types of internal extrinsic motivation is integrated motivation. While 12.5% of FASILs initially began to learn because being an English was an essential aspect of their self-image, no CTL reported that they were motivated to begin learning for this reason.

#### **5.3.3.4. Intrinsic motivation (n =5; 15.4%)**

##### **Subcategory - Immediate family members as valued role models (n = 3; 7.7%)**

The three CTLs in this group believed that their feelings of relatedness to English-speaking family members had been the major circumstance that led to what could be classified as a love for language learning for its own sake: intrinsic motivation.

Two of the three participants in this group, Bette and Patricia, had parents who were long-term professional English educators at private language schools. Both participants claimed that relationships with these parents had led to their fascination with English as a beautiful and abstract subject, which it pleased them to learn. Interestingly, neither

Patricia nor Bette would go on to develop a strong out-of-classroom relationship with the language. Other data gleaned from their interviews, such as the fact even after years of classroom learning both had their social media and computer search engines configured in Portuguese (unlike most FASILs and many CTLs), highlights the fact that these participants had a firm conception of English as something that happened in the classroom. Given that these learners tied their love of English to their mothers' professions as language teachers, their stories add to evidence that the way English is initially presented to learners can have a lasting impact on their attitudes towards the language.

**Subcategories:**

- 1. aesthetic appeal (n=2; 5.1%)**
- 2. intellectual appeal (n=0; 0%)**

We have already seen in Chapter 4, Quantitative Findings, that there was a significant difference between FASILs and CTLs in terms of current (as opposed to initial) intrinsic motivation with CTLs much more likely to claim intrinsic motivation as their primary language learning motivation. The distinction between the two groups in terms of intrinsic motivation holds true when analysing participant initial motivation. More than 15% began their language learning because of intrinsic motivation. This is as opposed to 1 in 32 FASILs (3.1%). Furthermore, in their interview responses, all CTLs who fit into this category claimed that they had decided to learn because they appreciated or “loved” English, making it clear that from the beginning they looked at the language as something abstract rather than something functional. The response of Tomas, a hybrid CTL is particularly interesting because, unlike Patricia and Bette, he seemed to have an interest in the way English was used out-of-class from the beginning of his learning. Nevertheless, his response shows that his interest was more aesthetic than pragmatic, seemingly placing English on a pedestal, as if it were an object of art:

(Tomas)

*"I always wanted to be able to understand music in English. I always really liked ... the sound of it. I thought it was beautiful. So it was my own choice. I think it is beautiful to hear people speaking in English, to learn to make these sounds, and so I told my parents to register me with a school."*

In Tomas' response to the present interview question as well as in his responses to later ones he shows that he conceives of English as an external object to be admired and learned formally, despite the fact that English is more to him than just a classroom subject.

#### **5.3.3.5. Special case – Eduarda**

##### **Intrinsic motivation – intellectual appeal Amotivation – parents' insistence**

I have chosen to write about one participant, Eduarda, separately because she is the only CTL participant in the study who claimed to have begun her progress from the basic level through contact with informal sources before enrolling in language school. Though she would go on to attend language school due to her parents' insistence, her initial progress happened out-of-class as a result of her desire to "crack the English code", an example of intrinsic motivation due to the intellectual appeal of learning a language.

(Eduarda)

*"I started at school because I was obliged. I do not know whether I would have started anyway because I first began to progress on my own. I had already gained some knowledge of English out-of-class. This happened because English was a code I wanted to crack and I was interested from a young age. I began using [...] video games, music, later the Internet. I was very interested [...]"*

#### **5.3.4. Summary of qualitative findings regarding RQ 1**

Understanding whether there are conditions unique to FASILs as they begin their independent learning paths is crucial to the purposes of this study because it helps clarify whether successful FASIL acquisition is due to a special facility with autonomous learning, or, rather, could be reasonably expected to be within the grasp of most learners depending on the circumstances in which they encounter English. The following summary of the qualitative findings for RQ 1 address theoretical issues in autonomy, learner identity, and motivation that have been referred to throughout this thesis.

##### **Amotivation and Intrinsic Motivation**

Perhaps the most significant finding discussed in this chapter is that the majority of both FASILs (53.1%) and CTLs ( 53.8%) were amotivated when they began their learning. In other words, the majority of participants, according to self-reports, did not begin their progress learning English with the intent or goal to learn. Rather, most FASILs began to learn English incidentally and unconsciously as they engaged in activities that they enjoyed which featured English. The majority of CTLs began to progress from a basic level of English proficiency when they were placed in a language learning environment that they did not initially believe in or want to be a part of. Thus, the majority of participants in both groups did not become involved in English because they took charge of their learning or were practicing autonomous learning strategies.

Nevertheless, there was an important difference between the two groups of amotivated learners. Amotivated FASILs had initial contact with English in ways that came about naturally as basic aspects of their personal lives whereas CTLs began to participate in activities involving English that existed apart from their everyday lives, as a result of the wishes of others or, in the case of three participants, as the result of accident/convenience. These qualitative findings along with the quantitative finding from the final question of the self-report Likert scale questionnaire, which found that FASILs were *not* more likely than CTLs to learn independently in non-English language learning situations, supports the idea that FASILs do not have an advantage in terms of being more autonomous or more prepared to be autonomous than CTLs. Rather, early

on, FASILs, as opposed to CTLs, find themselves in situations that encourage autonomous behaviour because they involve performing activities that they personally value. Such findings support the hypothesis that given the right circumstances and motivations, individuals are able to acquire skills autonomously without training.

The two groups differed markedly in terms of intrinsic motivation, with only one FASIL reporting that he began to learn as a result of what could be called intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, 15.4% percent of CTLs began learning as a result of intrinsic motivation. The distinction in terms of intrinsic motivation between the two groups at the onset of their language learning is not surprising considering that, as we already know from quantitative findings, by the time of the interview significantly more CTLs than FASILs were primarily motivated to learn English through intrinsic motivation.

### **Family encouragement and groomed learner identities**

Qualitative analysis showed a marked difference between FASILs and CTLs in the role their parents played in their initial language learning. 46% of CTLs began to learn English because parents wanted them to. The majority of these participants mentioned that their parents had insisted on their going to school because they connected language school with their child's future professional success. 33% of those CTLs who were obliged to go to school mentioned that they initially protested but were not allowed to discontinue their private language education. Despite these numbers, when asked, as veteran classroom learners at the time of their interviews, whether there was anything to criticize about their language schools, only 7% of CTLs (3 of the 39 CTL participants) offered any criticism whatsoever. In other words, more than 90% of CTLs, after at least four years of private language school, claimed to be fully satisfied with their schools and their methodologies despite the fact that most of them had not chosen to go to language school in the first place. Thus we see that two outside authorities, parents and schools, seem to mediate the relationship between CTLs and English learning.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that not a single FASIL mentioned parents as having a role in their English learning. No FASIL, for example, claimed to have begun learning with

informal sources as the result of parental pressure. Additionally, though 12 (37.5%) FASILs attended private language schools for a brief period, none mentioned that parents had required them to do so. Whether or not parents had encouraged some of these FASIL participants to attend private language school, all FASILs who began learning in school discontinued their learning within a year, most within six months. Thus even if parents had been involved in FASIL decisions to enter language school, they did not insist their children continue. Additionally, FASILs did not report parental wishes as a reason why they chose to learn informally. The data presents no evidence that parents played a significant role in FASIL English learning.

The role parents played in the initial English learning of many CTLs, along with the eventual nearly unanimous approval from CTLs of their language schools, supports the idea that many CTLs may be actually pushed or groomed to have learner identities as a result of the role that others play in their language learning lives. This is very different from the experience reported by the FASILs in this study whose initial progress with English was not mediated by an authority and who were thus, logically, more likely to form unimpeded, personalised, self-regulated relationships with the language.

### **International focus and Internal Extrinsic Motivation**

A further key difference between the two groups of participants was that while 12.5% of FASILs initially began to learn English because of integrated motivation, the desire to learn a skill because the learner considers it an integral aspect of their sense of self, no CTL began to learn because of such motivation. Perhaps more importantly, all FASILs who began to learn because of integrated motivation felt that English was important in fulfilling transnational identities, their desire to be more than simply Brazilian. This desire represents what the current study has termed an internal international focus, an interest in international culture and communities because of their importance to the individual's sense of self. Interestingly, all 4 of the FASILs with initial integrated motivation described contact with English language culture as being responsible for generating their internal international focus. In turn their internal international focus led them to want to use English well.

Integrated internal motivation is one of two types of internal extrinsic motivation according to Ryan and Deci (2000). The other slightly less internal type, identified motivation, is the desire to learn a skill because it is instrumental to the enjoyment of an activity that is personally valued. Participants who initially felt this motivation reported that they had begun to learn in order to better appreciate informal media such as video games, music or television. Again, a higher percentage of FASILs – 19% -- began to learn English as a result of this sort of internal motivation than CTLs – 10%. Of the six FASILs who began learning English as a result of this motivation, three, by the time of their interviews had become primarily motivated by the more personalised internal extrinsic motivation, integrated motivation. In contrast, no CTL who began to progress in English due to identified motivation developed the more internal integrated motivation after entering the formal language learning path (see Appendix I for initial and final motivations of all participants). Additionally, no CTLs in this category, despite their initial interest in learning English to understand informal sources, had notably expanded their interest in informal sources by the time of the interview. These results suggest FASIL type learning paths are more likely than classroom paths to lead to development of an internalised, informal relationship with English. Additionally, this evidence provides more support for the idea that CTL learning paths may push learners away from a personalised connection to the language.

### **External Extrinsic Motivation – attitudes towards academic and professional success**

The quantitative findings have already shown that CTLs were significantly more likely to feel external extrinsic motivation – the motivation to learn a skill due to external, socially valued rewards that the skill brings – than were FASILs at the time of their interviews. The evidence presented in this chapter adds to those findings by revealing that at the beginning of their learning paths, CTLs were more likely to feel this kind of motivation than were FASILs (20.1% to 12.5%). When comparing the groups in terms of the specific types of external motivation they felt at the onset of their learning, the major difference between groups was that while several CTLs chose to learn English because they believed

the skill would further their professional careers, no FASILs began learning English for these reasons. Although these are small numbers, the connection between CTL paths and a motivation connected with future career rewards becomes even more apparent when you consider that at least 10 CTLs were obliged to attend language school because of parents who wanted to give them a better chance to succeed professionally. Thus, the research shows that 36% of CTLs, compared to 0% of FASILs, began to learn at language schools because either they or their parents believed such education could lead to professional success.

With respect to these data, it should be mentioned that there is a key difference between the FASIL and CTL learning paths. When a CTL graduates from language school, he or she earns a qualification, a certificate that can be used to bolster a CV. FASILs gain no such concrete proof of their achievements. It seems quite plausible, then, especially given that quantitative analysis found veteran CTLs were significantly more likely to be primarily motivated for extrinsic rewards than were veteran FASILs, that the need to learn English in order to pass, get to the next school level and finally to gain a certificate, reinforces CTL perception of the English language and English language learning as something apart and externally dictated.

The evidence discussed thus far makes it seem likely that a main advantage that FASILs have over CTLs in terms of becoming autonomous learners is that they have not either chosen or been forced onto paths which may impede a personal relationship with the language before they have had the chance to appreciate English as something functional and connected to their everyday lives. A final issue to be considered, however, is whether FASILs have special intellectual capabilities or traits compared to CTLs that help them to learn efficiently on their own. While the study does not offer direct evidence that FASILs do not benefit from having more language learning capacity, the evidence that the interviews provide in no way supports this possibility.

No participant, whether FASIL or CTL, mentioned being motivated by success with basic English in regular school. On the other hand, some participants in both groups were

externally motivated to learn in language schools or independently due to academic concerns in regular school regarding English. Importantly, there was almost no distinction between groups in percentage of participants whose initial motivation to learn English related to academic concerns (FASILs 9.3%, CTLs 7.7%). On the other side of the spectrum of intellectual predisposition, almost no participants in either group were initially motivated by the intrinsic intellectual appeal of learning the language (1 FASIL, 1 CTL). Finally, if FASILs began to follow independent learning paths because they were especially good at learning while using informal sources of English, one would expect some mention of this in the interviews. No FASIL mentioned this as a motivation. Rather, as already noted, a large majority of FASILs mentioned that they began to learn due to a personal fascination with foreign pop-culture. Whether or not FASILs tend to have psychological traits that lead them to be more open to foreign cultures is an interesting question that could be explored in future research.

**Table 35: FASIL versus CTL initial motivation**

Motivation category	Sub category	FASILs		CTLs	
		n	Proportion of total (%)	N	Proportion of total (%)
Amotivation	Incidental (convenience, accident)	17	53.1	3	7.7
	Parents' insistence	0	0	18	46.2
	Category total	17	53.1	21	53.9
Intrinsic	Intellectual appeal	1	3.1	1	2.6
	Role models	0	0	3	7.7
	Aesthetic appeal	0	0	2	5.1
	Category total	0	0	6	15.4
Internal extrinsic	Identified	6	18.8	4	10.3
	Integrated	4	12.5	0	0
	Category total	10	31.3	4	10.3
External intrinsic	External	0	0	0	0
	Introjected	0	0	1	2.6
	External (international)	1	3.1	2	5.1
	External (academic)	3	9.3	3	7.7
	External (general/professional)	0	0	2	5.1
	Category total	4	12.5	8	20.5
Total		32	100	39	100

## 6. Qualitative analysis: Research question three

### *Research Question Three:*

**Is there a difference between groups (FASILs and CTLs) with regard to: a) types of motivation; (b) aspects of autonomy; (c) learning strategies and behaviour; (d) learner beliefs and attitudes that might account for group differences in language proficiency?**

### **6.1. Qualitative analysis: Number one motivation to learn English – categories, data collection and rationale**

Findings regarding aspects of participant motivation have already been presented in two sections of this thesis. In Chapter 5, which presented findings related to RQ 1, “What are the conditions that lead FASILs to become acquirers of English?”, an analysis of participants’ retrospective responses regarding the reasons why they began learning English, i.e. their initial motivation, was presented. This revealed that, at the beginning of their learning trajectories, the majority of participants in both groups, FASILs and CTLs, were amotivated, i.e. they did not have the goal or desire to learn English. While amotivated CTLs commenced learning as a consequence of parental pressure, amotivated FASILs began to learn incidentally, as a by-product of using informal sources of English.

Motivation was also analysed in Chapter 4 as part of the quantitative analysis of RQ 3. The quantitative analysis of motivation compared groups by their *current* motivation for learning English, based on responses to the structured interview question, “*What is your number one motivation for learning English?*”. The analysis found that CTLs were significantly more likely than FASILs to be primarily motivated to learn English for its own sake (**intrinsic motivation**), or for externally granted rewards (**external extrinsic motivation**). FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to primarily want to learn

for internally generated reasons (**internal extrinsic motivation**). A multiple regression found that of all sub-factors analysed internal extrinsic motivation was the most significant contributor to language proficiency for the participants in the study.

The present section supplements the quantitative analysis by categorizing responses to the “number one motivation for learning English” question more finely into Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination sub-types of motivation (as opposed to the broad overarching categories used in the quantitative analysis) and by analysing themes characteristic of responses that fit these sub-categories. The sub-categories are a good fit for the study because they cover a detailed spectrum of types of external to internal motivation, while bridging two of the key learning factors under investigation: motivation and learner autonomy. The sub-categories are the following:

- **Intrinsic motivation** (motivation to learn for the joy of it)
- **Integrated motivation** (motivation to learn a skill that fulfils a self-image or identity)
- **Identified motivation** (motivation to learn a skill that is instrumental to doing well at a personally-valued activity or in reaching a personally-valued goal)
- **Introjected motivation** (motivation to learn a skill in order to gain self-esteem and social status based on external criteria)
- **External motivation** (the desire to learn a skill in order to gain rewards valued based on the criteria of external authorities)

The qualitative analysis sub-divided intrinsic motivation into intellectual and aesthetic appeal, divisions that emerged from the data and were also used in the analysis of initial motivation to learn English presented in Chapter 5. Responses were categorized as “aesthetic appeal” if they focused on the beauty of the language or a generalized love of the language. They were categorized as “intellectual appeal” if they emphasized satisfaction in gaining knowledge.

**Table 36: What is your number one motivation for learning English? - Comparison of CTLs and FASILs**

Learner category	Motivation category	Sub-category	N	Proportion of total (%)
FASILs	Internal extrinsic	Identified	12	37.5
		Integrated	12	37.5
		Category total	24	75
	Intrinsic	Aesthetic	0	0
		Intellectual	3	9.4
		Category total	3	9.4
	External extrinsic	External	5	15.6
		Introjected	0	0
		Category total	5	15.6
	Total			32
CTLs	Internal extrinsic	Identified	10	25.6
		Integrated	1	2.6
		Category total	11	28.2
	Intrinsic	Aesthetic	7	17.9
		Intellectual	5	12.8
		Category total	12	30.8
	External extrinsic	External	16	41
		Introjected	0	0
		Category total	16	41
	Total			39

Table 36 presents a comparison of responses by FASILs and CTLs to the “number one motivation for learning English” question. Perhaps the most crucial finding was the large disparity between groups in number of participants whose primary motivation fit the integrated sub-category, the most internalised and self-determined type of extrinsic motivation. 12 out of 32 FASILs reported a primary motivation that was integrated, i.e. they were motivated to learn English because they felt it was an essential aspect of their self-image or identity. Only 1 of 39 CTLs reported a number one motivation for learning English that corresponded to this category. This finding supplements the quantitative

analysis by showing that not only were FASILs more likely to be motivated for internal extrinsic reasons than were CTLs, but FASILs were much more likely than CTLs to have internalised English to the point that it was an essential aspect of their identities. Responses categorized as integrated motivation in all cases related to the participant's self-regulated desire to be part of a global community and/or to feel like an international person. The untranslated response of Adriano, one of the most proficient FASILs in the study, gives insight into how such motivation can develop through use of informal sources:

“[English] has allowed me to communicate with humanity. I would literally be excluded from the world, from a huge part of mankind, human development and human knowledge if I didn't know English.”

That only 1 CTL response qualified for the integrated motivation category, despite the fact that all CTLs were accomplished English students who, in many cases, also had substantial contact with informal sources, adds to evidence presented in Chapter 5 that classroom learning experiences may push learners away from developing English-speaker identities related to use of English in their lives out-of-class.

Table 36 shows that though only one CTL felt integrated motivation, a substantial number (N=10) had as their primary motivation the less self-determined form of internal extrinsic motivation, identified motivation, motivation to learn English because it is essential to participate in a personally-valued activity. The analysis thereby indicated that using English outside of class can be a primary reason to learn English for both FASIL and CTLs, though, unlike FASILs, CTLs very rarely internalise English to the extent that they feel it is a part of their identity.

Table 36 indicates that, by a considerable margin, the largest group of CTLs (16 out of 39, 41%) reported that they were primarily motivated to learn English due to external motivation, the least self-determined of the SDT motivation sub-categories. In comparison, only 15.6% of FASILs gave answers that corresponded to the external

motivation sub-category. Notably, the analysis found that no participant responses in either group fit the introjected regulation sub-category -- motivation to learn English in order to gain social status or to increase self-esteem.

As shown in Table 36, there was a great disparity between FASILs and CTLs in terms of intrinsic motivation (9.4% versus 30.8% respectively). The qualitative data supplement the quantitative data by revealing that the majority of intrinsic motivation responses by CTLs fit the aesthetic appeal sub-category while no FASIL response corresponded to this sub-category. Aesthetic appeal responses tended to idealize English in a very general way. For example, the CTL, Patricia, responded, "I just love everything about English. It is the most beautiful language." Her response was one of four by CTL participants in this category that mentioned "love" for the language as the key motivating factor to learn.

Only 3 out of 32 FASILs gave responses that fit the intrinsic category; all three fit the intellectual appeal sub-category. Marcela's response exemplified this sub-category: "Gaining knowledge. I enjoy learning anything." Though responses in the intellectual category did not indicate a motivation to use the language for pragmatic reasons, they tended to be less idealized and more concrete than the responses in the aesthetic appeal category.

## 6.2. Motivation change over time

**Table 37: Motivation change over time: Comparison of primary motivations at the time of the interview of FASILs and CTLs who began learning as amotivated learners**

Learner category	Motivation category	Sub-category	N	Proportion of total (%)
FASILs who began learning amotivated	Internal extrinsic	Identified	8	47.1
		Integrated	5	29.4
		Category total	13	76.5
	Intrinsic	Aesthetic	0	0
		Intellectual	3	17.6
		Category total	3	17.6
	External Extrinsic	Introjected	0	0
		External	1	5.9
		Category total	1	5.9
	Total			17
CTLs who began learning amotivated	Internal extrinsic	Identified	5	23.8
		Integrated	1	4.8
		Category total	6	28.6
	Intrinsic	Aesthetic	2	9.5
		Intellectual	3	14.3
		Category total	5	23.8
	External Extrinsic	Introjected	0	0
		External	10	47.6
		Category total	10	47.6
	Total			21

This section focuses on how language motivation changed over time for CTLs and FASILs (see Appendix I for a list of all the study participants with their mode of learning, initial motivations to learn English and primary motivation to learn English at the time of the interview).

Differences in how motivation of CTLs and FASILs developed from an initial amotivated state offer clues regarding how FASIL and CTL learning paths affect their development of attitudes towards English. Table 37, above, shows how motivation changed over time for those CTL and FASIL participants who were amotivated when they began learning English. Changes among initially amotivated participants are important to study for two reasons. Firstly, as indicated in Chapter 5 (See Table 35) the majority of participants in both groups were amotivated when they began learning English. Secondly, FASILs and CTLs who began progressing as amotivated learners were essentially blank slates without pre-formed attitudes or goals regarding English learning before starting along their different learning paths.

As shown in Chapter 5, a total of 21 CTLs were classified as being initially “amotivated” to learn English. By the time of their interviews, 10 of the 21 CTLs (47.6%) who had begun as amotivated learners were principally motivated to learn for externally dictated reasons. Of the remaining 11, five (23.8%) reported intrinsic motivation as their number one motivation to learn English. Of these, the majority gave responses characterized by generalized attitudes of fondness for the language, attitudes that they did not clarify with more specific concrete or instrumental reasons for why the language mattered to them. An exchange between Bette and the interviewer was typical:

**Interviewer:** *What is your number one motivation to learn English?*

**Bette:** *“I just love English.”*

**Interviewer:** *“Could you explain what you love about it?”*

**Bette:** *“I don’t know. I just love English and the way it sounds. I love it more than Portuguese.”*

Five CTLs who began as amotivated learners were, by the time of their interviews, primarily motivated for identified reasons. These participants generally mentioned motivation to participate in specific activities that they personally valued, activities that could only be enjoyed with knowledge of English. In some cases these activities were possible future activities that were not part of their current lives. Laila, for example, stated that her number one motivation was to be able to talk to foreigners if she studied abroad.

Only one of the 21 CTLs (4.8%), who began as amotivated learners had, by the time of the interview, a primary motivation that could be categorized as integrated motivation. Her response – *“To be able to understand all the people in the world, to be able to communicate with them. To be who I want to be”* – showed that, for her, English had become essential to her identity.

17 FASIL participants began to learn English as amotivated learners. Of these, only one had, at the time of his interview, a primary motivation that could be categorized as external motivation. This is a remarkably small number compared to the nearly 50% of initially-amotivated CTLs that, at the time of their interviews, were primarily motivated to achieve externally granted rewards. This difference is even more noteworthy when it is remembered that the FASIL and CTL participants were following similar professional paths and had grown up in similar backgrounds. It is unlikely that FASILs were less motivated than CTLs were to improve their CVs and their likelihood of getting hired.

Table 37 also indicates that as opposed to the initially-amotivated CTLs, many FASILs who began as amotivated learners had developed, by the time of their interviews, internal extrinsic motivation as their primary motivation. A total of 76.5% (13 out of 17) of initially-amotivated FASILs came to be primarily motivated for self-determined reasons – either identified motivation (N=8) or integrated motivation (N= 5) – compared with only 28.6% (6 out of 21) of initially-amotivated CTLs.

For both mode of learning groups, the number of participants whose initial motivation fit categories other than “amotivated” was relatively small. Nevertheless, similar patterns to those discussed with respect to the amotivated FASIL and CTL participants were revealed in the data. In particular, the motivation of participants who began their learning with identified motivation, i.e. motivation to excel at personally valued activities or to reach goals whose values were internally generated, changed in different ways depending on whether they were FASILs or CTLs. Of the six FASILs who reported that they had begun to learn English primarily as a tool they could use in personally valued activities, three, by the time of their interviews, reported a primary motivation to learn that fit the more internalised category, integrated motivation. No FASIL participant who began learning with identified motivation had, by the time of the interview, become primarily motivated to learn for reasons that fit the external extrinsic or intrinsic categories.

Paula, who originally began to learn English so that she would be able to read ‘Harry Potter’ in its original language, is an example of a FASIL whose initial, fairly limited identified motivation became more internalised as she came to think of herself as a member the international community. She described her primary motivation for learning English in the following way: *“To talk to the world. The world today speaks English. It’s important for me to be part of this [...]”*

The motivation of the four CTLs who had begun to learn English for identified reasons changed in very different ways compared to the FASILs in the same initial motivation category. Of the four CTLs, one reported that she was now primarily motivated for reasons connected with the joy of learning (intrinsic motivation); one was primarily motivated to achieve professional goals for which English would open doors (external motivation); and the remaining two continued to be motivated for identified reasons. The two CTL participants who continued to have primary motivation that fit the identified category gave responses that did not indicate their out-of-class relationship with English had become more internalised over time. Katerina, for example, claimed her number one motivation to learn English was: *“To be able to travel, to be able to read a book in its*

*original* [language]”, an answer that was similar to her reason for beginning to learn English, which was to be able to understand songs and watch cartoons without subtitles.

In contrast, the three FASILs who began learning with identified motivation and whose current primary motivation continued to fit that type, gave responses that demonstrated their relationships with English had become more varied and sophisticated. For example, the response of Pedro, who claimed to have begun learning English to be able to succeed at video games, indicated he now learned English for more extensive motives:

*“I need English to be able to understand whatever I encounter in the world. Because I think that the world is every day more dominated by English. In order to be able to play video games you need English. To go online, you need English. To read you need English [...].”*

A final important aspect of the motivation change over time data is related to those participants of both groups who began learning English in order to achieve externally-valued rewards. All four FASILs who began learning with external extrinsic motivation continued to report it as their primary motivation at the time of their interviews, the only change being that three participants, who had begun learning because they could not master the basics in secondary school, were now motivated by career and professional aspirations. As noted in Chapter 5, these were the only FASIL participants who began learning independently with formal resources or with informal sources in order to gain formal knowledge. At the time of their interviews, though they were now predominantly informal learners they continued to be among the only FASILs who reported that they sometimes consciously studied and practiced linguistic structures. This once again supports the possibility that there is an association between formal learning and external motivation.

## 6.3. The best thing about knowing English

### 6.3.1. Best thing about knowing English: Response categorization

The principal categories for the qualitative analysis of CTL and FASIL answers to the question, “What is the best thing about knowing English”, were once again based on the Ryan and Deci typology<sup>45</sup>. However, in order to be consistent with the focus of the “best thing about knowing English” question, the word “benefits” was substituted for “motivation”; e.g., “integrated motivation” became “integrated benefits”.

#### ***Fulfillment of self-image/identity (Integrated benefits):***

To analyse responses to the “best thing about knowing English” question and to ensure that there was no overlap between categories, strict classification criteria were followed. In order for a response to be placed in the integrated benefits category, participant responses had to clearly demonstrate that that the best thing about knowing English was either that it allowed them the participant to fulfil a personal image or cultural identity or that enabled them to feel a part of an English-speaking community.

Responses that fit this category tended to emphasise that English had changed a participant’s state of being or relationship to the world. For example, Henrique stated, “*It has to do with being a part of things. Not being left out of things.*”

The noun “world”, was mentioned several times in responses that fit this category:

- “[...]enables me to be a part of the world [...]”
- “[...] opening a world of cultures”
- “[...] communicating with the world”

Shinthya’s response was one of several FASIL responses touched on a fulfillment that was both highly-internalised and connected to day-to-day activities:

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 3, Section 3.5.4.2. for the rationale for basing categories on the SDT types.

“Being able to talk English in every-every situation, you know I think in English very often - you know, like, some things, like, I scream mentally with someone in English. I also dream it's very common, so, just living in English.”

***Relevance to personally valued activities/situations (Identified benefits)***

“Identified benefits” can apply to benefits of knowing English that have not been so internalised that they are essential elements of a person’s identity, but which nevertheless are important to the learner because they enable him or her to do or achieve something personally valued. Interview responses that fit this category varied in clear ways and were therefore further divided into three sub-categories.

*Identified Benefits (Constant Relevance)-*

Responses that fit this sub-category specifically emphasized the totality of the benefit of knowing English, one that could not be boiled down to specific activities or situations but was, in essence, a full time benefit that impacted all aspects of life. Despite their extensiveness, such benefits were not categorized as integrated because they were seen as external to the self.

*Identified Benefits (Occasional Relevance – Technology)*

Responses to this category dealt with a benefit that was occasional or part-time because it was only relevant to specific situations. These situations were seen as in some way reliant on the Internet or other recent developments in technology.

*Identified Benefits (Occasional Relevance – Traditional)*

Responses to this category described a benefit that was occasional or part-time because it was only relevant to specific situations. Unlike the previous category, this category corresponded to benefits that were not reliant on new technology, and were, therefore, accessible pre-Internet.

For occasional relevance, the default category was traditional. Only if it was made clear in the response that the benefit was connected to technology could it qualify as occasional relevance – technology. In a handful of cases it was necessary to refer to a participant's responses to other interview questions to verify that the benefit he/she named involved the Internet. For example, if the participant stated the best thing about knowing English is understanding television, it was necessary to check previous responses to see if that participant relied on the Internet to interact with television (downloading or streaming shows, for example). Since all participants were asked how they interacted with media that they regularly used, verifying this information was a matter of reviewing the answer to the question on the participant's interview profile that referred to how the specific informal source was used.

### ***Identified benefits (constant relevance) – Examples***

Participants whose responses indicated that the best thing about knowing English was its constant relevance to their lives used words such as “access”, “all”, “everything”, and “knowledge”. The word “access” was used by 7 of the 15 total participants whose responses qualified for this sub-category. The following are excerpts of responses with the word, “access”:

- “[...] to have access to new knowledge, to new visions of the world [...]”
- “To be able to have access to many more things [...]”
- “To be able to have access to a global culture [...]”

Participants in the identified benefits (constant relevance) sub-category felt that benefits to knowing English were not specific to one activity or goal, but rather applied to all aspects of their lives, at all times. The importance of knowing English to these participants was that they never became limited or restricted. The response of the FASIL participant, Lucia, exemplified this perspective:

*“Mostly for knowledge itself. To know that I am not restricted from this by not knowing English. I like to be able to plan for any goal without limit.”*

The response of Tomas, a hybrid CTL, also emphasized the importance of a lack of restriction, and the totality of the benefit of knowing English: *“I can speak and understand all things at all times [...]”*

Though participants in this group did not claim that the main benefit/use of knowing English was a transformation of their self-image or cultural identity, the main benefit for them -- an ability to navigate through the world without restrictions -- can be seen as all encompassing.

#### ***Identified benefits (occasional relevance – technology) – Examples***

Benefits of knowing English that fit this category were benefits that implied the use of technology in specific and limited activities and contexts. Pedro’s response is an excellent example:

*“The best thing about knowing English is that it opens up literature to me, which is my biggest passion, and also I am able to communicate online to people who appreciate literature but who don’t know Portuguese.”*

For Leonardo, the best thing about knowing English was, *“Being able to understand television.”* This response was categorized under “technology” after referencing his earlier interview responses regarding television in which he reported that he downloaded his favourite television shows and that he used *Google Translate* to verify the meaning of jokes on series.

### ***Identified benefits (occasional relevance – traditional)***

Responses that qualified for this sub-category referred to benefits that could have existed before the advent of the Internet. The following are examples of responses that qualified for this category:

- *“To be able to talk to somebody from a different country and live outside of the country.”*
- *“To have the ability to travel or study abroad without difficulty.”*
- *“Knowing how to do things when the opportunity comes up.”*

### ***Intrinsic benefits – enjoyment of learning, intellectual)*** ***Intrinsic benefits – enjoyment of learning, aesthetic)***

Sub-categories for intrinsic benefits were the same as those used in the motivation analyses: intellectual and aesthetic appeal. Participant responses that indicated the main benefit of knowing English was the satisfaction of learning for its own sake were placed in the intellectual sub-category while those who felt the best thing about knowing English was a more abstract joy connected to the beauty of the language, or fun learning, qualified for the aesthetic sub-category. Silvio’s response is typical of the intellectual appeal sub-category: *“I become really happy when I learn something in English like ‘once upon a time’.”* Sofia’s response is typical of the aesthetic appeal sub-category: *“I think it’s pretty and I like learning it.”*

### ***Self esteem/pride (introjected benefits)***

Participant responses that fit the introjected classification described feelings of satisfaction linked to being able to do things that others could not, benefits related to increased status, social worth, and self-esteem. More than 50% of responses in this category featured the word *“orgulho”* which means “pride” in English. The following excerpts from responses refer to these sorts of rewards:

- “Knowing things that other people don’t know [...]”
- “When you speak another language, it’s like you go up a level.”
- “[...] being able to speak English, something that not everybody can do. A question of pride.”

***Career enhancement (external benefits)***

Responses that indicated the best thing about learning English was gaining an externally endorsed reward fit the external benefits category. Of those participants whose responses fit this category, all mentioned ‘CV’ or ‘career’ as the main benefit.

***Transformative benefits***

An unexpected, but highly illuminating, aspect of the data was that many participants considered English benefits so impactful and extensive that they saw them as having transformed their identity and/or place in the world. These responses corresponded to two categories: *integrated benefits* and *identified benefits* (constant relevance).

To compare the numbers of FASILs and CTLs who reported transformative benefits, the analysis summed the number of participants in each group that claimed integrated benefits, indicating that English had become an essential part of their self-image, with the number of respondents who reported identified benefits (constant relevance), indicating the life-changing constant instrumental benefits of knowing English:

$$\text{Transformative Benefits} = \text{Integrated Benefits} + \text{Identified Benefits (Constant Relevance)}$$

**6.3.2. Best thing about knowing English – Analysis**

Table 38, below, compares responses by FASILs and CTLs to the “best thing about knowing English” question. The table presents the category and sub-category totals for internal extrinsic, intrinsic, and external extrinsic benefits. The following table (Table

38.2) shows total transformative benefits – the sum of integrated and identified benefits (constant relevance) – for each group.

**Table 38: "What is the best thing about knowing English?" - Comparison of CTLs and FASILs**

Learner category	Benefit category	Sub-category	N	Proportion of total (%)	
FASILs	Internal extrinsic	Integrated	10	31.25	
		Identified	Constant relevance	10	31.25
			Occasional relevance (technology)	7	21.9
			Occasional relevance (traditional)	1	3.1
			Sub-category total	18	56.25
		Category total	28	87.5	
	Intrinsic	Aesthetic	0	0	
		Knowledge	2	6.25	
		Category total	2	6.25	
	External extrinsic	External	0	0	
		Introjected	2	6.25	
		Category total	2	6.25	
	Total		32	100	
	CTLs	Internal extrinsic	Integrated	2	5.1
			Identified	Constant relevance	5
Occasional relevance (technology)				6	15.4
Occasional relevance (traditional)				6	15.4
Sub-category total				17	43.6
Category total			19	48.7	
Intrinsic		Aesthetic	2	5.1	
		Knowledge	2	5.1	
		Category total	4	10.3	
External extrinsic		External	5	12.8	
		Introjected	11	28.2	
		Category total	16	41	
Total			39	100	

**Table 39: FASILs versus CTLs, transformative benefits**

<b>Learner Category</b>	<b>Benefit Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Proportion of total (%)</b>
FASILs	Transformative benefits total	20	62.5
CTLs	Transformative benefits total	7	17.9

***Transformative benefits***

Arguably, the most notable piece of data from responses to the “the best thing about knowing English” question was the very high number of FASIL participants (20 of 32) who felt the primary benefit/use of knowing English was that it transformed their lives either by allowing them “to be part of mankind” (integrated benefit), or by giving them “total access”, the ability to “read and understand everything [...] everything on the Internet, music, academic articles. Everything,” (identified benefits – constant relevance). In comparison to 62.5% of FASILs, 17.9% of CTLs (7 out of 39) gave answers that indicated they felt the primary benefit of knowing English was transformative.

The 17.9 percent of CTLs is actually a substantial number when it is considered that the all-encompassing role of English in the daily lives of EFL learners has rarely been pointed out in the SLA literature. However, the fact that FASILs were far more likely than CTLs to feel their knowledge of English had been so useful as to transform their place in the world implies that formal, guided learning is not prerequisite to gaining significant practical benefits from English knowledge and may in fact impede it. It is important to note that the constant relevance of English in the contemporary world (as described by participants such as Melissa in the quote above) includes “everything”, not only accessing and enjoying informal media but also more formal instrumental benefits such as academic performance and career guidance. It does not seem likely that such a complete life benefit would be more pertinent to FASILs than to CTLs.

There is a qualitative difference between the integrated benefits category and the identified benefits (constant relevance) category though both are seen here as “transformative”. First we will discuss integrated benefits responses.

As can be seen in Table 38, a much higher percentage of FASILs (31%) than CTLs (5%) reported that the best thing about knowing English were highly internal, integrated benefits. This result was consistent with findings regarding primary motivation that revealed FASILs were much more likely than CTLs to be motivated to learn because they had acquired a transnational, multi-lingual identity or felt that English was an aspect of their personality. FASIL responses to the “best thing about knowing English” question, however, also revealed something that was less apparent in responses to the primary motivation question. This was that while most participants felt that knowing English fulfilled them, they were also enthusiastic about the instrumental benefits in their day-to-day lives that English brought them. Roberto’s response, for example, demonstrated clearly that he considered his international identity to be essential while at the same time appreciating the practical benefits that went along with it:

“I mean I am not just Brazilian. This is the most important thing. I-I can talk to a lot of people that I wouldn’t be able to talk to otherwise, and we are on the same level [...] like when I could talk to the German guy, and then after, uh, some people I met from other countries, and I can communicate with no barriers. That’s so amazing for me. I don’t know, I like, I like the feeling of being able to talk to people and being able to move through my life ... with access to everything I need, when, uh, just a f-few years ago, I was limited because I was just Brazilian.”

Table 38 also shows that FASILs were more likely than CTLs to say that the best thing about knowing English was its constant value as an instrumental tool that brought broad, constant benefits -- *identified benefits* (constant relevance) --enabling access to a range of opportunities that would otherwise be closed to them. Though a higher percentage of FASIL than CTL responses fit (31.25% versus 12.8% respectively) this category, the total number of participant (15 out of 71; 21.1%) who fit the category demonstrates just how functionally relevant English can be in the daily lives of English users in a non-English speaking country. The response of Davide, which details the extensive instrumental benefits that knowing English brings to him, highlights the fact that for many Central

Brazilians English occupies a role which may be better described as a second first language than a second language:

“The answer to that question is access to information, um, I see that knowing English gives me the...the opportunity to read a lot more about everything, everywhere. The most interesting content in [sic] the Internet, for instance, is in English ... I can r-read easily, I won't have a hard time finding information about almost everything, um, and that-that includes other languages ... Like, now, I'm studying German, it's much easier to find books and, um, sites and forums about German learning in English than than in Portuguese, so that's an advantage ... and I extend that to music, to movies, to series, to books, to my field [...].”

The access that Davide mentions would clearly be pertinent to both CTLs and FASILs. The fact that CTLs mention it less often as a primary benefit implies that despite spending large sums of money on an English education, they often do not gain valuable benefits available to them in real life. The possibility that classroom learners are steered away from the transformational, global benefits of English due to, perhaps, a formal orientation towards language and an external locus of perceived causality, recalls the quote by Reinders and White (2011: 2), previously referenced in the literature review:

“... access to, for example, authentic materials or native speakers can be detrimental if learners are not prepared or supported for this. Reliance on technology can, for example, discourage learners from memorizing new vocabulary when they have direct access to an online dictionary.”

Unmediated “access” to the global community and to English language texts, celebrated by the majority of FASILs as the major benefit of knowing English, calls the quote into question. The internal extrinsic motivation to have this unrestricted access and, in many cases, along with it, a fully integrated transnational identity, is, according to the multiple regression analysis presented in Chapter 4, the most significant unique contributor to

successful English acquisition. In the minds of the top learners, it is independence and control that are paramount. As Maria, a hybrid CTL, stated in her response, the best thing about knowing English is, *“Being independent [...]. I don’t need anybody to filter what was said.”*

### ***Identified benefits (occasional relevance)***

Nevertheless, the high number of CTL participants whose responses to the “best thing about knowing English” question fit one of the three identified benefits sub-categories shows that CTLs, like FASILs, often value English as a key to achieving real life goals, though it does not hold as complete a place in their lives. Table 38.1 shows that similar percentages of FASILs and CTLs (25% of FASILs versus 30.8% of CTLs) believed the best thing about knowing English was that it enabled them to do personally-valued activities or to reach personal goals that were occasionally relevant to their lives, rather than at all times. Though identified benefits (occasional relevance -- technology) does not qualify as transformative, most responses in this sub-category did indicate that the best thing about knowing English is its instrumental value to one or more personally valued activities engaged in on a regular basis. All 7 FASILs and 5 out of 6 CTL participants in the occasional relevance (technology) sub-category mentioned a benefit that was enjoyed on a predictable, generally daily, basis. Additionally, the one FASIL who gave an occasional relevance (traditional) response also mentioned that the principal benefit of knowing English was that she was able to engage in her favourite activity (reading original English literature) on a daily basis.

The only responses that fit internal extrinsic benefits sub-categories and did not mention that the primary benefit of English was its day-to-day value, were given by seven CTLs, one in the occasional relevance (technology category) and six in the occasional relevance (traditional) category. For these participants, the principal benefit of English was either its value at occasional, unpredictable moments when understanding or using English would help them to do something personally important, e.g. *“If I need to talk to somebody in the world’s language”*, or, in two cases, the possibility that one day English would be

instrumental to achieving an as yet unplanned long-range personal goal, e.g. *“To have the ability to study abroad or travel without difficulty.”*

Thus, according to the analysis 87.5 % (28 out of 32) of FASILs, all of whose responses fit the internal extrinsic sub-categories, reported that the best thing about knowing English was related to the enjoyment of constant or daily internally valued benefits. A smaller but, nevertheless, substantial percentage of CTLs – 28.2 % (11 out of 39)<sup>46</sup> reported that the best thing about knowing English was that, on at least a daily basis, English was crucial to enjoying internally valued benefits. These numbers continue to support the fact that the role of English in the daily lives of English learners who live in non-English speaking countries is significant. They also provide further evidence that FASILs more often take advantage of the benefits of using English in the real world than CTLs do.

### ***The joy of learning for its own sake – Intrinsic benefits***

Few FASILs (6.3%) or CTLs (10.3%) felt that the best thing about knowing English was the abstract enjoyment of learning the language. In some ways this was to be expected since benefits of knowing English are likely to be connected to lived experience, which would seem to correspond to the instrumental value of the language rather than an appreciation of the language as an abstract concept.

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<sup>46</sup> This number subtracts the 6 CTL participants who reported identified benefits which were not constantly relevant or relevant on a regular basis to their lives from the total CTL number in the internal extrinsic category.

**Table 40: Differences between FASILs and CTLs regarding their primary motivation for learning English and the best thing about knowing the language**

Learner category	Motivation category	Sub-category	Primary motivation		Primary benefit	
			N	Proportion of total (%)	n	Proportion of total (%)
FASILs	Internal extrinsic	Identified	12	37.5	18	56.25
		Integrated	12	37.5	10	31.25
		Category total	24	75	28	87.5
	Intrinsic	Intellectual	3	9.4	2	6.25
		Aesthetic	0	0	0	0
		Category total	3	9.4	2	6.25
	External extrinsic	External	5	15.6	0	0
		Introjected	0	0	2	6.25
		Category total	5	15.6	2	6.25
	Total			32	100	32
CTLs	Internal extrinsic	Identified	10	25.6	17	43.6
		Integrated	1	2.6	2	5.1
		Category total	11	28.2	19	48.7
	Intrinsic	Intellectual	5	12.8	2	5.1
		Aesthetic	7	17.9	2	5.1
		Category total	12	30.8	4	10.3
	External extrinsic	External	16	41	5	12.8
		Introjected	0	0	11	28.2
		Category total	16	41	16	41
	Total			39	100	39

As shown in Table 40, above, the responses of the FASIL group to the primary benefit question were consistent with their responses to the primary motivation question regarding intrinsic motivation/benefits. There was almost no difference between the number of FASILs whose primary motivation was intrinsic motivation and the number of FASILs who felt that the primary benefits of knowing English were intrinsic, connected to the joy of learning for its own sake. On the other hand, CTLs were three times as likely to report that their primary reason for learning was joy of learning than that the best thing

about English was the joy of learning it. The disparity between responses to the two questions by CTLs, not just in the intrinsic category but in other categories as well, implies that the real life benefits that CTLs most experience are, to an extent, divorced from their conceptions of English learning and their motivations to pursue it. This suggests that they possibly compartmentalize learning English and using English. FASILs, on the other hand, seem to base their motivation to learn English on their lived experience with the language.

### ***Pride and self-esteem (External benefits)***

There was one principal inconsistency between primary motivation and primary benefits for the FASIL group. This occurred within the external benefits sub-category. Five FASILs stated in their interviews that their primary motivation for learning English was external motivation (in four of five cases this motivation was related to career). No FASILs, however, felt the best thing about knowing English was enhancement of career or gaining a specific external reward. This discrepancy was not surprising given that all study participants were full-time students at the time of their interviews. Thus, English knowledge would most likely not yet have benefited their careers.

Two FASILs (6.3%) did state that the best thing about knowing English was connected to pride and self-esteem (introjected motivation). Both felt the best thing about knowing English was the enhanced status that came from being able to use English in ways that others could not. Though only two FASILs considered social status and pride to be primary benefits that came from knowing English, several FASILs responded to other questions in their interviews in ways that indicated they believed English knowledge brought them a higher social standing.

There was a major difference in CTL responses to the primary motivation question and the primary benefit question within the external extrinsic sub-categories. Whereas 16 CTLs asserted in their interviews that their “number one motivation” for learning English was external motivation – motivation to gain rewards that were externally endorsed (in

almost all cases the rewards concerned career enhancement) -- only five (12.8%) felt the best thing about knowing English had to do with externally granted rewards. The other 11 felt the best thing about knowing English had to do with introjected benefits --social prestige or acceptance.

As with the FASILs, it was not surprising that relatively few CTLs reported the best thing about knowing English had to do with professional rewards given the fact that they were all still full-time students. However, the relatively large number of CTL participants who stated the primary benefits of knowing English had to do with enhanced pride and social status was surprising since no participant had stated a primary motivation to learn English that corresponded to the introjected sub-category.

Surprisingly, only one CTL mentioned that her feelings of pride in English knowledge resulted from achievements or activity in the classroom. Rather, benefits were predominantly connected with status that came from use of English in real life situations. 64% (7 out of 11) of the CTLs whose responses fit the introjected benefits category specifically linked these benefits to everyday experiences in which their English knowledge gave them a special or superior status compared to others (e.g., helping friends or family members with real life tasks; being able to engage successfully in activities that were closed to others).

Data from responses that fit the introjected category, in addition to evidence from the analysis of other categories, indicate CTLs are aware of the functional usefulness of English in their out-of-class lives though they are considerably less likely than FASILs to take full advantage of it or to value English based on highly personalised, internally generated criteria. Furthermore, the fact that CTLs are aware of the importance of English in out-of-class situations does not seem to greatly impact their conception of English learning as something formal, engaged in, primarily, for externally motivated reasons. The analysis offers more support for the hypothesis that CTLs may fossilize in their learner identities, possibly impeding independent acquisition in informal situations

which, in turn, could limit their ability to access the full benefits of English knowledge that are available to them.

#### **6.4. “What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?”**

##### **6.4.1. Most important English learning Experience – Categorization of responses**

Following Kuckartz (2014), categories were designed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. All responses were assigned to one of the following two major categories:

- **Controlled use**
- **Naturalistic use**

##### **Controlled use**

A participant’s most important English learning experience was classified as “controlled use” if it occurred within a structured, artificial situation where English was used either:

- a) in a planned activity or lesson in a school;
- b) as part of a scripted performance/simulation/or scheduled event unrelated to school; or
- c) was related to a formal academic evaluation.

Controlled use was further divided into “**externally directed**” and “**independently directed**”. The independently directed subcategory reflects the possibility that even in non-naturalistic settings, such as classrooms, spontaneous use situations can occur (Krashen, 1981).

##### **Controlled Use – Independently directed**

Participants’ most important English learning experiences were categorized as “controlled use –independently directed” if, though the actual event occurred outside of everyday life in a controlled environment, it came about because of the planning and

choices of the participant and/or the participant tied the importance of the moment to an unpredictable, personal discovery about English.

Examples of controlled use-independently directed experiences include the independent decision of a learner to take a test offered by an organization or an online site as a means for personal evaluation. An example of this was the most important learning experience of Hugo, a FASIL, who independently decided to take a TOEFL test online and derived personal satisfaction from the realization that he had progressed without the help of formal instruction.

Another example of a controlled use-independently directed experience was the most important learning experience of Beatriz, a CTL, who, to prepare for a consulate visa interview, decided to take private lessons in which she and the teacher prepared for the interview. The experience of Beatriz was categorized as independently directed because she sought out the private teacher to specifically teach her content that she was partially responsible in choosing.

The most commonly cited controlled use-independently directed experience was participation in this research study. Two CTLs and one FASIL cited the experience due to their personal satisfaction at being able to use the language for a practical purpose.

### **Controlled use - Externally directed**

Responses were categorized as “controlled use-externally directed” if the most important learning experience came about as part of a planned activity through which the participant was led. Moments that qualified as externally directed were ones in which the activity was experienced in an expected way, based on the control and decisions of an external authority.

Examples from the interviews of externally controlled “most important English learning experiences” include the following: satisfaction upon completing, with other classmates, a semester long textbook and moving on to the next level; a learner’s stand-up comedy

presentation, done following the guidelines assigned by a teacher; achievement of a high mark on a language school's end of semester oral test.

### **Naturalistic use**

If a most important learning experience happened spontaneously as part of the everyday life of the participant, it was categorized as "naturalistic use". The category, naturalistic use, was further divided into naturalistic use (online) and naturalistic use (offline).

#### **Naturalistic use (online)**

A participant's most important English learning experience response was categorized as naturalistic use (online) if the experience involved the use of Internet technology integrated into the participants' everyday life rather than externally controlled as part of a structured, planned activity. The sub-category was further classified as either "**interpersonal English communication**" or "**non-interpersonal English use**".

Naturalistic online interpersonal English communication involved turn-taking communication in English with other people. Examples of this included: an e-mail-based friendship conducted in English with a French girl after an initial meeting in Paris; a business deal conducted over social media with native speakers over an extended period of time; joking and laughing with online video game companions from other countries.

Naturalistic online experiences qualified as "non-interpersonal English use" if they happened online but did not involve a second English speaker. Examples of these experiences included watching downloaded television or searching for work related information available online.

#### **Naturalistic use (offline)**

The subcategory, naturalistic use (offline), refers to "most important learning experiences" that could conceivably have occurred before the advent of the Internet. As with the naturalistic use (online) sub-category, the offline sub-category was further divided into "interpersonal English communication" and "non-interpersonal use".

Experiences were categorized as naturalistic use (offline) if they involved the use of media -- e.g. television -- as long as this media use did not rely on Internet technology. To correctly categorize answers that mentioned generalized use of media such as television/film and music<sup>47</sup> as offline or online, the researcher referred to responses to previous interview questions dealing with the particular informal source mentioned by the participant. The researcher then verified if a participant's use of the media source in question relied on the Internet.

Example responses of naturalistic use (offline – non-interpersonal English use) included dreaming in English, reading a book (for leisure rather than for a classroom assignment) in English for the first time, and watching a Brazilian reporter for the Olympics interview foreign athletes in English on television.

#### **Naturalistic use (offline – interpersonal communication in English)**

Responses that fit the sub-category, naturalistic use (offline -- interpersonal English communication) referred to experiences marked by turn-taking exchanges in English that did not involve the Internet, such as asking for directions in English while abroad, making friends and communicating with American exchange students, explaining a restaurant menu to tourists in Brasilia, or meeting and conversing in English with a French national in French Guyana.

#### **6.4.2. The most important English language learning experience – analysis of responses**

This section analyses responses to “the most important English language learning experience” question. The analysis at times refers to Table 41, below, which shows how FASIL and CTL responses were distributed across the categories and sub-categories defined in the previous section.

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<sup>47</sup>In these cases, participants did not respond to the question by mentioning “a single moment” in their learning experience (e.g., a specific moment experienced with television or music) despite being asked for a specific moment in follow-up clarification of the question.

#### 6.4.2.1 Controlled use by CTLs

The overall response pattern by CTLs to the most important English learning experience question was unexpected. As shown in Table 41, the responses of only 30.8% of the CTLs (12 out of 39) fit the controlled use category. This meant that nearly 70% of CTLs considered their most important English learning experience to have happened naturalistically, as part of their everyday lives, in a spontaneous use, real-world environment, rather than in a controlled or classroom environment. Furthermore, the majority of controlled use most important experiences reported by CTLs, though they occurred in non-naturalistic environments, fit spontaneous “acquisition” rather than conscious “learning” as distinguished in the Krashen (1981) dichotomy.

Of the six CTL responses that were classified as **controlled use–externally directed**, all occurred in schools. However, none of these referred to an activity or exercise that involved the conscious practice/learning of a linguistic structure, and only two involved participation in an assigned classroom activity.

Most CTLs in this sub-category had most important learning experiences that were in some way linked to the ability to use English in authentic contexts. For example, while three CTLs had most important learning experiences involving official assessment by a school, two of three stated that the experience was important to them because they believed they could now function in the English-speaking world. Romano’s is an example of this:

(Romano)

*“I think at the end of the regular course when I entered advanced conversation classes because we were told we were at the point where we only spoke and wrote in English, so [...] it gave the impression that you were already able to go to a country and speak in English.”*

**Table 41: “What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?” – Comparison of CTLs and FASILs**

Learner category	Use category	Sub-category	N	Proportion of total (%)	
CTLs	Naturalistic	Online	Interpersonal English communication	0	
			Non-interpersonal English use	2	
			Sub-category total	2	5.1
		Offline	Interpersonal English communication	20	
			Non-interpersonal English use	5	
			Sub-category total	25	64
	Category total			27	69.2
	Controlled	Externally directed		6	
		Independently directed		6	
		Category total		12	30.8
	Total			39	100

**Table 41, continued.**

Learner category	Use category	Sub-category	N	Proportion of total (%)	
FASILs	Naturalistic	Online <sup>48</sup>	Interpersonal English communication	3	
			Non-interpersonal English use	5	
			Sub-category total	8	25
		Offline	Interpersonal English communication	12	
			Non-interpersonal English use	6	
			Sub-category total	18	56.25
	Category total			26	81.25
	Controlled	Externally directed		0	
		Independently directed		6	
		Category total		6	18.75
	Total			32	100

<sup>48</sup>Note that one FASIL's most important controlled use experience also happened online.

Two other CTL participants in the controlled use–externally directed sub-category mentioned moments that involved, to some extent, authentic English use in the real world. Though Felipe’s stand-up comedy routine was a structured activity assigned by his teacher, it was a moment of individual use while studying abroad where his goal was to entertain non-Brazilian class members while using informal English as a *lingua-franca*. Notably, Felipe was the only participant who mentioned a most important experience that involved school-directed, simulated interaction.

Finally, Leantho’s most important English learning experience, though it occurred in a classroom, involved use of informal, authentic sources:

*“It was the first time I watched a film without subtitles in class and I was able to understand everything by myself [...].”*

Thus, even in the controlled use–externally directed category, all specific most important learning moments<sup>49</sup> referred to by CTLs were linked to use in the real world and none were activities or exercises that featured conscious learning of grammatical structures or rules.

The final two CTL participants in this sub-category did not mention specific learning moments but, rather, general or repeated ones that suggested they were dependent on school methodology. Matheus’ most important learning experience, *“the sensation of moving up a level [...].”*, happened on a regular basis and involved being given a fresh level textbook that made him feel he had accomplished something. Marta’s two-word response to the “most important learning experience” question was “English school”.

There were also six CTLs who reported most important English learning experiences that fit the **controlled use–independently directed** sub-category. All six described

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<sup>49</sup> Two of the responses in this sub-category did not refer to specific learning moments.

experiences that involved use of authentic language. For five of the six, the experiences, though they happened in controlled, non-naturalistic environments, involved spontaneous practice with expert users of the language. Two of the participants mentioned their experiences in the present study, being interviewed by a native speaker. Two other participants mentioned as their most important learning experiences listening to or interacting with a native-speaking English teacher who veered from planned lesson content to informal, spontaneous chat about everyday life. For both of these participants, it was the spontaneous, extra-curricular use of the language that appealed to them as well as the authenticity of the content. For example, Ingrid, a seven-year classroom learner, considered her most important English learning experience significant due to the motivational impact of the informality and authenticity of the language she listened to:

*“I had an American teacher who was really extroverted and loved to talk in English in day-to-day language and it motivated me to hear his accent and more authentic vocabulary.”*

Sofia makes almost the identical point about the power of language used authentically and experienced spontaneously:

*“I had an English teacher from England. He talked about his personal life [...]. He put the boring grammar part of the class in the middle of the class, but at the beginning and end [...] we talked to him about our normal lives, and this was fun.”*

Only one participant, Beatriz, in the controlled use–independently directed sub-category, reported consciously learning or practicing a specific grammatical structure as an aspect of her most important learning experience. As mentioned above, she asked a private teacher to help her practice specific vocabulary in order to prepare for an upcoming visa interview.

The analysis of CTL responses that fit into the controlled use sub-categories reveals that in classrooms and other controlled English use situations, the great majority of English learning experiences that were considered most important involved authentic input and/or a link to everyday life. Surprisingly, there was no response that referred to collaborative learning in which peers worked together to complete a task or reach a common goal. Thus, the majority of CTLs within the controlled use category, despite years of communicative classroom experience, mentioned isolated moments of personal discovery and use of authentic language as the most significant English learning events in their learning careers.

#### 6.4.2.2. Controlled use by FASILs

As shown in Table 41, 18.75% (6 out of 32) percent of FASILs reported that the most important English learning experience of their lives happened in non-naturalistic environments. Though this is a smaller percentage than the 30.8% of CTLs, the numbers are quite similar considering that CTLs, as opposed to FASILs, spent so many years studying in classrooms.

As would be expected, no FASIL reported a most important learning experience which fit the controlled use-externally directed category. Six FASILs, however, reported most important English learning experiences that fit into the controlled use-independently directed category.

FASIL experiences that fit the **controlled use-independently directed category** differed from those of CTLs in the same category in at least one notable way. In contrast to several CTLs, all FASILs in this sub-category explicitly noted why their learning experience was important for them. These data once more suggest that FASILs, though engaged in informal use, rather than conscious learning behaviour, are often reflective about themselves as learners.

Five of six FASIL participants in this sub-category actively chose to participate in controlled activities that featured English. For two FASILs, participation in model UNs was their most important English learning experience. One of these, Davide, believed his model UN experience was important because it was moment when he became aware that he had acquired a high level of English ability. On the other hand, for Diego, the model UN experience was important because, immersed in an English language community, he was forced to think in English for an extended period of time. Thus, he valued the sensation of having internalised the language. Model UN experiences recall the Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) article that compared a group of high school learners preparing for a college entrance exam to learners in the same school whose English instruction was focused on participation in an invented community of practice, a model UN. Though Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide focus on the motivational effect of contextualized use situations, there are key differences between the learning situation in their study and the experiences of the two FASILs mentioned above. Firstly, the FASILs, as opposed to participants in Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide's (2008) study, actively sought to participate in extra-curricular model UNs based on their own interests in politics. They shared this experience with others who had similar interests. Secondly, though English use was necessary for participation, learning English was not the purpose of the activity. Substantial English practice was a by-product of engagement.

Two other participants in the controlled use-independently directed category reported most important learning experiences they actively sought out. Both participants, Ida and Hugo, reported seeking out English proficiency tests. They considered these learning experiences important precisely because the exams confirmed that they had, in fact, learned the language to a high level without ever studying formally.

The experiences of both Ida and Hugo, who initially learned largely through solitary, receptive activities, suggest that motivation developed internally through engagement in

personalised learning environments can lead to successful acquisition of both informal and formal English as well as autonomous reflectivity, marked by self-evaluation of language knowledge.

(Ida)

*“I took a test to get a certificate to study abroad. I had never taken a test in my life in English and when I got a very good result it showed that I really had learned the language on my own.”*

Though a number of FASILs tied their most important English learning experiences to confirmation of language ability that happened in controlled use, non-naturalistic settings, many more reported most important learning experiences in which they became aware of their language achievement while using the language naturalistically<sup>50</sup>. This was also the case with CTLs.

#### **6.4.2.3. Naturalistic use (online) – CTLs versus FASILs**

As shown in Table 41, most participants in both groups-- 69.2 % of CTLs (27 out of 39) compared to 81.25% of FASILs (26 out of 32) -- reported that the most important English learning moments of their lives occurred while using English in naturalistic situations. This section will explore similarities and differences between FASIL and CTL “most important English learning experiences” that were categorized as naturalistic (online) use experiences.

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<sup>50</sup>Note that participants were not asked in the interview question to explain why they chose a moment as their most important learning experience. Many, however, volunteered this information.

A crucial difference between FASILs and CTLs in the naturalistic category was that a much higher percentage of FASILs than of CTLs reported that their most important learning experiences happened online (28.1% versus 5.1%)<sup>51</sup>.

In light of this finding, it should be noted once again that screening forms as well as quantitative and qualitative strands of data analysis showed that there was no difference between FASIL and CTL access to new technology. Furthermore, based on quantitative findings reported in Chapter 4, it seems highly unlikely that the discrepancy between groups was due to significant differences regarding interest in English language pop-culture.

Most important learning experiences of FASILs that fit the naturalistic online use sub-category were not only more numerous but covered a larger range of Internet use, both formal and informal, than did those reported by CTLs. The responses also described deeper and more sustained engagement. The two CTLs whose most important experiences relied on the Internet, reported experiences that involved relatively superficial use of Internet sites – downloaded television -- that they did not suggest resulted in continued or deeper use of English. The experience of understanding television programs without subtitles, downloaded from the web, was Luciana’s most important English learning experience because it was “cool”. In contrast, though Adriano, a FASIL, reported a similar most important learning experience that he stated he valued because it was a preliminary step that built confidence in his language ability and led to more involved, active use of the Internet.

Of the FASIL most important learning moments that happened naturalistically online, 37.5% (3 of 8) involved direct interpersonal communication in English. A fourth FASIL considered his daily engagement in asynchronous communication in order to accomplish IT work-related tasks as his most important English learning experience. Neither of the

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<sup>51</sup>This figure includes the FASIL, Hugo, the only study participant whose experience, though categorized as controlled use, happened online.

CTLs whose most important learning experiences happened naturalistically online reported an experience that qualified as interpersonal communication in English. Considering that quantitative findings showed that CTLs had a significantly higher percentage of productive practice during their English development than did FASILs, it is interesting to note that only FASILs reported most important experiences that happened online and involved productive and communicative use of the language. An excellent example of a FASIL most important learning experience that occurred online and involved interpersonal communication is the following experience reported by Edu:

*“The first time I received a message from somebody connected to the area of IT in the United States, from Silicon Valley. [...] And these people were interested in [my Twitter] account because they had registered something with the same name and they asked me to trade the account to them. At first I was resistant but their project was sensational. They wanted to pay me, but I gave them my site. I wound up forming a professional connection with them that I expect will be very helpful to me. And we exchanged many messages, text and email. They introduced me to someone in Belgium to start a social network site, similar to Facebook and I met a lot of people that way. This made me quite happy. It was when English helped me most in my life. I realized I could do these things because I knew English.”*

Edu’s experience is highly relevant to this study for several reasons. Firstly it illustrates the instrumental benefits that the Internet can offer to people living outside of English speaking countries by facilitating complex, functional interpersonal and intercultural engagement with English and the global community. Secondly, in the experience that Edu reported, he tapped the formal, professional benefits of using English online that, in their interviews, many more FASILs than CTLs mentioned having experienced, despite the fact that career benefits are the reported primary learning goals of many more FASILs than

CTLs in this study. Finally, Edu is an example of an English user whose learning path began incidentally, through solitary and mostly receptive contact with informal sources, yet resulted in advanced knowledge of both formal and informal English and the ability to use English in complicated social interactions. In a response to an earlier interview question, Edu estimated that 90% of his English development occurred through receptive (reading/listening) activities.

Edu's most important learning experience offers more evidence that face-to-face interaction, peer collaboration and teacher support as well as productive output at early stages of learning are not pre-requisite to the future autonomous and interpersonal use of highly advanced English skills. It suggests that foreign English learners can become willing and effective real-world communicators through an initial, mostly solitary, silent "apprentice" period of heavy exposure to personally valued, authentic, comprehensible input from the virtual real world community of practice that now exists online.

#### **6.4.2.4. Naturalistic use (offline – individual use of English) – CTLs versus FASILs**

A similar percentage of CTLs (12.8%) and FASILs (18.75%) reported that the most important English learning experience of their lives happened naturalistically, offline, in moments that did not involve turn-taking communication in English. The analysis of responses that fit this sub-category revealed a similarity between the groups regarding types of experiences as well as reasons why these experiences were important. The majority of both CTL and FASIL responses in this sub-category tied the importance of experiences to a realization of the important role English played or could play in their lives. Several participants in both groups credited the practical relevance of these experiences for giving them motivation to continue learning. For other participants, the accomplishment of personal goals helped them to realize that they had mastered English to the extent that their sense of self had changed and broadened. The experiences of every CTL and FASIL participant in this sub-category involved an internal connection with the language.

Internal discovery of English, marked by thinking in the language, was mentioned by several CTLs and FASILs. The CTL, Leonardo, and the FASIL, Marco, discussed very similar experiences in which they dreamed in English and afterwards felt that this indicated a new-found mastery of the language. For these participants, the dreaming was an important sign that they could “think in English”:

(Leonardo)

*“There was a time I dreamed in English. It was so cool because there were words that I dreamed that I didn’t even know existed. And after they stayed in my head and I looked them up [...] There were many words that I didn’t know and in the dream I spoke them fluently.”*

Leonardo’s explanation of the dream’s importance focuses on his fluency and the fact that English use had, at least during the dream, become automatic. His answer to the best thing about knowing English question when viewed in light of his reported most important learning experience suggests that he had the goal of internalising English to the same degree he had internalised his first language, Portuguese.

*“[...] I want to be able to speak just like I speak in Portuguese. So the best thing is when I am able to say something like I say it in Portuguese.”*

The response of Monnique, another CTL, also underlined her goal of native-like mastery and internalisation of English. Her most important experience was watching a Brazilian television reporter interview foreign athletes in English. As a result, Monnique said, *“It became my goal to be able to talk that way, like in Portuguese, but with my own language.”*

Thinking in the language also marked the most important learning moment of several

FASILs in this category. Shinthya's went into detail about the motivational importance of a private accomplishment that showed English had become integrated into her personality.

“The first time I wrote a song [...] I start [sic] thinking in English, and then the things start to-to go, and then when I see I had it like here, a page all full, was really sucked [sic], my song, but it was really something, with new words, you know, which uh-which-do something different that I really enjoy doing today, when I'm really mad, when I 'm really happy I write a song in English, always [...].”

#### **6.4.2.5. Naturalistic use (offline – interpersonal communication in English) – CTLs**

As shown in Table 41, 20 of 39 CTL participants reported that their most important English learning experience happened when they spoke in English with one or more people in an unplanned conversation that occurred naturalistically as they went through their everyday lives. In all cases, these interactions were with non-Brazilians.

The majority of CTLs who reported intercommunicative moments with non-Brazilians as their most important English learning experiences indicated that it was the authenticity of the experiences that made them important. Seven CTLs in this sub-category explicitly mentioned that their experiences were significant because, through successful communication with native speakers, they realized they had truly learned the language. This is noteworthy because it implies that for these CTLs years of assessment events, collaborative learning and task completion in their schools had less of an impact on their feelings of competence than a single, often brief, encounter outside of the classroom in which English was used for a practical purpose. For the CTL, André, for example, it was brief, though practically important, encounters with salespeople abroad, rather than his considerable experience as a successful CTL in interactive classrooms, that convinced

him he could communicate in English: “[...] *going to the United States, talking in stores and feeling like I could really communicate.*” For Katerina, the most important experience was checking in at a hostel in London.

A number of CTLs, while referring to the belief they had gained in their own language abilities through English communication with non-Brazilians implied that they did not consider English classroom interactions to be “real” communication. Jose’s response is a good example:

*“[...] When I went to Oiapoque, the border of French Guyana, and there was a French girl that spoke English there. It was the first time that I spoke personally to somebody else in English. I’d been in my English course but I’d never talked to anybody really. This showed me that I had learned.”*

Though a good number of responses by CTLs emphasized the unique learning value of real world use experiences and implied that communicative activities in the classroom did not carry the same weight, no CTLs faulted their language schools for not providing more contact with authentic sources of English when they were asked to evaluate their classroom learning. This, despite the fact that in interview responses participants stated that schools rarely provided exposure to authentic English or attempted to connect lessons to the out-of-class lives of students. No CTL participants reported that their language schools had ever assigned out-of-class tasks that required use of authentic, informal English sources or that the Internet was used in class for anything other than the supplemental use of online formal learning sites. Thus, there seems to be an inconsistency between CTL responses that indicate naturalistic learning experiences are most important because of their authenticity and findings that show the most valued learning resource for most CTLs is school, which provides little, if any, authentic practice. The interview profile of Danilo, a hybrid CTL, when compared to his stated most important language-learning experience, exemplifies this inconsistency. The following is

Danilo's response to the most important learning experience question:

"[...] I remember one day we went to a bar called Papa's, uh, on Savassi and there they had uh Michael, an American, and he was from Brooklyn New York, he speak [sic] uh, very, very heavy language with lots of slangs [sic] and everything and eh, 'yo man, whatever,' and I-I sort of understood him and I could communicate with him, and I was 15 years old, and he gave me a compliment. He said 'man, you speak just like an American', and that for me it was like... I feel accomplished."

It is a testament to the power of authenticity that accumulated passing grades and praise from adult English professionals in language school had less of an effect of Danilo's feelings of competence in English than a compliment by a slang-speaking teenager from Brooklyn who told him he spoke "just like an American." Nevertheless, despite this experience and the fact that Danilo would go on to have contact with informal sources that surpassed that of most FASILs (he reported eight years of daily contact with every type of informal source discussed in the interview) he estimated that formal learning was responsible for 75% of his acquisition, that his most important English learning resource was school, that the best thing about knowing English was that it helped his career, and that his primary motivation for learning English was to give himself professional qualifications. Thus, despite the extent and impact of his informal, authentic experiences, he seemed to consider English learning as the domain of the classroom, and English itself as somewhat external to his identity.

#### **6.4.2.6. Naturalistic use (offline – interpersonal communication in English) – FASILs**

As was the case with CTLs, the largest group of FASILs stated that their most important English learning experience happened naturalistically in an interpersonal exchange with English speakers.

A key difference between the groups, however, was that two-thirds of FASIL naturalistic in-person experiences happened in Brazil, while the experiences of the majority of CTLs happened abroad. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that FASILs were more likely to actively take advantage of opportunities to speak with non-Brazilians in Brazil. This is supported by the fact, already noted, that no CTL participant, as opposed to three FASILs, reported a most important English learning experience which featured online communication with international English speakers. Furthermore, the fact that FASILs were considerably more likely to cite experiences that involved naturalistic use of authentic English language media (37.5% of FASILs versus 12.8% of CTLs) in Brazil supports the possibility that FASILs were more willing and/or more able to tap a variety of Brazil-based opportunities to use English authentically.

Once again, in their responses FASILs often focused on moments that were significant because they became aware for the first time that they had in fact acquired English. Roberto's evaluation of his most important English learning moment exemplifies how English proficiency can come to be highly valued for FASILs as a life skill:

“[...] I was so happy, so happy because I knew I could communicate in English.”

The importance and thrill of communicating with non-Brazilians was also highlighted by CTLs who described naturalistic, intercommunicative experiences in English. Several FASILs, however, tied the importance of the experience was connected not only to “cool” intercultural exchange and/or the confirmation of English language proficiency, but also to the realization that they were no longer limited by their Brazilian identities and could now function as “part of the world”. Oyama's response, is an example of how FASIL paths can lead to highly desired opportunities to navigate the world autonomously as members of the global community:

“First time I-I went abroad and went to uh, The Netherlands, everybody speaks English there, so I-I was really lost [...] And lucky for me, I-I met a-a guy around my age in the street [...] I-I got out, like asking for information and it was-it was really great. [...] it’s... you know when you realize that you... I happen to know it’s... you’re part of the world and you’re not just those people who are never gonna leave their hometown. E-even though I-I was in a-in another country, it was like that hit me there, just, “Yeah I can do this.”

#### **6.4.3. Summary: “Most important English language learning experience”**

Multiple regression analysis presented in Chapter 4, Quantitative findings, revealed that internal extrinsic motivation made the largest independent contribution to English language proficiency for the present study’s participants. The qualitative analysis of the current question, “What single moment was the most important English language learning experience in your life?”, supports the quantitative evidence by suggesting there is a positive association between real-life internalised experiences with English and language learning. The analysis also supports Ryan and Deci’s (2000) contention that internal, self-regulated motivation is associated with feelings of competence, relatedness and autonomy. Furthermore, the analysis provides evidence that such feelings are more likely to develop in everyday use situations than in the controlled environment of the classroom.

Arguably, the most interesting finding of the analysis of the “most important learning experience” question was that the great majority of CTLs reported their experience to have occurred within naturalistic settings when they used authentic English for personalised, real-life purposes. This finding, however, seems to some degree inconsistent with CTL conceptions of language learning, as shown in their responses to other interview questions: Roughly 75% of CTLs stated that their most important

English learning resource was formal (school, textbooks or teachers) and more than 72% of CTLs stated their primary motivation for learning English was not connected with personalised use of the language in everyday situations.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the current question strongly supports the fact that FASILs and CTLs are similarly motivated by informal contact with English. The evidence shows that classroom learning -- conversation, exercises, activities and formal assessment -- is often considered inferior by CTLs to real-world use in terms of its importance to learning and confirmation of English knowledge. The evidence indicates that CTLs sometimes do not consider English language use in the classroom to be authentic.

Quantitative findings presented in Chapter 4 found that FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to have an internal locus of control, to believe English learning success depended on a learner's own effort rather than on innate talent or effective teaching and methodology. Given that the analysis of the current question indicated naturalistic experiences with English build feelings of competence, it seems reasonable to suggest that the FASIL group's more internal locus of control when compared to the CTL group's may partially result from frequent, rather than isolated, experiences using English for self-endorsed, authentic purposes. These experiences seem to provide concrete rewards for effort and build confidence, perhaps leading participants to engage in more challenging English use adventures. Henrique describes the FASIL experience in the following way: *"It's like a snowball<sup>52</sup>. You start out learning slowly and before long you are learning very quickly."*

We see in the data that participants value social contact that happens in the context of everyday life, but we see no evidence of a similar appreciation for conscious collaborative learning in the classroom. Even for the minority of CTLs whose most important experiences happened in controlled environments, experiences were considered

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<sup>52</sup> Pedro and Laura, both FASILs, use the same "bola de neve" -- "snowball" -- analogy when discussing their informal learning.

significant principally due to unpredictable independent realizations. Naturalistic experiences noted by both CTL and FASIL participants in no case involved direct collaborative construction of knowledge with other learners. In fact, many participants seemed to value their experiences particularly because, unsupported, they had been able to conduct successful real-world social communication with native speakers.

FASIL responses indicate that they sought out opportunities, both on and offline, for independent, personalised use of authentic English within Brazil. This was not often the case for CTLs whose most important English learning experiences generally did not occur through active choice but by accident or in situations abroad where they were forced to speak English. An important unanswered question is whether CTLs would be more likely to seize these opportunities if they were less classroom-focused.

## **6.5. Qualitative analysis of learner behaviour with informal sources**

### **6.5.1. Learner behaviour with informal sources**

The qualitative analysis of learner behaviour with informal sources examined data from responses to two principal interview questions asked to all participants:

1. *“Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games], and what you like about it?”*
- 1a. *How do you think contact with music [(including books with graphic content such as comic books)] may help you to learn English?*

Question 1 and its follow up, question 1a, were asked five times in modified form as the last questions in sets of questions for each media source the study focused on. Preceding questions in each set were short answer and were analysed quantitatively.

As detailed in Chapter 3, Methodology, questions dealing with use of informal sources were deliberately open in order to elicit a wide variety of responses about a type of second language learning behaviour that is emerging with globalization and Internet technology and that has rarely been studied. Leaving the questions open without leading participants or insisting on responses was done to encourage candour and allow participants to discuss their experiences freely. Responses covered many aspects of use and attitudes towards the sources.

Unlike previous questions reviewed in this chapter and Chapter 5, which primarily relied on categories arrived at deductively, based to a large extent on previous research and theory, analysis of the current questions was carried out through the use of inductive categories that emerged from the data, in order to gain a broad descriptive picture of a new and understudied context of use.

In tabulating responses, each individual **Aspect of Use** mentioned by participants was noted. These received tallies corresponding to the total number of participants who mentioned the aspect of use. The tallies were subdivided into two numbers representing participants in each group, FASILs and CTLs.

For each media source there were a large number of separate aspects of use mentioned. For example, there were 66 different aspects of use for English language music. To keep the analysis manageable, the study focused on those aspects of use for each respective media source that were mentioned by at least 10% of participants who chose to answer

the interview question about that particular media source<sup>53</sup>. For example, 67 total participants answered questions about the use of English language television/film. If 6 or more participants mentioned a particular aspect of watching television, the aspect passed the 10 percent threshold and became a focus of deeper analysis. If an aspect of use was not mentioned by at least 10 percent of total participants, but was mentioned by at least 10 percent of the total number of either FASILs or CTLs who used the particular informal source in question, that aspect was noted and became part of the analysis as well.

The 10% number was chosen carefully, after a review of responses to all media sources showed a divide between oft-repeated aspects of use and those repeated rarely, or, as was generally the case, just mentioned a single time. Oft-repeated aspects of use for a particular media source generally started at about 10% of total participants who answered questions dealing with a particular media source.

It was necessary to meticulously analyse participant responses in order to identify each aspect of use that they touched upon. Responses generally included several different aspects of use. For example, part of Álvaro's response to the learner behaviour question regarding video games was the following:

*“The type of game I like to play is RPG, a game that has a story, a type that you go creating your own character. This type of game always has a very long story, you have to read a lot of texts and for that reason I play them in English, because I want to practice.”*

This response yielded several different aspects of use:

1. Role playing games (RPGs) referred to as preferred genre
2. RPG (referred to in general)

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<sup>53</sup>Not all participants answered questions about each informal media source. This was understandable since most participants did not have experience with all sources.

3. Reading extensively by following the storyline
4. Character (avatar)
5. Playing with the goal of learning English

At times a participant's description of one aspect of behaviour with informal sources subsumed other individual aspects of behaviour and/or touched upon related but distinct aspects. In those cases, each aspect was marked down as mentioned in the particular interview. The following example from Leonardo's interview illustrates the point:

*"Everything I want to know online is in English. I go to Wikipedia, because the Portuguese Wikipedia is crap, and I just read the articles on Wikipedia about things I want to know."*

Though the response broadly focuses on two related but distinct aspects of use, superior English content and breadth of content online available in English, it also mentions use of the English-language *Wikipedia* site. Thus in Leonardo's response, there are four separate points. In addition to the breadth of content available online in English and the superiority of English content, there are two more specific aspects of use:

- the use of the *Wikipedia* website in English
- the superiority of English language *Wikipedia* to Portuguese language *Wikipedia*.

#### **6.5.1.1. Video game play**

##### *6.5.1.1.1. Video game play – Aspects of use – FASILs versus CTLs*

25 participants (35% of total study participants) responded to open interview questions about video game play. While more than half of FASILs responded to these questions only about 20% of CTLs did. This was in line with quantitative findings that found FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to play video games regularly.

In total, 15 aspects of video game use were mentioned by more than 10% of video game players. Table 42, below, breaks down the 15 aspects by the percentage of all regular video game player participants who mentioned them, the percentage of FASIL video game players who mentioned them and the percentage of CTL videogame players who mentioned them.

The details of participant responses suggest that an important motivator of video game play is the emotional pull of the story or the world where the player navigates a complex alternate reality. Though data indicate that both FASILs and CTLs were attached to video games, FASILs were more detailed and reflective in their descriptions of how the emotional pull of the story, particularly the story of RPG style games, led to engagement with the details of the language.

Pedro's description touched on properties of the RPG genre that promoted personal attachment to the game, and, along with it, attention to the language. His response is an example of the reflectivity of some FASILs about the language-learning potential of media sources.

*“So for me, the immediate attraction was this really cool story, this one, and, later other RPGs, and the fact that I was involved in it and so there was this- this extreme interest in what was happening [...] I think games like this have an enormous potential for learning. People have the attitude that people have to teach the language for its sake alone, and not as if it were a method of expressing things and, particularly, yourself. But the video game works so well for me because it is an expression.”*

In fact, a much higher percentage of FASILs than of CTLs referred to the RPG genre of video games, describing these games as complex in story and language. FASILs discussed

their willingness to take on difficult linguistic challenges that were necessary to do well in the games. Despite the challenges, three participants, all FASILs, stated that it was while playing RPGs that they first began acquiring English. Such evidence suggests that substantial motivation to play games can lead learners with only a basic English knowledge to confront complex linguistic tasks early on.

**Table 42: Aspects of use – Video Games**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
RPGs	9	52.9%	1	12.5%	10	40%
Complexity of story	4	23.5%	0	0%	4	16%
Need to know English to advance	6	35.3%	5	62.5%	11	44%
Figuring out vocabulary from context	5	29.4%	1	12.5%	6	24%
Interaction with non-Brazilians in online video games	8	47%	2	25%	10	40%
Lasting friendships with non-Brazilians met during video game play	3	17.6%	0	0%	3	12%
Use of online support material to support video game play	7	41.2%	0	0%	7	28%
Use of dictionary while playing the game	4	23.5%	1	12.5%	5	20%
Use of Google translator while playing	2	11.8%	1	12.5%	3	12%
<i>World of Warcraft</i>	3	17.6%	1	12.5%	4	16%
Repetition	5	29.4%	1	12.5%	6	24%
Vocabulary learning	10	58.8%	5	62.5%	15	60%
Extensive reading while playing, Incl. dialogue, instructions, etc.	8	47%	3	37.5%	11	44%
Begin learning with video games	3	17.6%	0	0%	3	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>25</b>	

Participants brought up the intricacy or “complexity” of story and how this necessitated focused reading, specifically of the dialogues that appeared in conjunction with graphic images onscreen. Responses indicated that players’ commitment to advance in the games often led to careful scrutiny of the language. Several participants mentioned using dictionaries or *Google Translator* to decipher vocabulary. Others gave responses that described how graphic and complementary linguistic elements of games contextualized vocabulary that was met in unpredictable ways. FASILs were considerably more likely to go into detail about moments when they figured out unknown language in games with the help of contextual clues. Melissa, gave a detailed description of how she acquired a vocabulary item due to her involvement in a game’s story:

*“You have to understand what many characters say. I remember that there was a specific part of the game that I couldn’t pass. There was always a guard that stopped me and said something like “I’m thirsty, I’m thirsty.” But since I had no English, I did the association thinking it was a cognate with Portuguese “I’m triste, I’m triste”<sup>54</sup>. And I could never pass and would think, ‘so what, he’s sad.’ So I figured out there was something wrong and I took out the dictionary of my father. So I looked it up and saw the truth. The character was thirsty. So I went to the supermarket in the game and bought water and then I could make it to the next stage.”*

Henrique discussed how visual elements of games facilitated vocabulary learning, which, again, happened as a by-product of committed effort to advance in a game:

*“When I first began [...] it’s like, you read the sentence and you don’t know – ‘Can you fix me a glass of water please’ so, for example, you see this sentence with the word, ‘water,’ that you know and so you understand the meaning*

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<sup>54</sup> “Triste” means “sad”.

*because where you are in the game there is a glass of water and then think, "O.K., 'glass of water' must be 'copo de agua'."*

Along with the drive to know vocabulary in order to decipher puzzles and advance to higher levels in alternate reality games, a number of participants mentioned that an affordance of video game play is repeated encounters with the same content, and that this repetition leads to vocabulary learning.

An important distinction between groups involved the use of online websites to support video game play. Nearly half of FASIL games players mentioned this aspect of use, while no CTLs did. FASIL participants mentioned how their involvement with video games led them to seek help online, which provided support in the form of video blogs, forums, sites called "wikias", textbook information sites such as Wikibooks, and video game journalism such as "gamingnews.com". This evidence once again shows that FASILs are considerably more likely than CTLs to use the Internet for practical daily benefits. Carlos described the advantages to accessing online resources and the international gaming community for help:

"I mean you wanna tweak your character, right? [...] So those nerd masters [expert players who give online advice] they do their research for you [...] and so you, or [sic] listen to their video blogs online or you read about things on forums [...]"

Online sites had the potential to lead to chat with foreigners not only about the games but also about other subjects. One participant, Adriano, discussed how video game forums led to debate with native English speakers about issues unrelated to video game play:

"When I was 15, I joined a video game forum [...] and they were talking about all kinds of stuff, not just the video game, you know, everything you c-

could imagine [...] So, um ... I got involved in a lot of like serious discussions about serious stuff. Like, at 16, I was dis-discussing politics with American natives.”

Ten participants, eight of whom were FASILs, played in MMOGs. Participants noted the close communication in English that had to be maintained, generally through chat, as players from different countries worked together to accomplish tasks. They noted that English was a necessary skill to win, and implied that speaking in “normal” as opposed to learner English was advantageous. According to Rodrigo:

*“In order to play, you need to communicate with your team in English [...] games help you learn how to talk like a normal person because you are surrounded by people speaking to each other in normal terms.”*

Eugenio’s response pointed to the role of English as a necessary tool to interact with non-native speaking players.

*“There was this time I played World of Warcraft with some Romanians for about a year, when I was 15. I had to fight with them so they would speak in English – [laughing] ironically I even learned a bit of their language, but I don't speak Romanian and so English was the good common language for servers [communities] to have.”*

A total of ten nationalities -- Polish, Irish, Russian, Turkish, French, German, British, American, Italian, and Romanian – were mentioned in participant responses to the open question on video game play. This kind of international interaction is not only a good example of English functioning as a *lingua franca*, but it also suggests that FASIL-type acquisition is not limited to Brazil.

Three participants who met non-Brazilian players in online games claimed the contact led to lasting friendships that went beyond the games and were maintained on the web through Voice over IP services (VoIP), such as *Skype*, or through social media and email. The most dramatic example of a close relationship formed during online game play came from Denyse who met a German boyfriend online:

*“I dated a guy that I met on the game. And then I saw him in person and all that. He was a German who showed up on the game and we started to date for some two years. He even came to Brazil to visit me.”*

Responses showed that video game playing is a highly personalised English language experience. A key aspect of the games is that for every user the experience is unique, from the choice of video game (13 distinct video games were mentioned by participants, but only one, *World of Warcraft*, was mentioned by more than 10% of participants), to the auxiliary activities and communities that the games involve.

#### **6.5.1.2. Listening to English language music**

##### *6.5.1.2.1. Music – Aspects of use*

A majority, 49 (68%), of the interviewees answered the open interview questions regarding how they listened to English language music. Very similar percentages of FASILs and CTLs responded (65.6 % and 71.2% respectively).

In total, 17 aspects of English language music use were referred to by more than 10% of regular listeners. Table 43, below, breaks down the 17 aspects by the percentage of all regular listeners who mentioned them, the total percentage of FASIL listeners and the total percentage of CTL listeners.

Responses suggest that for many learners, English language music is compelling.

Several participants passionately described their relationship with English language music and/or a particular artist, using words such as “obsessed”, “in love with”, “fanatic”, “crazy about”. English language music was a part of daily life for many learners with several participants claiming to never listen to Portuguese music and others mentioning that they listened extensively to English language music, using expressions such as “*all of the time*”, and “*most of the day*”.

Music was the only informal source that led CTLs and FASILs in approximately equal numbers to the Internet. Participants went online to gain information about artists through websites or social media fan pages. The most frequently noted aspect of music use was visiting websites that shared lyrics and/or translations of music. *Vagalume.com.br*, a Brazilian website that offers translations and lyrics of international music, was mentioned by 20.4% of participants who discussed their use music listening.

**Table 43: Aspects of use – Music**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extreme Fan	3	14.3%	3	10.7%	6	12.2%
Used the dictionary (online or offline)	2	9.1%	3	10.7%	6	12.2%
Important to sing and understanding correctly	7	33%	1	3.6%	8	16.3%
Listen exclusively/almost exclusively to Eng. Music	3	14.3%	4	14.3%	7	14.3%
Memorize songs	3	14.3%	2	7.1%	5	10.2%
Attempted to figure out meanings	8	38.1%	4	14.3%	12	24.5%
Repetitive listening to lyrics	7	33%	5	17.9%	12	24.5%
Learning due to repetition	4	19%	2	7.1%	6	12.2%
Figure out lyrics through repetition	5	23.8%	2	7.1%	7	14.3%
Learning through listening (general)	6	28.6%	5	23.8%	11	22.4%
Listen all the time/every day /most of the day	2	9.5%	5	17.6%	7	14.3%
Use of the website Vagalume lyrics/transl. websites	5	23.8%	5	17.6%	10	20.4%
Mentioned specific genre(s) of music	8	38.1%	10	35.7%	18	36.7%
Preferred rock (and roll)	9	42.9%	2	7.1%	11	22.4%
Preferred rock (and roll)	4	19%	1	3.6%	5	10.2%
Listened to Led Zeppelin	3	14.3%	0	0%	3	6.1%
Frequented website or social media page dedicated to artist	2	9.5%	3	10.1%	5	10.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>28</b>		<b>49</b>	

Despite the attraction of music for CTLs, FASILs were more likely to report active and deep interaction with the language as an element of their listening. This may have been partly because music for FASILs was not just enjoyable, but also involved a growth in cultural identity. Several FASIL participants discussed how their engagement with music was linked to the feeling of being more than just Brazilian. The response of Roberto, whose FASIL learning path began with music, offers a detailed overview of how initial fascination with a musical performer can lead to heavy engagement with the language of music and, finally, the development of a feeling of transnational identity. This pattern was seen several times in FASIL responses regarding informal sources.

“When I was I guess 15, me and my best friend were watching a movie called *Crosswords Forever Friends*, and Britney was in it. [...] So then I got kind of obsessed with her, because I really liked her. So it was really funny ‘cause I actually just printed all of her song lyrics [...] and what I did was once they were printed, I would get a dictionary and look for the words I didn’t know [...] I would look for all the lyrics, and try to understand all of it, but I wouldn’t translate it, I would try to understand it in English ... I remember one sentence Britney said in one of her DVDs, and I got that sentence with-with the accent she said it, and until today, I have this-this accent ... And every time I say something like, six years, I say ‘six years, jeers’.

The importance of being more than Brazilian for FASILs was apparent with regard to other aspects of music listening. For example, 33% of FASIL listeners mentioned that it was important to them to understand and sing their favourite songs correctly like native speakers as opposed to Brazilians who could only understand the tune. Only 1 of 28 CTLs mentioned this aspect of use. Carlos’ explanation was typical.

(Carlos)

*"I would get the lyrics from the Internet. If I liked the song so much I wanted to understand why, not just ... because a lot of Brazilians say "ah, man, I love this song" [...] I mean, it's, it's really dumb to be like this. So I wanted to sing the song and know what I was saying."*

Participants described how their attachment to music drove their desire to understand the meaning of lyrics. Though some turned immediately to online lyrics/translation sites such as *Vagalume.com.br*, a number of participants, the great majority of whom were FASILs, mentioned that figuring out the meanings of songs for themselves rather than turning to online translations was important to them. Magda is an example of a hybrid CTL whose personal connection to music pushed her to make her own interpretations of the language.

*"I tried to with a lot of persistence to get the metaphors [...] and sometimes the songs are hard to understand because they're in lots of metaphors. So I look for the-the meaning of those metaphors by browsing the Internet but not on websites um ... sometimes there are websites that try to translate even though it might not be the real um ... the real meaning [...] but yeah, I t-try to make my own interpretation."*

As in their responses regarding video games, FASILs were more likely than CTLs to make reflective comments about how music led to learning. For example more FASILs than CTLs mentioned that repetition was particularly helpful for learning. Henrique, for example offered the following insight: *"The repetition of music helps a lot. You know the lyrics, you like the song, and you hear over and over and the expression ends up being absorbed."*

Diego's response touched on several affordances of English language music:

"I think that listening to music inevitably helps you to pronounce, your pronunciation and also listening comprehension trying to listen to music and get the lyrics. And I think th-that's the main thing, it would be learning colloquial language."

Ida's response was similarly reflective:

*"You are able to hear what the singer is saying, what the pronunciation is, and you even can get the translation. It's something that I really learned a lot from."*

As was the case with video game use, very few participants in either group mentioned that they listened to music with colleagues. Rather, they highlighted relationships with the international community of fans through websites and lyrics sites.

A wide variety of musical acts were referred to. In all, 24 artists were mentioned, but only one act, Led Zeppelin, was mentioned more than once. This fact highlights the unique nature of each user's experience with music

Whereas participants from both groups tended to follow contemporary artists, FASILs were much more likely to mention specific genres than CTLs were (42.9% versus 7.1%). Genres referred to included folk, gospel, heavy metal, hip hop, rap and reggae.

### **6.5.1.3. Viewing of English language television/film**

#### *6.5.1.3.1. Television/film – Aspects of use – FASILs versus CTLs*

Nearly every interviewee (67 out of 71) responded to open questions regarding English language television. 17 aspects of viewing were mentioned by more than 10% of interviewees. Table 44, below, breaks down these aspects by the percentage of all regular viewers who mentioned them, the total percentage of FASIL viewers and the total percentage of CTL viewers.

Responses often touched on new technology and implied that the way people watched television was changing. For example, a high percentage of viewers (17.9%) mentioned that they never watched dubbed television or even “hated” it. This is notable since only a decade ago Brazilians had very little access to non-dubbed television shows. Participant responses recalled Sockett and Toffoli’s (2012:144) “crossing the Rubicon” description of viewers who, once they had experienced subtitled content, no longer had patience for dubbing. Several viewers noted that they downloaded their shows, with some also mentioning that they accessed English subtitles in this way. Such access led to further engagement with language. For example, Augusto discussed how he looked at “fansubbed” shows, i.e., subtitles made especially by fans and attempted to critique them.

**Table 44: Aspects of use – Television/Film**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English subtitles	16	51.6%	11	30.6%	27	40.3
English subtitles as crutch	8	25.8%	4	11.1%	12	17.9%
Never watch dubbed	3	9.7%	9	25%	12	17.9%
Portuguese subtitles	10	32.3%	3	8.3%	13	19.4%
Portuguese subtitles led to no subtitles	5	16.1%	4	11.1%	9	13.4%
Downloads content	5	16.1%	7	19.4%	12	17.9%
<i>Friends</i> TV series	3	9.7%	6	16.7%	9	13.4%
Watch with no subtitles	10	32.3%	13	36.1%	23	34.3%
<i>Two and a Half Men</i> TV series	3	9.7%	4	11.1%	7	10.4%
Television leads to learning	9	29%	4	11.1%	13	19.4%
Repeated viewings/use of rewind	4	12.9%	3	8.3%	7	10.4%
Engagement with English because of bad Portuguese translations/subtitles	6	19.4%	2	5.6%	8	11.9%
Vocabulary learning	5	16.1%	2	5.6%	7	10.4%
Emotional attachment to shows	2	6.5%	4	11.1%	6	9%
Extensive watching of shows	6	19.4%	8	22.2%	11	16.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>		<b>36</b>		<b>67</b>	

Participants almost never reported watching a show with others or collaborating with peers in order to understand language. They did, however, report interacting, often indirectly, with the global community of fans (e.g., Augusto's comment about fansubbing).

Similarly to what was found in analysis of responses regarding video games and music, there was a high degree of variation in television viewing tastes. Participants mentioned 26 separate television series, however only two shows, *Friends* and *Two and a Half Men*, were mentioned by at least 10% of the total number of respondents. The fact that both *Friends* and *Two and a Half Men* are situation comedies, suggests that the nature of such shows, for example the structure provided by the familiar episode format, may make them especially accessible to learners.

As was the case with other informal sources, a major difference between FASILs and CTLs regarding television use was the level of engagement with language that participants in each group reported. FASILs were more likely than CTLs to mention that television led to attention to linguistic detail, and they tended to be the participants who described more fully how this happened.

Though participants in both groups brought up how they used subtitles, a larger percentage of FASILs than of CTLs mentioned that they used subtitles for support when watching shows with technical vocabulary or unusual dialects (e.g., *House*). Adriano stated that he generally watched television and films without subtitles, but when watching a film that dealt with "gadgetry", e.g., James Bond films, or when there were "whispered words" he turned to English subtitles. Oyama expressed the same sentiment when discussing why he sometimes turned to English subtitles:

"Nowadays I use subtitles only for shows and movies with technical vocabulary or when I know the characters talk very fast and use a lot of slangs [sic]."

Participants used both English and Portuguese subtitles as a way to scaffold their listening. Again it was primarily FASILs who reported this strategy. Two of the four most proficient learners in the study – Pedro and Adriano – as well as Danilo, the second highest scoring CTL, mentioned that though they focused on English audio, they often kept Portuguese or English subtitles on screen in case they needed them. This often led to acquisition. Danilo described his use of subtitles in the following way:

“I don’t look at the subtitles all the time, I listen, listen, listen. If I don't get something then I go to the subtitles, so I like having it as a crutch. Well I didn't get it so I lean on it, and I ... ‘oh that’s what he said’ and usually that's when I learn new words”

Carlos’ response was particularly interesting as he described how he used both English and Portuguese subtitles in different ways to help him understand vocabulary that was crucial to the story:

“I was starting to understand the context and I ... picked up a word I didn’t understand, and I-I sometimes I would learn that word with the Portuguese subtitles ... I would hear this word but not know w-what the meaning of it was, and I c-could actually, *you know*, connect the Portuguese subtitles and learn it and say, ‘*Oh, say this is this word*’ [...] *And sometimes the opposite, with English subtitles. ‘No I don’t know what the fuck this word is’ s-so I-I would look at the English subtitles, hear the English word and I would now say, “so that’s how you pronounce this word [...]*”

Diego's response also reflected on the acquisition process with subtitles:

“Even when I was very young and I didn't know English, I always watched in English with Portuguese subtitles. After I often watched without subtitles at all ... and then, finally I began ... I began to want to - I would use English subtitles for when I didn't understand everything perfectly and I had some sort of question.”

FASILs were much more likely to offer responses that indicated they independently sought to understand language structures due to their practical value in helping to decipher content that interested them. Several participants mentioned that they were sensitive to bad translations, which led them to attempt to figure out jokes and metaphorical language on their own. Oyama, for instance, felt that imperfect translations led him to engage more deeply with the language,

“You start noticing that the subtitle doesn't quite match what the-the person's saying. Some jokes are off [...] Probably it's because uh, because it's a wordplay in the original language, so I notice that sometimes, and that made me want to-to learn more.”

According to the CTL, Leonardo, the bad translations often lead to more attention to original audio. *“Sometimes the subtitles are so bad, jokes or swear words. Like they translate “you shit” as “you fool” You know it is completely wrong. So I have to pay attention to the audio.”*

Both CTLs and FASILs referred to the positive effect of repeated viewing of scenes or whole films, but, again, it was more often FASILs who went into more detail about this process. Viviane's description was one of several that showed the level of engagement

with language that FASILs sometimes were capable of:

*“I memorize what the actors say. I think it helps because you see the film the first time and you might understand but you can’t repeat what they say. When you see it several times you are going to be able to repeat because you are going to understand more exactly what they were saying.”*

The apparent difference between FASILs and CTLs in terms of engagement with the English used in programs cannot be attributed to less interest or use of television. As shown in Chapter 4, Quantitative Findings, CTLs were similarly as likely to watch English language television shows regularly as FASILs were. Furthermore, in responses to this question, CTLs were as likely as FASILs to report extensive viewing: the heavy number of hours they watched television per day or week. Participants from both groups mentioned binge watching, short periods of time (weeks/months) in their lives when they devoured full seasons of shows (accessible through downloading) for many hours a week before sliding back into a less extensive viewing pattern.

Thus, differences between FASILs and CTLs in the use of English language television/film, as with the use of music, had less to do with time spent with the content than with the way the participants engaged with the shows.

#### **6.5.1.4. Reading of material not made for Internet**

##### *6.5.1.4.1. Reading – Aspects of use*

Twenty-nine participants, 40% of all interviewees, responded to open questions about reading English content that was not made especially for the Internet.

In total, 16 aspects of reading were mentioned by more than 10% of respondents or by at least 10% of at least one group. Table 45, below, breaks down these aspects by the

percentage of all participants who mentioned them, the total percentage of FASIL readers and the total percentage of CTL readers.

**Table 45: Aspects of use – Reading (traditional content)**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Literature/Classics	5	35.7%	1	6.7%	6	20.7%
Harry Potter	4	28.6%	4	26.7%	8	27.6%
Read only after reaching a high level	3	21.4%	1	6.7%	4	13.8%
Improves English (general)	4	28.6%	0	0%	4	13.8%
Improves Vocabulary	3	21.4%	0	0%	3	10.3%
Horror Genre	2	14.3%	0	0%	2	6.9%
Read Harry Potter with Portuguese version as support	2	14.3%	2	13.3%	4	13.8%
Prefer to read literature in original language	4	28.6%	0	0%	4	13.8%
Try to read as a personal challenge	1	7.1%	2	13.3%	3	10.3%
Prefer specific genre	5	35.7%	1	6.7%	6	20.7%
Read with purpose of learning English	0	0%	3	21.4%	3	10.3%
Strong emotional attachment to the material	3	21.4%	1	6.7%	4	13.8%
Finished series of books (e.g. Harry Potter) in English after beginning in Portuguese	3	21.4%	2	13.3%	5	17.2%
Reads more in English than in Portuguese	2	14.3%	0	0%	2	6.9%
Extensive reading	7	50%	0	0%	7	24.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>29</b>	

#### 6.5.1.4.2. Reading – FASILs versus CTLs

Responses to open questions about reading revealed great differences between FASILs and CTLs, with FASILs much more likely than CTLs to go into detail about aspects of use. This was perhaps to be expected from quantitative findings that had shown FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to read at least two books a year. Given the relatively even number of participants in the two groups who responded to the open questions about reading, the study's data suggest that while CTLs do read, reading more often becomes a valued pastime for FASILs than for CTLs.

Only FASILs mentioned that they read in English because they preferred to read literature "in the original." In all, 17 books/book series or authors were mentioned. Of these, 12 were mentioned by FASILs, while only 5 were mentioned by CTLs. Roberto described his affection for the *Shopaholic* series of books:

"This *Shopaholic* books [...] I was attracted by the cover. At first I was really afraid 'cause I would, like, look up every word and th-then I realized that, you know, I didn't need to look up every word ... 'cause I could guess them from the context ... and then I just, I just fell in love with the book and then I read all of it. Um ... and then I went to more, bought m-more books from the same author, and I read more of them."

In participant responses, eight readers named preferred genres. All eight of these readers were FASILs (57.1% of FASIL readers). The genres covered a range from literature/classics, to manga to political science to best sellers, horror and science fiction. Two FASILs (14.3%) and no CTLs stated that they read more in English than they did in Portuguese. A majority of FASIL readers (57.1%), but no CTLs, mentioned that they read extensively – e.g., "three books per month", "always", "one book a week", "one hour a day".

As with other informal sources, FASILs were more reflective about their learning experiences. Only FASILs discussed how reading books led to improvement in their English skills. Diego noted that, “literature helped me [...] to see an English different from spoken English.” Julia brought up the incidental nature of her learning through reading books: “I buy the book and I forget me, you know, I d-don’t think about learning English - just keep reading-keep reading and then I learn it”. One notable reflective response came from the CTL, Rodrigo, who stated that after years of amotivated learning in language school, he began to progress when he took the challenge of reading on his own:

*“It was the first book I read in English, that I struggled through, but when I finished I knew that I was really using the language in a real way and it built confidence.”*

A final aspect of use that should be noted was the popularity of *Harry Potter* amongst members of both groups. This aspect of use was in line with responses to the video game, music and television/film data that implied the motivational power of current Anglo-American popular culture and its native English-speaking actors, singers and characters.

#### **6.5.1.5. The Internet**

##### *6.5.1.5.1. The Internet – Aspects of use*

Nearly all interviewees in the study (68 out of 71) answered open questions about how they interacted with the Internet. All 32 FASILs and 36 of 39 CTLs responded.

##### *6.5.1.5.2. The Internet – FASILs versus CTLs*

In total, 25 aspects of Internet use were mentioned by at least 10% of respondents to open questions on the Internet or by at least 10% of one of the mode of learning groups. Table 46, below, breaks down the 25 aspects of use by the percentage of all regular users of the Internet who mentioned them, the total percentage of FASIL Internet users, and the total

percentage of CTL Internet users.

**Table 46: Aspects of use – The Internet**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Forum</b>	10	31.3%	2	5.6%	12	17.6%
<b>Wikipedia</b>	4	12.5%	0	0%	4	5.9%
<b>Portuguese content is poor quality</b>	10	31.3%	1	2.8%	12	17.6%
<b>More to choose online in English</b>	7	21.9%	1	2.8%	8	11.8%
<b>Intense browsing</b>	4	12.5%	0	0%	4	5.9%
<b>Only/Most Internet use in English</b>	9	28.1%	3	8.3%	12	17.6%
<b>Much more Internet use in Portuguese</b>	0	0%	4	11.1%	4	5.9%
<b>BBC</b>	8	25%	2	5.6%	10	14.7%
<b>Hobby</b>	18	56.3%	4	11.1%	22	32.4%
<b>Facebook to IM foreign friends</b>	8	25%	3	8.3%	11	14.7%
<b>Skype</b>	3	9.4%	5	13.9%	8	11.8%
<b>Facebook</b>	19	59.4%	11	30.6%	30	44.1%
<b>Blogs</b>	2	6.3%	7	19.4%	9	13.2%
<b>News</b>	9	28.1%	5	13.9%	14	20.6%
<b>TV Sites</b>	4	12.5%	3	8.3%	7	10.2%
<b>Read articles online</b>	4	12.5%	3	8.3%	7	10.2%
<b>NY Times</b>	4	12.5%	2	5.6%	6	8.8%

**Table 46 (continued): Aspects of use – The Internet**

Aspect	FASILs		CTLs		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Ask for IT help online</b>	5	15.6%	0	0%	5	7.4%
<b>Writing</b>	14	43.8%	7	19.4%	21	30.9%
<b>Chat rooms</b>	5	15.6%	2	5.6%	7	10.3%
<b>Lyrics sites</b>	2	6.3%	6	16.7%	8	11.8%
<b>YouTube</b>	3	9.4%	4	11.1%	7	10.3%
<b>To learn (not English lang.)</b>	5	15.6%	1	2.8%	6	8.8%
<b>Interaction w/foreigners</b>	18	56.3%	10	27.8%	28	41.2%
<b>Met people online</b>	1	3.1%	4	11.1%	5	7.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>36</b>		<b>68</b>	

The data indicate that the Internet was used for a great variety of practical, personally valuable tasks. Despite the fact that participants were not asked to list sites they used, there were 47 different Internet sites mentioned.

Though participants did not note using the Internet in the presence of others, a large number of participants mentioned interacting with non-Brazilians online. 41.2 percent of total participants (50% of FASILs and 25% of CTLs) reported that they had experienced some form of interaction with foreigners through social media, blogs, chat rooms, forums and VoIP (*Skype*). Thus, many participants connected to people of other cultures through the Internet.

There was a clear difference in use patterns between FASILs and CTLs, with FASILs reporting more involved use for a greater variety of reasons, and going into more detail about why Internet sites were so important for them.

Overall, nine FASILs (28.1%) affirmed that they used English language websites at least as often as Portuguese ones. Eight of these said they only used English websites or they generally used English websites. This was in contrast to CTLs, only 3 of whom (8.3%) said they used English websites as often as Portuguese ones. Furthermore, 4 CTLs (versus 0 FASILs) reported that they used the Internet in Portuguese almost exclusively.

FASILs reported great interest in Internet content. Almost a third (31.3%) of FASILs (versus 5.6% of CTLs) stated that they were compelled to use English sites because sites in Portuguese were poor in quality. Adriano's comment exemplifies this sentiment: "I do not use the Internet in Portuguese at all. It's very lacking in information and content." Four FASILs spoke specifically about the *Wikipedia* website, discussing the Portuguese version in negative terms. Eugenio, for example, stated, "*When I saw the potential of the English version of Wikipedia, I used that. It is much much better than the Portuguese version.*" One CTL, Leonardo, mentioned *Wikipedia*, calling the Portuguese version, "*crap*". Participants felt they needed to know English in order not to be limited by insufficient choice while online. Many more FASILs (no. = 7) than CTLs (no. = 1) discussed the preponderance of choices available online in English as opposed to in Portuguese.

The Internet was seen as a useful tool to supplement valued hobbies and to gain knowledge. In all, 14 hobbies were mentioned, including fashion, sports that were played (e.g., BMX bicycle riding, bodybuilding), sports that were followed (e.g. "Arsenal site" "Andy Roddick"), art, travel, and, of course, film, television, video games, music and literature. The Internet was also used to support academic studies. It functioned as a guide for daily activities such as shopping and film viewing. Five participants noted the

Internet as a resource to obtain IT support help and access to the news. All of these aspects of use were mentioned much more frequently by FASILs than CTLs.

The Internet was also regarded as a way to learn about non-English related subjects. *Wikipedia* has already been discussed above; in addition, six participants (5 FASILs versus 1 CTL) brought up specific subjects they had been able to explore online. These included learning French and Japanese through online language learning sites, learning about “math, chemistry, and the French Revolution” through podcasts, and learning how to speak publicly. Rodrigo spoke enthusiastically about his online learning:

*“I take online classes in English about public speaking. So the only way to learn from these classes is to know English. They are really good. They teach you everything [...] about how to interact in public ... like how to write in social media, and social dynamics [...] the way to talk well, get the attention of other people, how to be influential.”*

The data provide evidence that FASILs are considerably more involved online than CTLs. The examples of use offer insight into just how much extra control the Internet offers to people not just in terms of learning English, but also in terms of managing their lives. As noted earlier this chapter, there is no reason to believe benefits of “the English language Internet” are less practically valuable to formal learners than to informal ones.

#### **6.5.1.6. Summary of learner behaviour with informal sources**

While data point to some basic similarities in how FASILs and CTLs interact with informal sources out of the classroom, there are key differences. These provide potential explanations for why, as a group, FASILs seem to acquire much greater proficiency outside of the classroom than CTLs do.

Findings support Sockett (2014), Kuure, (2011), Lam (2006) and others whose studies found that the materials foreign users choose to interact with outside of the classroom and their reasons for using them are based on their individual tastes and lifestyles. The evidence suggests that it is precisely this personalisation that makes using the language compelling. The RPGs and television programs that galvanized Pedro's learning and led him to be able to find a means of personal "expression" were unique to his tastes as were the music (Britney Spears) and books (the *Shopaholic* series) that spurred Roberto to discover English and eventually feel that he had become an international person. For these learners, use of English is a by-product of living in a globalised environment. It would seem difficult to create the same sort of internalised motivation for a group of students who, naturally, have heterogeneous interests and tastes.

The social experience for the most successful learners in this study consists of self-guided interaction. Sometimes activity features live interaction (e.g., in MMOGs) or asynchronous interaction (e.g., in online forums), but most English use is solitary, with a social/affective component marked by a feeling of connection to a vast number of unknown international users, viewers, players, etc., who share the same interests. While this sort of interaction has little to do with teacher facilitation and required classmate collaboration (Little, 2004), it is in-line with the idea from self-determination theory (SDT) that "relatedness" supports autonomous behaviour (Ryan and Deci, 2002). According to SDT, an individual is more likely to behave autonomously when he/she is engaged in activity that is endorsed by people who share similar values and interests.

FASILs report that attention to language, supported by technological scaffolding such as subtitles and *Google* searches, is a key aspect of leisure and everyday activity that features English. This attention to linguistic detail often results in valuable use moments in which English is deciphered or "figured out". For example, FASILs report the need to understand the meaning of songs for themselves, that video games must be navigated without

limitations, that the whispered words of television shows must not be missed, nor can the jokes be misunderstood. Perhaps most importantly, FASILs often report they would feel handicapped and cut off if unable to take advantage of the superior English resources available online.

CTL responses reveal that they are also intrigued by, and sometimes passionate about, informal sources of English, often in the form of Anglo-American pop-culture. However, with notable exceptions, they rarely report putting forth the same sort of effort as FASILs do while engaged with English outside of class.

### 6.5.2. Conscious learning behaviour/strategies

All participants were asked the following question, which was developed specifically to investigate conscious learning behaviour and strategies related to use of informal sources:

*Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?*

In contrast to the open questions regarding general behaviour with informal sources discussed above, this question was asked only once with reference to all informal sources rather than at five separate times for each informal source.

As with the two previous questions on informal learning, the current question was primarily analysed inductively, with concentration on themes that emerged from responses to the question. Common themes of responses fit well into two principal categories: **Intentional Learning** and **Incidental Learning**. Surprisingly, responses often referred to aspects of incidental learning, for example, to a lack of conscious

learning behaviour or to negative attitudes towards formal learning. The two principal categories were sub-divided into themes mentioned by at least two participants.

The vast majority of participants, 31 of 32 FASILs and all 39 CTLs, answered the open interview question regarding intentional learning behaviour with informal sources. A comparison of FASIL and CTL responses by category and theme is shown in Table 47 below.

**Table 47: Learning behaviour/strategies with informal sources**

Behaviour	FASILs		CTLs	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Intentional Behaviour</b>				
Dictionaries	16	51.6%	14	35.9%
Intentional Strategies For purpose of learning English	5	16.1%	10	25.6%
Ask Friends Eng. Questions	4	12.9%	6	15.4%
Study Lyrics	1	3.2%	4	10.3%
Contextualize new language using Internet search	5	16.1%	2	5.1%
Google Images	3	9.7%	0	0%
Use Online Site for English Learning	4	12.9%	2	5.1%
Write things down	5	16.1%	8	20.5%
Subtitles (total)	11	35.5%	12	30.8%
Subtitles (English)	9	29%	3	7.7%
Subtitles (Turned off)	2	6.5%	7	17.1%
Subtitles (Portuguese)	1	3.2%	1	2.6%
Practice in mind by contextualizing	7	22.6%	1	2.6%
Awareness/Attention	9	29%	3	7.7%
Rewind (TV)	3	9.7%	3	7.7%
<b>Incidental Behaviour</b>				

<b>Does not write things down</b>	7	22.6%	9	23.1%
<b>Does not use dictionaries</b>	9	29%	7	17.9%
<b>Incidental Learning (general comments)</b>	8	25.8%	7	17.9%
<b>Dislike of Formal learning</b>	5	16.1%	0	0%

### 6.5.2.1. FASILs versus CTLs – Intentional learning behaviour/strategies

This section introduces the intentional learning themes briefly (most are self-explanatory), and then compares FASIL and CTL responses. The following section reviews themes that fit into the incidental learning category.

#### **Dictionaries**

A high percentage of participants from both groups (51.65% of FASILs, 35.9% of CTLs) reported using dictionaries for help with language encountered through a variety of sources including video games, music, books, academic texts, and IT texts<sup>55</sup>. One notable difference between groups was that FASILs were more likely to report turning to online dictionary tools than were CTLs (43.8% versus 28.5%), who more often reported using traditional paper dictionaries. Three FASILs mentioned using dictionaries in order to revise emails or writing they did online. No CTLs mentioned using dictionaries to help them as they wrote online. Aside from using dictionaries, several participants in both groups sometimes asked friends for vocabulary help.

#### **Write things down**

Similar percentages of FASILs (16.1%) and CTLs (20%) mentioned that they wrote words down while using informal sources of English. Of these, several noted keeping vocabulary notebooks. Others mentioned writing words down while watching television or listening

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<sup>55</sup>Dictionaries were not always consulted while using the sources, but often at a later time to look up words that had been encountered informally.

to music and afterwards checking their meaning. One participant mentioned that she used Post-It notes and another stated that he kept a list of new words on his cell phone.

### **Use *Google* to research words and understand context of use**

An important difference between groups had to do with using non-dictionary online sources to gain a deeper understanding of new English words and expressions. A number of FASILs (5 of 31; 16.1%) went into detail about how they used Internet searches to research and contextualize new terms they encountered while using informal sources. Viviane explained: *“I never look it up in any dictionary. I try to find occurrences of it online and then try to figure out the meaning from that.”* Álvaro reported a similar strategy: *“I try to find all the ways to say something using the Internet. If there is a word that I do not know at all how to say, I keep trying and digging in search of it.”* Though two CTLs (5.1%) also reported using online searches, they did not describe this strategy with any sort of detail.

The use of Internet resources extended to the use of *Google Images*. Three FASIL participants said that they used *Google Images* in conjunction with other types of searches to help understand terms, expressions, and idioms as well as objects. No CTL mentioned using *Google Images*.

### **Deliberately practice new vocabulary by creating contexts of use**

A second difference between groups implied a different level of engagement with language encountered informally. 22.6% of FASILs reported that they actively practiced new vocabulary words by creating contexts in which to use them, either in their own imagination or in the real world. Only one CTL referred to a similar strategy.

Several FASILs went into detail describing this behaviour. Thiago commented:

*"It's like this. I see a new word and in some way I want to show that I know that word. So I try to find some way to use the word in what I am thinking and have it make sense."*

Melissa stated:

*"First I begin to imagine a sentence that I want to say. I keep trying to imagine it using words within my vocabulary, how I would use that particular word or expression. And usually I then say the sentence out loud."*

### **Awareness/Attention**

Nine of thirty-one FASIL participants brought up concentrating or paying attention to linguistic content while they engaged with informal sources. Several FASILs described this process. Hugo, for example, mentioned that he was conscious of noticing the sounds of English sentences while listening to English content. He also stated that he was very aware of the words that are used in the articles that he reads. Jorge reported that he tries *"consciously to grasp grammar by watching series."* Pedro discussed how he has developed into an active informal learner, paying close attention to linguistic detail,

*"I force myself to comprehend everything. Of course, this was not always the case, but over time I saw how interesting it was [...] so I continued to see how it worked and learned from it."*

Only 7.7% of CTLs (no.=3) compared to (29%) of FASILs brought up paying attention to linguistic structures whilst engaging with informal sources.

## **Subtitles**

Participants often referred to subtitles in their responses. For this theme, responses were subdivided into watching with English subtitles, watching with Portuguese subtitles and watching without subtitles. A high percentage of participants in both groups (35.5 % FASILs versus 30.8% of CTLs) mentioned subtitles in their responses. However, there was a clear difference regarding how subtitles were used. Three times as many FASILs as CTLs reported using English subtitles, a number explaining the subtitles were important to help them to understand missed details of dialogue. One FASIL noted she used subtitles to reinforce her memory of words and that this led to a snowball effect in terms of learned vocabulary.

The great majority of CTLs who referred to subtitles mentioned choosing to turn Portuguese subtitles off. Of CTLs who discussed subtitles, 58.3% said they purposefully did not use them or covered them up. Though most CTL participants did not mention specific reasons why they did this, two participants claimed it was as an exercise to deliberately train their listening.

## **Rewind**

The percentage of FASILs (9.4%) and CTLs (7.7%) who mentioned repeated viewings of television programs or using rewind was roughly equivalent. Participants mentioned that that they did this in order to become more familiar with new vocabulary items that had come up during their viewing experiences or to catch things that they did not understand the first time through.

## **Strategies used with the purpose of learning**

The majority of responses that fit the previous categories were related to intentional learning behaviour occurred in order to support the enjoyment of their naturalistic use of a particular informal source. The present category refers to behaviour in which informal

sources were intentionally used for the primary purpose of learning English. CTLs (25.6%, no. =10) were more likely than FASIL participants (12.9%, no. =4) to mention using informal sources deliberately to learn English. Below are lists of strategies noted by participants in each group. If a strategy was brought up more than once, the number of times it was mentioned is in parentheses.

#### FASILs

- Sing out loud to learn pronunciation
- Watch films and series with the intention to learn
- Specifically watch television to get the “way of speaking”
- Translate texts online purposefully to practice

#### CTLs

- Copy texts over to memorize grammatical structures (3)
- Read to improve writing
- Choose English language video games on purpose in order to improve (2)
- Communicate with cousin in English on Facebook in order to improve
- Listen to English language music specifically to improve vocabulary
- Watch films with the intention to learn
- Watch video blogs with the belief that they will improve listening comprehension

##### *6.5.2.1.1. Intentional learning behaviour – Summary – FASILs versus CTLs*

Members of both groups were interested in the meaning of what they listened to, read or watched, and made attempts to use various resources to understand. There were, however, three main differences between FASILs and CTLs. These had to do with use of technology, level of engagement with language, and reflectivity.

As has already been pointed out various times with regard to other questions, CTLs did not report accessing technology as often as FASILs. Unlike FASILs, CTLs did not as often take advantage of affordances such as *Google Images*, *Google* searches or online dictionaries to decipher meanings of terms encountered during use of informal sources.

More crucially, FASILs showed more interest in the actual language, especially when engaged in an activity in which “pleasure” rather than “learning language” was the focus. Several FASILs reported strategies that implied figuring out the details of language was a necessary part of enjoying media. This finding follows closely upon the “figuring out moments” that many FASILs reported in the previous section of this chapter concerning the use of specific informal sources.

Responses imply that learning for FASILs does not simply occur incidentally as they use informal sources, but that they make a conscious effort to understand the linguistic details of the English media they use. FASIL responses indicate active, deep engagement with language in various ways: contextualizing new structures with online searches of text and images, using subtitles in various active ways, using online dictionaries, using the rewind key. FASILs report resourcefulness, self-reliance, and deep interest in the language, paying attention and being aware of the details of language while they consume English language media. They also report creating situations to practice new structures encountered through informal sources. These strategies suggest that FASIL learners are pushed by self-determined motivation to put in unusual mental effort in connection with their enjoyment of informal sources. Such effort seems to go beyond the normal relaxed mental attitude towards linguistic content that native speakers, and classroom learners, generally have when using media sources for leisure purposes (Vanderplank, 2013).

Many more FASILs than CTLs made statements that indicated an interest in the process of learning. These observations are consistent with evidence from responses to other

interview questions that show FASILs become reflective about their experience using English.

Finally, it is important to note that CTLs were more likely than FASILs to use informal sources specifically for the purpose of learning English. The data provide more support for the possibility that while the leisurely experience of using informal sources for FASILs includes a conscious effort to understand the details of language, CTLs more often compartmentalize learning English and leisurely activity involving English language.

#### **6.5.2.2 Incidental learning behaviour/strategies – FASIL versus CTLs**

Despite the fact that the open interview question asked participants how they consciously tried to learn, many participants noted aspects of learning that touched on the incidental nature of their learning. Below I categorize their comments into several themes.

##### **Don't (rarely) use dictionaries/understand through context**

29% of FASILs and 17.9% of CTLs stated that they did not use dictionaries at all, or only used them as a last resort. Several participants mentioned that they counted on “context” or “contact”. Some participants stated that they never used dictionaries while reading or watching films because it gets in the way of the experience or “*diminishes the essence of things*”. Other participants stated that only after they have exhausted all their options of context to understand, would they turn to a dictionary.

##### **Do not study or write things down**

About 20% of participants in both groups stated that they did not write things down while using informal sources of English. Joana stated that she was “not the sort” that learns things through studying grammar or keeping track of words. Other participants said they do not “study anything” but, rather, “rely on memory”.

### **Incidental learning, specific references to the process**

Eight FASILs (25.8%) made the point that they learned incidentally through spontaneous use. Several of the most proficient FASIL learners in the study referred to the naturalness of learning that comes when language is used for communicative purposes. Roberto stated, “I wouldn’t say I ever studied it. It was a natural process”. Davide reported, “I think it’s kind of hard to understand how I did [it] ... because I don’t understand how I did learn English at first.” Adriano, in a statement that is surprisingly reminiscent of applied linguistics theory states,

“Vocabulary isn’t planned. It’s random, it’s plentiful ... much more than in a school, so, so you wind up learning a lot more expression [sic] – whole sentences – and many words. It was simply that there was not a plan to it.”

Carlos, in a statement that could have been lifted from Krashen, said,

“I am not concerned with the *little rules*. I am concerned with, you know, being able to u-understand and communicate. It’s like, grammar mistakes are inevitable. I will make ‘em. *I don’t care and focus on what has utility for me.*”

In a statement that refers to “figuring out moments” discussed above, Lucia claims, “*It’s mainly while I am using the language, figuring out what it is I have to use, the need to find the right word, etc.*”

Several CTLs also mentioned the process of learning incidentally. Unlike FASIL participants, however, they gave few personal descriptions of the process. The one exception came from Eduarda, the only CTL in the study who began learning with informal sources rather than at a language school:

*“I wasn’t looking forward to learning English for any specific reason, so I would just exercise it when it was natural, which usually was by the TV or the Internet [...] the hard part of the learning -- when it starts to become something natural, fluid, fluent, it definitely comes more through the everyday things.”*

Eduarda’s description, as was the case with responses by several of the FASILs, recalls Krashen’s conception of “acquisition”.

### **Dislike of formal learning**

In their responses to the intentional learning open interview question, five FASIL participants discussed their negative feelings towards formal learning. Joana said, “I don’t like systematic learning [...] because I don’t learn in boxes. I learn in my own specific way.” Marco stated that “[I] *believe strongly that you learn with practice and not in a school environment.*” Roberto affirmed: “I hate making things formal [...] I don’t like to feel that I’m studying.” Eugenio stated he preferred to learn independently: “I’ve always learned better doing things my way, alone.”

No CTLs made negative comments about formal learning, but one CTL, Katerina, commented on the limitations of learning with informal sources. She mentioned that while she improved her vocabulary out of class, school was what best helped her with grammar.

#### *6.5.2.2.1. Incidental learning behaviour/strategies – Summary – FASILs versus CTLs*

The evidence from the present question shows that many CTLs use informal sources similarly to FASILs, in order to enjoy them, and that much learning comes about without a plan. A key difference between CTLs and FASILs, however, is connected to how they enjoy informal sources. Thus, while FASILs and CTLs do not relish the idea of “studying” during

their leisure time, part of the leisure experience for FASILs can involve attention to linguistic details of the media. Furthermore, FASIL statements regarding interaction and learning with informal sources demonstrate that along with practical motivation to learn English, FASILs also have an intellectual interest in the language learning process as it occurs informally. Unlike FASILs, CTLs seem more comfortable with formal learning and less likely to creatively interact with informal sources or to reflect on the learning that takes place through this type of interaction. Many FASILs, on the other hand, are deeply sceptical of learning that does not take place for practical reasons.

# 7. Discussion

## 7.1. Findings

In this section, I will review the most important findings presented in the previous three chapters. These findings in some cases have never been demonstrated in SLA research before. In other cases they add to important recent literature in a new field of SLA: informal out-of-class learning influenced by the confluence of Internet technology and a globalized society. The findings presented here also challenge several assumptions that have almost become accepted in SLA theory, including basic aspects of the current dominant paradigms in learner autonomy, learner motivation, SCT as well as more general theory related to the SLA process. In Section 3 of this chapter, I will discuss in detail how the findings here challenge these currently “understood” aspects of SLA.

Arguably, the most important finding of this study is that FASILs can and do achieve high levels of proficiency without formal training. The level of FASIL acquisition can be judged by their high scores on a variety of linguistic tests that were developed to be challenging specifically to high-level Brazilian learners, and by their significantly better scores than the CTLs, who were highly experienced and well trained in formal language school, having reached an intermediate-advanced intermediate level.

Below I will summarize the results of the linguistic tests given to CTLs and FASILs and explain why I believe they help to show a greater potential for effective naturalistic informal learning than has been possible in the past. The findings also suggest that there is a need to look more broadly at what the constraints are on SLA in formal learning contexts.

### **CTLs versus FASILs – Language proficiency**

The analysis found that FASILs, with at least two years of continued progression from a basic level of English knowledge through out-of-class use and with, at most, one year total formal training, were significantly more proficient across a battery of tests measuring a range of knowledge and skills than were CTLs, current learners of English with a minimum of four years formal training and who were allowed an unlimited amount of informal contact with the language. Statistical analysis showed that group differences on tests were significant (for all tests  $p < .01$ , for the majority of tests  $p < .001$ )

Perhaps the most important linguistic test was the Chaplin retelling narrative writing test. The results of the test were crucial for several reasons:

- 1) More than any other test in the battery, the Chaplin re-telling test measured spontaneous, communicative use. Though it was a writing task, the time limit was chosen to give learners only enough time to describe what they had seen, not enough time to plan or rewrite.
- 2) The study measured grammatical knowledge, and thus provided evidence to link naturalistic use of English in today's English as a foreign language use conditions with acquired grammatical proficiency. This represents an important contribution to the literature, which has, of yet, shown little evidence empirically that informal learners can acquire sophisticated grammatical knowledge.
- 3) The test also provided, for the first time, a measure of advanced lexical range by informal, out-of-class learners as demonstrated in a spontaneous use situation. Kusyk and Sockett (2012) have made a significant contribution in this regard, but

their learners were shown to have acquired a set of specific 3 and 4 word clusters, rather than a large lexical range, as shown in spontaneous use situations.

- 4) The tests, rated by experienced IELTS assessors based on specific IELTS grade bands, provided scores based on well-known, validated criteria, that can be considered high measures of vocabulary and grammar acquisition levels by FASILs, not only in comparison to CTLs, but in comparison to other learners throughout the world.

Test scores showed that FASILs had acquired advanced to near-native levels of grammatical accuracy and lexical range without ever having lived abroad or having received more than minimal amounts of basic instruction. Of these FASIL participants, 44% (15 of 34) achieved averages on the lexical resource and grammatical accuracy bands of at least 7.5; 29% achieved averages of at least 8.0. Translating those scores to the Common European Framework (CEFR) levels, 29% of FASILs achieved C2 level, or “mastery”, whereas 44% were at the high end of the C1 level, or above, signifying advanced level. The average FASIL scored 6.4 on vocabulary and 6.3 on grammar, which would correspond to the low end of C1, or advanced level. Three Chaplin retelling writing test samples by FASILs can be seen in Appendix J.

These FASIL scores are, in a sense, more impressive since the lexical range and grammatical accuracy ratings were assigned to writing done under spontaneous use conditions, rather than under the somewhat more relaxed time pressure of official IELTS exams that allow time for planning and editing.

Importantly, the tests were not only important in helping to gain an objective understanding of FASIL proficiency, but they were also helpful in assessing CTL levels. On average, CTLs scored 4.8 on both grammatical accuracy and lexical range. These scores placed them, on average, based on Cambridge language assessment equivalences, at the

low end of the B2, advanced intermediate level, in terms of CEFR standards. Even under very strict time limits, these scores confirmed the study's judgment, based on student self-assessment, CTL number of years spent learning English in private language schools (a minimum of 4 and an average of 6.5), as well as verification from the Brantmeier, Vanderplank and Strube (2011) self-report protocol of skills, that CTL participants had an advanced-intermediate level English proficiency.

FASIL superiority over CTLs on the other English linguistic tests was also revealing in that each test represented a different sort of knowledge. The results on several of the tests had important theoretical implications.

Included in the battery of tests was the grammaticality judgment/text-editing test. Several steps were taken to make it an extremely challenging one. Firstly, it was a real-world communicative task, rather than a test of decontextualized knowledge that simply required test takers to indicate which items on a list are correct or to correct items that had already been indicated as possibly incorrect. Furthermore, the test was made up of advanced grammatical structures, used both correctly and incorrectly, which, based on preliminary observations, and my own experience, present difficulties even for the most advanced Brazilian learners. FASILs on average found and corrected nearly three times as many mistakes in the passage as CTLs, a highly significant difference ( $p < .001$ ). This finding supported the contention that autonomous learners in Brazil are able to acquire and apply sophisticated linguistic knowledge in formal activities such as text editing. As will be explained below, these results touch ground that has not been explored by other research on out-of-class, predominately online learning.

Linguistic test scores were important not only in showing the level of mastery that FASIL participants can reach in grammatical and vocabulary knowledge, but in supporting preliminary observations, as well as SLA literature, which either directly (e.g. Postovsky,

1974; Krashen, 1981) or indirectly (e.g. Bialystok, 1981; Ellis, 2006) suggest CTLs may plateau before reaching native-like levels of knowledge despite years of experience and high motivation. As found in the preliminary study with regard to CTL overgeneralization of “will” in future use, the CTLs tend, at least in their production, not to go past initially learned one-to-one translations, to a more nuanced understanding of variant structures. This becomes especially apparent with basic but essential structures that are not acquired despite being explicitly taught and/or heavily featured in input.

A striking example of this in the present study are the results of the “there is” test. The “there is” test required learners to demonstrate productive knowledge of the structure by actively using it in a communicative situation (in this case, in descriptive speech), rather than simply by passively understanding the item. The test, however, was set at a low bar in that it could only be failed if participants 1) did not use the “there is” structure in required situations of use *and*, 2) committed at least one error by using an incorrect variant of “there is”.

The difference between FASILs and CTLs who passed the test was highly significant ( $p < .01$ ). Nearly 90% of FASILs passed the test, while only 55% of CTLs did. This is despite the fact that 1) most schools, including many the CTLs had attended<sup>56</sup>, explicitly teach the “there is” structure at multiple levels; and 2) “there is” is a basic, high frequency item that occurs in formal and informal contexts. Crucially, though it has a very unique use in English, without common variant structures, “there is” does not have a simple one-to-one counterpart in Brazil and thus acquisition can be complicated by L1 transfer interference. As discussed in detail below, in nearly every failed test, rather than “there is” participants used a “learner dialect” (Postovsky, 1974), Portuguese influenced variant, the overgeneralized “have”, which, in communicative classrooms is likely used and heard with great frequency. The fact that L1 interference very rarely constrains acquisition of

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<sup>56</sup>Cultura Inglesa, Brasas, Fisk, Wizard, CCAA, CCBEU, TFLA, and Number One

the structure by FASILs, even by FASILs with very few years of experience speaking English, implies that L1 transfer in this case is not inevitable, and quite likely due, in part, to deficiencies in the formal classroom environment.

Test results show that mistakes with the “there is” structure were likely due to L1 Transfer. Every participant who failed the test used the verb “have” with no subject in a non-native way and in a sense that could cause communicative breakdown for an English interlocutor not used to Brazilian learner dialect. This was almost certainly because, despite formal Portuguese having an equivalent structure for “there is” (the verb “*haver*”), it is used almost exclusively in formal situations. In most spoken contexts of Brazilian Portuguese the equivalent structure for “there is” is “*ter*”. “*Ter*”, one of the most basic verbs in Portuguese, is a verb that most Brazilians learn in primary school has the direct English translation, “have”. Unfortunately, “*ter*” has a much broader metaphorical range than “have” and among its uses is “there is”/“there are”.

The results from two other important tests from the study further support the difficulty that CTLs have getting beyond L1 Transfer despite repeated exposure to frequently occurring structures. One of these was the test of deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures contextualized within a reading passage. Items within this text, which participants had to choose between, had been deliberately selected for the test because of their frequent misuse in the SMS chat conversations of highly experienced learners that inspired this study. In every case, these structures were basic to English, yet deceptive due to polysemy or other disconnects between the two languages. Results showed that CTLs, significantly more often than FASILs, had not overcome L1 transfer difficulties and/or difficulties due to deceptive structures. For example, CTL participants would have learned early on the translations of basic Portuguese vocabulary --“*com*” (“with”), “*aprender*” (“learn”), “*preocupado*” (worried). On the test, significantly more CTLs than FASILs chose, “learn with” a teacher and “worried with” a test rather than “learn from a

teacher” and “worried about a test”. Another important test item required participants to choose between two English equivalents of the Brazilian word “*pegar*”. On the test, students had to choose whether they went to a supermarket to “get” or “take” food. CTLs were significantly more likely to make the mistake “take food”, having overgeneralized the learned translation of “*pegar*” = “take” without realizing that this translation makes it seem as if the narrator of the text has actually stolen the food rather than exchanged money for it. As has been discussed by Laufer (1989), Belasco (1984), Postovsky (1974) and others, such gaps in knowledge can result in communication breakdown, often without learners being aware of it. The fact that FASILs scored significantly better than CTLs on the contextualized deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures test not only is a clue to why many traditional learners plateau in their learning, but also points to an advantage that FASILs have over them. When FASILs hear authentic speech, they are less likely to misunderstand it. Thus, authentic texts become more accessible, which is a point Belasco makes about “liberated listeners” (1984).

The final linguistic tests were the reading comprehension tests borrowed from Martinez and Murphy (2011). On these tests, CTLs had mean scores of approximately 87% on the reading comprehension of passages composed of words used with literal meanings and 52% on the reading comprehension of passages written with multi-word constructions/figurative language. Notably, these scores were almost identical to those of the participants, also Brazilian private language school students, who had taken the tests in the Martinez and Murphy study. FASILs scored significantly better than CTLs on both tests, particularly on the reading comprehension of figurative language test, correctly answering, on average, more than 71% of items. The test results provided evidence that FASILs have a more sophisticated understanding of figurative language than CTLs, while at the same time supporting FASIL superiority in comprehension of written literal meaning.

Thus, taken together the linguistic tests showed that while FASILs often acquire the nuances of the second language, CTLs frequently persist in deficiencies in acquisition common in Brazilian English learner dialect, seemingly hitting a barrier in terms of development. The possibility that the plateau effect is not an unavoidable feature of second language acquisition but rather one brought on by certain aspects of the instructed learning experience, is supported by quantitative findings: for CTLs, years spent learning did not correlate with proficiency. On the other hand, years spent learning for FASILs strongly correlated with proficiency levels. In terms of sustained development up to advanced levels, we should also refer back to the Chaplin test. The fact that only 1 CTL participant (2%) of all CTLs averaged a 7.5 rating or above on Chaplin lexical resource and grammatical accuracy, while 44% of FASIL reached this level indicated that while many CTLs scored at an advanced-intermediate level on the tests, only FASILs reached what the testing community considers advanced levels.

To review, the linguistic tests led to the following important findings:

1. FASILs frequently reached a high level of grammatical acquisition, using, in spontaneous writing, a wide range of structures in sentences that were generally error free<sup>57</sup>. They also showed much greater ability to apply formal knowledge of grammar to difficult editing tasks than CTLs did.
2. FASILs showed a wide vocabulary range with deep knowledge of literal, metaphorical and figurative terms, and were able to use this knowledge spontaneously.
3. FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to have overcome common L1 Portuguese to English transfer interference in their second language acquisition.

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<sup>57</sup> This description is based on the IELTS band descriptors levels 7-9 for the general test, writing section<sup>328</sup>

4. FASILs were able to apply their knowledge to a range of communicative tasks, and able to use language at a high level in formal contexts.
5. There is strong evidence that while CTLs tended to plateau at an upper intermediate level, FASILs improved through advanced levels.

These data, of course, have limitations, which will be touched on in Chapter 8: Conclusion. Here I will touch on three questions that may arise to challenge these data. These are the following:

1. Does CTL acquisition represent a sufficiently high benchmark of comparison?
2. How sure are we that FASILs acquired their knowledge through informal use?
3. How common are FASIL learners? Might they not be rare “language geniuses”?

The comparison of FASILs with CTLs was crucial because CTLs are learners that would traditionally be considered the best-trained Brazilian learners of English. The study went to great lengths to verify the level of CTLs, who had volunteered for the study knowing that it sought upper-intermediate to advanced learners. CTLs not only self-reported themselves as upper-intermediate learners<sup>58</sup>, but this was verified by a self-report protocol of skills.

As mentioned above CTL scores on the Chaplin narrative writing for grammatical accuracy and lexical resource, marked blind by two experienced IELTS markers and which were shown to have inter-rater reliability, placed CTLs, on average, at the low end of the B2, advanced-intermediate level, in terms of CEFR standards.

All CTLs, like all FASILs, were current language learners without financial obstacles, professionally-oriented students who had been accepted at the most competitive

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<sup>58</sup>The 6.5 average years actually would place them as advanced learners at most, if not all, private language schools in Brazil.

universities or *pre-vestibulares* in their states; and they had studied for an average of 6.5 years, or 780 guided hours of instruction, at accredited private language schools in Brazil. Additionally, for the 40 weeks of private language school per year, there were approximately 1-2 hours of assigned homework a week. Thus, we can make a fairly accurate estimate that CTLs averaged approximate 1200 hours of formal learning hours at private language schools. These hours do not include informal contact with English out-of-class, which all participants reported. 25% of CTLs reported 2 or more hours of daily contact with informal sources with 42.5% of CTLs reporting at least 1 hour of daily contact. The median CTL contact with informal sources was 5 hours per week. Though this figure is based on estimate by CTLs of their contact with informal sources at the time of their interviews, it is clear that most CTLs complemented their formal learning hours with informal sources.

There is another important piece of evidence, which casts doubt on the possibility that FASILs had benefited simply by having massive amounts of contact with informal sources. This is that the ten hybrid CTLs, who had studied an average of 6.7 years formally and reported 2 + daily hours of contact with informal sources, did not approximate to the proficiency levels of the highest-level FASILs. The top 9 scoring FASIL participants in the study had higher proficiency levels than any hybrid CTL though 4 of these, including Roberto, the highest proficiency learner, reported less than two hours a day contact with informal sources. The ten hybrid CTLs ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 61<sup>st</sup> on the linguistic tests. Notably, only one hybrid CTL, and only one CTL in total, scored a 7.5 average on the IELTS writing scales for grammatical accuracy and lexical resource while 44% of FASILs reached this level. Therefore, despite having the best of both worlds, hybrid CTLs were not as proficient as FASILs who had little to no formal learning. This evidence, when considered in light of qualitative evidence that I will discuss at length below, supports the possibility of a kind of affective filter, connected with fixed learner identities, which could limit CTL acquisition with informal sources.

The CTL learning plateau, as discussed above, has been noted often. In this study, CTLs had reached levels that would be expected in the past for high-level Brazilian classroom learners, and they faced constraints, such as L1 transfer interference and fossilization, which are basic to SLA theory (Doughty, 2003; Selinker, 1972). What is new in the research is that many FASILs overcame these constraints to master the language.

The study presents strong evidence that FASIL acquisition happened out of the classroom. As opposed to CTLs, only 37.5% of FASILs had any experience at private language schools at all and of those, the great majority had fewer than 60 total hours experience. FASILs, like CTLs, had attended private primary and secondary schools where English was taught. We know therefore that FASILs did not have an advantage over CTLs in this respect. We also can be reasonably sure that neither group obtained more than basic knowledge from this experience. As mentioned earlier in the study, it is common knowledge that English regular school in Brazil, even at high-level private primary secondary schools, is a fringe subject, which, at maximum, does not bring students to more than basic levels of proficiency. A report sponsored by the British Council explicitly confirms this (Data Popular Institute, 2014: 12). The same report states that private language schools are the preferred option to learn English for 87% of Brazilians (17). To go along with this verification, the present study asked participants to discuss English in regular schools and how far it could take them. The results were unanimously negative, with approximately 30% of all participants stating that regular school English classes could provide basic levels of knowledge at best, and 70% stating that learning in regular schools was negligible or non-existent.

Furthermore, nearly all FASILs reported no use at all of formal resources available online, with four FASILs (all in the lower half of the group in terms of proficiency) reporting that they had used these rarely.

For the above reasons, it is clear that FASILs gained their non-basic grammatical and vocabulary knowledge as well as their writing and reading skills informally.

Crucially, evidence from the study makes it seem highly improbable that FASILs, as a group, are linguistically 'gifted' or had an intelligence advantage over CTLs. Not only were all volunteers recruited from the same five schools/universities where students had met the same entrance criteria but no participant studied linguistics, language or literature or intended to study them at university. At each of the five sites, a call for volunteers was given to two lecture rooms or classes full of approximately 40 students (approximately 80 total per institution). Of the approximately 400 interested volunteers in total, 50 CTLs and 34 FASILs fit the selection criteria and took part in the study. Thus more than 40% of participants were FASILs though the study did not in any way recruit them. Given the fact that among middle class to upper class Brazilians with high-level professional goals, CTLs are not unusual (Data Popular Institute: 2014), the comparable percentage of FASILs makes it clear that, even within a sample of learners taken exclusively from non-international Central Brazilian state capitals, they are not aberrations. Furthermore, it would be an incredible coincidence if by chance such a high percentage of volunteers were "language geniuses". However, if so many FASIL "language geniuses" had somehow happened into the sample, it seems highly improbable that they would not have been similarly represented in the CTL group.

Data from the study also make it seem unlikely that FASILs had a psychological or intellectual advantage over CTLs in terms of self-reliance. On the attitudes and beliefs questionnaire there was not a significant difference in Likert scale responses between the two groups regarding independent learning in non-language learning situations. In fact, CTLs believed slightly more than FASILs that they were self-reliant in such situations.

Interview questions also probed the possibility that FASILs began learning with an

advantage in motivation or self-reliance by investigating the conditions that led to FASIL learning, and comparing them to those of CTLs. The most significant finding from questions that probed conditions that led to initial progress in the acquisition of English was that the majority of members from both groups were not interested in learning English when they began to progress, i.e. they were amotivated. Thus, the majority of FASILs and CTLs did not begin learning because they had goals to learn English or had taken charge of their learning. Considering these data, there is no reason to believe that FASILs had an acquisition advantage over CTLs because they were naturally more autonomous or better motivated.

With regard to language-learning ability, data did not imply a FASIL advantage. No FASIL reported being motivated to begin learning because he had shown early facility with English in rudimentary classes in primary school or while encountering English informally. Furthermore, despite their success, none of the top 50% scoring FASILs in the study believed language-learning success was tied to natural ability. The vast majority attributed success to “*effort*” or “*motivation*”.

At the beginning of this thesis, I quoted Benson and Chik’s (2010) assertion that “It is possible that people who are intensely involved in FL communities or the pursuit of some interest through an FL may neither need nor benefit from FL instruction. This remains a researchable question[...]

 (75). The evidence presented here clearly supports the claim that FASILs don’t need instruction to become highly proficient in English and goes further in suggesting that it is not uncommon for informal learners in Brazil to reach extremely high levels of both lexical and grammatical knowledge without formal instruction. However, it should be noted that several FASILs felt that they could benefit from certain types of formal instruction, for example instruction in academic skills, now that they had acquired the language to high levels.

## 7.2. Affective fuel

As several researchers in recent years have suggested, in today's globalized, technologized society "online informal learning of English" (Sockett, 2014) or "naturalistic CALL" (Benson and Chik, 2011) gives learners an unprecedented capacity to use and acquire English informally. Several studies of informal, out-of-classroom learning in recent years, e.g. Black (2006;) Kuure (2011); (Kusyk and Sockett, 2012), have shown that informal learning in the modern day can be especially powerful because of at least three important reasons: 1) learners acquire compelling user identities based on belonging to authentic communities of practice and using the language for authentic reasons; 2) learners are able to personalise their use experiences due to access to a variety of resources that they may be interested in; 3) Learners have unprecedented access to a variety of TL users as well as technology that makes interaction less demanding and intimidating than face-to-face interaction would be.

The present study of FASIL learning in Central Brazil, while supporting many of the conclusions of pioneering research referred to above, has uncovered data that both expand on recent findings and, to a degree, shift the focus.

Particularly important is that while most researchers have concentrated on the effects of interactive use with other TL users in "online spaces" (Benson and Chik, 2011; Black (2006); Lam (2000, 2006) and social media (Sockett and Toffoli, 2012), the present study has demonstrated that though online interaction with TLs is indeed an aspect of current out-of-classroom use practices, it most likely is secondary to solitary, receptive but active contact with the globalized culture, especially pop-culture. Furthermore, the comparison between FASILs and CTLs has allowed for a consideration of how formal learning paths may actually interfere with effective out-of-classroom learning.

Sockett (2014) points out that “listening” is the key skill in OILE (32). This may or not be the case based on the evidence presented here, which shows that the textual, multi-modal element of informal learning is involved in many modern, informal activities that involve listening. What is certain according to the present study’s findings is that FASILs believe that reading and listening feature much more prominently in their development than writing and speaking. One of the key structured interview questions was the following: *“In your English language development, estimate what percentage of your activities involved productive (speaking and writing) versus receptive (listening and reading) practice.”* For this question, responses showed a highly significant difference between groups: the mean CTL response was 55% receptive versus 45% productive, while the mean FASIL response was 70% receptive versus 30% productive. Qualitative data from rich interview responses filled in the details of FASIL learner behaviour, offering further evidence that direct interaction with others, while highly valued, was, for most informal learners, not the primary factor in the development of English language identities and made up only a small amount of the linguistic input that led to acquisition.

The importance of receptive activity was made clear throughout FASIL interviews. When FASILs discussed their most important learning resource, the Internet was mentioned most of all (31.3%), followed by video games (25%), television (25%), music and books (9.4% each). If we look closely at the way participants described how they used informal sources, we see that the use of each resource involved many different types of activity, but most of these were receptive and independent of online partners. While, with respect to all of these sources, there were a significant number of participants who mentioned interaction in informal communities (e.g., online gaming, forum participation, ex-pat English book club), interactive activity was secondary for most participants to solitary activity. Furthermore, no learner claimed that membership in one particular community of practice had been of primary importance in the development of his/her identity as an English learner. Even for MMOG video game players, the video game playing experience,

and its role in identity formation was seen very much as an individual experience. Pedro's quote, revisited here, shows the individual quality of identity formation that can occur through video game play:

*“So for me, the immediate attraction was this really cool story, this one, and, later other RPGs, and the fact that I was involved in it and so there was this- this extreme interest in what was happening [...] I think games like this have an enormous potential for learning. People have the attitude that people have to teach the language for its sake alone, and not as if it were a method of expressing things and, particularly, yourself. But the video game works so well for me because it is an expression.”*

It is important to note that for Pedro, as well as for other frequent online video game players such as Henrique and Carlos, not only was the interactive experience with communities of practice just one aspect of a much larger, and often solitary, video game experience, but the video game experience was only one aspect of their informal experience with English in general. For example, for Pedro, television and books might have had even more influence on his personal relationship with English than video games had. In fact, Pedro, an aficionado of writers as disparate as William Blake and Isaac Asimov, considered books to be his most important English learning resource. A simplified account of Pedro, which looked only at his online video game experience, could have given the impression that he had formed a transnational English user identity and learned English largely through his participation in online communities of practice with video game players. In fact, this would be a gross simplification.

Not only for video games, but also for other resources, direct, shared experience with international users was only one aspect of participants' rich English user lives. For example, though nearly 50% of FASILs were regular participants in online forums, forum

users, such as Adriano, while appreciating the access the Internet gave them to international TL users, also valued the unlimited access they had to ready knowledge about the world that they could read at their own leisure and control independently. For Adriano, a dedicated member of several forums, most of his time was actually spent in intense Internet browsing that involved predominately receptive activity. And along with Internet browsing, he watched television, played video games, listened to music, and read literature.

The data, therefore, show that the driving force for FASIL learning is not access to TL users and specific communities of practice online, per se, but rather access to the entire world, which has allowed them to make their own stamp on it, and to live with English in a complex and thorough way. FASIL interview responses, reviewed in detail in the previous two chapters, indicate that they are immersed in the language, they dream in it, they experience it in their thoughts when they are alone and in the presence of others, they watch films, read books, listen to music, learn about personally interesting subjects online and feel the need to understand the language of this media as they understand their first language. Along with these experiences, they interact with international TL users in various ways: shopping online, accessing shared knowledge, chatting through text (synchronously and asynchronously), playing online games, and sometimes speaking with friends or strangers they meet in and outside of Brazil. English use is spread out over their day-to-day actions within a global community in which English is constantly relevant.

For nearly all of the highest proficiency learners in this study, being an English user was important because it allowed them to overcome the constraints of nationality, to be able to have unlimited access to people and knowledge. The best thing about knowing English for Shinthya was “living in English”, which included talking to herself and dreaming in English as well as talking to other people and being able to read whatever she liked. For

Henrique, a *World of Warcraft* “nerd” who often played with foreign online friends, the best thing about knowing English was not video games or any other single informal source, but “*understanding, not being outside of things. For example politics and the economy, I like to have access to all sites.*” Melissa stated, “I can basically read and understand everything. Everything on the Internet, music, academic articles, everything.” For Adriano, the best thing about knowing English was, “It has allowed me to communicate with humanity. I would literally be excluded from the world, from a huge part of mankind and human development and human knowledge if I didn’t know English. I would say intellectually it’s my most important asset.” In Adriano’s quote we see clearly that his individual journey is primary, though his individuality, like everybody else’s, takes place in a very broad and rich social world. As we will see in the next section, within certain fields of SLA, learning for yourself, “egoism” in Lewis’ (2013) words, is seen as anti-social and to be discouraged. With the advantages available in today’s society, this perspective could be problematic because it leads to methodologies that discourage a very powerful affective fuel, a fully self-determined, personalised relationship with the language.

We have seen in the data that in today’s society, it is not unusual that, through day-to-day life, foreign learners in Central Brazil become so psychologically immersed in their second language that, as Shinthya says, they are “living in English”. According to the multiple regression carried out in this study, the strongest contributor to proficiency among both the CTL and the FASIL groups was internal extrinsic motivation, marked by a deep, personal link to English. Based on the data presented here, it seems that it is this kind of motivation, often characterized by a desire to have complete access and not to be limited or left behind, that has led learners to invest a great amount of effort in understanding the linguistic details of the English content that they interact with in their leisure time. This effort has produced “figuring out moments”, moments of learning through self-reliant engagement with language.

“Figuring out moments”, which were mentioned by participants with regard to all five of the informal sources touched on in detail in the interviews (see section 6.5), are individual moments of discovery in which the learner, generally with the help of technological scaffolding such as subtitles, graphic elements in video games, or online searches of key content from leisure activities, acquires new linguistic structures. An important difference between FASILs and CTLs is that FASILs are much more likely to report and reflect on these moments. Thus, for FASILs, conscious attention to the details of language comes naturally as a part of leisure experience driven by personal motives. They generally negotiate meaning not with a conversational partner but internally with authentic input that is highly interesting to them, mediating their interaction with the help of technological support that they control.

CTLs, based on their own responses, rarely put forth such effort in their activities. An hypothesis of this study, is that the laid back engagement style with informal sources that CTLs report is likely tied to their compartmentalization of learning and use, which has been encouraged from the very beginning of their English learning paths. Though, both CTLs and FASILs report that they do not like to “study” when watching television or listening to “music”, for CTLs and not FASILs, the conception of studying seems to overlap with attention to the details of English language used in informal, leisurely activity. Therefore, CTLs may be held back not just by fossilized learner dialect forms that result from too little early exposure to authentic input and too much exposure to learner input, but also by fossilized learner identities which steer them away from learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

Pertinent to the effort that FASILs rather than CTLs seem to make once they are interacting in the out-of-classroom environment, is Gavriel Salomon’s (1984) concept of “amount of invested mental effort” (AIME), describing the paradox that while students felt more comfortable with television than with print, they learned better with print

because they invested more effort into the perceived challenging, academic format. With regard to television learning activities, it was shown that learners rarely put forth the required effort to overcome their habitual attitudes towards television as a leisure activity and to gain educationally from it.

Invested mental effort, as well as fossilized learner identities, were, in fact, touched on by several FASILs during their interviews. Below, is the response of Thiago to the interview question: “In your opinion what is the main reason learners succeed”:

*“I think it depends on people’s attitudes towards language and their effort and motivation. Sometimes people have a system of learning that is very systematic. They become stuck in this system and don’t try to learn the language itself, which is not systematic, but is something that is a living thing and not something that just is.”*

It is notable that Thiago, a FASIL with almost no formal learning experience, is almost certainly referring to “effort” with English encountered during day-to-day life.

In addition to Salomon’s work, the ideas of Menezes (2013) seem to support the FASIL advantage over CTLs in out-of-classroom learning, and, particularly, the possibility that ingrained learner identities inhibit independent learning moments. She points to the fact that Brazilian language learner histories repeatedly show that independent learners take themselves to “edge of chaos” moments in which, through authentic experience generally outside of the classroom, important leaps of learning take place. On the other hand, those learners who are less autonomous are generally held back from edge of chaos moments by the grammatically oriented classroom, which acts as a basin attractor rather than as a platform for leaps. While Menezes does not mention “figuring out moments”, the present study has found these also tend to happen when learners bring themselves to challenging,

new experiences with informal sources, the “edge of chaos”, where they deal with complex, sometimes unpredictable, input and acquisition contexts.

Interviews show CTLs do in fact value being able to use English in the real world, and when what might be called “edge of chaos” moments occur, they appreciate them. The data indicate that despite many hours in the classroom and practice with simulated use and collaborative task-based activities, most CTLs do not consider these to have been their most important or influential learning experiences. Though as quantitative findings clearly show, they consider teacher-guided school activity to be essential to their learning, CTLs almost always report authentic use situations, as the most important English learning moments of their lives. Usually these have happened outside of a classroom. Nearly 70% of CTLs reported their most important learning moments to have happened in uncontrolled, naturalistic settings. It is these moments, or, much less often, non-programmed spontaneous moments of independent discovery in the classroom, that CTLs report as highly influential, often because it was at these times that they first believed they had really learned to use the language and/or felt that language was more than “just a game” and that they had now internalised it.

While the data show that most CTLs report that the best thing about knowing English is using it in the real world, and that their most important learning moments happened in authentic moments of communication, it is also clear that CTLs believe that without school they will never be able to achieve this. Thus, while Danilo felt that his most important learning moment was a compliment on his English given to him by a teenager from Brooklyn – “You speak just like an American” -- rather than the excellent marks he was given by well-trained “experts” in formal language school assessment, he was nevertheless quite sure that it was his school that was primarily responsible for his English acquisition, that he couldn’t have acquired English and received the compliment had he not followed the formal learning path. A potential problem with a belief in the

centrality of the classroom to language acquisition is that it may block CTLs from seeking out authentic moments and taking advantage of them by learning in an active way, engaging with the details of their second language. The vast majority of CTL most important moments happened accidentally or were one-offs outside of Brazil, for example checking into a London hostel. On the contrary, most FASIL moments were sought out, generally within Brazil. As Henrique pointed out in his interview, such authentic and challenging use moments may be repeated over and over outside of the classroom, resulting in learning that grows like a “snowball”.

Why are CTLs so passive? The data make it seem likely passivity is built into the CTL learning path. From the beginning of their learning arcs, CTL and FASIL experience is quite different in this respect. While CTLs are obliged to go to a school where their learning is mediated by “experts”, where they closely follow a methodology in which progress is measured by graduation to the next book and where independent and personalised use of authentic materials is not a required aspect of school curricula, FASILs use the language for their own purposes, controlling their materials and feeling success through the achievement of goals intrinsic to their everyday lives. It is not surprising then that while members of both groups often begin their learning amotivated, they quickly come to learn for very different reasons, with FASILs much more likely than CTLs to conceive of English learning as something personalised to their real life needs, and to pursue learning to meet those needs.

Thus, while the FASILs regularly steer themselves towards “edge of chaos moments” requiring the “figuring out” of language and encouraging feelings of competence, CTLs are often guided away from such moments in class and when they do occur out-of-class, they consider them to be lucky accidents, and rarely seek them out again. Language schools teach that the right place for these moments, like a pot of gold, is at the end of the rainbow. The few CTLs who criticized their schools, criticized them for not allowing for

personal, authentic and independent discovery moments within their methodologies. They were also among the only CTLs who believed most of their learning had happened out-of-class. However, most CTLs and even most hybrid CTLs believed that school had been their essential resource and had imparted to them most of their linguistic knowledge. As we will see in the final part of this chapter, this is essentially the point of view that most mainstream classroom-centred CTL researchers present. It seems, then, that CTLs have learned their lessons well.

### 7.3. Implications

#### **A classroom centred discipline**

Within the SLA community it is widely accepted that adult second language acquisition is less successful than first language acquisition (Doughty, 2003). The logic behind this claim is summarized by Doughty when she argues that adult second language acquisition is “always incomplete” and “**typically relatively unsuccessful**”, while given “**adequate exposure, normal intelligence and normal social conditions,**” first language acquirers and child second language acquirers are always successful. This logic is shared by much of the SLA research community with many prominent researchers in a variety of sub-specialties maintaining that it is in the classroom that the gap between first and second language acquisition must be bridged (Lantolf, 2013; Little, 2004; Doughty, 2003; DeKeyser, 2001; Ellis, 2006; Norris and Ortega, 2000; Van Lier, 2008; Dörnyei, 2009).

There is, however, a logical leap that must be made to conclude that second language acquisition is fundamentally different from first language acquisition because it so often falls short where first language acquisition does not. The statement relies on a double standard that is rarely challenged or even noted by current researchers in the field. The great majority of SLA research has been conducted on learners who not only are “typically unsuccessful”, but who have also not experienced the same “adequate

exposure” and “normal social conditions” that Doughty states are necessary for successful acquisition by first language acquirers. Before we make the claim that an expert is required to retune, mediate, facilitate, or manipulate the learning context or the language processing system of second language learners because SLA is a typically unsuccessful process as opposed to first language acquisition, we must be sure that second language learners have failed in similar contexts to those in which first language learners have succeeded.

It is likely that until recently such a comparison would have been quite difficult to carry out. However, as we know from the present study, “adequate exposure” and “normal social conditions” are now available for adult second language learners. What we have seen in the study is that FASILs, like first language acquirers and child second language acquirers, learn while living their everyday lives, using the language for authentic reasons that they endorse rather than for scripted reasons that they know have been created for the classroom. Starting with what might be viewed as “legitimate peripheral practice” (Lave and Wenger 1991), exposed to plentiful authentic language rather than bombarded by learner dialect, a large percentage of FASILs in this study have naturally become expert practitioners. Thus they have taken advantage of the conditions that Doughty says are essential for first language acquirers to become successful foreign language acquirers.

When examined in the light of the findings presented here, it seems several conclusions by prominent researchers about the role of instruction in SLA as well as the limits of naturalistic SLA have been too sweeping, made with insufficient evidence. This is at least partially attributable to the fact that the field of SLA over the past few decades has functioned almost as a closed system, consisting of samples of classroom learners, classroom based interventions and practice, and assessments based on use of English within the classroom. It is not likely that such a literature can identify inherent constraints of the classroom because there is no out-of-class control group. Furthermore,

it should be quite evident that factors connected with success at activities within classrooms where no learners have acquired the language to advanced levels will not necessarily help us to understand which factors contribute to near-native acquisition and the ability to use the language in the real world. Significantly, it is this that we most need to understand, as many SLA researchers freely admit. The primary goal of instructed SLA is the ability to use the language spontaneously in the real world (Loewen, 2014).

The findings of the present study have highlighted some of the limitations connected with such a classroom-centred research system. For example, questionnaire items dealing with learner attitudes and beliefs adapted from studies on high school and university language students could not show significant differences between CTLs and FASILs. Those items, which in previous studies had been able to show distinctions between more and less successful classroom learners, indicated that the CTL and FASIL groups were similar in their high levels of intrinsic motivation, high internal loci of control, high levels of international posture, and goals to use the language in the future. Differences between the two groups could not have been revealed without more specific questioning that allowed for the discovery of fine-grained distinctions among self-motivated, relatively high-level learners. The implication to be drawn is that models of acquisition based solely on samples of classroom learners cannot be assumed to apply to SLA learners in general.

### **Adequate exposure**

A number of prominent researchers of the past (Postovsky, 1974; Krashen, 1981; Belasco, 1984; Gardner, 1985; Dickinson, 1987) focused on the limitations of learning in the artificial conditions of the classroom and the importance of exposure to plentiful, authentic input and/or natural, personalised purposes (conditions) for use. The findings in the present study to a large extent support this previous research.

Among researchers who have questioned elements of classroom learning, including the adequacy of classroom input, is Postovsky (1974) who observed that students who learn in classroom environments marked by large amounts of “classroom dialect” are often not prepared to communicate in authentic contexts, arriving at a plateau in their knowledge before they reach high levels of proficiency. Belasco (1971) made an almost identical observation. Both researchers were interested in steering learners away from bad habits that can occur when natural learning conditions are not experienced and when speaking and interaction among learners happens too early in the acquisition process.

As we have seen, data from this study’s linguistic tests support the possibility that FASILs benefit from a silent period and/or from heavy early exposure to authentic structures while CTLs may suffer the kinds of unnatural acquisition that Postovsky and Belasco observed in classroom learners fluent in classroom dialect but unable to function in out-of-class, interactive situations in which they are exposed to native speech. The study showed that FASILs, who are not exposed to learner dialect, are much less likely than CTLs to have difficulty overcoming L1 interference in order to master, use and understand nuanced grammatical and lexical structures.

Current researchers, however, present a picture that does not take into account the benefits of exposure to authentic language or the disadvantages of heavy exposure to classroom input “rich” in typical learner “distortions” (Postovsky, 1974). Hatch (1978), Long (1996), Swain (2005), Lantolf and Thorne (2006), Ellis (2008) and many others tout the necessity of learner-to-learner interaction at all proficiency levels without investigating the dangers of fossilized errors that could occur from high frequency speaking and listening of structures that have not yet been acquired. For example, while Long’s (1996) Interaction Hypothesis frames “negotiation of meaning” as a process that occurs during face-to-face interaction and leads learners to notice their deficiencies while

learning from conversation partners, there is no recognition that classroom partners may just as likely reinforce poor language as highlight new language.

This is not to suggest that learner output and live interaction are not useful or even necessary in the SLA process. However, there is a need to 1) be more specific about when productive use should be encouraged compared to other skills, 2) distinguish between the quality of different types of interaction, and 3) be more expansive about what “interaction” refers to. We know from explicit interview responses that, despite years of facilitated interaction, many CTLs only gained confidence in their speaking abilities when they accidentally used the language on their own in authentic interactive contexts. We have also seen in interview responses by FASILs regarding their use of video games, television programs, etc., that there is often a largely internal negotiation of meaning that takes place between out-of-classroom English users, guided by textual scaffolding available through technology, and multi-modal authentic input.

The mainstream SLA research community has not yet recognized the value of learner-controlled authentic input, not only due to its richness and variation, but also due to its link to the real world of the learner, which can lead to heightened engagement with the linguistic details of the input. SLA advocates of task-based, interactive learning (e.g. Pica, 2005), while referring to the positive aspects of teacher-controlled input, such as its carefully selected level of difficulty, show very little interest in investigating motivational benefits of independent, out-of-class interaction with authentic input or in developing ways to facilitate such interaction.

In Ellis’ (2008) article on the principles of instructed learning, strongly influenced by current trends in SLA research, he does not touch on the affective power of *authentic* input nor does he comment on the newfound access the Internet gives learners to varied authentic material, including TL virtual communities. Rather, for out-of-class practice,

Ellis recommends formalized input (graded readers and self-access centers with formal learning materials) and underlines the importance of teacher mediation of that input. While in many FL contexts graded materials are without a doubt valuable in helping students embrace a more independent approach to language learning, online, informal resources such as video games and Internet forums bring exciting new possibilities for out-of-class use and learning. Prominent researchers often do not consider these powerful resources in their development of out-of-class use projects. An example of this is Murray, Fujishima and Uzuka 's (2014) English Café, conceived of as an out of classroom space where people could “speak as themselves” informally, but a resource which portrayed language, primarily, as a subject to be learned, offering formal materials for study without encouraging personal discovery of the language through the use of informal English sources for leisure purposes.

Given the formal bias of researchers and educators, it is unsurprising that CTLs, with their extensive classroom training, would not interact at a deep level with English linguistic content that they encounter informally out of the classroom. Their behaviour is consistent with the recommendations of the SLA research community. Reinders and White (2011: 1), for instance, consider “unrestricted access” to authentic input to be “dangerous” (Reinders and White, 2011) without expert guidance, going so far as to suggest, in true Orwellian fashion, that independent use can inhibit autonomy. In fact, the evidence in this study suggests just the opposite: while expert guidance may inhibit autonomy and, with it, successful acquisition, unlimited access to information and independent engagement with it often leads to extremely positive results. Unlike CTLs, FASILs put forth significantly more effort with the linguistic content of informal sources. The results are predictable: FASILs speak like native English speakers and CTLs speak like relatively high-level Brazilian learners.

## **Krashen + 1**

Models of classroom learning that emphasize interaction and output can be seen, to some extent, as reactions to Stephen Krashen's work in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and, especially, his monitor model of SLA acquisition, which postulated that acquisition is only dependent on exposure to what he called "comprehensible input". Though the present study does not question that there are benefits associated with learner output in the acquisition process, data indicate that the higher proficiency group, FASILs, had less productive practice and more receptive practice than CTLs. An implication to be drawn from this is that Krashen may have been right in prioritizing input over output.

The theoretical framework of this thesis was largely influenced by another aspect of Krashen's hypothesis, the learning versus acquisition distinction (1981). The findings here support certain aspects of Krashen's theory but also suggest factors in acquisition that Krashen did not focus on.

Krashen distinguished between acquisition, which he stated arises from use of the language in meaning-making communication, and learning, which comes from conscious study of rules and definitions. According to Krashen, only what is acquired is available for spontaneous use. Our findings to a great extent support this point, but suggest it is not simply exposure to comprehensible input and subconscious, implicit acceptance of it that leads to effective and complete intake, but highly engaged spontaneous use of the language fueled by personally compelling input. Engagement with this input is often marked by certain elements of conscious attention.

These findings were revealed in a detailed comparison of the interview responses of FASIL and CTL participants themselves. The following excerpts by FASILs not only describe their experiences but also act as an inadvertent commentary on how their acquisition links to existing SLA theory:

(Adriano)

“Vocabulary is not planned. It, It’s random and it’s plentiful - much more than in a school, so, so you wind up learning a lot more expression [sic] – whole sentences – and many words. It was simply that there was no plan to it.”

(Joana)

“I’m not the sort of person that learns things through studying and grammar or keeping track of words [...] I don’t like systematic learning be, because I don’t learn in boxes. I learn in my own specific way.”

(Carlos)

“I am not concerned with the *little rules*. I am concerned with, you know, being able to understand and communicate. It’s like, grammar mistakes are inevitable. I will make them. *I don’t care and focus on what is useful to me.*”

These three statements are notable for several reasons, including the fact that they are examples of spontaneous but thoughtful, highly fluent speech, made mostly in English, which could have been uttered by applied linguistics students rather than by L1 Brazilian Portuguese interviewees with no formal language training.

More importantly, they show how FASIL learning relates to key issues in SLA. Adriano’s quote underlines the “adequate exposure” factor of SLA, the importance of authentic input which has become much more accessible for out-of-classroom users in recent years (Benson and Chan, 2010; Sockett and Toffoli, 2012). Carlos and Joana touch on “normal social conditions”, specifically authentic, individualised purposes for use that arise in the course of everyday life. The statements taken together practically summarize Krashen’s (1981) acquisition versus learner distinction and at the same time highlight certain

aspects of learning in the complex real world that to an extent relate to aspects of more modern exposure-based approaches to language acquisition such as DST and chaos theory, discussed by Nick Ellis (2006), Vera Menezes (2013) and others. The quotes, however, imply the need to amend Krashen's work and to apply Nick Ellis' CREED model in a different way than he does to the process of SLA.

The above quotes taken together support Krashen and yet suggest a necessary amendment to his work. Adriano's statement underlines the primacy of "plentiful" input noting how it directly leads to acquisition of "whole sentences", in other words not only vocabulary but grammatical acquisition. Many other high-proficiency FASILs echoed his statements regarding the importance of plentiful, varied input. Both Carlos and Joana clearly show themselves to be acquirers in the Krashen sense, unconcerned with "rules" or definitions.

FASILs acquired high levels of language without overactive "rule monitors", underlining the importance of plentiful input and spontaneous use. On the other hand, CTLs were highly conscious of grammatical rules, with several stating that grammar had to be acquired in the classroom and counting as proof their ability to advance to new levels or textbooks, rather than their ability to use the language spontaneously. Thus, the groups fit the learner versus acquisition distinction and their respective results on the tests support Krashen's contention that use for meaning-making purposes, and not conscious study, leads to the ability to use new language spontaneously. Furthermore, the qualitative findings suggest that CTLs, as opposed to FASILs, compartmentalize learning and use and are likely "less open to" input encountered outside of classroom contexts. These findings exemplify a classroom constraint that Krashen alluded to: students who have learned to think of English as an object of study may be restricted by a high affective filter from seeking out and interacting with out-of-class input (1981: 77).

The findings however show a limitation in Krashen's argument, particularly his idea that input limited to the  $i + 1$  level, a specific level just beyond the learner's ability level, is optimal and, for this reason, teacher-concocted spontaneous use situations may be preferable for learners, particularly at low levels. Krashen does not distinguish between different types of input, except in its complexity level. He does not recognize that some comprehensible input and some use situations may lead to more effective acquisition than others, depending on the learner/acquirer's attitude towards it. While Krashen believed that plentiful input in communicative situations was needed, he did not focus on the power of authentic, personalised reasons for use, driven by input that fit the interests of the learner. He and Terrell (1983) would propose the so-called "natural approach" without recognizing the importance of natural motivation and limitations inherent in simulated communication for inorganic purposes.

According to the present study's participants, input for communicative purposes is more powerful if it is relevant to their lives or "useful", as Carlos's quote points out. Joana also supports this theme when she states she does not like "systematic learning", but learns "in her own specific way". And, according to Adriano, plentiful input gains power from not being "planned" but rather from being "random". The lesson to be learned here is one that the SLA community has seemingly failed to recognize for over three decades: *the limitations of conscious learning go beyond input and processing systems to the learner's psychological relationship with the input and the context of use.*

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Like Krashen's Monitor Model of acquisition, dynamic systems theory (DST) is partially based on the power of the brain to subconsciously organize plentiful, random input into a language system. The data from the present study, as shown in the quotes from Adriano, Joana, and Carlos, contribute to our understanding of how SLA, and, specifically,

naturalistic SLA in today's globalized use contexts, may relate to DST and other models of acquisition dealing with complex and chaotic input and contexts of use.

DST, and, particularly, Nick Ellis' (2006) CREED model, is pertinent to this discussion because 1) it figured strongly as a theoretical basis for Sockett's (2014) detailed description of informal learning online, which he calls OILE and 2) Ellis' rather counter-intuitive application of the model to SLA is an excellent example of why there is a need for more extensive evaluation of informal learning in various modern contexts as well as more investigation of the constraints on acquisition in formal learning situations.

In Sockett's (2014) explanation of the effectiveness of OILE, he uses CREED as a theoretical basis for why informal learning online can be so successful. He states that as in first language acquisition, online informal acquisition emerges from the unpredictable interplay of a large variety of input sources. These, over time, create a complex system based on frequencies of occurrences of structures in varied contexts. The data from the present study partially support this reasoning. The complex out-of-class use environment of informal foreign language learners, marked by authentic, plentiful, random input encountered in a variety of contexts, may lead to a sophisticated native-like second language system. However, there is an important element of FASIL acquisition that is not touched on by DST and related models of acquisition. FASIL learners do not simply benefit from interacting with input that is random, complex and plentiful, they also benefit from engaging with it for personalised reasons. Neither Ellis in his conception of CREED nor Sockett in his application of it to OILE, stress that input's effectiveness is not just related to frequency of occurrences in input, but also the learner's attitude towards personalised input, which can lead to highly motivated *conscious* attention to specific structures. As is the case with Krashen's theories, what is lacking in CREED is an appreciation of the power of personalised motivation to contribute to acquisition.

In Ellis's (2006) article on CREED, he claims that the primary constraint on SLA is the

entrenched L1 system, which blocks the L2 from being acquired. For Ellis, this inherent constraint on SLA can best be overcome by explicit instruction followed by proceduralization. On the other hand, naturalistic learning, according to Ellis, has been shown in the literature to be inadequate. To support this statement, Ellis states that many naturalistic learners communicate without using determiners, subordinating elements and prepositions (2006, 110). To judge the relevance of Ellis' statement, we need to know the conditions that led to the deficient naturalistic acquisition he is referring to. Did the naturalistic learners develop their English as legitimate members of a target use community (Lave and Wenger, 1991) or did they exist on the fringes of the community, marginalized? Were they exposed to plentiful, authentic input or to mostly error-laden input spoken by other learners?

In Adriano's quote, he explicitly refers to the advantages of plentiful, random, unplanned input that he experiences out-of-class compared to limited classroom input. For him this seems to be a common sense explanation of his learning success. The quote is even more convincing regarding the potential of out-of-class learning given that an informal, naturalistic learner who has not had the benefit of explicit instruction has spoken in high-level English. Adriano's quote inadvertently supports an idea that Ellis has missed in his application of CREED to SLA: authentic, varied input, the same type of fuel which Ellis states is necessary for the development of the first language system, is most likely, and certainly more logically, a more important prerequisite to successful second language acquisition than explicit instruction, which can only realistically touch on a fraction of the nuances of a living, thriving language. If we analyse Adriano's spontaneously spoken English, we see that he has overcome, without the help of explicit instruction, exactly what Ellis (2006) claims to be the principal constraint on L2 acquisition, the supposedly "entrenched" (101) first language system. Adriano does not make L1 transfer mistakes. Rather, he shows he has overcome at least two of the most persistent ones for a Brazilian Portuguese L1 speaker. In his phrase, "**There was** no plan to **it**", Adriano has used "there was" and the object pronoun, "it", flawlessly despite the fact that these structures

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would normally present difficulties for learners with a Portuguese L1. In fact, the FASILs' significant advantage over CTLs in the acquisition of both of these structures as well as other structures that would normally be deceptive for Portuguese speakers is shown clearly in data from the present study's linguistic tests. An analysis of the quotes by Carlos and Joana would show they had similar success with deceptive English structures as Adriano did. Thus, the information contained in the quote implies that *contrary* to Ellis' contention, inadequate, classroom input under artificial conditions, which FASILs but not CTLs avoid, may be more likely to lead to entrenched L1 transfer mistakes than the previously tuned L1 system, which both FASILs and CTLs have to contend with.

### **Dependence is not autonomy**

The various stories of independent learning presented in this thesis reveal highly successful autonomous language learning that has been self-determined in the sense that it is based on personal choice with regard to why the language is used, what contexts language use takes place in, and what aspects of the language are attended to. FASIL independence and self-reliance compared to the relative passivity of the CTLs, was not, according to the study's data, due to the fact that FASILs were more psychologically or intellectually equipped to be autonomous than CTLs. Rather, the difference between the two groups was that CTL relationships with English were regulated by others from the start while FASILs were always in full control of their English use. Data from the study show that contexts propitious to the emergence of autonomy are ones in which the ways a learner interacts with the language (materials, behaviour, beliefs) are dictated by his own needs as opposed to the decisions of external authorities. Thus, the study supports the strong version of autonomy (Smith, 2002), which holds that people are naturally autonomous provided they are placed in the right situations for that autonomy to emerge. However, these "right situations" do not appear to be in the classroom.

The successful learning of the FASILs, therefore, exemplifies the personalised, classroom-independent elements of learner autonomy stressed in the work of early theorists on language autonomy such as Holec (1981) and Dickinson (1987), and also supports Benson's (2011b: 118) definition of autonomy, which focuses on personal control. However, the findings strongly dispute the core of what I have argued is today's favoured learner autonomy paradigm, which prioritizes support over independent discovery, and controlled learning environments over real-world social contexts of use entered into due to personal interests.

In the literature review, I discussed the ideas of David Little and the great influence he and his work continue to have on the field of learner autonomy. Central to Little's model of autonomy is the concept of "interdependence" a term that, as applied in research that uses it as a theoretical basis (e.g. Murphy, 2013), seems to be a euphemism for "dependence". In fact, it is quite hard to locate where "independence" fits into the "interdependence" construct. In Little's own words, "independence is not autonomy, but autism" (Little, 1995:178). This characterization of "independence" is rather perplexing in its extremity. At what point does independence from teacher and peers become so problematic that it can be compared to a clinical developmental disability? According to Little (2004), "learner autonomy necessarily "develops out of the interactive (and thus linguistically mediated) experience of shared responsibility for collaborative learner projects." Thus interdependence is dependence on teachers and colleagues for support and scaffolding plus the independence to contribute to the group work and act within this dependent scheme.

Despite the unprecedented out-of-class control of personally interesting TL use contexts that technology offers, several prominent autonomy researchers caution against independent use, sometimes citing the "proven" concept of "interdependence" to support their arguments. Reinders and White, for example, (2011:2) back up their contentions

regarding the dangers of private, unregulated use of technology by stating, “it is now better *understood* [emphasis added] that autonomy is very much about interdependence.” Dang (2012: 441), explains that information and communications technology (ICT) classwork invites the unwelcome possibility of students becoming more involved with independent computer use than with peer-to-peer collaborative activity. Little (2004) states that despite new technology, “I now view the concept of independent language learning (that is language learning undertaken individually and without the support of a teacher) with a great deal of scepticism” (24). The anti-individuality strain that runs through the classroom-centred learner autonomy paradigm is so extreme that Lewis (2013), another important figure in the field of autonomy, refers to the idea of learning for oneself as “disquieting” because it seems to condone “egoism” (38).

The evidence presented in this study acts as a strong counter-argument to arguments such as those above. In fact, according to the findings of the present study, the argument that independent learning is to be avoided while co-constructed learning with peers and teachers is essential to autonomy is tenuous. Quantitative and qualitative findings show that determining one’s own reason for use of the language, seeing it as an aspect of one’s own world rather than as something dictated by others, correlates strongly with proficiency as well as autonomy. A key difference between FASILs and CTLs was their locus of control, with FASILs believing significantly more than the less proficient CTLs did that their success was determined by factors *within* their control. Unlike the majority of CTLs, they did not believe that the right methodology or teacher was necessary for acquisition. Furthermore, despite the success that many FASILs had, none of the top learners attributed their success to genetics but rather to “*empenho*”/“*esforço*” -- “effort” and “motivation”. As seen throughout the study, this effort was driven by a connection with the language that became internalised through personalised use rather than “other regulation”.

Even within the CTL group, time spent with informal sources correlated with proficiency. Thus, for CTLs, this sort of independent use was not dangerous but helpful. On the other hand, years spent learning in a formal context had no correlation with proficiency. Additionally, for CTLs as well as for FASILs, the factor that correlated most with proficiency was internal extrinsic motivation, self-determined motivation based on a personal link with the language.

The study shows that independent, out-of-class exploration of the language allows learners the benefits of seeing the language as an element of their own world. An example of a learner who enjoyed such benefits is Pedro whose language learning *was* “undertaken individually and without the help of a teacher”, and who mastered English to a level that no autonomy researcher has shown can be reached through “co-constructed” learning with peers and teachers. For Pedro, English had the natural purpose of helping him to express his identity, which he discovered during his exploration of a virtual world that was interesting to him on a deep, personal level. It would take a teacher of practically superhuman psychological and logistical gifts to facilitate this type of personalised experience for each learner in a collaborative classroom.

The fact that FASIL learning often happened independent of classmates and teachers should not be taken to mean that it was asocial. However, the evidence presented here does not support the idea that autonomous learning must be co-constructed with other English learners, either in a classroom or, indeed, in a living room. Such collaboration was not a key factor in the acquisition of any learners in this study. Social exchange took place in the real world rather than a simulated one, often through the Internet, where learners felt connected with other people due to their shared interests as opposed to a shared goal of learning English.

Interview responses in this study show that there is a link between autonomous language and reflectivity. However, the data indicate that “reflectivity” about the language learning process as well as how the language, itself, is constructed emerges from personally motivated use of the language. The contention by Schweinhorst (2003) and many others that learner reflectivity about English use and learning must be facilitated by a teacher was disproven dozens of times throughout the interviews by participants who often gave eloquent, spontaneous explanations of the nature of their naturalistic learning. Below, I revisit Eduarda’s thoughts on her English learning:

*“I wasn’t looking forward to learning English for any specific reason, so I would just exercise it when it was natural, which usually was by the TV or the Internet [...] the hard part of the learning -- when it starts to become something natural, fluid, fluent, it definitely comes more through the everyday thing.”*

It seems natural that highly successful users of English would reflect on a process that has given them valuable benefits that they enjoy in their everyday lives. However, the contention that teacher assigned activities which require reflectivity (e.g. Hafner and Miller, 2011; Hamilton, 2013; Mideros and Carter, 2014) will teach learners to reflect about language out-of-class seems to be wishful thinking and has not been supported by any research that I am aware of.

### **The context of a social context**

Menezes (2013) writes that her research on language-learner histories has shown “that the classroom is not the idealised ‘collaborative paradise’ teachers dream of, but an arena where some students must struggle to protect their needs and their identities against the impositions of their teachers and partners.” The themes of this discussion are very much

in keeping with Menezes' quote, though here I would substitute, "SLA researchers" for "teachers".

Arguably, SCT, more so than other fields in SLA, advocates the unrealistic "collaborative paradise" that Menezes refers to. In a seminal book chapter on the subject, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) describe a model of language acquisition that would likely seem inapplicable to most people who have taught in an SLA classroom. According to them, language teachers must be deft enough to choose just the right level of mediation (there are 12 levels) needed to coax out each element of the language based on their expert evaluation of where each structure is currently located on each student's zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to SCT, a learner is dependent on this sort of other regulation until the very end of his learning path (Lantolf, 2013). Only then can internalisation of the language along with independent learning of the language happen.

For Lantolf (2013), a deep and thorough understanding of the second language as a scientific system is necessary for second language learners to acquire the freedom to use it independently. He uses the aspect system of language as an explanation of the type of scientific knowledge that learners should be able to *consciously* wield. He does not, however, clarify why second language learners should be able to have a thorough conscious understanding of the aspect system when, quite likely, more than 99% of first language users do not. There is no evidence from the present study that second language learners, whether CTLs or FASILs, seek to consciously understand the intricacies of their second language to a degree that surpasses their conscious knowledge of their own first language.

Lantolf (2013) and Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue that because man is a "social being" and life and learning are social phenomena, English learning can only happen through shared experience with other peers in an "other regulated" classroom. There are obvious

holes in this logic, the most glaring of which is the naïve assumption that carefully controlled interaction in a classroom equates to real-world human social experience. The authors equate inorganic, compelled social interaction with naturalistic interaction, simulated purposes for use with real purposes for use, learner and teacher input with authentic input (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 208). Lantolf (2013) goes further characterizing out-of-classroom learning as generally counter-productive: “Everyday development due to its largely spontaneous and unconscious nature is likely to constrain the freedom individuals have to fully regulate their mental and physical activity” (31). The findings in this study, relating to both FASIL and CTL out-of-class learning, show Lantolf is either wrong, or that what he counts as “full regulation” goes beyond the full regulation that most people exert on their first language. Just as importantly, Lantolf does not demonstrate that he has seriously investigated what the present study suggests would be the motivational limitations of such deep and complex “other regulation” in an artificial environment. He also offers no evidence for how such practice prepares the learner to use the language in target environments of use.

Lantolf’s extreme viewpoints, especially his negativity regarding independent learning, are easily challenged by the present research. For instance, Lantolf (2013) contends that research casts doubt on the ability of learners to develop inner speech to use the language as a tool for thinking (26). We know from the data presented here that this doubt is unfounded, and that some of the most important learning experiences mentioned by both CTL and FASIL learners happened internally while using the language to think or talk to themselves. Direct quotes from FASILs contradict Lantolf’s position. For example, Pedro’s quote:

*“I usually mix English and Portuguese, according to what fits best in my head [...] and I have to actively try to block myself from speaking in both languages with others, so as not to look snobbish. What happens is I often speak a*

*translated way of my internal dialogue (which uses English words) when I talk to people in Portuguese.”*

The research here shows that this sort of independent development is not an aberration but is common, and perhaps normal. Thus, we have one more example of a leader in a major field of SLA study that seems to have been precipitous in casting “other regulation” as necessary and ‘naturalistic’ learning as inadequate and potentially harmful. Even dyed in the wool classroom learners, as shown in a number of statements by CTLs, hold naturalistic authentic interactions to be of much greater value in their development of confidence in their abilities than simulated communicative tasks that they often do not even think of as “real” communication.

### **Taking English off the pedestal**

The following two quotes taken from the FASILs, Roberto and Adriano, the most proficient participants in the study, hint at what could be gained if researchers let go of the reins and began to recognize the motivational value of informal, personalised connections to a second language. Roberto’s response explains why he began to learn English. Adriano’s explains what for him is the best thing about knowing English. Both responses are excellent examples of highly internalised, extrinsic motivation as described in the Ryan and Deci (2000) typology.

(Roberto)

“[...] because all the movies I liked, they were in English. All the songs I liked, they were in English. Uh ... some books I wanted to read, they were in English, so I realized that there was some part of the culture that I needed to have access to and not knowing English would be a problem [...] And I guess this thing of belonging ... of really knowing another culture, mainly

the American culture ... I was really connected to the American culture at that time. And, and then I just started ... getting song lyrics [...]"

(Adriano)

"[English] has allowed me to communicate with humanity. I would literally be excluded from the world, from a huge part of mankind, human development and human knowledge if I didn't know English."

In the quotes, Roberto and Adriano, neither of whom has had formal learning experience, speak with native-like proficiency as they spontaneously answer formal interview questions. They reveal that despite living their whole lives in non-cosmopolitan capital cities in Central Brazil, they have strong transnational identities and see English as necessary to pursuing activities that are meaningful to them, such as gaining knowledge online or using pop-culture. Without English they would not be able to be who they want to be or to do what they want to do. This is the essence of their motivation.

Not only for Adriano and Roberto, but for most FASILs and for more than 18% of CTLs, benefits of knowing English were transformative because they enabled participants to transcend Brazilian identities and become part of a global community of English speakers and/or to access a world of opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible. Before the Internet, most learners in this study would almost certainly not have acquired English in the same way because they would not have seen English as a part of their daily lives. This is important to recognize. Once the SLA community is cognizant of how changes in the place of English in the world have altered the way a large and growing number of non-native speakers use and relate to the language, it can begin to re-evaluate established models of acquisition that were developed before these new motivational conditions were in place.

It is also necessary to revisit SLA theories of the past that have been unfairly maligned. Dörnyei and others in the SLA sub-field of motivation argue that Gardner's highly-researched Socio-Educational Theory and his concept of integrativeness have become far less relevant now that English is a global language and there is no longer a "specific target L2 community" (24) that learners wish to integrate into. In fact, what we have now is a multiplicity of L2 target use communities that modern learners in the age of globalized English want to integrate into. Adriano's and Roberto's responses clearly show that integrativeness, as described by Gardner (1985), is a component of what has driven their successful language learning. "Integrativeness", in fact, represents an internal, self-determined connection with the language and has much in common with Deci and Ryan's categories of internal-extrinsic motivation.

By going beyond the more common classroom-centred research approach, this study has made the important finding that self-determined motivation based on a current personal connection with English, has significantly more power to generate engagement with the language than motivation that is based on the abstract enjoyment of learning English as a subject or on an appreciation of its beauty. In fact, intrinsic motivation did not correlate with proficiency for either group. This is because intrinsic motivation, whether connected with aesthetic appreciation of the language or satisfaction in the acquisition of knowledge, implies looking at the language as something apart and impersonal. While such an attitude may be useful in distinguishing positive learning orientations in low-level classroom learners (e.g., Noels et al., 2000), it implies a distance between the learner and the language. When one "just loves English" one is putting the language on a pedestal. Noels (2001) found that intrinsic motivation is more likely to pertain to classroom issues than to social or intergroup issues. The present study supports this finding.

Nonetheless, as in other sub-fields of SLA, prominent researchers in language learner motivation such as Dörnyei (2009) and Yashima (2009), seem too ready to portray language as a foreign object, something shining in the future which learners can be encouraged to enthusiastically look forward to wielding for what are, at least to some extent, externally endorsed reasons. When Dörnyei suggests that teachers regularly “highlight the duties and obligations learners have committed themselves to” (2009, 38), he implies a limited understanding of the ways in which current out-of-class, informal environments lead learners to readily engage with the language on a daily basis.

Like other models of acquisition discussed in this chapter, Dörnyei’s *ideal self* system may be relevant to second language acquisition in today’s world, but only to certain types of learners, for example amotivated high school students or learners with wholly academic purposes for learning. However, for many modern learners it would be an unnecessary compromise to accept the identity of an English classroom learner rather than a global English user, unless the classroom learner identity was thought of as an auxiliary component of the real-world identity. Since the conditions for personal learning environments already exist for many learners (Stevens and Shield, 2010), it would seem to be a logical step for motivational researchers to help learners to recognize exciting opportunities to develop their current second language learner identities through independent exploration and discovery. The conditions exist for learners to form personal connections with the language, connections which Sockett and Toffoli (2012) point out are much more likely to flourish out of class, where the learner is in control of his purposes for use of the language as well as the content of the language he uses.

We have seen that the motivation to learn English based on benefits pertinent to everyday life strongly contributes to proficiency. According to the data presented here, this is partly because of the snowball factor: authentic experience, as opposed to constructed experience, leads to feelings of competence, which push learners to take on

greater challenges such as playing video games with international teammates or learning about public speaking from an online course. In a world in which English exists as the *lingua franca*, where motivation to learn English for real, everyday reasons is omnipresent, where text rather than speech is the dominant form of communication, where authentic input is plentiful and varied, where communities of English speakers with similar interests are regularly accessed in non-English speaking countries within the course of daily life, perhaps the most efficient way to bridge the gap between first language acquisition (FLA) and SLA is to encourage learners to actively tune into the FLA like conditions they live in – as FASILs do -- and to tune out the stream of classroom centred resources, expert research and deep-pocketed language schools that portray language learners as necessarily dependent on others to achieve a difficult, distant goal.

## 8. Conclusion

### 8.1. Identifying FASILs as an emerging common learner type

This study has investigated a group of language learners, referred to here as fully autonomous self-instructed learners (FASILs), who acquire English as a foreign language through informal, naturalistic contact with the language and largely without formal training. The FASIL participants in this study not only had never received more than a basic level of instruction in English, but they had never lived abroad or with a fluent speaker of English. Nevertheless, nearly a third of them, based on internationally recognized standards, had reached levels of lexical and grammatical mastery of English. Furthermore, based on a battery of linguistic tests covering a range of English skills and knowledge, FASILs showed themselves to be significantly more proficient than well-motivated, classroom-trained, long-term current learners who studied an average of 6.5 years at private English education at well-resourced, respected English language schools in Brazil. These learners by their own criteria and their schools' criteria, as well as based on results in the present study, had reached intermediate to advanced levels of proficiency. These well-motivated, traditional learners, referred to as classroom-trained learners (CTLs) in this study, were not only formally trained, but also, on average, had daily contact with informal sources of English in their out-of-class lives.

Evidence from the study supports the conclusion that the superiority of FASILs relative to CTLs in language proficiency was due to factors relating to the manner in which they acquired the language. Though they differed in terms of mode of learning, participants in the two groups were equivalent in terms of socio-economic, cultural, and academic backgrounds and were not significantly different in terms of demographic factors such as age and gender. All participants had professional aspirations and attended elite institutions of higher education. Participants who had advantages such as experience

living/studying abroad or an immediate family member were excluded from the FASIL group but not from the CTL group.

## **8.2. The power and potential of naturalistic, autonomous learning**

Within a large body of qualitative and quantitative data generated by this study, there was no indication that FASILs had entered on to independent paths as a result of being more linguistically gifted than CTLs or being more predisposed to autonomous learning. Rather, the majority of participants from both groups began to progress in English as amotivated learners, uninterested in English. A key difference between the groups was that CTLs, from the beginning of their learning, had their relationships with English dictated to them first by their parents and subsequently by language schools themselves. On the other hand, FASILs were in control of their contact with English from the outset of their progress with the language. For them, use of English was dictated by its place in their everyday lives. Personalized orientations towards the language arose naturally out of functional use. The result was often a highly reflective, conscious appreciation of the language alongside an extremely high proficiency level.

The study employed in-depth structured interviews supported by a Likert Scale-based questionnaire to explore possible factors related to learner beliefs, learner attitudes and learner behaviours that could account for differences in proficiency between the two groups. The most crucial finding was that internal extrinsic motivation, a self-determined motivation that comes from an individual's internally generated appreciation of a behaviour's value, was the greatest contributor to language proficiency in the sample as a whole as well as within each individual group. Statistical analysis, supported by ample qualitative data, showed that FASILs were significantly more likely than CTLs to be primarily driven by this kind of motivation. In contrast, CTLs tended to be motivated by attitudes towards the language as a foreign object either to be tamed in order to gain

external, and, generally, financial/professional rewards or to be admired as an exotic and aesthetically rewarding hobby.

Based on the findings, FASILs seem to have emerged as a common learner type due to the confluence of two related changes that have influenced the role of English within non-English speaking countries. These changes are 1) a globalized world with English as a *lingua franca*; 2) the development of technology, especially Internet technology and online platforms, along with concomitant changes in the way people communicate. One of the most important changes inherent in new technology is the multi-modal nature of communication for both entertainment and practical purposes. Built into communication on the web, are textual, graphic and audio elements that reinforce meaning and make it easier for motivated non-native English speakers to participate in personally important activities that demand the use of English.

The analysis found that FASIL acquisition is affected by these changes in a complex way, but one that can be distilled to the following dynamic: FASILs, through their unmediated connection to a globalized world often develop personalized motivations to learn the language, marked by strong identification with other bi-lingual and transnational members of the globalized world, and/or a conviction that English is so constantly relevant to their lives that they will be limited in their pursuit of personally important goals without it. This affective fuel leads FASILs to put forth a high degree of mental effort in their interactions with the linguistic elements of informal sources that they encounter out-of-class. Thus, FASILs are not simply learners who learn more effectively because they are exposed to informal sources. They are primarily learners who have strong personal reasons for using the language, who benefit from being able to engage in personally important activities that, though challenging linguistically, are scaffolded by the affordances of technology that have not been available in the past.

It is not surprising, then, that FASILs are likely to view the functional benefits of using informal sources and the learning that comes about through their use as two aspects of the same process. CTLs, on the other hand, despite recognizing the important benefits that English can bring them, tend to compartmentalize learning and use, and remain dependent on classrooms and formal resources to progress. The evidence in this study supports the possibility that the formal CTL learning path, which, from the beginning, emphasizes the centrality of expert control to acquisition, may, effectively, “groom” many CTLs to have fixed learner identities. Interview responses imply that classroom-focused learners may underappreciate or be intimidated by English-use contexts in their out-of-class lives, which, though they require effort, would likely be relevant to their achievement of personal goals. It is interesting to note that CTLs have the tendency to believe that the FASILs they have met in their lives are unique language geniuses, who they naturally could never emulate. FASILs on the other hand, despite their success, generally believe that language acquisition is a question of effort, not innate ability. This suggests the question of whether CTLs would benefit if they were encouraged to believe that independent use of the language is both an important aspect of learning and within their grasp.

Data from the linguistic tests show FASILs were significantly more likely to overcome traditional L1 transfer constraints on the acquisition of basic English structures than CTLs were. Furthermore, the quantitative data indicated that CTLs tend to plateau before they reach advanced levels of English. Unlike the FASIL group, time spent learning by CTLs does not correlate with continued improvements in proficiency, towards mastery of the language. The quantitative data taken together with the qualitative data regarding “affective fuel” and mental effort with informal sources suggest a theory as to why FASIL learning tends to be so much more effective than CTL learning, namely, FASILs go through a path of learning that is very much like first language acquisition. They are exposed from an early age to authentic sources of English with which they interact for personally

relevant reasons. Not only is the input they receive more varied and less likely to include learner errors than what CTLs experience, but also they have the strong motivation to understand and use the authentic forms they are exposed to correctly. The situation may be quite different for CTLs who put effort into learning language that is decontextualized from its natural use environment and are likely exposed to plentiful non-authentic language spoken by themselves and other learners with the same L1 background.

### **8.3. Theoretical implications**

This study's findings have important theoretical and practical applications in the field of SLA. As has been argued throughout this thesis and as has been claimed by other researchers (e.g., Benson, 2011a), over the past two to three decades SLA has become a field dominated by classroom-centered approaches based on classroom-centered research. Findings in the field have often been extrapolated to apply to SLA in general, including naturalistic SLA, without a firm empirical basis for doing so (e.g. Ellis, 2006; Lantolf, 2013). Though the present study in no way seeks to imply that established theory developed through research on specific types of classroom learners is not pertinent to specific classroom contexts, it does challenge the extent to which this research can be applied. The results of this study inevitably call into question current SLA theory regarding autonomous language learning, motivation and L1 constraints on L2 acquisition.

The findings of this study support Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (1985) that learning will be most effective if it is controlled and endorsed by the learner. Based on the evidence presented here, the dominant paradigm of learner autonomy, which counts teacher-facilitated collaborative learning with peers as necessary to the development of autonomy and which either de-emphasizes or explicitly discounts independence and individualization, must be reconsidered. In fact, we have seen that users of English

regularly develop into effective autonomous learners, without the support of teachers, within independently-controlled learning environments that are largely solitary. While teacher facilitation and collaboration may play a key role in the development of a degree of learner autonomy and, even, in the encouragement of reflectivity about language and the learning process, this would likely only be relevant to specific classroom contexts that necessitate the ceding of control to the teacher by students who have limited goals in terms of acquisition.

The present study's findings also highlight the importance of personalized motivation driven by a perception of the language as an essential aspect of regular life rather than as an object of study. Nearly every highly proficient participant in the study pursued English for internally generated reasons and considered it indispensable, with a constant relevance to their lives. Though intrinsic motivation, which has been seen as a key to language learning success, may be an important factor in classroom success by relatively low-level learners, many of whom are learning as an academic requirement (e.g. Noels, 2001), there is no evidence in this study which suggests it contributes to the acquisition of high levels of proficiency in a second language unless it complements a more personalized motivation to learn a language based on its functional value to a user's life.

Finally, with regard to distinctions between the first and second language acquisition processes traditionally emphasized in the SLA field (e.g. Doughty, 2003), the stories of FASILs show that when second language acquisition takes place under conditions similar to first language acquisition, neither the processes themselves nor the end results of these may be as dissimilar as previously thought.

#### **8.4. Future research**

The present study represents a beginning. Necessarily limited in its specificity as well as

its scope, it suggests a number of research paths that can build upon what has been presented here.

Of the many possible areas of future research there are three principle ones which I will discuss here. They are 1) expanding research on FASILs to other populations, including other nationalities, other socio-economic classes, and also learners of other second languages; 2) examining with more specificity the various processes of acquisition which have been revealed in the present data; 3) Exploring ways of applying the benefits of FASIL acquisition to formal learning as well as looking at ways that formal learning may complement FASIL acquisition.

The present study dealt with learners from middle to upper class backgrounds who did not face financial obstacles in their education. An obvious limitation to the present study, then, is that the findings cannot be assumed to apply to learners from more diverse social and economic backgrounds. It seems likely that the ability to build a personal relationship with a second language and to value a more global outlook is less relevant to people who are burdened by local and immediate concerns. Furthermore, mastery rather than competency of a second language may not be as relevant a goal for learners from less affluent backgrounds. Future research could investigate to what extent FASIL acquisition exists among other socio-economic classes. If there are examples of FASIL development under such circumstances, what are the conditions that spark personal relationships with the language, and how do they compare to the ones observed for the middle to upper-middle class population in this study?

This study has dealt with the acquisition of English. However, how relevant FASIL learning is to learners of other languages remains unclear. Many of the conditions that lead to the frequency of the FASIL phenomenon in Central Brazil may not be applicable to the learning of other languages. For example, it is English that is the *lingua franca* of the

Internet, not German. How, then, would the principles of FASIL learning apply to a learner of German? We have seen in the Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) study that, in fact, they may indeed apply to the learning of a second language other than English provided learners feel a personal connection to the second language. The Internet brings the ability to connect to TL users in all languages, and technology offers many of the same affordances that FASILs in the present study, such as Internet searches, a wealth of authentic material, and exposure to informal text and multi-modal communication. Future research could investigate ways departments of modern languages at universities may encourage or impede the development of internal loci of control, independent out-of-class use, and an internalized international focus. Other possible research could investigate in what way today's migrants may benefit from technology-mediated access to authentic, personally relevant TL use contexts and from the self-determined motivation that these contexts encourage.

The present study has sought to provide a broad understanding of the FASIL phenomenon in Brazil and its benefits in terms of acquisition and learning. However, future research is needed to gain a more thorough understanding of how FASIL learning develops and to better understand how internalized relationships with the language are maintained over time. One way to address this concern would be longitudinal research that first locates early FASIL learners and then tracks their development.

Other aspects of FASIL learning observed in the present study can now be investigated with more specificity. For example, participants were asked about how and why they began to learn English, but they were not pressed in follow-up questions to discuss the specific details of how their learning began. Studies that delved more deeply into learning histories could lead to a richer understanding about circumstances in which personalized relationships with English develop, providing detailed information about, for example, how certain informal sources act as gateways to more challenging activity.

Additionally, more focused research that captures learning as it happens rather than simply in retrospective accounts is needed to understand more completely the respective benefits and constraints of FASIL and CTL learning. A potentially rich source of future data is the actual online activity of participants, provided they are willing to volunteer such information. Other studies on informal learning, for example Kuure (2011), Benson and Chan (2010) and Lam (2006), have used data of online activity to gain insights about specific out-of-class English use experiences. If participants were willing to share their Facebook post histories, or a snapshot of them, it could lead to new discoveries about the nature of FASIL relationships with various global TL use communities as well as how multi-lingual, transnational identities manifest themselves in social media spaces. Detailed study of forum threads or online gaming activity could lead to observed “figuring out moments” rather than simply self-reported ones.

Finally, there is the question of to what extent the benefits of independent online learning can be applied to formal learning. Benson and Chik (2010) suggest a formal classroom that is auxiliary to “independent forays”. Such a system would be an inversion of several recent autonomy and SCT interventions that attempt to bring new communication modes into the classroom (e.g. Reinhardt and Zander, 2011; Lee, 2011) and, in effect, formalize them. New research could investigate projects that involve individualised, out-of-classroom use in which learners choose their own material based on their own interests and then report back on their individual experiences to a group of peers. Research studies on approaches like this could address questions regarding the viability of such flipped classrooms and their potential benefits in terms of acquisition, self-reliance, and motivation. For example, would learners who reported to a class on “figuring out moments” in self-endorsed activities experience feelings of competence and self-efficacy? Could student classroom presentations encourage classmates to emulate novel, out-of-classroom activity and learning behaviours connected with it?

To return to an important theme of the thesis, what can be done to combat groomed learner identities and, especially, ingrained beliefs in the centrality of the classroom? There is the question of how these beliefs take shape in the first place. Research digging deeply into the development of learner beliefs, perhaps through the use of case studies in combination with ethnographic data, could study ways in which parents, methodologies, and teachers reinforce language learner passivity and a belief that a necessary precondition to acquiring a second language is simply being “good at it”. Furthermore, there is the question of what the effect would be if classroom learners became aware of what has been shown here: highly successful FASIL acquisition goes on every day for a variety of normal people just like themselves? The demystification of FASIL acquisition may not be as far-fetched as it sounds. As we have seen there is no shortage of FASILs willing to reflect on their experiences and it would certainly be possible in many formal learning contexts to arrange to see FASILs’ acquisition in action, for example the demonstration of “figuring out moments” with the help of technological scaffolding. A number of questions could be addressed as part of this line of research. To what extent does such modelling generate fresh interest in using English out-of-class? Is there evidence that exposure to FASIL learning models leads CTLs to have a broader conception of language learning?

### **Concluding remarks**

Though the language-learning paradigm presented here may be applied to the needs of classroom learners in certain ways, it assumes the goal of full acquisition of the language, rather than more limited goals which still exist for many learners and may be pertinent to other research traditions in SLA. The present study focused on acquirers/learners who saw English as something of permanent importance. The goal of most participants was to master the language and based on the findings presented here, learning that is overly reliant on the classroom likely interferes with that aim. However, among learners with more limited goals, FASIL learning is not necessarily ideal and, in fact, could be a distraction. It is important for classroom-based researchers to be aware of this.

Application of these findings to the needs of students and learners focused on very different acquisition goals, e.g., the ability to complete academic tasks, pass standardized tests, communicate on summer holidays, or learn a language for specific professional purposes could be largely irrelevant.

With that said, in order to more fully understand the process of SLA, researchers must begin to accept the fact that the classroom context is not the only context, and probably not even the most dominant context, for many learners today, including those who sometimes find themselves in formal classrooms. In today's world, many acquirers enjoy powerful benefits that result from ready access to TL informal sources along with an internalized motivation to use them based on their practical importance.

There is much to be gained today by pursuing new approaches. Language acquisition models based to a large extent on observations made when constraints on naturalistic learning were much greater and when the classroom context of learning was practically required for any learner living outside of an English speaking country are likely not ideal theoretical frameworks for research on language acquisition by people living in today's society. In a time marked by very different modes of communication than what existed in the recent past, when the English language has acquired a significantly more personal, functional role in many non-native speakers' lives, new approaches based on new, or appropriately revised, theories are needed.

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# Appendix A

## Test 1: Reading comprehension of literal meaning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Instructions**

Read the profiles from the website '*FriendsBook*' and tick ( ) the sentences that are true about each text. Then, circle the percentage which best reflects your comprehension of each text.

### **Example:**

My name is John. I love animals, but especially cats. I have a cat named Erik, which is also my brother's name.

- The writer is a boy or a man.
- The writer has a pet.
- The cat is probably male.
- The writer is an only child.

### **A.**

Let me tell you about my home. It's on this little hill out in the country. But I'm not far from the city (I don't like the city - do you?) - not much time to get here. I can't wait to show you a photo... or you can call me to come over to see in person! 07786 237 679

1.  His home is not in the city.
2.  He lives near the city.
3.  He seems proud of his home.
4.  His home probably has a view.
5.  He wants people to visit his home.
6.  He prefers the city.
7.  He doesn't have pictures of the home.

B.

People say there's nothing like a good book to warm your heart. It is true. A good book can be everything. I read every night, about a book a week. (And sometimes as many as five!) I read for hours and hours. In my town I go down to this nice book shop just on the corner and they have everything. There's a nice soft spot there by the fire that I like, and then I may spend nine hours there before I get out – all day! But I want someone to read with, so do call me now – I'm in the book!

4.  She thinks that a book can help someone feel good.
5.  She reads frequently.
6.  She usually reads a maximum of five books per week.
7.  She doesn't like to read outside the home.
8.  The book shop is near her home.
9.  The book shop is not very comfortable.
10.  She would like to have company while she reads.

C.

The good part about living here is nature. I need to be free in the world. As I like to make and grow things, I don't live by any large cities. The grounds here on my block are fairly good (and they are pretty). I've been across the country and around the whole world a few times, but I think that here is better than any place I know on earth. And I don't ever need to go to the city to buy things – I don't like it there, actually. That's the good thing about living here, I feel: it's neither the country nor the city. I like to show it off. Call me to come down and see it if you like. I like company! (And I'm nice – really!)

11.  She lives in a densely populated area.
12.  She has traveled a lot before.
13.  She enjoys having visitors.
14.  She likes to garden.
15.  She thinks the place where she lives is inconvenient.
16.  She likes nature.
17.  She lives in the country.

D.

I go out so often with my two kids. But I don't mind spending all my time with my kids. It's worth it. Especially playing football: it's an all day thing. It doesn't cost much: all you need is to have a ball for football – not a special occasion or even to be on a real team. It's not hard. My kids don't even need me. You see, I'm not a real player, myself – I have flat feet. I lose every time. One time I broke my arm and left leg and had to be carried away! Now what I do is get a ball and watch my kids having a good time all the day through. Others like to drink, I like looking at my kids.

- 18.  He seems to love his children.
- 19.  He thinks football is expensive.
- 20.  He has never played football.
- 21.  He once hurt himself playing football.
- 22.  His children do not play football without him.
- 23.  He can't use his feet at all.
- 24.  He likes to drink.

## Test 2: Reading comprehension of formulaic expressions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A.

I don't get out much – it's about time I do. I'm not from here – this country or city. (But I like this country.) I'm far from home. I'm a little over the hill, let me tell you, but you can't tell! (I can show you my photo, or wait to come see me in person!) Call me on 07786 554 0978

1.  He wants to go out but has a problem with time.
2.  He is foreign.
3.  He lives in a remote area.
4.  He wants to keep his location a secret.
5.  He thinks he looks younger than his age.
6.  He probably lives in an area with hills.
7.  He lives on the hill, but not on top of it.

B.

About me? I'm living large in the city, better than ever. Actually, I've been around the block a few times and I think I make a pretty good living on the whole, but that's neither here nor there. If you don't know any better, I come across as a show off. The thing is, my nature is to be fairly down to earth, by and large, on the grounds that I call it like I see it. I know my place in the world. If things are down and I need to part company with the world, I go to the country. I don't really need to buy nice things to feel better. But I live off cities – they grow on you. Feel free to call me.

8.  He says he is experienced and honest.
9.  He thinks he makes a decent salary.
10.  He thinks his past and occupation are irrelevant.
11.  Some people might think he likes to show what he has.
12.  He cares about the earth and the environment.
13.  He lives in the city but wants to live in the country.
14.  He thinks cities tend to grow too big.

C.

I don't like to go out much, myself. The thing is, I have two left feet and I need to watch my spending. (Mind you, I'm not flat broke!) Now, for what it's worth, I do have a ball playing football with my kids every so often and even having one drink on occasion. (And not two at a time!) But I don't get carried away or lose it. Having a good time doesn't have to be hard or cost you an arm and a leg. I'm a real team player, looking out for others all the time – especially my special kids. My kids see me through the day. With my kids, a good time is to be had every time.

- 15.  She does not know how to dance well.
- 16.  She thinks football and drinks are worth the money.
- 17.  She plays football with her children frequently.
- 18.  Her children are with her most of the day.
- 19.  She drinks only when it is a special occasion.
- 20.  She says it can be cheap to have a good time.
- 21.  She is looking for more players for the football team.

D.

Many people say I'm all about my nine to five, and they say I do everything by the book. Be that as it may, I do have a soft spot for a warm heart to heart and there's nothing like a good night (and day) on the town with someone sometimes. I do have a fire for my shop and I spend hours and hours there, but every now and then I get down and out, so it is nice to just have someone in your corner to go to. I want someone I can read like a book, someone true. Call me this week (before nine)!

- 22.  He likes to go out and have fun.
- 23.  People think that he is obsessed with work.
- 24.  He has a special place in his house for romantic occasions.
- 25.  He likes to have tender and honest conversations.
- 26.  He sometimes feels quite sad.
- 27.  He likes to have someone who lives close to him to go out with.
- 28.  Some people think he is too "correct" and proper.

# Appendix B

## Chaplin retelling test

### **Directions:**

*You will be shown a clip of a scene with Charlie Chaplin twice. You will be given pencil and paper to take notes on everything you see. After you watch the scene, with the notes you have taken, write a full description of everything that happens in the scene. In your description, concentrate on writing, in what you think is everyday, grammatically correct English, about the people, places, and actions in the scene. You will be given 14 minutes to finish this task.*

# Appendix C

## Knowledge of contextualized meanings of deceptive vocabulary and grammatical structures

### **Directions:**

*As you read the paragraph, you will come across pairs of words. In each pair, one choice is more acceptable than the other. Please choose the more acceptable of the two words based on the context of the paragraph. You have four minutes to complete the task*

Having a girlfriend is not easy. For example, I once had a girlfriend who was very beautiful but not very nice. When she (made/did) a mistake, she never (assumed/admitted) that she was wrong. This was very (boring/annoying). (Another/other) problem was her behaviour. She was very beautiful and young, but she (acted like/looked like) an old woman. I was worried (with/about) our relationship for a long time. I learned something (with/ from) this relationship –before you become serious with a girlfriend, you must (have/be) sure that she is the right (person/people) for you. As a relationship (grows/grows up) things change.

I will tell you a (story/history) about the moment I (knew/realized this). Work was over so I went to restaurant. I had a great dinner and then when I was finished I got up and left. I needed to go to the store to (get/take) some food. When I went into the store I saw my old friend, John. He (told/said) me his brother was (traveling/away). He was staying at a really nice hotel in Argentina.

“Wow,” I said, “My girlfriend is also in Argentina.”

“Can you (remind/remember) me of her name?” he asked.

“Cejanna Santos,” I said.

He said, “My brother is also there with Cejanna Santos.”

“Can you (lend/borrow) me your phone,” I asked. I called (to/up) my girlfriend’s mother to (know/ find out) if it was the (truth/true). It was. The (new/ news) made me very (mad/ nervous) and when I spoke to my girlfriend, I yelled.

# Appendix D

## British weather – grammaticality judgments

### **Directions:**

*Please read the following passage. Underline and number any word or phrase that you think is incorrect. Then, below the passage list the numbers of the incorrect words or phrases and, next to them, write a corrected version that would make sense if put back into the passage. You have ten minutes to complete this exercise.*

Recently, I've been thinking about something a friend asked me. He wanted to know what was the weather like in England and if I preferred it than New York's weather. He said, "The weather in New York is definitely the worst in the world. It must be better in London."

I have traveled many times abroad. For example, I have been to Spain on my summer vacation in 2002. Then, in 2008, I would live in Germany, but I stopped in London on the way. There, I fell in love, forgot about Germany and ended up to stay. I got married my beautiful wife and had a child. Now I am happy. However, although I love my family, I don't love the English weather.

The worst thing about the English weather is that you rarely see the sun. Even in the summer, usually is cold. But, worst of all, it rains a lot so you always have to carry an umbrella. For example, in the morning it may be cloudy, then it stays sunny, but suddenly it can change back again and start to rain.

If I have another chance to live abroad, I will choose a warm country. I have actually been thinking in moving to Argentina or to Uruguay. Several of my friends have been to these countries and they loved. One thing is for sure. Although the weather is never perfect in any country, I am sure I would see more of the sun in Uruguay or Argentina than I do in London.

# Appendix E

## Interview Schedule (translated from Portuguese)<sup>59</sup>

*In your opinion, what is the most important reason that some learners of English in Brazil who are not limited by time and money have great success in learning English?*

*What is your number one motivation to learn English?*

*(just one motivation)*

*About what percentage of your knowledge and ability in English comes from contact with English outside of courses, directed by yourself, and what percentage comes from contact directed by schools, private language courses and teachers?*

*How old were you when you began to progress in your learning from the basic level?*

*How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?*

*How many years have you spent learning English since you began to progress from a basic level?*

*Do you go/Have you gone to private language school? (if not already answered)*

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<sup>59</sup> All questions were asked in Portuguese

***When did you start school? (If question not already answered)***

***How long did you go there for (If question not already answered)***

***Why did you not go to language school?/Why did you stop going so soon?***

***How long did you go there for? (If question not already answered)***

***Is there anything that you would criticize about your school?***

***Which private language school do/did you go to? Have you always gone to that school? (If not already answered)***

***How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level?***

***How is/was conversation and interaction organized in your school? (if applicable)***

***Who choose/chose conversation subjects in your school? (If applicable)***

***How is/was vocabulary learned and practiced in your school? (If applicable)***

***How is/was grammar learned and practiced in your school? (If applicable)***

***How many hours per week do/did you have class? (If applicable)***

***Describe English in regular school; How far can regular school take students?***

*Do you regularly (multiple times per week) watch English language film/TV with original audio?*

*Do you sometimes watch English language television/films with English subtitles?*

*Do you sometimes watch English language television/films without subtitles?*

*Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it? (IF applicable)*

*How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English? (If applicable)*

*Do you regularly (multiple times per week) listen to English music?*

*Do you regularly (several times per month) look up the lyrics to English language music?*

*Do you regularly (several times per month) use an English language music translation site or look up the meaning to music lyrics in a dictionary?*

*Do you sometimes sing while looking at lyrics?*

*Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it? (If applicable)*

*How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English? (If applicable)*

*Are you a member of a social media site?*

*Is your social media site configured in English or Portuguese?*

*Do you subscribe to an English language news site online through social media and/or do you go to an Internet news site regularly?*

*Do you read English articles (more than headlines), blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week?*

*Do you write English online?*

*Are you an active (weekly/write and read) participant in an Internet forum?*

*Do you sometimes use Internet English teaching sites (either written material, video material or podcast classes)?*

*Is your computer (or search engine) configured in English or Portuguese or another language?*

*Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it? (If Applicable)*

*How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English? (If Applicable)*

*Have you read at least two English language books in full within the last year?*

*Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it?*

*How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English? ) (If applicable)*

*Do you play multi-player online video games in English at least once per week?*

*Are you a regular (at least once per week) player of any kind of English language video games?*

*Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games]? Tell me any details about how you use English language television/film [music, the Internet, books, video games] and what you like about it? (If applicable)*

*How do you think contact with television/film [music, the Internet, books (including books with graphic content such as comic books), video games] may help you to learn English? (If applicable)*

*Estimate how many hours per day (or per week) you have contact with English outside of school or your English course (this can include speaking, watching television or listening to music, using the Internet, playing video games, and reading books)?(The closes estimate you can make)*

*Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books? (“things that you do to learn” “strategies”)*

*What do you do most often when you come across a new vocabulary item while reading or listening?*

- *Skip it/don't worry about it*
- *Either write it down and find out the meaning later or find out the meaning right away*
- *Try to understand it by the context*

*During your English development, what approximate percentage of your practices involved receptive activities (reading, listening) and what percentage involved productive activities (writing, speaking)?*

*What is the best thing about knowing English?*

*What is the most important resource for learning English including all informal (television, internet, reading, music, etc.) and formal (school, teacher, etc.) sources?*

*With whom do you speak English most frequently?*

*In what situation in the future do you imagine yourself speaking English?*

*Will you continue to improve your English? How do you intend to do that?*

*What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?"*

***(I am asking for a specific moment"; "something that happened only once.)***

# Appendix F

## **Sample Interview : Roberto (FASIL)**

(italics indicates translation)<sup>60</sup>

***I: In your opinion, what is the most important reason that some learners of English in Brazil who are not limited by time and money have great success in learning English?***

Roberto: Mm, I guess that depends on each person. But in general I guess they're very motivated, and they have a very real aim, like, they have a very big fat reason to learn English, and that's what pushes them to learn. The main thing is motivation. Like there must be something to make you want to get it.

***I: What is your number one motivation to learn English?***

Roberto: I think it's part of my personality. I have always wanted to be something else. To be more than just a Brazilian guy, to be something else.

***I: About what percentage of your knowledge and ability in English comes from contact with English outside of courses, directed by yourself, and what percentage comes from contact directed by schools, private language courses and teachers?***

Roberto: Mm. I would say 20 percent from school and 80 percent from other sources, other than school.

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<sup>60</sup>Interviewer spoken in Portuguese, except where indicated. The interviewee requested to speak in English and did so except where indicated.

**I: *How old were you when you began to progress in your learning from the basic level?***

Roberto: *[SPEAKING PORTUGUESE]* How?

**I: *When did you begin to learn, really to use progress more than just at the most basic level?***

Roberto: Um, I guess I was 15.

**I: *15. So you only speak English for three years?***

Roberto: Fou -r.

**I: *You've only spoken English for four years?***

Roberto: No, I'm 21 now.

**I: *Oh, 21, okay.***

Roberto: So it's been yeah, so it's been like six years.

**I: *How and why did you start using English and improving from a basic level? Where did you start? Why?***

Roberto: Because all the movies I liked, they were in English. All the songs I liked, they were in English. Uh, some books I wanted to read, they were in English, so I realized that there was some part of the culture that I needed to have access to and not knowing English would be a problem. For example there were some singers I liked and all their

songs were in English, and I-I really liked them and I wanted to know what they-they were saying, but not by looking at translations, I wanted to really know what they were saying, and, the movies and stuff like that, I never liked a dubbed movies, like when they replace the audio for the original audio. And I guess this thing of belonging, you know, of really knowing another culture, mainly the American culture, I was really connected to the American culture at that time. And-and then I just started studying you know like, getting song's lyrics and [INAUDIBLE].

**I: *What a great answer. How many years have you spent learning English since you began to progress from a basic level?***

Roberto: Six

**I: *Have you gone to private language school?***

Roberto: Yes

**I: *Which private language school did you go to?***

Roberto: It's mostly for people who are already know [INAUDIBLE] English. Uptime Consultant is the name. It's a 12 month course. I stopped after the first semester.

**I: *How old were you?***

Roberto: I was six, it was 16, I was 16.

**I: *How long did you go there for?***

Roberto: After one semester

**I: *Why did you stop?***

Okay, mm. Well, I, I knew English before, because I had contact with English through [INAUDIBLE]. Uh, but I didn't know anybody who spoke English and I needed a place to practice it. To talk to people and that-that's why I enrolled in the course. So I mostly didn't care about their classes, about their grammar lessons, 'cause I already knew it but it was an opportunity to talk to people.

**I: *So that's why you went, but why did you stop?***

Roberto: Because, it wasn't what I wanted. It was very formal, the way you learned there, there were lessons you had to follow and then people would correct your lessons and then it go to the next lesson. And I didn't like learning that way 'cause there were things I wanted to ask and they weren't in the question, and with people online, with friends online, I could ask them anything, doesn't matter what lesson I'm learning or ...

**I: *Go ahead.***

Roberto: I mean if I didn't know English, I wouldn't be good at all. But, 'cause in one year, the way it's done there, I guess it would be impossible for me to learn anything I could use. But because I knew, you could get something but not enough.

**I: *But you said you began progressing when you were 15. You already knew English after one year?***

Roberto: Well, almost two, actually. And it was like ... the school was a pretty low level.

**I: *How was conversation and interaction organized in your school?***

Roberto: They called it communicative. At least, they said it was. And I, I admit, I think they do try to focus on the student, not the teacher. The thing I thought would be good was that when you are at home, what you don't is, like, well, I mean somebody live to talk to. So this was a cool thing about it. At least I could interact a little speaking with others. But, it didn't work so well, because people they wait till they have to talk. You know. They don't talk when they want and say what they want.

**I: *So, then who chose the subject of conversation?***

Roberto: It was always the teacher, the book. It was always this way, every class.

**I: *How was vocabulary learned and practiced in your school?***

Roberto: Mm, ... I don't remember to be honest except uh that it was connected to the book. It came from the book. And then, I guess, we were told to talk about it.

***I: How was grammar learned and practiced in your school?***

Roberto: It was the same as the vocabulary. I guess it was- it was the first part, talk about the story and then, the, the second part, you take a break, and you come back and practice vocabulary and grammar.

***I: How many hours per week did you have class?***

Roberto: Three hours a week.

***I: Is there anything that you would criticize about the school?***

Roberto: It was basic, it was formal. The teach, I think it was the teacher that he was very tied to the textbook, even maybe, it was the school that made him do this. It took a, away the chance to learn something real, a vocabulary word because there was not reason for it except it was in the book.

***I: Describe English in regular school; How far can regular school take students?***

Roberto: I can't say uh, it didn't contribute-contribute to me, but like from high school on was like uh, vocabulary here and there. I think it's impossible to teach grammar to uh, 45 kids at-at once. It should be in a group, in a small group, you know where you-where you can work if you can find a group that is the same level as you. But this doesn't, it never happens.

**I: *So how far can a student get in regular school?***

Roberto: Just some vocabulary and some grammar like the verb “to be”. No way can you learn even to talk.

**I: *Ok. Now to change the subject a little bit. Do you regularly -- multiple times per week -- watch English language film/TV with original audio?***

Roberto: Almost every day.

**I: *Do you sometimes watch English language television/films with English subtitles?***

Roberto: I used to a lot, but not anymore.

**I: *Do you sometimes watch English language television or films with subtitles?***

Roberto: Yes. I mean, I ... only watch with subtitles when I can't turn them off.

**I: *Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English language television or film? Tell me any details about how you watch English language television or film and what you like about it?***

Roberto: Yeah, uh, I rarely watched something dubbed. Only when there was somebody else with me, so I normally liked watching the audio in English. The original audio, and the subtitles in Portuguese. And then when I realized I had some vocabulary, I guess that was before I read my first book in English. I started watching the subtitles in English too. And then you, for a long time, I watched stuff like that with the subtitles in

English for a really long time. And then I started watching Friends, all this, all the seasons of Friends. When I was, when I was in the eighth season I guessed one day I-I took, I don't know how to say that. I just took the subtitles off, I just turned off the subtitles option.

**I: *You turned off the subtitles?***

Roberto: But it was, it was by accident.

**I: *Oh really.***

Roberto: [INAUDIBLE], and then I kept watching the-the episodes like I watched four or five episodes without subtitles and I didn't realize and then when I realized it was like, oh my god, there are no subtitles, and I can understand. And then, after that I, not all of the stuff I watched, I-I watched without subtitles, 'cause some of them were too hard for me. But then I started you know, avoiding subtitles and nowadays I don't use subtitles for anything unless there is no choice.

**I: *Anything else?***

Roberto: Mm ../

**I: *Well, let me get to the next question. How do you think contact with television or film may help you to learn English?***

Roberto: Some of the stuff, series and movies, definitely helps my listening. And then I can use my iPad as I am watching to get vocabulary automatically, so it definitely helps in that way.

**I: Do you regularly -- multiple times per week -- listen to English music?**

Roberto: Yes

***I: Do you regularly, several times per month, look up the lyrics to English language music?***

Roberto: Yes

***I: Do you regularly, several times per month, use an English language music translation site or look up the meaning to music lyrics in a dictionary?***

Roberto: No. Never.

***I: Do you sometimes sing while looking at lyrics?***

Roberto: I sing, but not looking. M-Maybe, yes I did this, but not anymore.

***I: Could you share anything else you can think of about the way you use English language music? Tell me any details about how you use English language music and what you like about it?***

Roberto: I can tell you about the first time I got into it. I mean into the English of it.

***I: Tell me.***

***Roberto:*** All right, um, I used to like Britney Spears a lot.

**I: *Okay, that's good that you can admit that.***

Roberto: Uh, there was, when I was I guess 15, me and my best friend were watching a movie called *Crossroads Forever Friends*, and Britney was in it. And we really liked it. And then I decided I want to know more about-about her and then I searched for her songs and I liked it and then I-I bought her DVDs and I liked her performance and stuff like that. So then I got kind of obsessed with her, because I really liked her. So it was really funny 'cause I actually just printed all of her song lyrics, I really downloaded all of them. I-I got to letrasterras.com.br

**I: Okay ...**

Roberto: [SPEAKS PORTUGUESE] *And I looked for all, for almost all of her like, 200 something lyrics, and downloaded all of them, and what I did was once they were printed, I would get a dictionary and look for the words I didn't know. I wouldn't translate the whole things 'cause I knew a lot of structure, a lot of words I already knew, so....*

**I: *How do you think contact with music may help you to learn English?***

Roberto: That-that's hard for me to know, like to have a notion of how I learn English that way. I guess, well, in the way of caring about the lyrics. Like I said, I would look for all the lyrics, and try to understand all of it, but I wouldn't translate it, I would try to understand it in English, and if I didn't understand it in English, I'd ask help from my friends online. And, also, like television, it helps listening, of course. I remember one sentence Brittany said in one of her DVDs, and I got that sentence with-with the accent she said it, and until today, I have this-this accent. She said, uh, I've been working here for six years. And every time I say something like, six and years, I say six years, jeers.

**I: [ SPEAKING IN ENGLISH) So you imitated the accent too?**

Roberto: Yeah. This was something I got. Listening, pronunciation. And vocabulary. I learned a lot of things, I just [INAUDIBLE]. Now my voice is echoing.

**I: *Oh 'cause I'm turning, I'm turning it up higher. I will turn it down***

Roberto: Okay, now it's not anymore.

**I: *I think it's going to be fine, it's-it's been fine every time so far. So.***

Roberto: Okay.

**I: *Hopefully that won't be a problem. Sorry about that.***

Roberto: All righty.

**I: *Are you a member of a social media site?***

Roberto: Yes, Facebook.

**I: *Is your social media site configured in English or Portuguese?***

Roberto: Everything English.

**I: *Do you subscribe to an English language news site online through social media or do you visit an Internet news site regularly?***

Roberto: Yes. *Many.*

**I: *Do you read English articles (more than headlines), blogs or other content on the Internet multiple times per week?***

Roberto: All the time. CNN. Others.

**I: *Do you write English online?***

Roberto: What do you mean?

**I: [SPEAKING ENGLISH]. Anywhere. In general do you ever write things in English when you're online?**

Roberto: Yes. All the time.

**I: *Are you an active participant in an Internet forum? When I say active, I mean do you do it at least once a week? And do you write on them as well as read?***

Roberto: Very much.

**I: *Do you sometimes use Internet English teaching sites, either written material, video material or podcast classes?***

Roberto: I have used them. Maybe you have heard about Live Mocha. It-it was not like the best experience 'cause Live Mocha take-takes away the point of being natural communication. 'Cause it was like a learning/coaching website, and I wasn't interested in that. So I-I was there for one month, two the most. And then I just stopped.

**I: *And do you sometimes use Internet teaching sites now?***

Roberto: No.

**I: Is your search engine configured in English or Portuguese or another language?**

Roberto: My whole computer is in English

**I: *Could you share anything else you can think of about your use of English the Internet? Tell me any details about how you use the Internet and what you like about it?***

Roberto: Talking to people.

**I: *Could you elaborate?***

Roberto : Chat. In 2008 I got on Facebook. And, I mean, nobody knew it in Brazil, nobody even knew it existed.

**I: *Yes. It was all Orkut before that.***

Roberto: Yeah. So when I got on Facebook in 2008, all the people there were American and I had some American friends there, I don't remember exactly where they were from, I guess some of them were from this downloading site, AIRE, that I had met while on a, a sort of a forum, and some of them I just added, and we would chat, like type. Type chat, and-and then --

**I: *Is there still Facebook, do you still talk to people online?***

Roberto: Yeah, a lot, like really. Mainly now that it's famous in Brazil. But most of them are Brazilian but I do have some friends from all over the world.

***I: Anything else about the Internet?***

Roberto: Mainly, in the past, I would access some-some fan club sites of Brittany Spears, and I would read stuff about her on her official site, and news, I mainly, I'm obsessed with news, and I like reading news in English, so I-I don't access very much through the websites, 'cause I have the apps on my IPod, so I have the CNN app, I, and then I have an app called clipboard, have you heard about it?

**Q: [SPEAKING ENGLISH] No. Can you say, describe that one.**

Roberto: Clipboard is an app for news and then you can have many sources of news in it. So I have National Geographic, I have CNN, and I have New York Times, uh, the Sun, and some other magazines. And then all of them are within this app. So you select news you want to read, and you can watch videos, too, about the news, like they, uh, Sandy destroyed the east coast, and then you go there and watch the video and then read some stuff about it. I like writing commentaries and reading people's commentaries on their views or on things like those and --

***I: On what?***

Roberto: Uh, on news, news that I read. Uh, some, on Facebook, many pages I follow on Facebook, they-they post things that are polemic and then people just got.

***I: Not "polemic", "controversial". That is the English word most people would use in that context - "controversial" is like "polemic".***

Roberto: Yes. They're controversial and I like participating in this kind of thing, so I just [INAUDIBLE] and then I mention people, and then just debate about it.

***I: On what?***

Roberto: Like on National Geographic website or if I open up uh, some news about CNN, and then there's the option of leaving a comment, I-I'll read or just leave a comment.

**I: *How do you think the Internet may help you to learn English?***

Some of the stuff helped my reading, like the websites, and writing, the chat rooms. It helps with everything.

**I: *OK. Now could you tell me a little bit about uh, can we skip to reading Have you read at least two English language books in full within the last year?***

Roberto: *Yes. More than I can count.*

**I: *Could you share anything else about your use of English language books? Tell me any details about how you use English language books and what you like about it?***

Roberto: Like when I started. I guess when I was 16, I said, I'm going to read a book in English, 'cause I don't know, I'm going to try. And then I went to a, to a bookstore here and they had those pocket books in English, which they imported.

**I: *OK***

Roberto: Yeah, the ones that smell bad and the paper is really bad. They are horrible, they smell horrible, but anyways it's really cheap, *15 reais?*, and then it was really funny because I picked up a book which was really colourful when they had like baby decoration in it. Uh, it had like some toys and then I thought, okay, that's for children, uh, that's for children. I'm not going to have any problems reading it. But it turned, it turned out it was not for children at all, it's called, uh, Shopaholic. And this shopaholic books they're really famous in the US, but they're not easy at all, they're not for children at all. And then I, I was attracted by the cover. At first I was really afraid 'cause I would, like, look up every word and th-then I realized that, you know, I didn't need to look up every

word ... 'cause I could guess them from the context ... and then I just, I just fell in love with the book and then I read all of it. Um ... and then I went to more, bought m-more books from the same author, and I read more of them. And then I would just go and buy more books, and-and then I got the whole Harry Potter series.

**I: *Uh-huh, you read that all in English?***

Roberto: But I didn't read it all, no, I'm in the fifth book.

**I: *So, to make it clear, you read four Harry Potter books in English?***

Roberto: No, I've read like 30 books in English, or even more than that. And then I got all the Twilight Saga books, 'cause all my friends were talking about it and I didn't know what to say about it. So I got the first, and then I said, okay, I'll read the first 'cause all my friends are talking about it. And-and then I read the first and I liked it, and then I got the others. And then I started reading classics in English, like, Dracula, Frankenstein, uh, some of Sherlock Holmes' works, I have a lot of books in English here in my [INAUDIBLE].

**I: *How do you think contact with books may help you to learn English?***

Roberto: It's the same. I'll want to know what everything means. Like when I began. I was always looking at the dictionary. I didn't want to miss something.

**I: *OK. I am gong to ask a few short questions and then we can finish. Do you play multi-player online video games in English at least once per week?***

Roberto: I never played video games

**I: Are you a regular – once per week at least -- player of any kind of English language video games?**

Roberto: No, no kind of video games, never, even when I was a kid.

**I: Estimate how many hours per day, or per week, you have contact with English outside of school or your English course -- this can include speaking, watching television or listening to music, using the Internet, playing video games, and reading books. Everything together.**

Roberto: Well, I'd say one hour a day maybe or more, a little more, one hour and a half. 'Cause I would watch stuff in English, at least one episode of a series a day. And then I would talk to people. So, now maybe a little less. But, I would say, the average, one hour and a half.

**I: Is there anything specific that you do to study and practice the English grammar and vocabulary you encounter in music, television and films, video games, the Internet, and books?**

Roberto: I wouldn't say I ever studied, it was a natural process for me. I hate making things formal [...] I don't like to feel that I'm studying.

**I: Well, it does not have to be formal like in school. Anything you do to practice the grammar and vocabulary you encounter. If there is anything.**

Roberto: Maybe-maybe if I think of a word, if I think of that, then most certainly I would look for an opportunity to use that soon. So I would create a, the, create an opportunity to

use that. If I'm talking to someone, maybe I would try to find a way to use the word controversial.

**I: [SPEAKING ENGLISH] What do you mean by find a way?**

Roberto: I mean, I used to make jokes a friend of mine, 'cause he learned a new word and then, five minutes after, he uses the word in a sentence. And I thought it's very fake 'cause he's just learned the word and then he uses it in the next sentence. But I do that now, too.

**I: *Interesting. OK. Now these are the quick questions. What do you do most often when you come across a new vocabulary item while reading or listening? There are three possibilities --***

*Skip it, don't worry about it*

*Either write it down and find out the meaning later or find out the meaning right away*

*Try to understand it by the context*

Roberto: I try to understand it by context

**I: *During your English development, what approximate percentage of your practices involved receptive activities, like reading, listening, and what percentage involved actual productive activities, writing and speaking?***

Roberto: 70% reading and listening, 30% writing and speaking.

**I: *What is the best thing about knowing English?***

Roberto: Mm. I mean I am not just Brazilian, this is the most important thing. I, I can talk to a lot of people that I wouldn't be able to talk to otherwise, and we are on the same level, like when I could talk to the German guy, and then after, uh, some people I met from other countries, and I can communicate with them. That's so amazing for me. I don't know, I like the feeling of being able to talk to people and being able to move through my life ... with access to everything I need, when, uh, just a few years ago, I was limited because I was just Brazilian.

**I: *What is the most important resource for learning English including all informal (television, internet, reading, music, etc.) and formal (school, teacher, etc.) sources?***

Roberto: Internet

**I: *With whom do you speak English most frequently?***

Roberto: Mm. The thing is, I've hardly spoken to anyone, but on the Internet, I talk to my friends, who are American or from somewhere else. Yes, normally on Facebook or on Messenger. There is Alison Bradley,<sup>61</sup> she's a really nice friend of mine.

**I: *Where's she from?***

Roberto: She's from Ohio I think, yeah she's from Ohio. And she's awesome, like she's awesome. I met her in Brazil. I met her in Brazil, in Brasilia. I was there for a week doing a kind of program and she was there, studying on an exchange at UFB. She speaks Portuguese. And then I met her.

**I: *In what situation in the future do you imagine yourself speaking English?***

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<sup>61</sup> The name has been changed

Roberto: I always speak English. I mean, tomorrow, the same as today. That's part of my identity now, that's part of who I am. I don't want to lose who I am

***I: Will you continue to improve your English? How do you intend to do that?***

Roberto: Yeah, I'm interested in academic English 'cause I want to study abroad, in the, I don't know, I want to study abroad, like maybe part of an exchange program, or [INAUDIBLE] get your doctor's degree. And I want to use English for that purpose, write articles in English, research in English.

***I: What single moment was the most important English learning experience in your life?***

*Roberto:* There was, it wasn't on Internet that, there was this time I-I was sixteen I was at school and then a German guy with, came-came to Brazil [INAUDIBLE] as a exchange student. And when he arrived that day, people looked for me, because they knew I knew some English. And then it got to be, hi, there is, there is, this is Fred, who just got from Germany, he doesn't speak Portuguese, he doesn't speak uh, Spanish, he speaks English and German. Good luck, and then I had to communicate with him. And if at the end of that day I was so happy, so happy because I knew I could communicate in English.

# Appendix G

## **Likert scale attitudes and beliefs Questionnaire**

1. *How much do you agree with the statement, “anybody can learn a language well if he puts in the right amount of effort?” Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
2. *When I learn a new vocabulary item, I try to find out all its different uses and if it is formal or informal. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating “never” and 7 indicating “all the time”.*
3. *It is important for me that I have the experience of living and working in another country. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
4. *I am learning English to help myself financially or at work. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
5. *I get a feeling of satisfaction from speaking and understanding a second language. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

6. *I do not particularly like speaking or learning English. I do it because I may need the English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
7. *I purposefully look for English speakers or I make up my own conversations in my head, to practice new words. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating "never" and 7 indicating "all the time".*
8. *I enjoy the feeling of learning a new, difficult aspect of English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
9. *While learning English, it motivates me to think of myself in the future as a bi-lingual person. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
10. *I would feel guilty if I didn't learn a second language. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
11. *I feel like knowing English is important for me to achieve my personal goals or to pursue my interests in life. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

12. *Language learning ability is crucial to be able to succeed learning English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
13. *It is important for me to feel that I am a member of a community – whether professional or social -- that includes people from international backgrounds. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
14. *I learn English so that people will respect me more. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
15. *It is important to my own self-image of myself to speak English well? Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*
16. *I write down new words I hear or read and look at them regularly to try to learn them. Answer 1 to 7, with 1 indicating “never” and 7 indicating “all the time”.*
17. *While learning English, I often imagine myself speaking English in the future with non-Brazilian friends and colleagues. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

18. *Good teachers, textbooks, and other resources are necessary to achieving success in learning English. Answer from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

19. *In my life, not including English learning, I choose my own materials and depend on myself, instead of a teacher, textbook or course (school, university). Answer between 1 and 7 with 1 indicating that you do not agree at all and 7 indicating that you completely agree.*

# Appendix H

## **RQ 1 Qualitative Analysis: Categories, Definitions and Examples**

Question 1: Why did you start acquiring the language?		
Category <sup>a</sup>	Sub-category	Typical example <sup>b</sup>
Amotivation	Incidental learning	<i><b>I always liked international bands and I always liked songs in English music, bands in English and wanted to know the lyrics. So I would go online, I would see the lyrics in English and just try to sing them just like they sounded to me. Do you know, I think in the beginning I really learned a lot just that way.</b></i> -Laura (FASIL)
	Parental insistence	<b>It was my mum's decision.</b> I didn't really want to go. I even cried the first few weeks. -Magda (CTL)
Internal extrinsic motivation	Identified	<i><b>I began because I wanted to learn</b> so that I could, mostly, understand the films I liked and participate in online conversation sites. And so all I did was when I went to IMDB or some other site online, I tried hard to understand what was written, using a dictionary or google translator. And with time I was able to use my English skills with these things, to really understand my favorite band, for example.</i> -Augusto (FASIL)
	Integrated	<i>The first reason, I really want to learn. I don't know why, I'm really-<b>I consider myself like Americanized</b>, you know, I don't like too much-I don't like speak Portuguese. I-I'll-I don't know I'll-I find-I-how can I say just-I just want to know the world, I say it this way. All the-all-not all the world, but these English speaking places I wanted to know. I wanted to be just a part of things, to know what-like feeling better, you know, because I never feel myself really good here in Brazil.</i> -Shinthya (FASIL)

Category <sup>a</sup>	Sub-category	Typical example <sup>b</sup>
Intrinsic motivation	Aesthetic appeal	Well it was like this. When I was pretty young, my aunt and uncle went to the United States ... so they lived there. And I, I... I loved to hear them, sometimes they would talk in English, in the United States on the webcam. I don't know it was Skype, but, mmm, Internet. And you know at that beginning, I, I, they taught me to say> "Oh, how can I say this word? How can I say this in English?" And so, <b>I-I begin to love you know the-the language, the English. And this is why I started, the, the love for it, the sound, and the curiosity about it.</b> -Fernando
	Intellectual appeal	At an early age I became interested in an English dictionary simply because I thought it was fun to see that there was another language than just Portuguese and <b>I gained pleasure in comparing the two languages.</b> -Davide
	Family influence	I had a great interest in English. I thought it was beautiful. It was mostly because of my brother who lived there. <b>It was because of my brother, who was very important to me.</b> He did a month, in California, in a language course there. And then he moved to England. -Vinicius
External extrinsic motivation	External (International focus)	<i>[...] I began learning with a friend who lived abroad. I spoke with her by internet, Skype and social media. And I went on to watch films, read articles and books online. <b>It was a real need because if you want to succeed in life, you need to know the English culture. It is omnipresent in our everyday lives and a person who knows English is much more able to navigate the world, deal with international clients... international people successfully.</b></i> -Mauricio (FASIL)

External intrinsic motivation	Introjected	<i>So sometimes we would talk about something, or even about the importance of learning English and the process. And, if you didn't know anything you got lost or you didn't understand. So what I think is <b>learning English is a form of inclusion</b>, and because today it is very natural for people to have a second language. -Leia (CTL)</i>
External intrinsic motivation	External (Professional)	<i>I started to go to English school because <b>I realized that it was something good for me, for my professional life.</b>-Anderson (CTL)</i>
	External (Academic)	<i>I didn't like English at first because when I had English in the regular school it was so bad and I just didn't do well at all. That's because the English in regular school is just awful. But <b>I really needed to learn English</b> for school [...] -Ruy (CTL)</i>
<b>Question 2: Why didn't you go to language school?<sup>d</sup></b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Typical example<sup>b</sup></b>	
Cost prohibitive <sup>c</sup>	N/A	
Dislike of academic environments	<i>I went to school for two semesters. I really did not like the atmosphere. It took me out of my comfort area. It was like any other subject to me and <b>I didn't like the classroom, didn't like academics at all.</b> -Jorge</i>	
Dislike of school environments	<b>I didn't like English in a school. It was boring and unreal.</b> But then while watching series and really learning new words, it was real. -Joana	
No time	I liked a-anything with English. Even in regular school. But studying to get into medical school is so hard so even I want, I- <b>I didn't have time to study at a language course.</b> -Shinthya	

Category <sup>a</sup>	Typical example <sup>a</sup>
No interest	<i>I only even thought of English schools recently when I needed to get certificates to apply for study abroad programs. And I thought a lot about which test to take, and I just took the one at university that counts the most to get into an exchange program. This was only last month. And I passed without problem. So, I don't know. <b>I just never got to the point where I even thought of schools.</b></i> –Ida
No need	I had no desire at all to learn in school. <b>It just seemed to me to be a waste of time.</b> And I thought I could work hard and learn on my own at home. -- Mauricio
<p><sup>a</sup> For category definitions, see the following section.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Typical examples of interview transcripts belonging to the different categories have been chosen for illustrative purposes. Where italicized, transcripts have been translated into English from the original Portuguese. Emphasis is mine and has been added in bold.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> No study participants fit into this category.</p> <p><sup>d</sup> This question was only asked to FASILs, who, by definition, did not attend language school.</p>	

## **Definitions of FASIL and CTL motivation categories**

### **Amotivation**

“The state of lacking an intention to act. When amotivated a person’s behaviour lacks intentionality and a sense of personal causation” (Ryan and Deci, 2000: p. 61).

### **Internal extrinsic motivation**

Motivation that is autonomous, self-regulated, and to some extent internalized.

#### **Identified Motivation**

Identified motivation is defined as motivation to learn because that learning strongly connects with an activity that is prized by the learner, not because of externally imposed values, but because of personally generated values

#### **Integrated motivation**

The desire to learn skills that have become integrated into the learner’s behaviour and sense of self, an essential aspect of his or her identity.

### **Intrinsic motivation**

Motivation to engage in an activity for the “inherent satisfactions” connected with the activity itself.

#### **Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic appeal)**

Satisfaction derived from the aesthetic beauty of the language and/or fun associated with learning.

#### **Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual appeal)**

Satisfaction connected with intellectual motivation/ and or the pleasure of gaining knowledge.

### **Intrinsic Motivation (Parents or relatives as valued role models)**

Parents or other immediate family members who speak fluently and, possibly, work with English are responsible for making English-learning appealing as an abstract concept rather than for instrumental rewards.

### **External Extrinsic Motivation**

Motivation to learn because such learning fulfils the values and demands of an outside authority and leads to external rewards.

### **External Motivation**

External motivation is defined as a desire to learn because such learning fulfills values and demands that come from an outside authority

### **External Motivation (international Focus)**

The desire to learn English in order to have contact with internationals, travel or move abroad in order to meet externally imposed values or gain external rewards, such as professional success or social status.

### **Introjected Motivation**

Motivation to learn in order to gain prestige as a result of social acceptance.

# Appendix I

**Summary of study participants: RQ 2 Categories plus final motivation**

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation at time of interview</b>
Adriano	FASIL	Amotivation - incidental	No time	Informal	Identified Motivation
Alvaro	FASIL	External motivation - international focus	No interest	Formal	External Motivation - international focus
Anderson	CTL	Amotivatón - Parents' insistence		Informal	Identified Motivation
Andre	CTL	External extrinsic (external) motivation		Informal	Identified Motivation
Augusto	FASIL	Identified Motivation	Did not like school	Informal	Identified Motivation
Beatriz	CTL	Amotivation - Parents' insistence		Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Bette	CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (Family Influence)		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)
Bruna	CTL	Amotivation - Accident/Convenience		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Carlos	FASIL	Amotivation - incidental	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Carolina	CTL	Amotivation - Parents' insistence		Formal	External Extrinsic (External ) Motivation

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation at time of interview</b>
Caroline	CTL	External Extrinsic (External)Motivation		Formal	External extrinsic (External) motivation
Clara	CTL	Amotivation – Parents’ insistence		Formal	Identified Motivation
Claudio	CTL	Amotivation – Parents’ insistence		Formal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Cleide	CTL	Amotivation – Parents’ insistence		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)
Danilo	Hybrid CTL	Amotivation -- Parents’ Insistence		Formal	External Extrinsic (external) Motivation
Davide	FASIL	Intrinsic motivation – intellectual aspect	No interest	Informal	Identified Motivation
Denyse	FASIL	External motivation – bad at school	No interest	Informal	External Extrinsic (Introjected) Motivation
Diego	FASIL	Amotivation – Incidental	Didn’t like lang. school	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Edu	FASIL	Amotivation – incidental	No interest	Informal	Identified Motivation

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation<sup>c</sup></b>
Eduarda	Hybrid CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)/Amotivation -Parents' insistence		Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Eugenio	FASIL	Identified Motivation	Didn't like lang. school	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Lucia	FASIL	Amotivation—incidental	No interest	Informal	External Extrinsic (external) motivation
Felipe	CTL	Amotivation - Accident/Convenience		Formal	External Extrinsic (external) Motivation
Fernando	CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (Aesthetic)		Formal	External Extrinsic (External ) Motivation
Anna	Hybrid CTL	Amotivation -- Parents' Insistence		Informal	External Extrinsic (External ) Motivation
Henrique	FASIL	Amotivation incidental	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Hugo	FASIL	Integrated	Did not like school	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Ida	FASIL	Identified Motivation	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Ingrid	CTL	Identified motivation		Formal	Identified Motivation
Joana	FASIL	Amotivation—incidental	Did not like school	Informal	Integrated Motivation

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation<sup>c</sup></b>
Jorge	FASIL	Amotivation – incidental	Didn't like school in general	Informal	Identified Motivation
Jose	CTL	Identified Motivation		Informal	intrinsic motivation (intellectual)
Julia	CTL	Amotivation --Parents' insistence		Formal	External extrinsic (external) motivation
Katerina	CTL	Identified motivation		Informal	Identified Motivation
Laila	CTL	Amotivation – Parents' insistence		Formal	Identified Motivation
Laura	FASIL	Amotivation—incidental	No need	Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Leantho	CTL	Identified Motivation		Formal	External Extrinsic (int. Focus) Motivation
Leia	CTL	External Extrinsic (Introjected) Motivation		Formal	Identified Motivation
Leonardo	CTL	Amotivation -- Parents' insistence		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Luciana	CTL	External extrinsic (external) motivation		Formal	Identified Motivation

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation<sup>c</sup></b>
Luisa	FASIL	Amotivation—incidental	No interest	Informal	Identified Motivation
Magda	Hybrid CTL	Amotivation - Parents' insistence		Formal	Identified Motivation
Marcela	FASIL	Amotivation - incidental	No interest	Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (Intellectual)
Marco	FASIL	Amotivation—incidental	Didn't like school	Informal	Identified Motivation
Maria	Hybrid CTL	Amotivation - parents' insistence		Informal	Integrated Motivation
Mariana	FASIL	Identified Motivation	No interest	Informal	Identified Motivation
Marta	CTL	Amotivation - Parents' insistence		Formal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Mateus	CTL	Amotivation --Parents' insistence		Informal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Mauricio	FASIL	External motivation - Bad at school	No time	Formal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Melissa	FASIL	Amotivation - Incidental	No Need	Informal	Identified Motivation
Miguel	FASIL	Amotivation—Incidental	No interest	Informal	Identified Motivation

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation<sup>c</sup></b>
Monnique	Hybrid CTL	Intrinsic (aesthetic) Motivation		Informal	Intrinsic (aesthetic motivation)
Murilo	FASIL	Amotivation -incidental	Didn't like lang. school	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Oyama	FASIL	Identified Motivation	No need	Informal	Identified Motivation
Patricia	CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (Family Influence)		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)
Paula	FASIL	Identified Motivation	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Paulo	CTL	External Extrinsic (Int. Focus) Motivation		Formal	External Extrinsic (Int. Focus) Motivation
Pedro	FASIL	Amotivation—Incidental	Didn't like lang. school	Informal	Identified Motivation
Roberto	FASIL	Integrated Motivation	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Rodrigo	Hybrid CTL	Amotivation - parents' insistence		Informal	Identified Motivation
Romano	CTL	External Extrinsic (Int. Focus) Motivation		Formal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Ruy	Hybrid CTL	External motivation - Bad at school		Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)

<b>Name<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mode of Learning</b>	<b>Initial Motivation</b>	<b>Reason for not attending language school<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Most important resource<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Primary Motivation<sup>c</sup></b>
Shinthya	FASIL	Integrated	No time	Informal	Integrated Motivation
Silvio	CTL	Amotivation -- Parents' insistence		Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)
Sofia	CTL	Amotivation - Accident/Convenience		Formal	External extrinsic (external) motivation
Nano	CTL	Amotivation --Parents' Insistence		Informal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Tarcisio	FASIL	External motivation -- bad at school	No need	Informal	External Extrinsic (external) motivation
Thiago	FASIL	Amotivation—Incidental	No time	Informal	Intrinsic Motivation (intellectual)
Tomas	Hybrid CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (Aesthetic)		Formal	Intrinsic Motivation (aesthetic)
Vinicius	Hybrid CTL	Intrinsic Motivation (Family Influence)		Formal	External Extrinsic (External) Motivation
Viviane	FASIL	Integrated Motivation	No interest	Informal	Integrated Motivation
<p><sup>a</sup> Names have been anonymised to protect the identity of participants.  <sup>b</sup>The reason for not attending language school applies to FASILs only.  <sup>c</sup>Participants' most important resources and primary motivations refer to these as they were at the time of the interview.</p>					

# Appendix J

## Three Sample FASIL Essays from Chaplin Retelling Test

### **Roberto**

There is a set of roses and a pretty woman sitting by the sidewalk close to the roses. She has two roses in her hand and in the next scene some cars approach the corner and three people, two men and a woman are shown walking on the street. Then, Chaplin turns up and there is a motorcycle in front of him, he walks around it and gets in a car and in the next scene he gets out of it. The pretty woman on the sidewalk with the set of roses calls Chaplin and once he looks at her she offers him the roses she seems to be selling. He gets closer to her and chooses between the two roses she offers him. Accidentally he bumps into her hand and one of the roses falls on the ground. He picks up the rose and the woman gets down on her knees to look for it, since she is blind and can't see he has it already. She stands up and he puts the rose in her hand and she puts it in his suit pocket. He reaches for his pocket in his pants and picks out a coin which he gives to her. Another man turns up in the scene, enters a car and leaves. As she is blind, the woman thinks Chaplin is the one who left and asks him to wait for his change. Chaplin walks away, then comes back, sits close to a fountain and watches the woman from far. The woman picks up a vase, walks to the fountain, fills it with water and throws the water at Chaplin, obviously not knowing he is sitting there, since she is blind. Chaplin stands up and walks away.

### **Diego**

The scene starts with a woman sitting next to a flower basket, apparently trying to sell them on the street. A few cars stop right next to her on the street, making it impossible to

cross it at the given spot. Charles Chaplin shows up and, since the car is parked right where he meant to cross the street, he has to go through it, getting in on the one side, and out on the other one. As he steps out of it, the woman speaks up to him in order to sell him some flowers. While choosing the one he likes the best, he accidentally drops the flower. He picks it up right ahead, but the woman stays knelt down trying to find it. That's when Chaplin realizes she is actually blind. She asks him if he already picked it up, and once he answers positively she stands up again, takes the flower and puts it into his jacket pocket. Chaplin pays her and while she takes his change, another man comes around the corner and gets into the parking car. The blind saleswoman thinks it is her customer, who is up to leave without taking his change and tells him to wait. The man doesn't listen to her and leaves. Chaplin leaves too, without taking his change but returns shortly after making it around the corner and sits down right next to her. The woman stands up and walks up to a small fountain in order to fetch some water to water her flowers. She fills the bucket she carries with her a little, in order to clean it probably, and then spills the water over. She accidentally wets Chaplin, who was sitting right next to her. Totally wet, Chaplin gets up and leaves.

### **Adriano**

We see a bunch of flowers arranged neatly in a basket. The scene cuts to a girl staring mindlessly. We then see cars driving by, as a man with a cane walks out of the busy traffic, onto the sidewalk, by the same girl from before with the flowers by her side.

She notices someone is standing there and offers a flower to the man. He implies she should keep it instead. Suddenly the flower falls to the sidewalk, on the ground. As the girl asks if the flower was collected, the man realizes that the girl is blind. With a generous, warm look on his face, he gets the flower himself and gives the girl some money for it.

A car door closes behind them, which makes the girl think that the man has left without his change. Realizing what happened, the man with the cane begins to walk away. He takes no more than a few steps, though, before returning and sitting beside the girl.

The flower seller, however, is unaware of the man sitting nearby, and after filling a bucket with water from a tap, throws water at the man.

