Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

By

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I am the author of the thesis entitled

Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

submitted for the degree of Philosophy

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List of abbreviations

AMTB: Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
ECAs: Elective corner activities
ELLs: English language learners
EFL: English as a foreign language
ESL: English as a second language
English SL course: English speaking-listening course
ELLH: English language learning history
GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
L2: Second language
LL: Language learner
MA: Master of Art
MOET: Ministry of Education and Training
The USA: The United States of America
TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication
TOFEL: Test of English as a Foreign Language
Abstract

This research draws on complexity theory to investigate the inter-relations among three factors that affect English learners’ learning: learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self. In the field of language learning and teaching, there has been insufficient research exploring relations between learner autonomy and sense of self, even though some studies have confirmed a close link between learner motivation and autonomy (Ushioda, 1996; Gao & Lamb, 2011) and relations between learner motivation and their sense of self (Dörnyei, 2009). This research aims to accommodate the gap in the literature on learner autonomy and sense of self, seeking the answer to the overriding research question “How does autonomy in the language learning experience in a Vietnamese tertiary context influence the learners’ motivation and sense of self as future English learners/users?” Moreover, these two factors together with learner motivation are viewed under the lens of complexity theory, emphasizing the intricate interface between the role of learners and their contexts (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). The subjects are tertiary students in an economics university in Hanoi, Vietnam. A mixed methods approach with a triangulation design was selected to generate data for the study. Quantitative data were obtained from two survey questionnaires to 77 first-year students: one survey before the English Speaking-listening course offering autonomy in learning, and one after the course. Qualitative data were obtained from written narratives of English learning histories, interviews and learning diaries from 15 participants volunteered from the 77 survey respondents. Findings show the complexity and dynamism of English language learners’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self, and their interrelated relations. Once participants’ autonomy was enhanced, English language learners perceived themselves as motivated English learners with a strong sense of their ideal selves as successful English users in the future and vice-versa. This finding challenges the simplicity of the self concepts in Dörnyei’s (2009) L2 Motivational Self model in the fields of English learner motivation, self and autonomy. Further, it would be possible for English teachers to utilize diverse elective class activities to turn the classroom into a miniature of the real community, providing English language learners with opportunities to communicate with each other in English, and their identity would thus be negotiated and constructed. The final findings contribute to our understanding of learners’ motivation, their autonomy and sense of self as “whole persons” in their own Vietnamese social-cultural
contexts and suggest pedagogical implications to enhance learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.
CHAPTER ONE:

My research story

1.1 My research inquiry

My research journey has so far taken me through a series of concepts in language learning from motivation to possible selves and then to the notion of the autonomy of language learners. It has evoked the images of three blind fortune-tellers and an elephant in a story within Vietnamese literature. In this story, three blind fortune-tellers argue about what an elephant is like. One who touches an ear of the elephant says that an elephant is round like a huge plate, while another who touches the trunk says that an elephant is long like a huge snake, and the other who touches one leg argues that an elephant is huge like a pillar of a pagoda. And the seemingly endless argument may not come to an end unless the three fortune-tellers get a pair of glasses to view the elephant as a whole complex agent in its interactions with the environment, rather than as separate fragments.

Connecting the story back to my study, I take the position that motivation, sense of self and autonomy in one language learner should not be viewed as separate and static attributes of the
learner. These three are all dynamic and in flux most of the time when we see the learner as a whole-person in his/her context, as Ushioda (2009, 2011) and Norton (2000) have proposed. The glasses I have found through which to view the motivation, identity and autonomy of my language learners as language users are coloured by complexity theory as discussed by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), which helps link the three notions properly, as one of its arguments is to balance the role of individuals and the context surrounding them.

Subsequently, in this thesis, the histories of research fields in language learners’ autonomy, motivation and self are presented in detail, revealing how they all share a shift from the focus on individual perspectives to a social-cultural approach. Arising from the literature on the three concepts, the L2 Motivational Self System constructed by Dörnyei (2005) with possible selves by Higgins (1996) and the social-cultural perspective by Benson (2006) and Oxford (2003) in autonomy, have all been brought together under the umbrella of complexity theory by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), and the resulting understandings are selected to frame my research. More importantly, my research curiosity arose around the question of whether or not all the selected frameworks, which were mainly based in Western civilizations, should be viewed differently from a Vietnamese perspective in an Asian context.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Two starting points leading me to the present study are: my own observation and experience in teaching English at tertiary level in Hanoi, Vietnam, and the gap in literature of language autonomy, motivation and self so far, in particular a lack of empirical studies in those fields in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts such as Vietnam.

My interest in the motivation of language learners first sprang from my observation back in the early 2000s that my first-year students at Hanoi National University in Vietnam did not want to study written English. I wondered why and what de-motivated them. Mainly based on the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation recommended by Gardner and his colleagues (1992), my MA thesis focused on types of motivation the students possessed and factors that led to a lack of motivation to learn writing skills among the students in the classroom settings (Nguyen, 2002). The findings showed that most of the students were instrumentally motivated to learn English for their future jobs as English language teachers,
mainly at primary and secondary schools in Hanoi (Nguyen, 2002, 2005). Meanwhile, the concept of integrativeness in motivation seemed exotic to most of the English learners in Vietnam in the era of the 1990s. One of the reasons was that the chance to make contact with target language speakers was considered a luxury which existed only in the learner’s imagination in an EFL environment of Vietnam, particularly when we had not then entirely opened the door politically and economically to the world.

Continuing with my interest in English learners’ motivation, I kept observing students and reflecting on my own teaching. I have so far realised that academic choices for students seem limited, leaving them with less responsibility for their own learning, which might lead to a low motivation to study the subject. The timetable and the learning places are fixed by the university at the beginning of a school year. The learning content is decided by teachers with standard textbooks compiled and selected by teachers also. Even the aims of the entire course and of each lesson, which are prepared carefully by the teacher, are to be presented to administrators and authorities but not to students. It means that seldom are students informed of or given a chance to discuss or help determine the goals of their learning with their teachers. Consequently, students position themselves and are positioned by teachers in a passive role, waiting to be fed with the knowledge, and following exactly what the teacher asks them to do. As an English teacher, my curiosity was aroused as to whether or not it was possible to enhance autonomy among my English language learners (ELLs).

In terms of the literature, the history of second language motivation has witnessed the fact that researchers have long been searching for a different motivation paradigm from the classic model constructed by Robert Gardner and his associates (1992). That model has been considered the most influential model in the field, with an emphasis on the significantly important role of motivation in the success of language learners (Dörnyei, 2005). Further, the concept of the Integrative orientation is considered to be the major impetus for learners to acquire a second language (L2). The introduction of possible selves into the literature of second language acquisition and language learning motivation has opened a fertile new research area. Expanding on the Integrativeness concept of Gardner (2001), the L2 Motivational Self System, an L2 motivation model constructed by Dörnyei (2005), includes three dimensions: Ideal L2 self, ought L2 self and L2 Learning Experience. The third self
aspect for the learner, the L2 learning experience, includes the quality of the learning experience, teachers’ and parents’ influence, peers’ and groups’ influence, and autonomy.

To date, there has been insufficient research exploring the seemingly neglected aspect – the L2 Learning Experience – and its link with the ideal and ought (or ought-to) L2 selves (Lamb, 2011; Ushioda, 2014b), particularly the relation between autonomy and possible selves. The literature of the field has witnessed a large number of studies into the ideal L2 self, the ought self and the interrelationship between these two aspects of self (Dörnyei, 2009). The investigations, moreover, have mainly utilized quantitative methodology in collecting data and information (Murray, 2011b). More noteworthy, most of the studies have been investigated in Western regions, although some have occurred in non-Western contexts in such countries as China, Japan and Iran (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009).

A study on relationships between ELLs’ ideal self, ought self and autonomy in a Vietnamese social and cultural context; therefore, beckoned me as a researcher in the field. Also, basing my research in such an Asian context as Vietnam, my study might bring a new light to theory of complexity, and might further advance the L2 Motivational Self model in some respect. Further, the study was hoped to provide a complex take on the evolution of language education and multilingual development in Vietnam.

1.3 Aims and research questions

The lack of autonomy among my students and the gap in the literature on autonomy and possible selves and L2 motivation led me to the current study. It would be intriguing to discover whether English learners and/or users in an EFL context like Vietnam might become more aware of and able to envision and sustain the L2 ideal self and ought self if they were given more control over their own learning. This research was designed to find answers to the following research questions:

**How does autonomy in the language learning experience in a Vietnamese tertiary context influence the learners’ motivation and sense of self as future English learners/users?**

Sub question 1: How do English language learners (ELLs) perceive their autonomy in English learning?
Sub question 2: How do ELLs perceive their sense of self as English language users/learners?

Sub question 3: How do ELLs engage and invest in English learning and English use?

Sub question 4: How and in what way does autonomy help initiate and sustain ELLs’ sense of self as English language learner/users?

Sub question 5: How is the relationship between learners’ autonomy and their sense of ELL selves related to their investment and engagement in learning English?

The following section presents current situations of teaching and learning EFL in Vietnam with an aim to set the scene for my study and the research context where I sought the answers to my research questions.

1.4 Teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam

The role of contexts in language learners’ motivation, autonomy and self has been discussed with increasing awareness of the significant impacts of these on language learning, since the study of these fields was developed in 1960s. This section will thus attempt to shed light on the current situation of teaching and learning EFL in Vietnam, where the community-oriented and hierarchy-based culture originating from Confucianism, taken together with an examination-based system of education, has put pressure on the autonomy of Vietnamese learners in general, and on EFL learners in particular (Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014), and somehow impacted on learners’ motivation and sense of self.

The community-oriented and hierarchy-based culture is of significant influence on the Vietnamese person’s sense of self and learning autonomy. With respect to learners’ sense of their selves, the question “Who am I?” is always preceded by the question “Who are we?” in Vietnam’s collectivist culture. This striking cultural feature of Vietnamese society considers the needs and interests of individuals as secondary to those of the group (Tran, 2007). Therefore, in groups within the classroom, individual needs are rarely emphasized (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). In relation to the sense of ought self, as the thinking and lifestyles of Vietnamese for many generations have been rooted in the ideological teachings of Confucianism (Nguyen,
T. T. H., 2014), the obligations of people towards others, particularly in relation to having respect for elders and towards society, are especially stressed in the system of behaviours and ethics set out by Confucianism. Responsibilities within relationships at society’s macro level, for example between the ruler and citizens, or at a micro community level, between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, or between friends and friends, call for harmonious decision making.

In terms of learning autonomy, the notion of autonomy (further elaborated in Chapter Three) refers to individuals’ freedom to make independent decisions in their learning. In formal learning contexts, as I indicated from my own experiences above, at all levels of education, teacher educators make most of the major decisions concerning the learner and the learning process (Dang, 2010). These decisions involve the setting of learning objectives, determining course content, selecting materials (usually prescribed textbooks constitute the core learning material), deciding on learning tasks and encouraging productive classroom interactions. Teachers keep their own records of their learners’ progress and set homework tasks. The learners’ task is to complete all assignments set by their teachers. Considered as experts in a certain field, teachers find themselves constantly providing explanations and answering questions raised by students. In terms of assessment, teachers are required to do all the marking, grading and testing in order to assess and classify their students. Based on the students’ results, teachers are expected to provide rewards or punishments. Therefore, within this curriculum-based and teacher-centred environment, students seem to have limited autonomy (Dang, 2010; Nguyen, T. N. 2014).

Further, the examination-based system of education constrains students’ motivation to the instrumental level of passing tests, rather than encouraging richer and deeper subject learning and understanding (Nguyen, T. N., 2014; Tran, 2007). Under this type of learning assessment, learners at all levels of the education system, from primary school to tertiary level, face significant competitive pressures as they strive for high academic achievements. Table 1 below indicates the levels of the general education system in Vietnam. This system is divided into three levels, or 12 grades, with tests and examinations taken throughout the school year, thus placing tremendous pressure on the shoulders of teachers, learners and parents.
Table 1

Levels of General Education in Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Duration (years)</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1−5</td>
<td>6−11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6−9</td>
<td>11−15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary/high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10−12</td>
<td>15−18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At each school level, one school year comprises two semesters, with the first semester covering the period September to December, and the second, January to May. Examinations are conducted in the middle and at the end of each semester. As such, students attempt two mid-term tests and two end-of-term tests each year. Students’ averaged test marks are used to rank and classify their learning achievements. The grading system follows a 10-point grading scale with 5 points representing a “pass” grade. As determined by Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), test result points correspond with grades “excellent” (9 – 10), “very good” (8 – 9), “good” (7 – 8), “average” (5 – 6), and “fail” (below 5) (MOET, 2015). Students need to achieve at least an “average” grade in each of the four tests attempted each year in order to move on to the next grade in the following year. The 10-point scale test grading system is also applied at tertiary level, although different universities may adopt substantial variations. In a number of universities, a credit system is currently in use to replace the subject-based test system. One credit is equivalent to a one-hour lecture and one hour of self-study per week over a 14 – 16 week semester. Mid-term tests and end-of-term tests are also used as tools to assess students’ achievement (MOET, 2015).

The teaching and learning of English at the tertiary level is no exception in terms of the teachers’ and students’ assessment burden, limited subject content choices for learners, limited learning resources, and power imbalances between teachers and learners. Intensive tests and
examinations have placed a great deal of pressure on teachers and learners, such that students may be reluctant to study outside the textbook in order to avoid failing their examinations (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). Moreover, in some cases such tests as TOFEL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System) or TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), predominantly designed for those intending to study overseas, are used as a yardstick to measure the language competency of learners (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). This inevitable mismatch between assessment within a local curriculum context of teaching and that within an international testing context may be burdensome for students, and may hinder teachers’ capability and flexibility to set goals and choose the types of learning strategies English learners prefer to engage with.

In relation to learning contents, EFL learners do not have a voice in selecting what they will learn. While the Ministry of Training and Education has issued a fixed English EFL curriculum for learners from Grade One at primary school to Grade Twelve at high school with assigned textbooks and syllabus, the Ministry has developed curricula for different majors at the tertiary level that universities throughout the country are obliged to follow strictly (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). At the tertiary level, teachers are required to select or compile textbooks and design a syllabus for the English subject depending on their learners’ EFL achievement levels and chosen majors. However, students’ specific EFL learning needs, as well as the need to develop individualized learning plans, have received limited attention from English teachers and educators (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). This has meant that learning strategies, focused on providing learners with greater opportunities to take a more active role in their own learning process, are limited in their development and implementation. As such, traditional rote learning strategies, which focus on absorbing and memorizing rather than experimenting and producing knowledge, prevail (Dang, 2010).

At the tertiary level where English is studied as a major or compulsory subject, teaching and learning facilities and related resources are generally insufficient to meet the demands of English learners (Dang, 2010). Of the five foreign languages recognized nationally at universities – English, Russian, French, Chinese and German – 94% of undergraduate students and 92% of postgraduate students study English (Hoang, 2008). However, investment in language learning resources, including laboratories, libraries, access to the Internet and
teaching aids remains low at most of universities in Vietnam, even those located in major cities such as Hanoi, or HoChi Minh City (Dang, 2010). This situation places significant pressures on learners keen to seek alternative or additional materials to supplement their textbook-based English language learning.

Moreover, when I observe the tertiary classroom in Vietnam, I see power imbalances between teachers and learners. Keeping in mind Vietnam’s traditional philosophical perspective on learning, students expect to learn everything from the teacher, as they consider their teachers to be experts in their discipline areas. Having deeply absorbed the ideology of Confucianism, students maintain a respectful distance between themselves and their teachers (Nguyen, T. T. H., 2014). The cultural traditions have established a mandatory obligation that everyone shows respect for their teachers. With such teachings as “Tôn sư, trọng đạo” (Respect the teacher and follow the rules), “Không thầy đố mày làm nên” (Without the teacher, you cannot learn or do anything), and “Tiên học lễ, hậu học văn” (The first thing to do is to learn how to respect the teacher before we learn for knowledge), children are always taught to obey and keep a distance from their teachers in order to show their respect for teachers to the same extent as they would for their parents. These traditionally grounded attitudes and behaviours towards teachers have led to learners accepting without question passive and less flexible styles of learning.

In summary, the fundamental teachings of Confucianism, together with family-oriented living styles, have had significant impacts on the decision making of Vietnamese students in daily life as well as in their choosing of English as a foreign language for their future life-long career. The hierarchically structured relationships set by the society, in concert with a rigorous test-oriented education system, have resulted in EFL students having less autonomy to make independent decisions about their learning. These circumstances may lead to a lack of motivation on the part of learners to learn the subject matter. This study would investigate both the macro cultural historical phenomenon and the micro local educational culture complexity of Vietnamese languages learners. It would be argued that the above mentioned social cultural phenomenon was somehow one-dimensional and that there might be other phenomena that carry the weight for some languages students. Given the context for the research question, the next section presents an overview of the thesis organization.
1.5 An overview of the study

The study is organized into nine chapters. The introductory chapter sets the scene by presenting the research query, statement, questions, the current context in teaching and learning EFL in Vietnam and an overview of the study. This background chapter is followed by Chapter Two, which provides a detailed discussion on the definitions, the nature and characteristics of autonomy in language learning, according central importance to the discussion on autonomy in the classroom setting. This chapter also aims to throw some light on the theories of motivation in language learning with prominent trends in the field including the socio-psychological model, self-determination theory, the process-oriented construct and socio-cultural context theories.

The concept of identity in L2 motivation introduced in the second part of Chapter Two, the socio-cultural context, links with the third chapter, in which the centre of the discussion is on the theories of identity and the L2 Motivational Self System. In terms of identity, the focus is narrowed down to the concept of possible selves and the L2 selves in the ‘self’ system. The final part of this chapter focuses on an introduction to complexity theory, which helps view the three concepts of autonomy, motivation and identity within the context of the language learner.

After the theoretical backgrounds are set out, Chapter Four presents the mixed research methodology with the triangulation convergence mixed methods design. The method design is followed by a description of the study site in an economics university in Vietnam, the participants and the English speaking-listening course which I conducted to develop ELL autonomy. The chapter proceeds to a discussion on the main research methods, including English language learning histories, learning diaries, semi-structured interviews and surveys which were used to conduct the study. Data collection procedures and analysis strategies are presented in the final part of this chapter.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present findings from data analysis. Chapter Five provides an overall picture of ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self drawn from the quantitative data. Chapter Six discusses what the participants themselves said about these three factors based on analysis of the qualitative. Chapter Seven focuses on the dynamism and complexity of ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self in light of complexity theory.
Chapter Eight pulls together the main findings and discusses the meanings of these findings. Following is the concluding chapter which summarizes the answers to my research questions, considers the significance and limitations of the research and proposes directions for the future.

Given the context for the research, the next chapter reviews research into L2 learner autonomy and motivation, aiming to lay a sound foundation for the explication of the background theories my study draws on.
CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNER (LL) AUTONOMY AND MOTIVATION

Theories of language learner (LL) autonomy and motivation

2.1 Introduction to LL autonomy and motivation
In the previous chapter, I described settings of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the current Vietnamese context, and noted that the cultural and political situations of Vietnam may cause certain impacts and constraints on practices of learner autonomy. This chapter reviews the history and related theories of language learner (LL) autonomy. It then proceeds to discuss the history and background theories of LL motivation. The reviews and discussions on LL autonomy and motivation contribute to the theoretical framework for this study.

2.2 Theories of LL autonomy
Theories of LL autonomy focus on definitions of autonomy, terminological distinctions, common fundamentals of and perspectives on LL autonomy, relationships between autonomy and culture/s and ways to develop LL autonomy in classrooms.

2.2.1 Approaching LL autonomy
LL autonomy is reflected in a capacity to take responsibility for and control over the learning process in social and cultural contexts in which teachers act as a more capable other in the role of negotiators and collaborators. For their part, learners take on the roles of active agents enacting autonomy-related skills: independent decision making, dialogic negotiation and collaboration, and critical reflection.

2.2.2 Definitions of LL autonomy
Interest in the concept of LL autonomy within the field of language education is said to originate partly from a response to the political turmoil in Europe in the late 1960s (Gremmo & Riley, 1995, in Benson, 2011). Subsequently, in the early 1980s, the construct of learner autonomy driven by the concept of freedom and autonomy within philosophical disciplines was initiated by the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages.
In the earlier studies on autonomy, LL autonomy is viewed as an attribute which resides within the learner as a capacity and is defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3). On the notion of the capacity to take autonomous responsibility, Holec defines LL autonomy as constituted in learners’ attributes within a given learning situation in which they demonstrate a capacity to take charge of and responsibility for their learning by:

- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used.
- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc…)
- evaluating what has been acquired.

(Holec, 1979, p. 3)

Although Holec’s (1979) definition seems to adequately identify specific aspects of ‘what’ an autonomous learner is expected to exercise in their control over the learning process, it seems to underplay the issues to do with ‘how’ learners are able to carry out independent learning activities (Benson, 2007). That is, this definition on the one hand can serve as a model to operationalize LL autonomy; however, on the other, it leaves open the nature of learners’ cognitive capacities (Benson, 2011). Any perceived shortcomings in Holec’s autonomy construct may be made up for by Little’s (1991) definition, in which LL autonomy is defined as a set of capacities including detachment, decision making, independent action and critical reflection. Little adds a psychological dimension to definitions of autonomy by arguing that an autonomous learner is expected to “develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for LL autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts” (Little, 1991, p. 4).

Meanwhile, other researchers have started to use the notion of LL autonomy to refer to the situation in which learners can learn under their own control. Autonomy is, hence, defined by Dickinson (1987) “as the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the
decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions”, and “full autonomy” is used to describe the situation in which learners are entirely independent of other agents like their teachers, the institutions to which they are bound and/or the particulars of prepared learning materials (p. 11). From Benson’s (2011) standpoint, the argument for learners having full control over the learning content fits with understanding LL autonomy as a primarily situational phenomenon. Benson (2011) further comments that this situated nature of autonomy has been underplayed in both Holec’s and Little’s definitions of autonomy. Benson adds to his argument by asserting that learners’ control over learning content has both situational and social aspects, and that learners should have the freedom to make their own decisions about their learning goals and the subject content, in concert with control over their learning situation. Such control may also extend to creating opportunities to more actively interact with other agents within the learning process.

More recently, social aspects of autonomy have been receiving greater attention in the field of language education. Benson (2008) calls for a shift “towards a more complex view of the requirements for autonomy and of the relationship between autonomy in learning and autonomy in life” (p. 30). Furthering this argument, Paiva (2011) defines LL autonomy as “a socio-cognitive system nested in the SLA (the second language acquisition) system. It involves not only the individual’s mental states and processes, but also political, social and economic dimensions’ (2006, p. 63). Similarly, Tassinari (2012) defines learner LL autonomy as the “metacapacity” (for taking control of learning), “a complex construct, a construct of constructs” with “various dimensions and components” (p. 28). Tassinari further suggests essential components of learner autonomy including:

- a cognitive and metacognitive component (cognitive and metacognitive knowledge, awareness, learners’ beliefs);
- an affective and a motivational component (feelings, emotions, willingness, motivation);
- an action-oriented component (skills, learning behaviours, decisions); and
- a social component (learning and negotiating learning with partners, advisors, teachers…)

(Tassinari, 2012, p. 28)

Drawing on the above conceptualizations of LL autonomy, in this study I adopt a definition that sees autonomy in language learning as the willingness and capacity of the learner to take control over the learning process (Benson, 2011), including control over their learning goals, techniques, strategies, materials, assessment and reflective practices over both formal and informal learning contexts in accord with their society.

2.2.3 Terminological distinctions
In the field of LL autonomy, apart from the inconsistencies among the multiple definitions of autonomy, there is a terminological confusion between autonomy and individualization, communicative teaching and learner-centredness, and agency. A distinction between LL autonomy and these concepts is presented below.

2.2.3.1 LL autonomy and individualization
Striking definitional differences between the concepts of LL autonomy and individualization are attributed to the extent to which learners have the ability to take control over the learning process. While LL autonomy emphasizes the control learners have over the learning, individualization leaves the learner in a more dependent position within traditional teaching contexts with a consequent lack of control over the learning (Benson, 2011). In practice, individualization remains a method of teaching rather than a learning procedure. That is a kind of programmed learning in which the teacher directs the learning process providing different learning materials for individual learners.

However, conceptually, LL autonomy and individualization share some similarities. The first common feature between them is that both autonomy and individualization take into consideration the specific individual nature of learners with their own capacities and preferred learning styles (Holec, 1979). Also, the concepts share a concern with meeting the needs of the learner (Benson, 2011). Self-directed learning is a form of individualization as well as autonomy, as learners can decide their own learning objectives and actions to achieve them. That Brookes and Grundy (1988, in Benson, 2011) suggest that LL autonomy and
CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNER (LL) AUTONOMY AND MOTIVATION

Individualization are associated by a mutual link to the concept of learner-centredness lends weight to the idea that autonomy and individualization are closely associated: “One corollary of learner-centredness is that individualization will assume greater importance, as will the recognition of the autonomy of the learner as the ultimate goal” (p. 1).

2.2.3.2 LL autonomy, communicative teaching and learner-centeredness
A key element in any focus on LL autonomy, communicative teaching and learner-centeredness, is the learner, who is considered to be the central agent in the learning process (Breen & Mann, 1997; Nunan, 1997; 2013). Ideally, in this process, learners rather than teachers are at the centre acting as active agents (Nunan, 1988; Tarone & Yule, 1989). A communicative approach towards language teaching emphasizes learning in communicative contexts rather than the acquisition of language in a decontextualized setting. Similarly, learner-centredness orients towards the process of language learning as the active production of knowledge with a focus on methods of learning instead of on teaching methods (Benson, 2011).

In general, individualization, approaches which prefer communication, and learner-centredness all focused on LLs becoming autonomous as speakers of the target language. Autonomy, however, was not addressed in the process; it was the desired product.

2.2.3.3 LL autonomy and agency
The notion of agency originated from the Latin meaning of ‘to do’, ‘to act’, ‘to lead’, and ‘to drive’. Agency is generally defined as “the means of quality of being an active force in producing an effect, and an agent is one who has this quality” (Oxford, 2003, p. 80). Huang (2011) proposes that learner agency entails deliberative action actively carried out by the learner as an agent.

Research in the fields of education and sociology show that definitions of agency and LL autonomy, as well as explications of the interrelationships between them, are complicated by inconsistencies between the theory and practice of these two notions (Murray, 2011a). On one hand, there are certain overlaps and close relationships between the two concepts. Ahearn (2001, in Murray, 2011a, p. 251) defines agency as “the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act”. This definition is similar to the construct of LL autonomy described above in terms of there being issues to do with power and control underlying the two concepts. On the other
hand, several attempts have been made to distinguish between agency and autonomy. Benson (2007, p. 30) recommends that “agency can perhaps be viewed as a point of origin for the development of autonomy”. This argument is complemented by Huang’s work (2011) on the role of agency and identity among Chinese students. Huang’s study concludes that while autonomy refers to a long-term development process, agency can be treated as “raw material for autonomy” that is “concrete, specific and observable” (p. 242). The author then recommends that the degree of control that the learner is able to have over his/her learning may help distinguish between agency and autonomy. However, the boundary between the degrees of control, in my opinion, is still a matter of debate. In this study, therefore, LL autonomy is the primary concern of investigation.

2.2.4 Common fundamentals of LL autonomy
Despite certain inconsistencies in the nature of the LL autonomy concept and its implementation (Benson, 2011), there are fundamental notions on which researchers in the field of language education agree.

Firstly, research suggests that LL autonomy is not an inborn trait, but that it can be developed by individuals (Holec, 1979), and possibly be “discovered and rediscovered”, terms used by Breen and Mann (1997, p. 134). As such, and assuming there are opportunities to do so, autonomy in these senses (i.e., developing and evolving), can be exercised by language learners at all educational levels. It refers to a broad learning approach of learners rather than a type of behaviour or a mode of teaching or/and learning (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1979). Moreover, the notion of learners exercising their autonomy does not necessarily mean that learners are teaching themselves through self-instruction, or learning in isolation from their peers or teachers. Where learners learn with others, autonomy may be further developed through appropriate learning conditions, and through opportunities to exercise control over their own learning (Benson, 2011; Little, 1990). Appropriate learning conditions may include learning environments in which independent thought and decision-making are encouraged and nurtured through interactions with others: family members, teachers, peers and/or significant others. As learners can develop skills closely related to the notion of autonomy (i.e., decision making, independent assessment of self and achievements, critical reflection), and begin to increasingly exercise their autonomy, a learner’s level of autonomy may be understood in
terms of degrees, as “it is displayed in different ways and to different degrees according to the unique characteristics of each learner and each learning situation” (Nunan, 1997, p.2).

Secondly, in the field of language education, autonomy can be seen as a legitimate and desirable target for learners, teachers and educators. Benson (2011) speculates that autonomous learning is more effective than non-autonomous learning in language learning and teaching, and therefore developments in LL autonomy may lead to improvements in learning. Consider Nguyen’s (2009) study at a Vietnam university as an example, the findings of which show a positive relationship between LL autonomy levels and their language proficiency. Benson (2011) argues further that more autonomous learners can become better members in the society in their later lives as a result of their success in developing their own autonomy. In brief, LL autonomy can be seen as a beneficial condition for effective language learning.

Thirdly, LL autonomy is not a single, easily described concept in terms of its role in learning; rather it needs to be understood from the learners’ perspectives as a multi-dimensional and dynamic state (Benson, 2011; Little, 1990). As autonomy takes different forms in different learning contexts, ideas that degrees of autonomy and impacts on learner control can be measured in some way without taking into account complex interacting learning contexts, are fraught with difficulty (Benson, 2011). Moreover, LL autonomy changes in different contexts at different times. The dynamic structure of autonomy is shaped by interactions between the learner and their learning environments and histories and, as such, it may be said that language learners influence and are influenced by the communities in which they are bounded over time (Paiva, 2011).

2.2.5 Perspectives on LL autonomy
In the previous section, autonomy has been described as changing in both individual and social contexts from different perspectives. In order to better grasp an overall and deeper understanding of LL autonomy, the following presents an explication of four key perspectives on autonomy: political-critical, technical, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives.

The political-critical perspective involves teachers’ and learners’ ability to deal with issues of power, ideologies and access within the teaching-learning process. Benson (1997) emphasizes the “control over the content and process of one’s own learning” (p. 25) in this political
perspective and argues that LL autonomy should be enhanced once learners have their voice in the decision-making process.

A technical perspective on LL autonomy emphasizes the situation in which learners are entirely responsible for their learning (Benson, 2006; Oxford, 2003). This situational independent approach to learning is illustrated in Dickinson’s (1987) definition of autonomy discussed earlier. As reported in the research literature, from a technical perspective, the learning context literally refers to physical external settings and possibly well-resourced self-access learning centres. Although learning conditions at these centres may be underpinned by abundant learning resources that enable learners to decide what, when and how to learn their language subject (Oxford, 2003; Pennycook, 1997), more complex issues to do with learning strategies and agency are underplayed in this perspective. Within these more technically oriented learning contexts, activities such as learner training, strategy instruction, technical support and consultation services, and learning strategies are treated instrumentally as tools that are supplied by language teachers to learners (Benson, 1997, 2011). Indeed, more effective language learning strategies require these centres to move far beyond the physical circumstances and to consider learners’ psychological, cultural and social contexts and concerns (Oxford, 2003).

In contrast, a psychological perspective on LL autonomy focuses on cyclically interrelated behavioural and cognitive capabilities of language learners (Dang, 2010). Autonomous learners from this perspective demonstrate a number of characteristics such as high levels of motivation, particularly a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and a sense of agency; the need for achievement; and positive attitudes towards learning (Oxford, 2003). With set goals and targets, autonomous learners are able to initiate, monitor, evaluate and critically reflect on their learning processes and achievements (Dang, 2010). Autonomy, in this psychological approach, refers predominantly to second and foreign language settings, rather than to learners’ mediated environments (Oxford, 2003).

Unlike the psychological perspective, the socio-cultural perspective focuses on mediated settings, and construes LL autonomy to be a socially-shaped variable (Benson, 2006; Oxford, 2003; Smith & Ushioda, 2009). This perspective acknowledges the important roles both personal and situational attributes play in the development of LL autonomy. Social interactions
are emphasized in the development of language, cognition and human capacities. Context is thus constituted in not only the mediated meaningful learning situation in a social and cultural setting at a certain time, but also in certain types of relationships within the mediated learning process (Oxford, 2003). Therefore, it might be argued that the socio-cultural perspective inspires and nurtures the development of autonomy through the provision of opportunities for learners to make contextual choices, engage in interactive activities, initiate dialogically grounded negotiation, and critically reflect on their own learning (Dang, 2010).

Within this socio-cultural perspective, Oxford (2003) proposes two related forms of socio-cultural autonomy: socio-cultural I and socio-cultural II. Socio-cultural I is based on the works of Vygotsky (1978) and Lantolf (2001, in Oxford, 2003). The context of LL autonomy here refers to learners’ specific learning settings at specific times, and the relationships and interactions between individuals in the mediated environment. A mediated learning environment is characterized by the presence of a “more capable other” (i.e., a teacher, a parent, or other artefacts such as texts) acting in dynamic interactions with learners. Such socio-culturally mediated learning environments have the potential to facilitate learners’ progress through a zone of proximal development, defined by Vygotsky (1978) as the difference between the performance of the learner with and without assistance. Socio-cultural II is based on the works of Rogoff and Lave (1984, in Oxford, 2003), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998). The central point of this perspective is not the individual; instead, the emphasis is placed on the context in which learners exercise their autonomy. The context referred to here is that of the “community of practice” constructed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). This context refers to relationships between individuals in one community and their wider social and cultural environments. More interestingly, the notion of imagination by Wenger (1998) was further developed by Norton (2001) into the understanding of investment and imagined community in language learner motivation. These notions will be discussed later in this chapter.

Arguing that these above categories have close interrelations with each other, Murase (2009) developed a quantitative measure that assists English language teachers to quantify their learners’ level of autonomy in learning the language. That instrument called Measuring Instrument for Language Learner Autonomy (or MILLA) is a questionnaire of two main
sections: Section One with 113 items on a five-point Likert scale; Section Two with six questions about participants’ demographic details. 113 items in the instruments cover key points regarding LL autonomy from political, technical, psychological and socio-cultural perspectives. Murase’s measure was first piloted with 90 tertiary students and then used to evaluate learner autonomy in an EFL context in Japan. Similarly, my study takes the position that the four perspectives are closely interrelated; hence, an adaptation of Murase’s (2009) questionnaire was developed to generate language learners’ perceptions of their own learning autonomy in the Vietnamese context. More details are presented in Chapter Four.

2.2.6 LL autonomy and cultural contexts

Arguments for and against the appropriateness of the idea of LL autonomy in different cultures, particularly between western and eastern cultures, can be found in the field of language learning. Researchers sceptical towards the relevance of the autonomy among non-European learners, particularly among Asian students, argue that as autonomy has been central to European liberal-democratic and liberal-humanist thought (Benson, 2011), it may be irrelevant to the collectivist orientation of Asian cultures and societies in which relations of power and authority differ markedly from those evident in Western societies. Ho and Crookall’s (1995, in Benson, 2011) research on autonomy in Hong Kong found that Chinese students feel uncomfortable when they want to express an opinion that their teachers may not agree with.

However, others in support of the universal fundamentals of the LL autonomy concept argue that Asian learners can become autonomous once they get support through proper pedagogical strategies, where the concept and practice of autonomy are re-adjusted and adapted to Asian cultures and societies (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 2000). Yang’s (1998, in Benson, 2011) research on an autonomy program among Taiwanese university students confirms the effectiveness of the inventive program. Also, in a recent study into autonomy among Vietnamese students, Dang (2010) suggested that because “it is difficult for teachers to negotiate with authority, it is better for them to do so with their students because it is within their power to do so” (p. 7). Moreover, strong traditions of self-education can be found in Asian cultures, as in Thailand and in China (Benson, 2011). Similarly, Dang’s (2010) results confirm that once students are able to modify their own learning habits and go through the zone of proximal development, their control over the learning will be enhanced. In a similar
vein, my study seeks to find out if LL autonomy can be enhanced through pedagogical interventions in Vietnam’s EFL context.

2.2.7 LL autonomy in classroom settings
As discussed above, although the notion of autonomy is complex in nature, skills related to its development can be identified and developed under certain conditions in appropriately resourced learning contexts. Classrooms can be seen as one of the promising mediated settings to inspire the development of LL autonomy (Nguyen, T. N., 2014), in which the teacher is regarded as one of the more capable ‘others’ and the dynamic social contacts between teacher and learners, learners and learners can help learners initiate and enhance their control over learning. Therefore, the way teachers organize the practice of teaching and learning may have a profound impact on the development of autonomy among students (Benson, 2011). The following discussion focuses on the roles of learners and teachers and their relationships, together with an attention to ways levels of autonomy within learners may be enhanced and further developed through the implementation of particular pedagogical practices.

2.2.7.1 Learners’ and teachers’ roles
The acceptance of responsibility for their own learning requires learners to fulfil two conditions: willingness and an ability to assume responsibility (Holec, 1979). The characteristics of an autonomous language learner were elaborated and added to by Breen and Mann (1997, 2013) in the context of attitudes towards learning, a desire for learning, a sense of self, metacognitive capacity, ability to manage change, independence from educational processes, strategic engagement with learning, and a capacity to negotiate. Among these characteristics, the capacity to negotiate is significant, as while autonomous learners are assumed to be capable of taking charge of their learning independently, language learners also need to collaborate and negotiate to make full use of the resources available in the classroom. The capacity to negotiate is particularly useful for language learners in EFL settings such as those in Vietnam, where classroom contexts are the major sites to provide learners with opportunities to communicate in the target language (Nguyen, T. N., 2014).

Similarly, the teacher’s important roles include those related to promoting negotiation and collaboration (Nguyen, T. N., 2014; Voller, 1997). According to Breen and Candlin (1980), the teacher plays a participant role in the learning-teaching situation with the role of a “joint
negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes” (p.100). The teacher in this sense negotiates with external education authorities to address and resolve external constraints in terms of the subject curriculum and syllabus. At the same time, the teacher negotiates and collaborates with learners in the process of learning, acting as a resource provider, encouraging decision sharing, and facilitating collaborative evaluation (Boud, 1988; Bruffee, 1993; Nguyen, T. N., 2014). The power of the teacher is lessened and that of learners increased. My study, hence, defines the primary role of both language learners and teachers as negotiators and collaborators in the teaching-learning process.

2.2.7.2 Developing LL autonomy in the classroom
In practice, research in the field of language education emphasizes the significance of developing autonomy in language learners to facilitate their progress towards becoming effective language users through appropriate pedagogical interventions. Nunan (1997, 2013) developed a program to increase learner autonomy based on his identification of two domains. Table 2 illustrates how these two domains: the content and the learning process, proceed through five levels of implementation including awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence.
Table 2

*Autonomy - Levels of Implementation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Learner action</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using</td>
<td>Learners identify strategies, implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles/strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer</td>
<td>Learners make choices among a range of options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning program</td>
<td>Learners modify/adapt tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Learners create their own goals and objectives</td>
<td>Learners create their own tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond.</td>
<td>Learners become teachers and researchers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Nunan, 1997, p. 195)
While the experiential content domain mainly deals with the issues of what learners learn, such as the linguistic content, the topics or functions of language, the process domain, addresses the matter of how learners will engage with methodology, selection, creation, modification and adaptation of learning procedures (Nunan, 1997, 2013). Nunan’s program is useful for language teachers to enhance learner autonomy, as it provides step-by-step procedures in both content and process with the initial aim to enhance learners’ awareness of learning goals, subject content, pedagogical strategies, and to facilitate their involvement in making choices and modifying goals. The hoped-for intended outcome is for learners to become autonomous in their learning beyond the classroom walls in wider society.

Similarly, Reinders (2010) designed a framework for stages in developing LL autonomy with a focus on the pedagogical aspect of LL autonomy that language teachers can implement in their teaching process. This framework is an extension and adaptation of Knowles’ (1975) work on self-directed learning. Table 3 draws on eight learning stages with the middle column showing how each stage is generally covered in a teacher-directed situation, and the right-hand column in a learner-directed environment.
Table 3

*Stages in the Development of Language Learner Autonomy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning stages</th>
<th>Teacher-directed</th>
<th>Learner-directed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying needs</td>
<td>Placement tests, teacher feedback</td>
<td>Learner experiences difficulties in using the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>Determined by the course, relatively fixed</td>
<td>Contextually determined, relatively flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning learning</td>
<td>Determined by the teacher. Somewhat flexible</td>
<td>Contextually determined. Very flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting resources</td>
<td>Provided by the teacher</td>
<td>Self-selection by learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting learning strategies</td>
<td>Teacher’s model and instructions</td>
<td>Self-selection by learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Exercises and activities provided by teacher</td>
<td>Implementation (language use) and experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring progress</td>
<td>Regular classroom feedback and comments on assignments and tasks</td>
<td>Self-monitoring, peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and revision</td>
<td>Test, curriculum changes</td>
<td>Self-assessment, reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Reinders, 2010, p. 46)

Reinders (2010) discusses the framework in detail, arguing that in identifying their needs, language learners have little knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses, and that there are always discrepancies between individual learners’ needs and classroom practice. Thus, he
suggests that an extensive language and learning needs analysis be a focal point at the beginning of any language course. The next stages, Setting goals and Planning Learning, are two sides of a coin: setting goals specifies what learners want to achieve while making a learning plan shows the pathway to their desired destinations. In the Selecting Resources stage, Reinders mentions the success of a number of teachers in getting learners involved in preparing, locating and sharing authentic materials with each other. Learning strategies in the framework include cognitive (i.e., how learners memorize vocabulary), metacognitive (i.e., ability to self-assess) and socio-affective strategies (i.e., ability to speak the language or to motivate oneself). In the Practice stage, it is important that learners have a chance to select practice materials and activities like homework so that they can incorporate the language knowledge taught in the class into their daily lives. In Monitoring Progress, Reinders suggests diaries as a useful tool for learners to reflect on “their motivation levels and other socio-affective aspects of their learning” (2010, p. 49). In the last stage of Assessment, besides test scores, it is necessary for the teacher to provide learners with assessment and revision alternatives, which may include learner portfolios and self-assessment worksheets and activities.

Reinders (2010) further recommends that the eight stages form an autonomous learning circle which is underpinned by learner reflection, interactions and motivation. While regular reflections may act as the “glue that holds autonomous learning together” (Reinders, 2010, p.50), self-motivation and collaboration represent the crucial affective factors. It is thus important that teachers support and model techniques for their learners to self-motivate as well as to interact and collaborate with each other in their learning process.

In this study, I drew on an adaption of Reinders’ (2010) framework and Nunan’s (1997, 2013) program to design an English speaking-listening course as an adaptive pedagogical practice to enhance LL autonomy. More details of the course are presented in Chapter Four.

2.2.8 LL autonomy summary
In summary, this section has focused on definitions of LL autonomy, its fundamentals and perspectives, the role of learners and teachers in practice in classroom contexts. In particular, this study defines LL autonomy as the willingness and capacity of learners to take control of their formal and informal learning process. The study further takes the arguments that LL
autonomy is a dynamic and multi-faceted construct which influences and is influenced by the learner’s community, and that LL autonomy can be developed in an EFL context with teachers and learners in the roles of negotiators and collaborators. The present study investigates whether the encouragement of LL learners to move towards a deeper sense and level of autonomy can be attempted in the context of the Vietnamese EFL language classroom setting, where communication in the target language within learners’ social contexts may be more generally limited.

2.3 Theories of LL motivation

With an understanding of LL autonomy in mind, this section turns to the concept of motivation which may interact with LL autonomy. The study of LL motivation has been a focus in second language acquisition (L2) research for more than four decades.

2.3.1 Approaching LL motivation

L2 learning motivation has shifted from a concept related to drivers of behaviour, embedded in the individual learner and with particular significance in classroom settings, to a view of its embeddedness in learners’ understanding of self in the socio-cultural environment where the language learning takes place. In the following section, the notion of LL motivation is further elaborated through a number of definitions. These are followed by accounts of firstly, LL motivation from the point of view of the individual, secondly, the process-oriented LL motivation model, and thirdly, the socio-cultural approach.

2.3.2 Definitions of LL motivation

The question, “What is LL motivation?” remains controversial among motivation and second language learning researchers. However, there is a general agreement on the idea that LL motivation is reflected in the choices learners make and in the demonstration, or not, of persistent efforts made by the learner to achieve desired learning goals (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 8). To exemplify, LL motivation may explain why particular subject matter is chosen, or not, and the level of intensity of learners’ engagement in the learning process. In accord with the discussion reported above, the history of LL motivation research has witnessed a movement from individual to more socially-oriented perspectives as reflected in more contemporary definitions of LL motivation.
Originally, language learning motivation was viewed as an individual and static attribute of the learner. Gardner and Lambert (1972) are considered to have laid the foundation for LL motivation research; they stated that learners’ motivation to learn a second language is shaped by their attitudes toward the target community together with their orientation towards the learning task. Gardner (1985) specifies three main elements of L2 motivation by arguing that:

The motivation to learn a second language is characterized by three aspects, the desire (or wanting) to learn the language, the motivational intensity (or effort expended) to learn the language, and the affective reactions (or attitudes) towards learning the language (1985, p. 7).

From the point of view of the individual learner, Gardner’s (1985) definition suggests that learners who are considered to be motivated to learn a second language may also have a desire to achieve their goals, expand and intensify their efforts to achieve desired goals, and maintain a positive attitude towards the learning activities. Attitudes can be understood as the “affective reaction” of learners towards the target language and people, and orientations refer to reasons why learners learn a second language (Gardner, 1985, p. 7). Within Gardner’s definition, two main types of motivation are proposed: integrative motivation that refers to a desire to be accepted into the target language community; and instrumental motivation that refers to material rewards the learner anticipates will arise when learning a second language. This theory assumes that an individual language learner’s personal attitudes towards target language community are central to LL motivation.

Extending on Gardner’s individual approach, a sharper focus turned to the dynamic nature of LL motivation. Dörnyei and Otto (1998) argue that the 1985 definition does not fully reflect the dynamic nature of motivation, which is characterized by a dynamism considered to be changing in time and space. According to Dörnyei and Otto (1998), motivation can be defined “as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and acted out” (p. 65). This definition embraces a more comprehensive process within which motivation is initiated, enacted and evaluated.

Similar to Norton’s concept of motivation grounded in social contexts, Ushioda (2011) argues for a “person-in-context relational view” (p. 12). Furthermore, seeing motivation as a changing process, at the same time emphasizing the importance of context in learners’ rich socio-cultural lives, these two authors assert that LL motivation can be seen as “an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations” (Ushioda, 2011, p. 13).

Drawing from these definitions, which in some respect share common understandings of LL motivation characteristics and concepts, I have based my study on an understanding of LL motivation as reflecting the learners’ reasons for choosing to learn a second language, the intensity of their learning efforts and their levels of engagement and investment in the language learning process in both formal and informal settings.

From an understanding of how LL motivation is conceptualized in this study, the next section aims to review major trends in LL motivation research with a focus on the more major work in the field. The history of the field so far has witnessed significant changes in approaches to LL motivation research. The review highlights historical shifts in approaches to motivation from a focus on the individual learner to more socially-oriented approaches in which LL motivation is understood to be inextricably linked to the learner’s sense of self, which is developed in a social context. This review takes in a number of models and theories in order of their emergence within LL motivation research, including the socio-psychological model, self-determination theory and the process-oriented model, all of which belong to the individual approach to LL motivation. The section concludes with the socio-cultural context theory in LL
motivation, discussing Norton’s (2000, 2013) incorporation of LL motivation into LLs’ identity.

2.3.3 The individual approach
Modern research into LL learning motivation can be traced back to the 1960s beginning with the social psychological period from 1959 to 1990 (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). During this period, the socio-psychological (or socio-educational) model marked radical advance in theories of motivation from those grounded in psychological traditions to those more firmly located within the field of second language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). The discussion below first introduces the socio-psychological model said to be one of the most influential frameworks in the field with its integrative and instrumental orientations. From this, attention turns to the self-determination theory, inherent in which are the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

2.3.2.1 The socio-psychological (or socio-educational) model
The socio-psychological model of second language acquisition also referred in the literature as the socio-educational model was constructed within a bilingual Canadian context in concert with Anglophone and Francophone communities by Gardner (1985) and Gardner and MacIntyre (1992). The model comprises four sections: external influences; individual differences; language acquisition contexts; and outcomes (See Figure 1).

Consistent with Gardner’s 1985 definition of motivation, the socio-educational model focuses on the measurement of learners’ commitment to learning the target language and the impact of learners’ levels of motivation on their L2 achievement. The model points out the role motivation plays in language learning and how the learner’s personal history and the motivators in their life contribute to individual motivation-related differences between learners. These individual differences can be identified in language learning contexts: both formal and informal, and lead to varying levels of acquisition of both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge of the target language (Gardner, 1985).
Figure 1. The socio-educational model (Source: Gardner, 2001, p. 5)

Abbreviations:
INT: Integrativeness
ALS: Attitude towards the learning situation
MOT: Motivation
APT: Aptitude

Gardner’s model is considered to be a breakthrough advance in the field of LL motivation from early motivation theories grounded in the traditions of scientific experimentally focused psychology (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). In the 1960s the model was regarded as “unique”, radically “new” and ahead of its time in terms of its representation of theories and educational values (MacIntyre, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005). Theoretically, this was the first time in the field of LL motivation that individual psychology and social contexts in language learning motivation were taken into consideration and brought together in this social psychological approach (Dörnyei, 2005). From Figure 1, it can be seen that the role of motivation in language learning is emphasized in the individual differences section of the model. In conjunction with aptitude, motivation is found to be one of the major variables that can have a profound effect on the success, or otherwise, of L2 learners in that these two variables have direct effects on both
formal and informal language learning contexts (Gardner, 2010). In other words, once learners are motivated and have the aptitude to learn a second language subject, they are more likely to actively engage in the learning process inside and outside of the classroom context. Consequently, their linguistic and non-linguistic achievement outcomes are likely to be positive, hence confirming close links between motivation, aptitude, and achievement.

Further to the conceptual linkages identified above, while LL motivation is seen as something within the individual, the model also identifies external influences on motivation that previously had escaped the attention of researchers in the field of psychology (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). According to Gardner’s model, external influences (See Figure 1), referring to “any factors that might influence language learning” (Gardner, 2001, p. 5), comprise two classes: history and motivators. History refers to the “complex of socio and personal variables that the individual brings with him or her that can influence second language acquisition” (Gardner, 2001, p. 5). Learners’ previous learning experiences, as well as their family and cultural backgrounds, are taken into account in learning a second language in socio-educational perspectives on L2 learning. While individual learners’ histories have a direct impact on the integrative attitude, the second class of external influences, motivators, “are shown to have a direct effect on attitudes towards the learning situation” (Gardner, 2001, p. 9). In relation to motivators, Gardner focuses on the important role of teachers and educators, whose roles are believed to have direct and significant impacts on learners’ attitudes towards their learning activities.

For the first time, educationally, the model marks out a distinction between the learning that takes place in L2 contexts and that which occurs in other school subjects (Dörnyei, 2005). The model strongly suggests that learning a second language is “different from much other learning that take(s) place in school” (Gardner, 2001, p. 5). Along with external influences on L2 learning, learning a second language is also influenced by both the formal and informal contexts within which L2 learning takes place. In the model’s “Contexts” column (See Figure 1), Gardner takes these to mean the significant and direct effects of “language material… written material, radio, TV broadcast, movies, language clubs” (Gardner, 2001, p. 11) on the outcome of the second language learning activity, in which two important variables, anxiety and willingness to make use of the language are also emphasized. More interestingly, another
reason for making a distinction between learning a second language and other subjects lies in the concept of self, as flagged by Gardner (2001) in his assertion that:

…learning another language involves making something foreign a part of one’s self.

As such, one’s conception of the “self” and their willingness to open it up to change, as well as their attitudes towards the other community, or out-group in general, will influence how well they can make this material part of their behavioural repertoires.

(p. 8)

Other remarkable features of the model that contribute to the field of LL motivation are the concepts of integrativeness and instrumental motivations. The concept of integrativeness “reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer psychologically to the other language community” (Gardner, 2001, p. 9). Integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation are closely related and in turn have a direct impact on learners’ motivation. The concept of integrativeness, seen as the core aspect of the model, is much contested by others interested in motivation research and possibly, as a consequence, has paved an intriguing path for later researchers to expand and more fully develop this concept beyond its original conceptualization. These directions may lead to more comprehensive and accessible understandings of the nature of motivation. Gardner (2001) discusses the impact of this notion: “A low level of integrativeness would indicate no interest in learning the language in order to identify with the group, while a high level would indicate considerable interest. Integrativeness involves emotional identification with another cultural group” (p. 9).

Together with integrative motivation, instrumental motivation is also a focus of the model. While integrative motivation consists of integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation (i.e., towards L2 course and teachers), and motivation including efforts, desire, and attitude towards L2 learning, instrumental motivation is considered to be “other motivation factor” within the individual differences section of the model (Gardner, 2001, p. 9). While integrative motivation refers to the desire of a learner to learn a second language in order to integrate with the target language and its community, instrumental motivation refers to the desire to learn because of utilitarian purposes such as finding employment in the future, being promoted in one’s career, gaining rewards, or passing examinations.
These two notions of motivation, integrative and instrumental, have been thoroughly discussed and investigated by many researchers in the field (Gardner, 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) investigated the impacts of these two types of motivation on the learning of French or English vocabulary among psychology students and found that both integrative and instrumental motivation have significant impacts on the students’ learning: “Both integratively and instrumentally, motivated students spent more time thinking about the correct answer than those who were not so motivated” (p. 57). Further, their findings indicated that instrumentally motivated learners spent more time on learning than non-instrumentally motivated ones. While Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) research linked integrative motivation to greater likelihood of language learning outcomes rather than instrumental motivation, Lukmani’s (1972 in Baker, 2011) study found that instrumental motivation was stronger than the integrative motivation among Bombay female students. Meanwhile, in the research by Yatim (1988 in Baker, 2011, p. 129), a combination of the two kinds of motivation as “an integrated entity” appeared among Malaysian student teachers.

Within quantitative research approaches, LL motivation is considered a measurable variable. In practice, the socio-psychological model has support from the attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) designed by Gardner (2001) and his associates, in which all the constituents of the model are fully operationalized (Gardner, 2010). Given its association with some of the key constructs in this study, a brief overview of the AMTB is presented below.

The attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) is made up of five scales with approximately 100 test items (Gardner, 2001) (See Table 4)
Table 4

Attributes Measured by the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrativeness: an open interest in the other language group, and/or outgroups in general, a willingness to identify with the group. The AMTB measures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards French Canadians (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative Orientation (4 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Foreign Languages (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes towards the learning situation—evaluative reactions to the language learning context. The AMTB measures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the French Teacher (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the French Course (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation—effort expended, desire to learn, and favourable attitudes toward learning the language. The AMTB measures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Intensity (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Learn French (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards Learning French (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language anxiety—feelings of anxiety and concern in using the language in the classroom and other contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French Class Anxiety (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Use Anxiety (10 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrumental orientation—an interest in learning the second language for pragmatic reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Orientation (4 Likert scale items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Gardner, 2001, pp. 10–11)

The AMTB contains both multiple-choice questions and statements designed to quantify learners’ commitments to learning a second language (Gardner & McIntyre, 1991), and has been adapted to many varied language learning contexts. The questions and statements identify the key variables understood to play a significant role in EFL learning: integrativeness,
attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation, anxiety, and instrumental orientation. Recognized as a “scientific assessment tool”, the test results are analysed through state of the art “advanced statistical data processing techniques” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 25). On the use of these techniques, Dörnyei (2005) notes, “Correlation, regression, and factor analysis underpin structural equation modelling procedures which are widely applied in research today, but were highly unusual when Gardner and associates introduced them to the study of motivation” (p. 25). Further, the AMTB was adapted for different languages in different cultural contexts.

However, although some researchers acknowledge the value of the model and its relationship to the development of the AMTB, other researchers identify a number of vagaries and confusions in relation to the distinction between “orientation” and “motivation” and the problematic “terminological” confusion over the term (Dörnyei, 1994). In the AMTB test, the term ‘orientation’ is used in the context of ‘Integrative orientation’ and ‘Instrumental orientation’. Although a distinction between ‘orientation’ and ‘motivation’ has been drawn by Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), confusion still arises when the terms have been used interchangeably by researchers in the field. In an attempt to differentiate ‘orientation’ from ‘motivation’, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) argue that ‘orientation’ and ‘motivation’ are quite different. While ‘orientation’ refers to “reasons for studying a second language”, or inclinations or dispositions towards, the term ‘motivation’ is used to indicate “the directed, reinforcing effort to learn the language” (p. 58). Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) argue that “it has been shown repeatedly that it is not so much the orientation that promotes achievement but rather the motivation” (p. 58). It seems, that the above distinction in some way has just elaborated the definition of motivation discussed in the previous part, when motivation is shown as “choice”, “persistence and efforts” for learners to engage in the learning process. In this way, it can be interpreted that orientation is one part of motivation. Moreover, Dörnyei (2001) argued that ‘orientation’ is Gardner’s term for a ‘goal’, and that unlike goal theories where “goals constitute the motivational foci”, in Gardner’s theories “goals do not appear in the core motivation concept” (p. 48). From these standpoints, it seems terminological confusion remains.

A further possible interpretive dissonance lies within other researchers’ understandings of distinctions between “integrative and instrumental orientations” and “integrative and
instrumental motivation”. Lambert (1974) made a distinction between integrative and instrumental orientation or “outlook”. Lambert (1974) identified an integrative orientation as “an interest in learning another language because of a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group” (p. 98). In this interpretation, learners show an interest in the target language because of their keen interest in the culture and their desire to be accepted by the community speaking that language. In contrast, an instrumental orientation is to focus on “the practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 98). Being promoted or receiving some reward for successful learning are examples indicating an instrumentalist orientation. These definitions and characteristics of the two orientations can be argued to be similar to the definitions of the two types of integrative and instrumental motivation discussed above.

The term ‘integrativeness’ has also been at the centre of debates in the field of LL motivation. The meaning of this concept in Gardner’s (2001) model was clouded by “two sources of terminological difficulty”: integrative and integrative motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 68). Among some researchers, this perceived difficulty generated confusion about the possible meanings of integrativeness, integrative orientation, integrative motivation, and LL motivation. Gardner (2001) added that instrumentality, like integrativeness, could combine with motivation to form Instrumental motivation, which led to further misunderstandings when linked with attitudes towards the learning situation. Besides, in the time of globalization, with the introduction and increasing popularity of the Internet, which creates a vague boundary between nations, the notion of integrativeness based on the presence of a target community is undermined. Dörnyei (2003) argues that:

the actual term integrativeness may not do justice to the overall and indisputable importance of the concept, as this factor also appears in situations that are very different from that in Canada in that there is no real or potential ‘integration’ involved. (p. 6)

In summary, central to Gardner’s (2001) socio-educational model is the emphasis on individual differences and the impact of learners’ levels of motivation on learners’ achievements. The AMTB test has been used to measure these variables and to quantify individual learners’ efforts. As evidenced in the model, there is unidirectional interaction
between external factors and motivation, then with the learning context and finally with the outcomes. The unidirectional feature within the model suggests that Gardner has focused on individuals in order to understand the relations between LL learners and their communities.

Although the model has generated a number of contested interpretive concerns and conceptual confusions, it has identified the potential role motivation can play in language learning, and highlighted influences on the success, or otherwise, of L2 learning and as such offers a significant contribution to better understanding of the process of L2 learning. The AMTB, together with various measures of L2 achievement like self-rating, objective tests and grades, were used to investigate correlations between motivation and language proficiency (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). As its title suggests, the model has dealt with socio-educational and external psychological factors, such as family and teachers and informal learning settings and contexts, in ways that reflect a significant advance over previous models within earlier traditional psychological research. Gardner and his associates have made significant contributions to the field through their influential theoretical model, or frame, for LL motivation research. Other researchers have broadened this field through their further conceptual development and the generation of deeper and expanded understandings of this intriguing area of L2 teaching and learning. The following discussion focuses on an extension of the theory of LL motivation in which both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are investigated based on their involvement in self-determination theory.

2.3.3.2 Self-determination theory
As earlier mentioned, on the debates around the concept of integrativeness, some LL motivation researchers were not completely convinced of how this concept was represented in the socio-psychological model proposed by Gardner (2001) due to certain discrepancies, definitional problems and inconsistency in language research findings from earlier studies. In an investigation into the second language subject orientations of high school learners of French, Spanish and English, Clément and Kruidenier (1983) conclude that besides an integrative orientation, which was only found in the multicultural context, four other orientations were significant. These orientations, travel, knowledge, friendship together with instrumental were found to be more popular among the participants, particularly in monocultural backgrounds.
Arguing that the four orientations cannot be explained adequately from the psychological perspective of Gardner’s (2001) integrative/instrumental model, Noels (2003) suggests that the self-determination theory, at the centre of which is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, provides a more robust and coherent link to understanding the nature of L2 learning. In making a distinction between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory describes intrinsic motivation as reflecting an innate interest in the activity itself while extrinsic motivation reflects an interest in gaining rewards or avoiding punishments through engaging with the activity, and these motives are put on a continuum of self-determination. In other words, a learner may be intrinsically motivated by their interest and curiosity and keenness and strive to learn as much as they can, regardless of rewards or punishment, whereas another learner may be extrinsically driven to work hard on the promise of a reward (i.e., successful career path), or fear of punishment (i.e., exam failure).

By definition, intrinsic motivation “refers to motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do” (Noels, 2003, p. 38). This kind of motivation is divided into three subtypes based on the common basis that intrinsic motivation is driven by “the pleasurable sensations experienced during the self-initiated and challenging activity” (Noels, 2003, p. 38). The first subtype, “intrinsic motivation-knowledge”, can be seen in a learner’s aspirations for exploring and discovering new things and new ideas. “Intrinsic motivation-accomplishment” as the second subtype, is reflected in a learner’s desire for achievements or mastery of learning tasks. The third subtype, “intrinsic motivation-stimulation”, brings about a feeling of being stimulated by performing the learning task itself (Noels, 2003, p. 38).

By contrast, those who are extrinsically motivated carry out an action because of an instrumental stimulus external to the action itself. This type of motive can also be classified into three subtypes along a continuum of self-determination, depending on the extent to which these subtypes of motive are internalized (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Vallerand, 1997). In an education context, Vallerand (1997) distinguishes between three levels of extrinsic motivation regulation: first, with the lowest level of internalization, is “external regulation”; second is the more “internalized introjected regulation”, which is more internalized; and thirdly is
“identified regulation” with the highest level of internalization in relation to the self-concept. While external regulation relates to external sources of ‘rewards’ such as benefits, and ‘punishments’ such as the cost of failure or loss of face, introjected regulation refers to reasons that “pertain to performing an activity due to some type of pressure that individuals have incorporated into the self, such that they compel themselves to carry out that activity” (Noels, 2003, p. 39). In the case of introjected regulation, learners act to respond to the external pressure in order to avoid threats to their self-esteem, such as those that might arise where losing face is a possibility. With identified regulation, learners choose to invest their energies into the learning process because they see the significance of their investment decisions for their academic achievements.

In an attempt to incorporate the conceptual developments illuminated above into LL motivation, Noels (2003) finds correspondences between particular aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and Clément and Kruidenier’s (1983) four motivational orientations. While Noel (2003) found that Clément and Kruidenier’s (1983) Instrumental orientation is closely related to aspects of external motivation, the other three orientations; ‘travel’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘friendship’, appear to correspond to aspects of intrinsic motivation. Also, Noel’s (2003) theoretical work suggests that the more internally motivated students are, the more enjoyable they find the learning process. This possible connection may lead to a suggestion that L2 learners within supportive learning environments that offer learners more autonomy are less likely to abandon their learning when they feel more intrinsically motivated to strive for their learning goals.

Based on the findings, Noels (2003) proposed a theoretical framework for LL motivation that identifies three interrelated motivational “substrates”: intrinsic, extrinsic and integrative. The first substrate, intrinsic motivation, derives from LL learning processes related to enjoyment from study. Extrinsic reasons based on external pressures correspond with Gardner’s instrumental orientation. The third substrate identified is integrative motivation, which when present, is reflected in positive attitudes toward contacts and identification with the target community. This motivational substrate might be seen to correspond to Gardner’s integrative orientation (Dörnyei, 2005).
In brief, self-determination theory’s framework for LL motivation, along with language learning and task motivation, maintained a high profile during the cognitive theoretical research period (Dörnyei, 2003) following that of socio-psychological research. Together with the notion of integrative orientation, self-determination theory focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as key factors in motivating learners. This construct would seem to complement rather than to replace the previous model by Gardner (Oxford, 2003), with both theories approaching motivation in language learning as a static trait within individuals.

2.3.3.3 The process-oriented model
In the spirit of continuing and expanding on previous researchers’ achievements in the field of LL motivation, and integrating a notion of dynamism, Dörnyei (2005), with an aim to synthesize previous theories in motivation into “a unified framework”, proposed a process-oriented model highlighting the dynamism of motivation.

The process-oriented model’s construction is based on Heckhausen and Kuhl’s (1985, 1991, in Dörnyei, 2003) Action Control Theory. The model comprises two dimensions: Action Sequence; and Motivational Influences. These dimensions are further divided into three phases: Pre-actional (choice motivation); actional (executive motivation); and post-actional (retrospection) (See Figure 2). These phases illustrate the complete circle of a motivational process starting with an individual’s initial wishes and desires and extending to goals, intentions, actions, achievements and concluding with an evaluation of the whole motivational process.

The most distinctive feature of Dörnyei’s (2005) model lies in its focus on the dynamism of motivation in language learning. This dynamism is first apparent in the dynamic process of language learning through the three phases: choice making, executive actions and the learner’s reflections (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). In the first phase, “choice making” involves three sub-processes of the action sequence: goal setting; intention formation; and the initiation of intention enactment. Each of these sub-processes is accompanied by motivational influences. An important element in this particular phase is goal setting when a desire, a wish or an opportunity is actualized as a goal (Dörnyei, 2005). Although the goal itself is understood to be the key motivational focus, the learner’s commitment underpins this goal and must be evident to some extent before the process of learning and the process of motivation can begin.
The central purpose of the second phase is to generate and carry out sub-tasks to reach targeted goals. Appraisals by teachers are conducted on an ongoing basis before final evaluations are made in the concluding stage, motivational retrospection, during which learners reflect on their learning progress.

Moreover, different motivational influences are observed during each of the model’s learning process phases. Figure 2 indicates the changing nature of motivation alongside the learning process. Dörnyei (2005) discusses specific details of these motivational influences. In the Choice Motivation phase, values and norms (integrative orientation), incentive values (intrinsic and instrumental), potency of goals and family, teachers, and school effects are important in the goal setting sub-process. In the formation of intention, other influences including expectancy of success, LL anxiety, need for achievement, degree of self-determination and urgency are the main motivators in the next step, the formation of intention. For the initiation of intention enactment, Dörnyei (2005) mentions action versus state-related influences.
orientation as the first motivational influence, besides others such as perceived behavioural control and distracting influences, and perceived consequences for not acting. In the second phase, after motivation has been generated, it needs to be maintained and sustained; this executive motivation is particularly relevant to activities in language learning, especially in the classroom context (Dörnyei, 2005). The main influences are therefore related to such learning activities as quality of the learning, classroom rewards, influences of the learner group and teachers. Besides these factors, there are numerous other influences such as autonomy, knowledge of learning strategies and parental influences. The third phase, termed “motivational retrospection”, focuses on an evaluation of the motivation process from the learners’ perspective. In this evaluation, the influences of learners’ perceptions of their past experience are of the essence (Dörnyei, 2005). The Motivational Retrospection of the model can be viewed as reflecting the dynamism of motivation in terms of motivational intensity through different phases, particularly in the phase of evaluation. Dörnyei (2005) argues that the learner’s reflection on their learning process impacts on the level of motivation the learner directs towards their learning intentions. Their reflections may inform their decisions to continue with their learning plans or to abandon these. Motivation, hence affects and is affected by the learning process and vice versa.

However, the process model is understood to have some limitations in its application by language researchers in L2 environments. One limitation is that even though the actional process in the model “is well-definable and has clear-cut boundaries”, it is not an easy task to define where exactly an action starts in an educational context (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 86). Moreover, the learning process itself does not occur in isolation from other activities learners are engaged in (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). On the “multiple engagement” of students in the context of L2 learning, Dörnyei (2005) comments that:

Whereas academic motivation is – hopefully – an important facet of the learners’ general disposition toward attending school, the classroom is also a social arena in which students go through some of the key developmental experiences in their lives, such as establishing friendships, falling in love, and experimenting with increasingly elaborate personal identities. (2005, pp. 86–87)
In this setting, learners’ motivation processes are influenced by “a complex set of interacting goals and intentions of both academic and social nature” (Juvonen & Nishina, 1997; Wentzel, 1999, in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 86).

In brief, despite the identified limitations, the process-oriented model suggests a number of advantages compared to other models previously proposed by LL motivation researchers. It is a comprehensive model in that it represents a synthesis of theoretical frameworks from previous L2 research including the theories of attitudes towards L2 and its speakers, the role of parents and teachers in learner motivation, the socio-psychological model’s treatment of anxiety, the sense of autonomy, the theoretical underpinning within intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation research and the self-determination construct. Further, the model is considered to represent the first construct to investigate the concept of dynamism in motivation within the L2 field (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012). The model also suggests a complete process of LL motivation from learners’ wishes, and desires through to a concluding reflective evaluation phase and is revealing of a relevant link between the process of an action and all motivational influences in every phase of the process. This model has been incorporated into Dörnyei’s (2009) L2 Motivational Self System which is discussed in Chapter Three.

2.3.4 The socio-cultural approach
Research into the field of language motivation seems to have turned to a new page when researchers began to investigate this field in relation to learners’ identity in the context of their learning (Norton, 2013; Ushioda, 2014b). Notable in this regard is the influential study by Norton (2001, 2013). Although the findings from Norton’s study emerged within an ESL context, they are significant to my own research question with respect to the investment concept in language learning motivation and to the notion of power and the imagined community, as I take both aspects to be also applicable to EFL classroom contexts.

In terms of language learning motivation, Norton (2000, 2013) stresses that the link between the individual and the learning context should not be treated as a set of one-way relations. Learner’s decisions are located within a social context which influences the individual and how he or she sees himself/herself as a language learner, reflecting the reflexive and multidimensional relationship between language and learner identity. The socio-cultural approach elaborates the social in the social-psychological dimensions emphasized in Gardner
and Lambert’s (1972) motivation theories and Gardner’s (2001) model. These theories define a motivated language learner as an individual who actively gains access to communication and can make participation-related choices through their interactions with the target language group (Gardner, 2001). This definition can also be seen in Gardner and MacIntyre’s work (1992), in their assertion that “the major characteristic of the informal context is that it is voluntary. Individuals can either participate or not in informal acquisition contexts” (p. 213). However, Norton (2000, p. 5) claims that “such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual”. The notion of inequitable relations of power is taken up later in this section.

Therefore, as an alternative to the term ‘motivation’, the notion of investment in L2 learning was proposed by Norton (2000), as this term can be mobilized to signal “the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p. 10). Originating from the economic metaphor of “cultural capital” by Bourdieu (1977), the concept “investment” in L2 learning can be used to refer to the knowledge and modes of thought of social classes and groups. Based on this idea, Norton argues:

If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return on that investment- a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (2000, p. 10)

Norton makes a clear-cut distinction between investment and instrumental motivation by asserting that instrumental motivation “presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical” language learner who desires access to material resources regarded as only being available to privileged target language speakers (Norton, 2000, p.10). The notion of investment conceives of the LL as having a complex social history and multiple desires. The notion presumes that when language learners speak, not only are they exchanging information with target language speakers, but also they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and
how they relate to the social world. Thus, an investment in the target language is “also an investment in a learner’s own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space” (Norton, 2000, pp. 10–11).

Symbolic and material resources are further related to the notion of power and identity (Norton, 2000). In this respect, power can be defined as “the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated” (Norton, 2000, p. 7). While symbolic resources can be understood as assets with symbolic meanings such as “language, education and friendship, material resources refer to capital goods, real estate and money” (Norton, 2000, p. 7). As implied above, relations of power keep changing as they are generated and regenerated between members, not only at the community level or between institutions, but also between people in everyday life as symbolic and material resources change (Norton, 2013).

The complex relationships between identity and power are at the centre of research by West (1992, in Norton, 2000) and Bourdieu (1977). While West reasons that the concept of identity, reflecting individuals’ different levels of desire for recognition, affiliation, security and safety, is closely linked with material resources, Bourdieu affirms that identity and symbolic resources have a connected relationship. Further, Norton, (2000, p. 9) argued: “The power relationship is additive rather than subtractive. Power is created with others rather than being imposed on or exercised over others”. Using this argument, Norton (2000, 2013) concludes that LLs’ identities negotiated in the context of classroom and the community, are subject to relations of power.

With respect to power relationships in classroom contexts, John Trent’s (in Norton & Gao, 2008) research into Chinese students’ limited opportunities to speak English in a Hong Kong university context, in which English is used as the major medium of instruction, is illuminating. The results show that the significant power imbalance between the teacher and the students constrains classroom interactions, and as such severely limits students’ opportunities to speak English. Trent suggests that language teachers should, therefore, seek to minimize these unequal relations of power by focusing on fluency rather than accuracy. Besides, Norton and Gao (2008, p. 112) argue that “There is a need to investigate investment
as a multiplex phenomenon in which the interaction between knowledge and expertise, freedom and control, and oral practices shapes learners’ investment in classroom discourse”. This argument can be effectively linked to the notion of classroom autonomy. In this sense, the pressure the teacher puts on learners to be accurate in their learning takes power away from learners. Broadly speaking, it is not necessarily the pressure of demands for accuracy, but any pressure the teacher brings to bear on learners that plays into teacher-learner power relationships in ways that favour the teacher.

For effective and successful language classroom teaching and learning, the teacher needs “to develop an understanding of their students’ investments in the target language and their changing identities” (Norton, 2000, p. 133), an understanding that is then developed into Norton’s (2001, 2013) concept of the “imagined community”. This conception of community extends from the notion of imagination by Wenger (1998). The imagined community is defined as a “process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (Wenger, 1998, p. 176). In essence, Norton and Kamal (2003) speculate that “a learner’s imagined community invites an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language must be understood within this context” (Norton & Kamal, 2003, p. 303).

The notion of imagined communities has been investigated in a number of EFL contexts. Norton and Kamal’s (2003) research focused on perceptions of literacy and the English language among middle-school children in Pakistan and found that their participating students’ understanding of an imagined community is one in which “the English language coexists with vernacular languages, and local needs are balanced against global imperatives. In such contexts, imagined communities are multiple and identities hybrid” (p. 301). In the context of China, Norton and Gao (2008) question the definition of the target language community, which is conventionally associated with members of the target language community, and for the English language, it is related to such countries as the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia or Canada. Their study findings show that such kinds of target language environment are absent in China, where English is learnt as a foreign language (Qu, 2005). Furthermore, for many Chinese learners of English, their imagined communities are constituted in “Chinese elites”, or Chinese of a higher class (Gao, Cheng & Kelly, 2007). In the context of Taiwan, Huang’s
(2009) study found that providing materials on the real global world of English as a *lingua franca* to students would lead to an imagined community of EFL speakers with which the students could identify. Thus, these examples of a target language environment illustrate Norton’s assertion that target language communities are ‘imagined communities’ which are diverse and relate to learners’ desired future identities.

In summary, Norton’s work (2000, 2013) has made significant contributions to the field of LL motivation by integrating motivation theory with that of language learner identity set within learners’ diverse everyday life contexts, in which multiple interactions between the language learner/user and their environment are in play. While Norton’s notion of power inequity is further applied to the idea of autonomy in the L2 learning classroom, the concept of investment may more fruitfully illustrate the dynamic nature of motivation at a time of worldwide globalization, when the idea of integrativeness may seem vague and ambiguous within diverse and/or unclearly defined target language communities. In addition, the introduction of the notion of an imagined community is particularly applicable to an EFL context, and is also complementary to research on learners’ L2 future selves, which is discussed in Chapter Three.

### 2.3.5 LL motivation summary

This section has provided a review of major LL motivation models, showing a shift from an individual approach to a social-cultural perspective in the field of research. Under the individual approach to LL motivation, the socio-psychological model (Gardner, 2001) emphasizes individual language learner differences and uses the AMTB test as the main research instrument to quantify individual learners’ efforts and the links between learner motivation and their learning achievements, the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation, and the one-way interactions between LL motivation and external factors. The self-determination theory (Noels, 2003) complements the socio-psychological model with the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation together with the notion of integrative orientation. Further, the process-oriented model (Dörnyei, 2005) emphasizes the dynamic nature of LL motivation with a description of a complete process of LL motivation. The socio-cultural approach to LL motivation identifies the significant role of context and learner identity in language learning. Norton’s (2000, 2013) work integrates LL motivation with learner identity, elaborating the dynamism of LL motivation with the notions of ‘investment’ rather than the concept of motivation, the notion of inequality which may well be applied in the field
of LL autonomy, and the idea of ‘imagined community’, which has been investigated in a number of EFL contexts.

2.4 LL autonomy and motivation summary

Chapter Two has first presented theories of learner autonomy in detail focusing on definitions of the term; fundamentals, four main perspectives and pedagogical practices to develop LL autonomy. The chapter takes the definition of LL autonomy as the willingness and capacity of the learner to take control over the learning process including control over their learning goals, techniques, strategies, materials, assessment and reflective practices in both formal and informal learning contexts in accord with their society. This chapter aims to further argue that LL autonomy is a dynamic and multi-dimensional construct that is embedded in learners’ communities. In this theoretical framework, this study seeks to investigate whether LL autonomy can be developed in an EFL context of Vietnam through appropriately adjusted pedagogical strategies.

Another equally important part of this chapter is dedicated to reviews of LL motivation theories, explaining how LL motivation is defined and presenting influential models and approaches in the field. The chapter defines LL motivation as the reasons why learners choose to learn a second language, the intensity of their learning efforts and, their levels of engagement and investment in the language learning process in both formal and informal learning settings. It also emphasizes the role of context in LL motivation, which was first mentioned in Gardner’s (1985, 2001) psychological model and became a focal point in the social-cultural approach to investigating LL motivation. In other words, these models have covered the impacts of LL contexts on LL learning as in the socio-psychological model (Gardner, 2001) and further in the socio-cultural approach (Norton, 2000, 2013), and they further emphasize the process of changes in LL motivation in the process-oriented model (Dörnyei, 2005). However, these models and approaches seem to fail in addressing the dynamic nature, the complexity of LL motivation and the balance between learners and their contexts. Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System is a continuation and extension of incorporating learner identity – the ‘self’ concept into LL motivation in order to accommodate the gaps in the previous LL motivation models. The following chapter discusses the subject of future selves, also referred to as “possible” selves and the L2 Motivational Self
System in conjunction with theories of complexity, which complete the framework for this study.
CHAPTER THREE: THEORIES OF POSSIBLE SELVES AND COMPLEXITY IN RELATION WITH LL AUTONOMY AND MOTIVATION

3.1 Introduction to theories of possible self and complexity

As explained in the previous chapter, theories of LL motivation have taken up the notion of LL identity, providing a more comprehensive understanding of LL motivation. After setting the scene of the self in language learning in relation with language learner identity, this chapter proceeds to present theories of “possible selves” or “future self guides” on which the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) was constructed. The chapter opens with an account of definitions, types and concepts of the possible self and the perspectives to view possible selves. This account is followed by a discussion on relations between possible selves and motivation, focusing particularly on the L2 Motivational Self System. An overview of Dörnyei’s self system provides readers with three main dimensions of the structure: “the ideal self”, “the ought self” and “learning experiences”, in which LL autonomy is mentioned as one of the influential factors in learners’ learning experiences. From this, the chapter proceeds to identify relations between LL motivation, self and autonomy, a link between the theories of LL motivation and those of LL autonomy presented in the previous chapter.

The tri-part literature review of LL autonomy, motivation and self may bring to mind the fable of the three blind fortune-tellers and the elephant first raised in the thesis introduction in its three separate ‘patches’ in the ‘whole’ literature patchwork of the language learning process. From this point, the chapter takes up complexity theory as the lens through which the three key constructs in this study – autonomy, motivation, and self – and their relationships can be more comprehensively investigated within the complex contoured landscapes of complex language learning systems.

3.2 Possible selves/ future self guides in relation to LL autonomy and motivation

This section commences with a review of identity and language identity before it moves on to key concepts of the self in language learning. The theory of possible self subsequently will be discussed in relation with LL autonomy and motivation.
3.2.1 Approaching the self in language learning
From the post-structural approach, “identity” in a broad sense is defined as:

multiple, changing, and a site of struggle, frequently negotiated in the context of inequitable relations of power. Identity signals the way a person understands her or his relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future (Norton, 2014, pp. 60–61).

In a similar vein, Block (2014) defines identity as “socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language” (p. 32). Identity is no longer seen as stable, simple individual traits like eye colour, body size or behaviours and characteristics. It is rather multi-faceted, dynamic (Gee, 2001) and about “negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future” (Block, 2014, p. 32). In this view, the notion of our current self is closely related to the concepts of who we were in the past and of who we will be in the future.

Post-structuralist theories of language offer researchers researching identity in language learning “ways to see individual language learner situated in a larger social world” (Norton, 2014, p. 61). While structuralist theories of language see language as consisting of stable patterns and structures, post-structuralist theories view language “as situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings” (Norton, 2014, p. 63).

In relation to identity, language learners are able to gain access to the community through language and also, by using language, learners can affirm their senses of selves at different times in specific places. Language identity is thus “understood as the assumed and/or attributed relationship between one’s sense of self and a means of communication” (Block, 2014, p. 47). In other words, language learning is “a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated” (Norton, 2014, p. 71).

For some language learners; therefore, especially those with limited opportunity to have contact with speakers of a target language, possible selves are “integral and essential to the learning process” as the imagined community is seen as the site for them to negotiate identities (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 110). In the literature of LL motivation, the notion of possible self has
come to dominate research on LL motivation and it has been argued that “examining the self system reframes the motivation construct in enlightening ways” (Mercer, 2014, p. 2). The notion and role of possible selves have been further elaborated in the L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei (2005, 2009).

The following section will review the concepts of possible selves, explaining what possible selves are, classifying types of possible selves, and discussing perspectives to view these selves. The section argues for Higgins’ (1987) suggestion that the ideal self and ought self as individuals’ future self states and the actual self as present self state should be viewed from the point of view of either individuals or others. The review emphasizes close links between an individual learner’s possible selves and motivation, which has been further theorized in Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System.

3.2.2 Theories of possible selves (PS) or future self guides

In the following, the discussion extends Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System, based mainly on the work of Higgins (1987), that constructs possible selves in terms of the ideal self and the ought self. The discussion takes the form of a review of more recently reported literature findings related to notions of self and possible selves.

By definition, possible selves, also referred to as future self guides, represent an individual’s “ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). These selves refer to future self states rather than to current ones as “the notion of possible selves concerns how people conceptualize their as-yet unrealized potential” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11), in relation to their hopes, wishes, and fantasies.

While some researchers differ in how they conceptualize the notion of possible selves, Markus and Nurius (1986) distinguish three main types of possible selves. Firstly, the ideal (or the hoped-for) self is the self that individuals “would very much like to become” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954) including the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, the loved and admired self. This future guide refers to the best case/ scenario. The second self type is the self that people expect to become. This “expected” or “likely” self represents the default case. From these understandings of “hoped-for” and “expected” selves, it may be
difficult to draw clear-cut distinctions between the ideal self and that expected self. The third self type is the feared self, defined as the self that individuals fear becoming. Within this type of self, Markus and Nurius (1986) include “the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self” (1986, p. 954) in this possible “worst self” scenario. In contrast, in her self discrepancy theory, Higgins (1987, p. 320) proposes the ‘ideal self’ and the ‘ought self’ together with another self, termed the “actual self”, to form three domains of the self. The ideal self is defined as the “representation of attributes” that an individual would ideally like to possess; a self similar to the ideal self suggested by Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 954). The ought self represents attributes that an individual believes he/she should or ought to possess, and the actual self refers to attributes that an individual believes that they actually possess. The ideal and ought selves are regarded as the main components of the possible selves. The following table summarizes differences between the two main selves.
Table 5

*Conceptual Differences between the Ideal Self and the Ought Self*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAL SELF</th>
<th>OUGHT SELF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Represents attributes that one would ideally like to possess (i.e., representation of hopes, aspirations or wishes)</td>
<td>- Represents attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., representations of someone else’s sense of duty, obligation or moral responsibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Represents “projections” rather than “attributes”</td>
<td>- Has a prevention focus: regulation of the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failing to live up to various responsibilities and obligations (Higgins, 1998; in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has a promotion focus: a concern with hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments.</td>
<td>- Refers to a positive reference point (i.e., The person who I believe I ought to become) (Higgins, 1987, p. 320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18)</td>
<td>- May be extended to include a negative reference point (i.e., The person I do not want to become, or fear becoming) (Higgins, 1987, p. 320)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: adapted from Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18; Higgins, 1987, p. 320)

At this point in the discussion, confusions about the possible meanings of concepts related to self may arise when distinctions between the concepts – the ideal self, the feared self and the ought (or ought-to) self – appear to be inconsistent. While in Markus and Nurius’ (1986) work, the ideal self (i.e., the person who I would ideally most like to become) may be seen as opposite in meaning to the feared self (self that I am afraid of becoming), the ought self in Higgins’ theory seems to include the feared self (See Table 5) and, as such, the ought self may be
extended to include a negative reference point (Higgins, 1996). Thus, in considering self in this study, I propose that the feared self should be understood as a counterpart of the ideal self in the same domain, and that the ought self should refer to the representation of an individual’s sense of duty and obligation at a future time. For example, a student wants to become a successful doctor in the future (i.e., their ideal self) because they are afraid of being an unhelpful person (i.e., feared self) and because of a belief that they will have to take care of their aging parents in the future (i.e., the ought self).

There are also striking differences in terms of perspectives from which possible selves can be viewed. Markus and Nurius (1986) suggest an ought self may be defined as an image of self which is held by another individual. This suggestion corresponds with various standpoints on selves evident in the “self” literature; that is, an ideal self is viewed as the individual’s own vision for himself or herself while the ought self represents others’ perceptions of an individual’s self (Dörnyei, 2009). By contrast, the typology of selves proposed by Higgins (1987) can derive from the point of view of either the individuals themselves or of others. Higgins’ theory identifies three self domains: the actual; the ideal; and the ought. These views of selves from the perspective of oneself and others are termed “standpoints on the self” (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). A standpoint is a point of view or a perspective from which an individual can be judged (Turner, 1956; in Higgins, 1987), and as such represents a person’s own standpoint and the standpoint of “some significant others” (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). These notions of possible selves and an individual’s and others’ “standpoints” are relevant to this study as they can be mobilized to better understand the roles learners, family, friends and teachers play in shaping the possible multiple roles learners take on in their L2 learning. Taken together, Higgins’ (1987) three self domains and the two standpoints on self compose six self-state representations (See Table 6).
Table 6

**Self-state Representations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standpoint</th>
<th>Actual self</th>
<th>Ideal self</th>
<th>Ought self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>Actual/own</td>
<td>Ideal/own</td>
<td>Ought/own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who I</td>
<td>“The person who I would ideally</td>
<td>“The person who I believe I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>believe I am actually</td>
<td>like to be”</td>
<td>believe I should/ought to be”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>now”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Actual/other</td>
<td>Ideal/other</td>
<td>Ought/other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who</td>
<td>“The person who others would</td>
<td>“The person who others believes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>others believe I am”</td>
<td>ideally like me to be”</td>
<td>I should/ought to be”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: adapted from Higgins, 1987, pp. 320 – 321)

The first two self-state representations (i.e., the actual/own and the actual/other) constitute a person’s self-concept (Wylie, 1979, in Higgins, 1987); the other four self-state representations are named self-guides (Higgins, Strauman, & Klein, 1986, in Higgins, 1987). It is postulated from the theory of self discrepancy that individuals are motivated to engage in a particular action when their self-concept is congruent with the “self” guides (Dörnyei, 2009).

3.2.3 The L2 Motivational Self System

On the emergence of the L2 motivational self system, Dörnyei (2005) argues:

> Along with many other L2 scholars, I believe that a foreign language is more than a mere communication code that can be learnt similarly to other academic subjects; instead, is also part of the individual’s personal “core”, involved in most mental
activities and forming an important part of one’s identity. Thus, I have become increasingly open to paradigms that would approach motivation from a whole-person perspective. (pp. 93–94)

The above quote is centred around three prime arguments which have gained a consensus from a number of researchers investigating LL autonomy, motivation and self. The first point argues for the idea that learning a language is not the same as learning other school subjects (Gardner, 1985). Further, learning a second language shapes and reshapes individuals’ identities (Block, 2014; Norton, 2014). Finally, the whole person perspective allows LL motivation researchers view LL learners in their own contexts, going beyond the classroom walls (Ushioda, 2014b).

The paradigms mentioned in Dörnyei’s comment refer to theories on possible selves in connection with identity. Two of the three dimensions in the L2 Motivational Self system constructed by Dörnyei (2005) refer to the future self, while the other relates to the context of learning:

- **Ideal L2 self**, referring to the L2 specific facet of one’s ideal self: If the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the Ideal Self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.
- **Ought-to (or ought) L2 self**, referring to the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes.
- **L2 Learning Experience**, which concerns situation-specific motive related to the immediate learning environment and experience.

(Dörnyei, 2005, pp.105 – 106)

The first component, the ideal L2 self provides a broad interpretation of the “integrativeness’ notion. It is of particular relevance to this study in the context of the use of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam. As Dörnyei (2005) reasons, “Integrativeness seen as Ideal L2 Self can be used to explain the motivation in diverse learning contexts even if they offer little or no
contact with L2 speakers” (p. 104). Further, in an EFL context in Vietnam, the notion of a global English with a global identity is dominant (Nguyen, T. T. H., 2014). In this case, an ideal L2 self can be built by L2 learners upon the imagined community described by Norton (2001, 2013).

The second dimension corresponds to Higgins’s ought self. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) argues that while the L2 ideal self is related to an integrative motive, the ought self is linked more to extrinsic types of instrumental motives. This representation of L2 learners’ visions of what they should/ought to become in the future in order to avoid undesirable or feared future outcomes generates motivation to drive the behaviour that they feel they should engage in out of duty or obligation (MacIntyre, 2002; in Dörnyei, 2009). It is suggested that the L2 ought self is assumed to play a significant part in Asian cultural environments as family aspirations for children represent an important influence on their language learning (Lockwood et al., 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1998). In an investigation into L2 possible selves among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners, Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) found that Chinese learn English to gain promotions at work, to secure income to support the family, while in Iran, L2 learning that resulted in a promotion at work would bring honour to individuals’ families.

From the perspective of selves, the notion of extrinsic motivation proposed by Noels (2003) (see Chapter Two) can be related to either the ideal self or to the ought self, depending on the level of internalization of the extrinsic motives (Dörnyei, 2009, Ushioda, 2014b). Research indicates that instrumentality can be classified into two constructs, related to promotion versus prevention incentives. Internalized instrumental motives are associated with promotion incentives: that is, they are related to the ideal self, and thus can have significant influence on learners’ expenditure of effort (Dörnyei, 2009). Non-internalized instrumentality is related to prevention incentives, the ought self, and is likely to exert only short-term influence on learners’ levels of motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2014b). Table 7 shows these two constructs of instrumentality in relation to possible selves.
Table 7

*Instrumentality and Possible Selves*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal self</th>
<th>Ought self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Is “dynamic, includes both integrative and instrumental dispositions, with internalized types of instrumental disposition” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 276).</td>
<td>- Is “less –internalized types of instrumental dispositions. I.e. ESL learners feel that they should possess at least a minimum level of English proficiency” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 276).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has identified regulation: “occurs when people engage in an activity because they highly value and identify with the behaviour, and see its usefulness”</td>
<td>- Has external regulation: entirely from external sources (rewards, praises….)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has integrated regulation: choiceful behaviour</td>
<td>- Has introjected regulation: externally imposed rules that the individual accepts as norms he/she should follow in order not to feel guilty (rules, laws).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Noels, 2003, p. 3)</td>
<td>(Noels, 2003, p. 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: adapted from Dörnyei, 2009, p. 276; Noels, 2003, p. 3)

It is noteworthy that a number of ELL motivation researchers in educational research contexts have investigated ELL motivation in relation to their ideal and ought selves, using questionnaires as one of the most popular data collection instruments. Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) used three versions of a questionnaire with nearly 5000 participants (1586 in Japan, 1328 in China, 2029 in Iran) to conduct a comparative motivational study of learners of English framed by Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System. Similarly, Csizér and Kormos (2009) investigated future learner self and learning motivation among 202 English language learners from Budapest, Hungary by utilizing questionnaires which consisted of 65 Likert-scale items. Likewise, in a study on international posture and the ideal L2 self in the Japanese EFL context, Yashima (2009) used a questionnaire to survey 191 high school students.
Meanwhile, Al-Shehri (2009) investigated the relationship between visual learning style, imagination, ideal language selves and motivated behaviours using survey data collected from among 200 English language learners in an Arab context.

The third dimension in Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) Self System, the L2 learning experience, corresponds to the notion of executive motives in the actional phase of Dörnyei’s (2005) process-oriented model (see Chapter Two). The relationship between this dimension and the possible selves components reveals possible links between learners’ current selves and imagined future selves, with the literature suggesting that a balance between these self-concepts and self-guides could enhance learners’ motivation levels. In the process-oriented model, Dörnyei (2005) identifies the role of L2 learning experiences, teacher and parent influences, and autonomy (see Figure 3 below). This study focuses on ELL autonomy. The following section discusses the relation between ELL autonomy, motivation and self before proceeding with an account of complexity theory.

![Figure 3. A process-oriented model of L2 Motivation. (Source: Dörnyei, 2005, p. 85)](image-url)

### 3.2.4 ELL autonomy, motivation and self

#### 3.2.4.1 Possible selves and LL motivation

Individuals’ possible selves are important motivational forces on behaviours at the time of acting (Frazier & Hooker, 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Ryan & Irie, 2014). The forces
reflect “a dynamic, forward-pointing conception” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11) that can provide an explanation for possible reasons why people are motivated to move forward in the future. Similarly, Yowell (2002) comments that the focus of the notion of possible selves is on the interrelationships between the individual’s current self identities and imaginative self identities, and the influence of this interplay on their purposive behaviours.

The education literature has shown that when learning is effectively tied to learners’ future purposes and outcomes, their motivation to set goals and invest the necessary effort to meet their set goals is enhanced (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Ryan & Irie, 2014). In a possible selves development program conducted with middle and high school students and university student-athletes, Hock, Deshler and Schulmaker (2006) found that the notion of possible selves can be effective in terms of illuminating the number and diversity of career, learning, and personal goals that the students desire to achieve. The program attempted to facilitate students’ progress through a process of encouraging students’ reflective thinking about their hopes, expectations, and fears for the future, and developing activities to assist students to identify their short and long-term goals, and to develop and pursue action plans to achieve their goals. The program comprised six components, each with a key guiding question for students to reflect on and respond to:

1. Discovery - What are my strengths and interests?
2. Thinking - Who am I?
3. Sketching - What am I like and what are my possible selves?
4. Reflecting - What can I be?
5. Growing - How do I get there?
6. Performing - How am I doing?

(Hock, Deshler & Schulmaker, 2006, pp. 211 – 214)

The program outcomes suggest that an effective goal-focused intervention program that encourages and assists students to identify and set specific types of goals has the potential to enhance students’ academic motivation and performance (Ryan & Irie, 2014). Significantly, such goal-setting programs may enhance the possibility that students will make more meaningful connections between their school experiences, planned goals and their ideal future
possible selves and will see greater relevance in these. The outcomes of another possible selves intervention program conducted by Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee (2002) targeting potentially delinquent youths shows higher class attendance and closer bonding to learning among the youths who participated in the program than those in the control group. These findings suggest that the way individuals envision their future has a significant and likely highly positive impact on their current motivation (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

Furthermore, possible selves in the psychologically close future have been found to exert a greater motivating influence than the selves in a psychologically more remote future. Strahan and Wilson (2006) investigated the relationship between participants’ possible future selves and their level of current motivation. The findings revealed that participants who felt that graduation was in the near future were more motivated to engage in the learning than those who perceived that graduation was in the distant future. That is, when the attainment of a possible self feels close, an individual may feel a need for swift action to reach their desired targets. Thus it can be concluded from Strahan and Wilson’s (2006) findings that the temporal proximity of future possible selves may have an impact on individuals’ motivation at the present time in ways that will help them to attain their hoped-for or avoid their feared possible selves.

It is also noteworthy that in the possible selves literature, well-elaborated possible selves are suggested to be particularly motivating (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1998). That is, the more elaborated and vivid the possible self is, the more motivational influence it is expected to exert on individuals. In this connection, Oyserman and Markus (1990, p. 113) stress that “specific and vivid senses” are seen as major components of possible selves in the process of motivation and goal setting. In particular, Strahan and Wilson (2006) and Ushioda (2014b) suggest that the more concrete action plans the students in their study draw up, the more motivated they are to put forth efforts in their learning activities.

Finally, Markus and Ruvolo’s (1989) study on the balance between possible selves and feared selves concluded that a dynamic balance between ideal selves and feared selves in the same domain of an individual is likely to generate greater motivational power than domination of either an expected possible self or a feared self alone. This finding is supported by Frazier and
Hooker’s (2006) work on possible selves in adult development, which concludes that balance is important as a motivational factor for possible selves. Other research has similar findings showing that the impact of the self can be found to be even stronger if a positive possible self is offset by a feared self in the same domain (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004, in Dörnyei, 2005).

3.2.4.2 LL autonomy and motivation
The language learning literature shows that autonomy and motivation have a close interrelationship with each other, not only in general education but also specifically in language learning contexts (Gao & Lamb, 2011) and, from this, makes the assumption that “autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 2). Autonomous learners are thus likely to be more highly motivated as, according to the research literature, opportunities to exercise autonomy over the learning process may lead to more effective learning (Dickinson, 1995; Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 1996, 2014a). Knowles (1975, p. 14) draws on the concepts “proactive” and “reactive” to further the argument for the positive relationship between autonomy, motivation and proficiency.

Similarly, the role of autonomy in language learning has been found to relate to various theories of motivation, among which are intrinsic motivation and attribution theory. A strong relationship between motivation and autonomy can be perceived in Deci and Ryan’s (1985) work on intrinsic motivation, according to other researchers (Dickinson, 1995; Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 1996). The findings from their work suggest that learning is more effective when learners are intrinsically motivated, and that intrinsic motivation is promoted under conditions whereby learners are given a measure of self-determination and control over their own learning processes and strategies. A condition of self-determination is the presence of informal structures and events, defined by Deci and Ryan (1985, 1995, 2002) as structures to facilitate independence in learning and creation of opportunities to enable learners to make decisions and choices. Intrinsic motivation in this respect can also be understood to drive the expression of personal control and autonomy in the process of learning, within which the setting of attainable short and long-term goals and sub-goals is a key objective (Ushioda, 1996, 2014a).

Attribution theories of motivation applied in research on autonomy and motivation suggest a strong link between autonomy and motivation (Ushioda, 1996, 2014a). Related motivation
research indicates that learners with belief in their own control over their learning tend to be more motivated and more successful in their language learning (Dickinson, 1995). Control over the learning process centres on the learner’s perception that their successes and/or failures are attributed to their own efforts, which can be controlled by learners themselves, rather than to outside objective factors. As such, learners are willing to accept new challenges in the learning process. In other words, learners’ motivational scenarios approach the ideal when positive outcomes are believed to be attributed to personal capabilities, and when negative outcomes are attributed to “temporal shortcomings that can be remedied” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 16).

Consequently, in pedagogical practices, in order to promote and enhance learners’ levels of intrinsic motivation and to foster autonomy as goals in language learning classrooms, learning needs to be embedded in the experiences of everyday living, by drawing on meanings that learners want to express and by encouraging learners to bring their outside interests into the classroom (Ushioda, 1996). In this sense, intrinsically motivated learning urges learners to explore and master the subject matter in a way that “fundamentally shapes autonomous learning” (Ushioda, 1996, pp. 41 – 42).

Subsequently, more recent research has suggested that the relationship between language classroom contexts and learners’ everyday world contexts plays a critical role with respect to students moving beyond being language learners to become proficient second/foreign language users (Ushioda, 2011). In this essence, when learners are encouraged to “speak as themselves” (Ushioda, 2011, p.15), students engage with and more deeply involve their own motivation, identities and interests in the language learning process. The concepts of autonomy and motivation are further investigated in the context of their close link to learners’ identities that language learners/users bring to the learning process (Chik & Breidbach, 2011; Norton, 2013; Paiva, 2011; Ushioda, 2011).

3.2.5 Self in relation to LL autonomy and motivation summary
In summary, this study takes the definitions of individual learner ideal selves as representations of attributes that learners would ideally like to possess, and the ought (or ought-to) self as attributes that learners believe they should or ought to possess (Higgins, 1987; Dörnyei, 2005).
The notions of these possible selves are theorized in Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System as the two first primary dimensions. The model includes the third dimension – L2 learning experiences – in which ELL autonomy is nested as one of factors related to the immediate ELL learning environment and experiences. Reviews of literature further reveal close relationships between ELL autonomy and motivation, between ELL motivation and self, and leave open investigations into relations between ELL autonomy and self or the interrelationship between the three factors within language learners (Lamb, 2011). These gaps are therefore the focal points of this study and are viewed under the light of complexity theory.

3.3 Complexity theory in relation to ELL autonomy, motivation and self

To this point in the thesis, the historical literature on motivation, possible selves and autonomy of the language learner within educational contexts has been reviewed. This part of the chapter aims to shed light on complexity theory; a field in which physical, biological and social sciences intersect, in relation to ELL autonomy, motivation and self.

3.3.1 Approaching complexity theory

As discussed in the previous sections, LL autonomy, motivation and self have been investigated in their unidirectional and/or causal relationships (between LL autonomy and motivation, between motivation and self) or in chronological relationships (as in the process model). These relationships remind me of the time when I met my doctor for the migraine caused by insomnia. The doctor gave me some medicine for a better sleep. As the insomnia and migraine happened again whenever I stopped the medicine, I visited a Vietnamese doctor who followed traditional oriental practices. That doctor prescribed some medicine for my kidneys, explaining that my kidneys were not functioning well, causing some problems in blood articulation, which led to low quality sleep. I was impressed by the idea that human beings are complex systems in which everything is related to each other in a complicated way. And beyond that is the reflection of Vietnamese culture and practices with underlying understanding and assumptions that human beings are constantly in harmonious relationships with the environment. Bringing in the Vietnamese notion of harmony leads me as a reader to a paradox. Complexity theory appears to lead me to focus on dynamism, of constant interaction and change on how this relates to a culture whose practices focus on harmony and on whether
or not it is difficult for such a culture to accept the chaos that complexity theory implies. Further, complexity and harmony are not mutually exclusive, and a Vietnamese ‘take’ on complexity would be an interesting enhancement of the theory.

Connecting the story to my research, I am interested in possible relationships between ELL autonomy, motivation and self within English language learners in their interactions with contexts. Complexity theory may help me understand the complex relationships among the three factors within ELLs in complicated and multidirectional ways. The theory used previously in other fields was developed by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) to function as an appropriate theory for a description of language learning; complexity theory as explicated here focuses principally on changes that occur in both agents and elements, on adaptation/co-adaptation and on the critical significance of context in dynamic complex systems.

3.3.2 Complexity theory
The notion of complexity was dated back to 1960s by a meteorologist named Edward Lorenz (Soleimani & Alaee, 2014). Lorenz noticed that even small differences in initial conditions could lead to large changes in the weather forecast. This sensitivity to the preliminary conditions is one of the main features of complex systems (Gleick, 1987). Before reviewing the complex features of complexity theory, this section will first explicate definitions of concepts within this theory, understood to be consistent in meaning with one another.

By definition, complex systems (or dynamic systems, or complex adaptive systems) comprise a number of “active elements” (Paiva, 2011, p. 58). Active elements in complex systems are generally numerous, diverse and in dynamic interaction with one another to generate a kind of unity or wholeness (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). The connectedness of the whole distinguishes a system from a collection or a group, while the diversity and dynamism of “heterogeneous” components distinguish a complex system from a simple one. Further, within complex systems, the term “elements” is used to refer to non-animate entities, while human beings and animate beings, as well as combinations between them, are named “agents” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). For example, an L2 classroom as a complex system, may comprise key agents such as the teacher, students and the relational bonds between the teacher
and the students and/or between the students and other students. Within this complex learning system, elements comprise physical objects: classroom, tables, chairs, curriculum, textbooks and visual aids. Together with elements and agents, processes themselves can also be considered as components in complex systems. In the L2 classroom for example, language acquisition and use and language skill building can be seen as processes within a complex language learning system (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman et al., 2009). The components; elements, agents and processes may, in themselves, be complex systems, thus creating subsystems within a whole complex system (Mercer, 2014). The students in the L2 classroom for instance, can be seen as agents and at the same time as complex systems comprising different and diverse identities, goals, and attitudes towards learning against diverse background contexts.

First and foremost, the active elements, that is, the agents and processes of a complex system interact with one another, giving rise to the collective behaviour of the whole system, and hence generate the dynamism and changes at the centre of complexity theories (Verspoor, 2012). As all components are dynamic, changing all the time, and the ways they interact also change with time, the dynamism in a complex system is said to go “all the way down” with changing “subsystems nested inside the bigger systems” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 29). Moreover, the term “nested” refers to the influence of one timescale and/or one level (space) on another one in a complex system from different directions (both top down and bottom up directions) (Byrne, 2002, in Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). For instance, in the complex system of an L2 classroom, connections exist between the teacher and learners, between learners and learners, and those connections change with time. In terms of changes, with a feature of non-linearity which “results from the dynamics of the interactions among elements and agents” and is a feature of openness (systems which are open for energy or matter from outside), a complex system changes in different ways, either by self-organizing when it restructures internally, or by adapting or co-adapting when it responds to outside “energy and matters” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 30, 32).

In the following, key concepts identified in the process of dynamism, including the “state of a system”, “parameters” of the states, the “phase shift” or “phase space”, the “landscape” and “attractors” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 20, 21), are reviewed in an attempt to convey a fuller explication of changes within complex systems. The state of a system is defined
as the “behaviour of elements or agents at a particular point in time” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 44), which is described by parameters. Continuing with the example of an L2 class, we can see the history of the class learning and teaching as the trajectory, and the states can be seen as connections and interactions between the teacher and the learners in different lessons. Parameters may be represented by the time, the location, the number of students, motivation, and the identity and/or autonomy of learners with motivation and/or the teacher’s actions identified as control parameters, as they may influence the trajectory of the learning system.

Once the whole system changes dramatically and suddenly from one state to another with quality differences, it is observed to pass a phase shift or a bifurcation. After a phase shift, the system can self-organize, and sometimes change into a new pattern of behaviours on different levels and/or in different spaces. This phenomenon can be described as the emergence of the whole rather than of fragments (Mercer, 2014). Consequently, a collection of different states can bring about a landscape change (or state space/phase space) to the whole system. In that system, particular kinds of attractors are present. These attractors are referred to as “states” that the system “prefers” (Thelen & Smith 1994, p. 272). Attractors in a complex dynamic system can be classified as “fixed points, cyclic and chaotic attractors with a butterfly effect” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 56–57). Taking the L2 classroom as an example, the assessment mode set by the teacher can be regarded as an attractor, and once that mode changes, it may cause a bifurcation when the teacher and students change their behaviours to suit the new mode.

Moreover, in response to changes in the environment, a system undergoes a process of adjusting itself to adapt, or it may even co-adapt and co-evolve with another connected system (Mercer, 2014). To exemplify co-adaptation of two systems, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) illustrate the connection of the language teaching and testing systems. While both systems respond and adapt to energy and matters from outside and may maintain stability, they both co-adapt to each other in a way that changes in one system may lead to changes in the other. In Larsen-Freeman and Cameron’s (2008) example, they observe that in China as children began learning English at ever-younger ages, the number of tests for young learners grew to the extent that the number of test preparation centres mushroomed. The appearance of
these centres caused changes in behaviours of parents, learners, teachers and other related agents in the system.

Besides changes and dynamism, another striking feature of complexity theories is that it aims to take into consideration interactions between a complex system and its environment (Alemi, Daftarifard & Patrut, 2011). From this perspective, the context is not separate from but becomes part of the system. “Context” can be understood as the “here-and-now” in which a system is in operation (Thelen & Smith, 1994, pp.263, 264). It refers to not only the physical surroundings but also to the socio-historical background of an individual or a system’s settings (Sade, 2011). A complex system can be examined from different timescales at different levels (Mercer, 2014). Timescales in an education system can refer to school years, semesters, weeks, or even lessons, while levels can be investigated within schools, classes, between teaching staff or groups of students. Also, there is a two-way interaction between the system and the context. In other words, every change in a system may influence and is influenced by its context. With respect to language learning, complexity theory views the individual and the context as “coupled” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). A brief account of the important role of the context in a complex dynamic system is provided in the following quote:

If a contextual factor affects a complex system, it can be incorporated as one of the dimensions of the system’s state space, and also into a collective variable if appropriate. By being incorporated into the state space, contextual factors will influence the trajectory of the system, will contribute to the development of attractor regions, and thus to phase shifts, self-organization, and emergence…context thus becomes the landscape over which the system moves and the movement of the system transforms the context. (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 68).

Further, complexity theory emphasizes that “humans shape their own context” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 7). Discussing minimal attention to the two-way interaction between learners and the context in the field of language learning, Ushioda (2007) writes: “The unique local particularities of the person as self-reflective intentional agent, inherently part of and shaping his or her own context, seem to have no place in [the earlier] kind of research”
As such, complexity theory on the one hand supports the socio-cultural perspective of language acquisition by Norton (2013), Oxford (2003) and Benson (2006), which has been discussed in the previous chapters. On the other hand, it includes psychological perspective by emphasizing the influential role of language learners in their own contexts. Specifically, Larsen-freeman and Cameron (2008, p. 69) argue that:

The context-dependent of complex applied linguistic systems is also three-fold: language is developed in context, as use in context shapes language resources; language is applied in context, as context selects the language action to be performed; language is adapted for context, as the experience of past language use is fitted to the here and now.

Language can be considered a complex system as it consists of interdependent subsystems including phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, semantics and pragmatics (Soleimani & Alaee, 2014). Further, language system is dynamic and complex as it changes over time and due to dynamicity of its users (Shakouri, Teimourtash, M., & Teimourtash, M., 2014). Language learning; therefore, can be considered a complex system and thus a complex process.

In brief, as the central points of complexity theory lie in changes occurring in agents and elements (i.e., educators, teachers, learners, curriculum, teaching and learning modes and others), in adaptation/co-adaptation and in significant contexts in a dynamic, complex system of teaching and learning a language, the theory enables an overall understanding of the transformation processes involved in motivation, identity and autonomy in L2 learning. The following section will discuss English language learner autonomy, motivation and self through the lens of complexity theory.

3.3.3 Autonomy, motivation and self through the lens of complexity theory
As indicated by the theory discussed above, by locating a learner’s motivation, identity and autonomy in language learning within the theoretical framework of complexity, I may be able to develop deeper overall understandings of the learner’s autonomy, motivation and sense of self in their language learning trajectories. It is interesting to infer from the previous discussions that the concepts of motivation, identity and autonomy of language learners,
representative of dynamic subsystems in the language learning process, share a number of similarities in light of complexity theory.

All of these concepts can be seen firstly as complex systems within the learning process, as all consist of active elements and agents including teachers, learners, parents, educators, curriculum, the testing systems, and so forth. These active elements and agents interact with each other, making a connected whole complex learning process system, rather than existing as a collection of separate entities, given that they are all dynamic and heterogeneous. Any change in these elements and agents may cause significant changes in learners’ motivation levels or sense of identity, as well as in the extent to which learners perceive they have autonomy. In turn, any changes in learners’ motivation and/or identity and/or autonomy may lead to changes in the learning process (Ushioda, 2014b).

As such, the three subsystems, ELL autonomy, motivation and self, are dynamic and in a state of flux most of the time within the larger, overarching system of language teaching and learning (Murray, 2011b; Ushioda, 2014b). The dynamic nature of motivation is brought into focus in Dörnyei’s process-oriented model, while that of learners’ identity has been viewed both in Norton’s work and in the social-cultural perspective on autonomy by Oxford (2003) and Benson (2003, 2006). In the aspect of the ELL self, Mercer (2014) argues that “the self can be thought of as a coherently organized dynamic system... as an ongoing process that is never complete, but is continually in a state of development and self-organizing emergence” (p.163). Thus, motivation, identity and autonomy are not static, but non-linear, interacting processes.

More importantly, the histories of the study on LL motivation and identity as well as on autonomy have witnessed a dramatic shift, as these concepts began to be researched from social rather than individual perspectives, on the assumption that they are all “socially mediated” (Murray, 2011b, p. 248). The argument related to the extent to which they can be treated as individual or social phenomena has generated numerous discussions in the field of language teaching and learning (Ushioda, 2014b). Some agreement may be found from the perspective of complexity theory, as it views the individual and the context as inseparable (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron; 2008). In context, language learners are seen as whole persons
with their own identity (Ushioda, 2012), history and social relations, in which they adapt and develop through negotiations with other agents and elements. Consequently, these interconnected elements, that is, ELL autonomy, motivation and self, when investigated from the perspective of complexity theory, may lead the systems beyond the classroom.

Thus far, complexity theory has informed studies by applied linguists. In an investigation into motivation and identity of learners learning English as a foreign language in Brazil, Sade (2011, p. 43) observed the “butterfly effect” in learners in the interactions between their selves and the cultural context, artefacts and discourses surrounding them, thereby confirming that “the social context is integrated as part of one’s identity system, and therefore, has a strong influence on language learning motivation”. Moreover, Sade confirms that within the perspective of complexity theory, language classrooms should be seen as a dynamic complex system, as an integrated part of the learning process, in which all the agents – teachers, learners – act as complex, dynamic, adaptive human beings in a connected way. Similarly, Paiva (2011), drawing on complexity theory, conducted a study on how identity and autonomy influence the trajectory of motivation among Japanese and Brazilian English learners and found that any small changes in ELL identity, autonomy or motivation can lead to significant changes in the learning process.

3.3.4 Section summary
This section has presented the theory of complexity, the centre of which lies in the changes and dynamism observed in both agents (i.e., teachers and learners) and elements (i.e., curriculum and physical classroom conditions), in adaptation and co-adaptation of subsystems in a system, and in the balance between learners and their contexts. Under the theory of complexity, ELL autonomy, motivation and identity/self can be seen as changing and dynamic systems, and these systems should be viewed within the ELL communities. In summary, complexity theory enables me understand the concepts of motivation, autonomy, and identity in ELLs in complex, dynamic and interrelated ways.
3.4 Summary of possible self theory and complexity theory in relation to LL autonomy and motivation

In summary, using complexity theory to understand language learning in an EFL context such as Vietnam, and focusing on the construct of ideal and ought selves in the L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) and the programs by Nunan (1997) and Reinders (2010) to enhance ELL autonomy, my research will investigate ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and self with a focus on the dynamic and complicated nature of and relationships between ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and future selves. The related theoretical frameworks pave the path to a research methodology for the study, which is the centre of the discussion in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY RESEARCHING ELLS’ AUTONOMY, MOTIVATION AND SELF

Methodology researching ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self

4.1 Introduction to the research methodology

The previous chapters identified the key components of theories of language learner autonomy, motivation and self. This chapter presents three main parts: the methodological framework and design; the research context and participants, including ethical considerations and a description of the English SL course; an explication of the research methods, an account of the data collection procedures, and an argument for the selected qualitative and quantitative analytical strategies.

The chapter introduction is followed by an overview of the methodological framework. This framework is grounded in my own teaching and research experiences, my research questions and theories related to learner motivation, learners’ sense of their selves and autonomous learning as seen through the lens of complexity theory. For the research reported in this thesis, I considered the tradition in researching language motivation, autonomy and sense of self and selected a triangulation convergence mixed methods design appropriate to generating the types of data required to respond to the research questions.

The next part of this chapter centres on a description of the background and context of this research. This part includes the recruitment and selection process, the issues around research ethics understood to be relevant to my research and the backgrounds of participants. A detailed explication of the English SL course which provided the context is also presented in this part.

In Section 4.4, I provide a detailed overview of the four main research methods, or tools I used before, during and after the English SL course to generate responses to my research questions: survey questionnaires, written narratives of English language learning histories (ELLH), semi-structured interviews, and individual learning diaries. This fourth section also addresses data collection processes and data analysis strategies.
As the students participated in my research were also my students in the English SL course, the terms students, participating students and participants are used interchangeably to indicate English language learners (ELLs) who participated in my research throughout this study.

4.2. Methodological framework
This section starts with a reiteration of the research questions that guide my research methodology before discussing the mixed methods approach used with the triangulation convergence mix method design.

4.2.1 An overview of the research questions
With a focus on the inter-relationships between the three main factors affecting learners in learning English as a second language, that is, learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self, this study has at its centre the following main research question and five sub-questions:

_How does autonomy in the language learning experience in a Vietnamese tertiary context influence the learners’ motivation and sense of self as future English learners/users?_

Sub question 1: How do English language learners (ELLs) perceive their autonomy in English learning?

Sub question 2: How do ELLs perceive their sense of self as English language users/learners?

Sub question 3: How do ELLs engage and invest in English learning and English use?

Sub question 4: How and in what way does autonomy help initiate and sustain ELLs’ sense of self as English language learners/users?

Sub question 5: How is the relationship between learners’ autonomy and their sense of ELL selves related to their investment and engagement in learning English?

The overriding aim of my research was to investigate the impacts of classroom autonomy on ELLs’ motivation and sense of self, and the relationships between the three factors. The intention of Sub-questions One, Two and Three was to tease out ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, their investment and engagement in the English subject and their sense of
self as English learners and users. Sub-questions Four and Five seek possible relationships between the three factors once ELLs’ classroom autonomy was enhanced. Following Holec’s theory (1979) with regard to language learners’ autonomy, I came to the understanding that the notion of autonomy can be learnt and observed in ELLs’ decisions and actions. As a result, the intriguing question of whether it was possible to apply such notions of developing learner autonomy in an EFL context of Vietnam occurred to me. I then made the decision of conducting my own English SL course as an integral part of this study. Further discussions related to the English SL course are presented later in the chapter.

I selected a mixed methods approach to generate data that would contribute to answers to my research questions. I implemented both quantitative and qualitative approaches in an integrated way in the processes of data collection and data analysis of my study. The selected quantitative methods included one pre-course survey and one post course survey. The qualitative methods comprised an English language learning history elicited prior to the course, three interviews each conducted before, during and after the course, and learning diaries composed by ELLs during the course. A detailed explication of the data collection methods is present in Section 4.4. The following outlines the primary reasons for my mixed methods decision.

4.2.2 A mixed methods approach: the rationale
Mixed methods research approaches involve the collection, analysis and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in one study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2008). The rationale for a mixed methods approach in my study stems from my own researcher worldview, my research problems and questions, the complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative approaches and from a review of the research methodologies in the fields of LL autonomy, motivation and self.

The first and perhaps foremost reason for employing the mixed methods approach within this research project is aligned with my own researcher standpoint, which rests on a set of value assumptions that affect my methodological preferences and affect social inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my understanding, there is an important connection between researchers’ worldviews, their research questions and the research methods they employ (Hesse-Biber, 2010). On the one hand, I am convinced by the impressive contributions of statistics used in quantitative methods to social research because the generalizations these analytical methods
permit provide an overall picture of the studied population. On the other hand, by nature I am drawn to complexity, variation and multifaceted social matters, a view of which cannot be captured fully with only correlation and/or statistical techniques. I am intrinsically interested in individuals as true “meaning makers” in their own contexts (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 63).

As such, this study draws on a combination of two research paradigms or worldviews: Post-positivism and Constructivism, each underpinned by contrasting assumptions about the nature of knowledge construction. The former is often associated with quantitative approaches, and the latter with qualitative approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Researchers following quantitative approaches believe that scientific knowledge can be gained with scientific methods and large-scale sampling. They emphasize examinations into the relationships among variables, which are believed to reveal answers to social queries (Curtis & Drennan, 2013). In contrast with the quantitative approach, qualitative research seeks responses to social queries by collecting descriptive data from small-scale sampling (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). With particular methodological persuasions, particular methods acting as the tools in hands of researchers can be utilized to generate responses to research questions. While quantitative research data may possibly be generalized to larger populations, qualitative methods generate data of a different type through extensive interactions between researchers and participants, data that is unique to each participant’s experiential lifeworld (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Hence, once viewed as “complementary rather than rival camps”, the strengths of one method offset the limitations of the other (Jick, 2008, p. 107).

Secondly, my research intentions call for both quantitative and qualitative approaches as “one type of evidence may not tell the complete story” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 33). My research intention to develop an overview of learners’ perceptions of autonomy, the amount of time and effort they spend on their English language subject and how they perceive themselves as English learners and users calls for survey questionnaire data. However, the research intention to also tease out possible relationships between learners’ autonomy, sense of selves and motivation – particularly since these may change – is more appropriately addressed through participants’ English language learning histories, diaries and semi-structured interview responses. As such, the complementarity between the quantitative and qualitative allows me to gain a fuller and more robust understanding of the research problem.
as well as to understand “the social story in its entirety” (Hesse-Biber, 2010: p. 4). A combination of methods provides rich data which are both numerical and discursive through “words, pictures and narrative” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, in Hesse-Biber, 2010). Each participant’s unique contribution to my research, therefore, offers a distinctive patch to my colourful research “quilt”.

Specifically, through the use of mixed methods my study was designed to be able to generate more comprehensive responses to my research questions along multiple meaning dimensions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The Sub-questions One, Two and Three, which were intended to investigate how autonomous learners perceive themselves to be and how much time and effort they spent on learning English, required quantitative methods. Meanwhile, the main “how” research question and its Sub-questions Four and Five required qualitative methods. The fourth and fifth sub-questions were intended to illuminate the effects of learning autonomy on learners’ sense of self. These sub-questions had the intention to explore specific dynamic processes in everyday practices in learners’ autonomy and sense of self, both in the classroom and within learners’ social settings. Consequently, face-to-face interviews, written English language histories and learning diaries were expected to provide further opportunities for the participants to expand on their survey question responses. Taken together, my selection of mixed methods was intended to generate a more substantial evidential base for both the study’s conclusions and recommendations for further research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Thirdly, working with both quantitative and qualitative methods has allowed me to cross-check my research results through triangulation and complementary processes (Jick, 2008). Triangulation is defined as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Denzin, 1978, p. 291). Integrating two or more methods to examine how autonomy influences language learner motivation and sense of self in my study would lead to more valid results. Further, a variety of data and methods are complementary to each other. Within the qualitative methods, interviews elaborated the English language learning history and the learning diary data helped me develop more confidence in my analysis as I cross checked for internal consistency. In brief, by linking the qualitative data with the quantitative, I judged I would be able to make a robust attempt to assess the validity and reliability of the findings (Jick, 2008).
Fourthly, a review of the qualitative and quantitative research methods employed in the fields of language learners’ motivation, selves and autonomy gave me confidence in conducting a mixed methods study. The review shows a dominance of quantitative methods in the fields of language learner motivation, self and autonomy, while qualitative approaches seem to be prevalent in studies employing complexity theory. (See Chapters Two & Three)

A long history of inquiry into the concepts of motivation, autonomy and self in an L2 educational context has witnessed an abundant quantitative research literature located within the scientific research paradigm (Murray, 2011b). From my literature review, the notion of using survey questionnaires was understood to be appropriate for gathering data on language learner motivation. For example, Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) use of surveys in their diverse studies along with many other researchers in the 1980s, focused on possible links between learners’ motivation and learning activity outcomes. Questionnaires were also used in Dörnyei’s and others’ research in the early 2000s to investigate learners’ motivation and sense of self. It is noteworthy that questionnaires remain one of the most popular data collection instruments among motivation researchers in educational research contexts, even when the theory of motivation has been broadened to address the learner’s understanding of self (Murray, 2011b). For instance, Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) used three versions of a questionnaire with nearly 5000 participants (1586 in Japan, 1328 in China, 2029 in Iran) to conduct a comparative motivational study of learners of English framed by Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System.

On the other hand, a number of researchers interested in learner motivation, selves and autonomy through the lens of the chaos and complexity theory, are likely to employ qualitative tools in their research design. In her (2011) research, for example, Sade analyzed autobiographical narratives written by Brazilian, Japanese and Finnish university students to examine their motivation in relation to processes of identity emergence. Likewise, Chik and Breidbach (2011) obtained the data from written narratives of Hong Kong and German learners. Moreover, other studies in the fields have so far utilized various combinations of qualitative methods. In a case study of two Korean students’ ESL motivation, Kim (2009) investigated the socio-cultural interface between ideal self and ought self by using interviews, ESL classroom observations, picture-cues recall tasks, and language learning autobiographies.
Similarly, Gao and Zhang (2011) utilized interviews, regular conversations, checklists, observation, field notes and email correspondence for their study on learners’ autonomous learning and their learning efforts among 22 mainland Chinese students in a three-stage study of 20 months.

In combining the two approaches, a mixed methods approach allowed me to more fully explore the landscape of my English language learners’ inquiry and to possibly grasp a deeper understanding of relationships between learners’ motivation, selves and autonomy through the lens of complexity theory within a Vietnamese EFL context. While the quantitative methods contributed to the generalizability of results, the qualitative methods helped enrich my understanding by illuminating elements of the contexts and “allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge” (Jick, 2008, p. 109). Grounded with my research assumptions and questions, my research employed a mixed methods approach with a triangulation convergence design. The following section explains the study design.

4.2.3 The triangulation convergence mixed methods design
The triangulation convergence mixed methods design was selected as I wished to obtain different but complementary data in order to best understand my research problems in ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self. Following is the Triangulation convergence design discussed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative data collection</th>
<th>→ Quantitative data analysis</th>
<th>→ Quantitative results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Compare and contrast</td>
<td>→ Interpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative data collection</th>
<th>→ Qualitative data analysis</th>
<th>→ Qualitative results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Triangulation design: Convergence Model. (Source: Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.63)
Both the quantitative and qualitative methods were considered equally important with equal weight in this study design. Therefore, I implemented both the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe. Before the English SL course, I collected data from surveys, interviews and ELL’s learning history. During and after the course, data were collected from surveys, learning diaries and interviews. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected separately, both prior to and after the course. Quantitative data were then analysed separately from the qualitative data. The results of the data sets of the two methods were directly compared and contrasted and converged in the interpretation step. Merging data sets from both quantitative and qualitative methods into one overall interpretation helped me develop confidence in the validity and reliability of my data-based responses to my research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

In the data collection process, I was aware of the potential issues that might arise in using concurrent data collections and I implemented solutions to these potential risks. One of these issues was the concern that different groups of participants for quantitative and qualitative methods might cause difficulties in converging the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In selecting participants, I thus tried to recruit the same participants for both quantitative and qualitative data collections. Participants for qualitative data collection methods were recruited directly from the survey respondents. Also, discrepancies in sample sizes for quantitative and qualitative methods might limit the comparability of the results. One of the solutions to this matter is to increase the number of participants from whom data were collected using qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007); hence, I chose the group with the largest number of volunteer participants to conduct the English SL course. Participant selection and recruitment processes are outlined in detail in the next section. Another problem was the possibility of bias when I conducted the English SL course and the second interview rounds during the course. In order to minimize this potential bias, I asked the participants to keep their learning diaries during the course. This kind of “unobtrusive qualitative data” might reduce the risk of bias introduced by interview data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 120).

**4.2.4 A summary of the mixed methods approach and design**

In summary, I selected mixed methods research with a triangulation convergence design to best find the answers to my research questions. I was convinced by the complementary natures of the post-positivist and constructivist paradigms, and believed that a combination of different
research methods would generate vivid, whole pictures of my ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self. Further, an implementation of surveys, ELLHs, interviews and learning diaries is thought to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings and conclusions. The next section provides an account of the context in which this particular research interest played out in practice through my descriptions of some of the main features of the university where the research was carried out.

4.3 The study site and participants

4.3.1 Introduction into the research site and participants
This section sets the scene for my research with a description of the study site in a tertiary context in Hanoi, Vietnam. Following is an explication of the research participants related to the recruitment and selection process, the ethical considerations and the study participants. I then proceed to a presentation of the English SL course through which I sought to enhance the participating ELLs’ classroom autonomy and the links between the ELLs’ autonomy and their perceptions of self and levels of motivation in learning English.

4.3.2 The study site: a tertiary education context
Business University, Hanoi (pseudonym for the university research site), where I have been working as an English teacher for nearly thirteen years, was founded in 1960 and has become one of the most prestigious universities in Vietnam. The university provides courses in economics, business administration, international trade, finances and banking, foreign languages and technologies. Along with the major courses provided, the university is keen to boost international cooperation with foreign universities and international organizations in order to set up a large number of joint training programs and transfer programs.

Among these programs is an advanced joint training course in economics between the Business University and a university in the USA. Prerequisites for this joint training program are successful completion of a university entrance examination and the achievement of an English language competency level of above 500 points in the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) (FTU, 2014). Based on these prerequisites, an average number of 90 students are recruited annually, and divided at random by the Business and Economics Faculty into two
groups, Group One and Group Two, in the first semester. Students remain in the same group for the four-year training program.

The language of instruction is English, thus learners are required to participate in English language courses in the first two foundational years. Students who achieve good results in their first two years of study are selected to participate in an exchange program at the university in the USA during the students’ third and fourth years of study. The participants for my study were selected from this exchange program. The following section presents the procedures of selecting and recruiting participants from this study site for the research.

4.3.3 Research participants
Discussions in this section focus on the selection and recruitment process of research participants, ethical considerations and backgrounds of participants. Details of the English SL course are also highlighted in the final part of the section.

4.3.3.1 Selection and recruitment
The target population of this study is first-year university students who have completed their first semester of study. Having recently completed their university entrance exam, these students are likely to have fresh reflections on their secondary school English language learning experiences.

With the target population of study in mind, in December 2012, I contacted the Business University in Vietnam and the Faculty of Business English Language and requested permission to conduct a teaching course for the purposes of enhancing learner autonomy for my research. The Faculty agreed to my teaching a speaking and listening course with one of the two first-year student groups in their advanced joint training course in economics. This was decided based on the timetable of subjects that were taught in that school year 2012 – 2013, which was fixed by the university. Ninety students in the program had been divided at random into two groups (45 students in each) by the Faculty: Group One and Group Two.

In March 2013, I approached the target participant groups following an introduction from their previous English teachers. I explained the purpose of my research and the intention of conducting an English SL course, and invited students to participate in the course. It was made clear to all the students that the course was designed to meet the examination requirements and
to cover the required textbook contents alongside a variety of classroom activities. A written invitation to the English SL course was distributed to 90 students in their classrooms. Following the invitation to the English SL course, the first questionnaires were distributed to those 90 students. I explained that the survey included an invitation to participate in the next stage of the project; namely the keeping of a learning diary, the construction of ELLHs and participating in semi-structured interviews.

I selected Group One to conduct my English SL course because all students in that group (45/45) agreed to participate in my English SL course while that number for Group Two was 42/45. Further, the selection was made based on the higher return rate of survey responses and the higher number of volunteer students from Group One to participate in the follow-up research activities: 39 survey responses and 15 volunteer students in comparison with 38, and 11 respectively from Group Two. In total, I was able to collect 77 survey responses, 45 students for the English SL course and 15 participants for the ELLHs, interview rounds and diary entry data collection.

The 15 students in Group One who took up the invitation to participate in later phases of the research were invited to a meeting. The meeting with the 15 participants was organized by the Faculty of Business English and me in order to provide information about and to explain the purpose of the project. The participants’ teacher and I provided a detailed description of what participation would mean in terms of each of the research methods, the time frame and the hoped-for benefits for participants. The information session included an opportunity for the 15 participants to ask questions.

4.3.3.2 Ethical considerations
The study involved university students in sharing their personal learning histories, and participating in classroom English learning; it might therefore create potential risks to participants’ physical and psychological safety and their privacy. In order to ensure the participants’ safety, identities and confidentiality, I first obtained a research ethics proposal from Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University and an organisational consent approval from Business University, Hanoi with a permission to conduct a teaching course at the university. (See Appendix 1: Ethics approval and organizational consent)
In approaching the 90 students for an invitation to the English SL course following an introduction from their previous English teachers, I explained clearly the aim and the intention of the English SL course before written invitations with the explanatory statement and the consent form were distributed to the students. I further made it clear to all the students that I would be teaching the course in accordance with the university curriculum, and that the assessment and evaluation would be done by teachers of the Faculty, and hence the participation in the study was in no way linked with the examinations and student’s final results in the English SL course. I also emphasized that deciding not to participate would not affect students’ relationship with me or with the Business University or with Deakin University. By returning the invitation without providing any personal information, students agreed to participate in the English SL course on a voluntary basis. (See Appendix 2: Written invitation to the English course)

I then distributed the first surveys to the 90 students. I informed the students that their identities and personal details would not be revealed, including where information about this study was published, or presented in any public form. I explained clearly the study purpose, and the aim of the surveys. Before starting the first surveys, participants were asked to code their surveys by writing three initial letters of their mother’s name on the questionnaire. This coding strategy not only provided anonymity to each survey participant but also enabled me to compare the results of the pre-course surveys with those of post-course during the data analysis process. I also explained to the participants that by returning the questionnaires they showed their consent in sharing their information in the research. The participants were likely to feel comfortable with the surveys because this method had traditionally been applied in research at the university for a long time. Moreover, it was hoped that the questionnaires would be able to generate rich experientially-grounded responses and build up willingness, as well as confidence, in the students to participate in the follow-up study activities. (See Appendix 3: Plain languages and Consent form- Survey respondents)

Another invitation to the survey respondents to participate in the next stage of the research study, namely by producing their written ELLHs, participating in three interviews and keeping learning diaries during the English SL course was delivered to 90 students. In accepting the invitation, the respondents were asked to provide their contact details (i.e., name, email address
and telephone number) on a tear-off slip of the survey, which could be separated from the participants’ responses in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants’ survey responses. (See Appendix 4: Invitation to the interviews, ELLHs and learning diaries)

In the first meeting with me, the 15 students who volunteered to share their ELLH, participate in interviews and write learning diaries were given the Plain Language Statement and the consent form. The statement and the consent form outlined clearly the purpose of the study, the rights of participants, the tasks involved as well as potential risks and procedures to minimise the risks. The participants were informed that the information they provided would be treated confidentially and anonymously with pseudonyms being used, and that they preserved the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. Participants who chose to be interviewed in a pair or a group were asked to give prior verbal consent to share their personal information with each other before they formed their own pairs or groups. I also noted that the language used (Vietnamese or English) in the narratives, diaries and interviews was to be chosen by the participants. (See Appendix 5: Plain Language Statement and Consent Form-Interview participants)

I was also aware of the importance of building trust and establishing rapport among my student participants. As such, before each interview, confidentiality and anonymity of the collected information was reassured. In the relationship between me and the participants, I always tried to create mutual respect by listening attentively to their experiences as well as their concerns and “recognising them as active partners” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010, in Doody & Noonan, 2013, p.31) in the interviews. Further, I was aware of my position when “wearing two hats”: one as the researcher, one as the English teacher. Mutual respect and equality were established with all students in my English SL course when equal opportunities of participating in class activities and the decision making process were maintained and when I made it clear to the students that I was not involved in the assessment tasks. The following presents a description of participants’ backgrounds.

4.3.3.3 Background of the participants
Demographic information collected through the first surveys to two groups of students included gender, hometown, overseas travelling experiences including their use of English as a means of communication when travelling, and details of their formal English learning.
Seventy seven students aged 19 – 20 of the 90 in two groups within the faculty responded to the first surveys. Coming from different parts of Vietnam, these 77 participants had passed the university entrance examination to enter courses with majors in English or/and mathematics.

From Table 8, it can be seen that although there were almost equal numbers in each group, female participants outnumbered male participants within each group and within the overall group: there were more than twice as many females as males. This gender profile may reflect the sex mix in the enrolments in the course in which the participants are enrolled.

Table 8
Distribution of Sexes in the Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genders/ Group No</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group One</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Two</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the participants’ hometowns (see Table 9), slightly more participants (43 in total) originated from the following cities: Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh. The remaining 32 participants originated from the Northern parts of Vietnam like Thai Nguyen, Thai Binh, Nam Dinh, and Phu Tho. In Group One, there were 23 from Hanoi and other cities and 14 from the provinces.
Table 9

Participants’ Hometowns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>No available data</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 10 indicates that in relation to overseas travel experiences, 42 participants (19 from Group One and 23 from Group Two) reported having had overseas travel experience. Thirty three participants (14 in Group One and 19 in Group Two) used English to communicate while overseas.

Table 10

Experience in Overseas Travel Using English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of participants with experience in overseas travel</th>
<th>Number of participants with experience in using English while travelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group One</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Two</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Total participants N=77)
The duration of their tourist travels varied from one day to one month. Destinations included English-speaking countries such as the United States of America (five participants), England (two participants), and Australia (one respondent). Other destinations included Malaysia, Japan, China, Indonesia, Korea, and Russia. One had studied in Singapore for two years and another studied in Japan for one year.

Most of the participants commenced formal English learning at their primary school when this subject was first introduced into the curriculum. On average, participants spent five years learning English in primary school (aged 6–11), four years in secondary school (aged 11–15), three years in high school (aged 15–18), and half of one year (one semester) at the university where English was a compulsory subject.

Fifteen students (three males and 12 females) were recruited from Group One to participate in the writing of ELLHs and learning diaries, and in the semi-structured interviews that followed on from the first surveys. Of the 15 participants, two males and five females were from Vietnam’s Northern provinces. English, in addition to French and Russian, was reported by the 15 participants as a compulsory subject in primary schools nationwide. In this study, 14 participants from both cities and provinces commenced their English language group at Grade Two or Three when seven or eight years of age. Only one boy started in a French language group in Grade One, as the French government subsidised the teaching of French language in his primary school. However, this boy changed to English as a major later in Grade Eight when French language subsidies ceased.

In summary, there were more female than male participants. Many came from big cities or from Vietnam’s Northern provinces. More than half had experiences in overseas travel, and used English while travelling. The majority of the participants came with a formal English learning background beginning in primary schools and continuing through to university level. The possible influences of the demographic features described in this section on learners’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self are discussed in the reporting of results in Chapters Five and Eight.
4.3.4 The English language speaking-listening (SL) course

As discussed, I came to the understanding that the notion of autonomy can be taught and also demonstrated in ELLs’ decisions and actions. Moreover, intrigued by the observations of elective corner activities (ECAs) at my children’s schools in Australia, where I work as a parent-helper, I considered the possibility of conducting a teaching course back in my home country Vietnam, motivated by my strong research interest in ways ELLs could become more autonomous.

My observations of Australian education settings prompted me to reflect on the nature of the teaching methods and their possible relationship to the development of learner autonomy. From my Australian experiences as both a parent helper in my children’s schools and for the past three years as a lecturer at Deakin university, I was struck by my observation that the teaching practices appear to enhance learners’ independence by providing them with varied choices. One of the teaching methods I understood to have the potential to develop autonomous learning was the classroom’s diverse ECAs. In every lesson that I observed the corner activities varied from reading, role-play, cooking, games, computing, and learning. The key intention of my English SL course was to empower learners through a number of elective activities, including ECAs in which learners had an opportunity to make choices in their learning contents, methods and assessment.

The teaching sequence of my English SL course was designed around Nunan’s (1997) model for the implementation of autonomous learning strategies, and the four key phases in the development of learner autonomy by Reinders (2010) (See Chapter Two). In addition, the design of the activities was based on specific learning strategies (Oxford, 1990, in Benson, 2001) such as cognitive, meta-cognitive and social affective and on “A possible plan for a teaching period” developed by Dam (2003). The aims of the English SL course were, firstly, to ensure that the learning content in the textbook was covered and that students would be well-prepared for the end-of-term test, and secondly, to assist students to become more active and responsible for their own learning with practices and feedback generated through the students’ interactions with other classmates during the activities and from the teacher. The English SL course was conducted over April and July of the academic year 2012 – 2013. (See Appendix 6: English SL course design and the course textbooks)
Within this frame, the first two lessons focused on the aims of the course and setting goals. I acted as facilitator and negotiator with the students to provide them with an overall view of the course and to assist them in setting their own goals in learning the English language. The following lessons centred on learning strategies, self and peer-assessment and the elective activities that were hoped to enhance learner responsibility and autonomy in their learning process. In practice, the first half of every lesson was devoted to covering the content in the textbook and elective activities related to final tests. Students had opportunities to work in groups of 5 – 6 to prepare a group meeting for the final oral test. Options for the presentation topics were in the textbook and they were encouraged to write up their own scripts. They were also encouraged to work in pairs or groups in the listening time to check each other’s work and share their listening techniques. Class debates were organized for students to discuss their chosen topics. Besides this, two voluntary students acted as the monitors in each class, who would organize all the group activities with the teacher’s support, to check their classmates’ homework and to manage the elective activities in each lesson. The following table displays varied elective activities used in the course to enhance ELL autonomy.
Table 11

*Elective Activities in the English SL Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Activities used inside classroom</th>
<th>Outside classroom activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group-work (students formed groups of 4-5 to play roles in preparation for the oral test)</td>
<td>Class library (2 students in charge of collecting old books from classmates and organized class library)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pair-work (students were encouraged to choose different partners to speak with in each lesson)</td>
<td>Buddy program (each student chose one partner to practise English outside class time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Class debates (discussion topics were selected by students, 2 – 3 students chose one topic and debated their arguments before the class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monitor of the week (2 volunteer students acted as monitors in each lesson who coordinated with teacher in organizing class activities)</td>
<td>Elective homework tasks (See Appendix 7: Homework task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ECAs (2 students organized one ECA)</td>
<td>Extra-class activities (2 volunteer students organized extra-class activities, creating opportunities for classmates to use English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sharing time (after ECAs, students reflected on what they had learnt and found interesting in the lesson and in their daily life that they wanted to share with their classmates)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other half of each class was spent on ECAs that were designed and conducted by the students. The corner activities were organized with varied topics including ‘My ideal persons’, ‘My vocabulary’, ‘My fluency’, ‘My favourite items’, ‘News’, and ‘Topics of the day’. These
five broad topics were selected by the students at the beginning of the course. Students were encouraged to choose the topics that they wanted to talk about, the time, the content, delivery form and partner to be the hosts for their topics. One topic had two hosts and there were often five topics in one lesson. Students who were not the hosts were free to join any activities that they liked in the lesson. The ECAs often took place for from 30 to 45 minutes. A five-minute session of sharing time was held after ECAs. During this time, students had a chance to reflect on what they learnt in the lesson from other classmates and to share their own experiences in learning English outside the group time. (See Appendix 8: Sample English SL slides)

In my teaching practices in the English SL course, an ECA was one of several elective activities that the students could choose to participate in on a voluntary basis. The idea of ECA implementation was based on my observations, my teaching experiences and my understanding of complexity theory. In the traditional language teaching and learning environment in Vietnam, the role of the classroom setting seems to be ignored; that is, both teachers and students consider the classroom a static element which does not impact significantly on the teaching and learning process. However, in light of complexity theory, like the teacher and students, the physical classroom setting is considered as an open dynamic system which may impact and be impacted on by the teacher and students. Approaching the classroom from the perspective of complexity theory, providing ECAs is one of many ways to bring life to the physical classroom environment. Students were free to choose where, when and with whom to organize their own learning activities. The classroom organization was, therefore, different in different lessons. (See Appendix 9: Corner activity examples from the students)

4.3.5 Summary of the study context
In summary, my study was conducted in a tertiary context of Vietnam with participants recruited from the first-year student population in an advanced joint program of the Business University. As a result of the selection and recruitment, I received 77 survey responses, selected Group One for my English SL course, from which 15 volunteered to participate in the rounds of ELLHs, interviews and learning diary entries. The English SL course was conducted with a variety of elective activities including ECAs. The following presents in detail the selected data collection methods, the data collection procedures and data analysis strategies.
4.4 Data collection methods, procedures and analysis strategies

4.4.1 Section introduction
An overall outline of the research methods, the aims of each method, participants, and how each method was conducted prior to, during and after the English SL course is shown below in Table 12.

Table 12

An Overview of Data Collection Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Method of conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st survey questionnaire</td>
<td>To find out ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy and sense of selves, and their engagement in learning English before they join in the course</td>
<td>77 students - 45 students in each of two groups within the faculty</td>
<td>Classroom distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before English SL course</td>
<td>ELLH</td>
<td>To gain in-depth information from the students’ ELLH</td>
<td>15 First-year students recruited from one group</td>
<td>Invitations to students to submit ELLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st interview</td>
<td>To gain in-depth information from the students’ ELLH</td>
<td>15 students</td>
<td>Conducted in pairs / groups or individually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Data collection methods

In this mixed method design, four main research instruments were selected to access participants’ opinions and situated meanings and as such, generate responses to the research question: survey questionnaires; English language learning history (ELLH); semi-structured interviews; and learning diaries. These instruments were used sequentially in this study. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Phase</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning diaries</td>
<td>To find out the influence of autonomy on sense of selves among ELLs</td>
<td>15 students</td>
<td>Invitations to students to share diary entries with me over 7 consecutive weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd Interviews</td>
<td>To find out the link between autonomy, motivation and sense of selves among ELLs</td>
<td>15 students</td>
<td>Conducted in pairs/ groups or individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2nd Questionnaires</td>
<td>To find out any changes in students’ perception of autonomy and sense of selves, and the link between them</td>
<td>77 students</td>
<td>Classroom distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3rd interviews</td>
<td>To find out the influence of autonomy on sense of selves among ELLs</td>
<td>15 students</td>
<td>Conducted in pairs/ groups or individually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
coded survey questionnaires completed by the ELL participants were designed to capture an overall picture of their perceptions of control over the language learning process, their motivation and their future sense of selves as English language learners and users prior to and after the English SL course. In particular, the three qualitative tools were used to generate a deeper and richer understanding of the interwoven relationships between learners’ autonomy, motivation and sense of selves in light of complexity theory. The research participants’ written ELLHs were intended to provide descriptive data reflective of the participants’ English language learning histories, and to identify the influence of significant others such as family, friends and society. The face-to-face interviews provided an opportunity for the participants and me as a researcher to further elaborate information derived from the ELLHs. As the third research tool, the participants’ learning diaries were intended to record learners’ opinions about the class activities that were conducted during the English SL course. The four main data collection instruments used during each of the three phases of the research are further explicated in the following sections.

4.4.2.1 The surveys
The survey content was informed by the work of Sheerin (1997), Ruan’s (2007) and Murase (2009) research focused on learners’ autonomy, and by Dörnyei (2009) and Huang’s (2009) studies on motivation and future selves. The survey items were adapted from previously well-tested surveys in a variety of contexts including EFL contexts of Asian countries like Japan, China, Indonesia, Korea and Taiwan. (See Appendix 10: The survey).

The survey consisted of three main parts with 63 Likert questions and five open-ended questions. Part One focused on students’ motivation in learning English, including their reasons for learning English and their sense of selves as English learners. This part contains 23 Likert-scale statements with a four-point scale from “Not at all like me” to “Very much like me”. The second part targets learners’ engagement in learning activities and the time and effort the students invested in their English language learning within and outside the classroom. For this part, 13 “How often” questions are asked with four scale measures from “Rarely” to “Every day”. The third part of the survey explored ELLs’ perceptions of their own autonomy in the learning process. Each of the first nine statements offers two options, (a) and (b), for the students to show their opinion on the roles of teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of the English language. Students were asked to circle their answer in one of the six boxes to
show their preference of (a) or (b) in each statement. Eighteen “Agree” or “Disagree” statements about students’ perceptions of learning autonomy were added. Following were five open-ended questions about the learners’ sense of being English learners, their class learning experience and future selves as future English learners or users.

The survey was written in English as the participating students were studying English language as their major, and all students had passed English language tests at intermediate level. The first survey concluded with an invitation to the survey respondents to participate in the next stage of the research study. In order to do so, the participants were asked to provide their contact details (i.e., name, email address and telephone number) on a tear-off slip. The content of the second survey was similar to that of the first, with the exception that in the second survey, the demographic information and the invitation to join the study were omitted. The main purpose of the second questionnaire was to investigate any possible changes in the participating learners’ level of motivation, exercise of autonomy and sense of selves after opportunities for the learners to learn more autonomously were introduced.

4.4.2.2 The written English language learning histories (ELLHs)

Many models of ELL motivation including Gardner’s (2001) and Dörnyei’s (2005) model have indicated a role for learning histories in ELL motivation. Limited work, however, has applied the ELLH as a research method. I selected ELLH as one of the qualitative data collection methods for my research because a written ELLH in the form of a narrative with some guidelines had the advantage of giving students more freedom and time to organize their ideas and to tell their learning stories.

Further, the ELLH is considered to be particularly significant to the study of learner motivation in the theory of complexity (Chik & Breidbach, 2011). In these respects, even though the study focused on aspects of learners’ autonomy and their future selves, it was necessary to take into account the historical factors relevant to the participating students’ learning processes, such as when they first began to learn English, family backgrounds, and past experiences in formal and informal English language learning. Therefore, the wealth of information that could potentially be generated from learners’ written ELLHs in this study might provide insights into the trajectories of learners’ language learning histories in terms of the participants’ motivation, autonomy and sense of self before they commenced the English SL course.
The written ELLH is one kind of autobiographical narrative in which early memories, particularly early childhood memories, act as the key to a person’s life story representation (Lieblich et al., 1998). As such, the written ELLH in this study invited students to share their English learning history by framing this around four main chronological milestones. The first milestone represented their English language learning starting point in relation to whether they had started learning the English language before or after English was first encountered as a school subject. An ELLH related to this particular milestone may also reveal further information about the “how”, “with who” and possible reasons “why” learners commenced their English language learning at that particular time. The following milestones represented learning experiences during the primary or/and secondary school years, high school (the period just prior to commencing university studies), then during the first semester at university. These learning milestones represented different study periods when many students face significant changes in their everyday life experiences of their formal and informal learning environments. The participants’ ELLHs were also intended to reveal learners’ English learning experiences outside the classroom and their perceptions of their own selves before they participated in the English SL course. (See Appendix 11: ELLH instructions)

4.4.2.3 The semi-structured interviews
I chose the semi-structured interview form for three rounds of interviews because the flexibility of a semi-structured interview allowed me to collect rich data for my research analysis (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The semi-structured interviews were scheduled in advance with predetermined open-ended questions, allowing new questions to emerge during the conversations between me and interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Hence, I was free to seek clarification and ask additional questions, which created “the chance to explore issues that arise spontaneously” (Ryan et al. 2009, in Doody & Noonan, 2013, p. 30).

An additional advantage was that semi-structured interviews could be conducted with either individual or group participants from 30 minutes to several hours (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Participants in my study were able to choose whether they wanted to be interviewed individually, in pairs, or in a group setting in all three rounds of interviews. These options took into account students’ preferences for privacy and the extent to which students felt comfortable to have an individual face-to-face interview when being asked to talk about their own learning histories. Other participants might prefer sharing their experience in a more social context with
other students. Further, pair/group interviews may help reduce fear of being interviewed individually and encourage greater sharing of contributions among the students (Whiting, 2008).

Each round of interviews was conducted with a particular set of aims. The first semi-structured interview in this study intended to elicit more information from the participating learners and to provide them with an opportunity to elaborate on their ELLHs. Each interview took approximately 50 – 60 minutes. The aim of the second round of interviews was to uncover any possible changes in goal setting and learning plans among ELLs. These second round interviews took approximately 30 – 40 minutes. The third round interviews were targeted at any changes in students’ perception of autonomy and sense of selves, and the link between the three factors. Each interview took approximately 40 to 50 minutes.

As “prompts can be used to encourage elaboration or explanation” (Doody & Noonan, 2013, p. 30), the stimulated recall method was used in the three rounds of interviews. This method involves the use of prompts in the form of written texts, and/or drawings that may have been included in their written narratives and question responses from any previous ELLHs the interview participants may have completed (Moss & Goldstein, 1979). In my first round of interviews, prompts used to support participants’ interview conversations related to their own ELLHs. The focus of the first round interview was on participants’ perceptions of their own learning autonomy in terms of who made decisions about their English learning (i.e., the learning materials, subject content, processes, assessment and testing, and their personal learning strategies). Further, the interviews also focused on ELLs’ level of motivation to learn English (i.e., the amount of time spent on the subject, learning efforts, and on their sense of self as confident or otherwise, and encouragement or not from family members or significant others). Any photos and/or drawings included in the participants’ ELLH narratives would be selected on the basis that they spoke to their learning autonomy and motivation-related themes. Prompts for the second and third round interviews were extracted from the power-point slides presented in the English SL lessons. (See Appendix 12: Interview protocols).

4.4.2.4 The ELLs’ learning diaries
As discussed in section 4.2, a learning diary was selected as one of the qualitative research methods in my study for its unobtrusiveness: that is, participants were free to write about their
opinions and comments on the learning process (Barkhnizen, Benson & Chik, 2014); and for its support in generating information related to dynamic changes in ELLs’ sense of self and autonomy. The aim of the participants’ learning diaries was to gather data related to any changes in the students’ perceptions of their sense of selves and their engagement and investment in learning English when they were provided with opportunities to learn more autonomously. The same 15 participants who participated in interview rounds and in writing ELLHs were invited to write about their opinions of their English group and their level of participation in class activities.

I selected a free writing technique proposed by Stevens and Cooper (2009) to guide my participants in their learning diary writing. “The only rule in freewriting is that the pen hits the page, produces words [without feedback], and does not come up for a set period” (Elbow, 1973, in Stevens & Cooper, 2009, p. 77). In other words, in a free writing process, “the flow mimics the thought process” (Isaacs & Brodine, 1994, p. 28). As such, my student participants were encouraged to keep writing without worrying about grammar rules, punctuation rules or sentence rules, either when they used the Vietnamese or English language as the main focus of the diary, so that “fresh, original ideas” could come up (Stevens & Cooper, 2009, p. 80).

The diary entries shared with me by the students allowed them to write freely about whatever happened in their daily lives (Sá, 2002). Also, students were encouraged to write about activities that they engaged within the classroom ECAs, about their experiences when they participated as the host or as a guest in the group ECAs. The students were then encouraged to keep their diary entries on a weekly basis over seven consecutive weeks and to return their diary entries to me at the end of the English SL course. (See Appendix 13: Learning diary instructions)

4.4.3 Data collection procedures
The data collection was conducted from March to July 2013. The procedures occurred in three main phases: pre-English SL course; during the course; and post course.
Table 13

Data Collection Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Data collection tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-English SL course</td>
<td>1st set of questionnaires to 90 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 participants’ ELLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st round of interviews with 15 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>During English SL course</td>
<td>15 participants’ learning diaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd round of interviews with 15 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post English SL course</td>
<td>2nd set of questionnaires to 90 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd round of interviews with 15 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to the English SL course, the first set of surveys were completed by 77 students collectively in the classrooms. Forty five students volunteered to participate in the English SL course, among whom 15 were recruited to join follow-up research activities. During this first phase, these 15 participants constructed ELLH and took part in the first round interviews.

Upon the completion of the first surveys, 15 participants were invited to a meeting with me where I explained the purpose of my research and of the English SL course and sought their consent. I also prepared the participants for the writing of their ELLHs. It was made clear that an ELLH was a kind of telling of their stories in learning the English language before they commenced their university study. Participants were advised that they were free to write in either English or Vietnamese about their English classes, teachers, friends or families or any significant things that they wished to share with me. Participants were given four weeks to complete their ELLHs.
Following the ELLHs was the preparation for the first round interviews. For successful interviews, I made careful plans and anticipated difficulties that might arise during the interview process. The potential difficulties included “the phrasing of complex questions and participants who are reserved” (Doody & Noonan, 2013, p. 30). One solution I chose to these matters was to discuss the interview questions in advance with a potential participant and with my supervisors (Smith et al. 2009, in Doody & Noonan, 2013). The feedback from the potential participant and my supervisor assisted me in making changes in the question wording and sequence. Further, before each interview, I provided clear and detailed explanations about the purpose and approximate length of the interview. I also explained that the interviews would be audio-recorded and asked for participants’ agreement. Participants were then advised to ask questions and seek clarification of my questions. Another strategy I applied was to allow participants to choose the time of the interview that was convenient to them, and the site of the interview in which they felt comfortable, safe and free from interruptions. (See Table 14 for details of the interview procedures)
Table 14

*Interview Procedures (Pseudonyms were used)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>First round interviews</th>
<th>Second round interviews</th>
<th>Third round interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Loan</td>
<td>Loan, Ngan and Ha</td>
<td>Loan, Ngan, Thao and Giao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>Hue and Tra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Phu</td>
<td>Phu and Thai</td>
<td>Phu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Le</td>
<td>Le and Thuan</td>
<td>Le and Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Nha and Minh</td>
<td>Nha and Minh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nha, Tra and Minh</td>
<td>Tra</td>
<td>Ha and Thuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ngan and Ha</td>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>Lan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>Lien</td>
<td>Lien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thuan</td>
<td>Thao and Giao</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lien</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Thao and Giao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the first round interviews, I organized a meeting with the 15 participants to explain ways to keep learning diaries during the course. An example of an individual journal was provided to participants, and student participants were encouraged to keep their learning diaries in either English or Vietnamese on a weekly basis. The participants were also advised to write their learning diary at home after each English class.
During and after the course, the English SL course was conducted, and the selected 15 ELLs kept learning diaries that were returned to me after the course. The second round interviews were conducted after the sixth lesson. Another set of surveys, similar to those used prior to the course, was distributed to the same 90 students (79 responses returned) at the end of the course. Following the surveys, the third round interviews were held with the 15 ELL participants.

4.4.4 Data analysis strategies
As discussed in the study design, the data analysis procedures involved conducting a separate data analysis for each quantitative and qualitative dataset. I started with the quantitative data of the first surveys to get an overall picture of ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, their engagement and investment in learning the English subject and their sense of English learners and their user selves before I conducted the English SL course. The data from the first surveys were then compared with those in the post course surveys in order to investigate any significant changes in ELL’s autonomy, motivation and sense of self after the English SL course. A qualitative thematic analysis was then conducted with the ELLHs and the first interview rounds, which was followed by an analysis of ELLs’ diaries and the second and third round interviews. The three qualitative data sets including the ELLH, the three interview rounds and the learning diary entries were subsequently put together in a narrative holistic-content analysis. As such, 15 English learning stories from 15 participants were narrated and analysed in light of complexity theory.

In the next step of data analysis procedures, I was able to make comparisons by examining the similarities and differences of the survey results and the qualitative data findings. I first compared the first survey results and the findings from the ELLHs and the first round interview data. Findings generated from the second survey responses were then compared with the results found in the analysis of the learning diary and the second and third round interview information. The following outlines details of each data analysis for quantitative and qualitative datasets and how data were converged in the interpretation step.

4.4.4.1 Quantitative analytical strategies
In preparing the data for analysis, I coded the data by assigning numeric values for responses, and created a codebook for the variables in an Excel file. I then explored the data with both a descriptive analysis and a referential analysis. I conducted a descriptive analysis with an
application of statistical software SPSS version 22 to examine a quantitative description of the 77 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self before the English SL course. I proceeded to an inferential analysis to find differences between the pre-course and the post-course survey results of the two groups. A number of tests were used in this inferential analysis, including the Rasch model, the paired-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test, t-test, and effect sizes and Pearson correlation coefficients. These are explained under the heading below: An inferential analysis.

4.4.4.1.1 A descriptive analysis
The relevant data in the first surveys were analysed based on percentage (%) and two kinds of “averages”- median (Mdn) and mode (Md), which indicate the central tendency of the 77 responses. These two kinds of averages were used to analyse the data because most of the items and questions in the survey questionnaires used Likert scales. The median represents a middle value, while the mode is the value that occurs most frequently in a list of responses. Hence, the median and a mode indicate the extent to which the 77 participants show agreement or disagreement towards the survey items or questions. Separate items in the first survey responses were analysed based on median and mode to generate answers to my research questions on ELL’s perceptions of their motivation, autonomy and sense of self.

For the sake of data analysis, a list follows of grouped items and their features. (See Appendix 14: Groups of survey statements).

Data related to perceptions of the roles of teachers and learners are elicited from 25 survey questionnaire items. Details follow:

(a) Ten statements (Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, and Items 3.10 – 3.12) ascertained the perceptions of the roles of teachers and learners. Items 3.1 – 3.8 are 6 point Likert-type statements – ranging from category 1, the lowest, to category 6, the highest level of autonomy

For example: Item 3.1: “I believe that correcting my mistakes is the responsibility of ….

(a) the teacher

(b) myself

1 2 3 4 5 6
The selected ratings were counted and the frequencies for all the students were calculated. The median and mode scores give an idea of the extent to which participants show their level of autonomy overall. A median and a mode of 1 would mean that they are dependent on the teacher; on the other hand, a median and a mode of 6 would mean that the participants are highly autonomous, or see themselves as so.

Items 3.10 – 3.12 are four-point Likert scale with category 1 = Strongly disagree, category 2 = Disagree, category 3 = Agree, category 4 = Strongly agree. An average score of 1 for all responses would mean that most participants strongly disagreed with the statement, and a mean score of 4 would mean that they strongly agreed.

(b) Six items (from Item 3.24 to Item 3.27, Item 3.4 and Item 3.9) conveyed the perceptions of the role of partners in the learning process. Items 3.24 – 3.27 were on a four-point scale while Item 3.4 and Item 3.9 were on a six-point scale.

(c) Nine items (from Item 3.15 to Item 3.23) were about learners’ willingness and confidence in acquiring autonomy. These items were on a four-point scale.

Twenty seven motivation-related items/questions and two open questions, Q. 2, & 3, were formulated for the surveys to elicit information about learners’ motivation in their English language learning and about the possible influences the learners’ family might have on their motivation. These items include:

- Three items about reasons for learning English subject: Items 1.13, 1.22, 1.23

- Six statements about attitudes toward the English language subject: Item numbers 1.19, 1.20 and 1.21, and Items 1.2, 1.17, 1.18.

- Sixteen items about engagement and investment in English learning and two items about family influence:
  - Three items about efforts in learning English: Items 1.1 and 3.13, 3.14
  - Two “How often” questions about formal use of English: Items 2.2, and 2.3
- Nine “How often” questions about use of English outside the group: Items 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.6, 2.9, 2.10, and 2.13.

- Two “How often” questions about financial investment: 2.11, 1.12

- Two statements about the information about the family influence on the learners: 1.8 and 1.9.

- Besides, background information in the first surveys indicates ELL informal learning outside classroom including extra classes, tutors and English speaking clubs.

Eleven Likert-scale questions and open questions 1, 4 and 5 provided information about the participants’ sense of self:

- Open question 1: actual English learner self

- Five items: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.11, 1.12 and open-ended Questions 4 and 5 conveyed ELLs’ perceptions of ideal self

- Six items: 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 1.16, 1.14, 1.15 about ought-to self

4.4.4.1.2 An inferential analysis

After obtaining an overview of ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self through a descriptive analysis, I proceeded to an inferential analysis of the survey data by comparing the information from the pre-course and the post course surveys from two groups. A number of tests were used, including the Rasch model, the t-test and effect sizes, the Wilcoxon ranked tests with an application of statistical software SPSS version 22, and the coefficient test.

The Rasch model was first applied to generate the total mean scores for both survey responses regarding ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self. The Rasch software Quest (Adams & Khoo, 1996) provided student ability and attitude scores in terms of logits, ranging for, usually, about +3 to -3. In order to simplify the reading of student scores, the logit values were transformed, using a simple linear transformation, into values between 0 and 600. These transformed values were then used for calculating means, standard deviations, and Effect Sizes.
(Cohen's d). The data were analysed using a Rasch (Rasch, 1960) approach, using Quest (Adams & Khoo, 1996) software and a Masters Partial Credit (Masters, 2010) technique. Output from this analysis provided individual logits scores for all participants on all sub-scales in the survey. Also, the software produced Wright Maps. (See Appendix 15: Wright maps)

A t-test and Cohen’s effect size were then conducted to investigate the similarities and differences between means of the two survey responses from two groups which were generated from the Rasch model. While the t-test tells us the differences between the two groups’ means, the effect size helps measure the magnitude of the difference between the two groups. Also, the t-test results and effect size values demonstrate the size of difference in the scores of three subscales – autonomy, motivation and sense of self – within each group before and after the study’s English course, quantifying the influence of the English SL course. The p values resulting from the t-test have a cut-off point or significant level at 0.05. If the p value is smaller than 0.05, there is a significant difference between the two groups and vice versa. Cohen’s effect size values (d) are interpreted as “small” if d=0.2, “medium” if d=0.5 and “large” if d=0.8 (Cohen, 1988).

Detailed findings from each survey item were generated through paired-samples of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, which compare the medians of items in the pre-course surveys with those in the post-course of the two groups. In the Wilcoxon Signed-rank test, a z-score is calculated based on ranks and the significance levels of the differences (p) in pre- and post-survey responses. The significance levels are classified as: 0.0001<p<0.001: extremely significant; 0.001<p<0.01: very significant; and 0.01<p<0.05: significant. In addition, comparisons of the median and mode scores from the pre-surveys and the post surveys can estimate whether the changes are positive or negative.

Additionally, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships between the three factors in both Group One and Group Two participants before and after the course. The numerical value of the correlation coefficient (r) can vary numerically between 0.0 and 1.0. The closer the correlation is to 1.0, the stronger the relationship between two variables is. A positive correlation means that if one variable increases, the other also increases. A negative correlation means that as one variable increases the others decreases and vice versa. The statistical significance of the correlation (p) is indicated by a probability value
of less than 0.05. This means that the probability of obtaining such a correlation coefficient by chance is less than five times in one hundred, so the result indicates the likelihood of the strength of the relationship occurring by chance. Results of the t-tests, Cohen’s effect size, the Wilcoxon Signed-rank test and the Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in detail in Chapter Five.

4.4.4.2 Qualitative analytical strategies

After the completion of the quantitative data analysis, I proceeded to qualitative data analysis. I chose a thematic analysis which aimed at “examining narrative materials from life stories by breaking the text into relatively small units of content and submitting them to descriptive treatment” (Sparker, 2005 in Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013, p. 400). I thus started the analysis by reading through and reviewing all the collected data from ELLHs, three rounds of interviews and learning diary entries. All 45 audio recorded interviews from the fifteen participants in three interview rounds were first transcribed by myself using the language in which the participants spoke, either Vietnamese or English. As the “thematic analysis involves the search for and identification of common threads that extend across an entire interview or set of interviews” (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013, p. 400), data obtained from the written narratives, the diaries and the interviews were then thematically coded and analysed with support from the software NVivo 10. The themes were then grouped into three large dimensions: ELL’s autonomy, motivation and sense of self for the theme-based analysis.

In the second layer of qualitative data analysis, I selected holistic content analysis which aims at “the interpretation of an entire life story” (Wells, 2011, p. 10). This approach intends to “explore and understand the inner world of individuals” (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 7). In the holistic content analysis process, Lieblich et al. (1998, pp. 62–63) discuss five steps: (1) researchers read the narrative materials until a pattern is conceptualized; (2) researchers write initial impressions of the story; (3) researchers identify specific themes; (4) researchers mark “the various themes in the story”; (5) researchers “follow each theme and throughout the story note conclusions”. Following the five steps, a chronology of individual ELLs’ English language learning history was composed. I used a sequence of themes from the qualitative data sets from each ELL: the ELLH, interview responses and diary entries. The results were found based on interrelated themes to provide answers to my research questions on the relationship
between ELL’s autonomy, motivation and sense of self, and on the complexity of the three factors.

Representations of the participants’ voices, excerpts from their ELLH, diary entries and interview transcripts are presented as written and spoken in either Vietnamese or English. Each quoted excerpt in Vietnamese is presented in an English translated version in the data presentation in Chapters Six and Seven.

4.4.4.3 Merging quantitative and qualitative data results
A complete picture of my ELLs’ perceptions on their autonomy, motivation and sense of self were more fully developed when the quantitative and qualitative data were merged in the discussion step. The results of the first survey analysis were complemented by the results of the ELLHs and the first interviews. The findings from the second survey were elaborated by the results of the learning diaries and the second and third round interview analysis. Also, by merging all the results of the three qualitative data sets, the holistic stories told by the fifteen participants complemented the broader analysis in light of complexity theory.

4.4.5 Summary of data collection methods, procedures and analysis
The following table summarizes the data collection methods, procedures and analysis strategies which have been discussed in this section.

Table 15

Data Collection Methods, Procedures and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step no</th>
<th>Data collection methods</th>
<th>Analysis test/ approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st survey</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis: percentage, median and mode used for the central tendency of the 77 responses to separate survey items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1st survey and 2nd survey</td>
<td>Inferential analysis:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Rasch model to generate total mean scores for responses to survey items in autonomy, motivation and sense of self

- Pearson correlation coefficients to assess the relationship between the ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self in both groups

- A t-test and Cohen’s effect size to investigate similarities and differences between means of responses to two surveys of the two groups which were generated from the Rasch model

- Paired-samples of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests to compare the medians of items in the pre-course surveys with those in the post-course of the two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>ELLHs and 1st interviews</th>
<th>Thematic analysis: results were merged with results of 1st surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2nd and 3rd interviews and learning diary entries</td>
<td>Thematic analysis: results were merged with results of 2nd surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ELLHs, 1st, 2nd and 3rd interviews and learning diary entries</td>
<td>Holistic content analysis: individual participants’ English language learning stories were narrated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Summary of research methodology

This chapter opened with a re-iteration of the research questions and then argued the suitability of the study’s mixed methods research approach. This was followed by a brief overview of the study’s research site as an insight into its situated context. From this, the discussion moved to a description of ethical considerations relevant to the study, an account of participants’ backgrounds and a description of the English SL course. Next was a detailed explication of the selected research methods implemented within the study’s design, explaining why and how these research methods were congruent with the research questions in relation to the type of data required to respond to these questions. Prior to concluding the chapter, attention was given to the data analysis strategies. The following chapter presents the findings emerging from the analysis of participants’ responses to the two surveys.
CHAPTER FIVE

Surveying English language learner (ELL) autonomy, motivation and self

5.1 An overview of chapter

This chapter presents the main findings generated from participants’ responses to the pre-course and post course surveys. These findings provide part responses to the research study’s questions.

Section 5.2 of this chapter presents an overall picture of the English learners’ perceptions of their learning autonomy developed through their engagement with the English subject, the students’ levels of motivation, and their sense of self before joining the English SL course. This picture was drawn from 77 responses to the pre-course surveys. The section firstly presents findings related to the participating learners’ perceptions of autonomy. It then discusses findings related to the extent to which learners were motivated in terms of their attitudes towards the English language subject, and their engagement with and time devoted to learning the English language subject. It also illuminates how the participants saw themselves as English learners and users in the past, present and future.

Section 5.3 makes comparisons and contrasts between the results of the 77 responses to the pre-course surveys and those of the 79 post course responses. The aim in this section is to investigate possible changes in the learners’ levels of motivation, their perceptions of autonomy and sense of self. Data from the two participant groups were analysed separately. Group One participants undertook the English SL course with me, the researcher, while Group Two participants undertook the same English SL course with a teacher from the university who was not implementing a specific range of strategies to support autonomy. This section concludes with an account of the correlations between the self-reported learner autonomy, motivation levels and senses of self of the two groups.

Results presented in Section 5.2 are based on a descriptive statistical analysis that produced median and mode data. Section 5.3 reports the inferential analysis, in which the paired-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test results assisted in making comparisons between the medians of the
two groups’ responses to the pre-course survey items with those generated from the post course survey. In addition, t-tests and effect sizes were used to compare and contrast the means of total responses in three sub-classes of the two groups: learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self. The use of Pearson correlation coefficients helped investigate links between the three factors in the two groups, as explained in Chapter Four.

References for the quotes from survey respondents which were extracted from the two sets of surveys in this chapter are coded in the way shown in the following example: (QTN2:F19:72) = Questionnaire Number 2, Female participant number 19, line 72 in the Excel file.

5.2 Descriptions of ELL participants’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self

This section focuses on a descriptive analysis of ELLs’ perceptions of their autonomy, motivation and self before they joined the English SL course. Findings are from responses to the pre-course surveys from 77 students in two groups with percentage (%) Median (Mdn) and Mode (Md) as the primary “averages” indicating the central tendency of the 77 responses to individual survey items. Results of percentages, medians and modes for all survey items are presented in Appendix 16: Detailed statistics of the results.

5.2.1 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy in their English learning

This section focuses on findings related to English learners’ perceptions of autonomy developed through their engagement with the English learning process. As first discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of language learner autonomy refers to the learner’s ability to take charge of the learning process (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981). The study findings in relation to perceptions of learner autonomy presented in this section are thus focused on participant learners’ perceptions of teachers’ roles and of their own roles and those of their partners, and on participant learners’ willingness and confidence to seek opportunities to develop greater autonomy in their learning.

5.2.1.1 Perceptions of teachers’ and learners’ roles

Data related to perceptions of the roles of teachers and learners were elicited from 10 survey items and the survey questionnaire’s open-ended Question 4. Each item has 6 Likert scales/categories, in which categories 1, 2, and 3 show that learners are likely to be teacher-
reliant, and categories 4, 5 and 6 show learners’ independence in their learning process. Six items asking for participants’ opinions about the role of their partners in the learning process, consist of four scale points with 1 as “Strongly disagree” and 4 as “Strongly agree”. The survey details have been further elaborated in Chapter Four.

The results revealed that participants could reasonably be described as independent English learners, and that they would like to be active and independent in the learning process. Their responses towards most of the items in the survey were positive though to varying degrees.

It is noteworthy that the majority of participants perceived that they themselves were responsible for correcting their own learning mistakes and finding out more effective ways to learn English. They understood that correcting their own mistakes was their responsibility (Item 3.1: Mdn=5, Md=5). Seventeen participants (22.1%) chose category 4, twenty two (28.6%) chose category 5, and twenty (26%) chose category 6 for this statement. Also, they preferred finding out independently what to do to improve their English language learning (Item 3.2: Mdn=4, Md=4). Twenty six participants (33.8%) selected category 4, and twenty three (29.9%) chose category 5 for this statement.

In addition, the participants were on the side of “agreement” in that they perceived themselves playing a greater role than teachers in evaluating their own English language learning and in preparing for their lessons. For the statement 3.5 “I think that tests can’t tell me everything. I know myself if I’ve been learning well.” (Mdn=4, Md=5), 20.8% of participants selected 4, and 28.6% chose 5. Similarly, the median and mode of 4 for responses to Item 3.6 showed that participants saw themselves as taking charge of preparing for a lesson. The percentages for this item illustrate this trend: 53.9% of participants chose 4; while only 3.9% chose 1.

Similarly, the majority of participants perceived that it was necessary to study beyond the textbooks (Item 3.8: Mdn=5, Md=6). Thirty six participants (46.8%) chose category 6, and twenty four (31.2%) selected category 5, showing their strong agreement that “it is important to learn beyond the textbook.” Meanwhile, a minimal number of 6.5% chose Category 3, and 1.3 % selected Category 2, no participants selecting Category 1.
Participants further reported that they did not want to sit passively; rather they preferred more communicative interactive learning opportunities with their classmates (Item 3.9: Mdn=4, Md=5 on a six-point scale). The majority of participants selected responses 4 or 5 or 6 for this item (20.8%, 24.7% and 20.8% respectively), indicating that they preferred moving around and talking with different classmates. In addition, they did not prefer to work alone in class activities, as most of the responses to Item 3.25 “I prefer working alone in the class.” were “Strongly Disagree” (31.2%) or ‘Disagree’ (48.1%).

Moreover, they reported that pair and group activities were effective ways for them to learn English. They could learn from pair/group work with classmates (Item 3.24: Mdn=3, Md=3 on a four-point scale). Most of them (64.9%) selected “Agree”, and 28.6% chose “Strongly agree” as responses to this statement. Also, many of them agreed (40.3%) and strongly agreed (33.8%) with the statement that they could learn English best outside the class if they studied with partners (Item 3.26: Mdn=3, Md=3 on a four-point scale).

They also found it useful to work in pairs or in groups without the presence of their teacher (Item 3.4: Mdn=5, Md=5 on a six-point scale). Many (35.1%) chose Category 5, 23.4% chose Category 4, and 18.2% chose Category 6. Their class partners’ evaluations were also perceived as important, as indicated in most of the responses to Item 3.27 (Mdn=3, Md=3 on a four-point scale). The majority (61%) agreed and 27.3% strongly agreed with the statement “Evaluation from a partner provides me with useful feedback for my English study.”

By contrast, participants perceived the teacher as an authority agent who should take charge by providing explanations for every language point or advice on out-of-class activities or advice on the learners’ difficulties. Forty nine per cent agreed that the teacher was responsible for explaining the language in the class (Item 3.10, Mdn=3, Md=3). Likewise, a majority (67%) agreed with Item 3.11 (Mdn=3, Md=3) that “The teacher should tell me how I should learn after class.” Many (58%) agreed and (36%) strongly agreed that “The teacher should say what my difficulties are” (Item3.12, Mdn=3, Md=3).

Similarly, participants were likely to see that teachers played an important role in the decision making process. Responses to the statement “I believe that the teacher is the only person who can decide on the activities, the time and the order in which to do them in the classroom” (Item
3.7) yielded a median score of 3, and a mode of 4 on a six-point scale. Similarly, the median and mode were 3 for the statement “I believe that the teacher should tell me what exercises to do and what books to read, etc…” (Item 3.3: Mdn=3, Md=3).

In summary, for the questions related to how students perceived the role of their teachers and themselves, the students saw teachers as having greater authority in providing explanations and giving advice in relation to outside class activities, and participants thought it was the teacher who “should” take charge of class activities and the selection of learning texts. However, the participants perceived that they were not passive learners, as they saw themselves as having responsibility for correcting their own mistakes, finding out effective ways to learn English, and preparing for their lesson. They also perceived the importance of learning with partners, as well as receiving feedback from their classmates. They desired more active teaching and learning methods, and preferred communicative activities in their English classes.

5.2.1.2 Willingness and confidence in acquiring autonomy
Data from nine items, Items 3.14 to 3.23, showed the participants’ willingness and confidence to develop greater autonomy. These items are 4 point Likert-type statements with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 4 = “Strongly agree”. Thus, median and mode scores of 1 would show that all respondents are not willing or confident to develop autonomy, and all scores of 4 would mean that they are all ready to become more autonomous.

The participants showed a willingness to set goals and make plans for their own learning since the median and mode scores for the items 3.15, 3.16 and 3.17 were 3 (on a four-point scale). The data suggested that they tended to be ready for setting their own goals for the English subject (Item 3.15: Mdn=3, Md=3). Most agreed (53.2%) or strongly agreed (33.8%) with this statement. Participants also reported that they were willing to make plans for their own learning process (Item 3.16: Mdn=3, Md=3). The majority selected categories 3 or 4 (57% and 18.2% respectively). Similarly, they showed a willingness to discover their own way of learning (Item 3.17: Mdn=3, Md=3). The overwhelming majority agreed (62.3%) or strongly agreed (35.2%) with this statement.
Moreover, participants were willing to identify and check their own mistakes and identify their own strengths and weaknesses in learning English. Median and mode scores of 3 (on a four-point scale) were found for Items 1.18 and 1.19. The majority (64.9%) agreed and 20.8% strongly agreed with the statement that “I am willing to check my own work for mistakes” (Item 3.18: Mdn=3, Md=3). A large majority responded positively with Item 3.19: “I am willing to identify my strengths and weaknesses in English” as 59.7% agreed and 32.5% strongly agreed with this statement (Mdn=3, Md=3).

Similarly, they showed confidence in their learning strategies, such as having their own way of learning (Item 3.20) and identifying their own strengths and weaknesses (Item 3.22). Also, they showed confidence in checking their English work (Item 3.21) and in measuring their own learning progress (Item 3.23). The majority of participants selected categories 3 or 4 for these items (Mdn=3, Md=3).

In general, the overall emerging message from the participants’ responses to questions related to the learners’ perception of their autonomy was that participants saw themselves as independent learners. They were aware of the need to take personal responsibility for correcting their mistakes, evaluating their progress and making decisions in their learning process. They perceived that they were responsible for their learning within pair and group work contexts. They reported their willingness and confidence in further developing their autonomy, even though they somewhat believed that teachers had more authority in teaching language points and in giving advice on opportunities for outside class learning.

5.2.2 ELLs’ motivation in English learning
Theoretically, the motivation of language learners is defined as being driven by the learners’ reasons for choosing English as a subject, their attitudes toward the subject, together with their levels of engagement and investment and the intensity of the efforts they put into learning the language (Gardner, 2001; Norton, 2013) (see Chapter One). Twenty seven motivation-related items/questions were formulated for the survey questionnaires to elicit information about learners’ levels of motivation in their English language learning and about possible influences the learners’ family might have on their motivation level. These items were discussed in detail in Chapter Four.
5.2.2.1 Reasons for and attitudes towards their English learning

Three Items 1.13, 1.22, and 1.23 generated responses to questions related to the reasons why students wanted to learn English as one of their school subjects. Six statements 1.2, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, and 1.21 elicit information about the students’ attitudes toward the English language and towards the English subject. These items are four-point Likert-typed statements. These points are classified into four categories: Category 1 = “Not at all like me”, Category 2 = “Not much like me”, Category 3 = “Somewhat like me”, Category 4 = “Very much like me”.

The scores of median (Mdn) and mode (Md) were used to ascertain the attitudes and efforts of learners. Therefore, a median or mode of 1 indicates that most responses are “Not at all like me”, showing the strong disagreement of participants, while a median or mode of 4 suggests strongly positive attitudes among the participants.

Many participants reported that they wanted to learn English because of their interest in the cultures of English speaking people. A majority of 70.1% selected “Very much like me” and 24.7% with “Somewhat like me” for the statement 1.22 (Mdn=4, Md=4). Many indicated they learn English in order to travel around the world (Item 1.23: Mdn=4, Md=4). Also, they wanted to learn English in order to be informed and updated (Item 1.13: Mdn=3, Md=4).

Participants also reported a positive attitude towards the cultures of English speaking communities. The most positive opinion was related to English movies (Item 1.19: Mdn=4, Md=4), and music in English (Item 1.20: Mdn=4, Md=4). An overwhelming majority of 83.1% chose Category 4 “Very much like me” for “I like English movies”, and an equally high number of 87% for “I like English music”. Similarly, 57.1% selected “Very much like me”, and 27.3% chose “Somewhat like me” for Item 1.21 (Mdn=4, Md=4) “I like English books, magazines and newspapers”.

Positive attitudes towards the English subject were also found. Items 1.2 (Mdn=3, Md=4), “I would like to learn English even if it were not required”, and 1.18 (Mdn=3, Md=4), “I find learning English really interesting”, attempt to find out the participants’ attitudes towards the English language subject. The median scores for both items were 3 and the modes for both were 4 (on four-point scales). The majority of participants indicated they would like to learn English even if it was not a required subject at school. In particular, 46.8% of participants chose “Very much like me” and 40.3% “Somewhat like me” for this statement. Similarly,
around half of the participants (49.4%) showed strong preferences for learning English in choosing “Very much like me” for the statement “I find learning English interesting.” Over one third of the participants (36.4%) selected the Category “Somewhat like me” for this item.

In contrast to positive opinions on the English language subject, the responses indicate relatively negative attitudes towards English classes from the majority. Item 1.17 “I like the atmosphere of my English classes” attempts to gauge the participants’ opinions on learning English in the classroom context (Mdn=2.5, Md=2). Approximately 42% chose “Not much like me” while 35% chose “Somewhat like me” for this item.

The negative attitudes indicated by the participants towards their English classes were consistent with findings from the open-ended questions in the pre-course survey. The results from open-ended Questions 2 and 3 (See Appendix 17: Responses to open Questions 2, 3 in pre-course surveys) indicated that 41.1% of participants did not like the teaching and learning modes in their English classes. Likewise, 16.4% said they did not like the textbooks used in their previous courses, and 11% claimed the course timetables were poorly-organized. In particularly negative responses, 16% of participants reported that “I like nothing in English courses” (in Question 2), and 9.6% of participants revealed that they “disliked everything in their English classes” (in Question 3). The following are comments on previous English courses, made by some of the participants:

I think in the class I can learn very little therefore I am not interested in any aspect of these courses. (QTN1, M8: 7)

...the lessons are quite boring because we just have enough time to cover the textbook’s content. I wish there are more time for talking and playing. (QTN1, M29: 15)

I do not like the teaching and learning modes, which sometimes turn out to be quite “passive” and they make the lessons very boring. (QTN1 F6: 6)

Overall, the findings identify relatively positive attitudes among participants towards English language learning, while the evaluation of class learning methods is less positive. While learners’ attitudes towards the subject play crucial roles in language learners’ motivation, these attitudes should be viewed in relation to reasons for learning English, and the engagement and
investment efforts that learners put into learning the subject (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2001; Norton, 2013).

5.2.2.2 Engagement and investment in English learning
Questions in Part Two of the survey questionnaires elicit information about learners’ engagement and investment in terms of time and finance in English learning. These are sixteen Four-point Likert type questions (How often do you…?). The four points are Category 1 = “Rarely/never”, Category 2 = “Once/twice a month”, Category 3 = “Once/Twice a week”, Category 4 = “Every day”. Therefore, a median or mode of 1 would mean most of the participants chose “Rarely” or “Never”, while a median or mode of 4 would show that all of the participants choose “Everyday” as their response to a question.

One of the most noteworthy findings is that participants perceived their own effort to learn English (Item 3.13: Mdn=4, Md=4- on a four-point scale) and their learning methods (Item 3.14: Mdn=4, Md=4- on a four-point scale) as important factors in the learning process. An overwhelming majority of 87% confirmed that their own efforts were very important for their English learning success. Similarly, 63.6% strongly agreed that the learning methods they selected were very important to their success in the English language.

Likewise, participants showed a positive tendency towards putting effort into learning English. The results for Item 1.1 “I think I am doing my best to learn English” indicated this trend with the median of 3 and mode of 3. More than half (50.6%) of participants indicated “Somewhat like me”, and 6.5% selected “Very much like me”, while 35% chose “Not much like me” and 7.8% selected “Not at all like me” for this statement.

Findings from Questions 2.2 (Mdn=2, Md=2) and 2.3 (Mdn=2, Md=2) demonstrated that participants were less likely to use spoken English with their teachers than with their classmates/friends in the school context. Both the median and mode scores for Question 2.2 “How often do you discuss homework in English with friends at university” were 2, showing that the students occasionally spoke in English with their friends. More than one third (36.4%) were in Category 2 – “Once/Twice a month”, and 23.4% were in Category 1 – “Never/rarely” responses. Only 28.6% selected the scale category “Once/twice a week”, and 9.1% chose “Everyday” responses. In contrast, the median and mode of Question 2.3 (Mdn=3, Md=3) were
3, showing that participants used English with their friends more regularly. Nearly half (46.8%) revealed that they spoke English with their friends once or twice a week, and 31.2% used English with their classmates every day.

Along with formal learning, many participants joined outside class learning activities to different degrees. Data from participants’ background information in the first surveys indicated that both attending extra classes outside the school and spending time at English centres constituted more popular informal English language learning activities. Participants reported that during their time at secondary and high school, they attended approximately 23.8 months and 15.7 months respectively of extra English classes. Likewise, the highest average time participants spent in English centres was 10.6 months during their primary schooling. In contrast, participants spent far less time in English clubs, and in learning with tutors (less than eight months on average). It is also noteworthy that outside school learning became less significant when participants entered university. The average amount of time spent in English centre learning, extra classes and clubs while at university was less than 0.6 months, while no time was spent learning with tutors. (See Appendix 18: Outside class learning)

Moreover, participants reported a relatively high level of engagement and investment in using English at home and in the community. The most popular activity among the participants was reading English materials (Question 2.5, Mdn=4, Md=4). More than half of the participants (54.5%) read English every day, and around one third (31.2%) read English materials once a week. Writing in English outside the school was also a popular activity (Q.2.7, Md=3, Md=2). Approximately one third of these learners (31.2%) said they wrote in English once a month, or once a week (29.9%) or everyday (27.3%).

Activities like chatting with friends in English outside class time (Q.2.8, Mdn=2, Md=2) and speaking English with foreigners (Q.2.4, Mdn=2, Md=2) appeared less popular among the participants. One fifth of the participants (19.5%) said they chatted with their friends in English every day, and one fourth (26%) selected the category “Once a week”, while 35% chose “Once a month”. Moreover, participants were less likely to speak English with foreigners (Item 2.4: Mdn=2, Md=2). Only 10% reported that they spoke English with foreigners every day, 19% chose “Once a week”, 42 % responded “Once a month” and 25% selected the scale Category
“Never”. The least popular activity was speaking English at home (Item 2.1: Mdn=1, Md=1) with the lowest median and mode of 1. The vast majority of 74% (n=57) rarely used English as a means of communication at home.

Participants reported strong and enthusiastic interest in the cultures of the English speaking communities. Responses to Questions 2.6, 2.9 and 2.13 (Mdn=4, Md=4) demonstrated a high frequency of engagement with outside classroom activities that were related to their interest in the English speaking community culture. The median and mode scores for these responses were 4. The overwhelming majority of participants (89.6%) listened to English music every day. Watching English language television programs or English language films, and browsing English language websites were other regular activities of most participants (66.2% and 62.3% respectively). Listening to English language radio programs appeared to be the least popular activity among the participants (Item 2.10, Mdn=2, Md=1). Only 10% of participants listened to the radio in English every day, 19.5% “Once a week”, 31% “Once a month” and 34% “Never”.

In contrast, participants reported spending very little on the purchase of English materials (Item 2.11: Mdn=2, Md=2 and Item 2.12: Mdn=2, Md=1). Few spent money on English printed materials on a daily basis (5.2%), while 15.6% purchased English materials weekly. Thirty six (46.8%) said they bought English books or magazines once a month, with 23 responding Never/Rarely. Similarly, 44.2% revealed that they never spent money on English CDs, DVDs or video games.

Participants from both groups reported that parents played an influential role in their English language learning. Most strongly agreed or agreed that their parents encouraged them to use the English language (Item 1.8: Mdn=4, Md=4). Approximately equal numbers (37.7%) chose “Very much like me”, and “Somewhat like me” (35%) for the statement that their parents encouraged them to join extra classes (Item 1.9: Mdn=3, Md=4).

In summary, despite findings that suggested the participating learners held negative attitudes towards their English classes and invested very little in the purchasing of English materials, the participants demonstrated high levels of motivation in learning English. They showed positive attitudes towards the subject and put extra effort into learning the English language.
In the school context, they reported using English with friends more often than with their teacher. They spent a significant amount of time using English outside their study in activities such as reading and writing, while less time was used speaking English with foreigners or friends. They also revealed an interest in the English speaking community’s culture and reported the important role of their family as an influence on their English learning. The next section examines the perceptions of sense of self among these motivated and independent English learners.

5.2.3 ELLs’ perceptions of their sense of self
This section focuses on perceptions of self amongst the English learners, including a sense of the English learner self, the ideal self and the ought self. In theory, sense of self is defined as the way we perceive ourselves, and the self state representations include actual/own self – “The person who I believe I am actually now”, the ideal/own self – “The person who I would ideally like to be” and the ought/own self – “The person who I believe I should/ought be” (Wylie, 1979 in Higgins, 1987, p. 320). (See Chapter Three)

The survey’s Question 1 “Are you a good English learner? Why or Why not?” elicits information about the participants’ sense of English learner self. The responses are categorized into groups of either “No”, or “Probably no”, or “No idea”, or “Probably yes”, or “Yes”. In addition, data from Part One of the first survey convey their perceptions of ideal self (five items: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.11, 1.12 and open Questions 4 and 5) and ought self (six items: 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 1.16, 1.14, 1.15). These 4-point Likert-type statements generate responses in four categories: “Not at all like me” = 1, “Not much like me” = 2, “Somewhat like me” = 3, “Very much like me” = 4. The median and the mode scores are used in order to measure the central tendency, that is, the most likely responses. Hence, medians and modes of 1 would indicate that all the participants chose “Not at all like me”, meanwhile medians and modes of 4 would mean all participants selected “Very much like me”.

5.2.3.1 Sense of self as an English learner
In answering the Yes/No question in the first survey, participants in both groups showed a low level of confidence in their sense of being a “good English learner”. More than half of the responses (54.6%) were in the “No” group, and around 7.8% chose “Probably No”. In contrast,
only approximately 20.7% chose “Yes”, and 9% chose “Probably Yes” (See Appendix 19: Participants’ perceptions of English learner self.

The reasons mentioned by the participants for this overall response included claims about their laziness in the university environment, and their personal ineffective learning methods:

...because I haven't used it for quite a long time after the entrance exam to university. The English class at the university is not really interesting and I find it not really what I want to attend and expect (QTN2, F30: 25).

...not really because I haven't found out an efficient method for my learning English (QTN1, F31: 67).

Nearly one fifth of the responses (16%) fell into the “Yes” group. These students indicated that they felt confident about their learning process and had a love for the English subject:

I am a good English learner because I'm capable of learning outside of class and can motivate myself. (QTN1, F24: 75)

...quite good in some way... I have a passion for English, which is of great important for every learner. (QTN1, F26: 29)

In other words, a minority of 77 participants perceived themselves as “good English learners”, indicating their confidence in learning this subject by using effective learning methods, or by having a passion for it. In contrast, the majority perceived that they were not yet “good English learners” because they were not confident with their learning methods, or they were not actively engaged in their own learning processes.

5.2.3.2 Sense of an English ideal self
The results revealed that most of the 77 participants had a strong sense of an ideal self as English users in the future. It is interesting that most participants perceived themselves as English users in their future jobs, as pointed out in Item 1.4, “The things I want to do in the future require me to use English” (Mdn=4, Md=4), and Item 1.12, “Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally” (Mdn=4, Md=4). Slightly over
60% of participants chose Category 4 “Very much like me”, and around 13% chose “Somewhat like me” for both items. (See Appendix 16: Detailed statistics of the results)

Similarly, the majority of the 77 participants believed that they would use English in their future study – Item 1.11 (Mdn=4, Md=4), or living abroad – Item 1.3 (Mdn=4, md=4). More than 60% of participants chose Category 4 “Very much like me”, while approximately 30% selected Category 3 “Somewhat like me” for these two statements. Statistics for Item 1.5 (Mdn=3, Md=3) also indicate a strong sense of self as future successful graduates. A modest minority of 19.5% were in Category 4 and 54.5% in Category 3.

Additional information about ideal selves emerged from responses to open-ended Question 4. The most preferred future jobs were in business or finance areas:

In 8 years’ time, I will be 26 years old. I hope at the time, I will be working in an environment that requires using English. Also, I might be married, and I want to have a chance to travel abroad as much as possible. (QTN1, F16: 9)

Responses to the open Questions 4 and 5 also demonstrated that 31 students said that they would use English in their everyday life, and some others imagine themselves using English in their future study (n=13) and living or travelling abroad (n=10):

I will use English daily, it will become a part of my life. I will use it in my office with my colleagues, at home with my children to help them improve their English. I will update information from English channels (QTN1, F25: 70).

In sum, most of the participants had a strong sense of their ideal self as competent English users in their future jobs, their study and in their daily life.

5.2.3.3 Sense of an English ought self
Sense of an English ought self refers to the sense of responsibility participants perceive they need to take in learning the English subject. Six items on the surveys generated data for the ELLs’ perception of sense of ought self, including:
1.7: Studying EL is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak EL.

1.15: Studying EL is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score in EL proficiency tests (TOEFL, IELTS…).

1.6: Learning English is important because people surrounding me expect me to do so.

1.10: Studying EL is important to me in order to bring honour to my family.

1.14: I have to learn EL because without passing the EL course, I cannot graduate.

1.16: Studying EL is important to me because if I don’t have knowledge of EL, I will be considered a weak student. (See Appendix 16: Detailed statistics of the results)

A sense of an ought self among the participants appeared relatively strong as reflected in a diverse range of opinions. The sense of needing to be “an educated person with sound English competency” (Item 1.7), appeared the strongest with 42% of participants expressing “Very much like me” and 28.6% selecting “Somewhat like me” (Mdn=3, Md=4). Following was the sense of needing to be an English learner with good results in English proficiency tests (Item 1.15). Many participants (32.5%; 31.2% respectively) expressed strong agreement, or agreement on this item (Mdn=3, Md=4). A similar pattern (32.5% “Very much like me”, 26% “Somewhat like me”, could be seen with regard to participants’ sense of what good English learners must be like in order to meet others’ expectations (Item 1.6- Mdn=3, Md=4).

Opinions seemed to be divided with regard to other items related to ought selves: Item 1.10 “Studying EL is important to me in order to bring honour to my family.”, Item 1.14 “I have to learn EL because without passing the EL course, I cannot graduate.” and Item 1.16 “Studying EL is important to me because if I don’t have knowledge of EL, I will be considered a weak student.” Participants were slightly on the side of disagreement that learning English would bring honour to their families (Item 1.10, Mdn=2, Md=1). Approximately one third of participants (35%) chose “Not at all like me”, slightly fewer (28.6%) selected “Not much like me”, while 20.8% and 15.6% chose “Somewhat like me” or “Very much like me”. Responses
to Items 1.14 (Mdn=2, Md=1) and 1.16 (Mdn=2, Md=2) were also slightly on the disagreement side.

To summarize, the majority of participants did not perceive themselves to be good English learners. However, they demonstrated a strong sense of an ideal self in the context of becoming successful English users in the future. The students perceived that as educated persons, they needed to speak fluent English, converse well in English with those they would interact with, and get good results in international English tests. However, their sense of ought self appeared relatively less strong and more contextualised in their responses. They tended to disagree with the item opinions that suggested that learning English would bring honour to their family, that without passing the English course they could not graduate, or that they would be considered a weak student should they not have any knowledge of English.

5.2.4 Summary of ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and self
This section has presented findings from all the descriptive data analysis for both groups in the pre-course surveys. An overall picture of learners’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self shows that the majority of the 77 ELLs in general perceived themselves as independent learners who could take responsibility for their learning processes. They had a clear view of learner roles and the teacher’s role in their English classroom learning. Also, they were highly motivated to learn English with positive attitudes towards the subject and strong engagement and investment in their English learning. They also showed a strong sense of ideal self and a less strong sense of ought self as English learners and users, even though they did not demonstrate a strong sense of actual self as good English learners.

5.3 Changes in motivation, autonomy and sense of self and correlations between these three factors
This section presents study findings from an inferential analysis related to correlations between autonomy, motivation, and sense of self and changes in these three factors in the two groups before and after the English course. Details of the tests used to compare and contrast the responses from two groups have been presented in Chapter Four. These tests include the Rasch model used to generate logits, or the total mean scores for three subclasses – learner autonomy,
motivation and sense of self – Pearson tests, the t-test, effect size and the Wilcoxon ranked test.

Pearson correlation coefficients were first computed to assess the relationship between the three factors in both Group One (my class) and Group Two participants before and after the course. At this point, it may be helpful to remember that I conducted the 18-week SL course with ECAs for Group One. Students in Group Two took the same speaking and listening course with a teacher from the university who did not implement strategies to enhance classroom autonomy. Results from the Pearson correlation coefficients for the two groups before the course showed there were positive correlations between ELL motivation and autonomy ($r=.314$, $p=.005$), and between ELL motivation and sense of self ($r=.301$, $p=.007$). After the course, there was also a correlation between ELL motivation and self ($r=.315$, $p=.005$). Results from the Pearson correlation coefficients for Group One showed there were no correlations between ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self before the English SL course. However, after the course, there was a positive correlation between learner autonomy and their sense of self, $r=.355$, $p=.029$. Overall, enhancements in autonomy in this group were correlated with increases in their sense of self. Meanwhile, for Group Two students, there was a positive correlation between learner autonomy and motivation before the course, $r=.341$, $p=.003$; and also a positive correlation between their motivation and sense of self before the course, $r=.368$, $p=.021$. After the course, there was also a large positive correlation between motivation and sense of self in this group, $r=.462$, $p=.003$.

An independent t-test was then used to investigate relationships between the 77 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self and their gender, hometown and travel experiences before the English SL course. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the scores for perceptions of autonomy of male ELLs ($M=0.56$, $SD=0.53$) and female ELLs ($M=0.48$, $SD=0.43$) conditions; $t(75)=0.72$, $p=0.47$. Similarly, no significant difference was found in the scores for perceptions of motivation of male ELLs ($M=0.85$, $SD=0.59$) and female ELLs ($M=0.70$, $SD=0.59$) conditions; $t(75)=1$, $p=0.32$). Neither was there a significant difference in the scores for perceptions of self of male ELLs ($M=0.70$, $SD=0.75$) and female ELLs ($M=0.71$, $SD=0.70$) conditions; $t(75)=-0.3$, $p=0.98$. The t-tests results further indicated no significant differences in the scores of ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy,
motivation and self and their hometown or travel experiences. (See Appendix 20: t-test results for gender, hometown and travel experience with autonomy, motivation and self)

Further, the data taken from the first survey show that the two groups of learners were similar in their perceptions of their sense of autonomy, motivation levels and sense of self before the English SL course. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the total mean scores in relation to perceptions of learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self of Group One and Group Two. There was no significant difference in the scores for perception of autonomy in Group One (M=0.51, SD=0.34), and Group Two (M=0.49, SD=0.54) conditions; t(37)=-3.58, p=0.72*. Nor was there a difference between levels of motivation in Group One (M=0.65, SD=0.43) and Group Two (M=0.83, SD=0.70) conditions; t(37)=1.34, p=0.18. Similarly, the scores for the responses to Items related to perceptions of self were not different in the two groups with Group One (M=0.75, SD=0.51), Group Two (M=0.66, SD=0.85) conditions; t(37)=-0.67, p=0.50. Further, Cohen’s effect size values suggested a low practical significance between the two groups’ autonomy (d=0.05) and sense of self (d=0.13), and moderate practical significance in their perceptions of their motivation levels (d=0.32)

Similar results from the t-tests were found for the two groups with the post survey data, showing no significant differences between the scores in the two groups’ perception of autonomy (p=0.27), motivation (p=0.27) and sense of self (p=0.29). However, the Cohen effect size values suggested a moderate practical significance existed between the two groups’ autonomy (d=0.33), motivation (d=0.2) and sense of self (d=0.3). This means that, following their completion of the English SL course, there were moderate differences between the two groups in relation to the students’ perceptions of their autonomy, motivation and sense of self.

A paired-sample t-test was subsequently conducted to compare students’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self before and after the English SL course within each group. Findings show that after the course, Group One experienced significant changes in their perceptions of autonomy (p=0.000), in their motivation (p=0.009), and in their sense of self (p=0.004). By contrast, Group Two indicated significant changes in their perceptions of their autonomy (p=0.008), and notably, there were no significant changes in their levels of motivation (p=0.06) or sense of self (p=0.86). Further, Cohen’s effect sizes suggested a large
improvement in students’ perceptions of autonomy between post and pre-data (d=0.76), and medium improvement in their motivation (d=0.46) and sense of self (d=0.59) among Group One participants. Group Two effect sizes, however, showed a medium improvement in their autonomy (d=0.41), motivation (d=0.33) and a smaller improvement in their sense of self (d=0.02) after the English SL course.

Detailed findings were generated through paired-samples of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, which compare the medians of individual items in the pre-course surveys with those in the post-course survey of the two groups. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-rank tests are described in detail for both groups in the following sections. A comparison of medians and modes provides supportive information for the analysis. In cases where there were no significant changes in the responses’ medians and modes, Cohen’s effect sizes (ES) were reported to support the findings.

5.3.1 Changes in ELLs’ perceived levels of their autonomy
Changes in learners’ perceptions of their autonomy in their English language classes were investigated by comparing and contrasting Group One and Group Two students’ responses to 25 survey items (See Appendix 14: Groups of survey statements). Similarities and differences between the two groups are also presented in this section. The related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to test for differences in Group One and Group Two students’ perceptions of their autonomy before and after the students’ engagement with the English SL course.

The most remarkable change was seen in Group One participants’ confidence in acquiring autonomy. The results suggested that learners in Group One demonstrated significant changes in their confidence in taking responsibility for their own learning processes. There was a significant statistical change in the responses related to learners’ confidence, as reflected in their responses to “finding my own ways to learn English” (Item 3.20) when undertaking the pre-and post-course (z=-3.105, p=.002) (d=2.2-large Cohen’s ES). There was also a significant difference in the responses focused on the students’ confidence in “checking their own work for mistakes” (Item 3.21: z= -2.558, p=.011). (d=0.77- large ES) Item 3.23: “I am confident of
measuring my progress in English learning on my own.” $z= -2.241$, $p=0.025$ (d=0.44 - medium Cohen’s ES).

Another noteworthy change was observed in Group One students’ readiness to further develop their autonomy. Results from the tests indicated that students were willing to take personal responsibility for identifying and amending their mistakes and difficulties in their learning. There was a significant difference in their willingness to check their own work for mistakes (Item 3.18) in the first survey compared to the second survey ($z= -2.084$, $p=0.037$) (d=0.35 – medium ES). These figures illustrated that post course, the students appeared to be more ready to take charge of their own mistakes in learning English. Moreover, these learners reported a more positive attitude towards their own role in dealing with their learning difficulties. There was a significant change in the responses shown for Item 3.12 “The teacher should say what my difficulties are” ($z=2.738$, $p=.006$, and $d=1.11$– large ES) compared to responses in the pre-surveys.

In summary, the students in both groups reported that they perceived themselves to be autonomous English learners in wanting to take an active role in classroom learning activities, and in wanting to be independent in their own EFL learning. Further findings suggest that Group One students experienced more significant changes in their levels of confidence and willingness to develop a stronger sense of their learning autonomy after having undertaken the English SL course. In contrast, there was no significant change in autonomy for Group Two participants.

5.3.2 Changes in ELLs’ motivation levels
In this section, learner motivation is discussed in the context of the students’ attitudes towards the English subject, the levels of their engagement with and investment in learning in terms of the amount of time students invested in their English language learning and in purchasing additional English language learning resources as a financial investment. Overall findings show that participants in Group One reported more significant changes in their levels of motivation compared to participants in Group Two.

Highly significant changes in attitudes to the English classes were found among Group One students. The results from the paired-sample Wilcoxon sign-ranked test indicated an extremely
significant change in attitude to English classes at Item 1.17 “I like the atmosphere of my English classes” \( z=-3.658, p=.000 \) in Group One. The results for Group One increased from 2 to 3 for the median and from 2 to 3 for the mode. In contrast, the corresponding figures for Group Two were exactly the same for the first and the second surveys with a median of 3 and a mode of 2. The Wilcoxon test results for Group Two are: \( z=-.056, p=.955 \).

Additional information about learners’ attitudes toward class learning in Group One was obtained from open-ended Questions 2 and 3 in the second survey. The results showed that the majority of students had positive comments to make about the teaching and learning methods, with 72.5% of the participants responding that they liked the teaching and learning methods in the English SL course. The participants reported that they liked the teaching and learning methods and the text-books, or the subject timetable or the course content. Their attitude towards the course influenced their engagement and investment in the English subject. (See Appendix 21: Open questions in post-course survey)

Some of the comments the Group One students made about the teaching and learning methods included:

… teaching method because it allows certain degree of flexibility… The course based mostly on group work and self-studying, not on teacher's fixed program (QTN2, M7: 39).

I am very impressed with the teaching and learning modes. There is comfortable space for students but enough pressure for us to try our best. The modes are really different from what I used to be taught in English several years ago. The content is great, too. In addition, the basic things which are required, we learned a lot beyond the textbook, like improving necessary skills and thinking our plans and future (QTN2:F19: 72).

I like the speaking and listening course in this semester very much: The content is interesting; it makes me awake/amazed through the whole class... The teaching and learning modes are suitable: we have many chances to interact with the teacher and
other classmates, we don't have to sit through the whole class, there are a lot of exciting activities in and outside the class, I have definitely learned and got involved (QTN2:F19: 53).

There was also a significant change in the effort that Group One participants put into their English learning. Item 1.1 “I think I am doing my best to learn English”: \( z = -2.294, p = .022 \). The median increased from 2.5 to 3, and the mode increased from 2 to 3, and an effect size \( d = 0.48 \) showed medium significance in this change.

Moreover, engagement with the use of English in the class context was higher in Group One after the course. Participants reported being likely to use English more frequently with their friends at university (Items 2.2). Results from the Wilcoxon test \( z = -2.678, p = .007 \) showed a highly significant change in the students’ perceptions of increased frequency in their use of English with university friends among Group One participants. The median and mode scores increased from 2 to 3.

Significant changes in the use of informal English were also observed in Group One from responses to Items 2.4, 2.1, and 2.8 in the second survey. A highly significant change in Group One was reflected in their engagement with English when speaking with foreigners (Item 2.4, \( z = -2.822, p = .005 \)). Also, the participants were more likely to speak English with family members (Item 2.1, \( z = -2.066, p = .039 \)). Moreover, they revealed in the second surveys that they chatted with friends in English more frequently (Item 2.8, \( z = -2.254, p = .024 \)). The median and the mode scores increased from 2 to 3 for this question. Another significant improvement in Group One was seen in their financial investment in English books and magazines (Item 2.11: \( z = -2.442, p = .015 \)). Further effect size \( d = 0.63 \) showed a medium positive significance in this change.

Group Two students reported significant changes in their use of formal English. The test results for Item 2.2: “How often do you discuss homework in English with friends at university?” were \( z = -2.479, p = .013 \). There was an increase in the median (from 2 to 3) and the mode (from 3 to 4) of the responses from this group (See Appendix 22A: Changes in frequency of using English with friends in the school context), which demonstrated that the students now used...
English more frequently with their university friends than before. There was also a significant change in the effort that Group Two participants put into their English learning. Item 1.1 “I think I am doing my best to learn English” (z=-2.202, and p=.028, and d=0.41- medium ES).

Another significant change observed in Group Two was in the level of their investment in activities related to the English speaking community’s culture. Responses to Item 2.13: “How often do you browse English language websites?” showed that students spent more time on English websites (Item 2.13: z=-2.193, p=.028, d=0.41- a medium ES). Similarly, for Item 2.6: “How often do you listen to English songs online?” they also reported in the second survey a higher frequency in their listening to English songs online (Item 2.6: z=-2.145, p=.032, d=0.37- a medium ES).

In short, the majority of 77 participants showed positive attitudes to English learning, high levels of engagement and investment in the subject, and keen interest in the cultures of English speaking communities. Most of the changes related to attitudes, engagement and cultural interest indicated a move to the more positive in the second survey question responses. Notably, Group One students demonstrated more significant changes in their attitudes towards, engagement with, and efforts exerted in their English classes.

5.3.3 Changes in ELLs’ sense of self
A significant change was found in Group One students’ perceptions of their sense of themselves as English learners based on the results of the Wilcoxon signed rank test (z=-2.334, p=.020). In the open question on the first survey “Do you think you are a good English learner?” more than 60% of Group One students reported that they did not see themselves as good English learners, and only 15.8% were confident in their English learning. There was a positive change in the second survey with 42% Group One students selecting “No” and 34% selecting “Yes, I am a good English learner”. In contrast, the figures for Group Two students were z=.654, p=.513 (p>.05), which indicated that there was not a significant change with respect to the students’ sense of themselves as being good English learners. (See Appendix 22B: Changes in sense of a good English learner in Group One)

Some of the students’ comments about the impacts of the English SL course included:
…because now I know how to develop a learning plan and bring it into action. I have the ability to point out my own strengths and weaknesses and therefore, I know exactly how to improve myself (QTN2. M3: 9).

I think that I am quite a good English learner because my English command can serve my communicational purposes well. I am able to use English to study other subjects and to entertain myself (QTN2, F40-71).

Both groups demonstrated a significant change in their sense of their future selves in becoming successful graduates in the near future. Item 1.5 “I can imagine myself as a successful graduate at graduation time”. Results from the Wilcoxon test were $z=-1.978$, $p=.048$ for Group One; and $z=-2.105$, $p=.035$ for Group Two.

Some changes in students’ perceptions of their sense of ought selves were observed in Group Two. Students were more likely to select “Somewhat like me” and “Very much like me” in response to the idea that studying English is important to bring honour to their family (Item 1.10: $z=-2.388$, $p=.017$). Also, participants in this group showed a change in their perceptions of the English learner because of their high need to meet graduation requirements. More students agreed that they had to learn English to pass the course and then to graduate (Item 1.14: $z=-2.553$, $p=.001$). Moreover, these students tended to strongly agree that they were highly motivated to study intensively in order to get good results in their English proficiency tests (Item 1.15: $z=-1.986$, $p=0.47$).

In summary, students had a strong sense of their ideal self currently as a good English learner and saw themselves becoming successful graduates in the future. A number of significant changes in the students’ sense of their ideal self were evident in the two groups, their sense of ought selves in Group Two and their sense of themselves as good English learners in Group One.

5.3.4 Summary of changes
Both Group One and Group Two students reported a number of changes in their perceptions of their own learner autonomy, their level of motivation to learn, and their perceptions of self.
Table 16 below provides a brief summary of the significant changes reported by the two groups.

**Table 16**

*Summary of Group One and Group Two Students’ Changes in Autonomy, Motivation and Sense of Self*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Group One</th>
<th>Group Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in autonomy:</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Find their own ways to learn</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Check for their own mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Measure their learning progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness in autonomy:</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Check their own work for mistakes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-Know their learning difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Attitude towards the English class</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efforts to learn English</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using English with classmates</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using English with foreigners</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking English with family members</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chatting with friends in English</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial investment</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to English songs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Browsing English websites</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of self</th>
<th>English learner self</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future self as a successful graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ought self:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-to bring honour to families</td>
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<tr>
<td>-to meet graduation requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>-to pass the course and to graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>-to get good results in English proficiency tests</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Also, responses to survey items showed positive correlations between learner autonomy and sense of self, between their motivation levels and sense of self, and between their motivation levels and autonomy. In contrast, there were no relationships between ELL family background, gender and travel experiences and their level of autonomy, motivation and sense of self.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the findings from two surveys. The first survey findings suggested that the majority of the 77 participants perceived themselves to be autonomous and motivated English learners with a strong sense of their ideal self. Further, the second survey findings pointed out that the majority of the 45 Group One participants saw significant changes in their perceptions of what the concepts autonomy, motivation and self meant for their own English language learning and how the intensity of these changed over the duration of the English SL course.

The descriptive analysis of the first survey responses showed key findings related to learners’ perceptions of their own autonomy, motivation and sense of self in learning English. In terms of learning autonomy, the majority of the 77 students perceived that they:

- Preferred to correct mistakes in their English learning themselves
- Could find out effective ways to learn beyond the subject textbooks
- Could evaluate their own learning process
- Could get involved in preparing for the lessons
- Preferred study beyond the textbook
- Preferred moving around the class and communicating with other students in English
- Did not prefer working alone in class activities
- Found pair/group work effective
- Could benefit from pair/group work even in the absence of teachers, and outside the class
- Evaluated feedback from their partners as an important resource for assisting them with their formal and informal learning
• Desired more autonomy in the classroom activities
• Were willing to and showed confidence in setting learning goals, making plans, finding out effective ways of learning, checking their own work and identifying their own strengths and weaknesses in English learning.

As well, they perceived teachers as:

• Agents with the authority to explain the English language and advise on how to learn English outside the class time
• Decision makers in relation to the selection of EFL learning activities and textbooks
• Advisors to tell students their weaknesses in English learning.

In relation to learners’ motivation to learn English, most of the 77 respondents perceived that:

• Their primary reasons for learning English were interest in the cultures of English speaking people, travelling and learning from the English news
• Most of the students possessed a positive attitude toward the English language and the English subject. They expressed the desire to learn the English subject despite their negative attitudes towards the English classes
• They put effort into learning English and speaking English with university friends, while they spent less time speaking English with foreigners or listening to English on the radio
• They liked music, movies and books in English, reading English materials, doing writing in English, listening to English songs and watching English TV programmes, and browsing English websites
• They also stressed the influential role the family played in their investment and engagement in their English language learning.

With respect to the learners’ sense of self, the majority of the 77 participants:

• Did not perceive that they were good English learners because of the classroom teaching and learning methods
Had a strong sense of ideal self as successful English users in their future jobs, or in their study or daily life. They also imagined themselves as successful graduates in the near future.

Believed that English was important for them to be considered as educated people in the society or that they did not want to get poor results in English international tests, and that people surrounding them expected them to learn English well.

Did not agree that learning English is necessary to bring honour to their family or that they would be considered a weak student without learning English.

The inferential data analysis generated findings in the changes in autonomy, motivation and sense of self amongst the two groups of learners before and after the English SL course:

Students in Group One reported positive changes in their willingness and confidence in developing a greater degree of autonomy, while no positive changes in autonomy were observed in Group Two students.

In terms of motivation, students in Group One showed more positive attitudes towards their English classes, put more effort into learning English, and used English more often with their classmates, with foreigners and family members. They also spent more money on English materials. By contrast, students in Group Two reported that they used English more with classmates, spent more time on browsing English websites and listening to English songs.

In the aspect of sense of actual self, students in Group One were more likely to perceive that they were good English learners, and that they would be successful graduates in the future. More students in Group Two perceived that learning English was necessary for them to bring honour to their families and that they did not want to get poor results in English tests.

The final key finding relates to correlations between the three factors: ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self. The finding shows that there are strong positive correlations between these three factors.
The following chapter will present findings related to learners’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self generated from five sets of qualitative data: the 15 participants’ written English language learning histories, the English learning diaries kept by 15 participants during the English SL course and the three interview rounds: pre-course, mid-course and the post-course interviews. The qualitative data presented in Chapter Six will elaborate significantly on the knowledge gained from the open questions in the surveys.
CHAPTER SIX

ELLs’ accounts of their perceptions of autonomy, motivation and self

6.1 An overview of chapter

This chapter begins with an introduction to the chapter’s purpose and content and unfolds around three main parts. The introduction is followed by an analysis of learners’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and self among participants before they joined the English SL course. Part Three presents an analysis of the changes in these perceptions observed after the participants had completed the English SL course, and draws out possible relationships between the three factors. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings drawn from the analysis presented and then provides a brief glimpse into Chapter Seven.

The theme-based analysis presented in this chapter emerged from data generated from 15 participants’ ELLHs, their learning diaries written during the English SL course, and these participants’ responses to the three interview rounds. Abbreviations to reference participants’ quotes are used in the order shown in the following examples:

- (ELLHLien: 3) The quote was extracted from the ELLH by the participant named Lien on page 3 of the transcript.

- (DLien: 6) = the diary was written by Lien on page 6

- (INT1TRSLien: 7) = the interview was extracted from interview round 1, translated by researcher, on page 7 of the transcripts.

6.2 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self prior to the English SL course

ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self before they joined the English SL course were captured through 15 participants’ ELLHs and their responses to the first interviews.
6.2.1 Section introduction
In general, ELLs perceived themselves as passive in the school context but more active beyond the school walls where interference from their parents was minimal. ELLs further found motivation to learn the English subject with positive attitudes and their varied engagement and investment in English. Besides, ELLs were not confident with their learning methods, hence seeing themselves as incompetent English learners, while they strongly believed that they would become good English users in the future. The following section presents in detail ELLs’ perceptions of their autonomy.

6.2.2 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy
The analysis of autonomy has at its centre a consideration of specific aspects of English learner autonomy, including the extent to which learners have control over the learning goals, techniques, strategies, materials, and assessment, and can reflect on their formal and informal learning contexts. In the analysis presented in the following, learners saw themselves as passive in school settings while they played a more active role in terms of selecting learning materials and strategies outside the classroom.

6.2.2.1 Examination-oriented, teacher-reliant and textbook-based formal settings positioning ELLs in passive roles
Three main points related to participants’ perceptions of autonomy included the examination-oriented formal settings, the teacher-reliant and textbook-based teaching mode and the passive position of learners in classrooms.

The examination-oriented approach to English teaching and learning is the most common theme that emerged from the participants’ ELLH and first interview responses. All 15 participants mentioned tests and examinations as key assessment tools they had experienced in the teaching and learning process. They learnt English as “a school subject with a sole aim to get high grades” (INT1TRSgia: 8). A common primary goal shared by all 15 participants in this qualitative aspect of the study was to pass their high school and university entrance examinations, hence their need to learn English. Lien stated that learning “to get into the English gifted class in the only and famous gifted high school” in her hometown was her important goal that she “had to achieve” (ELLH Lien: 1).
As a consequence, tests and examinations, of key significance to students’ educational goals and undertaken in the English language, played a key role in determining teaching and learning methods and classroom activities used to prepare the students for these educational ‘hurdles’. In preparation for tests, teachers and students focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary “while listening, speaking and writing skills was [were] left behind” (ELLHNgan: 3). Thai expressed his perspective on learning English at secondary and high school by saying “From the day I entered the secondary school to the day I departed from my high school, I was taught or, to be precise, stuffed, till I get enough knowledge for tests and examinations” (ELLHThai: 2). Thai described his learning process under pressures from school examinations with the feeling of being “stuffed”, being taught passively, and the feeling of boredom.

National English contests also shaped teachers’ choices in relation to the learning and teaching methods they used to prepare selected students. Three participants, selected for the school team to compete in the national contests, spent most of their time learning English in order to prepare for the competitions. Phu was selected for his Grade 11 school team that was competing for the Olympic English test in his province. His team spent one third of their lesson working from the textbooks and two thirds preparing for tests and mock examinations. Phu’s recall somehow showed his passive position in his high school learning when he said “Teachers told me that we needed to cover the textbooks”. It was the teacher’s decision to force Phu to learn at a faster pace, leaving students with no other options except that “we had to learn” to pass weekly tests (INT1TRSPhu: 3).

The second most common theme lies in the teacher-dominant and textbook-reliant teaching and learning environment. In their initial exposure to English, some participants described their teachers as having absolute authority in the class. Many depicted their teachers as the ‘god’ who knew everything about English and were perceived as decision makers in relation to classroom activities and lessons. Thai recalled how they “trusted” and “took in” whatever the teacher said and considered the teacher as the “one and only person on Earth to know English” (ELLH Thai: 1), and described his school learning as “a do-what-your-teacher-says process and timing depended on the schedule given by the teachers” (ELLH Thai: 1). Teaching and learning materials used in the class were limited to the subject textbooks. All 15 participants reported that they used the subject textbooks as the main source of their learning
at primary school. Tra stated that “we learnt from textbooks. Teachers taught based on textbooks. There was nothing other than textbooks” (ELLH Tra: 2).

Rote learning of new words and grammar was the typical learning technique for most learners in their primary school years. Rote learning techniques were applied when students practised writing new words and sentences. As Thai noted:

> I can hardly remember what I learnt in my first three years. All I can recall is that I had to write each new words [word] for 20 times in my notebook and do some sort of exercises in the textbook (rewriting sentences, filling the gaps, crossword puzzles and things like that. (ELLH Thai: 1)

It is interesting to see that the memories of English learning experiences in his primary time seemed a blur in Thai’s mind except for the copying task. Thai described such rewriting task as a compulsory one which he “had to” do. Similar to his opinion, Giao commented that “we were tortured to write each new word in five lines and two pages in full of new words as homework” (INT1TRS Giao: 2). Giao captured her feelings as being ‘tortured’ with such boring and time-consuming writing homework.

The third theme that emerged from the analysis was that students saw themselves positioned as passive learners in such a teacher-dominant environment. They described the classroom atmosphere and the passive nature of their learning in recalling the boring atmosphere of the class in which “the students were passive, it was just the teacher speaking and speaking alone” (ELLH Thao: 3). Again, teachers’ roles were emphasized as foregrounding the teacher as the main speaker and knowledge feeder who did most of “speaking and speaking alone”. Students felt passive when they “just write down” and “learnt mostly from what my teacher taught me” (ELLH Hue: 1). The teaching and learning method was just one-way in which teachers positioned students in a passive role. Most of ELLs “never thought about any plans or ways to advance English” (ELLH Hue: 1). In such an environment, with a lack of learner autonomy, ELLs did not find motivation for the subject as indicated in Nha’s narration: she “never gave it [English] a try” despite the bad marks (ELLH Nha: 1).
However, most of the participants reported that they wanted to be more actively engaged in their class learning with more interactions between teachers and students, and between students and students, despite being positioned as passive learners. Some typical comments from the participants’ ELLHs are that ELLs wanted to have opportunities to discuss and do some group work as they “needed something new and interesting” (ELLHNgan: 4).

In brief, participants reported experiencing examination-oriented, teacher-dominant and textbook-based teaching and learning in the school context. They also saw themselves as passive learners in such environments, and showed enthusiasm for more interactive formal classroom activities.

6.2.2.2 Learners’ active role outside school settings
The picture of learner autonomy in informal learning settings appears to contrast with that in the formal environment. Learning strategies were not limited to rote learning, and many participants regularly practised their language skills and accessed different learning sources.

ELLs reported that they enjoyed freedom in choosing learning materials and learning strategies in order to get well-prepared for school examinations and tests. Many recalled doing practice tests and exercises as the main learning method used to achieve good results. Reference books were used as the main source for their English learning at home as most participants had to be thoroughly prepared for their tests and examinations. A typical example was Thai. When in Grade 8, Thai spent most of the time completing exercises, particularly those in the Grammar in Use text; a popular text used at that time to prepare students for high school and university entrance exams. Thai was independent in selecting his own reference books and “test samples” which challenged him at a higher level of linguistic difficulty and knowledge of grammatical and syntactic features. Thai then chose “practice” as his primary effective learning strategy for high results in school examinations. Thai had a habit of doing all the exercises in reference books and advanced books before each school year. He completed a large number of mock tests in order to prepare for the examinations for entrance to high school and to the university. Thai expressed his contentment in his learning strategy when he wrote the “practice” method “worked pretty well for me” (ELLHThai: 2).

Moreover, there was a self-reported increase in independence levels of participants in choosing learning materials for their home study from their primary to university times. During their
primary school years, most participants reported that they used supplementary learning materials suggested by their teachers or provided by their parents. Tra listed her use of textbooks, reference books and cassette tapes as supplementary learning materials recommended by her English teacher during her extra classes.

ELLS started to find their own materials, particularly reference books, when they were in secondary school. Thai started searching for materials by himself when he was in Grade 8. He got the names of books from his classmates and asked his mother to buy them for him. Ly started to buy her own books when she was in Grade 8 or 9. Phu also bought reference books whenever he had a chance to go to Hanoi. The books Phu chose included grammar exercises, rewriting sentences and sample tests.

Dictionaries were mentioned as one of the main English language learning resources participants used as a learning source that helped them become more independent in their self-study. Thao bought her first dictionary when she joined an extra class and continued to use this for her self-study at home when “the exercises were tougher than those in the textbooks” (ELLHThao: 1). Ha found “it easy to learn English in high school time thanks to the dictionary” because she could “look up for new words in the dictionary” (INT1TRSHa: 20). Thai wrote about his perceptions of the teacher and his newly discovered learning material – the dictionary. The extra English course opened up a new horizon in Thai’s perceptions of the teacher and the English language knowledge. The teacher was no longer “the all-knowing god of English”, and the knowledge in the English textbook was compared with a “drop in the ocean”. Rather Thai saw the dictionary as his new “Holy Bible” which could bring him to the ocean of the English knowledge (ELLHThai: 1).

Many participants whose favourite subject was English used different learning resources to develop their learning strategies. English books, novels, movies, English channels, songs, news and music DVDs were popular resources for English language self-study by these participants. Le reported that she could do exercises from her sister’s books or from the books that she was interested in. For Le learning English was “a natural process” in which she “learnt new words from taking notes out of exercises, from movies, from the Internet” (ELLHLe: 2). Similarly, Thao preferred learning new vocabulary and improving her listening skills by watching English movies. In particular, Loan and Lan were interested in reading books. Loan
loved novels, and learnt English vocabulary and grammar by reading such books as *Emma* and *Robinson Crusoe*; whereas Lan was fond of reading ghost stories. These two girls also liked learning English by watching films or listening to music.

The Internet was mentioned as another main source of English language learning materials, which most participants had used since secondary school to the present. Phu reported that he took responsibility for his own learning and for choosing materials, with the Internet reported as the best way to access English learning materials. Phu started downloading materials from the Internet when he was in grade 10, and by the first semester at the university, he had about “100 Gigabyte of English materials, of all kinds” which he would “read gradually” (INT1TRSPhu: 5). Nha also used the Internet as a most useful English language learning resource, especially to improve her speaking skills. She joined PalTalk in order to talk with different people from all over the world and to practise speaking in preparation for her IELTS. She also used websites for English language news and videos. Other participants Le, Trang, Lan, Thuan and Giao also revealed that they learned English mostly from the Internet through watching movies, listening to music, reading novels and e-books, and even playing video games. As Thuan related, sometimes he also played video games because he thought “games are good resources too” (ELLHThuan: 1). More interestingly, Hang joined an online English-speaking club, from which she gained valuable learning from members of all different ages and through her engagement with other members was able to expand her English vocabulary.

In short, participants demonstrated more active roles in their informal learning context: they employed flexible learning strategies; and they sourced for themselves a wide range of learning materials including dictionaries, books, novels, music DVD, English channels and the Internet. There seemed to be a hierarchy for choosing learning materials among ELLS throughout their English learning histories: choices related to tests, choices recommended by teachers and then choices recommended by friends, and then by ELLs themselves with the use of books, novels, movies and the Internet. This hierarchy somehow showed an increase in independence of ELLs in selecting learning materials among ELLs in their informal learning settings.

In summary, a sharp contrast exists between the development of learner autonomy inside and outside the classroom. Most participants saw themselves as passive in examination and teacher-dependent formal learning environments and desired to play a more active role in the
classroom. However, they demonstrated a more independent learning style in their home learning with a variety of learning strategies and materials. The next section presents findings related to the participating learners’ motivation levels that were generated from participants’ learning histories and first interview responses.

6.2.3 ELLs’ motivation
As mentioned in Chapter Two, learner motivation factors comprise students’ attitudes towards the subject, their engagement and investment in the learning process. Findings show that although participants demonstrated positive attitudes towards the English language subject, their engagement and investment in English learning was varied throughout their learning histories.

6.2.3.1 Positive attitudes towards the English language subject
Fifteen participants reported generally positive attitudes towards the English subject, although five experienced negative attitudes at certain times during their English learning histories.

Of those five participants, Nha was not interested in learning English at primary school, so despite bad marks, she “never gave it a try” (ELLH Nha: 1). For Giao, her early English language learning was fraught with challenges. Giao described the “hard process” for her when her mother and teacher “had to force” her to learn English. Giao did not find motivation or interest in this subject because of her boring lessons. With negative attitudes towards the English subject at her primary school, Giao did not invest any time or efforts in learning English; rather she spent time playing soccer, despite “hard punishment” from her mother (ELLHGiao: 1, 2).

For others, language learning difficulties seemed to lead to decreased levels of motivation in learning English, particularly when the learning environment was new to students. Phu was highly motivated to learn English and was successfully enrolled in the gifted students’ English class. At first; however, he found his new more highly pressured learning environment stressful. Phu narrated “in the first month [in his gifted class], I was driven crazy. It was tiring and I was not familiar with the learning here, so I felt rather scared” (INT1TRSPhu: 3). Ngan faced similar feelings when she started her high school English classes, getting “tired of being between so-good-at-English students”; she hence “got bored with English” (ELLHNgan: 3).
Despite developing negative attitudes towards the English subject at some point in time, all participants reported generally positive attitudes in their ELLHs and first interview responses. Seven participants found learning the English subject interesting from their first experiences with this subject at their primary school, while others were more inspired and motivated to learn English when they entered secondary school.

For those who developed an interest in learning the English subject during their primary school years, English appeared as a new, “quite interesting and easy” subject (ELLHLien: 1) to learn compared to other school subjects. This sentiment was also captured by Ha, who felt inspired by the English subject. For Ha, English at first was a “strange language”, and it was attractive to her, as it inspired curiosity and hence motivation in her. Ha recalled vividly her feelings from being “bewildered” when she “did not understand well” to wanting to know more about that “strange language” (INT1TRSHa: 13).

Other participants who became interested in English at secondary school offered varied reasons for why and how this interest came about, including engaging with more interesting textbooks, listening to English music, meeting English speaking visitors and having a new teacher. Thuan found interest in the “renewed” English textbook (INT1TRSThuan: 1). Giao who used to be punished by her mother for her laziness found “listening to English songs was a new trend”, and she “started listening to English songs every day and started learning English carefully” (ELLHGiao: 2) without any force from her parents or teachers. Nha – the girl who never gave English a try despite her bad marks, “really enjoyed studying English” and even “studied in the English team at school” when she had a new and good English teacher, who “had a broad knowledge of English as well as an attractive way of teaching” (ELLHNha: 1).

Seven students reported that their liking for the English language remains unchanged since they first fell in love with this language, regardless of changes in their teachers or classmates or family circumstances. Loan started to learn English in Grade 3, and after one year she learned to love the subject when she had a new teacher who often introduced games and interesting activities to the class. Since that time, Loan maintained her passionate love for English “regardless of good or bad teachers” (INT1TRSLoan: 8). For Loan, the interest that she “built in the subject had never faded” since her last years at primary school, and she felt “more and more comfortable when it comes to English” (ELLHLoan: 7). Le reported having
similarly positive attitudes and a constant love for learning English as a subject and as a language. Her enthusiasm is reflected in her memories of dancing on the bed, singing English songs. Le wrote about her love for reading reference books and doing English homework. It was her passion for the English subject that inspired her to find pleasures in doing English homework, which “comes naturally” to her. Le’s curiosity in wanting to learn more about the subject and her passion in this subject led to her buying more “books to do exercises” (ELLHLe: 2).

In summary, participants generally reported positive attitudes towards the English language subject throughout their ELLHs, except for occasional periods in their experience. The following section explores in more detail the level of engagement and investment that the participants were prepared to put into their English language learning.

6.2.3.2 Varied engagement and investment in the English subject

Participants recalled that their investment in and engagement with the English subject was at times varied and that they engaged more with the English subject when preparing for entrance tests into gifted schools and/or national contests. Giao learnt English every day when she was in Grade 9 because she “had to pass the exam of three subjects including English with high results to go into the high school” (ELLHGiao: 2). Similarly, Ngan “spent five or six hours [a day] learning English and doing English exercises… and revising English lessons” because the high school she wanted to go to “required a really high entrance exam score” (ELLHNgan: 3). Also, Ha thought she “really learnt it [English] in Grade 8 at the secondary school” when the school had “a competition for excellent students who learnt English” (ELLH Ha: 1).

Similarly, participants said they spent more time learning English in preparation for the university entrance examination. Le reported spending four or five days a week learning English when she was in high school. Loan described vividly her learning atmosphere during her Grade 11 and Grade 12, when “the teachers gave us a lot of test [tests] and mock exam [exams] to prepare for the entrance exams to university, lessons were finished in the quickest pace we had ever had” (ELLHLoan: 1).

After beginning university studies, the majority of participants reported that they spent far less time learning English. Ngan said that in the first university semester she rarely studied English at home, except before the test. Others, including Lien, recalled “at high school, I learnt
English almost every day but now [at the university] I just spend half a day a week time” (ELLHLien: 3). In Minh’s view, it was during high school that she spent most of her time studying English for the sake of the university examinations. It is interesting to see Minh recalling her goal setting in passing the examinations and her efforts to achieve the set goals. And once the goals were accomplished, Minh let herself “rest for quite a long time” (INT1Minh: 6). Participants in general spent a significant amount of time learning the English subject in order to pass important examinations like university entrance exams or high school entrance exams. After the examination periods, students like Minh were likely to spend far less time on this subject, particularly after they gained entry into the university.

In brief, participants generally reported positive attitudes towards their English learning even though their efforts, engagement and investment were recorded in their learning history narratives as variable except for occasional periods in their learning experience. The next section will present primary findings related to participants’ sense of self before undertaking the English SL course.

6.2.4 Learners’ sense of selves as English learners and users
The concepts of self were discussed in Chapter Three, and findings on participants’ sense of self were also presented in Chapter Five. Further findings from ELLHs and first interview responses provide a greater depth of information about participants’ sense of themselves as English learners and users and their sense of their ideal and ought self. Although participants did not see themselves as good English learners, they strongly believed that they were good English users, they saw themselves as successful English users in the future with a sense of ought self.

6.2.4.1 Sense of English learners and users
The self of a good English learner and user is one kind of actual/own self which can reflect how one sees himself/herself at the present (Higgin, 1996). Findings strongly suggest that participants’ characteristics in some way influenced their preference for learning English. Six students preferred logic-based subjects, such as mathematics, to linguistic subjects. These students saw themselves as lazy if expected to learn by rote methods. In contrast, the other nine preferred linguistic subjects and had strong sense of self as good English users. Even
though they stated that they were confident in their language learning ability, few saw themselves as good English learners.

Nine participants perceived that they excelled at linguistic subjects like English, and seven of the nine participants perceived themselves as having extrovert personas. The nine students reported that they had a good memory, were good at imitating pronunciation and had a strong sense of their capability to learn languages. For them, rote learning of new words and grammar was particularly effective. Phu admitted that he found himself “good at languages” – both French and English (INT1TRSPhu: 7) thanks to his “quite good memory” and the fact that he had “learnt by heart every new word and everything” that the teachers taught in the class (ELLHPhu: 1). Similarly, Lan found learning English easier than other school subjects because she had “an almost photographic memory” and good imitation (ELLHLan: 2). Also, for Tra “new words just came into the mind naturally right at class” (ELLHTra: 1). These nine participants demonstrated independence in their English learning. They mentioned that they used English exercise or reference books, movies and novels as their main language learning materials outside the classroom. Tra said that she “practised a lot, watched a lot of English films and American movies” (INT1TRSTra: 21). Tra’s ability in learning English hence led to her engagement and investment in the subject.

These participants further showed a strong sense of self as English users. They commented that they found themselves better at using English to express themselves than using Vietnamese, and found English to be part of their own identity. Ngan found herself “crazy with learning” the English subject when she was inspired by “the happiness of seeing” herself “better at a strange language than other kids” (ELLHNgan: 2). Le preferred learning other school subjects in English as she found that she could “understand all the subjects better in English” (ELLHLe: 2). Particularly, Lan preferred her version of self as an English user to that of a Vietnamese speaker as she felt “more confident” when she spoke English. Lan narrated in her English learning history: “English is the main part of who I am. Without it, I think it would be extremely hard to survive” (ELLHLan: 5). Lan used the English language regularly in her daily life: watching movies, news, readings scary novels, speaking with her friends and writing her learning diaries as English had become one inseparable part of her life.
Despite the fact that most participants perceived themselves as independent English learners with their preferences in linguistics, and as competent English users, only three were confident that they were good English learners. The twelve other participants were not confident in talking about their sense of self as a good English learner. A common reason given was that they felt there was a lack of opportunities to engage in effective English language learning methods. Loan believed that she was “still studying at a slow pace” and did not think her method was “effective and powerful enough” (ELLH Loan: 3).

In short, few participants reported that they were good English learners even though they demonstrated confidence in using this language. The following will discuss their sense of future self, constituted in their ideal self as the person who ELLs want to be in the future, and ought self, the person whom ELLs think others want them to become in the future (Higgins, 1997).

6.2.4.2 Sense of an ideal self and ought self
Seeing themselves in the near future, participants demonstrated a strong sense of both their ideal self as successful English users and their sense of ought self with regard to English for family reasons.

Most participants envisaged themselves as being capable and competent English users in their daily life and in their future career. They believed that being competent in their use of written and spoken English would enhance their prospects of obtaining a visa for overseas study and on completion, improve their prospects of securing a well-paid job in an international or multinational company. Seven showed a strong sense of their ideal self as competent English users at graduation time in that they set goals to study abroad and spent time and effort learning the English language. As one of these students recalled: “Since the very first time I learnt English, I had a desire to become a good English user” (ELLPHu: 2).

Seven participants perceived themselves as wanting to take responsibility to become competent English learners and English language users as the ought self for family reasons. They reported that their parents were always proud of them, and hence placed high expectations on them. In her first interview responses, Lan mentioned her big family including her parents, aunts and uncles who were always “very proud” of her English competency. Lan therefore felt “a bit of pressure” when her family members showed their confidence in her
English learning ability, taking her “as a model” for her cousins and relatives (INT1TRSLan: 3).

Similarly, Giao emphasized her family status which put pressure on her, particularly when she was the eldest child in her extended family. The sense of ought self seems more evident in Giao’s story where she mentioned her family having a “well-educated” tradition with her grandparents being teachers. For Giao, being a good student was always a must for the sake of the family honour, and as one of the important traditions in Vietnam, the eldest child is usually under the most pressure to become a good learner and good model for his or her siblings, cousins and relatives (INT1TRSGiao: 6).

Another facet of the sense of ought self was seen in Ngan’s recall when she saw her own image of passing the university entrance examination partly because of the pressure caused by her father’s “high position” in his working place. In Ngan’s recall, it was her mother who emphasized Ngan’s responsibility to keep the family honour.

   It means that mum often tells me to pass the university exam because my father was in a high position in his company in which some of his colleagues’ children also joined the university exam that time. So mum said I should try my best to pass the exam to keep his honour. (INT1TRSNgan: 8)

In the same vein, some others also felt pressure from their parents to be a model for or to follow the model of their siblings or relatives. Thuan “felt rather tired” as his mother wanted him “to be a model” for his younger brother (INT1TRSThuan: 2), while Lien found it a pressure that her parents wanted her “to follow” her sister’s image; “she is a bright model” (INT1TRSLien: 3).

Participants perceived that they would be good English users in their near future and some believed that they needed to be good English users in order to be the model for or to follow the model of their siblings. The next part will discuss the key findings related to the roles of significant others on ELLs sense of self in their English learning processes. Also, a number of other people who stimulated and motivated them to learn English included school teachers, extra-class teachers, parents, relatives and friends.
6.2.5 Roles of parents, siblings and relatives in ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self

6.2.5.1 Significant others and ELLs’ autonomy

Findings show that parents enhanced their children’s autonomy outside the classroom in various ways. Except for a few parents who were decision makers in their children’s English learning experiences and learning resources, other parents frequently left the decisions about how to learn to the learner, but provided support, often in the form of money to buy learning materials or to pursue some extra English courses.

For two of the participants, their parents set goals for their children’s English learning. Ngan recalled her parents as the main decision makers when it came to her English learning study goals. In her first interview and ELLH, Ngan narrated how her parents were involved in setting study goals for her from primary school up to university, recalling that “My parents often set goals for me. You need to do this, you need to do that” (INT1TRSNgan: 4), and “Now [in the university time] my parents want me to get high results in IELTS, so they keep urging me to study it” (INT1TRSNgan: 11). Thai only got support from his mother to help him learn English effectively when he was at primary school because his mother used to learn English. Thai’s mother “could help make decisions on” Thai’s learning English “like how to learn vocabulary and on kinds of English materials” (INT1TRSThai: 1).

In contrast to the above parents, most of the other participants’ parents allowed their children independence in learning English at home. One of the reasons for this is that some parents had not learned English. Although Phu’s family had a tradition of learning French since the time he started the English subject at school, his parents never interfered with his English learning. Hue’s family was typical in that her mother worked locally as an accountant and her father often worked far from home; hence Hue took responsibility for her English learning. In similar ways, others including Lan, Loan, Thao and Nha, Tra and Thuan recalled:

My father was a driver and my mother worked at a factory at that time (then she moved to work at a vocational school). So I had to find my own way of learning, decide the time and location myself. (ELLHTra: 1)
My parents don’t know much about English, so they can only encourage me. Most of the time I learn English together with my classmates and friends, and we often share each other interesting materials. (ELLHThuân: 1)

Tra’s father was a driver and her mother was a factory worker without knowledge in the English language, so they did not interfere directly in her English learning. Tra was therefore granted independence in her own learning process. Similar to Tra, Thuan learnt English mostly from and with his classmates and friends.

6.2.5.2 Significant others and ELLs’ motivation
Teachers at schools, in extra English classes or centres played an important role in motivating and stimulating participants to learn English. Except for Hue, who related experiencing some negative influences from her teacher, the teachers of other participants inspired them to take up English as one of their subjects. According to Loan, she got interested in the English subject when she was in Grade four at primary school, where she had a new teacher who “used a lot of games, images in the lesson, plus she smiled a lot, which eased the tension in the classroom and made the lessons more interesting” (ELLHLoan: 1). For Phu, after briefly experiencing a difficult time at his high school for gifted students, his teachers’ compliments and teaching methods motivated him to learn the subject. As he recalled in his first interview: “In my Grade 11, my male English teacher often gave us new and strange kinds of exercises like English idioms and collocation. I really like these types and I learned a lot” (INT1TRSPhu: 3, 4).

According to the 11 study participants who took extra English language classes in their communities, the teachers of these classes fuelled their interest and motivation to learn the English language. Tra wrote about the teacher in her extra class as the person who helped her by recommending particular English language learning materials and as the person who brought her to the English language. Thao wrote about her own extra class teacher as the person who brought out her “curiosity and liking for English”, and who helped her to achieve high grades in this subject (ELLHThaо: 1). With Ngan, Ms. B in her extra class was the first person who had brought her confidence that she could also learn English well. Ngan narrated: “after the placement test, Ms. B looked at me and said: ‘you have ability to learn English’. The first time after many years of learning, I actually thought I could learn English well” (ELLHNgaо: 2).
Thai had an interesting story about his first extra class, in which he found an intrinsic liking for the English language. After this class, learning the English language seemed to become more significant to him. Thai reported his strenuous efforts and engagement in learning English once he found a love for this language and subject: “I devoted my love, my time and my efforts to her [the English subject], and she [the English subject] brought me happiness, joy, satisfaction and sometimes honour” (ELLHThai: 3). It was a change he understood as due to having a good teacher, whom he very much liked. Accepting his friend’s invitation to join an extra class somehow illustrated Thai’s increased independence in his learning decision-making process. Thai’s very first course was described as a short course, but an influential impetus for him, which “had changed my life forever” as he recalled (ELLHThai: 1). Thai’s passion for the English language subject sprang not only from the knowledge in English grammar, and the interesting features of the English language itself that Thai gained from the course but also from the learning process with teachers who “succeeded in showing me how fun learning English could possibly be” (ELLHThai: 1).

For some, learning with foreign teachers at English language learning centres also provided them with new teaching and learning environments within which they had opportunities to communicate with English native speakers and learn about their cultures as ways to improve their confidence in listening to and speaking English. Nha found herself motivated to learn the English language once she had opportunities to use the language, “speaking with correct pronunciation and intonation” in an “authentic English course” (ELLHNha: 2). Nha found motivation and inspiration when she could “study a real English”, as for her English only became real when she could speak, listen, read and write in the language. Nha vividly described her learning strategy and her progress in learning the speaking skill from the feeling of being an ‘idiot’ when she tried to speak English for the first time to the feelings of astonishment at her improvement.

Apart from their teachers, participants mentioned their parents, relatives and friends as influential factors in their motivation. Fifteen participants mentioned that their parents played significant roles in their English learning. For many, their parents introduced them to the English language. Ten recalled when their parents sent them to their first extra classes in which they found the motivation for learning English. Eight reported that their parents spent a
considerable amount of their hard-earned money on their English materials, including audio-cassettes, videotapes, books and reference books. Three others recalled that their love for the English language became ingrained when as younger children they listened to their parents’ favourite English music. Ngan thought that she “had contact with English quite soon” when she “was just a little girl”, being exposed to the English through her father’s favourite English songs by “BSB, Boy zone, UB40, Money M, ABBA and the Bee Gees” (ELLHNgan: 1).

Moreover, ten participants recalled their friends as influential players in their increased motivation to learn English as a school subject. Six mentioned how the competitive environment they experienced in their gifted high school had positive impacts on their motivation levels. Hang wrote about her talented classmates whose English levels “encouraged” her to try her best to be as excellent as them. (ELLHHang: 1). Similarly, Lien found motivation to learn English because “the fact that they [the classmates] were all trying to learn English pushed me up any time I felt like a coward and lost power” (ELLHLien: 4).

6.2.5.3 Significant others and ELLs’ sense of self
Significant others influenced learners’ sense of actual/other self (exemplified by the question, How do others see me at the present?) and their sense of ideal and ought self. All of the participants reported that significant others, including their siblings, relatives, neighbours, parents’ friends and colleagues, their friends and teachers, saw them as competent English learners, particularly after they gained entry into such a well-known university. Lien recalled in her first interview that “Of course, many people think and complement me that I am good because this is a famous university” (INT1TRSLien: 3). Thao, who used to hate the English subject at primary and secondary school, who found only extrinsic motivation in passing the English test, and who perceived herself as a slow tortoise in learning English, now gained her confidence in learning English when she found her actual/other self: “My friends admired me, the English teacher liked me a lot” (ELLHThao: 1). On one hand, Thao perceived herself as an incompetent English learner, as she did not have “a little bit of intrinsic ability” for the English subject (ELLHTha: 4). On the other hand, she felt more confident when she saw that other people, including her friends and her English teacher, admired and liked her because of her high result in the English tests. Similarly, Giao perceived herself more confident, recalling “My cousins looked at me admiring their big sister, and my grandparents were pleased [with my study result]” (INT1TRSGiao: 6).
Further, cousins, relatives, neighbours and parents’ friends and colleagues were also reported as being significant others in relation to some participants’ sense of their ideal self and ought self as presented in Section 6.2.4.2. Nine participants described the influence of their cousins and relatives, such as their uncles and their aunts, on their sense of ideal self. Six other students mentioned the influence of their neighbours and their parents’ friends or colleagues on their sense of ought self in learning English. Thuan said he “was influenced by a cousin. She used to be very good student with scholarship, so mum often told me to follow her way” (INT1TRSThuan: 5).

In short, although participants were not likely to see themselves as good English learners, they were more confident in seeing themselves as good English users in both the present and the future. Also, significant others played influential roles in ELLs’ sense of self and motivation in learning the English language subject.

6.2.6 Summary of ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and self before the course

This section has presented an analysis of key findings on participants’ learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self before they had undertaken the English SL course. The analysis highlighted four key findings. Firstly, participants were more active in their use of English outside the school setting. Second, they possessed positive attitudes toward the English subject despite their inconsistent investment and engagement in their English learning. Thirdly, although they did not see themselves as English learners they were more confident about being good English users, and had a strong sense of ideal and ought selves. Also, significant others played influential roles in participants’ development of learner autonomy, their motivation levels in English learning as well as in their sense of self. The following presents an analysis of the findings related to changes in participants’ perceptions of their developing autonomy, their levels of motivation and perceptions of their sense of self after completing the English SL course.
6.3 ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self after the English speaking-listening (English SL) course

Fifteen participants’ learning diaries, along with their second and third interview responses generated findings about changes in their autonomy, motivation levels and sense of self after they had joined the English SL course.

6.3.1 An overview of the section

Participants reported an ability to set goals and make learning plans, carry out self and peer-assessment, and monitor their achievements in reaching their learning goals and completing their learning plans for speaking and listening skills in particular. Further, participants demonstrated high motivation levels in learning English through a variety of class activities, especially elective corner activities (ECAs). They also demonstrated a more vivid sense of their future English user and learner selves with more detailed future English learning plans than before the course. Their plans detailed their English learning in the summer after the course and in the near future of 3–5 years. They also mentioned plans for self and peer-study in order to achieve their future goals.

6.3.2 Changes in ELLs’ autonomy

In the first three lessons of the English SL course, participants learnt about the importance of setting goals and making plans in their English learning process. Lien found it “interesting and motivating” when she could “raise her voice in how to learn English best” (INT2TRS Lien: 3). ELLs set specific goals for the English SL course. Some, like Phu, aimed to achieve high marks in speaking and listening skills in the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or Point 7 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Some aimed to improve their confidence in speaking in the class and to brainstorm ideas for their presentations. Others wanted to learn more about English-speaking cultures. Participants Lan and Thai felt confident in their English speaking and listening and wished to have opportunities to sharpen their skills and to make more friends. Although contented with her listening skills, Loan set specific goals to improve her “intonation, fluency and pronunciation” in her speaking skills after being instructed on how to identify her strengths and weaknesses in these skills (INT2TRS Loan: 4).
With clearly defined goals, participants described their detailed plans, which they made during the course. Participants demonstrated their confidence in making their own learning plans and selecting which class activities they would like to host and/or to join, when and with whom to practise their speaking and listening tasks outside the class, and how much time to spend on these two skills. Although the assigned homework was optional, some participants, like Lien, aimed to complete “all the homework and listen to exercises outside the textbooks” (INT2TRSLien: 1). Ngan spent a few hours a week watching English movies and English TV programs to improve her listening skills. Loan utilised the dictionary and pronunciation corner activities in order to improve her intonation and speaking skills. She also used other resources to improve her listening:

> After I joined Pronunciation corner and read your text, others commented on my intonation, and I practised more at home. I read books aloud (As usual, I just do reading in silence) I repeat movies. I also watch Discovery channel. Pronunciation there is clear, easy to listen to even though there is no subtitle. (INT3TRSLoan: 4)

Loan’s experience in the Pronunciation ECA led to changes in her learning strategies when she became aware of her weakness in pronunciation and intonation. Loan started to “read books aloud” rather than “just do reading in silence”, to repeat movies and watch Discovery channel. Loan’s readjusted learning plan aimed to improve her pronunciation.

Further, participants conveyed after the course that they had attained their defined goals. Phu, like some other participants, gained confidence in speaking in class and hence saw improvement in his speaking skills. Thai was contented as he could make friends and felt comfortable in talking with classmates and being able to “present some ideas in English” (INT2TRSThai: 3). In one of his learning diaries, Thai wrote: “The goals I set last week were partly accomplished. I did have conversations with classmates who I have never talked before” (DThai: 2). Others recalled that:

> My aim was to get 7 (on the IELTS scale) for my speaking and listening skills by the end of the course … I planned to speak English (not Vietnamese) in all English classes,
do all the exercises and practice listening everyday … It seems to me that my skills have improved somehow during the course. (INT3TRSLien: 1)

Recently, I prepared carefully for my pronunciation, using a dictionary for new words. It is working really well. My plan is going well too. (INT3TRSLoan: 4)

I set goals to improve my skills. And I can see that my skills improved after the course. (INT3TRSGiao: 9)

These students – Lien, Loan and Giao – all mentioned that their set learning aims or goals had somehow been attained with their learning plans throughout the English SL course. With Lien, it was her target of scoring 7s in the IELTS speaking and listening skills subtests that guided her in planning to “speak English in all English classes”, which she and her classmates had not customarily done before the course. Loan was inclined to using dictionaries to enrich her vocabulary and improve her pronunciation, while Giao saw a close link between her goals to improve the skills and her goal attainment after the English SL course.

When talking about self-assessment, participants’ interview responses suggested contradictory opinions. Five students, including Loan, Giao, Thuan, Ha and Hue, showed a lack of confidence in evaluating their own learning process, while the others found it quite comfortable and were confident about assessing themselves. For these five students, it was “not reliable to self-assess” in comparison with peer-assessment or teacher assessment processes (INT3TRSLoan: 5). Thuan also thought that he tended to be “more generous in self-assessment” (INT3TRSThuan: 6). In contrast, the other participants reported that they felt comfortable and satisfied with their self-assessment. Ngan’s interview responses revealed a positive outcome: “self-assessment helps me review what I have done well, and get experience to utilize my time” (INT3TRSNgan: 1).

For most participants, the self-reflection activity was considered a helpful part of self-assessment, as it helped them to evaluate how they had been studying and to orient their future plans. Loan reported that reflection assisted her to decide what and how to change in her learning plan because “as usual without a reflection, I did not pay much attention to myself when days passed by” (INT3TRSLoan: 6). As a result, she decided to spend more time
preparing for her speaking with a focus on intonation and pronunciation. With Thao, the very first reflection seemed to have influenced her future learning plan, in which she would devote more time and energy to her speaking and writing skills. Participants Lien, Phu and Hue made similar comments on the usefulness of reflection:

I think it is really useful as I can review my own study and others’, and see how hard I have tried or what obstacles I have faced. More important is I can see how I have learnt in a period of time. What changes I have made. I think it is useful and pretty influential.

(INT3TRSHue: 6)

Hue mentioned the reflection process as “useful and pretty influential” as she could “review her “own study and [that of] others” and see the efforts she had exerted in learning the English language subject, as well as considering her own difficulties. It is also interesting to note that Hue could evaluate her learning strategies and the changes she had made in her learning plans through the reflection time.

Participants also held positive opinions on peer-assessment which, according to their interview responses, helped them learn from their own mistakes and learn from their classmates as well. Giao revealed that her vocabulary had improved after getting feedback from her classmates that her vocabulary was poor. She decided to learn new words every day through reading English texts. When she tried working as a tutor for children, Giao focused on her pronunciation and use of vocabulary. Ngan experienced similar changes in her learning plan when her partners commented on her improper vocabulary usage and poor ideas. She said “I realized that I need to improve my vocabulary and try to think actively in English rather than to think in Vietnamese and translate into English” (INT3TRSNgan: 2). Others, like Ha, said they could learn from their peers. Not only did Ha find it useful in her self-assessment but she also saw benefits from her peer evaluation in that she could learn from her classmates’ “good and bad points”, and more importantly for her, she was able to “take their [her classmates’] good points as my own goal” (INT3TRSHA: 4).

Participants including Tra reported that they felt satisfied with being evaluated and assessed by their partner in pair-work and by peers in group-work because she found it fair, saying that “to be honest, I used to be confident that my speaking was good. But with their [her peers’]
feedback that I made mistakes here and there, I could realize that they were right…and I felt satisfied with their evaluation” (INT3TRSTra: 2). The feelings of confidence in self and peer-assessment reflects changes in these ELLs’ perceptions of the teacher’s role and the learners’ role in the assessment process, which demonstrated that the ELLs were feeling more autonomous in classroom learning.

In short, these findings show that participants became more autonomous in their English learning with an ability to set learning targets, to make plans, to self- and peer-assess and to reflect on their own learning progress, and hence become more confident with their English learning. The next section discusses the influence of learner autonomy on participants’ motivation levels.

6.3.3 Enhanced autonomy and ELLs’ motivation

Varied activities during the English SL course provided learners with chances to make choices and make their own decisions about where, when and how to practise their speaking and listening skills. Participants further described their highly positive attitudes and how they both invested and engaged in class activities to a greater extent than before the course.

Various class learning activities, including pair-work, debates, group-work and a buddy program, helped to enhance the students’ motivation. Positive attitudes towards classroom learning were reported by the 15 participants, who said that they loved the course because of its varied activities. With varied activities, ELLs could interact more freely with each other, and they “loved the way of learning because learners could interact and socialize” (INT3TRSLan: 3). Tra was satisfied with her buddy and group-work as they were effective in motivating her, and she realized that she could learn a great deal from her partners. Minh said she liked the different classroom arrangement of tables and chairs and a different partner to talk with in each lesson because “it was interesting and stimulated our needs to learn and to speak English in the class” (INT3TRSMinh: 1). Minh further shared her thoughts about her learning progress:

After a long time without practising speaking, I found kind of getting the feeling back.

Different activities stimulated me to learn and then once I speak more often, I can feel my skills getting better, more confident with faster responses and richer vocabulary.
like the slang I learned from others. It became faster to find words and ideas to speak than before thanks to my regular practice. In general, I like those kinds of activities.

(INT3TRSMinh: 1)

Having been stimulated by the classroom elective activities, Minh invested more time in practising speaking, and hence gained confidence when she saw improvement in her “responses and richer vocabulary like the slang”, and in finding “words and ideas to speak”.

Participants at the end of the course claimed that they spent an average of 1 – 2 hours a day on English at home. They all planned to increase the amount of self-study time once they completed the semester. During that semester, they attended a Management course with a professor from the USA, which required them to spend a great deal of time in preparation. Participants said that they tried to maintain their habits in reading, writing, speaking and listening to English. Lan and Loan continued reading English novels and writing in English. Thuan and Le preferred reading the news or watching fashion shows on the Internet. Also, Thai had just made reading CNN news his new learning habit because it “contained a lot of interesting news that I did not use to pay attention to” (INT3TRSThai: 5). Most, including Tra and Lan, liked watching English movies and listening to English music. Besides, Lien started speaking English with her sister at home, and Hue learnt English with her elder brother. Tra was interested in recording or filming herself speaking English, and she had put some funny videos on her Facebook page. Loan talked particularly about resuming her habit of doing homework.

In short, participants reported being inspired and motivated to learn English both in and out of the classroom. English was considered not only one school subject but a language of communication for socializing with other students. ELLs’ attitudes, engagement and investment were enhanced by the English SL course. The next part presents findings related to changes in learners’ perceptions of their future selves.

6.3.4 Vivid future self with specific learning plans
Participants envisaged their ideal selves more vividly as successful English users and developed detailed short and long-term learning plans. Participants saw themselves as being good English users by the time they graduated from the university. Ngan said she would feel
confident with her English competency in the future when she would use English regularly. Similarly, Minh confirmed that her current study plan helped her to improve her English and her confidence. She had a clear vision of herself working as a marketing staff member for a global company and corresponding in English. Thao and Tra had a similar sense of their future selves as competent English users because they were confident with their current learning plans and efforts in this language. Hue saw herself optimistically as a fluent English user with a 7.5 band in IELTS by her graduation time, even though she self-evaluated as a weak English learner compared to her current classmates.

Participants also identified their future English learning goals and plans. Many set goals to improve four skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – during the coming summer in order to prepare for IELTS or TOEFL tests. They planned to take their test in the following year, which helped them to be well-prepared for their future overseas study. Thirteen participants planned to do their Masters study in an English speaking country such as England, Australia or the USA. Lien intended to pursue her Masters study in the USA, as such she planned to “take the test (IELTS) by the end of the third university year” (INT3TRSLien: 2).

Participants kept elaborating and revising their future learning goals and plans during the English SL course. Seven reported that they had changed their learning goals and plans in considering their priorities and planning their time for the coming two or three years. Some had decided not to spend a great deal of time on their social activities at the university or on part-time jobs; instead they chose to focus on their overseas study goals:

I have changed my learning plan to utilize my study time. I have collected enough English materials, and developed a detailed plan with specific amounts of daily time on English learning. And my big brother also learns IELTS this summer. I think it will motivate me and him to learn together. And I have a timetable for both to learn all the skills. (INT3TRSHue: 4)

After the English SL course, Hue reported changes in her learning plans which aimed to “utilize my study time”. In her readjusted plans, Hue had prepared carefully for her self-study at home with detailed schedules and collecting of learning materials. More important is that
Hue demonstrated her motivation when she had plans to “learn together” with her big brother in preparation for her IELTS tests.

Many other participants, like Hue, also reported their plans for self and peer future learning. Ngan and others would look for an English speaking club to practise her speaking while keeping a diary in English at home to improve her writing skills. Nha wanted to practise speaking via Skype with her friends. Ha wrote about her plan for IELTS learning: “I think in summer when we have a lot of free time, it is awesome idea to study IELTS together with other students” (DHa: 4). Ha subsequently decided to study for the IELTS test in the summer after the English SL course:

I will study by myself because it is faster to self-study reading and listening skills than to learn with teachers. I can self-study speaking skills too. I have a friend living close by who also intends to learn IELTS, so we will learn together... We plan to learn together this summer, as our houses are so close, we can practise speaking and learn together. I will ask other teachers or you to check my writing. (INT3TRSHa: 1)

Besides her plans in reading and listening self-study, Ha had the intention to practise speaking with her next-door friend, and seek her teachers’ help with her writing skills. It seems that Ha was so highly aware of her strengths and weaknesses in the English subject as well as her learning strategies that she was confident in making her learning plans.

In general, participants showed their confidence in perceiving who they were and who they would be in the future and thus knew what they needed to do to realize their desired future selves.

6.3.5 Impacts of the elective corner activities (ECAs)
Participants generally confirmed that the success of ECAs depended on the host students’ preparation. According to Ha, Thuan and Thai, in the first lessons, these activities at first did not appear attractive to students as “they did not have much experience in how to organize their corners” (INT2TRSLien: 2). However, soon after that “students spent time preparing carefully and new ideas came, every corner then became so interesting” (INT3TRSHa: 7). Common comments included “We found corner activities were interesting and attractive”
“(INT3TRSNgan: 12), and “If hosts prepare carefully with interesting things, there will be more participants” (INT3TRSLoan: 12). When students were busy with other subjects, like Management with the USA professor, they spent less time developing corner activities, and thus some corners became less interesting. They tended to join “It’s me” or “My ideal person” corners as these corner activities “did not require much time to prepare for and also a good chance to speak English” (INT3TRSHa: 7).

ECAs; however, were reported to enhance the ELLs’ autonomy by providing them with options to be hosts or followers of their chosen activities. Lan, Phu, Giao and Tra selected activities that they were confident in and in which they could share their learning strategies with others. Lan chose to be host of the Fluency corner because she believed that she was good at fluency, and she also saw that some of her classmates had difficulties in their fluency. Lan suggested a number of drama activities to practise listening and speaking fluency. Others chose activities which they believed would support their learning processes. Lien hosted the “My Pronunciation and Vocabulary” corner activity more often than other corners because she wanted to improve her pronunciation and increase her vocabulary. She found useful things when she was in Phu’s corner. Lien could learn a great deal from “his way to prepare for the activity, his vocabulary learning strategy, and his enormous sources of learning materials” (INT3TRSLien: 3). Hue chose to host “My Pronunciation” because she thought it was beneficial for her pronunciation. It was for her “a chance to force myself to practise and I need to prepare carefully for this… and to practise reading all the prepared documents” (INT3TRSHue: 8). Others, including Loan, selected the activities they had ideas about and an interest in as a host or follower.

ECAs further enhanced the ELLs’ confidence in learning and using the English language in the classroom. Twelve participants related that they felt more confident in their speaking and listening skills. Ha recalled she became “far more self-confident” in her communication with her classmates in English than before the course because she “got inspired by the course” (INT3TRSHA: 2). Similarly, Lien found a significant change in her confidence, particularly in her speaking skills, when she narrated that “with more class practice and higher levels of confidence, I got better at speaking” (INT3TRSLien: 1). Thai also shared that he had noted a “great deal of improvement” in his confidence, and he “did not any longer experience the
feeling of being insecure when sharing his opinions with friends” (INT3TRSThai: 6). Other students, including Ngan, Giao, Minh, Nha and Phu, said that they could now think in English and could debate with classmates using fluent English.

I used to be shy to speak English. I often speak Vietnamese in a loud voice, but when it came to English, my voice became so soft that it could hardly be heard. I find myself recently more confident with much improvement in speaking English. It seems that the environment with more speaking opportunities makes that kind of speaking habit in me….The topics for speaking were varied beyond the class lessons, so I feel I’m getting more knowledge, and the way I organize my talk, my voice and my intonation and so on have also improved. (INT3TRSGiao: 10)

Giao discussed her changes from a shy English speaker with soft voice “that could hardly be heard” into a confident, well-organized and competent English user, improving in intonation and organizing ideas. Giao’s progress in speaking ability and confidence was attributed to the classroom learning “environment with more speaking opportunities” and “varied” speaking topics. As a result, Giao built up a “kind of speaking habit”.

ECAs helped the ELLs develop their sense of actual/own self when they were given more opportunities for real communication in the class. Through ECAs, Le and her classmates learnt more about each other’s beyond-the-classroom-wall lives, which brings meaningful and authentic communication into the class. Similarly, Ngan shared one “meaningful and helpful corner” in which “you had to use your speaking skill to convince people that you were deserve to live. It was a lesson about life” (DNgan: 4). Nha also talked about the “It’s me” corner, in which students asked for and shared advice about love affairs and friendships.

People talked about their own stories and shared their experiences and gave advice. I felt comfortable and helpful. We became closer, and through this we felt much closer… we talked in English, so we felt much more comfortable than talking in Vietnamese. It is also helpful. (INT3TRSNha: 2, 3)
Nha’s description illustrated real communication created through the ECAs between herself and her classmates as real people about their real problems and solutions in the classroom contexts. Further, the ELLs found it “comfortable and helpful” in developing closer bonds and relationships with each other. Through such a kind of authentic communication, ELLs had opportunities to negotiate their own sense of self as English users rather than as Vietnamese speakers with feelings of being “much more comfortable than talking in Vietnamese”. In general, ECAs “produce favourable outcome surpassing” the ELL’s expectations (DPhu: 6).

6.3.6 Summary of changes
Findings presented in this section show that participants became more autonomous after the English course when they knew how to set goals, make plans, evaluate their own and their peer learning processes and to conduct their own reflections. They also became more motivated within the class learning activities. Moreover, they reported a vivid image of future ideal self as successful English users by the time of their graduation as well as in the near future.

6.4 Summary of key findings from theme-based qualitative data analysis
This chapter has presented an analysis of the data generated from 15 participants’ English language learning histories, their learning diaries, their responses to three interview rounds related to learner autonomy, motivation levels and sense of self from their initial English learning experiences at primary school to their undergraduate entry into university. The findings were captured through two snapshots: before and after the participants’ engagement in the study’s English SL course. The analysis identified six key findings related to the research questions.

Firstly, on learner autonomy, one of the preliminary findings from the ELLHs and the ELLs’ responses to the first interview round is that, prior to the English SL course, the ELLs saw themselves as more passive in classrooms where teachers were seen to have absolute authority compared to their more active authoritative selves when outside of the classroom context. In more formal learning settings, they perceived the teacher as the person who makes most learning decisions related to the learning process, such as setting student achievement goals through the use of tests and examinations, selecting textbooks as the main learning materials
and using tests and exams as the only assessment tools. Participants, however, reported that they selected more varied learning resources such as dictionaries, books, novels, and videotapes for their informal learning.

Secondly, in relation to English language learners’ motivation levels, it was found that for many participants, although they had positive attitudes towards the English language and English as a school subject, they reported experiencing different levels of engagement and investment in this subject at different stages of their English learning trajectories. Participants who perceived themselves to be intrinsically motivated towards the English language reported that they were able to maintain a positive attitude and high levels of engagement and investment in English learning.

Moreover, in a third key finding, participants reported a strong sense of their actual own self and actual other self (See Chapter Three) in concert with their sense of being an English learner and user. They perceived that aspects of their personalities, such as the ability to learn through rote learning methods or to develop a genuine liking of the language, are important factors playing into their decisions to choose English as their major at university level. They also believed that others saw them as competent English learners and users as they had passed the entrance exam to such a well-known university. As well, while most believed that they are not competent English learners due to a lack of effective learning methods, some demonstrated a high level of confidence when writing and/or speaking English. Many participants also saw themselves as successful English language users in the future because being fluent English users was considered a condition of increasing their chances of studying or working abroad after their graduation.

The fourth finding that emerged from the analysis process is that significant others play an influential role in the development of learner autonomy, levels of motivation and perceived sense of self. Parents helped to enhance their children’s learning autonomy outside the classroom context. Also, teachers, parents, relatives and friends were seen to play the most important role in the participants’ learning motivation levels. Besides, participants also mentioned their parents, siblings and relatives as influential others in their sense of self.
The fifth finding shows that the ELLs experienced significant changes in their sense of autonomy particularly in the classroom setting, their motivation levels and sense of self following their experience in the English SL course. They became more autonomous with the experience of setting learning goals and plans, of self and peer-assessment, and of reflection on their own learning processes. The ELLs further became more motivated with positive attitudes towards the class learning and more engagement and investment in the subject both inside and outside the class. The ELLs also reported higher levels of confidence in learning and using the English language, and a strong sense of their future ideal selves.

The last finding relates to the significant impact of the English SL course with variety of class learning activities – particularly the ECAs – on the ELLs’ autonomy and motivation as well as on the sense of self. The activities promoting authentic and meaningful class interactions were found to be motivating, stimulating and helpful in enhancing the ELLs’ sense of actual self and autonomy.

This chapter has presented emerging themes of the qualitative data findings from fifteen participants’ ELLHs, from the learning diaries they kept during the English SL course and from three interview responses. The next chapter presents the dynamism of learner autonomy, motivation and self with findings as representations of the learners’ English learning trajectories or stories.
CHAPTER SEVEN: DYNAMISM AND COMPLEXITY OF ELLS’ AUTONOMY, MOTIVATION AND SELF

Dynamism and complexity of ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self

7.1 An overview of dynamism and complexity of ELLs autonomy, motivation and self

Key findings from the data analysis are presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. While Chapter Five presented an overview of learner autonomy, motivation and sense of self from two survey questionnaires to 77 students, Chapter Six provided an in-depth analysis with more details regarding these three factors through qualitative data generated from 15 participants’ English learning histories, interviews and diary entries. This chapter focuses on the dynamism and complexity of the three factors, which were analysed based on 15 participants’ English learning trajectories before, during, and after the English SL course. Their learning trajectory stories are constructed from their ELLHs, the learning diaries kept during the English SL course and their responses to three interview rounds. Due to space limits, seven typical stories were selected to present in this chapter based on the key themes that emerged in Chapter Six, on dynamism and on the representativeness of the seven stories. These seven stories, considered typical, were analysed in detail as the leading stories, while the others were briefly narrated and can be referred to in Appendix 23: Participants’ English learning stories.

Following the chapter introduction, the second part of this chapter presents findings related to dynamism and the complexity of ELL autonomy, motivation and self. The first story by participant Lien demonstrated dramatic changes in her perception of her autonomy after joining the English SL course. These changes in Lien’s autonomy then led to changes in her sense of self and motivation throughout her English learning process. Lien’s story is followed by Hue’s learning trajectory, which vividly narrated the dynamism in her motivation levels in learning English. The dynamic and multiple selves are then discussed in Nha’s and Ha’s stories. The stories of these two girls demonstrate a close link between their sense of self and their English learning autonomy and motivation even before they joined the English SL course. Nha and Ha possessed a strong sense of a future English user self in their overseas study, which urged them to study English to realize their dreams. They demonstrated their autonomy in study in setting goals and making their own learning plans after the English SL course.
Part Five focuses on factors that influenced the dynamism and complexity of the ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self. These factors included tests and examinations, significant others like ELLs’ parents, siblings, relatives and friends. Also, love for the English subject acted as a prime motivating factor in their learning. All of these factors were illuminated in stories by Tra, Minh and Lan. The chapter concludes with the finding that close interrelationships exist between the three factors, and that once learner autonomy is enhanced, there will be an increase in students’ motivation and changes in sense of self.

7.2 Impacts of the English SL course on ELLs’ autonomy—Lien’s story

Impacts of the English SL course were evident in the 15 participants’ English learning stories, and the most prominent changes in perceptions of autonomy were observed in Lien’s learning experiences. Drawing on interview responses, the participant’s diaries and English language learning history (ELLH), the following case study exemplar traces changes in Lien’s learning autonomy from her early family experiences with her parents and older sibling to Lien’s university years, particularly after she had joined the English SL course. These changes are discussed in the context of how they played into Lien’s perceptions of her evolving sense of her self—her actual/own self, her ought self and her ideal self.

In her first interview, Lien talked about her family, particularly her mother, who was a primary school teacher and her older sister, who seemed to be quite opposite to Lien in character and independence in study. Lien perceived herself as shy and reserved, relating in her first interview that she was not open, even with her family members, or confident when she had to talk in front of a large group or in front of boys. Her sister, on the other hand was extrovert and competent in her use of the English language in her job, a “future” self that Lien aspired to become. Lien reported in her first interview that her sister’s English language competency was both a motivation and a pressure for her, particularly as her parents promoted her older sister as a model for Lien to follow. In comparing and contrasting herself with her sister, Lien perceived her sister as having greater independence in her study and in her career choices, while Lien felt overprotected by her parents. While her sister made all her own decisions related to her daily life and her study, Lien’s parents made most of these types of decisions for Lien, including choosing Lien’s tutors and selecting her schools.
During her primary and high school years, Lien’s ought self seemed most prominent. She always strove in her studies to achieve good results and to keep honour for her mother. Therefore, her primary goal in learning English was to get high results in tests and examinations. As Lien attended the primary school at which her mother was her Mathematics teacher, the pressure to work towards a high achieving ought self in order to “keep honour” for her mother was particularly salient: “Because my mum was there, she always tells me not to do anything to threaten her face, so I felt pressure from this” (INT1TRSLien: 2). Bringing honour to families is considered a common ought self in Vietnamese society, as presented in Chapter One.

Joining my English SL course, Lien demonstrated dramatic changes in her perceptions of English learning autonomy. For Lien, the notion and practice of setting her own goals sparked a powerful understanding of her own sense of autonomy and inspired her to work further on enhancing this:

The lesson did bring me much INSPIRATION. I have to say that the way the teacher started the course by instructing us to set goal, make plan and find methods to complete it is so interesting to me as I rarely saw this way before (DLien: 4).

Lien commented on the first lesson of the English SL course as being “so interesting” because for her it was the first time she was instructed on how to set goals and make learning plans, which Lien “rarely saw before”. This comment reflects the common nature of teaching and learning English in Vietnam, in which teachers are assumed to “set goal, make plan and find methods”. These arguments have been discussed in Chapter One. She emphasized the “INSPIRATION” that she felt after the lesson, showing her enhanced motivation and her interest in the English language subject. Further, in her first interview, Lien said “I find it interesting when I can have my own opinions in the learning process, it is the best. With this way, I feel more motivated to learn English…” (INT1TRSLien: 5). This shows changes in Lien’s perceptions of her learning autonomy; she found having her own voice in her learning process “the best” way of learning. As a result, Lien felt “more motivated” with her enhanced autonomy.
Lien then found it necessary to seriously apply herself to learning English for her future goals. The following interview extracts and diary entries convey Lien’s understanding of the significance of goal setting in advancing her future study plans: “I started thinking seriously about my future goal, and to get that goal, I need to be good at English… it is meaningless if I just learn for the test” (INT2TRSLien: 2). Lien started to realize the importance of setting future goals for her life and her study and to think “seriously” about this. Learning English for Lien now was not merely the task of an ought self that urged her to pass the tests or examinations; rather it was her future self that inspired her to master the English subject. In her learning diaries, Lien continued with her thinking about making learning plans: “Studying abroad! I have that plan, too. I want to get a scholarship and I knew it’s hard but I will try my best” (DLien: 1). The quote shows Lien’s determination in realizing her learning plan of getting a scholarship to study overseas. Although it was not an easy task, Lien’s determination can be seen in her saying “but I will try my best”.

Lien’s engagement in classroom and home-based learning activities was directed towards achieving her learning goals related to gaining confidence and improving her listening and speaking skills. In her second interview, Lien talked about her reasons for choosing corner activities, doing more English language practice in class, and speaking English at home with her sister. With her set goals in mind, Lien chose ECAs to improve her pronunciation, expand her vocabulary and develop methods of learning new words from her classmates. These engagements in learning activities demonstrated Lien’s evolving autonomy in the mediated environments of both the classroom and her family. As a result, Lien had a positive attitude towards learning the English language subject and gained more confidence through the class activities: “With more practice in the class and more confidence, I can speak English better” (INT3TRSLien: 2).

After my English SL course, Lien reported her greater confidence in setting goals, in making a learning plan for both short-term and long-term goals, and in assessing her own learning process: “I think I know better how to study English effectively now. I have a definite goal now. I know how to plan for that goal” (DLien: 2). Lien’s specific goals were to achieve a level of 7 in the listening skills assessment at the end of the course, to complete an English communication course in an English centre in order to improve her listening and speaking skills with greater confidence, to complete both a TOEFL course and a GMAT course in
preparation for her planned MA study. Lien developed her own learning plan that comprised two hours of listening at home, speaking English at home with her sister, and paired learning with a male classmate to improve her writing and her confidence in public speaking. Lien also planned to do more listening and reading from the Internet sources, and watching English TV shows that reflected her interests. She felt she knew how to manage her time between study, entertainment and extra-curricular activities at the university.

Lien recalled that she felt more confident in moving around the class, sharing ideas and evaluations with her classmates. This kind of social interaction constructed her identity in a way that allowed Lien to perceive herself as a more confident ELL. Lien also noted that she found it easier to raise her hand or her voice in class debates, and she had even entered a number of class competitions for the best presenter of the day. Lien recalled in her diaries that she was “being serious about studying, planning and setting goals for study. I think I become more confident. I learnt a lot from my classmates who are hard-working” (DLien: 2). In such a classroom environment where Lien had opportunities to interact with other classmates, Lien’s identity was developed through greater confidence in her actual self and her ideal self as an overseas student.

As a consequence of her goal setting and development of her learning plan, Lien reported a significant change in her sense of her ideal self and actual self. Lien came to better understand who she wanted to be in the future and how to achieve this future self. Lien envisioned herself as a successful graduate with a scholarship to pursue her MA study in the USA. She believed that she would be confident in her use of English by the time she graduated and would have a good job and a happy family like her mother. Further, in the following diary excerpts, Lien conveyed her reflections on her life and shared her feelings of changes in her actual/own self:

I realize that I am the kind of person of too much security and too little risky. I am afraid of facing difficulties. I am scared of being embarrassed. Thinking back my life since I was born it was [a] quiet river flowing day by day in the same path. There was little big wave. I followed the road which may have been drawn up already and accepted whatever life gave me. I mean I was rather passive than active. I think since
I got to college, I’ve changed a bit but not enough for me to get out of my shield (DLien: 2).

Lien’s changes in her perceptions of her actual self began with her realization of who she was when she wrote in her diaries “I realize that I am the kind of person of too much security and too little risky”. Lien emphasized that she was over-protected with her acknowledgement of valuing “too much security” and her personality of “too little risky” and being “afraid of facing difficulties” and being “embarrassed”. Lien then experienced the reflection process, viewing her life as “a quiet river” in which she constructed her identity as a “rather passive than active” person who “followed the road” and “accepted whatever life gave” her. Realizing that she had surrounded herself with such a “shield” for a long time, Lien perceived that it would take time for her to “get out of” that shield to make changes.

Being active in the classroom learning was one of the keys to necessary changes that helped draw Lien beyond her own “shield”. From her responses in her first interview, Lien did not think that she was a good English learner because she had not found an effective learning method. However, in the third interview, she reported an improvement in her English, as she wrote “I am now active in how important it is for me to learn it and what way I can learn it effectively” (INT3TRSLien: 7). Lien’s realization of her active role reflected her changed perceptions of her learning autonomy. Further, in her ELLH, Lien wrote “In the past, my parents were the ones who made me study English but temporarily, I suppose that is my future which encourages me to learn this subject” (ELLHLien: 5). It is interesting to note that Lien’s sense of future self had become stronger and more motivating for her to learn English than the ought self from family and the pressure from examinations. Changes in Lien’s sense of self are summarised in Appendix 24: Changes in Lien’s perception of her selves before and after the course.

Lien’s written and interview narratives convey changes in her perception of autonomy after the English SL course and development of interrelationships between perceptions of her own autonomy to establish learning plans and engage in current and future goal setting, her evolving sense of her actual self, her ought and future self, and her level of motivation to achieve study goals. Lien made well-considered learning plans which she followed through on, and her motivation was enhanced when she developed a passionate desire and increased
engagement and investment in the English subject. Lien’s identity as a confident English learner and user was negotiated and constructed through her consistent use of English to communicate with her classmates, to converse with her sister at home and to share with me her personal feelings in the written learning diary entries. The finding further shows that a change in Lien’s autonomy led to a change in both her actual/own self and ideal self, even though it seemed to her that it would take more time to achieve a significant change in actual/own self. Experiences of autonomy in learning English led to her leaving behind the ought self which had been reinforced by her sister’s success and developing a personal sense of motivation. In other words, Lien identified autonomy as critical to her changes in self-perception. Moreover, once Lien’s sense of self experienced change, this led to her autonomy and motivation levels in learning the English subject being further enhanced. Thus the three factors interacted dynamically, resulting in mutual enhancement.

7.3 Dynamism and complexity of ELLs’ motivation - Hue’s story

The dynamism and complexity of ELL motivation have been exemplified partly in Lien’s story above. They are, however, more prominent in Hue’s English learning story revealing her changing and dynamic motivation levels in learning the English subject under the influential impacts of teachers in her various learning contexts from primary school to university. Hue also saw herself as competitive, and saw this as accounting for her engagement in learning English. Changes in her motivation led to an increase in Hue’s sense of autonomy and of her ought and ideal selves and these in turn helped further increase her motivation.

Hue saw herself as an independent English learner at home. Her parents did not interfere in her study even though they were willing to invest in purchasing her books and paying her study fees. She had the freedom to select extra classes to attend and reference books to read at home. Talking about her parents’ role in her English learning, Hue wrote: “My parents have never learned English so that they didn’t give me any advice or suggestions” (ELLHHue: 1). As mentioned in Chapter Six, some parents did not interfere with their children’s learning because of their minimal English competency. This is similar to Hue’s family, where her parents “never learned English”.

In general, Hue sensed herself as an ambitious and competitive girl with the characteristic of strength. Hue re-called that her mother played as an influential role in the development of
Hue’s personality as she believed in her mother’s advice that “today women need to be independent with high certificates. Otherwise, we will face a hard life” (INT2TRS Hue: 3). It is noteworthy that modern Vietnamese society had shaped Hue’s mother’s perception that women needed “to be independent with high certificates”, promoting images of independent and well-educated women for the sake of a secure and happy future life. Such perceptions were then well absorbed in Hue’s mind as her mother’s daughter, which in turn shaped Hue’s sense of her ideal and ought selves.

Hue started learning English with a positive attitude towards this school subject. She was interested in the subject as it was easy to understand and English was a new subject during her primary school years. She recalled in her learning history that she often took careful notes during the lessons and imagined publishing her own English dictionary in the future. Hue even asked her mother to let her join an extra English class. Further, she felt motivated to learn the subject because she would be “the first person” in her family who knew English (INT1Hue: 2).

However, Hue’s attitude towards the English subject changed from positive to negative due to the presence of under-qualified English teachers at her secondary school and high school. The secondary school teacher’s earlier teaching of Russian seemed to have influenced her teaching of English and this in turn influenced Hue’s motivation. Hue had unpleasant memories of her teacher’s incorrect spelling in her board writing and her Russian accent; she recalled “To be honest, I am easily affected by my feelings. Because of the teacher’s inaccurate English, I felt bored with English subject” (INT2TRS Hue: 11). Hue even hated her English high school teacher, who was in Hue’s opinion bad-mannered and showed inappropriate behaviours towards the students. With such an “extremely strict teacher” (INT1TRS Hue: 12), Hue intensely disliked learning English. As a result, she recalled being lazy and did not spend time learning English and decided to major in Vietnamese literature.

For Hue, her instrumental motivation to pass important examinations and tests played a key role in her English learning success. Hue only started learning English seriously when she failed the national Literature examination, which forced her to choose English as a major at university. In Grade 12, a year before the University entrance examination, she spent most of her time studying English independently. She attended one extra class and learned by herself.
at home. After gaining entry into her desired university, Hue continued studying for the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) to gain entry into a joint program between her university and a USA university. Learning English for Hue was obligatory for her ought self, as she showed when she wrote in her learning history: “But all the world chooses English! In order to be a good businessman, I must learn English and also because of the family honour” (ELLHHue: 2). Hue’s narrative reflects the complexity in her motivation and identity as an English learner. On one hand, she was inspired to learn English for her future self as a “good” businesswoman. On the other hand, she found herself bound with her ought self for her “family honour”. In Hue’s attitude, learning English further was a must because of its international position. By “all the world”, Hue implied not only Vietnamese society but also the worldwide environment.

Further, in her English learning, Hue did not perceive herself a diligent English learner. She preferred Mathematics to English because she did not like rote learning. She perceived herself as a “slow turtle” as she did not place any emphasis on learning English at first, and she was a much weaker English learner compared to her university friends. Also, Hue saw herself as lazy in learning English, even though she sometimes readily learned new vocabulary by watching English movies or listening to music. Talking about her sense of self as an English learner, she wrote:

Good English learner? Me? Are you kidding? Of course is [omit ‘is’] not! I can’t imagine how I will be. Maybe I can be better, but it’s hard for me to speak English fluently in just 1 years [year]. Maybe after the Uni, I think I can. (ELLHHue: 4)

Despite a lack of confidence in her sense of self as a competent English learner, Hue reported a sense of ideal self as a good English user. Hue knew that she needed to learn English for her future job and perceived that “I knew English is good, really good, and now I know it is now really the time for me to learn it because I will need a good job soon, I need a good certificate. I will die without English” (INT1TRSHue: 16).

After the English SL course, Hue reported a dramatic change in her English learning autonomy. Although her long-term goals of studying a Masters course overseas remained unchanged, she set short-term goals for her English learning. Hue targeted short-term goals,
medium-term and long-term goals as follows: Grades A in listening and speaking skills after the course, pronunciation improvement, improving writing skills in order to prepare for the IELTS test to study for the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), and to apply for a scholarship to study a Masters of Economics in the USA. Hue also made learning plans to develop her English language competencies and prepare learning materials, including books, reference books and the Internet sources for her plans. She asked Phu for learning material recommendations and suggested that he could be her buddy for their outside-class study. Hue revised her speaking learning strategy by recording her voice and correcting her own mistakes with Phu’s assistance.

In her English assessment, Hue showed her confidence in self-evaluating her own strengths and weaknesses in English learning. She also found the reflection step a useful process as it helped her to see her own progress. The reflection process assisted her to revise and change her learning plan and strategies at the end of the course. However, she was not confident in peer-assessment. On the one hand, she thought her peers were “not as qualified as teachers” (INT3TRSHue: 6). On the other hand, she saw herself as not good at English, and she believed that her “skill was not good enough to evaluate others” (INT2TRSHue:9).

Hue reported an increase in her English learning motivation once she had her own targets and plans. She said in her second interview that “To be honest, I feel I get more motivation” (INT2TRSHue: 4), and that “the learning plan is going well and the listening skill is rather useful for me to get familiar with overseas lecturers’ speaking speed” (INT2TRSHue: 4). Hue observed quick progress in her listening skills. At first, she found the listening textbook was much more difficult than that used in the previous semester even though the focus was still on listening and note-taking. Hue could not concentrate on the entire task, and she could only take note of the key ideas in the text. Her listening and note-taking abilities improved after four weeks of continuous daily practice. She found herself familiar with the tape speed and utilized a number of abbreviations, hence she was able to understand the main ideas and take note of the key details. In relation to her speaking skills, Hue found it interesting to have the chance to take charge of her own presentations. As she said: “we need to prepare for what to talk about, what to present. We need to make plans for this, and need to make our talk interesting” (INT2TRSHue: 5). Sharing her feelings about her motivation and autonomy in learning English, Hue wrote in her diary:
I love your corner, it help [helps] me to identify where I am, which I should do.

You have a wonderful lesson today about the arranging the works, and maybe I need to rearrange my life. It is so messy. (DHue: 2, 4)

The ECAs inspired Hue to learn English as they provided her with self-reflection opportunities with which Hue could “identify” her strengths and weaknesses and the tasks she should complete to achieve her set learning targets. The impacts of the lesson went beyond the classroom context when Hue not only knew how to control her learning process but also realized the need to “rearrange” her life because she found it “so messy”. Through class interactions, Hue’s identity was shaped when she was highly aware of “where I am”, and in its turn, her newly-constructed self of a more confident English learner helps shape her life.

In summary, Hue experienced constant changes in her levels of motivation throughout her English learning trajectory, which led to significant changes in her learning autonomy and sense of self. Hue perceived herself as an independent, ambitious and competitive girl who preferred learning Mathematics to rote English learning. From a motivated English learner in her primary school time with pride in being the first person in her family to know English, Hue became demotivated by the English teacher at secondary school. Her demotivation in English learning reached its peak when it turned into a feeling of hatred of the subject with her badly-behaved and underqualified English teacher at high school. Hue only became instrumentally motivated when she needed to pass the university entrance examination, and her sense of ought self became stronger after she gained entry into the university. Her experiences of autonomy in the English SL course demonstrated a change in her motivation to learn English and in her sense of ought self as well as ideal self after she had attained greater autonomy in her English learning.

7.4 Dynamic, multiple selves and imagined communities interacting with ELLs’ autonomy and motivation

This section discusses dynamism of selves and the role of imagined communities in ELLs’ autonomy and level of motivation. The story told by Nha is an exemplar of the dynamic self and of Canada as her imagined community, and Ha’s story emphasizes the multiple facets of her selves.
7.4.1 Dynamic selves and imagined communities - Nha’s story

Nha’s English learning story traces dynamism and changes in her sense of self at different time scales and in different spaces from her primary school experiences to her high school time when a classmate left to study abroad. These changes are discussed in the context of how they played into Nha’s perceptions of her evolving sense of self: her actual/own self, her ought self and her ideal self, and the impacts of these changes on her learning autonomy and motivation.

Nha described herself as an independent girl and commented that, in terms of her English language learning, she was not influenced by her parents and her older sister. She said she was seen as a “good girl” in the eyes of her parents, her friends and her teachers. Talking about her independence in her first interview: “At high school, because I am an independent girl and … I can do anything, I can choose my study and I... I do know, and I can make my own decisions” (ELLHNha: 3). By “I can” and “I do know”, Nha emphasized her independence in study and in life as well.

Nha stated that English was a compulsory grammar-focused subject at her primary school and in the early stages, she was not motivated to learn this new language. She perceived herself as a passive learner due to the traditional teaching and learning methods; she wanted to learn from communicative interactions in the classroom and wished for opportunities to discover the target language cultures:

I remember when I was at the primary and secondary school, there wasn’t anyone teaching me how to pronounce the word and talk with intonation. It was too tiresome to study only grammar, rules and regulations. Learning speaking and western culture is much more exciting! (ELLHNha: 3)

Nha discussed a lack of language use in her primary and secondary school curriculum and the teaching methods which focused mainly on English “grammar, rules and regulations”. Such kinds of traditional language teaching and learning at school, with English as one school subject, left students with the feeling of boredom. By “western cultures”, Nha implied the English speaking communities’ cultures which appeared “much more exciting” to discover and learn about. Nha added: “I feel it is the most interesting part in English that the feeling that I can communicate with foreigners; I can speak in English; I can express my ideas”
In Nha’s opinion, learning English was only meaningful when she could use the language to communicate with English speakers, and thus when she could affirm her sense of self.

From a passive English learner, Nha reported becoming a competent one when she experienced a change in her level of motivation. It was when her new teacher at her secondary school taught her not only grammar but also vocabulary, pronunciation through games, songs and role-play. In Nha’s opinion, this teacher was different from other teachers, as she brought a variety of English language learning activities into the class: “a lot of games and also exercises, not just boring things like the teacher introduced the grammar and then let us learn by heart and then test” (ELLHNha: 3). The teacher’s “attractive way of teaching”, which turned English into a living language rather than a just learning-by-heart school subject, encouraged Nha to become interested in the subject. With “vocabulary, pronunciation and songs”, in her narration Nha described her learning English speaking and listening skills which were often ignored in the English curriculum in Vietnam. Further, through “games and role-play”, it can be implied that Nha enjoyed interactions with her teacher and classmates in learning English. Writing in her narrative, “I didn’t know why I liked studying English, I just found it interesting and exciting” (ELLHNha: 3). As a consequence, she said she became the best English learner in her class and became a member of the school’s English team.

During her time at high school, Nha witnessed gradual changes in her independence in relation to making most of the decisions in daily life, and in her studies. She also noticed changes in her sense of self. According to Nha’s understanding, moving far from her family to live in Hanoi to attend high school made her more independent:

It is not until when I was at high school that I myself make decisions on the way and the location to learn English. Moving to Hanoi without my parents, I have to be independent in everything I turned to my friends for advice about how and where to study English and then I made my own way and set my own goal to study (ELLHNha: 3).

It was the change in her living and learning environment that created opportunities for such an independent girl like Nha to become more and more autonomous in her English learning. She
found herself to “have to be independent in everything”, from asking friends for advice to making her own decisions on ways of learning. Nha’s independence evolved to another step: setting her own study goals and her learning strategies.

Her dream to go to her imagined community, Canada, started when she first decided to join an English club at her high school, where she met many ambitious friends. Her friends acted as motivators for Nha to instil in her a dream of studying abroad. This decision seemed to be a “turning point” in her life:

I met a lot of new friends there that are really precious. They all dreamt about studying abroad. The first time I had the feeling that the US, Canada… was not that far and I myself could have a dream like that (ELLHNha: 5).

“The feeling that the US, Canada … was not that far” captured Nha’s realization of her imagined community, which now became real and reachable for her.

Nha’s dream only became integrated into her sense of her future ideal self when a friend left Vietnam to study abroad. Nha saw the goal of studying overseas and learning English as a first step to achieving that future self. She also revealed a determination to change her actual/other self by showing others that she was not “silly”:

It was only until my monitor got the A-level scholarship to study in Singapore that I “woke up”. To be honest, I used to fancy him and his leaving gave me a strong motivation to learn English so that one day I can also go to somewhere to study. I had that thinking because I wanted to show him that I wasn’t silly and I could do things like that (ELLHNha: 7).

Nha described her feeling of “waking up” when the friend she used to “fancy” left her for Singapore. The leaving of her friend and classmate seemed to bring about a significant change in her sense of self, which led to dramatic changes in her motivation and thus changes in her autonomy to learn the English language. Nha manifested confidence and determination in showing her own actual self that she “was not silly” and that she “could do things like that”.

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Nha set her own goals to learn English so that she could one day go to Canada. To achieve this, she undertook an IELTS course conducted by a well-known teacher, enrolled in a speaking course at an English centre, joined an English club, and practised speaking English in Paltalk, an online program. Motivated by these activities, Nha was so determined to pass her university entrance examination that she got high results in English tests and for her, “it’s extremely worthy” (ELLHNha: 10).

As a motivated and autonomous learner, Nha joined the English SL course with an active attitude towards the subject and class activities. She was particularly interested in role play, in which she made up a scenario for her group meeting. She wrote in her diaries, “It was kind of fun when we tried to be responsible for a branch of the whole company. This sort of feeling was just awesome and then we volunteered to take part in the game of today” (DNha: 2). According to Nha, class activities helped her become more open to her classmates, which led to a change in her actual/other self. As a consequence, she felt more confident to raise her opinions in the lessons:

When they [the classmates] stand up and present the results, I have a better idea what’s going on. I even stand up & give my opinion. I learnt a lot of new words and I even raised my hand to read those words. From now on, I won’t [be] afraid what others think of me if I raise my hand any more (DNha: 1).

It is interesting to note the significant changes in Nha’s sense of actual self when she described her increased confidence in raising her voice and her hand to share her opinions in the class. Nha did not see herself as constrained or bound by others’ feelings or criticism; rather she became more confident with her new actual self constructed in the comfortable classroom atmosphere.

Nha’s story shows the dynamism and complexity of her sense of self and a close interrelation between her sense of actual and ideal self, her perceptions of learner autonomy and her motivation in learning English. It seemed that for Nha, the self could become vivid and concrete and, as such, a stimulus that enhanced a deepened sense of autonomy. Her sense of self changed from that of a passive English learner at primary school to the top English student at her secondary school. Subsequently, her imagined community of Canada was nurtured when she joined an English club. The departure of her high school classmate seems to have been the
climax of her story, which led to a significant change in her sense of actual and ideal selves. This outcome then encouraged Nha’s greater investment and engagement in her English language learning. Moreover, it is clear that when her autonomy was enhanced after the English SL course, she became more active and more open in her classroom and therefore became more aware of her actual/own self and actual/other self. As a result, she became more confident in her own context, particularly within the classroom. With regard to the role of reflection, Nha related that although she exercised her autonomy over her learning goals, strategies, and materials, she did not pay attention to the need for reflection.

7.4.2 Multiple selves - Ha’s story
Even though there seem to be some overlaps between Nha’s evolving senses of self discussed in the previous Section 7.4.1 and Ha’s story narrated in this section, there are also certain striking differences. Nha’s story shows dynamism in her sense of self which was deeply affected by her learning spaces and time, and by her friends. Ha’s story demonstrated the complexity of her multiple selves – actual self, ought self and ideal self – from her early family experiences with her parents and younger sibling to Ha’s university years. These factors are discussed in the context of how they played into Ha’s perceptions of her evolving autonomy and motivation in learning the English language and subject.

In terms of actual/own self, or “the person who I believe I am actually now” (see Chapter Two), Ha saw herself as an “obedient girl” as she unquestioningly followed her parents’ decisions on which school to attend, which subject should be her major and which learning goals Ha should strive for. Ha reported in her first interview:

> It means that I often do whatever my parents want me to. For example, they want me to be in a team of gifted students for some kind of competitions, want me to be good at English, want me to be the best in my class. I do all. In general, I do whatever they want me to do (INT1TRSHa:4).

As a good daughter, Ha did “whatever they [her parents] want me to do”. She hence reported that she was a good student, and always strove to be the best in English in her class, even though she found herself particularly good at Mathematics.
For the actual/other self, “the person who others believe I am”, Ha said that in her parents’, her friends’ and her teachers’ eyes, she was always considered a good and hard-working girl. Her family background showed that her parents were well-educated and had excellent academic records. Ha’s father had spent six years studying abroad, while her mother was well-known in her school and at the university for her “first” ranking in her academic records. The family had successful friends whose children gained Olympic language contest prizes with some going on to study overseas. Ha had one younger sister aged 12 – 13. Her parents set high expectations for their two daughters, particularly for Ha as the elder child. As such, Ha’s parents wanted her to be as successful a learner as their friends’ children. That contributed to her ought/other self, or “the person who others believe I should/ought be”:

> For my parents, I am always a good and obedient child, and they always have high expectation of me... As usual, parents want to have a son (a traditional thinking), but my parents have only two daughters, so they have higher expectations of me and my sister. We see this and always try and try our best. (INT1TRSHa: 5)

Ha was highly aware of her parents’ expectations for her and her younger sister, which were deeply rooted in her family traditions of high academic achievements and in her response to the “traditional thinking” in Vietnam, which preferred sons to daughters. It seemed to be a normal assumption that boys were more likely to bring honour to families with their high study results, but as parents of only two daughters, Ha’s parents hoped to show others that their daughters were as smart as others’ sons and that they were also able to bring honour to the family. This factor reflects the impacts of Vietnamese traditions on people’s ways of thinking in Vietnamese society (see Chapter One).

At her primary school, a close link between Ha’s learning motivation, and her perceptions of her ideal self and autonomy was evident in her first period of learning English. Ha developed a positive attitude towards learning English because English was a new subject which seemed easy for her to learn. As she was the best in her class in her other subjects, Ha also wanted to be the best in her English subject. Her goal was then to get high results in this subject. Ha was also motivated by her good teacher, who often provided careful explanations and organized role play activities in the class. For her, the teacher was her ideal self because Ha was impressed by her speaking skills. Ha wrote: “I wanted to be the best in my class and one day
I would be as good at English as the teacher” (INT1TRSHa: 3). Her uncle, who was an interpreter, was also her ideal self because he was highly competent in his use of the English language. Therefore, she was active in asking her teacher for new words to learn, and in asking her uncle for learning materials. She listened to the audio-tapes that her uncle recommended and later during her secondary school years she bought herself her first English dictionary.

Ha’s perceived changes in her sense of self, sense of autonomy and levels of motivation that appeared to lead to new interrelationships between these concepts, were evident when she entered secondary school. During this period, Ha’s ought self became more prominent and closer links between her ought self and motivation were observed. Her parents wanted her to pass the entrance exam for entry to a prestigious high school for gifted language students. In order to achieve that aim, Ha needed to obtain a high prize in Vietnam’s national English contest. She felt confident in Mathematics; however she knew she needed to follow her ought self as her parents’ wish. As she recalled in her first interview:

I feel really tired of following my parents’ thoughts. I remember when I was in Grade 8, we had a team for a contest. I wondered a lot to choose between Mathematics or English teams. If I had joined in Mathematics team, I was so sure that I would have gained some prizes. I myself really wanted to be in that team, but my parents insisted on English, English. I was reluctant to join the English team, feeling very demotivated. I was also good at English, but I was far better at Math. I had to follow English as my parents wanted. (INT1TRSHa: 6)

Ha described her feelings of getting “really tired of following my parents’ thoughts” when she had options of either an English or a Mathematics group. The results of her being “reluctant to join the English team” as her parents wished represented Ha’s demotivation in study. Ha’s sense of ought self to follow her parents’ wishes reflects her obligations toward her family, which are deeply rooted in Confucian teachings in Vietnamese culture.

However, surrounded by many talented students, Ha found the motivation to choose the English team. She spent most of her time learning English. She listened to English songs, CDs, audio and video-tapes and movies to improve her listening skills. She spoke English with her
classmates, created and told stories in English as guided by the teacher in order to improve her speaking. Ha achieved second prize, which meant that 1.5 points could be added to her entrance examination result for the high school her parents expected Ha to attend. Talking about her motivation during this period, Ha said in her first interview: “Yes, partly because of my family, partly because of myself, I did not want to be worse than others. Although I did not like it, I still tried my best. For my parents!” (INT1TRSHa: 8).

Once again a change in the learning environment led to a change in Ha’s perceived sense of self when she was in high school, and it seems this change in ideal self and ought self led to a change in her motivation level and perceived autonomy. At high school, the fact that many of her friends aspired to study abroad led her to the same goal. Her strong sense of her ideal self motivated her to devote most of her time learning English. From her narrative:

As a curious teenager, who always wanted to discover new things, I learned English just to make my dream of going abroad come true… At that time, I thought that only by working hard I could become a good English user in the future… After school, instead of playing sport like usual, I spent most of my time doing my homework & studying English. (ELLHHa: 4)

Ha identified herself as “a curious teenager” who dreamt of study abroad, and together with this her future self of becoming “a good English user in the future” acted as primary motivators for her in learning English. Ha engaged and invested more time in “doing homework and studying English”.

As her parents expected her to pass the entrance examination set by a prestigious university to bring honour to her family, Ha prioritized the goal to pass the examination ahead of her goal to study abroad. Her efforts towards achieving the first goal included completing sample tests on the Internet and engaging in self-study using a dictionary in order to be well-prepared for the examination. She felt she had good teachers and an effective learning environment such that she did not find it necessary to join extra classes. To prepare for studying abroad, Ha learned English with her friends and joined an English club to improve her speaking and listening skills. Ha learnt vocabulary every day, and joined an IELTS course in preparation for her overseas study.
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At university, Ha reported a low sense of autonomy and a low level of motivation when her ought self seemed to waver even though her ideal self held to her goal of studying abroad. Although she felt some pressure had lifted after passing the university examination, thus bestowing honour on her family, Ha could not find the motivation she needed to learn English:

On [In] the first semester at the Uni. I was under no pressure to study English. I continued to learn English, but this study was not as hard as in the past. At the high school, everyone had to learn English to pass the entrance exam to Uni. or to study abroad, however, at the Uni., we become less motivated, and didn’t try our best to study English. (ELLHHa: 9)

The “pressure” that Ha mentioned was from the examinations and tests. Ha saw herself became lazier with less time spent actively learning English, even though she still listened to English music and watched English movies. Despite her sense of her ideal/own self as being a fluent English user with a well-paid future job and her ideal/other self bringing pride to her parents, and despite wanting to study overseas, Ha did not have any study plans in her first semester at university. In her first interview, Ha explained:

Now I find that learning English is always essential but it is not urgent. We used to have to learn for the university examinations, which was fixed with time. But now, I think I will need English when I am in the third year, when I need IELTS score, so leave it till the third year. (INT1TRSHa: 3)

Ha did not see any urgency in learning English after she passed the university entrance examinations, and she was waiting “till the third year” to study English in preparation for her IELTS tests.

However, after participating in my English SL course, Ha recorded a change in her learning autonomy such that she perceived changes in her ideal self and in her motivation to learn the English language. Excerpts from her diaries and her second and third interview responses evidenced these changes. Ha noted how surprised and interested she was when she first had a chance to raise her voice as a learner in the lesson. In that lesson, the teacher introduced the
goal of the course, asked students about their goals and negotiated with them in relation to how to conduct the course:

Actually the first lesson was more wonderful than I thought. Because we used to see the images of the teacher just talking, talking and talking, asking us to do something. For me, it was surprising that the teacher today appreciated our attendance and let us join in the lecture. Maybe new method could help us to achieve our goals & improving speaking and listening skill. (DHa: 1)

Ha mentioned the image of traditional teachers who controlled all the class activities; as such she found it “surprising” when the first time she was able to “join in the lecture”. It was the time when Ha’s perceptions of teachers’ and learners’ roles experienced changes and she thought of that “new method” with the hope that she would attain better achievements when she was more autonomous. This reflection is complementary to Lien’s and Nha’s comments on traditional English teaching in Vietnam, which were discussed in the previous sections.

In the second interview conducted after six lessons, Ha reported that she had realized the importance of setting goals, and that she knew how to set her own goals for different subjects with different learning methods. Ha also said she was more aware of her own strengths and weaknesses in her English learning. Ha also found inspiration in class activities such as quizzes, stories and love stories told by the teacher and classmates. She gained motivation from ECAs where she had fun and interesting arguments with other classmates. In her third interview after the course, Ha talked with confidence about her learning goals and learning plan. She moved closer to achieving her learning goal when she decided to spend one year preparing for an IELTS test instead of taking a part-time job. Ha’s learning plan involved self-study to improve her listening and reading skills, learning with a friend to improve her speaking, writing one essay a day, asking teachers for assistance, utilizing the Internet as the main source of learning materials and watching English movies. Her ideal self was to be a fluent English user with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master’s degree in finance, as she was determined that she would find a well-paid job in Vietnam. After all, Ha gained confidence when she learned how to assess her own English competency after having constructed a detailed learning plan from the perspective of her vivid ideal self.
Ha’s perceived sense of self, motivation levels and perceived sense of autonomy changed over the course of her primary school years through to university. Both ought self and ideal self acted as stimulus factors in her motivation in learning English. When Ha’s ought self was enhanced by the ideal self, she was more highly motivated and had a greater sense of autonomy in learning English; this was a critically significant outcome for Ha during her high school years when her parents expected her to excel in the university examination while she herself wanted to study abroad. Hence, Ha exercised her autonomy to spend most of her study time studying English through her own choice of learning materials and learning methods. However, once Ha’s sense of ought self eased, her perceived levels of motivation and autonomy diminished. After my English SL course, when a sense of learner autonomy was enhanced, Ha became more competent and successful in setting learning goals, constructing learning plans, assessing and reflecting on her own study decisions, and selecting her own learning materials. Under these circumstances, her ideal self became more vivid, her motivation level was lifted, and she became more positively engaged with and prepared to invest more of her personal resources in learning the subject.

7.5 Factors influencing dynamism and complexity of ELLs’ motivation, autonomy and self

This section discusses a number of the influential factors that impact on ELLs; autonomy, motivation and sense of self, including the significant impacts of tests and examinations, the role of significant others and the role of intrinsic love for the English language subject among ELLs.

7.5.1 Impacts of tests and examinations - Tra’s story

The influential roles of examinations and contests have been mentioned in Lien, Ha and Nha’s stories. The influences, however, are more evident in Tra’s learning trajectory, with tests and examinations as main motivators in her learning process.

Tra’s love for the English subject developed when she was in secondary school, and was further fuelled by an extra class English teacher. The English subject seemed to be the least difficult for Tra then because she found it easy to memorize new words and grammatical rules. The fact that Tra excelled in English could be attributed to her good memory. She recalled “In fact, I didn’t try to learn new words (and grammar) at home, they came into my mind naturally.
right at class” (ELLHTra: 1). With interesting learning materials, including English tapes and books suggested by her extra class teacher, Tra gradually found “curiosity and love for the English subject” (INT1Tra: 16). Tra described that teacher as “a good teacher with good handwriting, effective teaching method and good pronunciation”, which were “much different” from Tra’s class teacher (INT1Tra: 16).

Later, from her secondary school to university time, good results in English for the sake of honour to herself, to her own family and her schools were one of prime motivating factors for Tra to learn English. After two years of boring English classes at secondary school due to under-qualified teachers and unmotivated students, Tra was selected to an English-gifted class preparing for competitions in the town’s English contest. Tra suffered a great deal from her new learning environment, in which the students were much better at English than her and the teachers were extremely strict.

Overwhelmed by the study load and the competitive learning atmosphere, Tra became so depressed that her “memorization was from bad to worse, and learning by heart was the most awful thing in this world” (ELLHTra: 2). Meanwhile, the strict teacher with hard punishment for those who did not complete homework made Tra feel “scared whenever she came to his class” (INT1Tra: 18). Such pressures from teachers, friends and also her family and herself demotivated Tra in learning English as she wrote “my love and passion for English gradually faded away” (ELLHTra: 3). After her failure in the town competition and a feeling of being despised by friends and teachers, Tra continued learning English with a strong determination that she would earn a ticket into the province’s gifted high school. Tra recalled: “as a 14-year-old girl, I was stronger than anyone else (what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger…😊)… I was sad and depressed, but recovered soon” (ELLHTra: 3). Tra was motivated to pass the test in order to “bring herself honours”, so she tried her “best to pass the entrance exam to gifted high school” (INT1Tra:19).

Being selected to the province’s prestigious gifted high school, Tra was in another race, and this time it was for the national English contest. Tra described her struggles:

Through two years with hundreds of tests and exams, I was chosen into the 6-member team taking the national contest… I did a lot of exercises, learnt day and night … my
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teacher called me every day to force me to learn, or else, “choosing you into the gifted
team would be my biggest mistake.” Under pressure from her, my family, myself, I
studied, studied and studied, until one day, I woke up in a hospital. (ELLHTra: 3)

Tra vividly described the pressures she suffered from the test and examination system with
“hundreds of tests and exams”, from her teachers, her family and herself. Tra engaged and
invested her time to “learn day and night” just for her ought self. The school teacher, as
narrated in Tra’s first interview, even “forced” Tra to “learn more grammar and vocabulary”
because “grammar took up about 90% or 80% in the test” (INT1Tra:21) in order to get prizes
for the school honour. However, Tra only found motivation again for her English learning by
watching English movies to improve her speaking and listening skills, which were first
included in the national contest that year. She also found inspiration from a boy in the
Geography team whom she had a big crush on. As a result, Tra achieved the first prize in that
contest, which paved her way to the university and brought pride for her school and family.

For Tra, examinations and contests acted as both a stimulus and demotivating factor in her
English learning process. She first saw herself as a motivated English learner thanks to her
good teacher at an extra class. Her motivation to learn the English subject diminished when
Tra faced severe competition and excessive strictness of teachers in preparing for examinations
and tests. These pressures sat alongside her sense of ought self that forced her to learn for the
sake of her own honour and her family’s and the school’s reputation. Tra’s responses to the
pressures were to become “stronger” and “more inspired” in finding her own way to get high
“prizes” and an entry ticket to her favourite university. Further, Tra’s English learning history
demonstrated well the dynamic relationship between herself and the context.

7.5.2 Roles of significant others – Minh’s story
In contrast to Ha, who was bound by the ought self, Minh’s ideal self was nurtured by her
family and relatives, and her imagined community of the USA was on Minh’s mind from her
early childhood.

Minh developed a positive attitude towards the English language from her childhood. Born
into a family with high awareness of the importance of English language, Minh had early initial
exposure to the English language at the age of six. Her mother, a doctor who learned English
at her university, seemed to be the person to “bring Minh to English” (ELLHMinh: 1). Minh’s mother bought the very first English video-tapes and books with “cool and beautiful animated pictures” (ELLHMinh: 1) for Minh. Her uncle and aunts as English teachers corrected Minh’s pronunciation, encouraged her to speak English and provided her with interesting English materials like the audio book The Little Prince.

Thanks to her mother’s and her relatives’ encouragement, a strong sense of being a good future English user and a dream of studying in the USA fuelled a passion for English learning in Minh. And being good at English would be “a prerequisite for study abroad” (ELLHMinh: 2) – her dream since primary school age. Minh had a dream of going to the USA thanks to her mother’s beautiful description of the country and her uncle’s stories about his good old days studying there. Her dream became more inspiring and urgent in Minh after conversations with her parents’ friend’s son, who had been studying in the USA for more than five years. These people built in Minh a beautiful and attractive imagined community of the USA.

In such an encouraging family environment, Minh perceived herself an autonomous English learner. She decided to major in the English subject when she was in secondary school (aged from 11 – 15). She asked her mother to buy her more English books and interesting video tapes. Minh recalled in her first interview: “I thought that I was very independent very soon” (INT1Minh: 1). She was then so motivated to learn the English subject that she “took extra English classes and worked harder”, and at home Minh did “more exercises in different kinds of reference books” (ELLHMinh: 1). She became more active in her English learning process, writing that “Half of my bookshelf are English books. By reading them, I got better and better (especially at English grammar). I started to learn writing academic writing when I was at grade 9” (ELLHMinh: 1).

Minh was able to set learning goals for her English learning. After her decision of taking English as her major, she set a goal to join the team for the provincial contest. She said “I tried my best to improve my study and make my target. Make the goal nearer” (INT1Minh: 3). Minh then developed her own learning plan, asking her teachers for advice and comments on her written works. Talking about her learning materials, she revealed “I think that studying in the textbook is not enough for my goal. So I studied from a lot of reference books, IELTS for example and the books recommended by my teachers” (INT1Minh: 3). Later in Minh’s high
school time, she was selected to the school team for the National English contest; hence, she spent most of her time learning English. On average, Minh spent about “40 hours per week” on her English learning then (ELLHMinh: 2).

Minh was therefore confident that she was a good and motivated English learner with her ideal self as an overseas students in the USA. Minh wrote in her English learning history “My command of English seems to be the result of my learning process. Listening to my teachers’ lectures, doing homework and extra exercises help me improve my grammar and skills” (ELLHMinh: 3). Minh further described her way of learning English vocabulary with flash cards as “a very useful way” with which she could “learn English vocabulary anywhere or any time” (ELLHMinh: 3). Minh was also “aware of the importance of improving listening and speaking skills” (ELLHMinh: 1), so she spent more time watching English channels, listened to English songs and news. Listening to English seemed “natural” for her and she often “got high scores” for her listening tasks (INT1Minh: 3). Meanwhile, she deliberately targeted improving her speaking by practising more regularly with her high school classmates. Besides, Minh “tried very hard and wrote one or two essays almost every day” (ELLHMinh: 1). At the university, determined to follow through with her plan of studying in the USA, Minh continued her learning plan by practising English regularly with her classmates and self-studying her listening, reading and writing at home. At the end of the first university semester, she was awarded a scholarship to study in the USA.

Minh was highly motivated to learn English to study abroad. She saw herself as a successful English learner and user, and her dream of studying in the USA motivated her to spend time and put effort into learning English. Such a dream and inspiration were nurtured in Minh by her mother, her relatives and friends. The following story by participant Lan further demonstrates the role of motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, in ELLs’ autonomy and sense of self.

7.5.3 Roles of intrinsic love for languages and autonomy- Lan’s story
Many participants (seven out of fifteen participants) reported their passionate love for the English language subject, and the passion was found to be related to their independence in their language learning process, as well as to their sense of self as competent English learners and users. The passion for learning English in order to use it to gain knowledge and to enjoy
the language itself is termed intrinsic motivation (see Chapter Two). Drawing on interview responses and participants’ diaries and ELLHs, the following interpretation of these data sources traces changes in participant Lan’s intrinsic motivation in learning the English language and her learning autonomy and sense of actual self and ideal self.

Lan portrayed herself as an over-protected child in her family, and an introverted but competent language learner. As her parents did not know very much English, however, Lan became more independent in her English language learning compared to other participants, whose parents may have been more proficient English users. Lan presented herself as being introverted, antisocial, and competitive, preferring to work on her own rather than with others in groups. As she revealed in her diary, “As an introverted [person], I was highly allergic (figuratively, of course) to crowded spaces” (DLan: 3). In her narratives, Lan recorded that she had a good memory, which helped her absorb “everything taught in class like a sponge, never forget anything and never revised at home” (ELLHLan: 1). Talking in our first interview about her ability to imitate the pronunciation of words in other languages, Lan related: “my imitation is quite good. Even when we make subtitles in English and the audio in Japanese, I can imitate the Japanese sounds” (INT1Lan:3).

Lan was intrinsically motivated to learn the English language and hence the English subject. She first encountered the English language as a young child by listening to English music and watching English language cartoons. In her ELLH, she wrote about the influence of English music and cartoons on her interest in learning English: “perhaps the quirks of the language” from “all the classics, like Richard Marx, George Michael, Modern Talking, Billy Joel, the Beatles, even Boy zone and Back street boys” that she used to listen to “over and over and over” was “ingrained” into her (ELLHLan: 2).

At primary school, Lan found English an easy subject to learn; writing in her ELLH “I loved studying it [English], since it is very different from Mathematics” (ELLHLan: 2). Her interest in English was nurtured when she was sent to an extra English class with an effective teacher who introduced her to the culture of English speakers. Lan reported that she loved the atmosphere of the class with her enthusiastic and relaxed teacher.

Lan developed a habit of reading at secondary school when she was in Grade 6 and 7. While rummaging through a pile of old books in the attic one night, she found a Vietnamese version
of the novel *Gone with the Wind*. After reading this, she became “addicted” to reading and, as she recalled in her first interview: “After one night without a wink, I read such a wonderful novel, I even read with a torch” (INT1Lan: 2). When Lan was in Grade 9, the book series “Twilight” became a phenomenon among teenagers in Vietnam. She was very eager to read the series. The habit of reading in Vietnamese was then transferred into the habit of reading in the English language when Lan found it irresistible to continue her favourite series in English. It was first described as a “hard” process with “a little bit every single day” on her mother’s computer and a feeling of frustration when her eyes “watered”. Lan was however “so engrossed that” she completed reading the whole series in that way before the translated version was published (ELLHLan: 7).

The breakthrough that inspired Lan to read English emerged when participating in a high school Exchange program to England where she could buy fantasy novels. After Lan finished all the books bought in England, she was determined to continue with eBooks. The benefits she gained from reading English were not limited to a dramatic increase in her vocabulary. Lan gradually developed both a sense of the English language and confidence in her use of English grammar. As a result, she won a major prize in the national grammar-based English language contest. Lan described in detail the impact this reading habit had on her English language learning, particularly on her ability to read English. She invested her time in reading fantasy English books “in cell phone over a year”. The returns that she got was “the second place in the national competition in the English”, thanks to her “rocketed vocabulary, and improved writing style” (ELLHLan: 5).

Confident in the English language as she was, Lan believed in herself as an autonomous English learner. She did not follow her teacher’s traditional learning methods as for her such methods seemed uninteresting. From her ELLH, it was “extremely tedious” (ELLHLan: 3) to always do exercises given by the teacher, or learn everything by heart. For Lan, the “textbook and materials were also yawn-worthy. Textbooks were just a book filled with boring tasks, repeated over and over again” (ELLHLan: 5). In Lan’s opinion, “learning English is learn to know how to use it” (ELLHLan: 7). In that way, Lan studied English “every single day. TVs, books, magazines, novels, music, all are in English” because it helped Lan “to improve reaction [her reactions] on [in] both the speed and the content. Thinking in English is way faster than thinking in Vietnamese” (ELLHLan: 7).
Lan enjoyed learning English as a subject as her “motto to study English is to have fun” (ELLHLan: 8). Therefore, she chose English language learning materials that she was interested in and chose her own way of learning: reading English books, and learning English vocabulary and grammar through her reading. Also, having read a large number of books, Lan found herself developing “a sense of what to do when writing” (ELLHLan: 9). Lan also took a number of extra classes that provided her with opportunities to learn about English and English cultures. She narrated, “I joined several English centre [centres] when I was still not a Uni. student. Most of them were really fun… I think these centres help tremendously with communication skills since there [was] a huge gap for communication in the educational system” (ELLHLan: 9). As a school learner, Lan saw a lack of communicative learning and teaching activities in the formal classroom, and she sought to develop her “communication skills’ in her extra English classes.

Further, Lan showed a strong sense of actual self as a competent English learner and user. She commented, “I think I am both a good English learner and user. Sounds (very) arrogant, but it’s true. I think (mostly) in English (all the time), can speak naturally” (ELLHLan: 5). When asked about her definition of a good English learner, she mentioned the English language and its culture: “It’s about communicating, getting the information through, and blend in with the native speakers. Because learning a language also means learning its culture” (ELLHLan: 6).

Lan also reported a preference for identifying her actual self as an English user rather than as a Vietnamese speaker as she found herself more confident when using English. In her first interview responses, Lan found herself “socially awkward” as a Vietnamese speaker, but when she spoke “English before a crowd or present before the class”, she felt “really confident and comfortable” (INT1TRSLan: 8). Lan’s reflections here seem to signal her developing sense of self as an English user.

It is interesting to note the two opposite versions of actual self that Lan perceived: one was a Vietnamese speaker with a “few antisocial traits”, one was an English user who was “extrovert, confident, bossy and commanding” (ELLHLan: 7). Lan was highly aware of the differences between her two personas and wanted others to perceive her with the latter version. Consequently, Lan’s sense of self as an English language user pervaded her daily life. She read, wrote, spoke and listened to English every day. In her first interview, Lan reported that she watched television programs in English, particularly *Star Wars*, and listened to English
songs. Writing about her love for writing, Lan wrote “I can’t ever imagine myself not studying (or using) English. I love to write. I write short stories, diaries. I can’t help but to write” (ELLH兰: 8).

Lan related that when participating in the English SL course, she felt confident and interested in all the class activities and perceived her actual self as an English user to be enhanced through her participation. She also related that she became “more extroverted” and more confident with her own persona (INT3TRSL兰:7). In the third interview, Lan said that she really liked the course because it created opportunities for all students to interact through a variety of activities. In terms of Lan’s sense of her future self, she wanted to work in English-related work. She intended to complete her BA in the USA, and then pursue Masters Studies in the Greek language where she could learn more about the culture of Greece. Lan wanted to become trilingual in the near future with good command of the English and Greek languages.

This participant’s learning trajectory helps to illustrate the influential impact of intrinsic motivation on her learning autonomy and her sense of actual self as well as her ideal self. A similar story told by Loan (See Appendix 23: Participants’ English learning stories) further elaborates the close interrelationship between participants’ intrinsic motivation and autonomy and ELLs’ sense of self.

7.6 Summary of dynamic nature and complexity of ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self and influential factors

This chapter has presented the dynamism and complexity of, and factors influencing, ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self through the English learning stories of seven participants. Their stories were narrated from their ELLHs, their English SL course diaries, responses to three interview rounds, and selected aspects based on their representativeness and the dynamism in participants’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self.

Dynamism and complexity of the three factors were illuminated in the first four stories by Lien, Hue, Nha and Ha. The first story shows that the English SL course left significant impacts on Lien’s perception of autonomy, which led to her increased investment and engagement in learning English. Lien further experienced changes in her sense of actual/own self and ideal self after the course. The second story demonstrates dynamism and complexity
in the motivation levels of Hue. This participant possessed a negative attitude towards the English subject due to her under-qualified English teachers at secondary and high schools, and Hue only found instrumental motivation in passing the English tests and examinations in learning English. Hue’s enhanced autonomy acted as a prime motivator, and thus led to changes in her sense of ideal self. In the third story, Nha’s sense of actual and ideal selves was dynamic and fluid during her entire English learning trajectory. Her dream of studying in her imagined community, Canada, nurtured her ideal self when she activated plans to achieve it. Ha’s story narrated her constant struggles between her ought self and ideal self, which were at times in a state of mutual constraint, while sometimes in harmony.

Factors that influenced the dynamism and complexity of ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self were well demonstrated in the last three stories which centre on the influential roles of tests and examinations, significant others and the intrinsic love for the English language. For participants like Tra, examinations and tests acted as both motivator and de-motivator in her learning process, forcing her to learn English for the sake of honour for her family and school. Meanwhile, Minh received tremendous support from her family and relatives in nurturing her ideal self as a competent English learner and user in the USA. Further, intrinsic motivation was found an influential factor in Lan’s learning story, which led to her sense of autonomy as well as enhanced her motivation in learning the English language subject.

Another finding lies in the interrelated and inseparable relationships between ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and self. Even though this finding was not presented in a separate story, the interrelationships between the three factors were prominent in all the narrated stories. Participants’ stories showed dynamism and close interrelationships between three factors: their perceptions of autonomy, their level of motivation and their sense of self. ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self are dynamic, and change in different settings with different agents. When participants changed their learning environment, friends or teachers, there often appeared a change in their sense of self, motivation and autonomy. Lien and Hue’s trajectories revealed how autonomy influenced their sense of actual self and ought self and ideal self, while stories by Nha and others showed the tremendous impacts of their sense of ideal self on their motivation.
The following chapter centres on discussions about the major findings consolidated from quantitative data sets presented in Chapter Five, and qualitative findings in Chapter Six together with findings in Chapter Seven. It also focuses on the meanings and importance of these findings.
8.1 An overview of major findings and discussions

In the previous analysis chapters, a patchwork of ELL autonomy, motivation and self has been painted with quantitative data findings in Chapter Five, qualitative data information in Chapter Six, and ELL learning trajectories showing the dynamism, complexity and interrelatedness of the three factors in Chapter Seven. Bringing findings from these three chapters together, I can now provide an overview of the roles of ELL autonomy, motivation and self in the learners’ contexts. This chapter presents and discusses the major findings and the meaning and importance of these findings that have been identified from the combination of the quantitative and qualitative results presented in the previous chapters.

Seven major findings are presented in detail in this chapter. The first finding confirms that the ELL participants perceived themselves to be passive inside the classroom while more active in their informal learning, and they saw themselves as motivated language learners even though they were not confident in their learning strategies. These ELLs also reported a strong sense of ideal and ought self in the near future and perceived that examinations and textbooks were key factors impacting their learning process. Other findings related to the impacts of classroom autonomy on ELLs’ motivation and self, dynamism and interrelationships between learner autonomy, motivation and self, the role of imagined communities and contexts and intrinsic motivation.

8.2 ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self

ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self were elicited from findings which were identified from the combined data comprising: the first survey data analysis and a theme-based analysis of ELLH and their responses to their first interviews; the second surveys and the learning diaries and the second and third interview rounds; and all five qualitative data sets including ELLHs, three interview rounds and learning diaries.
8.2.1 ELLs’ varied perceptions and exercising of ELL autonomy in different contexts

The ELLs perceived themselves as passive within the classroom walls and desired more autonomous learning activities. Findings from the first survey responses show that learners perceived teachers as authorities in providing explanations for language knowledge, in giving advice on informal learning and learners’ difficulties in learning the language, and in deciding learning activities together with learning materials. These findings are complemented by results from the qualitative data sets of ELLHs and the first interview rounds, showing that learners perceived their learning environment as examination-oriented, teacher-dominated and text-book based sites. Being positioned as passive in such formal learning and teaching communities, ELLs relied on teachers for the language knowledge and learning activities. Further, set textbooks together with examinations defined learners’ learning methods and materials. However, as open, adaptive and dynamic systems, learners saw themselves as responsible for correcting mistakes, finding effective learning methods, preparing for the lesson, evaluating their own learning process, learning from pair and group work, and learning from their classmates’ feedback. They further desired more active learning activities in the class and reported willingness and confidence in seeking opportunities to develop their autonomy.

Beyond the classroom boundaries, the participating ELLs demonstrated more active roles. Firstly, as presented in Chapter Six, ELLs used flexible learning strategies and a wide range of learning materials including dictionaries, books, novels, music DVDs, English channels and the Internet. The use of these learning resources can be considered a strong indicator of ELL autonomy as these resources are individually accessed and hence individually-driven options. This finding contests the previous study that Vietnamese students may be reluctant to study outside the textbook (Nguyen, 2014). Secondly, ELLs showed their independence when they learned the English language through using it in their informal contexts: some learned English by reading books and/or novels; some listened to English music, and some made friends by joining English speaking forums or clubs. Thirdly, some learners acted the role of teachers outside classroom settings: some, including Phu, organized learning activities for their classmates; some, including Hue, worked as English language tutors for young children. Switching in their roles and hence in their identities between English learners and English teachers or/and users in some respect enhanced their sense of ELL autonomy.
Therefore, the findings confirm that ELL autonomy changes in different contexts at different times. Drawing on complexity theory, the context includes the physical, social, cognitive and cultural, and cannot be separated from the system (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Changes in autonomy were most evident in Nha’s story, and changes occurred whenever there was a change in her learning environment contexts (See Chapter Seven). Findings also show that changes in ELL autonomy happened more dramatically in informal settings with ELLs becoming more autonomous in choosing their learning materials, from the textbook at primary school to dictionaries and English novels and books in secondary school time, to the Internet at high school and university. The changes are attributed to a number of factors, among which are the maturity of participants and changes in the cultural and socio-economic situations of Vietnam in the last 10 – 20 years. In contrast, classroom learning autonomy seems more stable with the role of teachers as decision-makers, textbooks as the prime materials and traditional assessment methods.

Also, findings argue that Vietnamese culture facilitates and nurtures language learner autonomy. Culture from the complexity theory perspective is one complex system in the context system of EL learners (See Chapter Three). In the informal context, parents were found to be not absolute authorities in the decision-making process of ELLs. In some cases, including those of Hue, Giao, Lien, Ngan, and Ha as presented in Chapter Six, parents did not interfere in their learning process although parents and families might express high expectations of their children and hence create ought selves for them to fulfil.

8.2.2 ELLs perceiving themselves motivated
Results from the first quantitative survey and qualitative data, including the ELLH and first interview analysis, demonstrate ELLs’ motivation in learning the English language subject. One of the popular reasons for choosing the English language subject was the ELLs’ interest in the cultures of English-speaking people. They liked music, movies and books in English, reading English materials, doing writing in English, listening to English songs and watching English TV programmes, and browsing English websites. ELLs also learned English for travelling and getting information from the English news. These reasons can be seen to indicate intrinsic motivation as they relate to enjoyment that ELLs might find in their English learning process (Noels, 2003). Intrinsically motivated ELLs were found to be consistent in their engagement and investment in English learning, regardless of changes in their teachers. Also,
this finding corresponds to Clément and Kruidenier’s (1983) study that orientations towards “travel” and “knowledge” are found to be significant in a mono-cultural context like Vietnam.

ELLs showed generally positive attitudes towards the English language and towards English as a school subject despite their negative comments on class teaching and learning methods. ELLs confirmed that their own efforts and learning methods were crucial in their English learning process, although their investment in the English subject appeared inconsistent: they invested more study time before English tests or examinations. Besides this, many ELLs demonstrated an intrinsic motivation which maintains their love for and engagement and investment in English. Moreover, ELLs were more likely to use spoken English with their university friends than with their teachers. This finding illustrates the hierarchical relationship between teachers and ELLs in the formal setting in which teachers often possess an absolute authority (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). Along with formal learning, ELLs joined outside class learning activities to different degrees. Reading English materials and writing in English were favourite informal learning activities for the majority of learners, while speaking English to family members or foreigners were the less popular ones. In other words, despite their negative comments on their class learning experiences, ELLs demonstrated their positive attitudes toward the English subject. ELLs further engaged with and invested in this language use both inside and outside the classroom contexts with a wide range of activities that indicate their motivation in learning English.

8.2.3 ELLs’ different senses of self

In the aspect of actual self, findings from both surveys and qualitative data sets reveal that most ELLs did not consider themselves as good English learners, even though some of them perceived themselves as having extrovert personas and excelling at linguistic subjects including English. One of the main reasons stated by the students was that they were not confident in their learning methods, or they were not actively engaged in their own learning processes. Others might have thought that they were good at certain skills, like speaking and listening, but not all the four skills. Therefore, they concluded that they were not “good English learners”. Another possible reason for this finding was that from my own experience and observation, Vietnamese people in general and ELLs in particular are likely to be humble when it comes to showing their own ability, and they tend to be over-critical when judging themselves. This tradition may explain why ELLs did not perceive themselves as good English
learners despite their perceptions of their actual selves through the eyes of others, which revealed that their parents, friends, families and others saw them as competent English learners after the ELLs had passed the most difficult university entrance examination.

Discussing their sense of ideal selves, ELLs saw themselves as capable and competent English users in their future employment, study and their daily lives. For some ELLs, their imagined communities were England, the USA, and Singapore, Canada or a European country. The concept of “integratedness” by Gardner (1985) may fail to explain the motivation of ELLs in the context of Vietnam, where contacts with native English speakers seem limited. Rather, ELLs built up their ideal selves of competent English users in their imagined communities (Norton, 2013). More discussions on the ELLs’ imagined community are presented in Section 8.7.

In relation to the sense of an ought self, findings from the first surveys show that ELLs learnt English for the sake of good results in English proficiency tests and of being considered educated people. While survey results suggested that ELLS were not likely to learn English for their family honour, qualitative data findings showed some ELLs perceived a strong sense of ought self for family reasons. This contradiction shows the complicated nature of self which cannot be fully captured via survey methods alone. Some ELLs believed that they should be good English users in order to be the model for or to follow the model of their siblings. These ELLs perceived mastering fluent English might bring honour to their families. Some others learned English in order to pass important entrance examinations to bring honour to the family. These findings reflect Asian cultural environments in which a sense of ought self is assumed to play a significant role (Lockwood et al., 2005), particularly in Vietnamese cultures, where the academic self is considered important (See Chapter One).

**8.3 Examinations and tests as attractors in ELLs’ learning systems**

Examinations and tests have been found to be of great importance in ELLs’ learning process. Findings from both qualitative and quantitative data show that the primary reasons for most ELLs to learn the English subject was to pass the school English tests and exams and to achieve high results. Many learned English in order to get rewards from school or province or city English contests. ELLs chose learning strategies in order to meet examination requirements and assessment criteria. Evidence for this trend can be traced in Phu’s and Thai’s learning
8.4 Impacts of enhanced classroom learning autonomy in the English SL course on ELLs’ motivation and sense of self

Findings from the second survey and the learning diary, along with the second and third interview round analysis, demonstrate the possibilities to enhance classroom learning autonomy among ELLs in Vietnam’s context, and hence the possibility of autonomous ELLs becoming motivated ones.

8.4.1 Possibility to enhance classroom learning autonomy

Willingness and ability to assume responsibility are two conditions for acceptance of responsibility for learning (Holec, 1979). Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data show the ELLs’ willingness, confidence and enthusiasm in developing more autonomy and having more interactive class learning activities. In other words, if an individual learner can name what needs to change, he/she is more likely to be able to change it, which is in some aspect similar to having positive attitudes towards learning, one of the characteristics of an autonomous ELL (Breen & Mann, 2013). Also, as discussed above, ELLs demonstrated their
responsibility in their own learning and evaluating processes. The sharp contrast between these ELLs’ professed autonomy inside and outside class further indicates the possibility of substantially developing classroom autonomy. These implications revealed that ELLs were willing and ready for the innovation of more learner autonomy in their classroom settings.

The impacts of the English SL course on Group One ELLs’ autonomy enhancement were significant. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data show ELLs’ significant changes in their perception of autonomy, emphasizing that autonomy can be developed among Vietnamese ELLs. The ELLs in my study demonstrated higher levels of confidence and willingness, following the course than before the course, in finding their own way to learn English, in checking their own work for mistakes, in measuring their own learning progress, and in dealing with their learning difficulties. Complementary findings generated from qualitative data further confirm that ELLs were more confident with their goal setting, making learning plans, self-reflecting on their learning progress, and making self and peer-assessments. This finding argues that the concept of ELL autonomy which was derived from Western contexts may be applied to EFL learners in the context of an EFL Asian country such as Vietnam.

Further, impacts of the English SL course on ELL autonomy show that learner autonomy can be developed through appropriate learning conditions with learners’ independent thought and decision making being encouraged. Group One ELLs experiencing the English SL course with a variety of classroom autonomy enhancement activities demonstrated changes in their learning autonomy which were not observed in Group Two ELLs (See Chapter Five). Once ELLs have their voices heard in the learning process, they feel more comfortable in their class, and hence become more confident and willing to take the risk of making mistakes. Take Nha and Lien as examples: when their autonomy was enhanced, they became more active and more open in giving their opinions before the class. Further, ELLs in the course liked varied activities, amongst which they liked being able to choose and had various reasons for their choices. Various learning activities, including pair-work, debates, group-work and a buddy program helped to enhance ELL autonomy. One more noteworthy point is that ELLs became more autonomous when they were able to choose to do the teaching. As presented in Chapter Four, in each lesson, two learners were encouraged to be the monitors who would organize some class activities, pair and group work with the teacher’s assistance. For example, from a
shy girl Lien became far more independent and confident after acting as the class monitor, presenting new vocabulary and organizing group work in the class.

**8.4.2 Possibility of autonomous ELLs becoming motivated**

ELLs’ enhanced autonomy was found to lead to significant changes in their attitudes, efforts, engagement and investment in learning English. After the English SL course, ELLs had positive comments to make about the class teaching and learning methods and put more effort into English. Engagement with the use of English in the class context was also higher; ELLs were likely to use English more frequently with their friends at university.

Moreover, the use of informal English was reflected in their engagement with and investment in English when speaking with foreigners, with family members, when chatting with friends in English more frequently, and with financial investment in English books and magazines. These types of two-way interactions and financial investments in learning materials were not reported by Group Two students, who spent more time browsing English websites and listening to English songs. The Group One ELLs, after participating in the English SL course, became more inspired and motivated to learn English both in and out of the classroom, with English being considered not only one of their school subjects but a language of communication for socializing with other students. The results emphasize that autonomous ELLs could become motivated ELLs and hence inspired English language users. In other words, autonomous learners become more intrinsically motivated when they find enjoyment in learning the subject.

One more noteworthy observation is that some ELLs showed positive changes in their attitudes towards the English language subject and had detailed learning plans for short and long-term goals. With their plans, they intended to spend more time on English during their school holiday. This finding shows that ELL motivation does not only relate to their attitudes towards and their current investment in the subject but also relates to their future investment plans for learning English. In other words, ELL motivation concerns not only the current investment, but also involves ELLs’ intention to invest in learning the English subject in the near future.

**8.4.3 Possibility of autonomous ELLs with sense of vivid selves becoming more motivated**

Autonomous ELLs demonstrated their sense of actual self, ideal self and ought self more vividly and showed more motivation in their English learning after the English SL course.
Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data analysis show that changes in the sense of self were observed once ELLs’ learning autonomy was enhanced. ELLs were more confident with their actual selves, showing a stronger sense of being good English learners and users. Many ELLs, including Phu, Lien and Hue, found themselves more confident in learning English with effective learning strategies, and in using English in the English SL class. Many also saw themselves becoming successful graduates in the near future, and as being good English users by that time. Once they became more autonomous, ELLs were able to identify their future English learning goals and plans, and to keep elaborating and revising their future learning goals and plans during the English SL course. In general, when their autonomy was enhanced, ELLs showed their confidence in perceiving who they were and who they would be and thus knew what they needed to do to realize their imagined future self.

Enhanced autonomy helped ELLs see their future selves more immediately in time and thus they become more motivated. When ELLs were confident in setting short-term, medium-term and long-term learning goals and plans, they felt the attainment of their ideal and/or ought self to be close; therefore, they might have felt the need for swift actions to reach their set targets (Strahan & Wilson, 2006). Take Le as an example (See Chapter Six). She reported in her interviews that when she thought graduation time was far away, she did not exert any effort to learn the English language subject, but when Le set learning goals and detailed plans, she realized that the graduation time was much closer than she had thought. Consequently, she invested more time in the subject with a more serious attitude, more engagement and investment. In other words, the more concrete learning plans are, the more motivated ELLs become (Ushioda, 2014b).

Moreover, enhanced ELL autonomy brings about a desire to reduce the discrepancy between their current self and ideal self. That desire motivates ELLs to invest in the English language when they would like to become fluent English speakers in the future, and thus that ideal self becomes a powerful stimulus for learners. This stimulus was evident in Hue’s story, where she perceived her current self as a “slow turtle” – a slow English learner in comparison with her classmates (See Chapter Six). Once she experienced a development in her learning autonomy, Hue was able to envisage her ideal self as a fluent English user by the graduation time for the sake of her Master study overseas. Hue then found it more urgent than ever before to accelerate her English learning progress in order to bridge the huge gap between her current actual self
and her ideal one. To realize her ideal self of a good English user with at least 7 points in the IELTS test, she made detailed English learning plans. That urgency induced in Hue a strong motivation to learn the English subject.

Also, the power of dreams of becoming an ideal self in ELL’s imagined communities is a motivating factor for ELLs in learning the language. Dreams can only become ideal selves when ELLs are able to set specific goals and make concrete learning plans to realize their dreams (Dörnyei, 2005). In other words, “it is not enough to simply have clear visions of who or what one wants to become; an individual needs to simulate in detail how to become that person” (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 115). This was evident in Nha’s story (See Chapter Six). Her dream of studying in Canada was fostered and nurtured by her friends and her extra class teachers. Nha’s dream was realized in her ideal self of fluent English user when she set goals of going to Canada in one year’s time, got enrolled in an IELTS class, and joined in an online English speaking club. Similar to Hue, Nha became a motivated ELL with her vivid ideal self.

Moreover, when ELLs’ ought selves become integrated with their ideal selves, ELLs are more likely to become motivated language learners (Dörnyei, 2005). This feature was portrayed well in Ha’s English learning story (See Chapter Six). This girl was motivated to learn the English subject by her ought self; that was to bring honour to her family. When her ought self was accompanied by the ideal self of an overseas student, her engagement and investment in the English language subject increased significantly.

Also, enhanced autonomy may lead to a dramatic shift from a sense of an ought self to a strong sense of an ideal self, which in turn acts as a stimulus for ELLs. Lien’s and Ha’s cases illuminated this finding well (See Chapter Six). While Lien was pressured to learn English well in order to bring honour to her mother and to follow her older sister’s model, Ha was expected to be a good English learner because of her family’s prestige. However, both of them became motivated with their learning goals of studying abroad and strong perceptions of their ideal self after the English SL course. For Lien, being a fluent English user for the sake of employment security became more important than “just learning English for the tests” (DLien, 4). These stories therefore support Ryan and Irie’s argument that “it is through the ought self that many of these external influences are regulated, with some of them eventually being internalized to such an extent that they become a part of the individual’s ideal self” (2014, p.
Further, the shift from a sense of ought self to a strong sense of an ideal self was not observed among Group Two students who did not experience classroom autonomy enhancement. Those students instead reported their strong sense of ought self to learn English for their family honour, for their graduation and for good results in English tests alongside their sense of a successful graduate self after the English SL course (See Chapter Five).

To summarize, ELLs became more motivated when they gained confidence in learning and using the English language in the classroom, becoming more autonomous, and demonstrating a stronger sense of their actual self as good English learners and users. Further, ELLs’ motivation increased when they perceived their future ideal self as more immediate in time and had a desire to reduce the discrepancy between their actual and ideal self. Also, ELLs became more motivated once their dreams became their ideal self with their specific action plans in learning English, and once their ought self was integrated into or shifted into an ideal self.

8.4.4 The impacts of the English SL course from the perspective of complexity theory
As discussed above, the English SL course had significant impacts on ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self. Viewing the course from perspectives of complexity theory, the course acted as a stimulus factor or a bifurcation which brought about changes in the whole system of English learning in classroom.

From the perspectives of complexity theory, my English class could be seen as a dynamic system to which ELLs brought their own English learning histories, their own identities and their own perceptions of ELL autonomy. This state of my class system has been portrayed by the data generated from ELLs’ first surveys, their English learning histories and their first interviews. These findings presented in Section 8.2.1 of this chapter show that ELLs themselves were not passive; rather they were positioned in a passive role within the class walls with fixed textbooks, rigid teaching and learning methods.

My English SL course could be seen as a phase shift or a bifurcation in that system (See Chapter Three). The course provided ELLs with more opportunities to exercise their autonomy in learning with such elective activities as pair and group work, buddy programs, monitors of
the week, elective homework and elective corner activities. In that English class system, ELLs were dynamic systems who might adapt and evolve after the bifurcation of the English SL course. ELLs first experienced changes in their perceptions on autonomy with the roles of teachers and learners as negotiators. These changes were varied among the different ELLs. Changes in ELLs’ attitudes toward class learning, in their investment in learning English with more time speaking and listening to English at home and at university, were then accompanied by changes in their sense of ideal and ought self. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data show that there were significant changes in autonomy, sense of self and motivation among Group One ELLs (See Chapters Five and Six).

The motivation that the course generated can therefore be seen as another attractor with a butterfly effect (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), alongside traditional English examinations and tests as the prime attractors in the system. After the course, ELLs changed to a new pattern of behaviours when they found their vivid ideal selves as stimulus factors in their English learning trajectories. In other words, ELLs became motivated to learn English not only for the sake of examinations but also for their future selves.

8.5 Dynamism of ELL autonomy, motivation and self

The study findings confirm that LL autonomy, motivation and sense of self are dynamic and change in different settings, including schools, classes, and living communities, and change with different agents like teachers, friends, family members and so on. When ELLs changed their learning environment or had different friends or teachers, there appeared a change in their sense of self, motivation and autonomy (See Chapter Seven).

The dynamic nature of ELL autonomy is well demonstrated in Lien’s learning story, which shows significant changes in her sense of learner autonomy (See Chapter Seven). Lien changed from a shy, timid and dependent little girl in her primary and secondary school times to an independent and autonomous learner at university. And after my English SL course, she became more autonomous and confident in her learning process. Hue’s story reveals great changes in her motivation in learning the English subject (See Chapter Seven). With a positive attitude toward English, Hue had experienced negative attitudes and then feelings of hatred towards the subject due to her under-qualified English teachers at secondary and high schools. She only gained instrumental motivation for the subject when she had to take the university
entrance examination. Her motivation was subsequently enhanced after the English SL course when she became more aware of her weaknesses and strengths in the subject and clearer about her future learning plans.

Further, the complexity of multi-faceted selves is also seen in participants’ English learning histories. Dynamism of multiple selves can be traced back in Ha’s learning story (See Chapter Seven), in which her struggle between her actual self, ought self and ideal self was evident throughout her early family experience with her parents and her younger sister to her university time. The story therefore shows a close interrelationship between the ideal self and ought self: “which are sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict” (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 113). As well, the sense of actual own self and sense of actual others self are complementary to the sense of ideal and ought self, making the self more complicated and multi-faceted.

8.6 Interrelated relationships between ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self in light of complexity theory

Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data show close correlations between ELL autonomy, motivation and their sense of self. Further, all the selected stories presented in Chapter Seven show close interrelationships between three factors: ELLs’ perceptions of autonomy, their level of motivation and their sense of self. Take Lien and Hue and Nha’s learning trajectories as examples. Lien and Hue’s English learning stories demonstrate how autonomy influenced their sense of actual self and ought self and ideal self, while the story by Nha shows the tremendous impacts of her sense of ideal self on her motivation (See Chapter Seven).

These factors are seen interwoven and unseparated as they have an impact on and from each other, leading to continuous changes in ELL learning trajectories. In Ha’s English learning story, her senses of self were vividly portrayed with her ideal self of becoming a fluent English speaker like her teacher and her uncle, and then her actual self of being the best student in her primary and secondary classes, then her ought self of being a good English learner as her parents’ expected, and her ideal self of an overseas student like many high school classmates of hers. Going along with her fluid senses of self were her non-linear senses of autonomy with varied levels of motivation. Ha found herself motivated to learn English with her ideal self, particularly when her ought self was complemented by her ideal self to study abroad. Her sense
of learner autonomy was also enhanced when she was highly motivated by her ought self to pass the university entrance examination in order to bring honour to her family and her ideal self of being a student in the USA. After the English SL course, Ha became more autonomous with her learning process and more motivated with her ideal self and her determination of pursuing her Master of Finance degree overseas.

8.7 Power of imagined communities

Imagined communities related to the English language communities were found commonly among the participants of the study. The participants imagined such English-speaking countries as England, the USA, Australia and Canada. Also, their imagined communities were found to be associated with the members of the English language communities. Nha’s imagination of the English-speaking community in Canada was more vivid and nurtured by her English teacher in an extra class, by her Canadian friends in her English speaking club and by her online teacher in Canada. Minh’s imagined community was an American-styled university environment, which she often saw on television and learned from her friends who had experience studying in the USA. Some others were impressed so much by the teaching ways of their American professors that they imagined learning in the USA after their graduation. Two other ELLs imagined themselves studying in Australia after my English SL course, as they believed that the way I supported them to become more autonomous and independent was similar to the teaching and learning way in Australia.

Furthermore, the diverse imagined communities of ELLs were found to relate to their desired future identities. Some ELLs saw themselves as successful English learners and users in their imagined communities. Examples are Minh and Ha, who envisaged themselves pursuing their Masters study in the USA, and Le imagined studying finance in England. These ELLs saw their ideal selves in their imagined communities and thus found themselves more motivated to learn the English subject. This finding corresponds to Ryan and Irie’s (2014) argument that the imagined communities act as the primary site in which ELLs with minimal opportunities for actual contacts with the target language speakers negotiate their identities.

The impacts of the imagined community were powerful on ELLs’ motivation and sense of self and hence increases in ELL autonomy; these were illustrated in Minh and Nha’s English learning histories (See Chapter Seven). Minh’s dream of studying in the USA turned into her
ideal self when her imagined community of the USA was vividly portrayed and coloured by her parents, her relatives and her friends. Her determination of becoming a student in such an imagined community urged her to invest more time and energy in learning the English language subject. Minh found herself motivated and autonomous in her learning process to turn her dream into reality. Similarly, Nha’s dream of studying in Canada became something she saw as possible once she felt that Canada was “not that far” − Canada − her imagined community became something tangible and reachable in her sense. Nha’s ideal self in that imagined community acted as a stimulus for her investment and engagement in the English subject.

8.8 ELLs and their contexts including significant others as inseparable systems

The role of contexts on ELLs’ learning the English language in general and on their autonomy, motivation and sense of self has been the centre of debates in the long history of the field (see Chapter Two). One extreme is the individual perspective viewing the context as “an external factor” (Gardner, 2001, p. 5) impacting ELLs’ motivation and then affecting their formal and informal learning, which in turn impacts on ELLs’ outcomes. This one-way interaction shows a static relationship between ELLs’ motivation and their learning contexts with the argument that once ELLs are motivated, they are willing to participate in target language communication (See Chapter Two). On another extreme is the socio-cultural perspective, viewing context as an important and influential factor on ELLs’ identity and investment in their learning process. This perspective argues for the strong influence of the power for ELLs in their society of speaking the target language, their investment in learning a language, and their imagined community (See Chapter Two).

Findings from this study argue for considering the complexity of relationship between ELLs and their learning contexts, in which both the ELLs and the context are dynamic systems and neither the individual ELL nor the context becomes more important; rather they are closely interrelated and inseparable. Firstly, the context itself should be understood as a fluid system which includes ELLs’ formal and informal contexts, their classes, schools, families, communities, society and so on in different spaces and on different time scales (See Chapter Three). These factors are not static, but dynamic. Parts of participants’ ELLHs told about their first time learning English, their classes in the primary, secondary and high schools and the
university, their extra classes, their friends in English speaking clubs and so on. Further, such contextual factors influenced and were influenced by ELLs. In different learning environments either formal or informal at diverse times, ELLs experienced different levels of motivation in learning the English language subject, different perceptions of their autonomy and sense of self. Nha’s story demonstrates clearly changes in her learning context, which impacted dramatically on her learning process. Nha became more autonomous when she lived far away from home, and then became more motivated when she entered her high school with other highly motivated students (See Chapter Seven).

Significant others, including parents, teachers, relatives and friends, are influential factors in stimulating ELLs to learn English. Participants’ English learning stories also told about their families, relatives, neighbours and even their parents’ friends and their parents’ friends’ children, who influenced their English learning in some respect. The important roles of significant others were clearly narrated in Minh’s English learning story telling how she got inspiration to become a fluent English learner and user from the picture of a beautiful and attractive imagined place, the USA, painted vividly by her parents and her relatives. Similarly, Nha became motivated with her future ideal self as a good English user thanks to her high school friends and her teachers. Motivation-stimulating ought selves derived from parents, siblings and relatives were seen in Ha and Ngan’s stories. In some other learning stories, ELLs mentioned the influential role of their neighbours, their parents’ friends and colleagues and their extra class teachers on their English learning process.

8.9 Summary of findings and discussions
This chapter has discussed the key findings, and their meanings in light of complexity theory. Firstly, ELLs perceived themselves as passive in the classroom context with teachers as the key decision makers and the examination-oriented and text-book based English learning environment, while they demonstrated more active roles outside the class. This finding challenges the argument that the Asian English learners are not autonomous (See Chapter Two). Further, ELLs showed their motivation in learning the English language subject despite their negative comments on their classroom learning experiences. In particular, ELLs with intrinsic motivation sustained a constant level of engagement and investment in learning the subject. In terms of sense of self, ELLs did not perceive themselves as good English learners
but as competent English users in the future. The findings further confirm that autonomy can be enhanced amongst Vietnamese ELLs with readjusted curriculum and relevant elective class activities. The enhanced autonomy leads to enhanced motivation and sense of self among ELLs. Findings also show dynamism and the complex relationship between ELLs and the context, particularly in relation to significant others, as well as the important role of intrinsic motivation among ELLs and ELLs’ intrinsic motivation in the English language subject. These key findings emphasize that the L2 learning experiences have influential impacts on the ELLs’ sense of ought and ideal selves., which accommodates the gap in the L2 Motivational Self System model by Dörnyei (2005, 2009), showing further that the relationships among the three elements- the ideal self, the ought self and the L2 learning experience (See Chapter Three)- are too far complicated than in the model. Detailed implications and discussions on the model will be presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER NINE

What now and Where to go?

9.1 The story of “What now and Where to go”
I remember in one presentation that I attended in the CAES conference in Hong Kong in June 2015, when the presenter finished his presentation about his PhD research and one of the interesting questions raised by the audience was “What now? Where are you going?” And interestingly the answer was: “I do not know, I just want to submit my thesis and I am done.” Then what came into my mind was “My goodness, this is not my case. My research journey should be continued with what I have found, what I have not and what I can do to enhance my ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self”. In this chapter, I will then summarize the key findings of my research before I propose a number of implications for both theories and classroom teaching practices. Significance and limitations of the study are presented subsequently, paving a pathway to future directions. The chapter ends with closing remarks on my research story.

9.2 Summary of answers to research questions
The research was carried out in order to find answers to my research questions:

*How does autonomy in the language learning experience in a Vietnamese tertiary context influence the learners’ motivation and sense of self as future English learners/users?*

Sub question 1: How do English language learners (ELLs) perceive their autonomy in English learning?

Sub question 2: How do ELLs perceive their sense of self as English language users/learners?

Sub question 3: How do ELLs engage and invest in English learning and English use?

Sub question 4: How and in what way does autonomy help initiate and sustain ELLs’ sense of self as English language learners/users?

Sub question 5: How is the relationship between ELLs’ autonomy and their sense of self related to their engagement and investment in learning English?
The study employed the mixed methods approach to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. An English SL course, including 40 formal class hours, was conducted with an aim to enhance learner autonomy at an economics university in Hanoi, Vietnam, from March to July, 2013. The quantitative data was gathered through two sets of survey questionnaires: one pre-English SL course and one post-course. The surveys were delivered to 77 first year students at that university, among whom 45 students in Group One joined in the English SL course. Fifteen participants from the English SL class were recruited from the 77 survey respondents for the qualitative data, which included English learning histories of their time before they joined the course, one interview before the course, learning diaries, one interview during the course and one after the course.

The overall answer to my overriding research question is: autonomy in the classroom context did influence the participating ELLs’ motivation and sense of self significantly, in that once ELLs knew how to set their own learning goals, make their learning plans, choose learning strategies and materials, their senses of actual selves and possible selves became more vivid. ELLs thus became more motivated to engage and invest more in learning the English language subject. Following are the specific answers to my sub-research questions as evidenced by analysis of data from the participating ELLs:

1. ELLs perceived themselves as passive within the classroom walls and desired more autonomous learning activities. Besides, they took an active role in their informal learning environments including in their extra classes, their families and English speaking clubs. It is, therefore, concluded that these ELLs were not passive learners; rather they were positioned as passive in the formal learning environment.

2. ELLs were not confident that they were good English learners but saw themselves as competent English users in future employment and study. ELLs further possessed a strong sense of ought self in bringing honour to their families with their high results in English learning.

3. ELLs perceived themselves as motivated learners with positive attitudes towards the English language subject and interest in the cultures of English-speaking people. Their investment and engagement in the English subject varied in different periods of their learning histories with more intensive times before examinations or tests.
4. Autonomy did help initiate and maintain a sense of self among ELLs. They became more confident in their actual selves, showing a stronger sense of self as good English learners when they knew how to set learning goals and plans and were able to select appropriate learning strategies and materials.

5. There were close interrelationships between ELLs’ enhanced autonomy, their vivid sense of self and their investment and engagement in learning English. First, enhanced autonomy helped the ELLs feel the attainment of their ideal and/or ought selves to be close and thus they became more motivated. Also, once ELLs became more autonomous, their desire to reduce the discrepancies between their current self and ideal self became a stimulus for their investment and engagement in English. Further, once the ought self was integrated with or shifted into the ideal self as a result of enhanced autonomy, ELL motivation was strengthened.

Besides the key answers to my research questions, complexity theory brought me beyond the classroom walls with further intriguing findings. One of the further findings is that examinations and tests acted as prime attractors in these ELLs’ learning trajectories, and the motivation triggered by the English SL course could be seen as an additional attractor with butterfly effects on ELLs’ English learning systems. Also, ELL autonomy, motivation and self were found to be dynamic, interwoven and unseparated factors which impacted and were impacted on by each other in the ELLs’ learning trajectories. Similarly, ELLs and their context were confirmed to be inseparable from and interrelated with significant others including parents, siblings, relatives, teachers and friends as influential stimuli. The context should be considered to include a mediated environment of family and schools, a wider society of Vietnam and imagined communities in different time frames of the past, present and future, in which ELLs’ identities were negotiated and shaped. Classrooms could be a microcosm of the real social life with diverse elective class activities, where EFL learners had opportunities to use the target language to communicate with each other and with the teacher. In this way, ELLs’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self would be enhanced. Further, intrinsically motivated ELLs were likely to maintain their positive attitudes and level of engagement and investment in learning English regardless of changes in their teachers. Importantly, these ELLs’ diverse imagined communities were found to relate to ELLs’ desired future identities, which again acted as motivating factors for the ELLs.
9.3 Implications

9.3.1 An overview of the implications
The study results suggest a number of implications for both theories in the fields of ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self and for pedagogical practices in curriculum and classroom activity design. The theoretical implications include revisits to definitions of ELL motivation, autonomy, and sense of self and to the L2 motivational self system. In the pedagogical implications, steps to develop ELL autonomy, motivation and self are recommended.

9.3.2 Theoretical implications
Implications for theories relate mainly to definitions of the terms ELL motivation, ELL autonomy and ELL sense of self. Revisiting the L2 Motivational Self System model by Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) from the perspectives of complexity theory is also suggested.

9.3.2.1 Revisiting definitions of ELL autonomy, motivation and self
Findings of the study suggest an amended definition of learner autonomy from learners’ perspectives. Autonomy seemed to vary with context, and ELLs in the study were found to be more autonomous in out-of-class settings with language use in their learning process and in communicating with family members, friends, classmates or/and native English speakers. ELL autonomy should therefore relate to ELLs’ ability to take control over their learning and using the language in order to become competent English users. Taking control over learning the language includes controls over their learning goals, techniques, strategies, materials, assessment and reflective practices over both formal and informal language learning contexts. Meanwhile, the capacity to take control over language use, in turn, affects the learning process as language learning and language use should be seen as two sides of a coin.

The ability to take control over language use can be further extended to the ability to make decisions on problem solving, to cope with fluidity and increased demands of negotiation in both class-based and real-life communication in order to become competent English users. Inclusion of capacity to use the language in a definition of ELL autonomy may reflect in some respect the dynamism and fluidity of ELL autonomy and the complexity of the language learning process. In this way, learning a language integrates learning the pure linguistic features, learning the contents, and using the language as a means of communication for ELLs.
to express their opinions about real world, to show their identities and cultural beliefs. With this inclusion, ELLs multiple selves can be demonstrated via their interactions with other ELLs and other community members in the target language.

Definitions of ELL motivation should also be revisited from the perspectives of complexity theory. A definition of ELL motivation should therefore entail dynamism and interactions with elements of contexts reflecting reasons for the language learning, ELL attitudes towards the language, their engagement and investment in terms of finance and time in language learning and language use with the hope of becoming future competent English language learners and users. The reasons for the language learning should include intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. While the intrinsic orientations refer to the love or passion for learning the language itself, extrinsic orientations relate to learning the language for knowledge, for rewards and certificates, or for the aim of travelling or living overseas (Noel, 2003). Attitudes towards the English language learning may be positive or negative, and include ELLs’ attitudes towards the language itself and their attitudes towards the class learning experiences. Some ELLs who find interest in learning the language but hold a negative attitude towards the classroom activities may also find themselves motivated to learn the language in some aspects. Throughout the thesis, the terms “engagement” and “investment” were used together to show ELLs’ investment of time and finance in learning English. However, it is necessary to clarify that the notion of engagement refers to ELL efforts and involvement in their learning process and in using the language in and out of classroom. Engagements act as a link between ELLs’ reasons for learning the language, their attitudes towards the subject and their actual practices in the language investment.

The concept of investment of time and money in language learning and language use holds threefold implications. One implication is that the investment of time and money refers to ELLs’ decisions for allocation of their scarce resources. ELLs choose to spend their limited time and finance in learning the language when they find rationales and motivation for that choice. Further with the investment, ELLs hope for returns of their resource investment (Norton, 2013); one of the expected returns is the image of them being competent language learners and/or users. The image demonstrates the ideal or/and ought self that the ELLs envisage themselves becoming in the future. The literature of the ELL motivation field has shown that ideal and ought selves act as motivating factors for ELLs learning the language.
In other words, vivid ideal and ought selves invite ELLs to invest in language learning (Ushioda, 2014b). The last implication of the investment concept is that investment in language learning and language use shows dynamism of ELL motivation. The act of investment can be seen as a past or present act or a future plan; it is not bound up with the notion of a here-and-now timeframe. Investment in language learning is not always required to be at the present time; rather, in some situations motivated ELLs may make short-term and long-term plans in allocating their limited resources in their future learning and using the language. ELLs’ engagement in learning the English language with their specific learning plans makes them invest more time, energy and finance in the subject.

### 9.3.2.2 Revisiting the L2 Motivational Self System model from the perspectives of complexity theory

The L2 Motivational Self System model consists of three dimensions: the ideal self, the ought self and L2 learning experience. L2 learning experience corresponds to the Executive Motivation phase of Dörnyei’s (2005) process-oriented model (See Figure 3). In this phase of the model, the main motivational influences are listed as: quality of the learning experience (pleasantness, need significance, coping potential, self and social image); sense of autonomy; teacher’s and parent’s influence; classroom reward and goal structure (i.e., competitive or cooperative); influence of the learner group; and knowledge and use of self-regulatory strategies (i.e., goal setting, learning and self-motivating strategies) (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 85) (See Chapter Three).

The L2 Motivational Self System offers explanations for how language learners’ visions of the self energize their motivation in learning the language, showing that learning a language is not merely a pure linguistic learning process. Rather it is the process in which language learners become or avoid becoming a certain person (Ryan & Irie, 2014). Research on possible selves, the ideal and the ought self, and their influential impacts on language learner motivation have been receiving attention within the field of second language acquisition. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) further emphasizes that the possible selves are more than simply desired future states; rather they must be accompanied with plans and actions in order to “function as an effective motivator” (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 118).

However, in light of complexity theory, the L2 Motivational Self System reveals a number of limitations. Firstly, the L2 Motivational Self System fails to address the multi-faceted and
complicated nature of the self when focusing exclusively on the future self. The complexity of the self lies in the fact that the self should be treated as “an ongoing internal narrative of who we think we have been, who we think we are, who we would like to be, and the person(s) we are afraid of becoming” (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 110). In other words, the story of the self affects the way language learners interpret past experiences, the way they see themselves at the present and the way they envision their futures. The tendency discusses the possible selves with a focus on future states; therefore it may overlook the primary role of the current self-concept because the way language learners see themselves at the present time is very much a function of the way they interpret their past experiences and of the way they envision their future selves.

Secondly, the L2 Motivational Self System seems to ignore the paramount role of intrinsic motivation in ELLs, which was found in one half of my 15 research participants. This model fails to explain motivational factors in ELLs who learn the English language as the language is interesting in itself. These factors may lie in ELL’s current self-concept in which ELLs see themselves excelling in the language subject and finding interest in using it. These intrinsically motivated ELLs feel more confident when using the target language than they do in using their mother tongues; they find it interesting and more comfortable to be the version of themselves as English speakers and users rather than Vietnamese users. These ELLs further tend to become multi-linguals with at least another foreign language like Japanese, French or Greek besides English.

Also, the motivational influences in the L2 Motivational Self System represent a somewhat static portrayal of learner learning experiences mainly rooted in the here-and-now. Again, the stories of language learners’ learning experiences, sense of autonomy, roles of teachers and parents, friends and groups should be considered as open systems which interact with each other and influence language learners’ learning processes. Such stories themselves also have their own past, present and future states which directly influence learners’ motivation at different times and in different spaces. Such “ongoing experiences and social-environmental influences” are thought to “mediate developmental changes in motivation” of language learners (Ushioda, 2014b, p. 134).
Besides, the L2 Motivational Self System seems to underplay the role of contexts in which language learners are bound up and the interrelationship between language learners and their contexts. The context refers not only to the physical surroundings but also to the social, cultural and historical backgrounds of language learners from different timescales. Although the L2 learning experience dimension of this framework mentions such motivational influences as classroom rewards, parents, teachers and friends, other influential factors including social, cultural and historical backgrounds of learners, have been absent from the model. The notion of socio-cultural impacts should be viewed from both socio-cultural I – the level of a mediated environment and socio-cultural II – a wider society and community (Oxford, 2003). I would propose a socio-cultural III with imagined communities which impact ELLs’ identity, motivation and autonomy in their learning English. These levels of socio-cultural aspects can be considered as open and dynamic systems with blurred boundaries as they are in constant interactions with each other, with ELLs, and with all elements and agents involved.

9.3.3 Pedagogical implications
Viewing the classroom through complexity theory, the assessment system as well as textbooks may be relatively rigid with only slow, steady changes from one state to another, but teachers, students, the physical classroom, interactions between teachers and students, between students and students, between students and the physical classroom, learning materials, learning spaces and learning conditions are dynamic systems. Therefore, once English language teachers view the learning and teaching process, the classroom, the student, and teachers themselves as dynamic and open systems, they will experience changes in their perceptions of ELL autonomy, motivation and selves. In an environment constrained by examinations and textbooks, language teachers should be flexible with their teaching methods and a readjusted curriculum may be of great support for ELL autonomy enhancement.

I would therefore propose some stages to develop ELL autonomy, motivation and self, using a curriculum-ELL needs integrated approach and a textbook-ELL interest integrated approach. By using the term “a curriculum-ELL needs integrated approach” I refer to a balance between the curriculum requirements and ELL needs in learning the English language subject; meanwhile “a textbook-ELL interest integrated approach” emphasizes the need to include learning materials that are related to ELLs’ interests, in addition to the fixed textbooks. The
idea of these stages appeared after I finished the English SL course with positive feedback from the students about the class activities implemented to enhance their autonomy.

Table 17 recommends stages in ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self development in an EFL course. The stages show a continuous process of language learning from the setting goals stage to the assessment and reflection stage with threefold aims: to enhance ELLs’ autonomy, to increase their motivation levels and strengthen their sense of self. The stages may occur either continuously or concurrently. The stages are adapted from Reinders’ (2010) framework, Nunan’s (1997, 2013) program, Dörnyei’s (2005) process model of L2 motivation and from the experiences I gained from my English SL course.

In the very first stage of the language course, it is necessary to make learners aware of the pedagogical goals of the course. Learners should then be asked to identify their own difficulties, needs, strengths and weaknesses in the language learning from their previous learning experiences. At the same time, they need to think of their actual self, who they think they are, whether they are good language learners or not, and sketch their future selves – who they think they will become and others want them to become in the future. Teachers and learners then should discuss and negotiate learning goals, which should be harmonized between the curriculum aims, individual learners’ goals and their future selves.
### Table 17

**Stages in Development of ELL Autonomy, Motivation and Sense of Self**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning stages</th>
<th>Teachers’ actions</th>
<th>Learners’ actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting goals</strong></td>
<td>Make learners aware of pedagogical goals</td>
<td>Identify learning difficulties and needs, strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify their actual and possible selves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss actual and possible selves and negotiate learning goals (balance between pedagogical and individual goals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning learning</strong></td>
<td>Make learners aware of the pedagogical contents of the textbook.</td>
<td>Identify likes and dislikes in terms of the contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And selecting materials</td>
<td></td>
<td>Select learning materials of their interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate what to cover in the class, what as homework, and specify class time allocation for each specific content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take full use of textbook(s) and selected materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the goals are set and the future selves are visualized, learning should be planned with details. Learners should be aware of the learning contents from the textbook and identify their interests. Through negotiations between teachers and learners, agreements should be reached on which parts of the textbook contents should be covered in the class under the support and
guidance of teachers, and which parts should be covered at home as self-study homework. In the next stage of selecting learning resources, textbooks should be considered as one of varied learning materials that teachers and learners can utilize in order to meet the examination requirements and learners’ needs. Learners are therefore encouraged to select learning materials related to the learning contents and to their own interests.

In the selecting learning strategy stage, teachers need to provide a model and instructions before helping learners self-select the strategies that they prefer. In the next stage of practices, both teachers and learners are involved in selecting activities and exercises. In this stage, learners are encouraged to bring their daily life and their own identities into the classroom and share with their classmates. In the stage of monitoring the progress, teachers provide feedback and comments on the task together with encouraging peer and class feedback, while learners are guided in how to self-monitor their learning progress. Learners are encouraged to discuss and revise their goals and plans if necessary.

In the final stage of assessment and revision, teachers may use tests to assess learners’ achievement and may then amend the curriculum in accordance with learners’ needs and capacity. Along with formal tests, teachers need to guide learners to do self and peer-assessment and reflections. It is advisable to distinguish between formal evaluation through the means of tests and examination and self-assessment, which can be defined as learners’ judgements on their own competencies or achievements (Tassinari, 2012). In order to scaffold learners with self-assessment, teachers should use The Dynamic Model of Learner Autonomy by Tassinari (2012) (see http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/v/autonomiemodell). This model was designed with the aim to support learners and teachers in the self-assessment and evaluation of learning competencies and learner autonomy. During this stage, goals and learning plans need to be revised and new goals and plans made, if necessary.

9.3.4 Implications for classroom practices
For classroom teaching and learning practices, I would emphasize the importance of teachers’ awareness of the value of ELLs’ autonomy and of learners’ own roles and the use of elective class activities.
9.3.4.1 Teachers’ awareness of ELL autonomy and of their roles
The foremost important point for effective classroom autonomy practices is teachers’ awareness of ELL autonomy and of their own roles in developing and supporting autonomy. It is necessary for teachers to clarify the differences between autonomy and individualization, communicative teaching approaches and learner-centredness (See Chapter Two). While autonomy emphasizes the control over the learning, individualization, communicative teaching and learner-centredness remain methods of teaching and may be inclusive under the umbrella of autonomy. Language learner autonomy therefore should be understood as the ability to take charge of learning and using the language both inside and outside the classroom settings. Further, it is crucial that teachers see themselves as learning facilitators and negotiators rather than the agents who conduct the major part of teaching. Once teachers change their roles to negotiators, motivators, and learning facilitators, they will create changes in the nature of teaching and learning by empowering ELLs and thus enhance ELLs’ independence and autonomy. In this way, teachers can help enhance ELLs’ motivation and sense of selves.

Also, it is necessary for teachers to be flexible with the curriculum and textbooks and consider ELLs as open systems with their own identities, beliefs, cultural and historical backgrounds. Viewing learners and classrooms as dynamic systems and respecting interactions between teachers and learners, and learners and learners, teachers are more likely to be flexible with their teaching methods and open to changes and new things in their teaching and learning process, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Bridging the discrepancies between teachers and learners by reducing teachers’ power and empowering learners is another important step in enhancing classroom learning autonomy. In order to do so, teachers need to negotiate and collaborate with learners in the process of learning by encouraging decision sharing, involving learners in making choices of learning materials and strategies. In order to achieve successful negotiations and collaboration with ELLs, it would be useful for teachers to know the ELLH of each of their learners. Also, as discussed in Chapter Two, a power imbalance between teachers and students leads to limited classroom interactions between teachers and learners. One of the many ways to minimize such unequal relations is for teachers to focus on learners’ fluency rather than on their accuracy in using the language (Norton & Gao, 2008), with class activities to increase learner speaking
Another strategy is to apply a variety of elective in-class and out-of-class activities, providing ELLs with opportunities to choose, to make decisions and thus to take an active role in their learning process.

9.3.4.2 Elective activities and elective corner activities (ECAs)
Being flexible with the curriculum and the textbook, aware of their role as negotiators and collaborators in the teaching and learning process, and viewing the classroom and learners as dynamic and open systems, teachers are more likely to be flexible and open with classroom activities to enhance learner autonomy. A number of class activities may include: selective pair and group work in which learners are encouraged to choose partners or group members to learn with; making new friends — learners choose one classmate with whom they never or rarely speak and discuss a selected topic; class debate — topics for debates are generated from learners and different groups may choose one topic from the pool of generated topics to discuss in the class. Other activities may be utilized: sharing time — a 5 – 10 minute period at the end of each lesson in which learners share with their classmates their experiences in learning or in their life; monitors of the week — the role of class monitor is alternated among learners in order to enhance their sense of responsibility, sense of pride and management of the class. Outside-class activities should also be designed and activated by and for learners including: a buddy program — learners choose one partner to study with after school time; class library — learners collect and share their old books in a class library; and online forum — learners are encouraged to join a class forum discussing their learning matters and sharing readings in the target language.

ECAs are beneficial and effective in developing learner autonomy and motivation. Time allocation for corner activities should vary from one half to one third of each lesson (from 30 to 45 minutes). The idea of corner activities is to create more opportunities for learners to make decisions on where, when, what and how to use the English language to carry out any task or game that they want to share with their classmates. In each corner, there are two students acting as hosts who prepare for and organize the activity. Other classmates act as customers or participants who can freely choose any corner to practise their English. The number of corners depends on the size and space of different classrooms (See Chapter Six). The role of teachers during ECA time is to facilitate and supervise the hosts to organize helpful and effective activities in different corners of the class. It is; however, necessary to note some drawbacks of
the activity mentioned by the ELLs in my course. The activity is student-reliant and time-
consuming for ELLs to prepare. It is also organized on a voluntary basis for ELLs. Therefore,
teachers should be flexible in scaffolding students to organize the ECAs that suit their levels
of language proficiency and their interests.

The classroom layout also plays an important role in enhancing motivation and autonomy and
sense of self among ELLs. Traditionally, a classroom in Vietnam particularly, is considered a
fixed and static physical setting in which tables, chairs, blackboards are arranged by the school
or university, and learners are assumed to be seated in certain places during the school year.
This arrangement in some way limits interactions between teachers and learners, and between
learners and learners, and causes hesitations in learners to get out of their own places to
participate actively in class activities. Different class layouts in different lessons to match each
lesson with respect to teaching and learning aims are likely to create motivation and develop
autonomy and sense of self among ELLs. The ways teachers and learners arrange tables and
chairs suitable for different classes, group or pair work and activities may make the classroom
atmosphere more dynamic, and thus may turn the class into a miniature of the real community,
in which learners have a chance to interact with each other and use the English language as a
means of communication. In such learning environments, ELLs’ identity will be negotiated
and constructed to become more confident and competent English learners and users. In other
words, the more physical movement and interaction created inside the classroom by teachers
and learners, the better the sense of confidence and autonomy that is fostered among ELLs.

In brief, diverse class activities help learners bring their social life into the classroom with their
own culture, beliefs and identity. Such autonomy-stimulating activities help blur the barriers
between classroom – a mediated environment – and social life, and thus make the language
learning process meaningful to ELLs and congruent with their interests.

9.3.5 Summary of implications
This section has presented a number of implications for theories and pedagogy and classroom
practices in order to enhance ELL autonomy. Theoretical implications include revisiting
theories of ELL motivation and autonomy and the L2 Motivational Self System from the
perspective of complexity theory. Implications for pedagogical practices have a focus on
stages to develop ELL autonomy, motivation and self with an aim to readjust the curriculum
and utilize textbooks as well as other resources, encouraging learners to make choices and engage in decision making. Implications for classrooms have also presented with some elective classroom activities and ECAs.

9.4 Significance of study

This study constitutes a significant endeavour in bringing about a whole picture of a group of ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self in the Asian EFL context of Vietnam. While there have been studies on Vietnamese ELLs’ autonomy (Nguyen, T. N., 2014), and on Vietnamese ELL motivation (Tran, 2007), limited work has been done to explore the issue of Vietnamese ELLs’ sense of self or of the relationships between ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self. This research is therefore significant in accommodating these gaps in the empirical research of the fields. Moreover, the study has identified practical implications for the enhancement of ELL classroom autonomy, motivation and sense of self for English teachers and educators.

Further, this study would be helpful to researchers in the fields of ELL autonomy, motivation and self. The study first provides a tri-part literature review of the three factors: ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self and a review of complexity theory, which helps view ELLs as “whole” persons in their own contexts. Also, the mixed methods approach used to conduct the study utilizes the advantages of qualitative methods, and of quantitative surveys, which have been used widely in ELL autonomy, motivation and self research. The study has therefore provided an in-depth investigation into the participating ELLs’ perceptions on their learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self in relation with their contexts.

The research is particularly beneficial to me as a researcher in these fields and as an English language teacher and educator. It provides me with knowledge in ELL autonomy, motivation and sense of self together with vivid descriptions of my Vietnamese ELLs’ perceptions of the three factors. It helps enhance my confidence in my ongoing English teaching career and my passion for research.

9.5 Limitations of the study

“Developing autonomy is a lengthy process” (Reinders, 2010, p. 51). Time constraints, therefore, are one of the limitations of my research. My English SL course involved 40 hours
of class teaching and learning with twofold aims: one was to equip students with English language knowledge and skills to meet examination requirements, and another was to enhance their classroom learning autonomy. Although I had anticipated the limited time resources and designed detailed teaching plans in order to utilize the class time, allocating flexible homework as well as after-class tasks and assignments, my class observation shows that ELLs need more time reflecting on and self-assessing their own learning autonomy. Changing ELLs’ perceptions of their role in reflection and assessment cannot happen overnight. Take Nha’s case as a typical example. Although Nha exercised autonomy over setting learning goals, making learning plans and strategies, she had not placed much focus on her reflections and self-assessment. Hence, it may be speculated that if the notion and practice of reflection were included intensively in Nha’s autonomy training, her autonomy would be likely to be further enhanced.

Also, some programs, including a Buddy program in which ELLs choose a partner for their after class study and practices, need more time with teachers’ support and guidance to continue and extend so that learners can take full advantages of the activity. Even though some students have reported to me that they are now continuing with their pair and group work after school time, I believe that the effects of such programs would be far more significant if I had been able to spend more time scaffolding students with these autonomy-stimulating activities.

Another limitation of the study lies in the fact that the English course, through which I provided ELLs with autonomy opportunities, focused on two specific skills – speaking and listening, at intermediate levels. As with other language skills, such as reading and writing, for different levels of learners, different classroom teaching activities and methods should be developed by English teachers for the sake of ELL autonomy enhancement. The key point therefore centres on the important roles of teachers, on their perceptions of ELL autonomy and on their role as negotiators and learning facilitators. The limitations of my research will, it is hoped, be addressed in future studies.

9.6 Future research directions
This study focuses on ELLs’ perceptions of their autonomy, motivation and sense of selves, and the impacts of ELL autonomy on the other two factors – ELL sense of self and investment
in English language learning. Based on the findings of the study, I propose a number of future research directions that would go beyond the limited scope of this research.

This research firstly emphasized the classroom practices with related skills to enhance ELL autonomy. An important further step for research on ELL autonomy would be to extend such studies in relation to ELLs’ perceptions of their self-assessment and reflection in developing their autonomy. Such studies may bring about insightful implications for language teachers to find effective ways to enhance their students’ autonomy. Further, findings of the current study may be generalized with research on a wide range of tertiary students with intermediate levels of English language competency. Future research could investigate ELL autonomy from varied ELL populations, including children or students with a wider range of English proficiency from elementary to advanced levels. Such studies would provide a more comprehensive picture of ELL autonomy in such an EFL context as Vietnam.

In addition, an alternative approach to the focus on ideal and ought selves and ELL motivation would be an emphasis on ELLs’ feared self and anxiety in learning the English language. Rather than the typical positive sense of self and its correlations with ELL motivation, an exciting way forward in the field that may explore more fully the multi-faceted nature of self may be to commence research on a counterpart of the ideal self – the ELL feared self in relation to learners’ anxiety in the learning process.

Also, while the current study discusses the impacts of L2 autonomy on ELL motivation and self, a future approach could take a further step considering if there are relationships between L2 autonomy, motivations and self and L3 learning. This approach may open up fresh pathways for understanding possible relationships between the L2 acquisition field and the field of multilingual education.

Further, although the focus has been on the learners, teachers were found to be one of the most important significant others in ELL autonomy, motivation, and sense of self. There have been studies on how to prepare teachers to help their ELLs become more autonomous in Vietnam (Nguyen, T. N., 2014). However, it would be of interest to examine how English language teachers perceive their autonomy, their motivation in teaching the language and their sense of self, and further to investigate if there are relationships between the three factors among language teachers.
In addition, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data showed no significant relationship between ELLs’ gender and their perceptions of autonomy, motivation and sense of self. I am aware of the fact that my research sample (77 pre-course survey responses and 79 post-course survey responses) was rather small and that the imbalance between male and female participants may impact the results. Future research, therefore, could investigate the possible impact of ELLs’ gender on their perception of autonomy, motivation and sense of self with a larger sample size of ELLs and with a balance in the gender profile.

Moreover, although the study has emphasized the important roles of significant others including the ELLs’ parents, teachers, friends and others on the ELLs’ language learning process, future study may focus on other macro-cultural-historical phenomena with multiple dimensions. Some of these phenomena may include Buddhism, Communism which may influence languages learners in Vietnam in some respects.

In brief, the study has opened up a new horizon in researching English language learners’ autonomy, motivation and sense of selves in their macro social-cultural context and micro educational settings in Vietnam, and it is hoped that future research may continue this journey into the complexities of English language education in an EFL community of Vietnam.

9.7 Closing remarks

All in all, the research journey so far has transformed me into a researcher with deeper understandings of ELL autonomy, motivation and self. It has opened my mind with insights from complexity theory and thus provided a fresh perspective for me to use in approaching my ELLs, viewing them as dynamic systems in their own contexts. And the story of the fragmented perceptions of the elephant mentioned in the first chapter has been replaced with an image that is more vivid and comprehensive as shown in the following photo.
Just as the elephants have to be seen in their own context for their whole magnificent selves to be understood, so too the story of my ELLs’ perceptions of their learning autonomy, motivation and sense of self should be narrated in their own contexts, as shown in the following figure: once my ELL is viewed in her own context, possessing learning autonomy in her own hands, motivation in her heart and sense of future self in her vision, she will be motivated to move forward to be a better English learner and user.

Further, the study challenges the simplicity of the current L2 Motivational Self model by Dörnyei (2009) in a way that there exist complex relationships between the ought and the ideal selves, between the sense of self and L2 learning experiences of languages learners.
The current self state is considered an important factor in ELLs motivation and autonomy and in their formation of ideal self. Also, the imagined communities of ELLs can be related to their ideal sense of self in becoming competent language learners and users in the future.

In addition, one of the theoretical frameworks used in the thesis is based on complexity theory by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), which was rooted in Western civilization. Approaching the theory from a Vietnamese perspective has brought about new understandings of ELLs’ motivation, autonomy and sense of selves in such an Asian context as Vietnam. Some Vietnamese metaphors including “Living in harmony with the environment” (See Chapter Three) might provide the theoretical underpinning for a complex view on languages education and multilingual development in Vietnamese context.

Also, as Vietnam is an emerging area for research on autonomy, motivation and sense of self, the study has made an important contribution to the fields, particularly with the use of mixed methods. With qualitative data analysis, the language learners were brought to life as people with their unique holistic experiences of language learning. Also, a practical model to enhance languages learners’ autonomy, motivation and sense of self have been proposed, which emphasizes the pedagogical and curriculum implications of using the formal activities and resources in formal class teaching in Vietnam.

In closing my research, I would like to reiterate one of my students’ emails to me some months after the course when I had returned to Australia…

We're fine, thank you, teacher ^^

A summer holiday's passed by and we're about to start a new school year which I hope will be an interesting year with lessons as amazing as yours. We will have a lot of subjects on economics and business so it will be hard. Hope that everything will be fine.

What about you? How is it going on with you?

I can tell how much grateful I am to you. I admire your enthusiasm and seriousness. It's not a compliment because I truly think so. Is that what they taught you at Deakin
University or, I may say, a foreign environment. I'm asking this because I'm wondering about studying abroad. I don't know if I really like or if it's really necessary. I don't know. I'm kind of confused a little bit. I'm sorry to bother you but I need someone to tell and ask about this. Thank you

Best regards, (Lien, email, 08.12.2013)

I am pleased with the way she continues using English in all conversations with me, the way she is still pondering about her actual self and ideal self. Apparently, although the English SL course lasted only four months, its butterfly effects may last longer in students’ ideal selves which have been or are being realized in their learning plans. Some of them are now in different countries in the world, including the USA and England. There are certainly varied factors influencing their achievements, but I know for certain that the feelings of a future self that is something very attainable and of the imagined community that is something tangible and reachable have been influential factors in the realization of their future selves. At this point, my research may close with its last chapter, but I am confident that my students are continuing to write their own learning stories in some parts of which the experiences with my English SL course have helped shape who they are, and who they will be in the future.
References


Learning, 33, 273–291.


MOET (2015). *Các văn bản về qui chế thi và chỉ đạo của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo.*


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Appendices

Appendix 1: ETHICS APPROVAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSENT

Ethics Approval
To: Dr Tricia Henry School of Education cc: Mrs Thi Mai Nhung Nguyen
From: Faculty of Arts & Education Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG)
Date: 26 November, 2012
Subject: HAE-12-125 Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

The application for this project has been considered by the Faculty HEAG under the terms of Deakin University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC).

Approval has been given for Mrs Thi Mai Nhung Nguyen, under the supervision of Dr Tricia Henry, School of Education, to undertake this project from 26/11/2012 to 26/11/2016.

The approval given by the Faculty HEAG is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Faculty HEAG immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time.
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project.
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- Modifications are requested by other HRECs.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

The Faculty HEAG and/or DUHREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Kylie Koulkoudinas
HEAG Secretariat

Faculty of Arts and Education

Organizational Consent

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS ENGLISH, BUSINESS UNIVERSITY, HANOI VIETNAM

Organisational Plain Language Statement

Full Project Title: Complexity of English Language Learners’ (ELLs) Autonomy, Motivation and Self

Principal researcher: Dr Patricia Henry

Researcher’s name: Nhung Nguyen

Address: Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Melbourne Australia

Reference Number: HAE-12-125

Dear Dean of the Faculty of Business English, Business University, Hanoi Vietnam,

This letter is to ask for your permission for the researcher to conduct a speaking course in your faculty to collect data for a research project, which examines the way Vietnamese university students learn English, and how it impacts on their images as English users in the future. This information will help English teachers, and educators improve the teaching syllabus and curriculum. This project is totally funded by Deakin University, Australia and the Ministry of
Education and Training of Vietnam. The ethical aspects of the project have been approved by a human ethics panel at Deakin University.

With your consent, the researcher will carry out a 15-lesson speaking course with the first year students in the second semester of the school year 2012–2013. The course will not interrupt students’ preparation for normal university examinations. The participation in this project is in no way linked with the participants’ assessment and their final results in the course.

Data will be collected through questionnaires before and after the course, narratives before the course, while diaries and interviews will be conducted during the course. All data will be stored securely for a period of a minimum of six years after final publication. Participants will be notified of the findings via email and a seminar held at the faculty.

Approval to undertake this research project has been given by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University. If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact: The Manager, Office of Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581;

Email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Thank you for your permission and support!
CONSENT FORM

TO: THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS ENGLISH, BUSINESS UNIVERSITY, HANOI VIETNAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Consent Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Full Project Title:** Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

**Principal researcher:** Dr Patricia Henry

**Researcher’s name:** Nhung Nguyen

**Address:** Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Australia

**Reference Number:** HAE-12-125

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I give my permission for Thi Mai Nhung Nguyen of the Faculty of Business English, Business University, Hanoi Vietnam to teach in the faculty to collect data for this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal the participants’ identities and personal details if information about this project is published or presented in any public form.
I agree that

1. The organization MAY NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.

2. We DO require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.

3. We EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.

4. The researcher CAN take charge of teaching one speaking course in one class of the faculty in the second semester of the school year 2012–2013 to collect data.

Name of person giving consent (printed): Nguyen Quynh Giao (Pseudonym - Dean of Faculty)

Signature: Quynh Giao Date: 11th December 2012
Appendix 2: WRITTEN INVITATION TO THE ENGLISH COURSE

Dear first year students,

This letter is to invite you to participate in an English speaking-listening course. The course will cover all the required contents in the curriculum and help you prepare well for your examinations. Besides this, a variety of class activities will be used to enhance your class learning. Whether you agree to take part in the project is completely up to you. If you agree to take part in the project, you should fill out the invitation with your group information and return it to the researcher.

Please circle:

Your group: One Two

I Agree/Disagree to participate in the English speaking-listening course

Participants are invited to contact the researchers should they wish to obtain a summary of the results.

Thank you for your time!
Appendix 3: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM – SURVEY RESPONDENTS

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: The first year students of Hanoi Business University, Hanoi Vietnam

Plain Language Statement

Date: 02. 04.2013

Full Project Title: Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

Principal researcher: Dr. Patricia Henry

Researcher’s name: Nhung Nguyen

Email address: ngth@deakin.edu.au or mainhung1976@gmail.com

Phone number: 0904021976

Address: Faculty of Business English, Business University, Chua Lang Dong Da, Hanoi

Reference Number: HAE-12-125

Dear first year students,

This letter is to invite you to participate in a research project, which examines the way Vietnamese university students learn English, and how it impacts on their images as English users in the future. This information will help English teachers, and educators improve the teaching syllabus and curriculum. This project is totally funded by Deakin University, Australia and the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. The ethical aspects of the project have been approved by a human ethics panel at Deakin University.
You have been selected as English learners at the university level in Vietnam. Whether you agree to take part in the project is completely up to you. If you agree to take part in the project, you should fill out the questionnaire, and return it to the researcher.

In this package you will find a 6-page questionnaire. The survey asks you about the reasons for your learning English, the amount of time you spend on this subject, and your way of learning. There are also some general questions about you, to help interpret the information that you give. The questionnaire would normally take up 15 minutes of your time to complete.

All surveys will be kept for at least six years, then destroyed. Participants are invited to contact the researchers should they wish to obtain a summary of the results.

Thank you for your time!
Appendix 4: INVITATION TO THE INTERVIEWS, ELLHS AND LEARNING DIARIES

If you are interested in the project and wish to participate in the next stage of the project, please provide us with your name and contact information at the end of this survey, then we will contact you. In the next stage, you will be asked to write a brief narrative about the way you have learnt English, to keep diaries during the coming speaking course, and to join in audio recorded interviews with the researcher. All participants in this stage will get a 300.000 VND book voucher for their participation.

Participant’s Name (printed)

..........................................................

Signature .............................................. Date ...............................

Email.............................................. Telephone ...............................


TO: The first year students in the faculty of Business English, Hanoi Business University, Hanoi Vietnam

Plain Language Statement

Date: 08. 03.2013

Full Project Title: Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

Principal researcher: Dr. Patricia Henry  Researcher’s name: Nhung Nguyen

Address: Faculty of Business English, Business University, Chua Lang Dong Da, Hanoi

Reference Number: HAE-12-125

Dear FBE first year students,

You are invited to participate in this research project. Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. Deciding not to participate will not affect your relationship to the researchers or to Business University or to Deakin University. The participation in this project is in no way linked with the examinations and your final results in the course. Once you have read this form and agree to participate, please sign the attached consent form. You may keep this copy of the Plain Language Statement.
With your consent, your participation in the study will involve writing about your experience in learning English, keeping diaries during the speaking course, and joining in four interviews of approximately half an hour each. You may decide to stop taking part in the project at any point. With the interviews, we wish to voice record. All data will be stored securely for a period of a minimum of six years after final publication. Participants will be notified of the findings via email and a seminar.

Approval to carry out this research project has been given by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University. If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact: The Manager, Office of Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581;

Email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Thank you for your participation!
TO: The first year students in the faculty of Business English, Hanoi Business University, Hanoi Vietnam

Consent Form

Date: 08.03.2013

Full Project Title: Complexity of English Language Learners’ Autonomy, Motivation and Self

Principal researcher: Dr. Patricia Henry

Researcher’s name: Nhung Nguyen

Address: Faculty of Business English, Business University, Chua Lang Dong Da, Hanoi

Reference Number: HAE-12-125

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in writing about their English learning experience, in keeping diaries about my English learning and in interviews with audio recording.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.
The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

I will be given the options of reviewing and editing interview or/ and focus group transcripts.

Participant’s Name (printed) ........................................................................................................

Signature ..........................................................Date ..............................................
### 6A: ENGLISH COURSE DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson(s)</th>
<th>Content(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The objectives of the course set by the faculty, the textbook and assessment modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Setting goals, students’ strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planning learning (where, what and how), learning strategies, and individual speaking learning timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Materials choosing and useful tools for documenting and evaluating their learning process (posters, logbooks, portfolios). Refer to Appendix 6C for a form of recording information on newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self-assessment and reflection and peer feedback. Refer to Appendix 6D for a reflection form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-16</td>
<td>Students’ practice and monitoring progress. Refer to the tentative detailed practice lessons below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>The course reflection. Assessments: Self-assessment and peer assessment in terms of students’ participation in the class activities (10% of the final grade), class assessment and teacher assessment on the five minute talks (30% of the final grade). An end-of-term test will account for 60% of the total mark (this is the requirement in the fixed curriculum issued by the Ministry of education and training of Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Notes: Each lesson last 135 minutes)

### 6B: Textbooks:
- *Effective Meetings* by Jeremy Comfort published in 1996 by Oxford University Press


6C: A form of recording information on newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Where from?</th>
<th>When?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Source: Ryan, 1997: p.219)

6D: A reflection form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: …………………. Period covered:…………………</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What I have done

(Describe activities and write down the titles of any materials you have used)

What I have learnt

(Summarize what you think you have learnt in a few words)

Reflections

(Comment on how useful and enjoyable your activities were. Any problems?)

Future plans

(Note down next activities and when you will do them. Also note any changes to your goals and plans)

(Source: Benson, 2001: p.158)
**Appendix 7: HOMEWORK TASK – Week 22.5.2013-28.5.2013**

*DUE DATE: 28th May*

*It is compulsory that you complete chapters 4 & 5 in Noteworthy, and at least ONE speaking task!!!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Thinking and Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Noteworthy</td>
<td>Advantages and disadvantages of nuclear families</td>
<td>Your ideal spouse (husband or wife)</td>
<td>Religions in VN</td>
<td>Make a list of vocabulary about birth, marriage and death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture ready 3</td>
<td>Religion in USA</td>
<td>Freedom of religions-discuss</td>
<td>One book about birth rates and death rates</td>
<td>List the differences between: “religious and superstitious’, ‘believe and trust”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Noteworthy</td>
<td>A typical American family</td>
<td>The meaning of FAMILY in one’s life</td>
<td>One article about how to have a high quality life</td>
<td>Make a list of vocabulary or/ and structures you have learned from chapters 1 to 6 in Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture ready 3</td>
<td>A typical wedding in Vietnam</td>
<td>The current unbalanced genders in Vietnam</td>
<td>One picture book you are interested in</td>
<td>Check pronunciation &amp; meaning of the provided vocabulary “And the ugly”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested movie for this week: “Life is beautiful”
Group work: - decide on a scenario for a group meeting
- prepare an opening with clear agenda for your group meeting

Appendix 8: SAMPLE ENGLISH SL SLIDES

Contents
- What is a learning goal?
- What is a learning plan?
- What is a learning portfolio?
  - A 15 minute break
- Who are your group members?
- What are we going to do together? Where and how?
- What is homework for today?

Food-for-thought

The indispensable first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: decide what you want.

Ben Stein

Learning goals
- What is a goal?
- Personal vs. Learning goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Medium-term</th>
<th>Long-term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td>Drive a car</td>
<td>Have a baby</td>
<td>Have a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning goals</td>
<td>Collect data</td>
<td>Complete PhD</td>
<td>Postdoc course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to set learning goals?

- What you are interested in
- What you have — present skills and knowledge
- What you want to have **BY THE END**
- **SMART** model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Achievable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Time-bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual work**

*Think of your learning goals.....*
**APPENDICES**

---

**Group work**

- Work in groups of three students
- Discuss your learning goals—short, medium, long-term goals,
- Give comments on your friends’ goals
- Are the goals SMART?

---

**Food-for thought**

*‘A goal without a plan is just a wish’*

Antoine de Saint

---

**Individual learning plan: eight steps**

- Choose a goal
- Write down your present skills
- List skills you want to produce
- Choose activities and tasks
- Consider the needed time
- Choose resources
- Seek for helps if needed
- Check and revise plan

---

**Thinking**

- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What activities do you like/dislike?
- How much time do you have for the subject?
- .......
- --- put these in your plan???

---

**Pair work**

- Give comments on your partner’s learning plan:
  - be as specific as possible
  - be constructive
  - be critical and helpful

---

**Develop your portfolio**

- What is a portfolio?
- What to put in a portfolio?
Appendix 9:  CORNER ACTIVITY EXAMPLES FROM THE STUDENTS

Houghton Mifflin Spelling and Vocabulary

Match each homophone with its meaning.

- eye
- 2
- organ of sight
- it is
- two
- also
- an animal
- loved
- deer
- I
- its
- the speaker or writer
- belonging to it
- dear
- too
- it's

Spot the homophone

Homophones are two or more words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.

I was so hungry that I ate eight biscuits.
I don’t think I have ever seen such a beautiful scene.
The wind blew the blue kite into the sky.
He heard the herd of cows as he passed by it.
They’re playing with their ball over there.
Appendix 10: THE SURVEY

The survey consists of THREE parts, and it may take you 15 minutes to complete. Before you begin the survey, could you please provide some background information about yourself by ticking the appropriate box or writing in the provided space?

Your code: ___ ___ ___ (For the code, please write the three initial letters of your best friend’s name to code your survey. For example: if your best friend’s name is Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, you can write NTT in your code, or if your friend’s name is Nguyen Thu, you may write NT0 in your code- 0 is used in this case for zero).

Background information

1. Your gender:   male □           female □
2. Your hometown:

3. Have you ever travelled to any countries outside Vietnam?   Yes □    No □

If Yes, could you write down name(s) of the countries you have been to?

How long you stayed in the place(s)? …………………………………………………………………………………

Did you use English when you travelled to the place(s)?   Yes □    No □

4. How long have you been learning English? Please write the number of years or months you have in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>Outside school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tutor</td>
<td>club</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For example:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school</td>
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<tr>
<td>University</td>
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</table>
Part one: This part aims to find out the reasons why you learn English and the amount of time you spend on this subject.

For items 1–22, please give your immediate feeling after reading each statement. Please tick on the box under one of the numbers, which indicates to what extent you agree with the statement, using the 4–1 scale below, indicating feeling ranging from ‘Very much like me’ to ‘Not at all like me’.

4=very much like me 3=somewhat like me 2=not much like me 1=not at all like me
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. I think I am doing my best to learn English</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2. I would like to study English even if it were not required</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3. I can imagine myself living abroad and using English for communicating with the locals</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5. I can imagine myself as a successful graduate at graduation time</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7. Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.8. My parents encourage me to take every opportunity to use my English (i.e. speaking and reading)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.9. My parents encourage me to attend extra English classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.10. Studying English is important to me in order to bring honour to my family</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.11. Studying English is important to me because I am hoping to study abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.12 Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for studying English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>I study English in order to keep updated and informed of recent news of the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>I have to learn English because without passing the English course, I cannot graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Studying English is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score in English proficiency tests (TOEFL, IELTS…)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Studying English is important to me because, if I don’t have knowledge of English, I will be considered a weak student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>I like the atmosphere of my English classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>I find learning English really interesting</td>
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<td>1.19</td>
<td>I like English movies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>I like English music</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>I like English books, magazines, newspapers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>Learning English will help me better understand English speaking peoples and their cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>I learn English to travel around the world</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part Two: For items 23–35, please circle the number, which appropriates how often you use English daily, using the 5−1 scale below, which means the scales ranging from every day to rarely/never. I would encourage you to be open and honest in your responding since the success of this survey depends on it.

1=every day  2=once/twice a week  3=once/twice a month  4=rarely/never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>How often do you</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Speak English with your family member(s) at home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Discuss homework in English with friends at university?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Speak English with your teachers at university?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Speak English with foreigners?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Read English materials (including news)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Listen to English songs online?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Write in English besides studies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Chat with your friends in English?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Watch English programs or English movies?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Listen to English radio programs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Spend money buying books or magazines in English?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>Spend money on buying cassettes or CDs in English and listening to them or English video games?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>Browse English websites?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part three: this part aims to understand the way you learn English.

For each statement from items 1–9, there are two options (a) or (b), and six boxes in between a and b, you are invited to put a tick in ONE box that shows your most preference.

For example:

0. I think that I can learn best outside the class in

a. the morning √ b. at night

3.1 I believe that it is the responsibility of

a. the teacher b. myself

to correct all my mistakes.

3.2 I want

a. the teacher to tell me b. to find out by myself

what I have to do to learn English better.

3.3 I believe that

a. the teacher should tell me b. I can choose for myself
what exercises to do and what books to read, etc.

3.4. I think it’s useful to do speaking activities in pairs or groups

a. only if the teacher is listening to us

b. even if the teacher is not listening to us.

3.5. I think that

a. the teacher should give us lots of tests and tell us how well we’ve learnt.

b. tests can’t tell me everything. I know myself if I’ve been learning well.

3.6. I think that

a. the teacher has

b. myself and other have
to prepare everything for the lesson.

3.7. I believe that

a. the teacher is

b. I myself am
the only person who can decide on the activities, the time and the order to do them in the classroom.

3.8. I think that

a. covering all the knowledge in the textbook is enough for me.

b. it is important to learn beyond the textbook.

3.9. I prefer

a. sitting at the table and listening to the teacher’s teaching.

b. moving around and talking with different classmates.
For items 10–27, please circle one of the numbers, which indicates to what extent you agree with the statement, using the 4–1 scale below, indicating feeling ranging from ‘Strongly agree’ to ‘Strongly disagree’

4=strongly agree   3=agree   2=disagree   1=strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items 10–27</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.10 The teacher should explain every language point to us in the class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.11 The teacher should tell me how I should learn after class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.12 The teacher should say what my learning difficulties are</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.13 My own effort is very important to my English learning process</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14 The learning method that I use is very important to my English learning success</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.15 I am willing to set proper goals for my English learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.16 I am willing to plan my English learning schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.17 I am willing to find out my own ways to learn English</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18 I am willing to check my own work for mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.19 I am willing to identify my strengths and weaknesses in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.20 I am confident of finding my own ways to learn English</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.21 I am confident of checking my own work for mistakes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
For items 1 to 5 below, please feel free to answer the open questions and the more specific your answers are, the better it would be for the project.

1. Do you think that you are a good English learner now? And why/ or why not?
   
   
   
   
   
   

2. What are the things that you like in the English courses at the university you have joined in so far? (i.e., the textbook, the timetable, the contents, the teaching and learning modes, so on…)

   
   
   
   
   

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.22 I am confident of identifying my strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.23 I am confident of measuring my progress in English learning on my own</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.24 I can learn from pair/ group work with my classmates</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.25 I prefer working alone in English class</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.26 I can learn English best if I have someone else to study with me outside the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.27 Evaluation from a partner provides me with useful feedback for my English study.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. What are the things that you do not like from the English courses? (i.e., the textbook, the timetable, the contents, the teaching and learning modes, so on....)

4. How do you see yourself using English in 8 years’ time (in your late 20s or early 30s)?

5. How do you see yourself in 10 years’ time? (Imagine about your job, family, education, dreams, so on)

End-of-the survey and Thank you for your time!
Appendix 11: ELLH INSTRUCTIONS

Written Narratives

Instructions: Writing narratives is similar to telling stories about your own experience. In this project, could you please tell me in as much detail as possible about your way to learn English so far?

1. About your starting time in learning English

When did you start your learning English? Where and how?

Why did you start to learn English?

What learning materials did you first use? Who chose these or did you choose them yourself?

Did you make decisions on the time, the location and the way to learn or did someone else make them?

2. About the way you learnt English at the school? (At the primary, if you started learning English at the primary school; at the secondary and high school?)

-about your school? Have you got any memories related to your learning English that you want to share with me?

-about the text book and other learning materials?

-about your teachers and/or your classmates.

3. About the way you learnt English before you entered the university

Did you think that you were a good English user in the future?

Tell me what/ who made you study the subject most?

How much time did you spend on learning EL? (A week/ a month/ …)

Why did you choose EL as a major at university?
4. About your first semester at the university?

Did you see any similarities and differences in learning at the university and the high school?

What did you like and dislike about learning EL at the university?

Tell me about the teacher and the classmates here?

What was most useful to you?

What were good things about the course?

What were bad things about it?

5. About your learning English outside the classroom.

Have you ever joined in any courses/ clubs outside the classroom? If yes, tell me about your experience.

How do you learn EL at home?

What do you think of homework?

What is the role of your parents/your siblings/ your relatives/ your friends or anyone in the daily life in your learning EL?

How do you choose the learning material?

How do you learn vocabulary/ grammar?

6. How would you describe a good language learner?

Do you think that you are a good English learner at the moment?

Do you think how good at English you are now is related to what you have learned previously?

What do you imagine you will do in the future in relation to English language learning at the end of the course, after two years at the university, in the graduation time, and in your future job?
Appendix 12: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Protocols for the interviews are partly based on possible selves questionnaires by Schumaker, Deshler and Hock (2006)

**Interview 1:** pre-course interview to elaborate the information from the narratives

Q1: In the past, in general, do you think that you did spend enough time on learning English?
Q2: Do you think that so far you have learnt English because of yourself or someone else?
Q3: if you had another choice, do you think that you would have made a different decision?
Q4: What do you think of YOU as an English learner and as a person now?

**Interview 2:** During the course interview

Q1: What do you think of your way of learning English now?
Q2: What do you think of the role of goal setting in your learning?
Q3: Have you chosen any materials for the coming lessons? If yes, what are they?
Q4: What is your opinion in choosing your own learning materials besides the textbook?
Q4: During the process of setting goals, have you ever thought of you in 5 years’ time or 10 years’ time?
Q5: What do you hope to achieve as an English learner in 5 years’ time/ in 10 years’ time?
Q6: What is one thing you are really good at doing in English subject?
Q7: What are some of the things you hope to achieve in this area?
Q8: What are some of your fears in this area?
Q9: How do you feel about the current way of learning in the class now?
Q10: Do you want to change any goal or details in your learning plan?
Interview 3: Post-course interview

Q1: To what extent do the learning strategies help you in your English learning?

Q2: What are some of the things you expect to achieve as an English learner?

Q3: What are some of your fears as an English learner?

Q4: Do you spend more or less time on learning English now in comparison with 8 weeks ago?

Q5: Do you think that you have gained the target you set at the beginning of the course?

Q6: Do you feel confident with your self learning now?

Q7: Do you use English more frequently now than 8 weeks ago?

Q8: What are your plans for the coming semester and for your future in 2 years’ time?

Q9: What words or phrases best describe you as an English learner in now and in the future of 3–5 years’ time?
Appendix 13: LEARNING DIARY INSTRUCTIONS

Diary instructions

Keeping a diary is a way of reflecting your life in general and your learning English in particular.

So please write about your thoughts after every speaking and listening lesson. What did you think useful?

Besides, you are encouraged to write about everything that you have observed in a day in your study and your life, about your feelings after one lesson, or your thoughts about any special events or any person you have met or talked with, so on and so forth. Feel free to write in either English or in Vietnamese or in both languages.
Appendix 14: GROUPS OF SURVEY STATEMENTS

Part 1: Autonomy: total 25 items

Perceptions of the role of teachers and learners: 10 items

3.1 I believe that correcting my mistakes is the responsibility of

(a) the teacher  

(b) myself

3.2 I want

(a) the teacher to tell me  

(b) to find out by myself what I have to do to learn English better.

3.3 I believe that

(a) the teacher should tell me  

(b) I can choose for myself what exercises to do and what books to read, etc.

3.5 I think that

(a) the teacher should give us lots of tests

and tell us how well we’ve learnt.

(b) tests can’t tell me everything. I know myself if I’ve been learning well.

3.6 I think that

(a) the teacher has  

(b) myself and others have
to prepare everything for the lesson.

3.7 I believe that

(a) the teacher is the only person who can decide on the activities, the time and the order to do them in the classroom.

3.8 I think that

(a) covering all the knowledge in the textbook is enough for me.

3.10 The teacher should explain every language point to us in the class.

3.11 The teacher should tell me how I should learn after class.

3.12 The teacher should say what my learning difficulties are.

Perception of roles of partners in learning L2: 6 items

3.24 I can learn from pair/ group work with my classmates.

3.25 I prefer working alone in English class.

3.26 I can learn English best if I have someone else to study with me outside the class.

3.27 Evaluation from a partner provides me with useful feedback for my English study.

3.4 I think it’s useful to do speaking activities in pairs or groups

(a) only if the teacher is listening to us

(b) even if the teacher is not listening to us.
3.9 I prefer

(a) sitting at the table and listening to the teacher’s teaching.

(b) moving around and talking with different classmates.

Willingness to autonomy: 5 items

3.15 I am willing to set proper goals for my English learning
3.16 I am willing to plan my English learning schedule
3.17 I am willing to find out my own ways to learn English
3.18 I am willing to check my own work for mistakes
3.19 I am willing to identify my strengths and weaknesses in English

Confidence in autonomy: 4 items

3.20 I am confident of finding my own ways to learn English
3.21 I am confident of checking my own work for mistakes
3.22 I am confident of identifying my strengths and weaknesses
3.23 I am confident of measuring my progress in English learning on my own

Part 2: Motivation: total of 27 items and open questions 2 & 3
Attitudes to English learning: 6 items

Attitude towards English as a subject
1.2 I would like to study English even if it were not required
1.18 I find learning English really interesting
1.17 I like the atmosphere of my English classes

Attitude towards the English language
1.19 I like English movies
1.20 I like English music
1.21 I like English books, magazines, newspapers
Reasons for learning English: 3 items
  1.13 I study English in order to keep updated and informed of recent news of the world
  1.22 Learning English will help me better understand English speaking peoples and their cultures
  1.23 I learn English to travel around the world

Engagement and investment in L2 learning: (total of 18 items)
  Efforts to learn the English subject: 3 items
  1.1 I think I am doing my best to learn English
  3.13 My own effort is very important to my English learning process
  3.14 The learning method that I use is very important to my English learning success

  Formal use of English: 2 items
  2.2 How often do you discuss homework in English with friends at university?
  2.3 How often do you speak English with your teachers at university?

  Outside class use of English: 9 items
  2.1 How often do you speak English with your family member(s) at home?
  2.4 How often do you speak English with foreigners?
  2.5 How often do you read English materials (including news)?
  2.7 How often do you write in English besides studies?
  2.8 How often do you chat with your friends in English?

  Spend time on activities related to English speaking community culture
  2.6 How often do you listen to English songs online?
  2.9 How often do you watch English language television programs or English language films?
  2.10 How often do you listen to English language radio programs?
  2.13 How often do you browse English language websites?

  Investment in English materials: 2 items
2.11 How often do you spend money buying books or magazines in English?
2.12 How often do you spend money on buying cassettes, CDs, or video games in English and playing them?

Family influence on engagement and investment in English: 2 items
1.8 My parents encourage me to take every opportunity to use my English (i.e., speaking and reading)
1.9 My parents encourage me to attend extra English classes

Part 3: Sense of self: total of 11 items & Open questions 1, 4 & 5

Ideal selves: 5 items
1.3 My parents encourage me to attend extra English classes
1.4 The things I want to do in the future require me to use English
1.5 I can imagine myself as a successful graduate at graduation time
1.11 Studying English is important to me because I am hoping to study abroad
1.12 Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally

Ought selves: 6 items
1.6 Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so
1.7 Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English
1.10 Studying English is important to me in order to bring honour to my family
1.14 I have to learn English because without passing the English course, I cannot graduate
1.15 Studying English is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score in English proficiency tests (TOEFL, IELTS…)
1.16 Studying English is important to me because, if I don’t have knowledge of English, I will be considered a weak student
Appendix 15: WRIGHT MAPS

In a Wright Map, as in Figure Appendix 1, there is a scale in logits on the left-hand side and a vertical line in the centre dividing the Map into two columns. The left-hand column shows the distribution of students along the logit scale (where an X denotes 1 student in this case). The students are ordered from the least positive overall rating at the bottom up to the most positive at the top. On the right-hand side of the Wright Map the items are ordered from the least positive ratings (Not at all like me, for example) at the bottom to the most positive (Very much like me for example) at the top. The items are described on the Wright Map by a numeric code as follows: the first digit indicates the section number (for example, 3 is the section on Autonomy) followed by a period (.), then the item number which is followed by another period (.) and lastly a ranking numeral (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6) where 1 indicates lowest category, and the greatest numeral (4, 5, or 6) indicates the highest ranking for that item. Thus, 3.16.6 is in the Autonomy section, is item 16, and is the position of the rank of 4 (Very much like me). The point at which a student moves from a lower rating to a higher rating is called a threshold and it is these that are represented by the item names and rankings on the Wright Map. Thus, there are no ratings of 1 visible, as rating 2 indicates at what point on the scale the likely rating is 2, and no longer 1.

The Rasch analysis has a unique characteristic in that both the students and the rating levels are placed on the same scale. In effect, this means that it is possible to estimate the likelihood of a student with a particular scale score rating in a particular category (from 1 to whatever is the highest for that item) for each item. For example, a student with a scale score between 0 and 1 logit is most likely to have rated themselves at rank 2 for item 3 on Autonomy. When the item rankings are positioned lower on the scale than the student’s position, the likelihood of the student endorsing these rankings for themselves decreases. In an opposite manner, item rankings on the scale above this student’s scale score, of 1 logit, are less likely to endorse themselves with those rankings, and the likelihood of non-endorsement increases as the distance above their position on the scale increases. Thus, as we can see on the Wright Map that only one student (X) is endorsing themselves with a ranking of 4 for items 3.19.4 and 3.23.4 on Autonomy.
Figure Appendix 1: EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON AUTONOMY

---

3.0 |  
    |  
    |  
    |  
    |  
    |  3.16.6  
    |  
    |  3.6.6 3.9.6  
    |  3.7.6  

2.0 |  
    |  3.4.3 3.4.4 3.4.5 3.4.6 3.15.6  
    |  3.22.4  
    |  3.8.6  
    |  3.16.5  
    |  3.18.6  
    |  3.7.5 3.21.4  

X |  3.19.4 3.23.4  

XXXXX |  

1.0 |  XX |
| X | 3.3 .2 3.9 .5 |
|   | 3.4 .2 3.5 .6 3.6 .5 |
| XXXXX | 3.18.5 |
| XX | 3.7 .4 3.8 .5 3.16.4 |
| XXXXXXXXX | 3.9 .4 |
| XX | |
| XXXXX | 3.17.6 3.18.4 |
| XXXXX | |
| .0 | X | 3.5 .5 3.6 .4 3.8 .4 3.15.5 |
|   | 3.9 .3 |
| X | 3.7 .3 3.15.4 3.16.3 |
|   | 3.15.2 3.15.3 3.20.3 |
|   | 3.2 .2 3.18.3 |
|   | 3.17.5 |
|   | 3.5 .4 |
|   | 3.6 .3 |
|   | 3.19.3 3.22.3 |
|   | 3.9 .2 3.18.2 |
| -1.0 | |
|   | 3.8 .3 |
|   | |
|   | |
|   | |
|   | |
|   | 308 |
| 3.7.2 |
| 3.5.3 |
| 3.17.4 |
| 3.16.2 3.23.3 |
| 3.20.2 |
| 3.21.3 |
|-2.0 |
| 3.19.2 |
| 3.22.2 |

Each X represents 1 student
**Appendix 16: DETAILED STATISTICS OF THE RESULTS**

1: Responses from 77 participants to the first survey questionnaire items (3.1-3.9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Median (Mdn)</th>
<th>Mode (Md)</th>
<th>Cat. 1</th>
<th>Cat. 2</th>
<th>Cat. 3</th>
<th>Cat. 4</th>
<th>Cat. 5</th>
<th>Cat. 6</th>
<th>Missing Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>I believe that correcting my mistakes is the responsibility of…(a) teacher…(b) myself</td>
<td>5 (1.3%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>I want …(1) the teacher to tell me/ (b) to find out by myself what I have to do to learn English better</td>
<td>3 (3.9%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>I believe that (a) the teacher can choose (b) I can choose for myself what exercises to do and what books to read, etc.</td>
<td>3 (3.9%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.4
I think it’s useful to do speaking activities in pairs or groups (a) only if the teacher is listening to us.
(b) even if the teacher is not listening to us

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>(3.9%)</td>
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<td>(35.1%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5
I think that tests can’t tell me everything. I know myself if I’ve been learning well.

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>(5.2%)</td>
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<td>(14.3%)</td>
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<td>(20.8%)</td>
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<td>(28.6%)</td>
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### 3.6
I think that I myself and others have to prepare everything for the lesson.

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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>(1.3%)</td>
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### 3.7
I believe that (a) the teacher is
(b) I myself am the only person who can decide on the activities, the time and the order to do them in the classroom

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>(11.7%)</td>
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<td>(3.9%)</td>
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<td>(2.6%)</td>
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<td>(19.5%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Notes: Cat= Category; N=77 participants; the scores of median and mode are on a six-point scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.8 I think that (a) covering all the knowledge in the textbook is enough for me/ (b) it is important to learn beyond the textbook</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td>(1.3%)</td>
<td>(6.5%)</td>
<td>(14.3%)</td>
<td>(31.2%)</td>
<td>(46.8%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 I prefer (a) sitting alone/ (b) moving around and talking with different classmates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.9%)</td>
<td>(6.5%)</td>
<td>(23.4%)</td>
<td>(20.8%)</td>
<td>(24.7%)</td>
<td>(20.8%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2: Responses from 77 participants to the first survey questionnaire items (1.1–1.23; 2.1–2.13; 3.10–3.27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Median (Mdn)</th>
<th>Mode (Md)</th>
<th>Cat. 1</th>
<th>Cat. 2</th>
<th>Cat. 3</th>
<th>Cat. 4</th>
<th>Missing Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>I think I am doing my best to learn English.</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>6 (6)</td>
<td>27 (27)</td>
<td>39 (39)</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>I would like to learn English even if it were not required.</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>31 (31)</td>
<td>36 (36)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>I can imagine myself living abroad and using English for communicating with the locals.</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
<td>23 (23)</td>
<td>48 (48)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>The things I want to do in the future requires me to use English.</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>13 (13)</td>
<td>62 (62)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>I can imagine myself as a successful graduate at graduation time.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.3%)</td>
<td>(24.7%)</td>
<td>(54.5%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Learning English is important because people surrounding me expect me to do so.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11.7%)</td>
<td>(29.9%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(32.5%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Studying EL is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td>(28.6%)</td>
<td>(41.6%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>My parents encourage me to take every opportunity to use my English (i.e. speaking and reading).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6.5%)</td>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
<td>(24.7%)</td>
<td>(53.2%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>My parents encourage me to attend extra English classes.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
<td>(16.9%)</td>
<td>(35.1%)</td>
<td>(37.7%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Studying EL is important to me in order to bring honour to my family.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(35.1%)</td>
<td>(28.6%)</td>
<td>(20.8%)</td>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Studying English is important to me because I am hoping to study abroad.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>23 (29.9%)</td>
<td>52 (67.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (2.6%)</td>
<td>14 (18.2%)</td>
<td>61 (79.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>I study English in order to keep updated and informed of recent news of the world.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (5.2%)</td>
<td>13 (16.9%)</td>
<td>22 (28.6%)</td>
<td>38 (49.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>I have to learn EL because without passing the EL course, I cannot graduate.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21 (27.3%)</td>
<td>20 (26%)</td>
<td>19 (24.7%)</td>
<td>17 (22.1%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<td>Studying EL is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score in EL proficiency tests (TOEFL, IELTS…)</td>
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<td>25 (32.5%)</td>
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<td>I like the atmosphere of my English classes.</td>
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<td>(0%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I like English movies.</td>
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<td>I like English music.</td>
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<td>(87%)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
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</table>
|      |                                              |   |   |   | 1  | 14.3% | 27.3% | 57.1% | 0%
|      |                                              |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |
| 1.22 | Learning English will help me better understand English speaking peoples and their cultures. | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4  | 19  | 54  | 0  |
|      |                                              |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |
|      |                                              |   |   |   | 0  | 5.2% | 24.7% | 70.1% | 0%
| 1.23 | I learn English to travel around the world.   | 4 | 4 | 0 | 9  | 19  | 49  | 0  |
|      |                                              |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |
|      |                                              |   |   |   | 0  | 11.7% | 24.7% | 63.6% | 0%
<p>| 2.1  | How often do you speak English with your family member(s) at home? | 1 | 1 | 57 | 11 |  4  | 3   | 2  |
|      |                                              |   |   |  (74%) | (14.3%) | (5.2%) | (3.9%) | (2.5%) |
| 2.2  | How often do you speak English with teachers at the university? | 2 | 2 | 18 | 28 | 22  | 7   | 2  |
|      |                                              |   |   |  (23.4%) | (36.4%) | (28.6%) | (9.1%) | (2.6%) |
| 2.3  | How often do you discuss homework in English with friends at the university? | 3 | 3 | 2  | 12 | 36  | 24  | 3  |
|      |                                              |   |   |  (2.6%) | (15.6%) | (46.8%) | (31.2%) | (3.9%) |</p>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>(42.9%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>How often do you read English materials?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
<td>(31.2%)</td>
<td>(54.5%)</td>
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<td>(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>How often do you listen to English songs online?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>(2.5%)</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>How often do you write in English in addition studies?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(31.2%)</td>
<td>(29.9%)</td>
<td>(27.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>How often do you chat with your friends in English?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>(16.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(35.1%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>How often do you watch English language television programs or English language films?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>(1.3%)</td>
<td>(11.7%)</td>
<td>(18.2%)</td>
<td>(66.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>How often do you listen to English language radio programs?</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>(36.4%)</td>
<td>(31.2%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>How often do you spend money on English books, magazines?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(29.9%)</td>
<td>(46.8%)</td>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
<td>(5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>How often do you spend money on English CDs.?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(44.2%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(16.9%)</td>
<td>(10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>How often do you browse English language websites?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>(3.9%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
<td>(11.7%)</td>
<td>(62.3%)</td>
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</table>
| 3.10 | The teacher should explain every language point to us in the class.       | 3 (1.3%)  
     |                                                                           | 3 (36.4%)  
     |                                                                           | 28 (49.4%)  
     |                                                                           | 10 (13%)   
     |                                                                           | 0 (0%)     |
| 3.11 | The teacher should tell me how I should learn after class.               | 3 (1.3%)  
     |                                                                           | 3 (23.4%)  
     |                                                                           | 18 (67.5%)  
     |                                                                           | 6 (7.8%)   
     |                                                                           | 0 (0%)     |
| 3.12 | The teacher should say what my difficulties are.                         | 3 (0%)     
     |                                                                           | 3 (5.2%)   
     |                                                                           | 0 (58.4%)  
     |                                                                           | 45 (36.4%) 
     |                                                                           | 0 (0%)     |
| 3.13 | My own effort is very important to my English learning process.           | 4 (0%)     
     |                                                                           | 4 (2.6%)   
     |                                                                           | 0 (10.4%)  
     |                                                                           | 8 (87%)    
     |                                                                           | 67 (0%)    |
| 3.14 | The learning method that I use is very important to my English learning success. | 4 (0%)     
     |                                                                           | 4 (3.9%)   
     |                                                                           | 0 (32.5%)  
     |                                                                           | 3 (63.6%)  
     |                                                                           | 49 (0%)    |
| 3.15 | I am willing to set proper goals for my English learning process.         | 3 (1.3%)  
     |                                                                           | 3 (11.7%)  
     |                                                                           | 1 (53.2%)  
     |                                                                           | 9 (33.8%)  
<pre><code> |                                                                           | 0 (0%)     |
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<td>3.16</td>
<td>I am willing to plan my English schedule.</td>
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<td>(18.2%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>I am willing to find out my own way to learn English.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(62.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>(35.2%)</td>
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<td>(0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>I am willing to check my own work for mistakes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>(0%)</td>
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<td>(0%)</td>
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<td>3.20</td>
<td>I am confident of finding my own ways to learn English.</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>(16.9%)</td>
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<td>I am confident of checking my own work for mistakes</td>
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<td>(42.9%)</td>
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<td>3.22</td>
<td>I am confident of identifying my strengths and weaknesses.</td>
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<td>(2.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(29.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>I am confident of measuring my progress in English learning on my own.</td>
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<td>(5.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(32.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>I can learn from pair/group work with my classmates.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0%)</td>
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<td>(6.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>I prefer working alone in the class.</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(31.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(48.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can learn English best if I have someone else to study with me outside the class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>(23.4%)</td>
<td>(40.3%)</td>
<td>(33.8%)</td>
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<td>3.26</td>
<td>Evaluation from a partner provides me with useful feedbacks for my English study.</td>
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<td>(10.4%)</td>
<td>(61%)</td>
<td>(27.3%)</td>
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Appendix 17: RESPONSES TO OPEN QUESTIONS 2, 3 IN PRE-COURSE SURVEYS

Responses from two groups to open questions 2, 3 in pre-course surveys

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching-learning method</td>
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<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
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<td>8.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
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<td>16.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
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<td>All things</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks &amp; timetable</td>
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<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks &amp; teaching-learning methods</td>
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<td>1.3%</td>
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<td>Timetable &amp; contents</td>
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<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.7%</td>
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<td>Textbook &amp; contents</td>
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<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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(Note: N=75, 4 missing information)
### Open Question 3: “What do you dislike from your English speaking-listening course?”

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<tr>
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<td>11.0%</td>
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<td>Teaching-learning method</td>
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<tr>
<td>All things</td>
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<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook &amp; contents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents, textbook &amp; teaching methods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook &amp; teaching methods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable &amp; teaching methods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: N=73, 6 missing information)
Appendix 18: OUTSIDE CLASS LEARNING

1. Average amount of time spent on the English subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education levels</th>
<th>School learning (No of years)</th>
<th>Centre learning (No of months)</th>
<th>Extra class (No of months)</th>
<th>Tutor (No of months)</th>
<th>Club (No of months)</th>
<th>Others (No of months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1st surveys of the two groups)

2. Formal English learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education levels</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Number of average years in learning English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>6–11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>15–18</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>18–22</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 19: PARTICIPANTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LEARNER SELF

Open-ended Q1: “Are you a good English learner?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No idea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: N=77 participants)
Appendix 20: T-TEST RESULTS FOR GENDER, HOMETOWN AND TRAVEL EXPERIENCE WITH AUTONOMY, MOTIVATION AND SELF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Travel experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of self</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>.977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy Travel</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.5195</td>
<td>.45557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not travel</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.4803</td>
<td>.46484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Travel</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.7802</td>
<td>.60630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not travel</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.7014</td>
<td>.57007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Travel</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.6617</td>
<td>.64178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not travel</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.7640</td>
<td>.78137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy City</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.4391</td>
<td>.46808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.5937</td>
<td>.44352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation City</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.7730</td>
<td>.61569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.7190</td>
<td>.57093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self City</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.7347</td>
<td>.68211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.7127</td>
<td>.75301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.5633</td>
<td>.53500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.4786</td>
<td>.42749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.8538</td>
<td>.58823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.7034</td>
<td>.58734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.7043</td>
<td>.75447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.7096</td>
<td>.69362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 21: OPEN QUESTIONS IN POST-COURSE SURVEY

Participants’ opinions on the English course in the second survey from Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: “What do you like from your English speaking-listening course?”</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning method</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook+ teaching-learning method</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable+ teaching-learning method</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content +teaching- learning method</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable+ contents+ teaching method</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: n=40)
Appendix 22: CHANGES

22A: Changes in frequency of using English with friends in the school context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2.2: “How often do you discuss homework in English with friends at university?”</th>
<th>Group 1 Pre-survey</th>
<th>Group 1 Post-survey</th>
<th>Group 2 Pre-survey</th>
<th>Group 2 Post-survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22B: Changes in sense of a good English learner in Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OpenQ1: “Are you a good English learner?”</th>
<th>Pre-course survey</th>
<th>Post-course survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>No of participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No idea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 23: PARTICIPANTS’ ENGLISH LEARNING STORIES

File in Dropbox: <https://db.tt/20vtnbNp>
## Appendix 24: CHANGES IN LIEN’S SENSE OF SELF

Lien’s perception of her selves before the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self domains/Standpoint</th>
<th>Actual self</th>
<th>Ideal self</th>
<th>Ought self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own</strong></td>
<td>Actual/own</td>
<td>Ideal/own</td>
<td>Ought/own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who I believe I am actually now”</td>
<td>“The person who I would ideally like to be”</td>
<td>“The person who I believe I should/ought to be”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shy, reserved girl: scared when speaking before many people and boys</td>
<td>Not sure, start thinking</td>
<td>Good learner with good results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Actual/other</td>
<td>Ideal/other</td>
<td>Ought/other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who others believe I am”</td>
<td>“The person who others would ideally like me to be”</td>
<td>“The person who others believes I should/ought to be”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good, quiet, gentle girl</td>
<td>Successful like sister</td>
<td>Successful like sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self domains/ Standpoint</td>
<td>Actual self</td>
<td>Ideal self</td>
<td>Ought self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own</strong></td>
<td>Actual/own</td>
<td>Ideal/own</td>
<td>Ought/own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who I believe I am actually now”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A little bit more confident person:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- can talk/present before the class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- want to pair work with a boy classmate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- be less concerned about the actual/other self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- willing to raise voice in class debate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who I would ideally like to be”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- distinction graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- scholarship holder to study MA overseas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a person like mother who can balance between work and family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Actual/other</td>
<td>Ideal/other</td>
<td>Ought/other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person who others believe I am”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lucky girl | “The person who others would ideally like me to be”
-happy person with a happy family and a good job | “The person who others believes I should/ought to be”
Successful person at work |