A QUADRIPOLAR MODEL OF IDENTITY

IN ADOLESCENT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

SEPTEMBER 2010

Abstract

Integrating several psychological theories (e.g., self and identity, self-presentation and internalisation, possible selves and self-discrepancy, developmental processes in adolescence), this thesis proposes a new theoretical framework aiming to facilitate a better understanding of foreign language learning. The Quadripolar Model of Identity postulates the existence of four self components (*private*, *public*, *ideal* and *imposed*), whose pluridirectional interactions may lead to four types of self system (*submissive*, *duplicitous*, *rebellious* and *harmonious*) hypothesised to differ from one relational context to another (e.g., school, family, friends). For students, these identity processes are expected to fluctuate depending on the subject studied.

A preliminary validation of this new theoretical framework in foreign language learning, the study reported here represents a mixed-method cross-sectional investigation with 1,045 participants (mean age 16.47; 339 boys, 645 girls, 61 of undeclared gender) learning English as a foreign language in five Romanian secondary schools of different specialisms. Of the 1,045 students who completed a new purposefully-designed self-reported questionnaire, 32 participated in individual in-depth interviews, the quantitative and qualitative findings being integrated into a meta-inferential discussion.

The results offered consistent support for the Quadripolar Model of Identity, while also facilitating invaluable unexpected insights. Students' appreciation as individuals was found to predict the nature of their self system in class, while being also related to their perceived competence in English, their affective affinities with the foreign language, their learning orientation and their attributions for success and failure. In the absence of personal appreciation, an assessment-driven ethos was found to stimulate the manipulative display of various public selves that had little connection with the students' private selves. Teachers were identified as the principal motivator in the English class and differences in perceived teacher interest were associated with gender differences in perceived L2 competence and context-induced identity display. Implications for research and teaching practice are discussed.

Acknowledgements

To John, who makes the world go round

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List of symbols and abbreviations

α the probability of making a Type I error (believing there is an effect in a population when there is none); also, as Cronbach's α, a measure of internal consistency in a questionnaire scale

ANOVA   analysis of variance; a test for detecting group effects on one variable

B   regression coefficient; represents the change in the outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor

χ^2 as Pearson's χ^2, a measure of association between two categorical variables; as Wald's χ^2, a measure of statistical significance in logistic regression

CI   confidence interval; the range of values for a sample statistic within which the population statistic is expected to fall

d   Cohen's *d*; a measure of effect size

df   degrees of freedom; usually, the number of independent observations minus the number of parameters estimated

η^2 a measure of effect size; proportion of total variance explained by a variable; also used as partial η^2 (proportion of variance explained by one variable but not by others)

Exp(B)   expected *B* (odds ratio); represents the change in the outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor; an alternative to *B*

F   a measure of the ratio of the variation explained by a model (here, MANOVA) to the variation explained by other factors; also, nonitalicised, female

FLL	foreign language learning
L2	a further language learnt after one's mother tongue (either as a second or foreign language)
M	mean; the centre of a score distribution; also, nonitalicised, male
MANOVA	multivariate analysis of variance; a test for detecting group effects on multiple variables
N	sample size; the number of participants in a study
n	sub-sample size; the number of participants in a sub-group
P	statistical Power (usually capitalised, to indicate technical sense); the ability of a test to detect an effect in a population
p	statistical significance; the probability that an effect which does not exist in a population occurs by pure chance in a sample
OR	odds ratio; same as *Exp(B)*
QUAL	qualitative research
QUAN	quantitative research
r	Pearson's correlation coefficient; also a measure of effect size
R^2	multiple correlation coefficient used here in logistic regression (as Cox and Snell's pseudo R^2 and Nagelkerke's pseudo R^2); also used in linear regression
SD	standard deviation; a measure of variability in a data set
SE	standard error (of the mean); a measure of variability across samples from the same population
sig.	statistical significance (the *p* value)
t	in *t*-tests, a measure of within-group or between-group differences
V	as Pillai's trace *V*, a measure of inter-group effects in MANOVA; as Cramer's *V*, a measure of association between two categorical variables (used when one of the variables has more than two categories)

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I. Introduction

This research project is rooted in a decade-long interest in what is it that helps students participate genuinely in learning activities that they consider personally relevant, and how these factors could be turned into learning capital in the classroom. Many library shelves have been filled with books about how to motivate students to learn, but we sometimes forget a simple truth that Kohn (1993, pp. 198-199) expresses very clearly:

> …children do not need to be motivated. From the beginning they are hungry to make sense of their world. Given an environment in which they don't feel controlled and in which they are encouraged to think about what they are doing (rather than how well they are doing it), students of any age will generally exhibit an abundance of motivation and a healthy appetite for challenge.

A control-free environment that nurtures personal growth and an appetite for challenge is particularly needed in adolescence – a child's apprenticeship to responsible self-determined functioning in society. Given teenagers' increasing bids for independence and autonomy, contexts that do not support their explorations and personally relevant choices lead to frustration and conflict (e.g., Harter, 1999). The situation is further complicated by the different relational contexts in which a teenager functions: family, school, peer groups and so on. If interactions with adults are restrictive and unappreciative of one's individuality, there is often a peer group that is happy to accept a youngster on condition that a particular code of conduct is adopted (e.g., Connor, 1994; Elkind, 1984). Depending on the nature of the adopting group, this can be either detrimental or beneficial. Superficially displayed attitudes can end up reshaping one's identity (e.g., Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 2003), but it is a totally different matter if the change is triggered by, say, a questionable street gang or by a well-intended teacher.

The developmental stage when identity processes are at their most problematic peak – adolescence – is also the period when most foreign language learning occurs, given that foreign languages are usually studied in secondary school. It follows that the identity complications inherent in adolescence (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984) overlap with the identity complications that are inherent in language learning (e.g., Lightbown and Spada, 1999). It is sometimes said that learning a language means learning a new identity (Kellman, 2003; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Being an adolescent also means learning a new identity: the identity that one will manifest in one's community, at the hub of an intricate network of social relationships. Just as a new language is learnt by trial and error, by pronouncing a word wrong until you get it right or by making a grammatical mistake until it does not feel "right" anymore, in the same way teenagers learn "who they are" by trying out and discarding alternative public selves until one of them meets with social approval and gets adopted and sometimes internalised into their own identity.

Foreign language classes can be either a curse or a blessing for an adolescent's emerging sense of self. Expressing yourself in a different language from your own might expose you to ridicule, projecting a vulnerable self in the eyes of peers who regularly have fun counting your mistakes. But expressing yourself in a foreign language can also be an excellent tool for identity exploration, in a period when identity exploration is of paramount importance (e.g., Harter, 1999). Genuinely communicative language classes would appear, in this light, as the most suited to identity development of all academic subjects. As long as students have learnt to express themselves fluently, the teaching has been successful. But for this they need to be able to express *themselves*, to talk about what worries and what thrills them, as well as about what helps them engage more and learn better. When such communication occurs in the foreign language itself, the teacher gains crucial insights into the learners' own motivational

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processes, while the students gain socio-communicative competence that they will be able to use later, in real-life encounters, besides exploring and consolidating their identity through this very communication. One could almost say that successful foreign language classes are CLIL[1] lessons where the subject matter is the student's own identity.

But the overlapping complications inherent in adolescence and foreign language learning are not the only double-edged problem in class. The classroom is a space where two socio-relational contexts overlap. While the teacher is just a teacher at all times (except, perhaps, when the class is being observed by a superior member of staff), students are always both students and classmates, having to juggle with often contradictory social expectations: will they be (or pretend to be) hardworking and please the teacher, or will they be (or pretend to be) sworn enemies of learning and please their work-avoidant peers? The ensuing identity negotiations necessary to avoid conflicts are also encountered in adolescents' personal lives, when being in the same place with one's parents and one's best friends would often require the diplomatic display of particular context-dependent public selves. It is these spiralling "complications" that make foreign language learners' identity such a rewarding research topic.

Starting from such considerations, and having completed a study with Romanian learners of English as a foreign language (F. Taylor, 2008) which revealed a vast array of manipulative-escapist behaviours that students may display in class when they are not appreciated personally and their views not taken into account, an investigation into what exactly helps students feel appreciated in class was a natural continuation for my research interests.

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[1] Content and Language Integrated Learning – the teaching of a subject such as science or history through the medium of a foreign language (e.g., Coyle, Hood, & D. Marsh, 2010).

1.1 Purpose of the study

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to facilitate a better understanding of the adolescent foreign language learner caught in a web of social relations that may not always be self-actualising, with particular emphasis on the factors that may help learners feel personally appreciated in class and the ways in which these factors could be used to enhance their engagement and achievement. My chosen research context – described in more detail in Chapter Four – is the Romanian secondary-school system. This context served for the preliminary research validation of my proposed *Quadripolar Model of Identity* (see Chapter Three) because it is a context with which I am familiar both as a student and as a teacher, because my interest in this research topic was kindled by my previous study in a very similar research site, and because it is a medium where teaching is still regarded as knowledge transmission by an authoritative teacher figure, thus promising rewarding insights into differential classroom identity display. In addition, the student's identity and its relationship to language learning are significantly under-researched areas in this educational context.

As detailed later, my proposed Quadripolar Model of Identity postulates the existence of two self dimensions (internal/ external and possible/ actual), resulting in four self components: the *private* (internal, actual), the *public* (external, actual), the *ideal* (internal, possible), and the *imposed* (external, possible) selves. These four identity components (or poles) have led to the designation of my model. The multidirectional relationships in which these selves engage are hypothesised to result in four types of self system (*submissive*, *duplicitous*, *rebellious* and *harmonious*), which will most likely differ from one relational context to another and, in the classroom, from one academic subject to another. For this project I chose to concentrate on the teaching of English as a

foreign language and the students' identity perceptions in four relational contexts: English teachers, classmates, best friends and family.

Consequently, the project had two main aims:

- to gain new insights into the identity of Romanian adolescent learners of English as a foreign language and its implications for classroom involvement, and
- to validate the new theoretical framework "A Quadripolar Model of Identity" and its associated questionnaire.

These aims were further split into five research questions:

1. Is the *L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire* a reliable data collection instrument?
2. Are the L2 private, public, ideal and imposed selves distinct measurable variables?
3. How do Romanian secondary-school students perceive their L2 private, public, ideal and imposed selves?
4. How do these four self categories relate to one another?
5. How do these four self categories relate to the students' perception, involvement and achievement in the English class?

These questions were addressed through a parallel mixed-method cross-sectional investigation consisting in the administration of the new self-reported questionnaire followed by individual in-depth interviews and guided by a pragmatic research paradigm.

1.2 Thesis outline

The thesis begins with a Literature review (Chapter Two), which details some of the theories and research that have led to the formulation of my Theoretical framework. After defining the essential terminology, the chapter discusses developmental processes in adolescence, with an emphasis on the differential selves that teenagers may display in their interaction with their families, friends, teachers and classmates. Theories discussing the difference between one's private and public selves are presented next, along with the mechanisms through which a superficially adopted public self can finally be internalised into one's private self – the same being true about possible selves, be they internal or external. The literature review continues with research into the identity of foreign language learners and concludes with a set of reasons why I consider that more research is needed in the field.

Chapter Three details my proposed Theoretical framework, defining the four self components with particular emphasis on their relevance for foreign language learning, as well as the multidimensional relationships in which they are hypothesised to engage. Four possible self system types are then described, which may follow from the interactions of the self components in various relational contexts. Some limitations of the proposed model are acknowledged.

Chapter Four, Research context: Teaching English in Romanian secondary schools, offers background information about my research site aiming to facilitate a better understanding of my project. A brief geo-political introduction is followed by a short description of the Romanian education system and the role played by English as a foreign language in the national curriculum. Some methodological practices are discussed that indicate an apparent contradiction between the reality of the classroom and the theory of summative examinations.

The Methodology of my research project is detailed in Chapter Five, which begins by clarifying the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which this study was based, together with the reasons why a parallel mixed-method design was deemed most appropriate for answering my research questions. The chapter then offers further details about my participants, my data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis – for the quantitative and qualitative component separately. The steps I took for ensuring data and measurement validity are then discussed, before detailing my approach to possible ethical issues and my duty of reciprocity in relation to my research facilitators and participants.

The findings of my investigation are presented in the following two chapters: Chapter Six, Quantitative results, and Chapter Seven, Qualitative results. The former begins with descriptive statistics detailing the distribution of my data, frequencies and correlational results (including multinomial logistic regression), and then covers several inferential statistics: independent-sample *t*-tests for identifying two-group effects and multivariate analyses of variance showing various consequences of perceived assessment fairness, some of these being confirmed by Pearson χ^2. The latter chapter – Qualitative results – begins with succinct participant profiles including the self system types that they chose in the four relational contexts as well as a summary of their interviews, the remainder of the chapter being dedicated to a discussion of the interview data from the perspective of the four self system types (submissive, duplicitous, rebellious and harmonious).

The quantitative and qualitative findings are integrated in Chapter Eight, Discussion, in line with the principles of parallel mixed-method research designs. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to explicating the four large themes emerging from my data: the importance of allowing students to be "themselves" in class, the consequences of assessment-driven classroom practices, the crucial

difference that an interested teacher will make in students' academic lives, and some unexpected gender differences. The second section of the chapter represents an evaluation of my proposed Quadripolar Model of Identity in the light of the previous results and discussion, which is then followed by lines of future research and implications for the classroom.

Finally, the Conclusion assesses the extent to which my research questions have been answered and, after reiterating the reasons why I believe more research is needed, suggests that this thesis represents a step ahead towards a better understanding of foreign language learners' identity.

II. Literature review

Addressing a less researched area of the literature, the present project incorporates several different psychological theories with a view to facilitating a better understanding of identity-related phenomena in the foreign language classroom. Although not an easy task when trying to incorporate so many different strands, seeking to offer a logical sequence, this review will have a thematic structure guided by the concepts used in my research project. Accordingly, there are five sections: 1. Identity in adolescence (explicating the notion of identity and associated concepts, before reviewing the publications on the four main relational contexts that influence adolescents' identity development and the role of the main relational contexts in foreign language learning); 2. Actual selves and possible selves (discussing differences between one private and one's public selves; processes leading to the internalisation of publicly displayed selves; and possible selves theory); 3. Fully functioning persons (borrowing the phrase from Carl Rogers, whose educational model is reviewed in this sub-section); 4. Identity in foreign language learning (reviewing the publications centred around Zoltán Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, studies concentrating on general identity that refer tangentially to foreign language learning, and publications that apply various pre-existing theoretical models to L2 learning identity); and, finally, 5. Research needed (concluding that there is insufficient research in foreign language learning that addresses the learners' private, public and socially imposed selves, comprehensive identity models and new data collection instruments being also needed).

As the purpose of this study was to investigate the identity of the adolescent foreign language learners, my literature review will concentrate primarily on the

identity of the adolescent foreign language learner and does not intend to cover second language acquisition, nor the language teacher's identity or that of adult learners, unless particularly relevant.

2.1 Identity in adolescence

Although "self" and "identity" are now everyday vocabulary items, it is not easy to define them, in a domain characterised perhaps more than anything by terminological wilderness – a "self-zoo", to quote Tesser, Crepaz, Beach, Cornell and Collins (2000) – especially that self and identity have tended to generate parallel strands of literature (e.g., Côté, 2009). In addition, discussing the identity of adolescents engenders further complications, as this too has generated many different research approaches. An extra layer of difficulty is added by the influence of various relational contexts on adolescents' emergent identity. Accordingly, this section will aim to clarify some of the associated terminology (self, identity, self-concept, self-esteem, self-worth) before discussing the main characteristics of adolescent identity development and the influence of four main relational contexts: parents, friends, teachers and classmates.

2.1.1 From self to identity

It has been said that no topic is more interesting to people than people, although what many of us may be supremely interested in is the self. Being human implies the reflective consciousness of having a self, and the nature of the self is the very essence of being human (Lewis, 1990). From the large array of explanations that can be found in the literature, Baumeister's (1997, pp. 681-682) definition is one of the most illuminating: *self* is a general term which

represents "the direct feeling each person has of privileged access to his or her own thoughts and feelings and sensations". In other words, the self comprises cognitive, affective and physical aspects.

The self is clearly differentiated from people's knowledge or beliefs about themselves and their relations to other people – these being incorporated in the *self-concept* (Byrne, 1996; Hattie, 1992; Leary, 1995; Leary & Tangney, 2003; Oyserman, 2001; Showers & Zeigler-Hill, 2003; Wylie, 1989). Some authors use the notion of *self-esteem* for defining the evaluation and approval/ disapproval of the self-knowledge and self-beliefs that constitute a person's self-concept (Blaine & Crocker, 1993; Coopersmith, 1967; Crocker & Park, 2003; Harter, 1993). However, the notion has triggered serious criticism (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Kohn, 1994; H. W. Marsh & O'Mara, 2008), particularly for a reason emphasised by the very president of the International Council for Self-Esteem, namely that "efforts limited to making students 'feel good' are apt to have little lasting effect because they fail to strengthen the internal sources of self-esteem related to integrity, responsibility, and achievement" (Reasoner, 1992, p. 24). An alternative notion that appears in the literature is that of *self-worth*, which defines people's sense of personal value as a function of perceived ability, with direct repercussions for one's attributions of success and failure (Covington, 1992, 1984; Covington & Beery, 1976; Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1998; Horberg & Chen, 2010; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Thompson, 1993).

Developing from early adolescence (e.g., Côté, 2009; Harter, 1999), self-concept is the product of social relationships and interactions, reflecting the mores, norms and values of a particular relational context. Given that people function in many different environments, it follows that multiple self-concept categories develop that correspond to distinct roles, relationships, and social contexts. Authors have considered these multiple categories to be organised as a system of schemata (e.g., Markus, 1977), as an associative network (e.g.,

Bower & S. G. Gilligan, 1979), as a hierarchy (e.g., H. W. Marsh & Yeung, 1998), or not to be organised in any particular way (e.g., Harter, 1999), some researchers even maintaining that self-concept is not a very helpful notion at all (e.g., Baumeister, 1999).

Many authors do agree, however, that the self has many social facets modelled on the different relational contexts in which individuals engage, these facets being aggregated into the notion of *identity* (Baumeister, 1997, 1986; Goffman, 1959; Harter, 1999; Melucci, 1996; Schlenker, 1986). As such, identity is inextricably linked to the social context and inevitably shaped by it through the mediation of self perceptions. As Schlenker (1986, p. 24) explains,

> People's ideas about themselves are expressed and tested in social life through their actions. In turn, the outcomes of these "tests" provide a basis for crystallizing, refining, or modifying identity based in part on how believable or defensible these identity images appear to be.

In other words, living in society, people develop perceptions of what is and what is not desired in a particular context and display self images accordingly. The subsequent social responses determine whether the self image being tested is discarded or internalised. One direct consequence is that, functioning in several different contexts, individuals may display several different identity images, which are not always convergent (Goffman, 1959; Harter, 1999; E. E. Jones & T. S. Pittman, 1982; Juvonen, 1996; Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 2003). These identity images are composed of particular traits that are sometimes called self-defining goals and which represent the interface between identity strivings and motivation to act (Gollwitzer, 1986; Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). For example, somebody who wants to become a pop star knows that being a pop star involves singing or playing and instrument, wearing a particular type of clothes, associating oneself with people who appreciate pop music and so on. As such, the person who is not yet a pop star but wants to

become one will start by pursuing the self-defining goals of learning to sing, buying particular clothes and seeking the company of particular people. Authors differentiate between such identity strivings performed for expressive reasons – when the person genuinely wants to acquire that particular identity (e.g., Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), and those performed for strategic reasons – when the person is trying to manipulate an audience for a particular purpose (e.g., Leary, 1995). This area of the literature will be covered in more detail in the next section (2.2).

Two essential factors in the development of self and identity are choice and control, which play important parts in self-determination theory (e.g., Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 2002; La Guardia, 2009). This framework postulates the existence of three basic human needs – the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness – stating that the self images a person adopts in society are all in the service of these three basic needs (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2003). Identity-relevant behaviours can be assimilated into the self along a continuum comprising *external regulation* (e.g., compliance with rules), *introjected regulation* (e.g., self-/other approval, guilt, shame), *identified regulation* (behaviours consistent with personally important goals), *integrated regulation* (the most autonomous form of intentional, externally regulated behaviour) and *intrinsic motivation* (e.g., fun, inherent enjoyment). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to act are in contrast to *amotivation*, a state characterised by alienation and helplessness, resulting from lack of choice and control over one's actions.

Another framework which stresses the importance of control in mastering one's environment is self-efficacy theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977, 1997), although its links with the self and identity are somewhat obliterated by its main focus on cognitive behaviour regulation. Self-efficacy beliefs – or "beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage

prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2) – are task-specific and context-dependent, being thus different from the perceived competence conceptualised in other frameworks (for a comprehensive review see, e.g., Pajares, 1997). While the definition of self-efficacy is not always clear in the literature, being sometimes confused with self-concept, theorists emphasise that self-efficacy represents individuals' judgements of how capable they are of performing specific activities, whereas self-concept is a description of one's perceived self in relation to a social context (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

As mentioned above, the differentiation of self-concepts and the formation of a socially-conditioned identity begin in early adolescence, together with the superior cognitive and social development that the person is experiencing. It is in this context that different self images are determined in different relational contexts – described below.

2.1.2 Relational contexts in adolescence

Early to middle adolescence (12-15 years) brings with it the differentiation of selves to accommodate the diverse relational contexts in which the individual functions, while social comparison for the purpose of self-evaluation becomes more and more covert (Harter, 1998, 1999; Rosenberg, 1986). Young adolescents begin to compare themselves to their significant others, which results in the self displayed to a group of peers being frequently different from the self displayed to one's best friends or one's family. This can be the source of great inner conflicts as teenagers strive to accommodate emerging alternative selves, as well as contradictory pressures from different social groups, at the same time having to cope with age-specific anxiety and fear of rejection (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; E. H. Erikson,

1968; Higgins, 1996; Jacobs, Bleeker, & Constantino, 2003; Marcia, 1980; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2003; Woodward, 2002).

Towards late adolescence, however, people learn to accept their limitations and contradictions and understand that, while within-context inconsistencies are to be avoided, they are perfectly normal between contexts. Showing signs of the approaching adulthood, the adolescent now knows that one can be a slightly different person in different contexts without having to worry about being inconsistent. Research conducted by Susan Harter and her colleagues (Harter, Bresnick, Bouchey, & Whitesell, 1997; Harter & Monsour, 1992) revealed that self descriptions produced by early adolescents for different relational contexts overlapped in proportion of 30% while the percentage for late adolescents was 10%, showing a rising difference in self-perceptions between diverse social roles and an increased degree of acceptance of this apparent contradiction as a normal characteristic of an adaptable young adult. However, as Harter (1999) emphasises, conflicts between social selves do not disappear completely in adolescence: they are still likely to occur in socialising environments that do not support the integration of particular self attributes. While superior cognitive development allows for increasingly abstract thinking, late adolescents consolidate their identity by comparing themselves to future selves of their choice, be they internalised or self generated (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). As a result, the relational contexts that do not allow for such self-actualising manifestations are conducive to intra- and inter-personal conflict.

It is both intuitive and supported by substantive research that the main relational contexts shaping adolescents' identity are their family, their friends, their classmates and their teachers (Berndt & Keefe, 1996; Harter, 1998, 1996; Harter et al., 1998; Ide, Parkerson, Haertel, & Walberg, 1981; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992; Roeser & S. Lau, 2002; Salmela-Aro & Schoon, 2009; Tatar, 1998). These four categories exert specific influences on the development of the

teenager's identity and will be detailed below, followed by a short review (2.1.2.5) of studies that have investigated the influence of the main relational contexts in foreign language learning.

2.1.2.1 Parents

As the formation of a social persona starts at home, the family is an essential factor in identity development. While the socio-economic and educational background of the family is a strong determinant of the adolescents' subsequent path (Bartram, 2006a; Bell, Allen, Hauser, & O'Connor, 1996; Blau, 1999; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Jacobs & Eccles, 2000; Lexmond & Reeves, 2009; Trusty, 1998; Van De Werfhorst, A. Sullivan, & Cheung, 2003), the essential role in a teenager's self explorations is played by parenting styles. Research has linked supportive parenting to a smooth transition through the stages of teenage identity development (Adams, 1985; Jackson, Dunham, & Kidwell, 1990; Lexmond & Reeves, 2009; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005). Authoritarian parents, on the other hand, have been shown to discourage mature identity explorations and engender dependence on their guidance (Enright, Lapsley, Drivas, & Fehr, 1980; McClun & Merrell, 1998). For a healthy exploration of identity in adolescence, families who adopt a democratic parenting style, allowing for individuality and genuine communication, while expressing "tough love" – a combination of warmth and consistency – were found to be most successful (Lexmond & Reeves, 2009).

In a developmental stage when adolescents' bids for autonomy and independence are ever greater, while the time spent with their peers is increasing to the detriment of the time spent with one's family (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Harter, 1999), the likelihood of parent-child tension is also on the rise. Thus, a family environment that does not support exploration and the enactment of self relevant goals will lead to frustration and conflict (Holmberg,

1996; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992; McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009; Smetana, 1988). However, it has been emphasised that, while teenagers strive to liberate themselves from the parents' influence, they will always maintain a strong psychological bond to their families (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; W. A. Collins, 1990; Cooper, Grotevant, & Condon, 1983; Feiring & Taska, 1996; Steinberg, 1990).

2.1.2.2 Friends

Whilst parents' influence is maintained, during adolescence friends become an increasingly important source of self-evaluation and social support (B. B. Brown, 1990; Pekrun, 1990; R. M. Ryan & Lynch, 1989; Selman & Schultz, 1990). Many adolescents feel that adults cannot understand them (e.g., Elkind, 1984), therefore friends of a similar age can provide the emotional support and the mutual understanding necessary in honing teenagers' socio-integrative skills. Indeed, researchers have found that the highest level of genuine self-expression is triggered by close friends, usually of the same gender (B. B. Brown, 1990; C. Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1989; Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1997; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992), close companionship being identified by teenagers as the relational context in which they feel "the most real" (e. g., Gecas, 1972).

Friends can have a consistent influence on educational aspirations and outcomes (Berndt, 1996; Berndt & Keefe, 1996; Ide et al., 1981; Phelan, A. L. Davidson, & Cao, 1991; Phelan, Yu, & A. L. Davidson, 1994), as well as on the adolescent's emerging social identity. Although best friends' appreciation and support are a source of well-being in adolescence, consequences are not always positive, as youth will sometimes pay undesirable prices in order to gain acceptance to particular groups (Clasen & B. B. Brown, 1985; Connor, 1994). This includes the display of particular behaviours that identify a teenager as a member of a gang,

for example, and which can end up being integrated into one's self-concept (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2003; Spergel, 1995).

2.1.2.3 Teachers

Filling a large proportion of the adolescents' time, the classroom is a micro social setting that leaves its socio-ideological mark on students' identity through the mediation of teacher beliefs and practices (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Brophy & Good, 1986; Eccles & Roeser, 2003; Harter, 1996; Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006; Roeser, Peck, & Nasir, 2006). The teacher's role in the classroom is crucial in fostering an autonomous cooperative atmosphere in which students learn to develop in synergy, celebrating one another's successes and working together to consolidate one another's weaknesses (Ames, 1992, 1981; Boggiano & Katz, 1991; Brophy, 1981; Chambers, 1999; Covington, 1992; Maehr & Alderman, 1993; Maehr & Midgley, 1991; Murdock & A. Miller, 2003; Seifert, 1995, 2004; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005). In addition, given that students tend to perceive the teacher's responses as assessment of themselves as persons rather than of their performance, the feedback given in class is also crucial: not only should it be informative rather than controlling, but it should emphasise effort rather than ability or intelligence (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 2000; Dweck, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Praise for easily achieved successes and unsolicited help, as well as low teacher expectations, can also have debilitating effects on motivation and perceived competence, as pupils regard them as low ability cues (Boggiano & Katz, 1991; Brophy, 1983; Cimpian, Arce, Markman, & Dweck, 2007; Dweck & Molden, 2005; S. Graham, 1994; S. Graham & Barker, 1990; Jussim & Eccles, 1992; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Lepper & Hodell, 1989; Weiner, 1986, 1992).

Many studies have indicated that adolescence is associated with a decline in academic motivation and school interest (E. M. Anderman & Maehr, 1994; E. M.

Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999; Eccles & Midgley, 1990; Maehr & Midgley, 1991), as well as a reorientation from academic achievement to peer-related goals, from intrinsic to extrinsic motives and from learning to performance orientations (Chambers, 1999, 1993; Dweck, 1999; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Harter, Whitesell, & P. Kowalski, 1992; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). There is also evidence to suggest that teachers' attitude and behaviour can hinder – or facilitate – the internalisation of academic goals into students' self-relevant representations (Assor, H. Kaplan, Kanat-Maymon, & Roth, 2005; Assor, H. Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004). Some studies have also revealed that, from several relational contexts, adolescents repress their true self most when interacting with their teachers for fear of a negative affective reaction, as well as lack of validation and respect for one's views (C. Gilligan, 1982; Harter, 1996; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992). In turn, repressing one's true self has been linked to false identity display, hopelessness, depression and identity confusion (C. Gilligan et al., 1989; Harter et al., 1997; J. V. Jordan, 1991; Lerner, 1993), although these studies have concentrated mainly on female identity only.

Given that foreign language classes have been identified among the most likely to be avoided by students who play truant without being generally disaffected (Chambers, 1999; D. O'Keeffe, 1994; Reid, 1999, 2005) and that mild motivational decline and occasional truancy are linked to chronic truancy and drop-out (Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 2000; Galloway, 1983; K. Henry, 2007; Reid, 2005), the role that teachers in general, and foreign language teachers in particular, can play in students' academic identity formation is unquestionable.

2.1.2.4 Classmates

For the developing teenager, classmates serve as potential companions and friends, being important socialisation factors (Harter, 1996; Harter et al., 1992; Meeus, Oosterwegel, & Vollebergh, 2002). However, in the absence of a harmonious cooperative environment, they can also represent the source of social comparison in the classroom, with important repercussions for the adolescent's sense of self (Bartram, 2006b; Berndt & Keefe, 1996; Kindermann, McCollam, & Gibson, 1996). This may be one of the reasons why classmates have been identified as generating the relational context in which adolescents feel "least real" (Gecas, 1972; Harter, 1996).

In Western society, most educational establishments are competitive environments in which *performance* – rather than *learning* – orientations[2] are encouraged (e.g., Dweck, 1999, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Dweck, 1988). As defined in the literature, a learning orientation (or goal) is a focus on enhancing one's competence through increased effort, whereas a performance orientation is concerned with winning positive judgements of one's competence and avoiding negative ones: a performance-oriented student will strive to *look smart*, while a learning-oriented one will aim to *become smarter* (Covington, 1984; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Dweck & Licht, 1980; B. Greene & R. Miller, 1996; Meece, E. M. Anderman, & L. H. Anderman, 2006; Nicholls, Cobb, Wood, Yackel, & Patashnick, 1990; Seifert, 1995, 2004; Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001). In a performance-oriented framework, one's peers become one's rivals, in a constant struggle to outperform the other in *displaying* ability or intelligence, so that the

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[2] Several different labels have been used in the literature to designate the set of behaviours associated with learning/ performance orientations: *mastery goals/ performance goals* (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1987, 1988), *task involvement/ ego involvement* (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985; Nicholls, 1984; R. M. Ryan, 1982; Seifert, 1995), *task focused/ ability focused* (Griffin, Chassin, & Young, 1981; Maehr & Alderman, 1993; Maehr & Midgley, 1991; H. W. Marsh & Hattie, 1996; Skaalvik, 1997), *success oriented/ failure oriented* (Covington, 1992; Covington & Müeller, 2001; Harter, 1993).

other's failure is celebrated as an opportunity to *appear* better yourself; in a learning-oriented environment, however, rather than being rivals, peers are facilitators of self-esteem through cooperation and mutual enabling of progress (Butler, 1992; Dweck, 1999; Nicholls, 1984). The link between goal orientations and student identity has also been acknowledged through recent calls for the conceptualisation of a third goal – an "exploratory orientation" – that places the student's self in the focus (e.g., Flum & A. Kaplan, 2006; A. Kaplan & Flum, 2010).

Perhaps the most consequential influence that classmates can have on a teenager's academic identity under the circumstances is the so-called "norm of low achievement" or "law of generalised mediocrity", which results in peers being penalised by the group for their achievement strivings (Ames, 1992; Covington, 1992; Covington & Omelich, 1979; Juvonen, 2000; Juvonen & Murdock, 1993, 1995; Juvonen & Weiner, 1993; Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001; Slavin, 1991; Weiner, 2005). Dweck (1999, p. 131) offers a highly elucidative explanation for this prevalent type of peer pressure:

> [Competitiveness] creates **a system of winners and losers**, where there are a few winners at the top and a large number of losers under them. Many groups of adolescents have, understandably, rebelled against this by creating their own rule system in which working hard and getting good grades meets with strong disapproval.

> This is how students have conspired to undermine a system that designates winners and losers. **Through peer pressure they seek to eliminate the winners**. Then, those who would have been the losers no longer stand apart from the others. The norm of low effort also means that students' feelings about their intelligence are further protected . . . **If they don't try, a poor grade doesn't mean they're not intelligent**. (emphasis added)

Such pressure is quite inevitable in a society where self-worth is a factor of marks and test results (Covington, 1984, 1992), leading to self-serving shifts in one's attributions of effort and ability. According to Covington, this is very much

the case in Western society (as it is in my chosen research context, described in Chapter Four). For a learning-oriented student, effort represents one's chance to become better and better all the time, whereas for a performance-oriented one effort is a sign of low ability, or, as Seifert (2004, p. 141) puts it, "Smart people do not have to try hard and people who try hard are not smart". In consequence, classmates' silent bid for mediocre conformity can be much stronger than students' desire to succeed, leaving important marks on their and their peers' academic and social identity. Fortunately, however, research findings have indicated that resistance to peer pressure increases in middle to late adolescence, when youth become more interested in their own ideals and desired selves than in a group-imposed identity (Harter, 1996, 1999; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007).

2.1.2.5 Relational contexts and foreign language learning

Several authors have investigated the influence of relational contexts on students' attitudes to foreign language learning, in particular the influence of teachers, peers and parents.

Williams and Burden (1999) found that the teacher had a significant role in determining the students' cognitive attributional pattern, many teenagers judging their success by external factors such as teacher approval or marks. The two authors' qualitative study consisted in interviews with 36 English pupils aged 10-15 learning French as a foreign language, also including some ability ratings by teachers. Later, Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002) reported on a mixed-method investigation of English students' motivation to learn French and German, consisting of 228 questionnaires and 24 interviews with pupils aged between 11 and 14 (years 7-9). The teacher was again identified as an important determinant of students' motivation (M=12.99 out of 14), followed by parents (M=11.22) and the peer group (M=9.99). While no significant gender differences

were found in the perceived influence of significant others, girls were more motivated to learn foreign languages than boys, particularly in relation to French. Interestingly, French was considered "the language of love and stuff", while German was equated to "the war, Hitler, and all that" in the interviews, which led to boys preferring German and being teased by their peers if they showed an interest in French.

By contrast, Bartram (2006b) identified an anti-German learning culture in his 295 learners of French and German (aged 15-16) at comprehensive schools in England, Germany and The Netherlands. His longitudinal qualitative investigation of language-learning peer culture found that teenagers sometimes laughed at their classmates who tried to imitate the foreign accent in language classes, which had a detrimental effect on participation levels. As for gender effects, French was again perceived as "girly". In a separate publication, Bartram (2006a) reported a different component of his tri-national PhD study of attitudes to foreign language learning, this time emphasising parental influences. 411 learners of French, German and English (aged 15-16) in England, Germany and The Netherlands took part in his multi-method qualitative study, revealing that parents influenced their children's attitudes to foreign language learning in a number of ways, including positive and negative personal examples, the communication of educational regrets and perceived values, as well as through their own level of foreign language knowledge.

In turn, Kyriacou and Zhu (2008) explored the motivation of Chinese students to learn English as a foreign language and its relationship to the perceived influence of parents, teachers and peers. The responses they received to 610 questionnaires and 64 semi-structured interviews from 17- and 18-year-olds in seven Shanghai secondary schools indicated that English was not considered as important as other academic subjects, while significant others did not consider it particularly important that students did well in English. Of the three relational

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2.1.2.5 Relational contexts and FLL
2.2 Actual selves and possible selves

contexts analysed, the teacher was perceived to be slightly more important than parents and peers.

Block (2000, 2007) reports partial results of his doctoral study (Block, 1995) in which he interviewed repeatedly six Spanish students in their thirties learning English in a large language school in Barcelona, his main aim being to elucidate their perceptions of learning processes, lessons and teachers. Sustained tension was identified both in relation to the English teacher and with the peer group, which called for skilful negotiation by the students in order to maintain the balance of power, to avoid conflict and to ensure that learning took place. But one of the most striking examples of the influence that teachers can have on students' attitudes to foreign language learning is depicted in Lantolf and Genung's (2003) case study of Patricia Genung's failed attempt to learn Chinese during her doctoral programme at a major North-American university. The account shows how she challenged (unsuccessfully) the perceived abusive power of the instructors manifested through explicit drilling, grammar translation and little communicative practice, which finally transformed her from a successful language learner into a "successful" student who managed to obtain the necessary pass marks with little learning progress. These two situations are different from the previously reviewed ones in that they represent adults' experiences of foreign language learning, but they do serve as telling examples of the detrimental impact that teachers can have who are not prepared to empower their students. If these adults (particularly Patricia Genung – a colonel in the US Army, an extensive traveller and successful learner of multiple foreign languages) had to struggle to maintain their learning motivation in the face of inflexible teacher authority, it stands to reason that young learners would find it even more difficult to stay motivated in similar circumstances.

Although this sub-section does not concern itself with identity specifically, it does reveal an important interface between language learning and identity in the main

relational contexts discussed earlier. For students who gauge their learning success by the teacher's appreciation or assessment, language learning cannot be part of their true selves, and perhaps the same can be said of Kyriacou and Zhu's (2008) Chinese students, for whom learning English was mainly instrumental and less important than learning other subjects. The conflictual choice between self-relevant goals and socially-imposed goals also calls into question the students' appreciation as individuals in the respective relational contexts and sheds light on the ensuing identity display that may have little relation to their real selves (for example, Patricia Genung's public self as a successful student – clearly at odds with her perceived failure to learn the language – or Williams et al.'s (2002) boys who might have liked learning French but had to opt for German in order to avoid peer victimisation).

Up to this point, several important notions have been mentioned repeatedly: real/ authentic self, public image, identity display, differential identity, self-relevant goals, internalisation, desired selves, socially determined identities. As there are distinct areas of the literature addressing these points, they will be covered in more detail in the next section.

2.2 Actual selves and possible selves

With the onset of increasingly differential self-presentations and self-representations across relational contexts in early adolescence, multidimensional models of identity are necessary in order to capture the complexities of the self in the social context (Baumeister, 1982; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Harter et al., 1997; Hattie, 1992; H. W. Marsh & Hattie, 1996; Oosterwegel & Oppenheimer, 1993; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). Psychological literature distinguishes between one's real (or perceived) self and the self images that one displays in any given context, the two being engaged in a dynamic relationship

described below. There is also a distinction, on a hypothetical level, between one's desired selves and other socially conditioned possible selves, which are also bound in a mutually influential relationship. These will be discussed below, beginning with the difference between one's private and public selves, and the process through which the latter can become integrated into the former, then reviewing the literature on possible selves that is most relevant for adolescent identity.

2.2.1 Private self and public self

Although the degree of dissimilarity will vary in space and time, there are important differences between what we believe we are and what we show other people about ourselves, just as there are differences between what we show (or think we show) other people about ourselves and what they perceive, in turn (Andersen, Glassman, & Gold, 1998; Baumeister, 1986; Bennett & Sani, 2004; Hogan & Briggs, 1986; Schlenker, 1986; Tedeschi, 1986). The two facets of identity have been called the *private self* and the *public self*, Baumeister's (1986, p. v) definition being, once again, illuminating:

> The public self is the self that is manifested in the presence of others, that is formed when other people attribute traits and qualities to the individual, and that is communicated to other people in the process of self-presentation. The private self is the way the person understands himself or herself and is the way the person really is….

Private self is an alternative designation for self-concept – one's knowledge and beliefs about oneself crystallised through social interaction and past experience – the former being preferred in contexts where a differentiation is necessary between one's personal sense of self and its socially displayed counterpart (Andersen et al., 1998; Baumeister, 1986, 1999; Bennett & Sani, 2004; Hogan & Briggs, 1986; Leary, 1995; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006; Schlenker, 1986, 2003).

While the public self is delineated by one's private self (in the sense that one cannot display an image that is very evidently at odds with one's conception of oneself), the latter is also shaped by public manifestations, both in response to social conditioning and through the internalisation of some of the self images displayed in public.

2.2.2 Self-presentation and internalisation

Just as we cannot always say what we think (for fear of causing offence, for example), our innermost persona is seldom communicated socially in its entirety, and even William James, as early as 1890, noted that people have as many social selves as the audiences they encounter. In his colourful words, "Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers swears and swaggers like a pirate among his tough young friends" (James, 1890, p. 169). People are constantly caught between the desire to look competent – or incompetent, if that better serves them – and the need for social approval (Covington, 1992, 1984; Elliott, 2001; Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1995). Consequently, "our intended social identities", Hogan and Briggs (1986, p. 182) comment, "reflect the best compromise we can negotiate" in our interactions. It is the same mechanism that drives people away from their undesired selves (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986), as we would normally avoid being seen as maladjusted, immoral, socially undesirable etc. (Leary, 1995). Far from being a sign of insecurity or vanity – Leary explains – a certain degree of concern with the impressions one makes is essential for successful social interaction.

Such disclosure tactics are called *self-presentation* and although this can be used manipulatively, it is normal for a person to perform a set of predetermined behaviours in a particular social context in order to render a particular impression and thus achieve a desired goal (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1986;

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Baumeister, 1982; E. E. Jones & T. S. Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1995). As Schlenker (2003) emphasises, perfectly valid information about ourselves needs as much presentation skill as fabricated information in order to have the intended impact. The self-presentation "set" consists of an actor, an audience and a social situation, the last two components determining the salience of a particular public self (Schlenker, 1986, 2003; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Given that desirable self-presentations reflect "the integration of what people would like to be and think they can be in a given social context" (Schlenker, 2003, p. 499), a parallel with possible selves (2.2.3) emerges. While realistic possible selves are future self-guides based on the affordances in one's proximal social environment, self-presentations can be said to be the present enactment of one's desired selves (Baumeister, 1982; Higgins, 1996). It has even been suggested that, for a public self to be activated by a particular audience, the audience does not necessarily have to be present: research has indicated that imagined audiences are just as effective in influencing people's self-presentations (Doherty, Van Wagenen, & Schlenker, 1991; Schlenker, 2003).

The selves disclosed in public are determined by the private self (or self-concept), which ensures that one's social images are within one's realistic capacity (E. E. Jones & T. S. Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 2003; Whitehead & S. H. Smith, 1986). The key mediators here are perceived competence and constant self-monitoring: for example, if they believe they do not have the ability to perform complex mathematical operations, most people will not present themselves in public as mathematics experts. But the dynamic relationship between one's private and public selves is nowhere better demonstrated than in the evidence that our public selves can actually change our private self. "Act the part and it becomes incorporated into the self-concept", Schlenker (2003, p. 502) quips. The process – called *internalisation* – and the associated *carryover effect* have been researched and expounded by numerous authors (Baumeister &

Vohs, 2003; E. E. Jones, Berglas, Rhodewalt, & Skelton, 1981; Leary, 1995; Rhodewalt, 1998; Schlenker, 2003; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992; Tice & Wallace, 2003; Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). Internalisation is also an important component of self-determination theory (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985; La Guardia, 2009; Noels, 2009; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2003, 2000a), which explains how particular external orientations can be assimilated into one's self-concept to a lesser or greater extent.

The influence of public selves on one's private self is mediated by the emotional response the individual has to the audience's reaction (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1986; Baumeister & Tice, 1986; Leary, 1995; Tedeschi, 1986). Being manifestly perceived in the intended way may motivate the individual to reduce discrepancies between the current private self and the desired public self (Leary & R. M. Kowalski, 1990). Thus, internalisation is a vehicle of change that plays a crucial role in private identity formation (Baumeister, 1982; Leary, 1995). Acquiring a desired identity (or self) requires the enactment of a particular set of self-relevant images pertaining to that identity (Gollwitzer, 1986; Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998; Gollwitzer & Wicklund, 1985; Pin & Turndorf, 1990; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). For example, a new university lecturer projecting an image that is consistent with being a lecturer will help integrate this image into his/ her self-concept, solidifying this new identity. Similarly, a rebellious teenager who wants to be seen as "one of the gang" may display particular behaviours that will subsequently get integrated into the private self. Leary (1995) explains that, while enacting particular behaviours that are not yet part of their self-concept, people may learn new things about themselves; they may even come to understand that they actually *are* the way they presented themselves.

As we have seen (2.1.2), there is a considerable body of literature indicating that adolescents display differential public selves in their various relational contexts detailed above – parents, friends, teachers and classmates (e.g., Birch & Ladd,

1996; Côté, 2009; Harter, 1996, 1999; Harter et al., 1997; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992; Murdock & A. Miller, 2003; Roeser et al., 2006; Tatar, 1998). In addition, intriguing studies undertaken by Jaana Juvonen and her associates (Juvonen, 1996, 2000, 2006; Juvonen & Murdock, 1993, 1995; Juvonen & Weiner, 1993) have revealed that strategic self-presentation and manipulative attributional shifts are rife in competitive classroom settings. Not only do competitive contingencies encourage high-ability-low-effort attributions, but they also determine students to explain their poor performance by different causes depending on their audience. Thus, pupils tend to communicate low-effort attributions to peers and low-ability to teachers: in order to gain the group's acceptance, when talking to peers they display the image of smart teenagers who do not have to work hard, whereas when talking to teachers they strive to appear hard-working but not very able, as they believe that teachers appreciate effort and empathise with low ability. While proving that students do act different social roles depending on the context, this is a case when internalisation of public selves can have devastating consequences for students' academic self, motivation and achievement.

2.2.3 Possible selves

Together with the differentiation of selves, adolescents begin to consider alternative routes that the future might bring. When displaying particular public selves in particular social contexts, they try out possible selves that they may or may not internalise later (Dunkel, 2000; E. H. Erikson, 1968; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002). As such, these selves are always socially conditioned and contingent, the individual getting clear messages as to whether a particular self is acceptable or unacceptable (Kerpelman & J. F. Pittman, 2001; Markus, 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Marshall, Young, & Domene, 2006; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006; Wurf & Markus, 1991).

Desirable and undesirable self images have been shown to mediate long-term motivation by channelling the actions necessary for the achievement of a self-relevant goal (Cross & Markus, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; Ruvolo & Markus, 1992; Wurf & Markus, 1991; also, Beal & Crockett, 2010). Dunkel, Kelts and Coon (2006) offer a four-step explanation for the pursuit and integration of a possible self into one's identity: a) as individuals contemplate change, they generate possible selves; b) as they decide to pursue change, they try to validate their chosen possible selves; c) as they pursue some possible selves, they eliminate others; and d) when possible selves are achieved, they are integrated into the current self-concept. The constant reiteration of the process takes the individual further along a desired path.

In order for possible selves to translate into reality, they must start from the individual's own propensities (Hock, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2006; Hock, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2003; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). This has two immediate implications: effective possible selves are an expression of perceived personal control and agency (M. G. Erikson, 2007; Norman & Aron, 2003) and they must be placed within one's realistic potential (Dunkel et al., 2006). Accordingly, similar to self-presentations, possible selves have been considered to enter a mutually influential relationship to one's self-concept (M. G. Erikson, 2007; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; Strahan & Wilson, 2006; Wurf & Markus, 1991).

As Oyserman and Fryberg (2006) underline, in order for possible selves to be successful activators of behaviour, they need to fulfil two more conditions. First, they need to be "balanced" (when a positive self-identifying goal is accompanied by an awareness of the personally relevant consequences of not meeting the goal), and second, the possible selves need to be doubled by a strategy for attaining the desired state. In the absence of an activating strategy, evoking the end goal means simply evoking a mere state, rather than the process of getting

there, which may lack motivational power (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004). Similarly, Oettingen and Mayer (2002) differentiate between possible selves and sheer fantasies or passive expectations. As they explain, merely fantasising about the future lacks the motivational force of possible selves, because a possible self is a future state one must strive to achieve (or avoid) by taking active steps, whereas a fantasy is already lived in the present (albeit a hypothetical one), therefore failing to generate action.

The role of significant others in generating possible selves is important, although people one has never met (such as celebrities, famous gangsters or fictional characters) can be equally powerful inspirations in selecting a desired self, especially for younger adolescents (Harter, 1999; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Zentner & Renaud, 2007). Similar to triggering the display of divergent public selves, different relational contexts can inspire the adoption of contradictory possible selves. In other words, a particular self can be desired in one context and feared in another, like in the case of a diligent student who works hard in order to attain a particular desired self, only to be labelled a "nerd" and excluded from peer groups for being "too keen". The parallel with the norm of low achievement (2.1.2.4) and the decline in academic motivation (2.1.2.3) is evident. Some studies have suggested that being academically successful loses its salience as a possible self as pupils advance through secondary school, when being "a good student" is no longer an appealing goal for many of them (E. M. Anderman, L. H. Anderman, & Griesinger, 1999; Clemens & Seidman, 2002; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006).

Nevertheless, the potential of possible selves to enhance school persistence and academic attainment has been revealed repeatedly (E. M. Anderman et al., 1999; Leondari, Syngollitou, & Kiosseoglou, 1998; Lips, 1995; Oyserman et al., 2004; Oyserman et al., 2002). From this perspective, the teacher's role in the classroom is once again rendered crucial. Just as teachers can make the

difference between a competitive or cooperative classroom environment (e.g., Ames, 1981; Reeve et al., 2004; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005), so too can they help generate and keep alive the motivational vision of the students' desired selves (Day, Borkowski, Punzo, & Howsepian, 1994; Dörnyei, 2009a; Hock et al., 2006; Hock et al., 2003; Oyserman et al., 2002; S. Ryan, 2008).

Complementary to the possible selves model is self-discrepancy theory (e.g., Higgins, 1987; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). Postulating the existence of three "domains of the self" (the *actual self*, the *ideal self* and the *ought self*) [3] and two "standpoints on the self" (own versus significant other), Higgins and his associates maintain that discrepancies between one's self-concept (actual self) and the relevant self guides (ideal self and ought self) produce discomfort, which, in turn, activates the behaviour necessary to eliminate the associated negative emotions by resolving the discrepancy.

Sometimes, a person will have several conflicting ought selves, Van Hook and Higgins (1988, p. 625) maintaining that such discrepancies can induce a "chronic double approach-avoidance conflict (feeling muddled, indecisive, distractible, unsure of self or goals, rebellious, confused about identity)". Being caught between two different expectations, the person will be in a no-win situation: approaching one ought self-guide entails avoiding the second, and approaching the second means avoiding the first – hence, a double approach-avoidance conflict (also, Higgins, 1996, 2006). Similarities with possible selves and self-presentation theories are easily seen, as they both emphasise that when a person has to accommodate contradictory social expectations (whether for the future or for the present), tension and conflict are very likely to emerge.

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[3] The actual/ ideal dichotomy had appeared in the literature earlier (Rogers, 1951; Rogers & Dymond, 1954).

2.3 Fully functioning persons

Carl Rogers (1902-1987), one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology and initiator of person-centred counselling, appears to integrate (or anticipate) most of the theories reviewed so far in his writings about the "fully functioning person". Of utmost relevance for education is his book *Freedom to Learn*, revised, updated and published in its third edition by Jerome Freiberg (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). In this book, Rogers conceptualises the "fully functioning person" as somebody who has come very close to his/ her *real self* – the optimal result of education that helps people learn how to learn, and of person-centred therapy. This is not a static achievement, but a process through which people get closer and closer to being a "total organism". The key characteristic of this process is moving away from conscious and unconscious façades towards an increasing awareness and acceptance of one's inward experiences. Describing fully functioning persons, Rogers explains (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994, p. 65):

> They find this development exceedingly complex and varied, ranging from wild and crazy feelings to solid, socially approved ones. They move toward accepting all of these experiences as their own; they discover that they are people with an enormous variety of reactions. The more they own and accept their inner reactions – and are unafraid of them – the more they can sense the meanings those reactions have. The more all this inner richness belongs to them, the more they can appropriately *be* their own experiences… These people are becoming involved in the wider range of their feelings, attitudes, and potential. They are building a good relationship with what is going on within themselves. They are beginning to appreciate and like, rather than hate and mistrust, all their experiences. Thus, they are coming closer to finding and being all of themselves in the moment.

The biggest obstacle in becoming a fully functioning person – Rogers maintains – is our social defence, which prevents us from trusting our experiential reactions, so that "consciously we are moving in one direction while organismically we are

moving in another" (p. 324). This social defence is mainly represented by the *values* that the individual introjects from society and which can determine the person to lose touch with his/ her organismic reactions. We accept these values because we want to be loved or accepted, but more often than not these are "either not related at all, or not clearly related, to our own process of experiencing" (p. 283). Rogers argues that this is the very root of the crisis that humanity is going through nowadays: not a loss of values, but a contradiction between one's socially-conditioned values and one's personal organismic experience. Having relinquished the internal locus of evaluation for our own experience, having adopted the conceptions of others as our own, we have "divorced ourselves from ourselves" (p. 284), bringing about the fundamental estrangement of the modern person from oneself, which results in insecurity and anxiety.

It is quite clear that the fully functioning person needs absolute freedom in order to enjoy this experiential living. Quite opposite to the external choice that we normally associate with the idea of freedom, this is an inner, subjective, existential liberty that allows the individual to realise: "I can live myself, here and now, by my own choice" (p. 304). It is the courage to step into the uncertainty of choosing one's own self, the acceptance of responsibility for the self one chooses to be, the person's recognition that he or she is an emerging process, not a static end product. As Rogers shows, the fully functioning person is a self-organising system which, while being constantly interacting with the environment, is not causally determined by it. Thus, the fully functioning individual is both autonomous and dependent on the environment for this constant interaction (p. 310). Being open to experience, living existentially and trusting one's organismic reactions, this person is dependable but not specifically predictable. As the psychologist goes on to explain, "it is the maladjusted person whose behaviour can be specifically predicted, and some loss of predictability

should be evident in every increase in openness to experience and existential living" (p. 325). As individuals approach this optimum of complete functioning, though dependable and appropriate, their behaviour becomes more difficult to predict and equally difficult to control.

According to Carl Rogers, such freedom characterises very young children, whose locus of evaluation is established firmly within, and who learn about the world through personal experience unmediated by any socially conditioned "values". Incidentally (or perhaps not), we know that this is also the period of maximum natural inquisitiveness and intrinsic motivation to learn. As the child grows and starts longing for acceptance in society, the locus of evaluation for one's experience is externalised, and the individual undergoes conflictual encounters between social values and personal organismic reactions. Reaching adulthood, the two tend to become reconciled again, though quite differently from infancy. For the mature person, experience is no longer limited to the here and now, as it is for the infant, but the meaning of experience goes beyond the immediate sensory impact. The adult has learnt the rules of living in society and evaluates experience through this social lens. In addition, psychologically mature adults use their organismic intuitions just like infants, only they are able to do so knowingly: they are aware that sometimes they need to follow a particular route instinctively and only later understand why that was necessary. And, crucially, they have the liberty to do so.

If infants and adults can enjoy the freedom of organismic experience, for teenagers the most vulnerable point is being themselves. For most students – Rogers explains – appearing as a whole human being in the classroom would mean showing indifference, boredom, resentment at perceived unfairness, occasional excitement, envy towards classmates, suffering because of one's family, disappointment or real joy about one's girlfriend/ boyfriend, sharp curiosity about sex or physic phenomena and so on. Therefore, both students

and teachers accept the unwritten rule that "it is much safer [for the student] to button his[4] lip, preserve his cool, serve his term, cause no ripples, and get his paper credentials. He is not willing to take the risk of being human in class" (p. 43). Furthermore, teachers themselves rarely take the risk of being human in class, of being "unafraid" of their organismic reactions.

Traditional schooling is thus seen as a masquerade in which both teachers and students hide behind masks that are meant to conceal their true human feelings – the teacher, in order to preserve the image of formal authority, and the student in order to create a well-calculated impression of interest. In Rogers' saddening words (p. 42, my emphasis):

> If he wishes to be well thought of as a student, he attends class regularly, looks only at the instructor, or writes diligently in his notebook. Never mind that **while looking so intently at the instructor, he is thinking of his weekend date**, or while looking down, he is writing a letter in his notebook or wondering whether the family welfare check has arrived. He sometimes truly wants to learn what the instructor is offering, but even so **his attention is contaminated** by two questions: "What are this teacher's learnings and biases in this subject so that I can take the same view in my papers?" and "What is she saying that will likely appear on the exam?" If the student asks questions, the questions have the **twofold purpose of showing his own informed knowledge and tapping a known reservoir of interest and information** in the instructor. Therefore, he does not ask questions that might embarrass or expose himself. **It makes no difference what he thinks** of the course, his instructor, or his fellow students. He shuts such attitudes carefully within himself because he wants to pass the course, to acquire a good reputation with the faculty, and thus move one step further toward the coveted degree, the union card that will open so many doors for him once he has it. **Then he can forget all this and enter real life**.

In this light, school appears rather like a prison term that students have to serve before they can finally afford the liberty of being themselves. It is easy to see

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[4] The first edition of *Freedom to Learn* was published in 1969, when authors were not as gender-conscious as they are nowadays. Just as Freiberg did when publishing the third edition of the book, I have preserved Rogers' exact words on the understanding that his personal pronouns were surely meant to include both girls and boys.

that this is the exact opposite of the fully functioning person, who has the courage – and is allowed to – take responsibility for his or her true feelings.

Carl Rogers divides schoolchildren into two categories: *tourists* (described in the quote above) and *citizens*. Quite opposed to the former category, "citizens" are allowed to be themselves in a classroom where they are "stakeholders", are valued and appreciated for what they feel, are encouraged to make responsible choices preparing for their future place as fully functioning adults in society. Working with citizen-students, the teacher becomes a facilitator of change and learning. When the facilitator is truly himself or herself, prizes the students for what they are and shows empathic understanding for them as whole human beings, then "feelings – positive, negative, confused – become part of the classroom experience. Learning becomes life and a very vital life at that. Students are on the way, sometimes excitedly, sometimes reluctantly, to becoming learning, changing people" (p. 161). Such an environment that nurtures opportunities to learn from one's experiences (and one's mistakes) is crucial for the self-discipline, commitment and social responsibility that we, as educators, have a duty to facilitate in our students.

2.4 Identity in foreign language learning

Having reviewed all these different literature strands that have contributed to a better understanding of identity in adolescence and shaped my proposed Theoretical framework (Chapter Three), I shall now review the literature on identity in foreign language learning – after a short preamble on the relationship between language and identity.

The inextricable link between the two has long been acknowledged by psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers alike. From

language as the substance of the mind and the very core of the social self (Mead, 1934), to the dialogic appropriation of pre-existing linguistic codes for self-expression (Bakhtin, 1981), to language as cultural capital and personal power (Bourdieu, 1991), as the only means of expressing the me/other divide (Melucci, 1996) or as a symbolic elaboration of the self (Elliott, 2001), to verbal communication as a key to making sense of the world and allowing others to make sense of us (Durkin, 2004; Harter, 1999; Woodward, 2002), the link between linguistic expression and the self has been recognized consistently.

As the multiple roles that the self plays in society are mainly manifested through language, there is little wonder that over the last two decades studies in language acquisition have shown an increasing interest in the learners' identity. Goldstein (1995, 1997), Heller (1987), McKay and Wong (1996), McNamara (1987), Miller (2003), Norton (1997, 2000), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), Ricento (2005), Rubenfeld, Clement, Lussiter, Lebrun, and Auger (2006) and Toohey (2000) are only some of the authors who have researched and conceptualised the relationship between language acquisition and identity, regarding the language learner in interaction with the language-learning context. Whether researching young learners (e.g., Heller, 1987; McKay & Wong, 1996; J. Miller, 2003; Toohey, 2000) or adult learners (e.g., Goldstein, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000), what these authors have in common is their focus on second language acquisition, that is, the acquisition of an additional language (L2) after one's mother tongue, in a context where the L2 is spoken officially. Simply put, it is the case of immigrants learning the language of their host community while striving to become productive members of that particular community (Bussmann, Trauth, & Kazzazi, 1998). Most of the above authors' research has been conducted in the United States, Canada and Australia, with immigrants of various nationalities.

Learning a new language has been equated with learning a new identity (e.g., Kellman, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Woodward, 2002), and the ensuing psychological conflicts have been well documented by the above-mentioned and many other second language acquisition researchers. Immigrants may struggle negotiating a new identity while acquiring the new linguistic code, but they do usually benefit from rich cultural and linguistic input in their host communities, which makes the process smoother. However, the situation is very different in foreign language learning: in countries where the L2 is not an official language but is generally studied at school, through limited contact time and poor opportunities for real-life practice – for example, learning French in England, Spanish in Germany, or English in Romania (Bussmann et al., 1998; Dörnyei, 2009b; Gebhard, 2006). Addressing this under-researched area was the purpose of this study, which investigated the identity of Romanian adolescent learners of English as a foreign language.

Given the intrinsic differences between second language acquisition and foreign language learning, only the studies related to the self in foreign language learning will be covered in this literature review. The next subsection begins with the only existing multidimensional model aiming to capture the specific dynamics of the self in foreign language learning – Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System – which, together with its main advocates, will be given the largest part of this review, in proportion to its relevance and the number of publications it has inspired. Several other approaches will then be discussed that apply other theories of identity to foreign language learning incidentally or that consider identity tangentially when researching other aspects of language learning.

2.4.1 The L2 Motivational Self System and its main adherents

An important contribution to the field is Dörnyei's (2009a, 2005) *L2 Motivational Self System*, which is the only multidimensional model to date aiming to shed light on the foreign language learner's self. The model has attracted considerable attention in the recent years and has inspired several large-scale studies focusing on the self in foreign language learning contexts.

Bringing self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1996, 1987) and possible selves (Dunkel & Kerpelman, 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986) into language learning research, the framework explains motivated learning behaviour through people's desire to bridge the gap between their actual state and a desired future state. Dörnyei (2005) borrowed two concepts from Higgins (Higgins, 1987; also, Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) – the *ideal self* and the *ought self* – which he adapted to L2 learning, adding a third element. Thus, the L2 Motivational Self System has three components (Dörnyei, 2009b, p. 29; also in Dörnyei, 2009a, pp. 217-218):

1) the *ideal L2 self*, defined as "the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self'"; the author explains that "if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the '*ideal L2 self*' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves";

2) the *ought-to L2 self*, defined as "the attributes that one believes one *ought* to possess in order to meet expectations and *avoid* possible negative outcomes" (emphasis in the original); and

3) the *L2 learning experience*, defined as "situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the

impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success).”

The L2 Motivational Self System was generated as an alternative to Gardner’s (1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) “integrative motivation” or “integrativeness”, which explains language learning motivation through a positive inclination towards the L2-speaking community and a desire to identify with its members. While the contribution of integrativeness has been widely acknowledged in second-language environments (e.g., Gardner’s Canada), its usefulness in foreign-language contexts has been questioned, given that in this latter situation there is no strictly-defined L2-speaking community that the language learner might want to identify with (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005).

The general motivational potential of future self guides has been extensively acknowledged elsewhere (e.g., Dunkel & Kerpelman, 2006; Higgins, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 2002). Discussing this potential in the context of L2 learning motivation, Dörnyei explains (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p. 4):

> …if proficiency in the target language is part and parcel of one’s *ideal* or *ought-to* self, this will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language because of our psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible future selves.

The applicability of an ideal L2 self in the classroom is expounded and justified convincingly on many pages. However, when discussing the second component of his new self system Dörnyei (2009a, p. 32) contends:

> Because the source of the second component of the system, the Ought-to L2 Self, is external to the learner (as it concerns the duties and obligations imposed by friends, parents and other authoritative figures), this future self-guide does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices.

This is in contrast to the literature reviewed earlier (2.2.3), indicating that socially-induced possible selves can enhance school persistence and academic achievement (E. M. Anderman et al., 1999; Leondari et al., 1998; Lips, 1995; Oyserman et al., 2004; Oyserman et al., 2002).

As regards the applicability of the third component of the system, the L2 learning experience, we read that it is "associated with a wide range of techniques that can promote motivation, but because these have been described well in past discussions of traditional motivational strategies, I will not focus on them here" (Dörnyei, 2009a, p. 32). The reader is then referred to a 2001 publication for a review – "Motivational strategies in the language classroom", whose topic was not the learner's self (Dörnyei, 2001). Accordingly, in the edited volume gathering some of the most important studies related to the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) there seems to be some disagreement as to what exactly the third component of this self system represents:

- a set of classroom affordances and attitudes (Csizér & Kormos, 2009, p. 108);
- one's history of learning successes (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009a, p. 65);
- the actual *experiencing* of language learning, which transforms a dry school subject into a communication tool (Yashima, 2009, p. 152);
- the evaluation of past learning successes plus "an ongoing language learning activity of some sort" (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009b, p. 195).

Under the circumstances, it is not easy to discern how the L2 learning experience could be regarded as a *component* of the learner's identity, on a par with the two possible selves. Granted the importance of context in shaping the self, it is still difficult to ignore that the three components do not belong in the same category. Admittedly, Dörnyei (2009a, p. 29) does mention that his third element "is

conceptualised at a different level from the two self-guides" and adds that "future research will hopefully elaborate on the self aspects of this bottom-up process". But, more importantly, two crucial questions still remain unanswered: if the energising force of the L2 Motivational Self System relies on the urge to bridge the gap between a current and a possible self, what *is* the current self? And how can we help our students resolve the discrepancy between their present and their future L2 self, if we do not know much about their present L2 self?

The model has been validated empirically in several countries, the most important studies to do so being included in Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2009) edited volume: Al-Shehri (2009), Csizér and Kormos (2009), S. Ryan (2009) and Taguchi, Magid & Papi (2009). These will be reviewed as follows.

Al-Shehri's (2009) contribution is revealing and innovative, in that it connects the students' visual learning style to the use of imagination and the strength of an ideal language self. In a two-phase study with 200 participants (Arab students of English – some in Saudi Arabia, some in England), he found that a preference for visual learning was highly correlated with a vivid ideal self, which in turn was linked to increased language learning motivation[5]. The usefulness of these results notwithstanding, Al-Shehri's study did not investigate – nor had it reportedly intended to – the other two components of the L2 Motivational Self System.

Csizér and Kormos (2009) set out to test the tripartite self system with 432 Hungarian students of English (at secondary school and university), by using a questionnaire adapted from Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh (2006). The variables they measured were: *parental encouragement*, *L2 learning experience*, *knowledge orientation*, *international posture*, *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self* and

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[5] Brown (1991, p. 86) had also linked visualisation to foreign language learning: "Visualise yourself speaking the language fluently and interacting with people. Then when you are actually in such a situation, you will, in a sense, have been there before".

motivated learning behaviour. They found significant correlations between the ideal L2 self and motivated learning behaviour (r=.37 for secondary school and r=.49 for university students), but no significant correlation between the ought-to L2 self and motivated learning behaviour for secondary school and only a very small one (r=.13) for university. Correlations between L2 learning experience and motivated behaviour were .58 and .49 respectively. It is not reported what items (nor how many) were included in the L2 learning experience scale (and reliability coefficients are not given), but when the authors explain the relationship between this variable and the rest, they equate it with "positive attitudes to the learning context and the teacher as well as motivating activities, tasks and teaching materials" and add a puzzling conclusion for a study that was aiming to validate the three components of the new L2 Motivational Self System: "Thus, our findings highlight the importance of Dörnyei's (2001) argument that it is largely the teacher's responsibility to motivate students" (Csizér & Kormos, 2009, p. 108).

The two authors had published an article in 2008 based on the same data set collected with the same instrument, only the sample reported at the time included an additional 191 adults (Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Their aim was then to test empirically the two "main" constructs of Dörnyei's self system: the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self (no mention of the L2 learning experience), as well as to explore the relationship between these two and older attitudinal-motivational concepts. The variables they reportedly measured at the time were: *integrativeness*, *instrumentality*, *cultural interest*, *vitality of the L2 community*, *linguistic self-confidence*, *language use anxiety*, *classroom anxiety*, *milieu*, *parental encouragement*, *language learning attitudes*, *international posture*, *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self* and *motivated learning behaviour*. At the analysis stage, the ought-to L2 self scale (6 items) was excluded from the start because of reliability reasons (Cronbach's α<.35 for all three sub-samples), although the

instrument had reportedly been piloted and adjusted accordingly. The ideal L2 self emerged as a valid and reliable factor.

Similar to Csizér and Kormos (2009) and Kormos and Csizér (2008), Ryan (2009) only found support for the ideal L2 self, although he, like Al-Shehri above, had not intended to test any other component of the L2 Motivational Self System for the purpose of this publication. Working with a sample of 2397 learners of English from secondary and tertiary Japanese institutions, Ryan wanted "to empirically test the concept of the ideal L2 self as suggested by the work of Dörnyei and his associates in Hungary" (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2006), and also to explore the concept in a Japanese context (p. 126). As a result, his main data-collection instrument was heavily influenced by the Hungarian questionnaire, from which he adopted seven variables (*cultural interest*, *direct contact with L2 speakers*, *instrumentality*, *vitality of L2 community*, *integrativeness*, *milieu* and *linguistic self-confidence*).

Among other findings, he emphasised high significant correlations between integrativeness and the ideal L2 self (r=.59), suggesting that the two concepts might be tapping into the same pool of emotional identifications, but he found higher correlations between the ideal self and intended learning effort (mean r=.75) than between integrativeness and intended learning effort (mean r= .65).

The last of the four most important validation studies, reported by Taguchi et al. (2009), had four objectives: 1) "to validate Dörnyei's L2 motivation theory by replicating the Hungarian studies in the framework of his L2 Motivational Self System" (p. 74) in three different Asian contexts; 2) to test the validity of equating the ideal L2 self with integrativeness; 3) to verify the existence of two types of instrumental motivation (promotion/ prevention -- see, e.g., Higgins, 1996) and their relation to the ideal and the ought-to self; and 4) to examine the entire tripartite self system by addressing the L2 learning experience

component *for the first time ever* (p. 68). They addressed a total sample of 4,943 learners of English from Japan, China and Iran, of all proficiency levels and with ages ranging from 11 to 53. These respondents completed three versions of a questionnaire whose main scales were reportedly taken from Dörnyei et al*.* (2006): *integrativeness*, *cultural interest*, *attitudes to L2 community* and *intended learning effort* (criterion measure). Among other interesting results, the three researchers underlined mean correlations over .50 between the ideal L2 self and integrativeness for most subsamples, which led them to conclude that "the two variables are tapping into the same construct domain and can therefore be equated" (p. 77). They also found that the average variance in intended effort explained by integrativeness was 29%, whereas the ideal L2 self explained 34% and concluded – rather cryptically – that "these findings justify the replacement of integrativeness with the ideal L2 self" (p. 78). They also reportedly found two different types of instrumental motivation: promotion-oriented, corresponding to the ideal L2 self, and prevention-oriented, corresponding the ought-to L2 self. The ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self scales were reported to have reliability coefficients between .75 and .89.

In the light of their reported results, Taguchi et al*.*'s (2009, p. 88) conclusions seem quite surprising: 1) the Hungarian survey has external validity; 2) integrativeness can be relabelled as the ideal L2 self; 3) instrumentality can be classified into promotion and prevention tendencies; and 4) the validity of the entire tripartite L2 Motivational Self System is confirmed. Once again, however, of the three components of Dörnyei's (2009a, 2005) model, only the ideal L2 self seems to have drawn serious attention, along with the old Gardnerian constructs. Although the ought-to L2 self was used more as support for the promotion/ prevention differentiation of instrumentality than as a sound component of the tripartite model, the ought-to L2 scale had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α between .75 and .78), which must be acknowledged as an important step

forward. However, the L2 learning experience was largely ignored. Although the three researchers had aimed to test this component empirically for the first time ever, the only scale in their questionnaire that might look like it is "attitudes to learning English". Structural Equation Modelling did reportedly show that ideal L2 self predicts intended learning effort better through the indirect route of this variable for Japan and Iran. Nevertheless, what the authors included in this scale were items like "Do you like the atmosphere of your English classes?", "Do you always look forward to English classes?" or "Do you think time passes faster when studying English?" While such questions do offer useful contextual and motivational insights, it is difficult to see how they could outline one component of a tripartite self system. It is also worth noting that Taguchi et al. (2009) did not preserve the original name of the concept[6]. (Incidentally, neither did Csizér & Kormos (2009, pp. 108-109), who referred to "learning experiences" in their discussion, although they had initially intended to validate the "L2 learning experience" component of the self system.)

Despite Dörnyei's (2009a, p. 31) conclusion that "all these studies found solid confirmation for the proposed self system", we have seen that two of them (Al-Shehri, 2009; S. Ryan, 2009) only addressed one component of the model – the ideal L2 self – and the other two (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009) set out to validate all three constructs but only provided sound evidence for the ideal L2 self and some evidence for the ought-to L2 self (in the latter study). A parallel emerges with the practical implications of the three components discussed by Dörnyei (2009a, pp. 32-38): the ideal L2 self expounded on six

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[6] It must also be mentioned that one of the three authors has recently published a paper (Papi, in press) in which he used the entire "attitudes to learning English" scale from Taguchi et al. (2009), although this time he called it "English learning experience". Just like in the previous study published with his colleagues, Papi used items like the ones exemplified above to tap into the third component of Dörnyei's self system. Though not stated clearly, it would appear that this publication reports partial results of the same study that Papi co-authored with Taguchi and Magid (2009).

pages, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience discussed in one paragraph.

Besides, all the studies aiming to validate the L2 Motivational Self System on the basis of the big Hungarian survey (Dörnyei et al., 2006) – that is, in the present discussion: Csizér and Kormos (2009), Kormos and Csizér (2008), Ryan (2009) and Taguchi et al. (2009) – also face one very important problem: the big Hungarian survey is not related to the L2 Motivational Self System. As Dörnyei has explained repeatedly (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009a, pp. 26-27; Dörnyei et al., 2006, pp. 91-94), the L2 Motivational Self System is a recent reinterpretation of the Hungarian survey data collected in 1993, 1999 and 2004 with a questionnaire heavily influenced by Gardner's (1985) Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (built around the concept of integrativeness). Intrigued by his team's findings, which identified integrativeness as a key factor in L2 motivation in a foreign language context, he reportedly decided to interpret the data from a different perspective (Dörnyei, 2009a, p. 27):

> After some consideration I came to the conclusion that the possible selves approach . . . offered a good account of the data. Looking at "integrativeness" from the self perspective, the concept can be conceived of as the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self: if our ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2 . . . we can be described in Gardner's (1985) terminology as having an integrative disposition. Thus, the central theme of the emerging new theory was the equation of . . . "integrativeness/ integrative motivation" with the Ideal L2 Self.

Nevertheless, the instrument used for collecting these data contained variables addressing the L2 learners' attitudes towards their host community, which made sense in Gardner's Canadian context, from whom many scales were borrowed, but not so much in the Hungarian foreign-language context. Scales such as integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes towards the L2-speaking community, attitudes towards the L2, parental encouragement, L2 class anxiety and

motivational intensity (including motivated learning behaviours and learning effort) have travelled on, in various combinations, from Gardner (1985) to Dörnyei et al. (2006), to Kormos and Csizér (2008), Csizér and Kormos (2009), Ryan (2009), Taguchi et al. (2009) and so on[7]. While the benefits of using already validated and established data-collection instruments (entirely or partially) are unquestionable, there is little account in the above-mentioned publications of how research validity was maintained when drawing heavy inspiration from an instrument designed more than 25 years ago for a very different population, with different contextual effects and a different set of research questions.

The L2 Motivational Self System has made a very important contribution to the field, representing the first attempt at a coherent multidimensional theory of the self from a foreign language learning perspective. Its focus on the L2 as part of one's future identity is in line with recent research that considers present identity as the result of past and future possible selves (e.g., Strahan & Wilson, 2006). Nevertheless, as it has been indicated, there are many questions that this self system has left unanswered – especially regarding the language learner's present self and its relationships with the social context.

2.4.2 Other approaches

Apart from Dörnyei's model, which appears to be the only systematic theoretical framework dedicated specifically to the self in foreign language learning, there are also studies concentrating on general identity that include foreign languages incidentally (i.e., Herbert Marsh and his colleagues' research on academic self-concept), as well as a number of publications which apply various existing theoretical models to L2 learning identity (self-determination, self-esteem,

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[7] Also, outside the edited volume discussed here, Henry (2009) and Busse & Williams (2010).

motivational and self-regulatory perspectives). These strands of the literature will be reviewed below, but not before referring to some emergent research from China, which has also generated a so-called "revised version" of Dörnyei's framework.

2.4.2.1 Emergent research from China

The most important limitation of the L2 Motivational Self System outlined above – ignoring the L2 learner's present identity – was addressed by an emergent Chinese researcher, Xu (2009a), in his doctoral thesis, *English Learning Motivational Self System: A Structural Equation Modeling study on Chinese university students*, which he calls "a revised version of the L2 Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei". Although borrowing some items from Taguchi et al. (2009) and drawing on possible selves (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy (e.g., Higgins, 1987) theories, Xu's data collection instrument was based on 360 compositions that students wrote for him, describing their potential for learning English (Xu, 2009b). Working with 674 Chinese undergraduates studying English as a foreign language, he proposed and reportedly validated a model consisting of three components: the *possible English self*, the *present English self* and the *past English self*. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, Xu found that the present English self mediated between the past and the future English selves, 33% of the variance in the future self being explained by the present and past ones. With its strong emphasis on the impact that the present English self can have on a student's future identity and motivation, Xu's (2009a) proposed system addresses an important deficiency in the literature, in what appears to be a solitary multidimensional project in identity-focused research on foreign language learning to date. In doing so, however, he seems to have lost sight of

the social influences shaping the students' present identity and the contextual interactions in which they engage[8].

A research hub centred around Yihong Gao and her notion of "productive bilingualism" (e.g., Gao, 2002) has also offered important insights into the process of "identity change" through which foreign language learning can lead to increased cognitive, affective and behavioural capacities to accommodate a multiplicity of identities that go beyond the Chinese/ non-Chinese dichotomy (Gao, 2007, 2009; Gao, Cheng, Zhao, & Zhou, 2005; Gao, Y. X. Li, & W. N. Li, 2002; Gao & Liu, 2009; also, Norton & Gao, 2008). Although Gao and her colleagues' work has been criticised as being futile on the grounds that English language education may be purely instrumental in China and therefore could not affect the learners' identity (e.g., Qu, 2005), this body of research stresses once again the strong link between language and identity – in *foreign* language learning, this time. Given the scarcity of research in the field, this contribution is very important. Unfortunately, while most of these research findings are still published in Chinese or in Chinese journals with limited access for the Western reader, the impact of these studies has yet to reach the mainstream literature.

2.4.2.2 Academic self-concept

Focusing on self-perceptions formed through interactions and evaluations within one's social context (e.g., Shavelson & Bolus, 1982), self-concept research seems particularly promising in foreign language learning. Indeed Marsh and his colleagues (e.g., H. W. Marsh, 1990a, 1992; Marsh, Craven, & McInerney, 2005) have included it in their prolific research, although only incidentally. According to their multidimensional and hierarchical model, the overall self-concept (also called self-esteem in this model) is divided into academic and non-academic components, with the academic component being split further into a math

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[8] Given that Xu's PhD thesis was written in Chinese, the details available are limited.

academic self-concept and a verbal academic-self concept. Along with other subject-specific constituents, the latter also includes a foreign-language academic self-concept. The causal relation between these sub-components and achievement in the respective academic areas is believed to be reciprocal (i.e., high perceived competence leads to higher achievement and higher achievement increases perceived competence). Specific academic self-concepts have been found to correlate substantially with academic achievement, but not with non-academic components nor with a general overarching self-concept, which has cast doubts over the usefulness of a general measure – be it called overall self-concept or self-esteem[9] (e.g., H. W. Marsh, 1990a; H. W. Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; H. W. Marsh & O'Mara, 2008). However, it must be noted that other authors (e.g., Baumeister, 1997; Coopersmith, 1967) consider self-esteem the evaluative dimension of the self-concept, rather than an overarching aggregate of self-concepts.

Lau, Yeung, Jin, & Low (1999) took the so-called Marsh/ Shalveson model even further, splitting the English self-concept into four skill-specific parts: listening, speaking, reading and writing self-concepts (but their participants were students of English as a second – not foreign – language in Hong Kong). Though they did find four different factors, particular research design ambiguities have raised questions regarding the validity of such a focused approach for academic self-concept research. Specifically, as Bong & Skaalvik (2003) explain, Lau et al.'s task-oriented approach to perceived confidence would be more suitable for self-efficacy than self-concept research (see Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, for an extensive discussion of differences between academic self-efficacy and academic self-concept).

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[9] In a different approach, Ghaith (2003) investigated the effects of cooperative learning on "academic self-esteem" and on EFL reading achievement. Only the latter rendered significant results.

2.4.2.3 Self-determination

Another solidly established theory related to identity that has been applied to foreign language learning occasionally is self-determination (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 2002), introduced briefly in the first section of this chapter (2.1.1). Within the framework, Comanaru and Noels (2009) surveyed 145 university students of Chinese in Canada, of whom 71 were Chinese native speakers, 36 were English native speakers of Chinese origin and 33 were English native speakers of non-Chinese origin. Assessing the respondents' motivational orientations, psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness), learning engagement, community engagement and reasons for learning Chinese, the authors found that heritage learners (i.e., those whose families comprised native speakers of Chinese) considered the language a more important part of who they were than non-heritage learners, at the same time feeling more pressure to learn Chinese than the non-heritage group. Similarly, Noels (2005) questioned 99 university students enrolled in German courses at a Canadian university, 41 of whom studied German as a heritage language and 58 as a non-heritage language. Both types of learners endorsed all motivational orientations to a comparable degree, but heritage learners of German were more motivated by reasons related to their self-concept, indicating that heritage language learners were more integratively oriented (more motivated to interact with the German speaking community) than non-heritage language learners.

In her mixed-method investigation of 376 adolescents studying English as a foreign language in three Romanian secondary schools, F. Taylor (2008) also found that self-determination was positively correlated with involvement in class and learning orientations, the teacher's attitude and expectations playing a crucial role in determining the students' involvement or avoidance in class. Other studies found strong relationships between self-determined forms of behaviour

and language learning motivation and performance (e.g., Goldberg & Noels, 2006; Noels, 2001, 2009; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2006; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000).

2.4.2.4 Self-esteem

Another identity-related concept that has been applied to foreign language learning in an attempt to explicate learner identity is self-esteem, which – as we have seen – is concerned in some frameworks with the evaluative aspect of the self-concept (Coopersmith, 1967; Crocker & Park, 2003). As Rubio (2007, p. 2) explains in the introductory chapter of his edited volume, *Self-Esteem and Foreign Language Learning* originated in a fascination with the potential benefits of self-esteem in the classroom, reinforced by the feeling that the topic "certainly deserved serious research" and by the total lack of publications "covering self-esteem in the foreign language classroom in a comprehensive manner, that is including theory, research and classroom applications". Several pages on, however, he declares that empirical research is not the focus of the book, whose main aims are to attract the attention of theorists and practitioners, and to encourage future research (p. 8).

Indeed, of the eleven chapters included in the volume, only one reports on primary research: de Andrés (2007). The chapter refers to an intervention programme which the author piloted in 1996 following small-scale action research undertaken in 1993. Her participants were 31 children aged 6-8 studying English as a foreign language at a private school in Argentina. Their responses to a closed-item questionnaire were corroborated with work samples, classroom observations and projective tests, as well as with teachers' and parents' opinions. The objectives of the intervention programme were: 1) to develop children's understanding of themselves; 2) to develop understanding of others; and 3) to communicate more effectively. One of the three sub-sections

of the third objective was "to improve English language skills". This is the only reference to foreign language learning in the entire project, which consisted of games, story-telling, singing and arts & crafts activities understood to have been conducted in English. Based on answers to questions like "Did you like the project?" or "Did the project respond to your child's needs and interest?", it was concluded that "self-esteem work can be a vehicle for improving language acquisition" (p. 52). This conclusion might be considered rather arbitrary in the light of the evidence reported. In addition, although de Andrés started her chapter by reviewing the socio-psychological literature on the self (with reference to William James, Charles Cooley, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and many others), there is little indication of how the theories reviewed informed the reported project.

The remaining ten chapters of Rubio's (2007) edited volume follow a similar pattern: a review of the general literature on self-esteem and associated constructs, complemented by the authors' assumptions or inferences about the applicability of the concept in the foreign language class. Self-esteem seems to be generally used in free variation with concepts like identity, self-concept, self-confidence, self-worth, self-efficacy – all scarcely referenced and loosely (if at all) defined. Leaving such details aside, and ignoring the controversy that surrounds the concept itself in the literature (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2003; Kohn, 1994; H. W. Marsh & O'Mara, 2008), there seems to be little association between self-esteem and foreign language learning in the book, and even less preoccupation with the self or identity.

2.4.2.5 Motivational and self-regulatory perspectives

Other authors have considered the identity of the foreign language learner while researching related phenomena, such as motivation, pragmatic discourse, learning strategies and self-efficacy. These are presented briefly below.

Busse and Williams (2010) report on the first phase of a longitudinal mixed-method investigation into the motivational trajectories of 94 first-year undergraduate students enrolled on German courses at two British universities. The quantitative component of their study was heavily influenced by the Gardnerian tradition, borrowing items from Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret (1997), Ryan (2008) and Taguchi et al. (2009), the variables they measured being: *wish for language proficiency*, *intrinsic reasons*, *ideal self*, *instrumental reasons*, *integrative reasons* and *ought-to self.* For the qualitative component, they used a semi-structured interview schedule based on Ushioda's (1996a) doctoral exploration. Apart from their findings related to motivation – the main focus of their investigation – the authors also found some support for the ideal self, but not the ought-to self, in determining the students' motivational itineraries, the survey being corroborated by the qualitative content analysis of the interviews. Reminiscent of the literature generated by the L2 Motivational Self System, Busse and William (2010) did not elaborate much on the learners' present identity.

Investigating students' motivation to learn a foreign language, Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002) conducted a mixed-method study with a total sample of 228 pupils learning French and German in England with the aim to elucidate key motivators and various differential effects. In their study, motivational factors were divided into four broad areas: attitude, identity, agency and external factors. The identity component consisted of perceived success and perceived ability, and rendered fairly positive values, although smaller for boys than for girls (mean scores of 11.62/ 12.37 and 11.95/ 12.52 in a 4-16 range), smaller for Year 9 than for Year 7 (11.40/ 12.48; 11.83/ 12.57), smaller for low-proficiency learners than for highly proficient ones (10.15/ 12.76; 10.89/ 13.02), and smaller for learning French than for learning German (11.56/ 12.39; 11.63/

12.77). However, the self in foreign language learning was not the focus of Williams et al.'s (2002) research, which concentrated mainly on motivation.

In turn, Ushioda (1996b, 1998) reports on a two-phase qualitative study with 20 undergraduate learners of French as a foreign language in Ireland. Her aim was to explore motivational thinking in foreign language learning and its relationship with academic achievement. She found that internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure were related to students' academic achievement through the mediation of a positive self-concept. However, Ushioda's specific focus was not the participants' identity, and, in line with the purpose of her studies, "self-concept" was used in a loosely defined manner.

Recently, Ushioda (e.g., 2009) has called for a "person-in-context view of motivation", which would regard the language learner as a real person, rather than a "theoretical abstraction". Such a perspective would entail:

> a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of (p. 220).

The author's words encapsulate precisely what seems to be lacking in research on foreign language learning identity: a view of the language learner as an active self-reflective agent in interaction with the social context. Ushioda's "person-in-context view of motivation" is still in need of more solid conceptualisation and no published research seems to have explored this line of thought yet.

A similar standpoint has been represented in discourse analysis by Riley (2006). He points out that, although much has been written over the years about learners' motivations and needs, very little attention has been paid to the learners themselves. He contends (p. 296):

> Although it is true that applied linguistics literature abounds with references to "the learner", almost without exception this expression will be found to refer to a model or personification of the learning process, and not to real-life, flesh-and-blood individuals with their own subjective and social worlds.

Borrowing his approach from Vygotsky (1978) and Mead (1934), he regarded personal identity as the result of an interplay between individual awareness and social identity, which is constructed in and through discourse. Riley (2006) analysed a corpus of service-encounter recordings with the aim of elucidating the high rate of dissatisfaction amongst foreigners engaged in such encounters in France, as well as the difficulty of Nancy tertiary institutions in communicating with an increasing intake of foreign students. His results suggested an interactive nature of identity production in pragmatic discourse, whereby self-expression entails confrontation, negotiation and reconfiguration of identities in social encounters. Although Riley emphasised the "immediate implications [of his findings] for the foreign language classroom" (p. 316), it must be underscored that his research was rooted in second-language-acquisition and language-immersion contexts, which may shed little light on the learning of a foreign language through limited contact time outside the L2-speaking community.

A small qualitative investigation conducted by Syed (2001) also examined the identity of foreign language learners in their struggle to find their voice and place in society. Along the course of a semester, Syed interviewed repeatedly 5 female students aged 21-34 learning Hindi at a large American university. Two of these were learning Hindi as a foreign language, and three as a heritage language. He also conducted classroom observations and some interviews with the participants' language teacher. Noteworthy among his findings was the insight that these students' sense of self was being shaped by the expectations of their families and social circles, which had played an important part in their decision to study Hindi. In addition, a significant component of their learning motivation

was their desire to forge a particular identity: as individuals moving between several cultural worlds, learning the language helped them define who they were.

One more study addressing identity in foreign language learning tangentially is reported by Cotterall and Murray (2009), who provided metacognitive strategy training to 400 Japanese undergraduate learners of English within a mixed-method longitudinal study. In the quantitative component of their research, 100 of the participants completed a beliefs questionnaire consisting of 10 stand-alone items. Principal component analysis performed on the results revealed two factors, which the authors labelled "identity" and "metacognition". However, it is not clear why "identity" included items like: "I know what I need to do to learn English", "I can identify my strengths and weaknesses as a student" or "I know which aspects of my English I want to improve" (p. 38). Likewise, it is debatable whether an item like "I am better than average at language learning" is best placed under "metacognition". Equating the "identity" factor with a future possible self and discussing it in the light of Markus and Nurius's (1986) theory also appears rather questionable, as only one of the five items making up the identity factor refers to the possibility of using English in the future. Moreover, obtaining a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of .49 for the metacognition factor did not deter the two researchers from concluding that "overall changes in students' beliefs were significant, indicating that the course was effective in enhancing students' metacognitive knowledge about language learning" (Cotterall & Murray, 2009, p. 39). (But they were unable "to explore the relationship between enhanced metacognitive knowledge and gains in language proficiency" – p. 43.) While the other components of the investigation – language learning histories, portfolios, course evaluation, interviews and focus groups – offered interesting insights into metacognitive awareness, the contribution of the study to understanding the self is rather limited.

Foreign language learning has also been discussed from other self perspectives that concern regulatory attributes more than identity proper, one of the most important being self-efficacy (reviewed briefly in section 2.1.1). Working in this framework, Mills, Pajares and Herron (2007) found that higher-education American students enrolled in French courses were more likely to experience success in their French learning if they perceived themselves as effective metacognitive strategy users and had generally strong self-efficacy beliefs. Graham (2007) also found that, after a strategy-training project involving English learners of French, students' self-efficacy did improve (especially after detailed feedback), although much less than expected. Bong (2001) revealed that the self-efficacy perceptions of 424 Korean middle- and high-school students were moderately correlated across core academic subjects (including English), and Bong (2005) concluded that the goal orientation and self-efficacy of Korean high-school girls in core academic subjects fluctuated significantly across the academic year, culminating in high performance orientation and low self-efficacy around examinations. Finally, studying American adults' motivation to learn foreign languages, Ehrman (1996) showed that self-efficacy was negatively correlated with language learning anxiety and positively with assessed language performance. However, the relevance of self-efficacy for language learning identity is not unquestionable, although the notion is sometimes used in studies where self-concept would be more suitable (see Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, for examples and an illuminating comparison of the two). Accordingly, although there is a growing body of research on the importance of self-efficacy in foreign language learning, it was considered to fall outside the necessarily limited scope of this thesis.

2.5 Research needed

This chapter has offered an overview of several theories and research strands that have facilitated a better understanding of identity in adolescence and foreign language learning, and that have shaped my Theoretical framework detailed in the next chapter. We have seen how concepts like self and identity are explicated in the literature and what specific factors are considered to influence identity processes in adolescence. The effects of four main relational contexts (parents, friends, teachers and classmates) were detailed, and some relational approaches to foreign language learning research were also reviewed briefly. In order to clarify context-dependent identity display, concepts like the private and the public selves were reviewed, along with self-relevant and socially-conditioned desired selves and internalisation processes through which external behaviours or goals are integrated into one's self-concept. Carl Rogers' notion of fully functioning person was also described, which was thought to incorporate elements of most theories presented previously.

When reviewing the research on identity in foreign language learning, considerable attention was given to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, in proportion to its contribution to the field, the publications it has generated and its relevance for the present study. Other relevant areas of the literature were also discussed, such as the application of academic self-concept, self-determination and self-esteem to foreign language learning, as well as the inclusion of identity in motivational and self-regulatory models.

Comparing the two research areas – identity in adolescence and identity in foreign language learning – several lacunae become apparent in the research on the adolescent self in foreign language learning:

Private self. The prime under-represented area is clearly a conceptualisation of the language learner's present self. We have seen that the L2 Motivational Self System and the research it has inspired (2.4.1) have not yet given a satisfactory account of the learner's actual self and, while various other approaches have referred to the learner's identity, Ushioda's (e.g., 2009) call for a person-in-context that is more than a theoretical abstraction is yet to be addressed (2.4.2.5). Every teacher entering a classroom encounters twenty or so different universes, each of them – just like the teacher – feeling that all the others revolve around their own. What do we know about these universes? How can we help our students understand that the subject we teach is "good for them" if we know nothing about them as complete individuals, at the core of a tightly enmeshed social network?

Public selves. The intriguing insights provided by Juvonen and her colleagues (e.g., Juvonen, 1996, 2000; Juvonen & Murdock, 1993; Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996) into the strategic self-presentation that students resort to in the classroom (2.2.2) have yet to resonate in foreign language research. Given the added identity complications that learning a foreign language entails, especially in the context of adolescence – which has its own identity complications – it is surprising that the public selves that language learners may display in class have not yet been investigated. Differences between the identities they display to their classmates and to their language teacher or parents would also be potentially revealing, as would the degree to which one's private L2 self influences the L2 identity display. Another promising research path that is still unexplored would be investigating to what extent the teacher can inspire the display of a language-learning self, which might later be internalised into the learners' self concepts, making the language and language learning "their own".

Socially imposed selves. As we have seen, the ought-to self (representing duties and obligations imposed by friends, parents and so on) has been

investigated in a limited number of publications, but it was not considered to have any motivational potential, being external to the learner (2.4.1). However, it is very clear that adolescents do many things because they feel they have to although they would not if they had a choice, foreign language learning being one of them. It is also intuitive that many pupils start studying a language because they have to and end up liking it and adopting it into their own identity (although the reverse is certainly true as well, in which case it would be worth investigating why an alternative imposed self was stronger than the language learning one). The mechanism of internalising a socially imposed self could also lend itself to insightful research, whether the internalisation is produced through the adoption of particular public selves, or through the integration of an imposed self with one's own ideal self.

Comprehensive models. For the elucidation of such elusive concepts and of their pluridirectional influences, a comprehensive model of identity would be needed. Any one such concept, however fascinating, could only offer a splinter of the learner's sense of self. It is clear that we could never understand somebody's identity completely, but a multidimensional research framework would at least triangulate results and provide superior levels of interpretation. Only seeking a comprehensive picture of the learners' identity at the hub of an entire social web can we hope to facilitate their progress towards becoming fully functioning members of society (2.3).

New instruments. Finally, as these topics have not been researched in a systematic manner yet, new purposefully designed data collection instruments are necessary. Acknowledging the difficulties involved in designing and validating new research instruments, there may be little point in continuing to investigate these complex phenomena with instruments built decades ago for very different purposes, in very different settings.

The literature reviewed in this chapter and these concluding considerations have shaped the research design of the present project, as well as Theoretical framework detailed in the next chapter. Specifically, the framework that I am proposing – A Quadripolar Model of Identity, applied here to foreign language learning – hypothesises the existence of four components of identity (private, public, ideal and imposed), whose pluridimensional relationships in various social contexts may lead to particular configurations of the self system. These hypotheses, expanded next, have been tested through purposefully designed data collection instruments (detailed in Chapter Five).

III. Theoretical framework

The previous chapter identified several under-researched areas of the literature on identity in foreign language learning. This chapter, in turn, represents the extended hypothesis and theoretical framework that guided the design of the present research project, which sought validation, confirmation and unanticipated insights for the postulates delineated below. There are three main sections: first, a presentation of the four components of the proposed model; second, a brief description of the multidirectional relationships in which the four self components are thought to engage; and third, a short analysis of four self system types in which an individual's identity may materialise. The chapter ends by acknowledging some limitations of this theoretical framework.

3.1 Components

Stipulating the existence of two self dimensions – possible/ actual and internal/ external – the proposed model aims to incorporate both the future and the present aspects of the self, as well as its inner and outer facets. Given that present identity is influenced by the emotional crystallisation of past experiences, the model may thus offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the synchronic and diachronic dynamics of identity and their motivational implications.

The two self dimensions – possible/ actual and internal/ external – result in four components of the self system: the *ideal* (internal, possible), the *private*

(internal, actual), the *imposed* (external, possible) and the public (external, actual) selves, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. *A Quadripolar Model of Identity*

Self dimension	**INTERNAL**	**EXTERNAL**
POSSIBLE	Ideal	Imposed
ACTUAL	Private	Public

The internal/ external dimension entails two important differences: the locus of the respective selves, and their degree of integration. Thus, the ideal and the private self are personal to the individual, whereas the imposed and the public selves are not, but the latter two may be internalised subsequently. The ideal and the private self are the result of internalisation of social values and identities combined with personal values and preferences (which, it could be argued, are in turn socially conditioned).

The previous chapter reviewed extensive areas of the literature in support of different identities displayed in different relational contexts. Accordingly, the external dimension of this identity model is expected to fluctuate depending on the context in which individuals find themselves. There will be, then, as many imposed and public selves as the relational contexts in which the person is engaged.

These components of my proposed Quadripolar Model of Identity will be detailed below, with an emphasis on their relevance for understanding identity in adolescent foreign language learning.

3.1.1 Possible selves

As already indicated, this model hypothesises the existence of one ideal self and multiple imposed selves representing desired future states that originate in the individual and outside the individual, respectively. Being internal, the ideal self would tend towards unification, but the imposed selves would be plural because they originate in different contexts and audiences.

3.1.1.1 Ideal self

In the Quadripolar Model of Identity, the ideal self is understood to mean *a personal representation of what somebody would like to be in the future, irrespective of other people's desires and expectations*. Rather than suggesting a restrictive and inaccessible end state, the term "ideal" is taken to represent the best possible combination of attributes that a person would like to have in the future from a strictly subjective point of view. As these attributes are attained and incorporated into the private self, new desired characteristics will replace them in one's ideal self, ensuring a motivational continuum.

Although some of the possible selves literature speaks about multiple desired selves, in this framework one's ideal self is taken to represent the unitary combination of the most desirable attributes constituting the person's desired future identity. An adolescent could not be expected to say "The dream of my life is to become a successful actor" and also "The dream of my life is to become an excellent football player", but their desired attributes would coalesce into one unitary identity. In concordance with the literature reviewed earlier, it is expected that differentiation of desired selves or contradictory self attributes would be greater in early adolescence, a unitary ideal self emerging towards late adolescence. Nevertheless, the "dream of one's life" does not have to be monochromatic. A teenager may want to become, for instance, a very successful

actor who plays excellent football as a hobby, speaks five foreign languages fluently, travels to a different country every year, has friends all over the world and collects model motorbikes. But these would not be all different ideal selves – they would be facets of the same coherent ideal self.

It is hypothesised that, the more details one adds to one's ideal future self, the more motivational this would be in activating future behaviour. In addition, as the research reviewed has shown, the ideal self would be differentiated from sheer fantasy by the existence and implementation of a strategy for the attainment of the given desired self. The motivational force of the ideal self represents a mechanism similar to internalisation, only this time it occurs on the vertical (or diachronic) axis: activating one's ideal self in one's mind may act as a vicarious experience whereby the individual rehearses a future role in his/ her imagination which will later be enacted in reality. A strong ideal self would also be accompanied by an awareness of the personally relevant consequences of not meeting the desired self goal. Such "feared selves" may be part of the ideal self through their positive counterparts: if one's strong fear is failing examinations, for example, then being successful in examinations will be part of one's ideal self; similarly, teenagers who are afraid that they might be rejected by their peers would have peer acceptance as an important facet of their ideal self.

For the language learner, the ideal self would incorporate elements of linguistic proficiency that the student does not yet possess, but would like to and will internalise in the presence of the right strategy. The role of the language teacher would thus be not only to help students create and maintain compelling self-relevant language speaking symbols, but also to help students integrate these into their ideal self. The difference between teaching the foreign language as yet another academic subject and teaching it as a personally relevant communication tool is very important here. As we have seen in the literature review, the ideal self cannot be imposed – it has to be personal, so the teacher

needs to help students see the foreign language as a component of their own future self if it is to be taken seriously, rather than rejected as an external imposition. From this standpoint, in countries where the communicative value of a foreign language is overtaken by it facilitating access to academic qualifications, to the job market or to particular social strata, the role of the teacher would be the same, although the ideal self of the students would differ slightly. Instead of having the ideal self of, for example, "a successful consultant having international clients with whom they communicate in English", students' ideal self from this category may be more like "a successful consultant who speaks English so well that finding a job in the country is not at all a problem".

In language learning, like in any other life domain, the ideal self would have to be placed realistically within the limits of one's perceived ability, as well as be socially acceptable. It may also be conditioned by an incremental theory of intelligence, by learning (rather than performance) orientation, and by internal, unstable and controllable attributions of success and failure. In other words, such language learners would believe in expanding ability through increased effort, would work hard in order to reach the level of their ideal L2-speaking self, would enjoy challenges, would see mistakes as opportunities to learn more and would consider that success and failure depend entirely on how hard they try.

3.1.1.2 Imposed selves

In this identity framework, imposed selves are defined as *representations of other people's hopes, desires and expectations of what an individual should achieve in the future, the number of such representations depending on the number of social relational contexts in which the individual functions*. As the name indicates, imposed selves originate outside the individual's volition and have only an indirect connection to one's personal desires. The degree of imposition will vary from mild metaphorical (i.e., "normal" social conditioning) to

strong literal (e.g., the case of teenagers who are forced to pursue a particular career against their will).

The various circles in which a person performs as a social being create different expectations about that person's behaviour – that is, different imposed selves. The foreign language class would be one such circle. Depending on the teacher's attitude, the classmates' behaviour, the general classroom atmosphere and many other factors, a student will form an understanding of what is expected of him/ her in that circumstance and decide whether or not to meet the given expectations, which will determine his/ her future behaviour. In traditional competitive educational systems, a student's L2 imposed self in the classroom would most likely be equated with a controlling authoritative teacher who allows for little choice and personal expression.

It is very possible for a person to have several conflicting imposed selves. The language learner in the above example may belong to a group of peers who maintain the norm of low achievement. This student would have to reconcile the expectation to be submissive and hard-working (coming from the teacher) with the expectation to avoid involvement, to procrastinate, to withdraw effort and to feel proud of it (an imposed self originating in the peer group). For many teenagers, this is actually the norm, which can only exacerbate their age-specific uncertainty, confusion and rebellion.

Being the external counterpart of the ideal self, the L2 imposed selves may be associated with a fixed theory of ability, with performance orientation and with external, stable and uncontrollable attributions for success and failure. For example, a language learner with a very strong L2 imposed self would not have the freedom to develop in his/ her own chosen way, being perhaps inclined to perform the expected role superficially (without genuine involvement), to put in

as little effort as possible, to see failure as a threat to self-worth as it would imply low ability, and to attribute outcomes to forces outside one's reach.

3.1.2 Actual selves

While possible selves define one's future self-guides, actual selves cover the dynamics of one's present-day identity. Reflecting the proposed internal/ external dimension of my model, and in accordance with the literature reviewed, one's actual selves are hypothesised to consist of one private self and as many public selves as the social relational contexts in which the individual functions.

3.1.2.1 Private self

In this framework, the private self is understood to mean *a person's intimate representation of his/ her present attributes, which may or may not transpire socially*. Just like the ideal self, the private self is likely to be unitary, although comprising several different facets – academic, social, familial etc. – which contribute to one's individual character. Thus, the language-specific component – the L2 private self – will be one facet of the academic private self or academic self-concept.

Being an appraisal of one's present attributes, the private self is a cognitive, emotional and relational crystallisation of past experience translated into perceived competence or ability. In this way, the past influences the future via the private self, given that a strong future guide will have to be formed on the realistic basis of one's actual self appraisal: for a student who believes, for instance, that she cannot pronounce English correctly because there is something wrong with her phonatory apparatus, it is quite unlikely that impeccable English pronunciation will be part of her L2 ideal self. In younger adolescents, social comparison will also be an important source of information

for the private self, the way they compare to other people – as well as to themselves across life domains – determining their perceived competence, emotional responses and behavioural choices.

An environment that allows individuals the freedom to be themselves, that values them for what they really are, that encourages the expression of true feelings and experiences would be an environment in which one's private self would move naturally towards one's ideal self. In the classroom, such students would be responsible "citizens" rather than passing "tourists", whose strong self-worth would be encouraged by teachers who trust them to be essentially competent human beings and who approach them with empathic understanding. Thus, a language learner with a healthy L2 private self may think: "I cannot really express myself fluently in English yet, but I am on the right track; I am encouraged and valued for the progress I have made so far, I know what I need to do next and one day I will get to my ideal stage of speaking English with fluency and confidence in such and such situations".

3.1.2.2 Public selves

In the Quadripolar Model of Identity, public selves are *the various social presentations that a person may display depending on the relational context and audience.*

Due to the inherently human need to belong and be accepted socially, a person's public selves will be directly related to one's imposed selves. Thus, every imposed self is hypothesised to have a corresponding public self (which can be either conforming or rebellious): a pupil's classroom imposed self will influence her classroom public self (either to conform or to rebel), her family imposed self will influence her family public self and so on.

Given that imposed selves can be conflicting, one's public selves will also be conflicting at times, which requires skilful and strategic self-presentation: if I am with my family and I know that my parents expect me to be a dutiful daughter, I may choose to play that part submissively, but later complain to my group of friends and blame my parents for being, say, old-fashioned – an attitude very much appreciated by my peers. What I actually do is juggle with two different public selves, displaying an image that I feel is expected of me in the circle I find myself in at a given moment.

Of course, not everybody will confirm expectations. Some people may choose to defy a particular imposed self (or more than just one), seek a different affiliation, respond to a different imposed self and display a different public self. Conflict between one's imposed selves would thus trigger conflict between one's public selves. A familiar example would be a teenager who, caught in the presence of both parents and peers, may feel confused as to which public self she/ he ought to display, exemplifying the "double approach-avoidance conflict" conceptualised in the literature.

Especially in periods of identity conflicts such as adolescence, people may consciously adopt certain public selves in order to gain acceptance to particular groups (and they may internalise these public selves later, becoming genuine members of the respective groups). In school, particular stereotypes can generate public selves with important academic consequences – for example, boys not studying foreign languages because they are perceived as "girly", or the generalised norm of mediocrity which would require everybody to withdraw effort and adopt manipulative and escapist strategies.

In situations when people do not feel comfortable disclosing their real private self, conscious display of expected public selves is likely to occur. Students, for instance, who do not feel they can reveal their language learning anxiety or their

low perceived ability in the classroom, may be inclined to adopt a disruptive public self, or an indifferent or even aggressive self – thus gaining acceptance, if not from the teacher, at least from similarly inclined peers. The opposite of responsible "citizens", these will be "tourists" in the language classroom, who will invest all the necessary effort not in improving ability, but in proving that they have ability by withdrawing effort, so that, if failure occurs, they can blame it on lack of effort rather than lack of ability. They will pretend to be involved in class while actually attending to their own agendas and will only be themselves when back with whatever group allows them to be truly themselves.

However, public selves can play a very positive role in the classroom as an internalisation instrument. For example, language teachers can help students create L2 ideal images, with their associated set of behaviours (e.g., the four skills), and then help them adopt these behaviours into their L2 public selves. Provided all the conditions are fulfilled (personal choice, discrepancy from one's private self, social acceptance and so on), these may subsequently become part of the students' self-concept, thus helping them bridge the gap between their actual and their L2 ideal self.

3.2 Relationships

It is hypothesised that the four self components would enter multidimensional identity processes which may include the following relationships and characteristics:

Ideal self ↔ imposed selves. The most unlikely influence is probably that of the ideal self on the imposed selves, as what I personally wish to become may rarely change what other people want me to be. An exception could be the situation when public selves mediate this influence: the people around me may

form expectations about my future depending on my public image, on my public behaviour, on my claims, on my apparent abilities and inclinations etc., and then I may decide to adopt these expectations as my own desired self. However, the imposed selves will have a strong bearing on the ideal self: people's expectations and subsequent encouragement may persuade me to adopt a desired future for myself, as it happens with many children who do what their parents ask them to and are very happy to do so. Alternatively, people may decide to reject an imposed self, nurturing its very opposite as their ideal (as in the case of so many teenagers who rebel against various constraints in school, at home or in their peer groups).

Private self ↔ public selves. It is rather obvious that my self-concept will have a direct influence on the image(s) I want to display in public. I may behave in a particular way in order to *prove* that I have – or do not have – a particular identity as a conscious manipulation of other people's impression, or, most likely, what I believe I am influences the way I present myself in my social circles without me even being aware of this influence. In turn, the public selves influence the private self through internalisation (the carryover effect). As the literature review has shown, adopting a set of behaviours that pertain to an image we would like to display may influence the way we think about ourselves (sometimes facilitating unexpected insights into our own personalities) and they can even become part of our private self.

Ideal self ↔ private self. In order to be realistic – and realisable – people's dreams must be within the limits of their potential (more generous for some than for others). I cannot realistically wish to be an Olympics gold medallist if I hate sports, for example. My ideal self will have to be strongly rooted in my perceived abilities and my interpretations of past experiences. Sheer boasting or empty daydreaming do exist for some people, but without the necessary reality checks, these are not ideal selves proper. At the same time, an ideal self will

influence the way people feel about themselves, especially if it is accompanied by strong self-relevant symbolism and the right promotional strategy: if I want to be a very good teacher and imagine myself interacting with my students successfully while taking the necessary steps to get there, I have all the chances to end up being a very good teacher indeed. The ideal self may also affect the private self through the mediation of public selves: I may choose to display an image pertaining to a self that I would like to have, which I may finally internalise.

Imposed selves ↔ public selves. As explained previously, the way people behave in public is directly influenced by the audience and the context in which they find themselves at that particular moment. Thus, my L2 imposed self will directly determine my L2 public self/ selves (being submissive, duplicitous or rebellious), while my family imposed self will trigger a particular family public self. This influence is not necessarily reciprocated, though it can be: what other people want me to become may influence the public image I display, but my social presentation would not influence other people's expectations in the same way. However, public selves can shape imposed selves by creating precedents (people may expect me to behave the way I have always done) or by generating estimations of my potential based on my publicly displayed identity.

Ideal self ↔ public selves. Being cross-dimensional (see Table 3.1 at the beginning of the chapter), this relationship will be mediated by the private self, just like the next one is mediated by the public selves. What I would like to become may influence the way I behave in public, but it is my private self that decides my desired future and the public displays that may take me to it. In turn, particular self-presentations may reveal surprising attributes of the private self, which may trigger the adoption of a different ideal self or the alteration of the existing one.

Imposed selves ↔ private self. What I really feel I am is not always connected with what other people would like me to become, but imposed selves do have a heavy impact on one's private self. A good example is the role of the teacher's expectations in defining the students' self-concepts: if the teacher constantly doubts and ridicules a student, it is very likely that the student will finally doubt herself, just as she will feel very positive and full of potential if the teacher believes in her and expresses genuine encouragement all the time. In turn, the influence of the private self on the imposed selves will occur through the public selves one displays, by creating precedents and expectations through behaviour.

3.3 Self system types

In the transition from an actual towards a possible identity, both the ideal and the imposed selves can have motivational power. The ideal self may be a behaviour activator through the desire to resolve self-discrepancy, whereas imposed selves may motivate people to act either in the direction of somebody else's wishes for them or away from these wishes. Depending on these dynamic relationships, it is hypothesised that a person's identity may be materialised in four main self system types:

- **submissive**: a strong imposed self generates responses against the ideal self;
- **duplicitous**: a different ideal and imposed self generate parallel responses;
- **rebellious**: a strong ideal self generates responses against the imposed self; and
- **harmonious**: equivalent ideal and imposed selves generate congruent responses.

These four possibilities are described briefly below, being accompanied by figures in which arrows represent motivated behaviour from present towards future. For the sake of simplicity, the imposed selves and the public selves are treated as singular in these figures, but always bearing in mind that they are composite, one such self being salient at any given moment depending on the relational context.

The description of each system type will be followed by a vignette summarising the identity dynamics that a student may perceive in a given context. As explained in the Methodology (5.4.1), within the quantitative component of this study, participants were asked to choose one of these vignettes for any of the four relational contexts analysed: the English teacher, classmates, best friends and family. Within the qualitative component, all interviewees were also asked to comment on the suitability of these vignettes for describing their own identity processes in the four relational contexts, as well as to give concrete examples of how these dynamics might work in their own lives.

3.3.1 The submissive self system

In conditions of private/ public self congruence and ideal/ imposed self conflict, some people may relinquish their ideal self and adopt a certain imposed self as their future guide (see Figure 3.1). This may start as superficial compliance resulting in genuine internalisation at a later stage, which is not necessarily a negative consequence, especially if the initial ideal self was less than socially desirable.

For instance, a student who is totally disinterested in school may decide to comply with the teacher's requests and end up realising that being academically successful may be quite fulfilling on a personal level. This could lead the submissive self system towards a harmonious one (3.3.4).
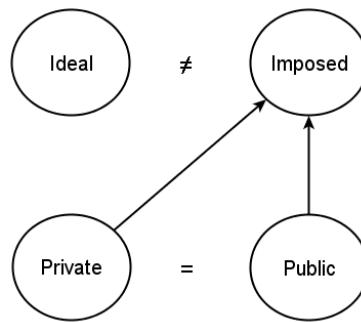
Figure 3.1. *The submissive self system*

In language learning, students who were not initially motivated to engage in class may also benefit from the process: if the environment is welcoming, they may try some learning activities, discover that they are good at them, feel appreciated and encouraged and adopt language learning into their ideal self (again, this would lead them towards the harmonious self system described below).

However, internalisation may not always follow submission to an imposed self. For many people, relinquishing their ideal self in favour of one or more imposed ones may lead to alienation, insecurity and frustration.

Vignette[10]: *They know very well what sort of person I am. What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I prefer to give up my intentions and do what they think is better for me. What they want me to do in life is more important than what I'd have liked, so I'll do what they say.*

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[10] As these vignettes were intended to mimic the language in which a student might express these self-relevant processes, an informal style was adopted.

3.3.2 The duplicitous self system

Presupposing the existence of major discrepancies between the ideal and imposed selves on the one hand, and the private and public selves on the other, the duplicitous self system would result in two parallel types of behaviour (see Figure 3.2): on the internal dimension (left hand side), the person would work towards reducing the discrepancy between his/ her private and ideal self in a covert manner, while on the external dimension (right hand side) complying superficially with an imposed self – allegedly working towards reducing the discrepancy between a given public self and the respective imposed self. This state of the self system might not be long-lasting, as sooner or later the person would have to commit either to the ideal self (resulting in the rebellious type described below) or to an imposed self (as in the submissive type above). In either case, stating a particular position would also induce a certain degree of congruence between the private self and at least one of the person's public selves, given that by expressing this preference the person will no longer have to pretend and hide his/ her actual private self.
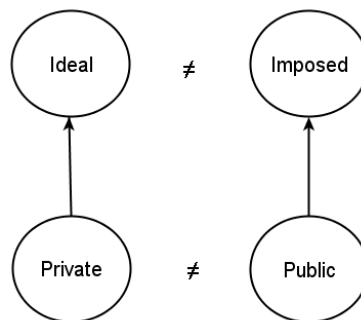

Figure 3.2. *The duplicitous self system*

In the foreign language class, this may be the case of students for whom speaking the respective language is not part of their ideal self, but who choose to hide this from the teacher and comply superficially. Arguably, this may be the most dangerous situation, given that the teacher has no direct means of

assessing whether such students' activity in class expresses genuine learning involvement or strategic impression management. It is equally possible, however, that a self-directed student who does not approve of the teacher's approach may pursue his/ her own learning goals covertly while superficially complying with the teacher's requests out of obedience, consideration, fear and so on.

<u>Vignette</u>: *They don't really know what sort of person I really am, and it's not important for me that they do. They would like me to do something else in life than I would, and that's why I'll pursue my own dreams without letting them know. At the same time, I'll give them the impression that I do what they ask me to, even though I'm actually seeing about my own business. I know better.*

3.3.3 The rebellious self system

If a person's ideal self is very different from his/ her imposed selves, but the private self is congruent with the public selves, like in the submissive system, another possibility is that the person may reject external impositions to the benefit of his/ her ideal self (see Figure 3.3). The resulting behaviour would be open defiance of imposed selves and relentless pursuit of one's ideal self both privately (self-concept) and publicly (social image).
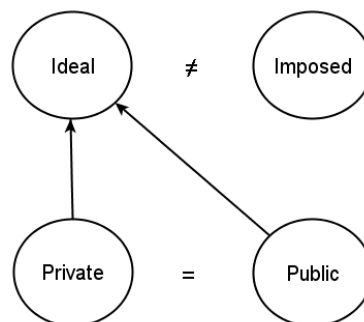

Figure 3.3. *The rebellious self system*

In the classroom, this system is visible in the behaviour of students who refuse to observe the teacher's rules which are not personally relevant to them (i.e., are not part of their ideal self) or who resist peer pressure (peer imposed self) in order to pursue their own learning goals irrespectively. In this latter case, rebellion will be directed at the peer group, as from their point of view (as origins of the peer-group imposed self) the person is a rebel.

In highly controlling contingencies, students for whom learning a foreign language was initially part of their ideal self may reject this if it is perceived as being externally imposed (if the students feel that they *have to* learn the L2, some may resist even if they would themselves have liked to become successful L2 speakers). From perceived lack of causality or control, their initial L2 ideal self would be regarded as an imposed self and, thus, rejected as a way of restoring personal causation. This ideal-imposed swap may occur in the case of numerous students who come to school genuinely interested and eager to learn, only to lose their initial enthusiasm in a few years when they start to disengage, play truant or even drop out.

Vignette: *What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I'll pursue my own dreams even if I have to rebel against them. They know me well, I haven't got anything to hide, and if they want to force me into doing something, I am likely to refuse it openly. What they want me to do is less important than what I want.*

3.3.4 The harmonious self system

Providing what somebody would like to become is very similar to what other people would like the person to become, a harmonious self system is thought to emerge, as seen in Figure 3.4. This may be the perfect combination for the self system, which would result in galvanising motivated behaviour. As such, it is

probably also the rarest form, at least in many educational systems. While it is theoretically possible to imagine a person with private/ public selves incongruence, these components are more likely to be convergent when the person does not feel hindered in his/ her pursuit of the ideal self by any externally imposed future guides.
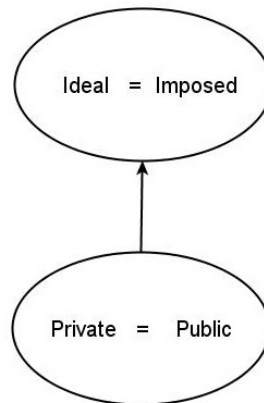
Figure 3.4. *The harmonious self system*

Students benefiting from a harmonious self system would work hard to bridge the gap between their actual and their desired states, while enjoying encouragement and useful informative feedback from the outside. They would feel valued and appreciated in the classroom, in their family, in their peer group or in their other social circles for what they really are, their feelings would be acknowledged and prized, their personal experiences would be regarded as intrinsically valuable. They would welcome mistakes as opportunities to learn more, they would seek challenges and would constantly expand their abilities. These people would make responsible choices about the persons they would like to be, having the freedom and the courage to be themselves in the present moment, without having to *prove* anything to anybody.

It is very important to note, however, that the harmonious self system would crystallise personal *and* social components of identity. The absolute freedom of

being oneself does not imply egocentric disregard for one's environment or other people's opinions. Quite on the contrary, it implies high social responsibility and just the right amount of self-doubt necessary for allowing other people the absolute freedom of being themselves. Every individual is a complex system, but also a component of a larger complex system, which can only function if certain social rules are endorsed and observed.

Vignette: *They know me very well and appreciate me for what I am. My dreams for the future are very similar to what they'd like me to do in life. They don't want to impose anything on me, but give me the total liberty to choose, and they always appreciate my decisions about my future. They help me feel really fulfilled.*

<div align="center">***</div>

The four types of self system delineated above are all motivational, in the sense that they generate behaviours necessary for bridging the gap between an actual and a future state. However, this may not happen in all cases. In the absence of an identity motivator – either an ideal or an imposed self – the system may behave in an erratic manner, may stagnate or may dwell on the past.

Momentary engagement with a particular activity can be very strong in itself, but in the absence of a future self guide this engagement may not be sustainable. If we take motivation to mean *moving* from one stage to the next (according to the Latin etymology of the word), then we need to envisage the next stage we want to reach and know how to get there. Thus, it is questionable to what extent one can talk about truly motivated behaviour in the absence of possible selves (be them ideal or imposed), of a future-oriented vision and of a clear strategy for bridging the gap between one's actual and possible selves.

Learning can and does occur while we are engrossed in an activity that we find very interesting, but in order for our students' learning to be more than a fortunate by-product, we need to include it in a future-oriented strategy that is personally relevant to them. This can well begin with pure interest, which leads to involvement, which leads to perceived competence and self-worth but at this stage that particular activity would have to be incorporated into one's ideal self in order to be truly motivational. Perhaps this is one of the differences between an infant (who can enjoy an activity for its own sake) and a social adult (who would also need a responsible long-term rationale besides pure enjoyment).

It could be argued that, in the foreign language class, performing an activity out of sheer enjoyment is a highly desirable goal, even in the absence of an ideal self. However, such enjoyment may not be durable and it may wane easily if the students do not find much personal relevance in performing such activities. Personal relevance is exactly what makes an activity fit into one's future representation of oneself, and its presence would place such behaviours in one of the four motivational self systems discussed above.

Other amotivational self systems may include having an ideal self without visionary strength or procedural resolutions (i.e., fantasising or daydreaming), or generating gratifying public selves without the accompanying behavioural moves (i.e., sheer boasting or impression management). Helpless and self-handicapping dispositions may also be included here. If individuals dwell on past failures, which they attribute to external, uncontrollable and stable factors, they may lack the perceived competence and the desired selves necessary to activate motivated behaviour.

3.4 Limitations

Although it conceptualises four different self components and six reciprocal relationships leading to four possible configurations, this model may appear like a naïve oversimplification of human identity. However, understanding a person's identity is not simply a question of combining four elements into one of four configurations. The four self systems can often occur simultaneously, each having a greater or lesser strength. This is easily understandable given that two of the components in this suggested model – the public and the imposed – are multifarious. Thus, for example, while in my peer group I may manifest a submissive self system (relinquishing my personal ideal for the sake of group acceptance and participation), at home I may benefit from a harmonious system, if my own goals are in agreement with my parents'. At the same time, if at school I have an English teacher who wants me to do grammar translation for hours on end and I know that is not my way of learning, I may incline towards a rebellious self system and pursue my own learning ideal irrespectively, or I may adopt a duplicitous system and pursue my goals in a covert manner. Nevertheless, even though several self systems are likely to act simultaneously in different relational contexts, one of them may tend to dominate, depending on the individual's priorities and inclinations, as well as on various external influences. This would happen both on the synchronic level (i.e., momentary dominance of a particular subsystem) and on the diachronic level (i.e., temporal transition from one dominant subsystem to another).

Thus, the main limitations of this framework are the very limitations that concern complex systems research in the social sciences. While a complete concomitant picture of the self system is at the moment difficult to envisage, it is hoped that the present framework will offer a useful if simplified snapshot of the L2 learner identity.

IV. Research context:
Teaching English in
Romanian secondary schools

For a better understanding of the present research project, this short chapter will offer a brief description of Romania and its educational system, with an emphasis on the teaching of English as a foreign language in secondary schools, in the light of historical and recent international developments.

A republic situated in the South-Eastern part of Europe (see Figure 4.1), Romania is one of the latest two countries – together with Bulgaria – to join the European Union in January 2007. It has a land surface of approximately 237,500 square kilometres (91,699 square miles) and a population of 21,584,365 inhabitants of whom 55.2% live in towns and cities, both urban and rural areas suffering from demographic aging and decline (National Institute of Statistics, 2007). Romanians represent 89.5% of the population, being followed by numerous ethnic minorities of which the Hungarians (6.6%) are the most substantial (National Institute of Statistics, 2004).

When the Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was eliminated in December 1989, the Romanian economy was on the verge of collapse, after the rapid repayment of the 11 billion USD foreign debts (20-30% of GDP[11]) imposing severe strains on the population (European Commission, 2008a). The following year marked the beginning of a difficult transition from a totalitarian regime with a deeply inbred corruption system to a democratic society and open market

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[11] Gross domestic product

economy. Romania's GDP has risen considerably in recent years, although during the latest economic recession it has relapsed to USD 256 billion (GBP 171 billion) estimated for 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

Figure 4.1. *Map of Europe* (adapted from www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/europe_map.htm)

The country's education system is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, whose continual restructuring and reformation in response to frequent changes in government are witnessed by its periodic change of remit and designation[12]. While higher education institutions are autonomous, state pre-tertiary education is subordinated to the Ministry through

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[12] Ministry of National Education (2000), Ministry of Education and Research (2003), Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (2007), Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation (2008), Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (2009) (cf. www.edu.ro).

County School Inspectorates that ensure observance of regulations and evaluate the educational process. State education is financed by the government and local budgets at a regulated minimum of 4% of GDP. The latest data available show that in 2006 the dedicated budget for education was 4.3% of GDP, compared to 5.1% for the entire European Union, 8% for Denmark, 5.5% for the United Kingdom and 2.1% for Lithuania (European Commission, 2009a; Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009).

Compulsory education lasts for 10 years in Romania, its structure being detailed in Table 4.1. Of immediate interest for the present project are the second phase of the lower secondary level and the upper secondary level (shaded in Table 4.1). Together, the two constitute what is generally known as secondary school, high school or the Romanian *liceu*. Although the latter stage is not compulsory, the two are usually perceived as a continuum and they normally occur in the same institution.

Table 4.1. *Educational levels in Romania* (adapted from European Commission, 2009b)

	Level	Age group
Pre-compulsory	Nursery	- 6
Compulsory	Primary	6 - 10
	General lower secondary I	10 - 14
	Vocational lower secondary, or	14 - 16
	General/ specialised lower secondary II	14 - 16
Post-compulsory	General/ specialised upper secondary	16 - 18
	Vocational upper secondary	16 - 17
	Post-secondary	18 - 20/21
	Higher	18 -

As in most European countries, Romanian schools have no autonomy in deciding the content of the compulsory curriculum, which is established by the National Curriculum Framework, and they have no say in the organisation of examinations leading to certified qualifications. The choice of school textbooks is also limited in most cases. However, schools are free to decide the content of their optional subjects, as well as matters related to internal assessment and student grouping (European Commission, 2008b). Like all European countries, Romania gives schools the freedom to decide what teaching methods to use, although monitoring mechanisms are often in place. Teachers make these decisions individually or collectively, either on their own or with the school head.

Students are assessed through formative and summative methods including oral questioning (particularly prevalent), written papers, practical activities, reports, projects and portfolios, marks being granted on a 1-10 scale with 5 the normal pass mark. In theory, evaluation is performed according to standardised curricular descriptors established by the Ministry (European Commission, 2008a; National Service for Evaluation and Examination, 2003). In practice, however, marks are often "based more on teacher's experience and perception rather than clean, relevant and unitary criteria" (Mihai, 2003, p. 69). Bad marks are sometimes granted for bad behaviour – leading to further bad behaviour, which in turn leads to more bad marks. Written and oral tests are frequently given as a form of punishment, to the extent that they are often associated in students' minds with indiscriminately punitive and unfair teacher practice. Many students maintain that assessment is also biased by remunerated private tutoring – rife in Romania especially for foreign languages and science subjects – in the sense that pupils who are tutored privately by the class teacher may be granted undeservedly high marks, while others may be marked down in class as an incentive to solicit private tutoring from the class teacher. It has been argued that, given their unflattering social status associated with insufficient salaries

and lack of incentives, private tutoring is Romanian teachers' solution for maintaining professionalism (Popa & Acedo, 2006).

Foreign language education has always been a high priority in Eastern Europe, Romania expressing a traditional preference for French as a fellow Romance language and a mark of cultural elites (Fodor & Peluau, 2003). While the soviet block imposed the teaching of Russian as the only compulsory foreign language in most Communist countries, the Romanian dictator opted for a colder relationship with Moscow in favour of a peculiar personality cult. In the 1970s, Russian was prevalent but not obligatory, French, German and English being also taught in Romanian schools and universities. Despite the historical preference for French, it has been argued that an interest in Anglo-American culture and civilisation acted as a spontaneous form of opposition to Communist indoctrination (Constantinescu, V. Popovici, & Stefanescu, 2002). However, whilst all links with the West were severed under threat of imprisonment for all but the secret police and their all-pervasive informers, learning foreign languages in school had the sole purpose of getting satisfactory marks, with no link to authentic communication (Fodor & Peluau, 2003; Medgyes, 1997). Even foreign language films, books and music were inaccessible unless they represented propaganda materials originating in the fellow Communist countries.

After 1990, the politico-economic environment in Europe has brought English to the first place in the order of importance, with the European Union and the need for a regional *lingua franca* playing an unquestionable role (Medgyes, 1997; Truchot, 2002, 2003). The World Bank, Peace Corps and the British Council have also shaped the importance that English would have in the Romanian educational system in subsequent years (Medgyes, 1997; Mihai, 2003; Romanian Presidential Committee, 2007). In 1990, a governmental decree made the teaching of a foreign language mandatory from the age of 8 in all Romanian state schools. A second foreign language was to be introduced at the age of 10.

Unlike several European countries, in Romania there is no compulsory foreign language but English is unequivocally prevalent: 96% of students opt for it in secondary schools – compared to an EU average of 84% – and 39% in primary schools (European Commission, 2008c; Eurostat, 2009). Since 1999, of the two foreign languages studied by every secondary-school student in Romania, at least one must also be part of the final examination, the baccalaureate.

The combination of strong international influences and developments, on the one hand, and a controversial political atmosphere with changes of government triggering changes in educational policy every four years, on the other hand, has taken Romanian education through a never-ending cycle of reforms and structural changes in recent years (European Commission, 2008a; Mihai, 2003). As far as the teaching of English is concerned, the result may be seen as an example of *less-than-healthy glocalisation*. Friedman (2000, p. 295) defines "healthy glocalization" as:

> the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich that culture, to resist those things that are truly alien, and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different.

Admittedly, monochrome Stalinist textbooks have been replaced by glossy materials featuring age-relevant issues (Andrei, 2006; R. Popovici & Bolitho, 2003), students watch English language films in class and may be assessed on projects more than on their proficiency in literary translation, regulations stipulating that by the end of upper secondary school productive and receptive skills are emphasised in equal measure (European Commission, 2008c). However, it is debatable to what extent these recent developments are truly glocalised in Romanian English language teaching. As Andrei (2006, p. 774) put it, "there still is a nostalgia for the past certainties, for more stable and more predictable curricula". Although syllabi are in theory based on a functional-

communicative model of learning and teaching (National Curriculum Council, 2007a, 2007b), in practice, however, teaching is still heavily driven by grammar-translation methodology, and the structure of the final examination – which for most pupils still represents the main reason for studying – has long contradicted the theoretical principles stated in the official documents, as emphasised by Mihai (2003). While project work was still an alien concept not long ago (Medgyes, 1997), while English classes are often *taught in Romanian* with only illustrative patterns written in English on the blackboard, and while some teachers still perceive themselves as the unquestionable fountain of knowledge in class, many students have adopted an attitude of tolerance towards their tutors and, expending just enough effort to leave the impression that they are involved in classroom tasks, they actually attend to their own – not always educational – agendas (F. Taylor, 2008, 2009).

These difficulties are doubled by the relatively large groups in which students are taught (around 30, reduced to half on some language courses), as well as by limited contact time with the language in school. They usually have two English classes a week and even in language-specialised institutions contact time rarely exceeds seven classes a week – including optional subjects taught in the foreign language. In environments still driven by the textbook and grammar-translation, supplementary problems emerge from important intrinsic differences between Romanian language and English in terms of spelling, morphology and syntax. In Romanian, for example, near total parity exists between graphemes and phonemes, which makes it hard for the learner to manage the multiple phonological actualisations that English graphemes can have. In terms of morphology, the four "official" tenses for expressing the present in English are represented in Romanian by just one, while the English modal "can", for instance, has five different derivatives in Romanian just for the present tense.

Paradoxically, many Romanian adolescents are proficient speakers of English. Their intrinsically driven competence, however, has little connection to their classroom activities. They learn the language from the films they watch, from the music they listen to, from the computer applications they use, from online socialising networks where they use English for authentic communication about personally relevant issues. Unlike other European countries, foreign language films are not dubbed but subtitled in Romania, which increases implicit language learning dramatically (Truchot, 2002). As most international cultural products that reach the country originate in the USA, one direct consequence is that numerous Romanian teenagers favour American English, although the British variety is usually taught in schools, Romanian language itself being now increasingly influenced by American English (Constantinescu et al., 2002).

Among the few investigations that have documented the mechanics of motivation and classroom involvement for Romanian foreign language learners, F. Taylor (2008) found that since they had started studying English, adolescents' excitement and interest for the language had decreased, although their perceived confidence and proficiency had actually increased. Her 375 participants also declared that they skipped 20% of their English classes and, when present, they paid attention in proportion of 77%, admitting to a wide range of activities they resorted to in class while giving the impression they were involved in the task. The qualitative component of the study identified as the main reason for such behaviours the teachers' arrogant attitude, as well as their lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for students as individuals with personal values and interests.

Elsewhere (e.g., Chambers, 1999; Reid, 2005), research has identified foreign languages among the classes most likely to be avoided by students, and small-scale truancy has been linked to chronic absenteeism and finally drop-out (K. Henry, 2007; D. O'Keeffe, 1994; Reid, 1999). Official statistics on truancy in

Romania were not available, but the dropout rate is known to be the highest of all countries admitted to the EU in the last two waves (Gogonea, 2008; Romanian Government, 2007; Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005; Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009). Given these risks and Romanian students' propensity for English language learning through intrinsically motivated routes, the necessity of immediate change in the classroom could not be greater.

V. Methodology

This chapter explicates the theoretical background of all the methodological decisions that I made in relation to the research design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, as well as the philosophical and ethical considerations supporting these decisions. The chapter consists of eight sections: 1. Purpose of the study (including aims and research questions); 2. Research paradigm, approach and strategy (explaining my propensity towards pragmatism, manifested here through a mixed-method research approach); 3. Participants; 4. Instruments; 5. Procedures; 6. Data analysis; 7. Data and measurement validity; and 8. Ethics and reciprocity.

5.1 Purpose of the study

As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of this study was to respond to the scarcity of research on the identity of the foreign language learner, with particular emphasis on differential identities that adolescent students may display to their teachers, peers and families, as well as on the relationship of these differential identities to the students' perceptions, involvement and achievement in the English class. Given that a novel theoretical framework and a new questionnaire were used in this investigation, part of the purpose was also to validate the framework and the data collection instrument.

Accordingly, the aims of this project were:

- to gain new insights into the identity of Romanian adolescent learners of English as a foreign language and its implications for classroom involvement, and
- to validate the new theoretical framework "A Quadripolar Model of Identity" and its associated questionnaire.

These aims were divided into five research questions:

1. Is the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire a reliable data collection instrument?
2. Are the L2 private, public, ideal and imposed selves distinct measurable variables?
3. How do Romanian secondary-school students perceive their L2 private, public, ideal and imposed selves?
4. How do these four self categories relate to one another?
5. How do these four self categories relate to the students' perception, involvement and achievement in the English class?

Both confirmatory and exploratory in nature, my research questions required at the same time a deductive and an inductive type of reasoning: deductive for validation (questions 1, 2) and theory verification (questions 3, 4, 5), and inductive for the exploration of unanticipated avenues (questions 3, 4, 5). It is this dual nature of my research questions that governed the entire research design, as recommended in the literature (e.g., De Vaus, 2002; Gass & Mackey, 2007; Mutchnick & Berg, 1996; Silverman, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

5.2 Research paradigm, approach and strategy

My project was governed by a pragmatic research paradigm which called for a parallel mixed-method approach to answering my research questions. I combined self-reported structured questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews according to the research strategy of concurrent triangulation. These methodological decisions are detailed below.

5.2.1 Research paradigm: Pragmatism

Investigating the complex phenomenon of adolescent identity in its multifaceted social context, the research paradigm that appeared most suitable is pragmatism. In the context of the great paradigm debate, pragmatism has been considered the third philosophical system, which helps research move beyond the normative/ interpretive divide by borrowing features from both (e.g., Creswell, 2008; B. Johnson & Christensen, 2008; R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In pragmatic research, a focus on outcome entails a choice of methods that would best serve the research purpose in the context given (Creswell, 2007, 2008; Dörnyei, 2007; J. C. Greene, Caracelli, & W. F. Graham, 1989; Holliday, 2002; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Rocco et al., 2003). "Situational responsiveness and a commitment to an empirical perspective" (J. C. Greene & Caracelli, 1997, p. 9) dictates the use of multiple methods that best answer the research questions, as well as a focus on the practical implications of the research (Creswell, 2007; Mertens, 2009; Rocco et al., 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003).

However, more than simply using "what works" in order to attain one's research objectives, pragmatism is a choice based on the belief that objectivity and subjectivity are not always in strict contrast, any given question at any point in time falling within an "inductive-deductive research cycle" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 87; also Rocco et al., 2003). Consequently, a pragmatic research approach entails the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods in the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, which are ultimately integrated into an organic view of the phenomenon under scrutiny. For this reason, Johnson and Onwegbuzie (2004) have proposed the term "integrative research" to represent this paradigm.

5.2.2 Research approach: Mixed methods

Acknowledging the diversity of human experience, a mixed-method research approach offers a more comprehensive picture than any single method would, as well as increased research validity (e.g., Creswell, 2008; Morse, 2003). This is particularly helpful in educational contexts when the exploration focuses on cognitive as well as affective aspects of the learning experience (Gorard & C. Taylor, 2004; D. Johnson, 1992; J. McDonough & S. McDonough, 1997; Rocco et al., 2003), as my project did.

The fundamental principle of mixed-method research is considered that of complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses (Brewer & Hunter, 1993; B. Johnson & Turner, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Accordingly, in order to elucidate my methodological choices, this section will very briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods, before justifying my decision to combine self-reported questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews in my study.

5.2.2.1 Quantitative research methods

Quantitative research methods are those techniques employed in the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, initially associated with the positivist tradition of scientific research. They are based on the assumption that an objective reality exists "out there" whose rules can be hypothesised, tested, confirmed and generalised in the natural as well as the social world (T. R. Black, 1999; Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2008; De Vaus, 2002; Howell, 2007; B. Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Muijs, 2004). Quantitative research designs can be descriptive (single or repeated measure with no intervention) or experimental (repeated measure: before and after an intervention), the former seeking to reveal associations between variables and the latter pursuing evidence of causation. Among the most frequent techniques used to collect quantitative data in the social sciences are closed-ended questionnaires, structured interviews, structured observations, conversation analysis and secondary documentary analysis. With some alterations (e.g., open-ended, unstructured), many of these can also be used in qualitative research.

Being subsumed to a realist cause-effect view of the world, quantitative research seeks theoretical explanations in order to formulate predictions about future behaviours of the systems placed under scrutiny. As such, some of its most important attributes are deduction (theory testing and validation), objectivity and generalisability. Despite their strong credibility with many stakeholders, quantitative research methods are not without criticisms. Among these are the mechanistic-reductionist view of human experience and the failure to acknowledge individuality by averaging results across samples and generalising them to entire populations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; B. Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

5.2.2.2 Qualitative research methods

If quantitative methods are used for collecting and analysing objective numerical data (i.e., variables), qualitative research methods are associated with the collection and interpretation of non-numerical information (e.g., descriptions, narratives, conversations, observations), emphasising subjective experience and the socially constructed nature of reality (Banister, Burman, Parker, M. Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; K. Richards, 2003; Silverman, 2009). Among the most common qualitative research methods are case studies, unstructured or semi-structured interviews and focus groups, direct observation, participant observation, open-ended questionnaires and various document studies.

Qualitative research is characterised by inductive exploratory reasoning and by a holistic process-oriented approach that produces "culturally situated and theory-enmeshed knowledge" through an ongoing interplay between theory and methods, researcher and researched" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 5). Rather than aiming for objectivity and distance, the qualitative researcher is central to the sense that is made, both researcher and participants being considered co-constructors of complex and fluctuating meaning (Banister et al., 1994; Creswell, 2007). Reflexivity is a key concept here – both as the researchers' *personal reflexivity* (i.e., acknowledging how one's individuality and values can and will

influence the research process) and as their *functional reflexivity* (i.e., a continuous critical examination of the research process) (Banister et al., 1994). The challenge here is for the researcher to find the right combination between an analyst's and a participant's stance, or to combine the *etic* and *emic* perspectives respectively (Davis, 1995; Sarangi & Candlin, 2003), a challenge also known as "the analyst's paradox" (Sarangi, 2002).

It is the researchers' immediate involvement that is also one of the most frequent criticisms levelled at qualitative research, as their subjectivity can sometimes endanger the quality of the interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; L. Richards, 2005). Other usually invoked weaknesses are the lack of generalisability, the difficulty of replication and the lack of methodological rigour (e.g., Bryman, 2008; Dörnyei, 2007). However, these are regarded as weaknesses only when seen through a quantitative research lens and it has often been emphasised that the two approaches should be treated as complementary rather than mutually exclusive (e.g., Davis, 1992; D. M. Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992; Silverman, 2009).

5.2.2.3 Mixed methods

B. Johnson and Turner (2003, p. 297) define *pure qualitative research* as "exploratory, inductive, unstructured, open-ended, naturalistic, and free-flowing research that results in qualitative data" and *pure quantitative research* as "confirmatory, deductive, structured, closed-ended, controlled and linear research that results in quantitative data". According to the two authors, these represent the extremes of a continuum and various combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods will often result in the most accurate and complete depiction of the researched phenomenon (also, Brewer & Hunter, 1993; Gorard & C. Taylor, 2004; R. B. Johnson, 1995; Morse, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Two of the most frequent designs in mixed-method research are the *parallel mixed designs* (also called concurrent or simultaneous – when the two strands are planned and implemented to answer different aspects of the research questions, which is the case in my project) and the *sequential mixed designs* (when one strand occurs after the other and depends on it in terms of research questions and procedures) (e.g., Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Methods can be

mixed at different stages of the research design: research questions formulation, data collection, data analysis or data interpretation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). When relatively complete quantitative and qualitative projects are used together as part of the same research programme, the design is called *multimethod* rather than mixed (e.g., Morse, 2003).

Some of the quality criteria and the reasons for mixing methods are, according to Greene et al. (1989): triangulation (corroboration of results), complementarity (clarification of results from one method through another), development (the results of one method inform another), initiation (discovering new perspectives) and expansion (of one method through the components of another).

Critiques of mixed methods include the difficulty of mixing research paradigms (e.g., Guba, 1987; M. L. Smith, 1994), the mismatch between the declared rationale and the practice of mixing methods (e.g., Bryman, 2006; Rocco et al., 2003), and the sometimes questionable capacity of a single researcher to master both quantitative and qualitative methods properly (e.g., Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; B. Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

In education, more and more authors have recommended or used various combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods in their pursuit for a more accurate multidimensional depiction of the learner and the learning process (e.g., Gorard & C. Taylor, 2004; Mertens, 2009; Rocco et al., 2003). The same trend can be observed in applied linguistics and language learning research (e.g., Dewaele, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007; D. Johnson, 1992; Lamb, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2009; Ortega, 2005), although it has been noted that there is a tendency for applied linguists to use different methods independently in order to ask substantially different questions (Davis, 1995),

which would place such studies in the multimethod rather than mixed-method design category (Morse, 2003).

5.2.2.4 Combining self-reported structured questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews

Subscribing to the practice of mixing methods in order to achieve complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses, my project used a parallel mix of self-reported (self-administered) questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. I will now present a brief description of the two research methods, followed by the concrete reasons for combining them in this project.

Questionnaire surveys are largely acknowledged to offer a particularly effective method for collecting data about the attitudes, feelings and beliefs of large participant groups, as well as important background information (De Vaus, 2002; Dörnyei, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2007; Gillham, 2000; Mutchnick & Berg, 1996; Oppenheim, 1992). Their effectiveness is enhanced in conditions of anonymity and confidentiality when the investigation focuses on complex sensitive issues (such as, in my study, differential identity displayed to teachers, peers and parents). Structured closed-ended questionnaires administered to large samples are especially useful for theory testing and validation, provided the instruments are carefully piloted and refined (Cohen et al., 2007). When questionnaires are administered in the presence of the researcher, potential difficulties in answering a question can be cleared immediately and the response rate is dramatically increased (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007).

Being an inherently quantitative research method, the questionnaire cannot probe for details and explanations, and neither can it offer any exploratory advantages (Bryman, 2008). Respondents may give superficial answers or skip

answers altogether, especially if the questions are long and complicated (Oppenheim, 1992). In addition, questionnaires need validation and advanced theoretical knowledge for sound development (B. Johnson & Turner, 2003).

Interviews represent a good method for exploring subjective and complex issues that cannot be accessed through a questionnaire, as well as seeking spontaneous and unexpected insights from participants, especially when unstructured or semi-structured (Banister et al., 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Cohen et al., 2007; Drever, 1995; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; K. Richards, 2003). Although aimed at a much smaller number of participants than questionnaires, interviews can trigger a higher response rate and higher reliability, as participants are more motivated than questionnaire respondents (Oppenheim, 1992). In semi-structured interviews (or the interview guide approach), general topics are specified in advance but the interviewer decides the order and actual wording of the questions during the interview, thus increasing the relatively systematic nature of the data collection process while allowing for exploration and spontaneity (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

One important characteristic of interviews is that they can restore the balance of power, giving the participants an opportunity to express their subjective views in their own words and to be considered partners and co-researchers in the project (Banister et al., 1994). This is especially important when conducting research with children and adolescents – a socially disempowered and disadvantaged group, who are hardly ever the researchers but always the researched (Eckert, 2000; Eder & Fingerson, 2002; G. A. Fine & Sandstrom, 1988; Hood, Mayall, & Oliver, 1999; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Although group interviews are quite common with young children and adolescents, when researching sensitive personal matters (e.g., relationships, identity, body and family issues) with older teenagers, peer pressure can inhibit honest disclosure, therefore individual

interviews are much more effective (Eder & Fingerson, 2003; C. Gilligan, 1982; J. M. Taylor, C. Gilligan, & M. Sullivan, 1995).

Table 5.1. *Complementary strengths of the two data collection techniques used in the study*

Strengths	Structured questionnaire	Semi-structured interview
theory testing	✓✓✓	✓✓
theory validation	✓✓✓	✓
confirmation	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
exploration		✓✓✓
probing and in-depth analysis		✓✓✓
numerous participants	✓✓✓	✓
good turnaround and low dross rate	✓✓✓	✓✓
perceived anonymity	✓✓	✓
minimal researcher intrusion	✓✓✓	✓
freedom to abstain from participation	✓✓	✓✓✓
motivation to participate	✓	✓✓✓
participants as co-researchers		✓✓✓
non-verbal communication	✓	✓✓✓

Note: More details as to how the two techniques contributed these research strengths can be found in the Participants, Instruments and Procedures sections.

Among the downsides of interviews are possible reactive and investigator effects (e.g., social desirability bias), decreased perceived anonymity for participants, lesser reliability and the need for skilled interviewers (e.g., Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; B. Johnson & Turner, 2003; Patton, 2002; Richman, Kiesler, Weisband, & Drasgow, 1999). In order to achieve the aims of this project, mixing self-reported structured questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews was considered the optimal combination, for the reasons summarised in Table 5.1.

The correspondence between the five research questions and my research methods can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. *Correspondence between the research questions and research techniques*

Topic of research question	Structured questionnaire	Semi-structured interview
1. Reliability of questionnaire	✓✓✓	✓
2. Measurability of distinct questionnaire variables	✓✓✓	
3. Students' perception of the four self categories	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
4. Relationships between the four self categories	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
5. Relationships between self categories and perception, involvement and achievement	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

This investigation used the research strategy of concurrent methodological triangulation (both methods being applied in parallel) resulting in a descriptive cross-sectional research design, as explained in the next section.

5.2.3 Research strategy: Concurrent triangulation

In the social sciences, triangulation represents the use of more than one method of investigation in order to increase understanding, confirmation and validity (Breitmayer, Ayres, & Knafl, 1993; Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mutchnick & Berg, 1996; Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). According to some authors, triangulation can be applied at several stages of the research project. For example, Denzin (1970) lists: time triangulation (cross-sectional and longitudinal designs), space triangulation (cross-cultural designs), combined levels of triangulation (combining individual, groups and collectivities), theoretical triangulation (several theories support the research framework),

investigator triangulation (more than one investigator) and methodological triangulation (different research methods).

Of these types, my project included: time triangulation (cross sectional design), space triangulation (on a micro-community level, by collecting data in five rather different schools), theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation (for the administration of the questionnaire) and methodological triangulation – which is presented here as my research strategy.

Concurrent methodological triangulation is the use of more than one data collection methods in the same phase of the research project; although the data collection may not happen at exactly the same time due to practical constraints, the different methods address related aspects of the same research questions (Breitmayer et al., 1993; Creswell, 2008; Morse, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). To use the notations introduced by Morse (1991) and generalised in the mixed-method literature, my research strategy can be represented as **QUAN + qual**, namely quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the same phase, the quantitative component having dominant status.

Accordingly, this investigation was governed by a descriptive parallel mixed-method cross-sectional research design, aiming to offer a comprehensive and comparative depiction of the phenomenon under investigation at one point in time, in one research context (Bryman, 2008, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007; De Vaus, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007).

5.3 Participants

The overarching method used for recruiting participants for this project was the *QUAN → QUAL sequential mixed-methods sampling strategy* (Kemper, Stringfield,

& Teddlie, 2003), in which a probability quantitative sample (1,045 students in 5 schools, aged 14-19) was used to derive the participants for the qualitative component (32 students in 4 schools). The respective sampling procedures and participant characteristics for the quantitative and qualitative components are presented as follows.

5.3.1 Quantitative component

My target population were the Romanian students enrolled in urban secondary-school education learning English as a foreign language. According to the latest report of the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation (2009, p. 30), there were 500,648 adolescents enrolled in urban secondary schools in the 2008-2009 academic year. All these study at least one modern foreign language, 96% of them opting for English (European Commission, 2008c; Eurostat, 2009). This brought my student population learning English as a foreign language in Romanian secondary schools to 400,622 persons. I calculated the necessary size of my research sample using the table provided by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 104), "Sample size, confidence levels and confidence intervals for random samples". According to the three authors, "a conventional sampling strategy will be to use a 95 per cent confidence level and a 3 per cent confidence interval" (p. 103). For my student population (400,622), this indicated a sample of up to 1,065 participants. The calculation was verified and confirmed using an automated sample size calculator (Creative Research Systems, n.d.). Corroborating this information with other sources (e.g., Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Borg & Gall, 1996; Bryman, 2008; Fowler, 1993), I targeted a sample of around 1,000 participants, the exact final number depending on contextual factors such as teacher availability and student attendance.

Five secondary schools where English is studied as a foreign language were selected through geographical cluster sampling from Brasov, a city in central Romania with an ethnically and economically heterogeneous population. Cluster sampling is a probability sampling strategy used for large and widely dispersed populations where the researcher selects a particular number of clusters (in my case, 5 schools) and tests all the cases or selects a particular number of random cases from those clusters (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). When combined with random sampling – as my strategy was – cluster sampling is considered to increase the validity of surveys with a specific focus when the population is widely dispersed (Aiken, 1997). The criterion applied in selecting this particular school cluster was diversity in specialisms (see Table 5.3).

It was anticipated that these diverse specialisms would allow for interesting comparisons and insights into the students' identities in relation to the subject of their choice: a computer science student would be expected to have quite a different L2 learning identity to a music or languages student, for example.

Table 5.3. *School specialisms and number of participants*

School	Specialism	Participant groups	Number of participants	
			Questionnaires	Interviews
A	Economics, Tourism and Administration	11	258	5
B	Computer Science	11	262	10
C	Music	4	84	5
D	Mathematics	8	175	-
E	Modern Languages	10	266	12
	Total	44	1045	32

Note: Schools are presented in chronological data collection order, which depended on the availability of the head teachers.

With the exception of School C, a small vocational institution with just 4 secondary-school groups, all schools had around 1000 students enrolled in secondary classes. Within the schools, 44 participant classes that studied English were selected randomly, but ensuring a balanced distribution of levels (years 9, 10, 11 and 12). The final quantitative sample of my study was N=1,045, of whom 339 participants were male, 645 female and 61 preferred not to declare their gender. The mean age for the entire sample was 16.47.

All these teenagers had studied English as a foreign language for periods ranging from 1 to 15 years in mixed-ability grouping, with kindergarten and primary school the only periods when foreign languages were optional subjects. Depending on their specialism, the number of English classes per week was between 2 and 7.

5.3.2 Qualitative component

Interview participants were selected from the same schools in three stages. First, when completing the questionnaire students were invited to volunteer for interviews and those willing to participate left an anonymous password on the questionnaire. (More details in the Instruments and Procedures sections below.) Second, a number of completed questionnaires were chosen by criterion sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994), my conceptual criterion being to ensure a variety of combinations of the four self categories and their subsequent perceptions. These questionnaires were ranked according to the number of applicable questions from the interview guide, as well as potential interest, so as to maximise the amount of relevant information. Third, the students with the highest ranking were interviewed (if they were present and still willing to participate – otherwise the second or third questionnaire in rank was selected), but only from some of the groups, thus introducing a certain degree of

randomness to the qualitative component too. The groups where interviewees were selected from depended on the class teacher's willingness to allow one student to miss part of the lesson.

There were far more volunteers than would have been possible for me to interview, both for practical considerations and for reasons of sample saturation (Bryman, 2008; Seale, 1999; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). My initial plan was to interview around 6 students from every school for a total of 30. The final number of interviewees was 32 (Table 5.3), with variations depending mainly on the school facilities for quiet confidential conversations. There were 16 female and 16 male interviewees. No interviews were held in school D due to an apparent misunderstanding detailed in the Procedures section (5.5.1).

5.4 Instruments

The scarcity of research on the identity of the foreign language learner that was indicated by the Literature review (Chapter Two) also meant that no research instruments from the existing publications were considered suitable for the research purpose of this investigation. In consequence, all my data were collected with new instruments, which are described below.

5.4.1 Quantitative component

A brand new quantitative data collection instrument – the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire – was designed, piloted and refined for the purpose of this study, which served as its initial validation. The variables and scales included were derived indirectly from my understanding of the literature reviewed and directly from the Theoretical framework expounded in Chapter Three. Having studied and taught in a very similar context in the Romanian education system

myself, my insider knowledge and prolonged engagement with the research environment (Banister et al., 1994; Davis, 1995, 1992; J. McDonough & S. McDonough, 1997; K. Richards, 2003) offered a solid background for my theoretical understanding of the concepts employed.

The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire consisted of 154 items structured into 7 main scales, one vignette section, biodata and background information. (Please see Appendix A for the English translation of the questionnaire in a graphically limited format, as well as Appendix C on the CD-ROM for the high-resolution questionnaire in English and Romanian, as well as more information about the scales and items.) These are presented briefly as follows.

The variables were measured mainly through summative Likert scales, some having an original multiple format validated in the present study for the first time (see Appendix A, sections III and IV). An even number of choices (6) was used in order to determine respondents to take a definite stance in their answers. All the scales represented randomised multiple-indicator measures, recommended in the literature for increasing reliability (e.g., Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; De Vaus, 2002; Dörnyei, 2003; Oppenheim, 1992). All these scales rendered very high reliability coefficients, which can be seen in Table 5.4.

There were 4 primary scales representing the four self categories explicated in the Theoretical framework (private self, ideal self, public selves, imposed selves) and 3 secondary scales tapping into supporting information (learning orientation, perceptions of the English class, attributions for success and failure) – see Table 5.4 and Appendix C for more details.

Table 5.4. *Questionnaire scales with subscales, item examples and internal consistency coefficients*

Scale	Subscales with the number of items	Examples of items	Internal consistency (Cronbach's α)
Private self	Cognitive appraisals (6)	*I am really good at English.*	.92
	Affective appraisals (6)	*English is one of my favourite subjects.*	.88
	Frame of reference: internal (6)	*I am better at English than at any other subject.*	.90
	Frame of reference: external (6)	*I am better at English than most of my classmates.*	.90
Ideal self	N/A (5)	*English will be a very important part of my future.*	.76
Public selves	English teacher (6)	*It's very important for me to show to these people…*	.90
	Classmates (6)		.91
	Best friends (6)	*…that I work hard to improve my English.*	.89
	Family (6)		.88
Imposed selves	Present English teacher (6)	*These people would like me to…*	.83
	Present Classmates (6)		.89
	Present Best friends (6)	*…always do my English homework.*	.89
	Present Family (6)		.84
	Future English teacher (6)	*These people would like me to…*	.86
	Future Classmates (6)		.90
	Future Best friends (6)	*…be an English expert in the future.*	.87
	Future Family (6)		.79
Learning orientation	N/A (6)	*If I know an activity is too hard for me, I still try to do it.*	.85
Perceptions of the English class	Interest; personal relevance (6)	*The English class really helps me develop as a person.*	.77
	Freedom to be oneself; appreciation as an individual (6)	*My English teacher knows what my hobbies are.*	.82
Attributions	Success (6 + 6)	*I always do extra work for English.* *My classmates helped me do well.*	-
	Failure (6 + 6)	*I didn't try hard enough.* *I was very unlucky.*	-

Note. Attribution scales were cumulative (students ticked all that applied), therefore Cronbach's α cannot be calculated here.

The vignette section consisted of four short descriptive paragraphs depicting the four self subsystems presented in detail in the Theoretical framework (3.3). Participants were invited to read the descriptions carefully and choose one for their English teacher, their classmates, their best friends and their family (see Appendix A, section I).

Although vignette studies are not new to social science research (e.g., Barter & Renold, 2000; Hughes & Huby, 2002; Stolte, 2001), they are quite rare in quantitative theory testing. Including descriptive vignettes with structured answer choices was considered an effective standardised method for testing particular motivational hypotheses associated with my identity model that would otherwise have remained inaccessible. The vignettes constituted initial prompts for the interviews as well (see Appendix B), all the interviewees giving detailed feedback on this questionnaire section.

The last section of the instrument (biodata and background information) collected details about the number of years participants had studied English for, their usual and their deserved mark (criterion measures), their gender, their age and – if they wanted to participate in the follow-up interview – an anonymous password or pseudonym.

The questionnaire was piloted online using the specialised commercial service Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) with a very similar sample from a different town (5 secondary-school groups, N=82). While representing a convenient means to run the pilot abroad several months before the main study, the online survey also offered a number of supplementary advantages such as enhanced anonymity and confidentiality, reduced social desirability bias and maximum efficiency in data handling (Adam, 1999; De Vaus, 2002; Richman et al., 1999). The administration took place in the IT lab of a college where I had worked as a teacher for three years, and every student in class had access to an

individual computer. After the consent of the head teacher was obtained, two of my former colleagues who had agreed to help received the links to the online survey and organised, as well as supervised, the administration process. Being IT specialists, they were to able assist the participants in case of technical difficulties. Following the analysis of the result, one item was eliminated from the ideal self scale, as well as one other entire scale (performance orientation) because of unsatisfactory internal consistency coefficients. The vignette section was also altered after the pilot, as the initial format posed unanticipated interpretation difficulties.

5.4.2 Qualitative component

All interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide from which I selected a variable number of items in variable order during the interview, depending on the direction of the discussion and the student's preferences. As the interviewees were considered co-constructors of meaning, they were free to suggest related topics or to skip questions as they pleased.

The interview topics were selected so as to test the theoretical framework proposed, to probe for unanticipated implications and to give the participants opportunities for subjective spontaneous contributions. While the topic guide provided a relatively systematic coverage of themes, the actual form of the interviews was different all the time, being intended to appear more like a casual conversation than a formal interview.

The general structure of the discussion was as follows. (Please see Appendix B for the full interview guide.)

- *Introduction*: initial remarks; thanking students for participation; asking for feedback on the questionnaire; testing the theoretical framework;

- *Missing answers*: if there were items/ scales left unanswered, making sure they were the result of choice and not of oversight;

- *Vignettes*: asking for feedback on their (lack of) suitability; using the descriptions as prompts for extrapolation; testing the theoretical framework; exploring participants' identity perceptions;

- *System subtypes differences*: exploring perceived public/ imposed identity conflicts;

- *Social roles*: exploring self-presentation and impression management (private self, public selves, imposed selves);

- *Social expectations*: probing and exploring public selves and perceived imposed selves;

- *English class/ teacher*: probing and exploring the private self, perceptions, freedom to be oneself, perceived proficiency and motivation;

- *Future job*: exploring the ideal self;

- *Concluding remarks*: allowing for extra discussion points; thanking participants and concluding.

In the pilot phase of the project, the interview guide was discussed with some of my former students who had taken part in a previous research project that I conducted (F. Taylor, 2008), and who had good awareness of my research interests, as well as good insider knowledge of the research site background. Their feedback was used in adjusting and refining the format of the interview and the wording of the questions. As the actual course of the final interviews depended entirely on every participant, this level of informal trial was considered sufficient in the preliminary stage of the research design.

5.5 Procedures

The five schools were contacted first by telephone, then by official letters, and, after obtaining the head teachers' verbal consent, new letters were sent for the confirmation of details. The head teachers' written consent was obtained when arriving on the research site. Data collection took place in September – October 2009 during regular teaching time, as detailed below.

5.5.1 Quantitative component

The questionnaire was administered by myself and one assistant – a former student of mine and participant in both the quantitative and the qualitative phase of my previous research project who is currently pursuing a foreign-language degree. She was briefed well in advance about the aims and procedures of the project, and also read some of the papers I had written on related themes. Visiting the research sites together and living in shared accommodation for several days before and during data collection, we were able to discuss all emergent issues extensively. After administering the instrument in the first class of school A together, we then separated and continued the data collection in parallel, meeting after every class during the break. As institution C had only 4 secondary-school groups, I collected data there on my own.

Teachers who offered to give us some of their regular contact time led us to the classrooms and introduced us to the students (which was sometimes done by the head teachers themselves). Students were informed about the purpose of the study, were guaranteed absolute anonymity and confidentiality, and were given the possibility to abstain. However, their reaction seemed positive and very few of them refused to participate. The questionnaire administration, including the

instructions and explanations, took approximately 30 minutes. Students who wanted to take part in the follow-up interview next day left an anonymous password on the questionnaire and were given details about the selection process (emphasising the fact that selection for the interview did not mean their questionnaire answers were good or bad, and that one student at the most would only be selected from every class).

My assistant and I supervised the whole process (with our respective groups), ensuring that everything ran smoothly and any questions were answered immediately. A new background variable – "administrator" (whether myself or my colleague) – was later added to the database to facilitate controlling for investigator effects. Immediately after administration, every questionnaire was assigned a unique identification code and, later in the day, photographed digitally for the audit trail and data back-up purposes.

An unexpected situation occurred in school D, whose head teacher was away on the day we had arranged to collect our data. Instead, we were met by the deputy head teacher and the school psychologist. All the correspondence had been performed with the head teacher and the psychologist, and the deputy head did not seem to know much about the project and did not appear particularly welcoming. A further complication emerged when one of the teachers in the staff room had a violent reaction to our presence in the very first minutes and accused us of intending to manipulate the students and to distort their family values. He did not understand why the vignettes in the first section of the questionnaire referred to the family (as well as the English teacher, peers and friends). He did not even look at the rest of the questionnaire and did not allow me to explain my theoretical reasons for including the family as the students' most important "significant others" and, as such, a major contributor to social identity formation. This teacher was then joined by the deputy head, and they both manifested aggressive behaviour towards me, much to the shock

of the school psychologist. It then emerged that neither the head teacher nor the psychologist had informed the rest of the teachers about our project (in sharp contrast to the detailed preparations that expected us in the other four schools).

After a large part of the first period was consumed in these discussions, we were finally allowed to begin collecting data. However, the psychological effect of the episode on my assistant and me was so strong, that we decided to skip one period and, after administering the questionnaire to a few more groups, to leave earlier than planned. I also decided not to return for the interviews the following day. This is the reason why I only had 175 questionnaires from school D and no interviews. Despite its negative impact and the reduced number of respondents, this incident served as a very useful lesson about the crucial importance of ensuring that all gate keepers are well informed before a research project begins, as well as making sure that the ethical implications of the research are clear to all the parties involved.

5.5.2 Qualitative component

When completing the questionnaires, respondents were invited to write a password on the form if they wished to participate in a follow-up interview. They were told that a limited number of interviewees would be selected depending on particular answers in the questionnaire. A priority list was created on the basis of these answers and of the potential insights that the questionnaire appeared to promise. (More details were provided in the section Participants – 5.3.2.)

I conducted the interviews (on my own) on the school premises during regular teaching time, the next day after the administration of the questionnaire in 3 of the participant schools (A, B and E), and on the same day in school C, at the end of the questionnaire administration process. No interviews were conducted in school D, as explained earlier (5.5.1). Depending on the volubility of the

students, as well as on other administrative constraints, the interviews lasted between 10 and 25 minutes, being digitally recorded by myself after the participants' oral consent was obtained. The interviews took the form of casual conversations in the Romanian language and were recorded and later transcribed in their entirety by myself.

In schools B and E, quiet facilities were available for confidential discussions (a remote library annexe in the former and an empty meeting room in the latter), therefore more interviews were conducted here than in school A, where no such facilities existed. School C only had four secondary groups and, of these, 5 students were interviewed at the end of the questionnaire administration process on the same day. (See Table 5.3 for the exact numbers of participants for every school.)

5.6 Data analysis

In line with the parallel mixed design of my research project, data analysis sought to identify complementarity in the two strands of data collected (Caracelli & J. C. Greene, 1993; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; J. C. Greene, 2007; J. C. Greene et al., 1989). Accordingly, the quantitative data were submitted to descriptive and inferential statistical procedures, while the qualitative data were analysed thematically, the results of these two parallel processes being integrated into meta-inferences (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) presented in the Discussion (Chapter Eight). The two data analysis processes are described in more detail below.

5.6.1 Quantitative component

The software packages used in the analysis of the quantitative data were SPSS[13] 16 (for descriptive and inferential statistics), G*Power 3.1.2 (for calculating the statistical Power of tests to identify group effects), an online effect size calculator[14], yEd Graph Editor 3.0.0.5 and Photoshop Elements 5.0 (for creating and editing diagrams and figures).

Each of the 1,045 questionnaires received an individual code which allowed it to be identified very quickly whenever needed. The data were screened, cleaned and coded, negatively worded items being reversed. Aggregated scores were calculated for the scales by adding up the item values. Where mean values were needed, these were calculated by dividing the summated scale to the number of component items. Inspecting the missing values did not reveal any particular pattern (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), therefore I decided to keep all the cases for subsequent analyses, when pairwise or listwise deletion of missing answers was applied, depending on the requirements of the respective procedures. As expected when investigating such complex phenomena as differential identity in adolescence, outliers were also present. Although they affected the distribution of the data slightly, a conscious decision was made to keep all the cases, in accordance with the philosophical convictions that guided my research design. Every one of my participants brought intrinsic value to my project, and the responses that deviated from the "norm" were at least as interesting to me as the "norm" itself. However, this decision was only possible in light of the reasonably normal distribution of my data: as detailed in section 6.1.1, the resulting skewness and kurtosis values were within the accepted limits.

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[13] Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, also known as PASW (Predictive Analytics SoftWare) between 2009 and 2010.

[14] http://www.uccs.edu/~faculty/lbecker/

There has been some controversy regarding the nature of the data produced by self-reported scales, these being considered a grey area between ordinal and continuous variables (Field, 2009; Kinnear & Gray, 2008). Although attitudes and feelings cannot be measured with the same precision of pure scientific variables, it is generally accepted in the social sciences that self-reported data can be regarded as continuous (interval) and used in parametric statistics (Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Pallant, 2007; Sharma, 1996). This is also the stance adopted for the present project. Blunch (2008, p. 83) maintains that treating self-reported scales as interval/ continuous variables is most realistic if the scales have at least 5 possible values and the variable distribution is "nearly normal". My data fulfilled both conditions, as detailed in sections 5.4.1 and 6.1.1.

5.6.2 Qualitative component

The 32 individual interviews were transcribed integrally, coded and analysed with the QSR NVivo 8 package. Data were analysed thematically, according to a double deductive-inductive approach that sought confirmation for the *a priori* categories detailed in the Theoretical framework (Chapter Three) while also revealing emergent, unanticipated, themes (Bazeley, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; L. Richards, 2005; Silverman, 2009). The *a priori* categories were my four self system components (private, public, ideal and imposed selves) and their interaction within the four self system types (submissive, duplicitous, rebellious and harmonious). The emergent categories concentrated primarily on what the participants considered to be the factors involved in identity processes in relation to learning English, as well as the extent to which they felt that the Quadripolar Model of Identity worked for them and how they would improve it.

Interview data were not quantified in any way, responses being appreciated for their intrinsic value and for the significance attached to them by the respondents

themselves, not for their frequency. Every individual account was considered to represent an individual world view and, consequently, an invaluable source of knowledge for the researcher.

More information about the process of qualitative data analysis can be found in Appendix C on the attached CD-ROM.

5.7 Data and measurement quality

As Davis (1992) points out, the fundamental philosophical difference between quantitative and qualitative research – whether there is a single objective reality "out there" or multiple subjective realities – has a direct influence on validity and reliability in the two research approaches. Thus, if quantitative research is concerned with objectivity and generalisability, qualitative research aims for credibility and transferability. In mixed-method research, the validity of a project is assessed separately for its QUAN and QUAL components, as they both contribute to the overall data and measurement quality (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The two strands of this project will now be discussed in terms of validity and reliability (QUAN), and trustworthiness (QUAL).

5.7.1 Validity and reliability

Research can only produce reliable results if valid instruments and methods are used. Although perfect validity can never be achieved (D. M. Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992), there are several ways of ensuring as high a level as possible. Three main types of validity are particularly important: *content validity*, *criterion validity* and *construct validity* (Basham, C. Jordan, & Hoefer, 2010; Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; De Vaus, 2002; Muijs, 2004; Mutchnick & Berg, 1996).

Content validity represents the extent to which a measure tests all aspects of the concept being investigated. As such, it depends on sound knowledge of the literature and on a carefully systematised theoretical framework. Although it would be difficult to say whether an instrument measures *all* aspects of L2 learner identity (if this could ever be achieved), my theoretical framework and, by extension, my questionnaire aimed to offer a comprehensive depiction of student identity, incorporating facets that had not been researched together before. Another aspect of content validity recommended sometimes (e.g., Muijs, 2004) is the so-called face validity, which can be estimated, for example, by asking questionnaire respondents for their opinion of the instruments. Positive feedback on the questionnaire was obtained from all the participants whom I interviewed, as well as from my assistant and a group of my previous students who also helped with the interview pilot.

Criterion validity is split into two subcategories: predictive validity and concurrent validity. As this was a cross-sectional research project, predictive validity could not be tested at this time, although it will be possible to do this in future follow-up projects. As for concurrent validity, it can be estimated by comparing the concepts measured to an existing criterion. In my questionnaire, the two criteria were the students' declared mark in English and the mark they thought they deserved. As shown in the Quantitative results chapter, the comparison of the students' L2 learning identities and their declared and perceived proficiency facilitated interesting insights.

As for construct validity, it measures the degree of association between the theoretical concepts and the internal structure of an instrument. Just like content validity, it is based on a very thorough literature search, leading to good knowledge and understanding of the field. Construct validity can also be ensured through concurrent research techniques that lead to similar results. My findings – obtained through concurrent triangulation – corroborated most of the results in

the existing publications. However, the comparison can only be partial, as no similar model exists in the field, the process of construct validation being only in its initial stage for now.

The literature also discusses *internal* and *external* validity, the former representing the degree to which causal relationships revealed in the study can be said to be true or, in any case, that the usual sources of bias have been eliminated, while the latter concept refers to the generalisability of the findings from one study to other contexts (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2008; Dörnyei, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Of the six main threats to internal and external validity that Dörnyei (2007, pp. 53-54) lists for research in applied linguistics, only two apply to my project: the *Hawthorne effect* (participants may behave differently when they are being studied) and *social desirability bias* (participants may behave the way they think they are expected). As my investigation tapped into my participants' reported perceptions rather than experimentally assessed performance, the Hawthorne effect was expected to be minimal (Adair, 2000; Adair, Sharpe, & Huynh, 1989; Cook, 1962; S. R. G. Jones, 1992). Great care was taken at all stages of the research design to minimise social desirability effects (e.g., in the formulation of scale items, in the presentation of the project to the participants, in answering questions during the administration process). Nevertheless, when researching differentially displayed identity and self-presentation mechanisms in school (Juvonen, 1996; Leary, 1995), social desirability represents both the object of research and its ironic validity threat. This was an inherent risk that I had to assume and apply all possible measures to control.

Regarding instruments reliability, one frequent measure in quantitative research is the *internal consistency* coefficient of a scale, or Cronbach's α, which is now easily calculated in most statistical packages. The α values recommended by

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 506) (corroborated by Dörnyei, 2007; Pallant, 2007) for educational research are:

> 0.90	very highly reliable
0.80 – 0.90	highly reliable
0.70 – 0.79	reliable
0.60 – 0.69	marginally/ minimally reliable
< 0.60	unacceptably low reliability

As seen earlier in the description of my instruments (5.4.1, Table 5.4), all my questionnaire scales rendered internal consistency coefficients over 0.75, six of them scoring 0.90 or above.

Interrater reliability is a complementary measure of the internal consistency coefficient, and it is determined by calculating the correlation between two sets of ratings produced by two individuals who rated an attribute in a group of individuals (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 212). My assistant and I used the same data collection instrument in the quantitative strand, therefore an interrater reliability measure would not say much about data quality here. However, the scores on the questionnaires that we administered independently were extremely highly correlated, reaching $r=.99$ ($p<0.01$, 2-tailed) on the mean administrator scores of the 22 questionnaire subscales. Cronbach's α calculated separately for the two administrators also resulted in only minimal differences. As a type of investigator triangulation, this is a good indicator of measurement quality, suggesting that researcher effects were kept to a minimum in the administration process.

5.7.2 Trustworthiness

A traditional classification of validity in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; also expounded in, e.g., Bryman, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009;

Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) assesses the value of a study in terms of *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. Each of these has an equivalent in quantitative research and together they form the overarching measure of *trustworthiness*.

The credibility of a study (equivalent to internal validity in QUAN) estimates to what extent the research findings are credible from the perspective of the participants. The very purpose of interpretive research being to understand subjective realities from within, it follows that research participants are the only real assessors of the qualitative project standards. The credibility of the findings can be increased by providing research reports to the participants and asking for confirmation (i.e., respondent validation or member checking), being thus directly related to reciprocity (discussed in the next section, 5.8). Reports were written and sent to all the five schools, as well as to all the teachers and students who declared their interest (see Appendix C, on the attached CD-ROM, for the report in Romanian that was sent to the schools, as well as its translation into English). The recipients were invited to express their views of the findings and their feedback will be included in my research reflexive cycle (Banister et al., 1994; Seale, 1999), as well as further refinement of my framework and future research.

Transferability, being equivalent to generalisability in quantitative research, represents the degree to which the findings can be transferred to other contexts. This is not easily achievable, given that qualitative research is always context-bound (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Schwandt, 2003). However, by comparing the findings from one context to those from another, a better understanding of the research problem can be achieved (Mason, 2006; K. Richards, 2003). Transferability can be increased by triangulation and by providing a very thorough description of the research site and conditions (Geertz, 1973; Holliday, 2002; K. Richards, 2003). While offering enough description of my research site

as to make my project as transparent as possible, I am also considering transferability an ongoing process: once disseminated, my research findings will represent an invitation to discussion and debate in the field, offering the conditions for comparison and contrast.

Dependability approximates quantitative research reliability and represents the likelihood that the same results would be obtained again. It is quite obvious that this is a relative concept, through the very nature of interpretivism (Banister et al., 1994; Davis, 1992). However, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers have a duty to maintain an audit trail of complete records that can justify their theoretical inferences, increasing the dependability of their results. Apart from my audit trail, which I maintained scrupulously, I have also increased the dependability of my findings by reducing interviewer variability error (Bryman, 2008). By interviewing all the participants myself, I maximised the opportunities for probing and in-depth understanding, while also maintaining constant access to non-verbal cues. Transcribing the discussions integrally, I also made sure that all these cues and other background information were recorded.

Confirmability (equating objectivity in quantitative research) is the assumption that one researcher's interpretations would also be corroborated by other investigators. This can be increased by keeping accurate records and constantly verifying all the research procedures, by peer debriefing (checking the procedures and results with a colleague) and by negative case analysis (scrutinising and discussing any case that does not seem to conform to the findings pattern) (Banister et al., 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; K. Richards, 2003; Silverman, 2009). The confirmability of my findings was enhanced by peer debriefing at all stages of design, implementation and analysis[15], by the analysis of the negative and less than straightforward cases reported in my Results and

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[15] With Ms Vera Busse (University of Oxford), who was conducting her doctoral research project on a very similar topic.

Discussion and by maintaining scrupulous research logs and memos that were used actively in the interpretive cycle.

5.8 Ethics and reciprocity

A responsible humanistic investigation, my project was guided by careful ethical considerations at all its stages. Crystallising information from some of the most quoted publications in the field (e.g., E. Diener & Crandall, 1978; Grodin & Glantz, 1994; Israel & Hay, 2006; Lipson, 1994; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008), my research ethics awareness dictated the observation of the following ethical principles in the instrument design, data collection and data processing stages:

Voluntary participation. The head teachers of the participating schools were not (and could not have been) forced to participate, but they decided to of their own accord. Teachers who allowed us to collect data during their class time were also free to decline, and many of them did. Although data were collected in classroom groups, no student was forced nor directly persuaded to participate. While the desire to please and to conform may have had an influence on the large numbers of teenagers who appeared very happy to get involved, there were also several who declined and waited quietly at their desks while the others completed the questionnaire. For the interviews, only the students who wanted to participate left a password on the survey form and they were only interviewed if they had not changed their minds in the meantime (and some had). During the interviews, they were all free to skip any question they wanted and, although encouraged if they seemed willing to respond, they were not pushed for answers at any time. The voluntary nature of the participation in my project also excluded any superficial material rewards, being considered that reciprocation

must take deeper and more sustainable forms, as discussed below (see Beneficence and Reciprocity).

Informed consent. The head teachers' verbal and written consent was obtained after they were sent one letter detailing the aims and nature of the project and another letter confirming all the details. The teachers who gave us some of their class time were also given brief information about the project before they offered to help (in most cases, by the head teachers, but also by us). As for the students, they all had a brief presentation of the project (including details of voluntariness, anonymity, confidentiality and beneficence) on the first page of the questionnaire that they were invited to read. In addition, before the administration began, my assistant and I took several minutes to explain everything orally, specifying that their consent would be formalised by them completing the form. We also explained the conditions for conducting the interviews, both after the survey and before the beginning of the interview proper. The interviewees' oral consent was also obtained for recording the conversation digitally, and all except one accepted happily. This one student wanted to know more details about the purpose of the recording and, after being given apparently satisfactory answers, agreed to be recorded. No person involved in my project was ever deceived or misled in any way.

Anonymity, confidentiality and non-traceability*.* These were vital conditions of my investigation, with very deep implications on my project design. I am familiar enough with the environment of my research site to know that lack of anonymity would have drastically reduced my participants' number and – crucially – the sincerity and dependability of their responses. While details about the schools and many of the teachers involved were known to me and to my assistant, we never asked for any student's name, the only form of "identification" being the password for the interview (often, combinations of symbols and numbers or favourite football teams). Although I would have gained

more research validity and understanding if I had had access to official documents and had been able to corroborate my findings with teachers' and peers' feedback on my participants, I knew this was impossible in that particular environment and I adjusted my research design accordingly. Everybody involved was promised absolute confidentiality and non-traceability and this was particularly important in protecting the students' interests in school. During the questionnaire completion process, we did not look at the participants' answers and did not show the completed questionnaires to anybody. All the materials have been stored safely by myself and will be destroyed in due course.

An extra layer of precaution was added when the research report (see Appendix C) was written. In order to maximise non-traceability, I decided to conceal even the students' pseudonyms, direct quotations from the interviews being only credited through their gender and age. In addition, research results were reported in an aggregated manner for the five schools, in order to avoid any unpleasant consequence that school identification might have led to.

Sensitivity. Although not everybody perceived it so in the end (see the school D episode, 5.5.1), no explicitly sensitive or otherwise harmful aspect was intentionally included in the data elicitation materials and techniques, undue intrusion being avoided at all times. Acknowledging that adolescents may not always be perfectly comfortable discussing the different identities they display to their significant others, the voluntary, anonymous and confidential nature of their participation was thought to minimise the sensitivity of the topic. Knowing the socio-cultural context very well and discussing these considerations with my assistant and some of my other former students, I was sufficiently confident that I would be able to avoid sensitivity issues successfully.

Beneficence. The maximisation of benefits for all the parties involved in my research was a principle that influenced my project design fundamentally. From

the very selection of my research questions to my interaction with the schools, it was my determined objective to help improve students' self-actualisation in school and contribute to a lesser documented area of the literature. Through the dissemination of my findings in Romania and elsewhere, my research has the potential to raise questions that could ultimately lead to students having a more rewarding time at school. This was emphasised to all the participants in the introductory part of our collaboration and – when one of the boys asked begrudgingly whether I was asking for their help to the benefit of British students – it was stressed that, although many implications would be general, mine was a Romanian project intended to raise educational standards in Romania.

All these principles, beginning with that of beneficence, are in direct relation to reciprocity. With the exception detailed above (5.5.1), from the first school secretary I contacted to the last student I saw on the last day I spent in school E, everybody showed a humbling desire to help and oblige. This, if nothing else, made it a duty of honour for me to reciprocate their altruistic help by making sure all the ethical principles above were observed.

My duty of reciprocity also involved sending research reports (see Appendix C on the attached CD-ROM) to the five head teachers and all the teachers and students who expressed an interest in the results. This is the first step in the process of ensuring that my research findings do make a practical difference. It is often emphasised that research – especially in the qualitative strands – is and should not be without practical consequences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln, 2002; Mertens, 2009; Mullany, 2007a; Patton, 2002; K. Richards, 2003; Roberts & Sarangi, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Sarangi, 2002; Sarangi & Candlin, 2003). Whether just through an alteration in the consciousness of the participants (e.g., K. Richards, 2003) or by forging a bridge between research and the professional field and setting the agenda for further analytical work (e.g.,

Mullany, 2007a; Roberts & Sarangi, 2003; Sarangi & Candlin, 2003), the investigator is an agent of change. Through the ongoing dissemination of my findings and by involving my research collaborators and participants in my reflexive interpretive cycle, I am ensuring that my research is not without beneficial consequences to all stakeholders.

Finally, it was considered a matter of ultimate research ethic and reciprocity to conduct and report every step of my project in perfectly good faith (American Psychological Association, 2009), to maintain my emergent researcher integrity and to express my gratitude to the field by contributing to its bank of dependable and illuminating knowledge in my own small way.

VI. Quantitative results

As justified in the Methodology chapter, this research project was governed by a parallel mixed design, using quantitative and qualitative data concurrently in order to address different aspects of the research questions. This chapter reports on the quantitative findings of the project, while the next chapter will present the qualitative findings. Although relatively independent in the data collection and analysis stages, the two strands are complementary and will be integrated into meta-inferences in the Discussion (Caracelli & J. C. Greene, 1993; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; J. C. Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The chapter is organised into two main sections: Descriptive statistics and Inferential statistics. The first section details the distribution of the continuous questionnaire variables, as well as the frequencies of the categorical ones, before reporting correlations and the results of multinomial logistic regression for predicting self system types. In the second section, various group effects are presented, which were identified through t-tests, multivariate analyses of variance and categorical cross-tabulation (Pearson χ^2).

6.1 Descriptive statistics

In this section, questionnaire variables will first be characterised in terms of distribution, variance and central tendency, followed by frequencies and percentages. Correlational analyses will then be reported to account for relationships between continuous variables, and multinomial logistic regression

will show how self system categories may be predicted from various independent variables.

6.1.1 Distributions and frequencies

The main descriptive statistics for the data collected through the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire are presented in Table 6.1 (self variables) and Table 6.2 (other variables). As can be seen in the two tables, skewness and kurtosis values indicate that the data are not perfectly normally distributed. However, it has been acknowledged that a perfectly normal distribution, with skewness and kurtosis values of 0, is a "rather uncommon occurrence in the social sciences", as Pallant (2007, p. 56) puts it. The author goes on to explain (p. 62) that many scales and measures used in the social sciences are not normally distributed because of the underlying nature of the construct being measured – for example, life satisfaction measures are often negatively skewed because most people are reasonably happy, while anxiety or depression are usually positively skewed in the general population because most people record relatively few symptoms of these disorders. Skewness is considered normal if its values lie within the range of -1 to +1 (Hair, W. C. Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Other sources (e.g., Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999) recommend the cut-off values of 2.00 for skewness and 7.00 for kurtosis when assessing the normality of data.

Accordingly, only two of my self variables had relatively high values (though still well within the above-mentioned limit): imposed self teacher (present) and imposed self family (present). One of the findings of the study is that most students rated their perceived imposed selves for the present very highly when referring to their English teacher and parents, as opposed to their classmates and friends. The means of the two variables are also considerably higher than

Table 6.1. *Descriptive statistics for the continuous self variables of the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire* (all variables represent summative scales; means calculated by dividing the total scale by the number of items)

Variable	N	M	SD	α	Distribution		Range	
					Skewness	Kurtosis	Potential	Actual
Private self								
Cognitive appraisals	1003	23.26	6.56	.92	-.26	-.56	6-36	6-36
Affective appraisals	1003	23.27	6.09	.88	-.30	-.31	6-36	6-36
Internal frame of	1015	24.95	6.90	.90	-.41	-.69	6-36	6-36
External frame of	1002	21.98	6.61	.90	-.06	-.59	6-36	6-36
Total	917	93.57	23.50	.92	-.31	-.62	24-144	26-144
Ideal self	1012	22.20	4.85	.76	-.66	.25	5-30	6-30
Public selves								
English teacher	1007	28.43	6.67	.90	-1.05	.76	6-36	6-36
Classmates	1001	19.32	7.35	.91	.01	-.78	6-36	6-36
Best friends	994	20.96	7.16	.89	-.21	-.45	6-36	6-36
Family	991	28.38	6.63	.88	-.97	.52	6-36	6-36
Imposed selves								
Teacher – present	1015	31.54	4.50	.83	-1.6	3.24	6-36	6-36
Teacher – future	1022	27.33	6.36	.86	-.93	.71	6-36	6-36
Classmates – present	1004	17.78	6.90	.89	.01	-82	6-36	6-36
Classmates – future	1014	16.63	6.90	.90	.01	-1.03	6-36	6-34
Best friends – present	1004	22.43	6.98	.89	-.36	-.38	6-36	6-36
Best friends – future	1018	21.37	6.82	.87	-.41	-.36	6-36	6-36
Family – present	1003	31.32	5.01	.84	-1.65	3.65	6-36	6-36
Family – future	1016	27.42	5.60	.79	-1.01	1.34	6-36	6-36

others. Thus, negative skewness confirms the hypothesis and corroborates the finding that teachers and parents have very high expectations of my participants (i.e., high scores clustered towards the right-hand side of the distribution curve). The only variable with a very high skew from Table 6.2 – years of studying English privately – was only used in one *t*-test (6.2.1) after eliminating values under 3 years (remaining *n*=94), Levene's test showing that group variances were equal (*p*=.08), therefore the analysis was appropriate.

Table 6.2. *Descriptive statistics for other continuous variables of the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire* (learning orientation and perceptions: summative scales; attributions: cumulative scales; means calculated by dividing the total scale by the number of items)

Variable	N	M	SD	α	Distribution		Range	
					Skewness	Kurtosis	Potential	Actual
Learning orientation	1029	22.78	5.66	.85	-.20	-.16	6-36	6-36
Perceptions of the English class								
Interest and relevance	1011	25.42	5.18	.77	-.40	-.17	6-36	6-36
Appreciation as an individual	1022	19.09	5.84	.82	.22	-.48	6-36	6-36
Attributions								
Success – internal	1039	2.29	1.55	-	.25	-.70	0-6	0-6
Success – external	1039	2.90	1.65	-	.06	-.81	0-6	0-6
Failure – internal	1036	3.15	1.27	-	.03	-.02	0-6	0-6
Failure – external	1036	2.13	1.33	-	.39	-.24	0-6	0-6
Years of studying English								
At school	1031	8.21	2.52	-	-.17	-.41	-	1-15
Privately	1030	.77	1.20	-	3.59	14.19	-	0-14
English mark								
Actual	1022	8.48	1.16	-	-.56	-.10	1-10	5-10
Deserved	1017	8.28	1.22	-	-.79	.68	1-10	3-10
Mark index	1014	-.2	.89	-	-.63	2.55	-	-5 - +2

Note. Cronbach's α internal consistency coefficient can only be calculated for summative scales.

As far as kurtosis is concerned, positive values indicate that scores tend to cluster in the centre and negative values show that scores spread towards the tails of the distribution curve. As the instrument assessed complex attitudes with often contradictory responses depending on a multitude of unknown factors, a perfect bell curve would have been an unrealistic expectation. More importantly, my sample size places this study within very safe normality margins. It is known that, with reasonably large samples, skewness and kurtosis do not make a substantive difference in the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Pallant (2007,

p. 56) interprets "reasonably large samples" as more than 200 cases, while Dörnyei (2007, p. 208) suggests that data normality is not a big concern with 100 or more participants, explaining that "normality does not have to be perfect because most procedures work well with data that is only approximately normally distributed". In section 5.3.1 of my Methodology I explained that, for my targeted population of 400,622 Romanian students learning English as a foreign language, the recommended sample size with a 95% confidence level and 3% confidence interval was 1,065 (Cohen et al., 2007, pp. 103-104) and my final sample – allowed by various administrative constraints – consisted of 1,045 participants. In consequence, the small abnormalities in my data (already within the limits recommended in the field) were ironed out by the large sample size.

A brief look at Table 6.2 also reveals that most students were fairly interested in the English class (M=25.42 out of 36), but their perceived appreciation as individuals – or teacher's interest – was not so high (M=19.09 out of 36)[16]. More detailed analyses will provide further insights into these statistics later.

Another interesting variable is the Mark index (Table 6.2), calculated by subtracting the mark students believed they deserved from the (declared) mark they usually got in English (for example, a pupil who normally gets 8 but feels 6 would be a more accurate mark will have a Mark index of 2, whereas somebody who gets 7 but feels he/she deserves 10 would have an index of -3, an index of 0 indicating perceived fair assessment). A mean of -.2 on an actual range of -5 to +2 and a kurtosis of 2.55 suggest that most students considered they were marked fairly (the median and mode of the variable being actually 0). However, t-tests reported later (6.2.1) will show important gender differences in perceived assessment fairness.

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[16] Statistically significant, as reported later.

Table 6.2 also contains descriptive statistics for students' attributions for success and failure and it can be seen easily that the highest mean is represented by the internal attributions for failure (M=3.15), followed by external attributions for success (M=2.90). In other words, most of these teenagers explain their success through external, uncontrollable and often unstable factors, while internalising the causes of failure. When they do well in English, they may think they were lucky – when they do not do so well, they may think they are not very capable.

Alternatively, internal attributions for failure may mean that they consider themselves capable but admit they have not invested enough effort in the respective activity, or indeed effort may have been withdrawn in response to the classroom norm of low achievement. A detailed break-down of boys' and girls' cognitive attributions for success and failure – presented in Figure 6.1 – shows very important differences: more girls than boys explained their failure through low ability and success through high effort, while boys did exactly the opposite, explaining their failure through low effort and success through high ability. All considerable differences were statistically significant[17].

The vignette section of the questionnaire invited participants to choose one description for each of the four relational contexts: English teacher, classmates, best friends and family. As detailed in the Theoretical framework (3.3; see also Appendix A, section I), they had a choice of four vignettes – each describing one type of self system: submissive, duplicitous, rebellious and harmonious (but these labels were not communicated to the students at any time).

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[17] Cohen's *d* effect sizes for statistically different means: *I had worked really hard…*: -.28; *I have a true gift…*: .31; *I can't understand some rules…*: -.16; *I'm not all that good at it*: -.20; *The teacher doesn't always explain…*: -.15; *The tasks were too hard…*: -.16; *My classmates didn't bother to help me…*: .21.
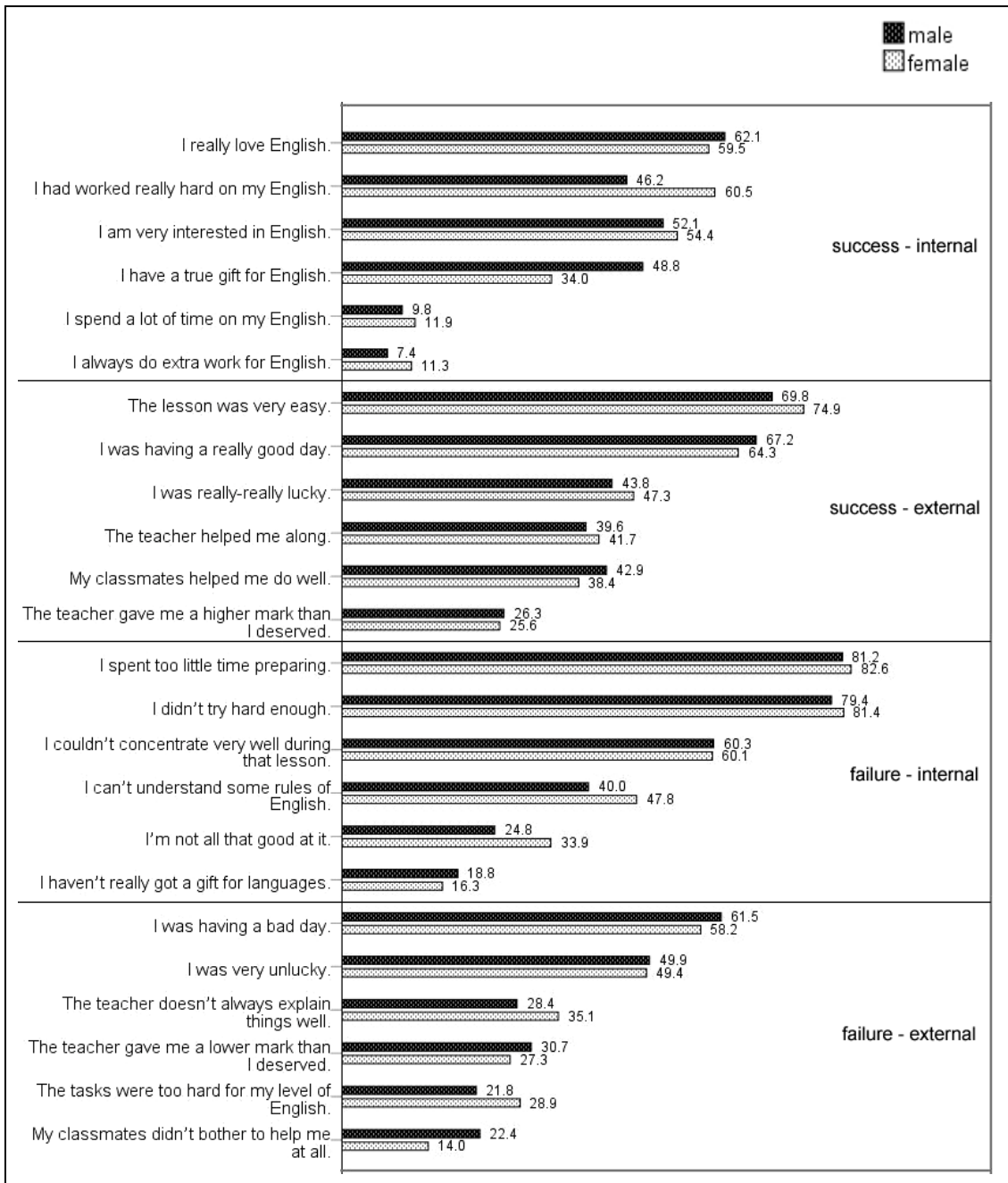
Figure 6.1. *Attributions for success and failure by gender* (percentages of 338 boys and 645 girls who ticked that particular prompt)

Table 6.3 presents a detailed profile of responses for every school and every relational context (overall and separate by gender). One immediately evident result is that most students chose the duplicitous self system for their English teacher and for their classmates, namely they did not feel they were known well in these two relational contexts and they preferred to keep their true self

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concealed by a convenient public self. A very large majority from every school chose the harmonious self system for best friends and family, showing that very similar imposed selves (i.e., from the teacher and family, and – we will see below – friends and classmates) do not necessarily result in the same self system.

Table 6.3. *Self system percentages for four relational contexts by school and gender* (the higher value in bold for every gender pair)

Self system type		Overall M	Overall F	A M	A F	B M	B F	C M	C F	D M	D F	E M	E F
Teacher	N	325	629	98	142	115	134	33	43	39	107	40	203
Submissive		**8.3**	6.5	**15.3**	9.9	3.5	**6.7**	**12.1**	7.0	**5.1**	1.9	5.0	**6.4**
Duplicitous		48.3	**53.7**	44.9	**56.3**	**54.8**	49.3	39.4	**44.2**	53.8	**54.2**	40.0	**56.7**
Rebellious		17.2	**19.6**	**21.4**	12.7	13.9	**23.9**	**15.2**	11.6	10.3	**18.7**	**25.0**	23.6
Harmonious		**26.2**	20.2	18.4	**21.1**	**27.8**	20.1	33.3	**37.2**	**30.8**	25.2	**30.0**	13.3
Classmates	N	324	632	98	143	115	135	33	43	40	106	38	205
Submissive		**4.6**	2.8	**7.1**	3.5	2.6	**3.7**	**6.1**	0	**7.5**	1.9	0	**2.9**
Duplicitous		43.2	**48.9**	49.0	**54.5**	34.8	**47.4**	42.4	**46.5**	**42.5**	38.7	**55.3**	51.7
Rebellious		28.4	**29.6**	**28.6**	25.9	**33.9**	25.9	24.2	**27.9**	15.0	**44.3**	**28.9**	27.3
Harmonious		**23.8**	18.7	15.3	**16.1**	**28.7**	23.0	**27.3**	25.6	**35.0**	15.1	15.8	**18.0**
Best friends	N	327	633	98	144	115	135	33	43	41	107	40	204
Submissive		**11.6**	4.9	**24.5**	7.6	**6.1**	3.0	0	**2.3**	**7.3**	3.7	**10.0**	5.4
Duplicitous		**9.8**	3.5	**13.3**	5.6	**6.1**	1.5	**6.1**	2.3	**12.2**	.9	**12.5**	4.9
Rebellious		12.8	**13.0**	14.3	**17.4**	14.8	14.8	**15.2**	4.7	7.3	**14.0**	7.5	**9.8**
Harmonious		65.7	**78.7**	48.0	**69.4**	73.0	**80.7**	78.8	**90.7**	73.2	**81.3**	70.0	**79.9**
Family	N	324	635	98	145	115	135	33	43	40	107	38	205
Submissive		**14.2**	12.1	**20.4**	17.9	7.8	**11.9**	**18.2**	11.6	7.5	**10.3**	**21.1**	9.3
Duplicitous		**6.2**	3.3	**6.1**	4.1	**4.3**	1.5	**6.1**	4.7	**7.5**	2.8	**10.5**	3.9
Rebellious		12.0	**13.2**	**13.3**	9.7	10.4	**19.3**	3.0	**9.3**	**12.5**	9.3	**21.1**	14.6
Harmonious		67.6	**71.3**	60.2	**68.3**	**77.4**	67.4	72.7	**74.4**	72.5	**77.6**	47.4	**72.2**

As can be seen in the overall column of Table 6.3, girls tended to be generally more duplicitous with the English teacher and classmates, and more harmonious with their families and friends, whereas boys tended to be more harmonious with the English teacher and classmates, and more duplicitous with family and friends. Boys were also overall more submissive than girls in all four relational contexts, which may have been very different if the subject investigated had been, for example, Physics. Although at this level it is little more than speculation, it may be that boys feel harmonious to their families when it comes to science-related subjects, girls being harmonious in Arts and Humanities. (Indeed, both in school C and school E, the girls' harmonious self system for the family exceeded the boys', and in school B – Computer Science – boys were 10% more harmonious with their families than girls – see Table 6.3.) Using dummy variables in *t*-tests, some of these differences were found to have statistical significance, as reported later (6.2.1.4).

The four self systems represented a useful filter when analysing the relationship between one's public and imposed selves. As seen in Figure 6.2, most students' imposed selves were stronger for the present than for the future[18], with the exception of the participants who felt duplicitous and rebellious with their classmates – these two categories also being the only ones where the public self exceeded the imposed self. It is also clear that the imposed selves coming from the teacher and family were very similar, both being stronger for the present than for the future.

One implication of this difference may be that neither the language teacher not the parents considered English an important part of the students' future. For teachers, the reason may be that not many of them seemed to be interested in the relevance of their subject for the students' life, while many parents expected

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[18] All statistically significant, as shown by *t*-tests.

their children to steer towards more lucrative vocations, such as law or medicine (though English was seen to have important instrumental value). Both these reasons found strong support in the interviews, as reported in the next chapter.
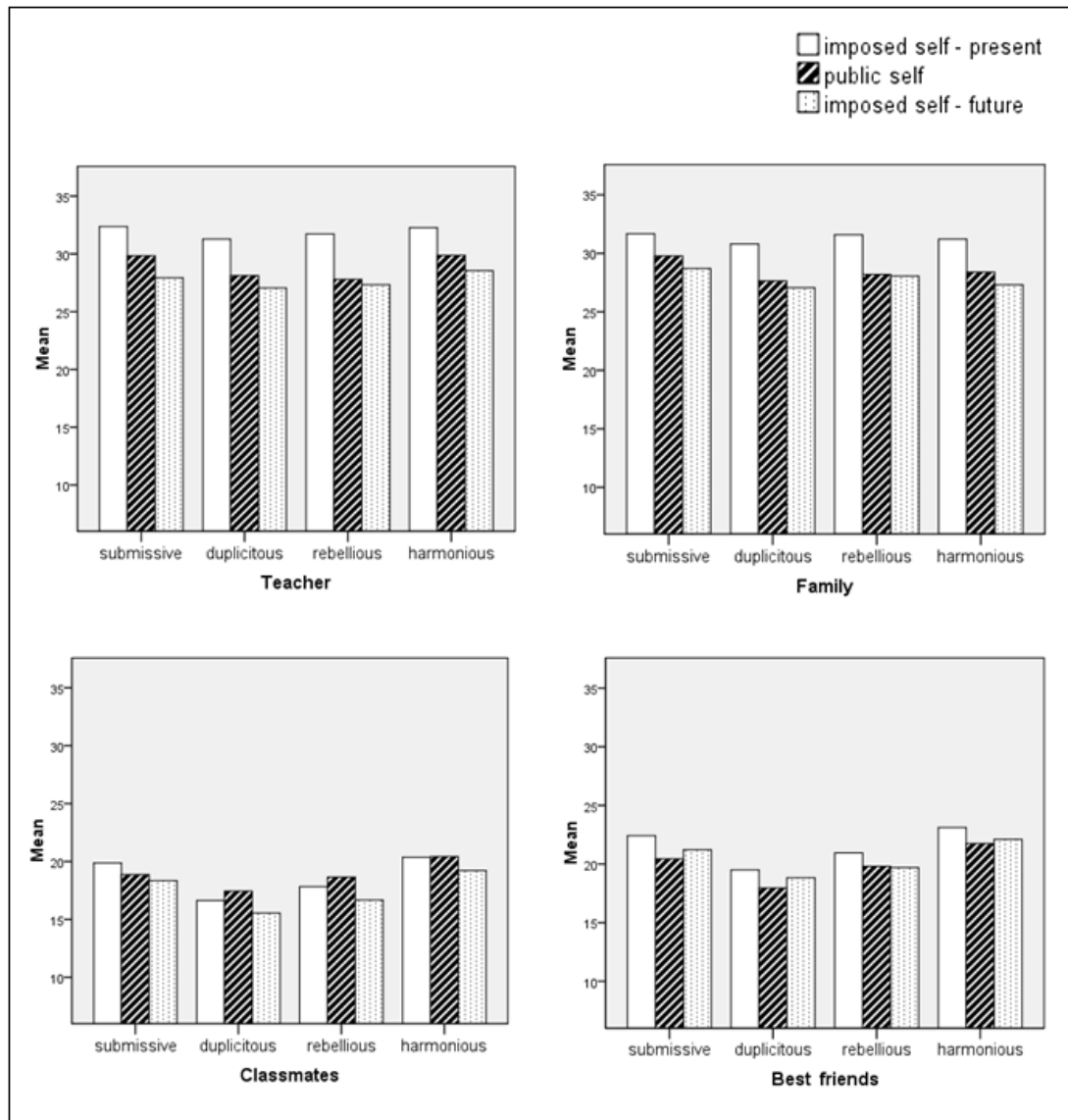
Figure 6.2. *Comparison of imposed selves (present and future) to public selves in four relational contexts by the self system type* (*N*=1,045; listwise deletion)

Although less than parents and teachers, students' best friends also seemed interested in the participants' present L2 self and less so in their future self. Overall, the imposed selves perceived to originate in classmates and friends were very similar, just as the imposed selves coming from the teacher and

parents were very similar. For classmates, it may be that they are simply not interested because they do not communicate or that they would not want their peers to work hard in English, so that they may look better in comparison; and for friends it may mean simply that adolescent friendships are based on other values than how well one does in English – these reasons being given by most interviewees.

Another important implication emerging from Figure 6.2 is that public and imposed selves seem to vary in tandem, a strong imposed self being accompanied by a similarly strong public self for the English teacher and for the family, while the opposite was the case for classmates and friends. This may suggest that these teenagers' public selves are a response to their perceived imposed selves, although identity display may sometimes be purely functional. As we have seen in Table 6.3, most respondents felt duplicitous with the English teacher and harmonious with their families, although in Figure 6.2 (and Table 6.1) we can see that their imposed selves are similarly strong in both relational contexts. Likewise, while the imposed selves perceived to originate in classmates and friends were very similar, most participants chose the duplicitous self system for classmates and the harmonious self system for friends. Correlations and *t*-tests will provide more details about the relationship between the imposed and the public selves.

Considering the continuous variables of the questionnaire in concordance with the categorical ones has also proved revealing (see Table 6.4). We can see that the highest means for all the four components of the private self occurred with students who chose a harmonious self system for the English teacher (total M=100.4 out of 144). Learning orientation (M=24.3), English class – interest (M=27.6), English class – appreciation (M=23.1) and internal attributions for success (M=2.7) were also highest of all for the students who felt harmonious with the English teacher. One very important implication of this finding is that a

teacher who encourages a harmonious atmosphere in class (in the sense expounded in the Theoretical framework – 3.3.4) may also help strengthen the students' private self, their learning (rather than performance) orientations and the sense of responsibility and persistence that comes with internal attributions for success and failure. For the relational context centred around the English teacher, the participants' lowest overall value for the private self appeared in the duplicitous self system. Given that a vast majority of students in all the five schools chose the duplicitous self system for their English teacher, as we have seen, it may not be a surprise that their L2 private self was not particularly strong.

An intriguing finding is that for the family relational context the highest private self value across all four sub-scales was found in the rebellious self system, while the lowest was in the submissive system. Understandably, perhaps, the strongest ideal self across all four relational contexts came with a harmonious self system in the family. As mentioned above and detailed later in Chapter Seven, few students thought the English teacher was interested in their future, but most of them emphasised that they parents were. In this light, it is quite explainable that a strong L2 ideal self will come with appreciation and understanding in the family, where preoccupation with the teenager's future is also strong. It is also rather telling that the highest values for the imposed self – family variable (both the present and the future) came with the submissive self system for the teacher. Imposed self – family future had a double peak: submissive self system with the teacher and with the family. In other words, students for whom the family-imposed self was perceived as strongest of all were the students who may have relinquished their own pursuits in order to do what the English teacher and the parents said.

Table 6.4. *Means for scales and subscales by self system type in four relational contexts* (highest mean for every relational context highlighted; highest mean across relational contexts in bold)

Scale	Range	Mean	Teacher				Classmates				Best friends				Family			
			Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har
Private self - cognitive	6-36	**23.3**	22.6	23.5	22.5	**25.1**	23.2	23.3	21.9	23.9	24.0	22.2	22.5	23.5	22.3	24.2	22.3	23.3
Private self - affective	6-36	**23.3**	22.6	22.8	24.4	**25.5**	23.5	22.8	22.6	23.9	22.3	23.0	22.8	23.5	21.2	23.9	22.8	23.5
Private self - internal reference	6-36	**25.0**	24.4	25.0	24.8	**26.4**	25.1	25.1	24.3	25.0	25.0	24.7	24.8	25.1	24.9	25.9	24.1	25.0
Private self - external reference	6-36	**22.0**	21.6	22.1	21.1	**23.4**	22.0	22.1	20.1	22.6	22.2	21.3	20.7	22.4	22.5	23.2	20.1	22.0
Private self - Total	24-144	**93.6**	91.4	93.2	94.1	**100.4**	93.5	93.5	89.5	96.0	93.7	92.4	89.3	94.5	93.5	97.4	89.6	94.0
Ideal self	5-30	**22.2**	21.9	22.1	22.2	23.3	22.4	21.8	21.7	22.6	21.1	22.0	21.7	22.4	20.3	22.4	22.0	**23.4**
Learning orientation	6-36	**22.8**	22.3	22.7	22.6	**24.3**	22.7	22.9	22.2	23.3	22.9	22.2	21.1	23.1	20.4	23.1	22.2	23.1
Public self - teacher	6-36	**28.4**	28.0	28.0	29.5	**29.9**	28.3	28.5	28.6	29.1	27.0	28.1	28.6	28.7	28.1	28.3	28.7	28.5
Public self - classmates	6-36	**18.3**	17.6	19.1	**20.1**	18.7	17.5	18.5	18.9	20.0	17.8	18.0	19.0	18.4	17.2	17.2	19.2	18.5
Public self - friends	6-36	**21.0**	20.3	21.3	**23.0**	22.0	20.1	20.8	19.9	21.9	17.9	19.8	20.1	21.6	19.8	21.0	21.0	21.1
Public self - family	6-36	**28.4**	28.1	27.9	**29.9**	29.3	28.5	28.1	28.5	28.7	26.9	28.4	29.4	28.4	27.7	28.4	29.4	28.2
Imposed self - teacher - present	6-36	**31.5**	31.2	31.6	32.0	32.2	31.3	31.7	32.1	32.0	31.3	30.8	**32.3**	31.7	31.8	31.7	31.7	31.5
Imposed self - teacher - future	6-36	**27.3**	26.9	27.3	28.0	28.5	27.2	27.2	27.1	28.4	25.9	26.5	**29.5**	27.5	27.6	27.7	28.0	27.2

Note. Dup = duplicitous, Reb = rebellious, Sub = submissive, Har = harmonious

(continued)

Table 6.4. *Means for scales and subscales by self system type in four relational contexts* (continued)

Scale	Range	Mean	Teacher				Classmates				Best friends				Family			
			Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har	Dup	Reb	Sub	Har
Imposed self - classmates - present	6-36	**17.8**	17.1	18.4	19.3	18.7	16.7	17.7	19.5	**20.4**	17.9	16.8	18.6	17.9	17.4	16.9	18.6	17.8
Imposed self - classmates - future	6-36	**16.6**	15.9	17.6	18.0	17.3	15.5	16.5	17.9	**19.3**	17.2	15.7	17.0	16.8	17.4	15.8	17.5	16.6
Imposed self - friends - present	6-36	**22.4**	22.1	22.3	23.1	**23.6**	22.4	22.3	22.3	23.2	19.8	20.9	22.5	23.0	19.6	22.4	22.5	22.7
Imposed self - friends - future	6-36	**21.4**	21.1	21.7	21.8	22.3	21.3	21.2	21.1	**22.4**	19.2	19.5	21.3	22.0	20.1	21.5	21.6	21.5
Imposed self - family - present	6-36	**31.3**	31.3	31.1	**32.7**	31.4	31.5	31.0	30.8	31.7	31.3	30.5	32.4	31.4	30.6	31.4	31.8	31.2
Imposed self - family - future	6-36	**27.4**	27.2	27.4	**28.4**	27.9	27.5	27.2	25.4	28.0	26.6	26.6	28.3	27.6	26.8	27.8	**28.4**	27.1
English class - interest	6-36	**25.4**	24.6	24.9	27.5	**27.6**	25.5	25.2	25.1	25.8	24.8	25.4	25.5	25.5	23.3	25.7	25.0	25.7
English class - appreciation	6-36	**19.1**	17.3	19.2	19.9	**23.1**	18.6	19.7	19.0	19.7	18.6	19.2	19.3	19.2	17.6	19.0	18.3	19.4
Attributions for success - internal	0-6	**2.3**	2.2	2.2	2.1	**2.7**	2.3	2.3	1.6	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.4	1.8	2.5	2.2	2.3
Attributions for success - external	0-6	**2.9**	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.6	3.0	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.4	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.1	**3.3**	2.8
Attributions for failure - internal	0-6	**3.2**	3.2	3.3	**3.4**	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.2	**3.4**	3.1
Attributions for failure - external	0-6	**2.1**	2.2	2.3	2.4	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.2	**2.5**	2.0

Note. Dup = duplicitous, Reb = rebellious, Sub = submissive, Har = harmonious

Among other revealing findings, Table 6.4 also shows that the lowest L2 private self appeared in the students who were submissive with their classmates, friends and parents, and we have seen that in the family context rebellious students had the highest private self values. For classmates and friends, an explanation may be the norm of generalised mediocrity, which might mean that teenagers who give in to negative peer pressure may not feel particularly competent or attracted to learning English – or perhaps that teenagers who do not feel competent or attracted to English give in to peer pressure more easily. For the family context, a possible cause might be that adolescents are encouraged to invest more time and energy in subjects that would ensure them a prosperous future (many interviewees said that their parents wanted them to become lawyers or medics) – as such, students who feel they have a particular affinity with the English language may have to rebel against their parents' wishes in order to pursue this option.

6.1.2 Correlations

Several of the findings mentioned above were confirmed by correlational analysis. The correlation matrix presented in Table 6.5 shows the relationships between the 10 self variables, all except one being significant at the $p<.01$ level (two-tailed). As mentioned earlier, we can see that the public selves and the imposed selves were correlated quite highly in each relational context – .54 for the teacher, .69 for the classmates, .72 for best friends and .65 for the family – indicating that the stronger the imposed self, the stronger the public self (and the reverse). We can also see that the public self displayed to one's family was highly correlated with the public self displayed to the English teacher ($r=.70$) and the imposed self perceived in the family was correlated, though on a lower level, with the imposed self coming from the teacher ($r=.52$). This may suggest that students display similar public selves to their families and teacher, perhaps for

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fear of reprisal, as many interviewees suggested, or simply, as one of the boys said: "If I please my teacher, I please my family." By all accounts, it seems to be in their best interest that students display the image of a hard-working person to their English teacher and parents, although, as many said in interviews and further analyses have shown, it may not always be true.

Table 6.5. *Correlation matrix for the main self variables*

Pearson correlations (N = 1045, pairwise deletion)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Private self	-									
2. Ideal self	.54**	-								
3. Public self - teacher	.24**	.33**	-							
4. Public self - classmates	.10**	.21**	.42**	-						
5. Public self - best friends	.15**	.32**	.47**	.68**	-					
6. Public self - family	.16**	.35**	.70**	.49**	.63**	-				
7. Imposed self - teacher	.12**	.25**	.54**	.29**	.29**	.40**	-			
8. Imposed self - classmates	-.03	.13**	.27**	.69**	.50**	.33**	.38**	-		
9. Imposed self - best friends	.09**	.30**	.35**	.49**	.72**	.46**	.42**	.61**	-	
10. Imposed self - family	.12**	.45**	.44**	.35**	.47**	.65**	.52**	.36**	.55**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As for the relationship between the public self displayed to friends and that displayed to classmates (r=.68), this may originate in both the friends' and the classmates' apparent indifference as to whether students worked hard in English or not. Although these are both important relational contexts for a young person, it appears that English is not high on the social negotiation agenda for Romanian teenagers.

The correlation between the actual mark students got in English and the mark they believed they deserved (Table 6.6) was highest in school C (r=.83) and higher for girls (r=.88) than boys. Table 6.3 has shown that the highest percentage of participants who chose the harmonious self system for the teacher was in school C: 33.3% boys and 37.2% girls. In school E, the correlation

between the actual mark and the mark deserved was .81 for boys and .63 for girls (Table 6.6). Going back to Table 6.3, we see that 30% of the boys and 13.3% girls were harmonious with the English teacher, while 40% boys and 56.7 % girls were duplicitous. Thus, it would appear that the more fairly students feel they are assessed, the more harmonious they may feel with the English teacher[19], and the more unfair their marks, the more duplicitous they may be to the teacher. This is also true of the girls in school A, whose mark correlation is .67 compared to the boys' .75, but although these girls are more duplicitous to the English teacher than boys, they are also slightly more harmonious with the teacher than boys, while the latter – although marked more fairly – have higher scores than girls in the rebellious and the submissive categories.

Table 6.6. *Correlations between actual mark and mark deserved by school and gender*

School	Gender			
	Male (*n=339)*	Female (*n=645)*	Missing (*n=61)*	Overall
A	.75**	.67**	.97**	.71**
B	.60**	.60**	.87**	.61**
C	.71**	.88**	1.00**	.83**
D	.73**	.76**	.62	.73**
E	.81**	.63**	.46	.65**
Overall	.75**	.71**	.75**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Other noteworthy correlations include the ideal self with the imposed self – family present ($r=.30$) and imposed self – family future ($r=.50$), suggesting that teenagers' dreams about their future may be in close relation with what they parents would like them to become; the affective component of the private self with learning orientation ($r=.71$), English class: interest ($r=.71$), internal

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[19] It is important to note, however, that correlation does not mean causation, but mere direct proportion in the case of positive correlations and an inverse proportion in the case of negative ones.

attributions for success (r=.63) and external attributions for success (r=-.33), and appreciation in the English class with interest in the English class (r=.60), indicating that students who feel appreciated in class will also be interested, assuming more responsibility for their own learning. Very small correlations also indicated that the older the student the weaker the public self displayed to the English teacher (r=-.14), classmates (r=-.14) and family (r=-.15). All these correlations were significant at the p<.01 level (two-tailed).

6.1.3 Multinomial logistic regression: Predicting self system types

In order to test whether the incidence of the four self system types could be predicted and, if so, from what independent variables, post-hoc multinomial (polytomous) logistic regression was performed. As known from the literature (Chan, 2005; Field, 2009; Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000; Kwak & Clayton-Matthews, 2002; Menard, 2002), the procedure is used for predicting nominal variables with more than two categories (in this project, the self system vignettes had four categories corresponding to the four hypothesised self systems).

Based on background knowledge of the research context and on the previous analyses reported, the variables expected to influence students' self system with the English teacher were the mark index, English class: interest, English class: appreciation, age, gender and school. The full regression model containing these predictors was statistically significant, with χ^2(39)=245.90, p<.001, indicating that the six variables were indeed able to predict the teacher self system that the students chose. The full model predicted between 24% (Cox and Snell pseudo R^2) and 27% (Nagelkerke pseudo R^2) of the variable variance, and

correctly classified 58.2% of cases. The statistically significant contributions in the model are presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7. *Variables predicting students' self system with the teacher* (multilogit reference category: harmonious)

Outcome category for *Teacher*	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Odds Ratio Exp(B)	95% CI for OR Lower	Upper
Submissive vs. Harmonious							
Age	-.31	.14	5.13	.024	.73	.56	.96
English class: appreciation	-.08	.04	5.26	.022	.92	.86	.99
English class: interest x Mark index	-.14	.05	8.42	.004	.87	.79	.96
English class: appreciation x Mark index	.15	.04	11.80	.001	1.16	1.07	1.27
Duplicitous vs. Harmonious							
Gender = Male	2.86	1.20	5.69	.017	17.43	1.66	182.58
English class: appreciation	-.18	.02	61.74	.000	.84	.80	.87
English class: appreciation x Mark index	.07	.03	7.10	.008	1.08	1.02	1.14
Gender = Male x Eng. class: interest	-.18	.04	6.98	.008	.89	.82	.97
Rebellious vs. Harmonious							
Mark index	-6.81	2.30	8.77	.003	.001	1.219E	.10
Age	-.27	.10	7.52	.006	.76	.63	.93
English class: appreciation	-.08	.03	8.11	.004	.93	.88	.98
School = C	-1.18	.46	6.50	.011	.31	.13	.76
School = D	-.84	.36	5.29	.021	.43	.21	.88
Age x Mark index	.39	.13	9.45	.002	1.47	1.15	1.88
English class: appreciation x Mark index	.10	.03	8.32	.004	1.1	1.03	1.17

The reference category for the multilogit model was the harmonious self system (an ideal default), therefore Table 6.7 shows the likelihood that a student would choose the other three self systems to the detriment of the harmonious one. The negative values in the *B* column express indirect proportion, and the positive

ones direct proportion. Thus, we can see that as age increases, students are less likely to feel submissive to the English teacher, and from the Odds Ratio column we can see that with every unit increase in the independent variable (i.e., for age, with every year), chances that a student may choose the submissive self system for the teacher decrease with 0.7% (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 461). A feeling of being appreciated as a person in the English class has the same effect: the more appreciated, the less likely to choose the submissive rather than the harmonious self system. The interaction effect between interest in the English class and the mark index suggests that students who are interested and are marked fairly (or up) are less likely to be submissive rather than harmonious, whereas students who feel appreciated in class and also marked fairly/ up are more likely to feel submissive. One substantial effect in this category which only just missed statistical significance, was that of boys being more likely to choose the submissive than the harmonious self system for the teacher (B=3.41, Wald χ^2= 3.15, p=.076, OR=30.22).

More substantial effects are found in the other two categories. We can see that male students are more likely to be duplicitous than harmonious with the teacher, the odds ratio being 17 to 1. Also, students who feel appreciated in the English class are less likely to be duplicitous (B=-.18, OR=.80) but those who feel appreciated and also marked up may be duplicitous rather than harmonious to the teacher (B=.07, OR=1.08); and male students who have an interest in the English class are less likely to be duplicitous (B=-.18, OR=.89).

The third outcome category – submissive vs. harmonious – reveals that the higher the mark index, namely the more fairly or generously students feel they are marked, the less likely they are to feel rebellious to the teacher; that older students tend to be less rebellious and more harmonious to the teacher (B=-.27, OR=.76) unless they are marked up (B=.39, OR=1.47); and that students from

school C (B=-1.18, OR=.31) and school D (B=-.84, OR=.43) are less likely to be rebellious than harmonious.

None of the six independent variables in the multilogit model had any effect on girls in particular. (Again, one wonders to what extent the academic subject investigated here was a decisive factor. Perhaps if it were Mathematics, there would be effects on girls but not on boys?)

No significant predictor was found for the classmates self system, but friends, school and gender were found to have some predictive power: $\chi^2(15)$=80.36, p<.001, indicating that the six variables were able to predict to some extent the teacher self system that students chose. The full model anticipated between 8% (Cox and Snell pseudo R^2) and 10% (Nagelkerke pseudo R^2) of the variable variance, and correctly classified 74.3% of cases. However, the multilogit output specifying the number of correctly predicted cases by this model mentions that all 74.3% correct predictions were in the D category (harmonious). A rather weak model predicted about 4% (Cox & Snell and Nagelkerke pseudo R^2) of the variance in the family self system through the effect of school, gender and age: $\chi^2(18)$=34.53, p<.05. The model identified 70% of the cases correctly, although all these were, again, in the D category (harmonious). As the percentage of correctly predicted cases belonged entirely to the harmonious category both for friends and for parents, the reliability of the predictions made for these two contexts is compromised. The reason may be that an overwhelming majority (over 70%) of participants chose the harmonious self system for parents and friends, thus skewing the distribution dramatically. The only relational context for which predictions could be made through multinomial logistic regression is, therefore, the English teacher. Given that this entire investigation concentrates on learning English, this may be yet another indication of the crucial role that the teacher plays in the process.

6.2 Inferential statistics

The procedures conducted for inferential purposes and reported in this sub-section are t-tests for identifying significant sub-sample differences and post-hoc multivariate analysis of variance for determining the effects of perceived assessment fairness.

6.2.1 T-tests

6.2.1.1 Gender differences

Some of the gender differences reported earlier were found to be statistically significant through separate independent-sample t-tests. The significant effects of gender on the self variables can be seen in Table 6.8[20]. From the six variables belonging to the internal selves (private – with subscales – and ideal), only the affective component of the private self was not influenced. For the remaining components, male participants had significantly higher scores: cognitive appraisals, internal reference and external reference, namely they felt more competent in English than girls, although effect sizes were quite small. Girls scored higher on the ideal self than boys, but the effect size and the Power[21] level of the analysis were only just acceptable.

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[20] All confirmed by ANOVA with Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons, which reduces the alpha level when multiple significance tests are executed, thus limiting the Type I error rate (i.e., the error of believing there is an effect in a population when in fact there is none) (e.g., Field, 2009; Howell, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

[21] For all t-tests, Power was calculated using the G*Power 3.1.2 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). It is important to note that the software takes sub-sample size into account when calculating the Power of a test and that, despite the unbalanced gender distribution of my participants, the Power coefficient was often very close to the maximum value of 1.00.

Table 6.8. *Gender differences on self variables*

Self variable	Gender	n	M	SD	SE	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size (Cohen's *d*)	Power (*α*=.05)
Private self (total)	M	289	97.26	22.19	1.31	3.32	864	.001	.24	.91
	F	577	91.67	23.96	1.00					
Private self: cognitive	M	325	24.62	6.42	.36	4.58	944	.000	.32	.99
	F	621	22.58	6.52	.26					
Private self: internal reference	M	327	26.32	6.50	.36	4.63	955	.000	.32	.99
	F	630	24.16	7.03	.28					
Private self: external reference	M	321	23.16	6.56	.37	3.94	942	.000	.27	.98
	F	623	21.38	6.60	.26					
Ideal self	M	329	21.76	4.63	.26	-2.18	958	.030	-.15	.60
	F	631	22.47	4.92	.20					
Public self: teacher	M	329	27.31	6.91	.38	-4.42	608	.000	-.31	.99
	F	624	29.32	6.21	.25					
Public self: classmates	M	324	17.37	7.06	.39	-3.14	944	.002	-.22	.89
	F	622	18.94	7.38	.30					
Public self: best friends	M	324	18.96	7.12	.40	-6.79	938	.000	-.46	.99
	F	616	22.20	6.87	.28					
Public self: family	M	323	27.33	6.83	.38	-3.93	605	.000	-.27	.97
	F	614	29.12	6.24	.25					
Imposed self: teacher	M	321	57.96	10.70	.60	-2.49	570	.013	-.18	.83
	F	623	59.71	9.24	.37					
Imposed self: best friends	M	310	41.09	12.79	.73	-5.31	930	.000	-.37	.99
	F	622	45.74	12.50	.50					
Imposed self: family	M	311	57.26	10.13	.57	-3.72	556	.000	-.26	.98
	F	619	59.78	8.91	.36					

Table 6.8 also shows gender effects on the public selves displayed in the four main relational contexts, all being statistically significant. A moderate effect size[22] (*d*=-.46) indicates that for female participants the public self displayed to friends is more important than it is for male participants, and the same stands true for the other three relational contexts, although effect sizes are smaller

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[22] For all *t*-tests, Cohen's *d* was obtained using the online effect size calculator which can be found at http://www.uccs.edu/~faculty/lbecker/

(d=-.31 for the teacher, -.22 for the classmates and -.27 for the family). Public selves were, then, significantly stronger for girls than for boys. The same effect was detected for imposed selves (apart from the one originating in classmates): girls had significantly stronger imposed selves than boys. Considering these findings, we can see that, in general, girls perceived imposed selves significantly more than boys and displayed significantly stronger public selves than boys.

However, Table 6.8 also shows that male participants felt significantly more competent in English than females, which implies that L2 identity display may have little to do with L2 competence (unless, of course, boys inflate their perceived competence either through genuine subjectivism or from a desire to appear better, closing the circle of unsupported identity display).

The fact that boys had significantly stronger L2 self concepts than girls appeared in a different light when regarded from the perspective of private tuition. Overall there were no gender differences in the length of private tuition students had taken and that a large majority (said they) had not taken any private classes at all. Nevertheless, when selecting just the cases with over two years' tuition outside school (n=94, 30 boys and 64 girls), it emerged that boys had studied English privately more than girls. Although the sample was small and unbalanced, the effect size was large (d=.49) and the Power coefficient, which takes sub-sample sizes into account, was within the accepted limits (P=.71, α=.05). Though with a much smaller sample, this would appear to explain why boys felt more competent in English than girls, supporting the assertion that their linguistic proficiency might originate outside the classroom. However, in the sample for which the gender difference in private tuition was found (94 students), boys *did not* feel more competent in English than girls. No differences were found in the total L2 private self, in the L2 ideal self, in learning orientation, perceptions of the English class or attributions for success and failure. The only differences were in the internal-reference component of the private self (d=.55,

P=.78), showing that boys felt they were better at English than at other subjects more than girls did, and in the actual mark they received (*d*=.65*, P*=.89) and the mark they believed they deserved (*d*=.55*, P*=.78). What is particularly important to note here is that the effect size is larger for the actual mark than for the deserved mark, and that there was no difference in perceived competence (cognitive appraisals) between the boys and the girls who took private classes, nor did they differ in how competent they felt by comparison to their classmates (external frame of reference). This shows that boys who take private tuition may receive unrealistically high marks in English at school.

6.2.1.2 Gender and school effects

Significant gender effects were also shown by the mark index: in science-oriented schools (A, B and D), female students felt they were marked down more than male students did (d_A=.34, d_B=.37, d_D=.40). As expounded in the Discussion (8.1.4), this might indicate the reinforcement of the stereotype that "girls do not do science" doubled by the teaching of English as an academic subject rather than a communication tool, thus resulting in girls in science-oriented institutions being marked down (or just feeling they are marked down) in all subjects, including English. For schools C and E, there was no significant gender difference in perceived assessment fairness and the mark index was close to 0, showing that students thought they were marked fairly objectively.

However, schools C and E were identified as sites of a different type of gender variance: that of the attention that English teachers reportedly gave to their male and female students. First of all, the interest that students manifested in the English class was found to be significantly higher than the interest which English teachers expressed in their students generally. When testing gender effects, no difference was found in the students' level of interest in class. Yet, the teacher's interest and appreciation of students as individuals was found to be

generally slightly higher for boys (*M*=19.65, *SE*=.31) than for girls (*M*=18.83,

SE=.24), *p*<.05, *d*=.14. On closer scrutiny, this difference was found to occur

only in schools C (Music) and E (Modern Languages), and in opposite directions:

in school C, the teacher showed less interest in boys than in girls (*d*=-.88*,*

P=.98), whereas in school E the teacher showed more interest in boys than in

girls (*d*=.58*, P*=.96). As Cohen's *d* shows, both effect sizes were very substantial.

The two schools revealed further gender differences on the internal selves

scales: in school C, boys had significantly lower ideal selves (*d*=-.59*, P*=.79) and

affective appraisals (*d*=-.46*, P*=.61) than girls, while in school E boys had

significantly higher values than girls in three components of the private self:

cognitive appraisals (*d*=.46*, P*=.83), internal frame of reference (*d*=.34*, P*=.62)

and external frame of reference (*d*=.36*, P*=.65). This shows that the teacher's

interest in students has dramatic effects on their perceptions: boys receive more

attention in school E and they feel more competent in English, but they receive

less attention than girls in school C, and they love English less and are

significantly less likely than girls to pursue English-related careers. It is

interesting to note that the teacher's appreciation did not affect love of English in

school E, and the teacher's lack of appreciation did not affect perceived

competence in school C. This may signify that boys who have an intrinsic

interest in English are not influenced by the teacher's attention.

6.2.1.3 Self shown to English teacher

The four categorical variables resulting from the self system vignettes were

recoded into a new dichotomous variable to represent whether students

disclosed to their English teacher what their perceived to be their "true self", or

they displayed a "different self" [23]. As the only self system in which the private

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[23] The two response categories for this variable will be called "true self" and "different self" from now on, but always with the proviso that the "true self" is no more than what students perceived (or declared) to be so.

self is different from the public self is the duplicitous one, it results that students who chose the duplicitous system for the teacher were coded under "different self" (*n*=530), while the participants who chose the submissive, rebellious and harmonious system for the teacher fell under "true self" (*n*=480). (Incidentally, this shows that students were 78% more likely to choose duplicitousness for the teacher than any of the other three systems taken separately.)

Table 6.9. *Effects of self shown to teacher on self- and language learning variables*

Variable	Self shown to teacher	n	M	SD	SE	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size (Cohen's d)	Power (α=.05)
Private self (total)	true	425	96.63	23.07	1.12	3.35	887	.001	.23	.96
	different	464	91.40	23.41	1.09					
Private self: cognitive	true	463	24.10	6.46	.30	3.56	968	.000	.23	.97
	different	507	22.61	6.51	.29					
Private self: affective	true	457	24.27	5.96	.28	4.43	969	.000	.28	.99
	different	514	22.56	6.08	.27					
Private self: internal reference	true	468	25.63	6.70	.31	2.78	981	.005	.18	.88
	different	515	24.41	7.02	.31					
Private self: external reference	true	459	22.56	6.46	.30	2.24	967	.025	.14	.70
	different	510	21.61	6.69	.30					
Ideal self	true	467	22.64	4.74	.22	2.38	978	.018	.15	.76
	different	513	21.91	4.88	.22					
Learning orientation	true	472	23.44	5.70	.26	3.12	993	.002	.20	.93
	different	523	22.32	5.59	.25					
English class: interest	true	458	26.50	4.91	.23	5.79	975	.000	.37	.99
	different	519	24.61	5.25	.23					
English class: appreciation	true	471	21.14	6.00	.28	10.70	929	.000	.68	1.00
	different	517	17.32	5.13	.23					
Actual mark	true	472	8.56	1.16	.05	2.07	989	.038	.13	.65
	different	519	8.41	1.16	.05					
Mark index	true	470	-.26	.85	.04	-2.05	983	.041	-.14	.71
	different	515	-.14	.92	.04					

T-tests were conducted to identify the effects that "self shown to teacher" had on self- and learning-related variables (Table 6.9). Mean scores were significantly lower on the different self than the true self for the following variables: private self (total, cognitive appraisals, affective appraisals, internal and external frame of reference), ideal self, learning orientation, perceptions of the English class (interest and relevance; appreciation as an individual) and mark in English (actual, and mark index).

Of particular importance are the large effect sizes identified for perceptions of the English class, which show that students who display a different self are less interested and find the class less relevant for their own needs (*d*=.37, *P*=.99), their perceived appreciation as individuals in the English class being also significantly reduced (*d*=.68*, P*=1.00). Overall, the statistics presented in Table 6.9 have crucial practical significance: they show that students whose true self is not known to the teacher have lower perceived competence and lower affective affinities with the English language; they also consider themselves weaker in English than other subjects and weaker than their peers in English. They are also less inclined to maintain their learning orientation and the responsibility that comes with it. Their achievement level in English is also impaired slightly (although this is only based on their declared mark – in a system where marks are not always a reliable measure of achievement). What is more, students who showed their true self to the English teacher felt they were marked down slightly more than those who showed a different self (*d*=.14*, P*=.71). This result was corroborated by the MANOVA and the Pearson chi-square tests reported section 6.2.2, indicating that students' genuine participation in the English class cannot be procured by unrealistically high marks, and that deciding to show one's true self or a different self to one's English teacher may not be related to assessment. For such a mark-centred context as my Romanian research site, this is a very significant finding indeed. (Of course, it is also possible that students who show

their true self in class – perhaps a disruptive, over-confident self – might feel they are marked down by the teacher who may tend to reprimand them more often for behavioural rather than academic reasons.)

6.2.1.4 Other two-group effects

Seeking statistical significance for the self system differences between boys and girls, t-tests were also performed on the categorical self variables. For this purpose, 16 binary-coded dummy variables were created for the vignette self categories: 4 relational contexts x 4 self systems (Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Hardy, 1993; Hardy & Reynolds, 2004). The results of the test indicated that boys were slightly more likely to be harmonious with the teacher (d=.14, P=.53), submissive and duplicitous with the friends (d=.26, .28, P= .97, .98) and slightly more duplicitous with the family (d=.14, P=.54) than girls, and that girls were statistically more likely to be harmonious with their friends (d=-.29, P=.99) than boys, although effect sizes were not great, and neither was Power for the teacher and family.

Other gender differences were found for internal attributions for failure, significantly greater for girls (M=3.22, SE=.05) than for boys (M=3.04, SE=.07), t(977)=-2.07, p<.05 (two-tailed), d=-.14, although the Power level did not reach a satisfactory level (P=.55, p<.05). There was also a small significant difference between the Mark index for girls (M=-.26, SE=.91) and for boys (M=-.11, SE=.84), t(977)=-2.07, p<.05 (two-tailed), d=.17, P=.71 (p<.05), indicating that female students felt they were marked down slightly more than male students did. In addition, all imposed selves for the future were significantly lower than the present ones, in the case of the English teacher (d=.77, P=1.00) and family (d=.73, P=1.00) the effect sizes being very large, which is another indication that neither the English teacher nor the parents seemed to think English should play an important role in the students' future. In

other words, these adults seemed to encourage the learning of English-as-an-academic-subject (for school exams and certificates) rather than English-as-a-communication-tool (for later life).

6.2.2 MANOVA and χ^2: Perceived assessment fairness

MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance) revealed that assessment had a significant effect on self- and learning-related variables. We recall that the variable "mark index" was calculated by subtracting the students' usual mark in English from the mark students believed they deserved. Thus, a mark index of 0 indicates that students believed they were assessed fairly, a negative value indicates they were reportedly marked down, and a positive value suggests they felt they were marked up. In order to identify possible effects that these three categories of assessment may have on other variables, the mark index was recoded into a new categorical variable called "assessment", having three possible values: 1. marked fairly. 2. marked down, and 3. marked up. MANOVA results showed that this variable did indeed have a moderate significant effect on self- and learning-related variables: Pillai's Trace V=1.13, F(45,2304)=31.01, p<.001, partial η^2=.38, P=1.00 (default α=.05). Box's test of equality of covariance matrices and Levene's test of equality of error variances were non-significant, confirming the appropriateness of the analysis. The tests of between-subjects effects indicated that all the variables included in the analysis were significantly influenced by perceived assessment fairness, some effect sizes being exceptionally high (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.10. *Effects of perceived assessment fairness on self- and language learning variables*

Dependent variable	Assessment 1=marked fairly 2=marked down 3=marked up	B (mean)	SE	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Effect size (partial η^2)	Power ($\alpha = .05$)	Significant pairwise comparisons[a]
Private self: cognitive	1	24.17	.31	79.29	.000	23.57	24.77	.89	1.00	
	2	22.18	.42	52.31	.000	21.34	23.01	.78	1.00	$1 \neq 2$, $p<.001$
	3	23.15	.60	38.61	.000	21.97	24.33	.66	1.00	
Private self: affective	1	23.61	.29	82.13	.000	23.04	24.17	.90	1.00	
	2	23.24	.40	58.14	.000	22.46	24.03	.81	1.00	--
	3	22.23	.57	39.32	.000	21.12	23.34	.67	1.00	
Private self: internal reference	1	25.75	.32	80.01	.000	25.11	26.38	.89	1.00	
	2	24.32	.45	54.33	.000	23.44	25.19	.79	1.00	$1 \neq 2$, $p<.05$ $1 \neq 3$, $p<.05$
	3	24.00	.63	37.91	.000	22.75	25.23	.65	1.00	
Private self: external reference	1	22.98	.31	74.03	.000	22.37	23.59	.88	1.00	
	2	21.02	.43	48.70	.000	20.18	21.87	.75	1.00	$1 \neq 2$, $p=.001$
	3	22.18	.61	36.34	.000	20.99	23.38	.63	1.00	
Ideal self	1	22.63	.23	100.31	.000	22.19	23.07	.93	1.00	
	2	21.95	.31	69.96	.000	21.34	22.57	.86	1.00	--
	3	22.24	.44	50.11	.000	21.37	23.11	.76	1.00	

(continued)

Table 6.10. *Effects of perceived assessment fairness on self- and language learning variables* (continued)

Dependent variable	Assessment 1=marked fairly 2=marked down 3=marked up	B (mean)	SE	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Effect size (partial η^2)	Power ($\alpha = .05$)	Significant pairwise comparisons[a]
Learning orientation	1	23.29	.27	87.78	.000	22.77	23.81	.91	1.00	
	2	22.28	.37	60.38	.000	21.55	23.00	.82	1.00	1 ≠ 2, p=.08 1 ≠ 3, p=.06
	3	21.94	.52	42.05	.000	20.91	22.96	.69	1.00	
Public self teacher	1	28.57	.30	95.05	.000	27.98	29.16	.92	1.00	
	2	28.72	.42	68.70	.000	27.89	29.54	.86	1.00	--
	3	28.75	.59	48.64	.000	27.59	29.92	.75	1.00	
Imposed self teacher: present	1	31.75	.20	157.77	.000	31.36	32.15	.97	1.00	
	2	31.95	.28	114.15	.000	31.40	32.50	.94	1.00	--
	3	31.49	.40	79.56	.000	30.71	32.27	.89	1.00	
Imposed self teacher: future	1	27.57	.29	94.58	.000	26.99	28.14	.92	1.00	
	2	27.76	.41	68.49	.000	26.96	28.55	.86	1.00	--
	3	27.33	.57	47.70	.000	26.20	28.45	.74	1.00	
Perceptions of the English class: interest	1	25.69	.24	105.58	.000	25.21	26.16	.94	1.00	
	2	25.53	.34	75.45	.000	24.86	26.19	.88	1.00	1 ≠ 3, p<.05 2 ≠ 3, p<.05
	3	23.99	.48	50.14	.000	23.05	24.93	.76	1.00	

(continued)

Table 6.10. *Effects of perceived assessment fairness on self- and language learning variables* (continued)

Dependent variable	Assessment 1=marked fairly 2=marked down 3=marked up	B (mean)	SE	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	Upper	Effect size (partial η^2)	Power ($\alpha = .05$)	Significant pairwise comparisons[a]
Perceptions of the English class: appreciation	1	19.64	.28	70.78	.000	19.10	20.19	.87	1.00	
	2	19.75	.39	51.17	.000	18.99	20.51	.77	1.00	1 ≠ 3, p<.001 2 ≠ 3, p<.001
	3	16.55	.55	30.32	.000	15.48	17.62	.54	1.00	
Internal attributions for success	1	2.53	.07	34.94	.000	2.39	2.67	.61	1.00	
	2	1.96	.10	19.46	.000	1.76	2.16	.33	1.00	1 ≠ 2, p<.001 2 ≠ 3, p<.05
	3	2.54	.14	17.79	.000	2.26	2.82	.29	1.00	
External attributions for success	1	2.79	.08	36.07	.000	2.64	2.95	.63	1.00	
	2	3.18	.11	29.56	.000	2.97	3.40	.53	1.00	1 ≠ 2, p<.05 2 ≠ 3, p=.09
	3	2.78	.15	18.25	.000	2.48	3.08	.30	1.00	
Internal attributions for failure	1	3.05	.06	51.40	.000	2.93	3.16	.77	1.00	
	2	3.38	.08	40.95	.000	3.22	3.54	.68	1.00	1 ≠ 2, p<.05
	3	3.19	.12	27.38	.000	2.96	3.42	.49	1.00	
External attributions for failure	1	2.14	.06	34.50	.000	2.02	2.26	.60	1.00	
	2	1.96	.09	22.72	.000	1.79	2.13	.40	1.00	1 ≠ 3, p<.05 2 ≠ 3, p<.001
	3	2.61	.12	21.39	.000	2.37	2.84	.37	1.00	

In Table 6.10 we can see that out of the three assessment categories, students who believed they were evaluated fairly had the highest scores for: private self (cognitive appraisals, affective appraisals, internal and external frame of reference), ideal self, learning orientation and interest in the English class. However, students who believed they were granted higher marks than they deserved had the lowest scores for learning orientation, interest and appreciation as an individual in the English class. This is a clear indication that learning (mastery), interest and relevance, as well as feeling appreciated in class, are not determined by undeservedly high marks, although they are affected by undeservedly low ones.

It is also quite revealing that, while the ideal self and the affective component of the private self had their highest values associated with fair assessment, unrealistically high marks came with the lowest affective appraisals and unrealistically low marks with the lowest ideal self. This indicates that perceived fair assessment is necessary to sustain students' love of English and their intention to use English professionally in the future. Another revealing finding was that students who believed they were marked down in English had the highest external attributions for success and highest internal attributions for failure, doubled by the lowest internal attributions for success and lowest external attributions for failure. In other words, participants who believed that their competence was higher than the teacher's appraisal were participants who explained their success through unstable factors outside their own control and who internalised the causes of their failure (explaining it through low ability or perhaps low effort). This shows the detrimental effect that unfair marks can have on students, possibly affecting the responsibility they take for their own learning, as well as their perceived competence in English.

A significant association was also found through Pearson chi-square categorical cross-tabulation between the perceived fairness of assessment and the self that participants showed to their English teacher (i.e., what they perceived to be their "true" self or a "different" self): $\chi^2(2)=6.19$, $p<.05$, Cramer's V effect size = .08. The differences, which are represented graphically in Figure 6.3, indicate that students who perceived they were assessed fairly were more likely to display a different self, as were those who believed they were marked up. Participants who believed they were marked down in English were more likely to show their "true" self to the English teacher. This indicates, once again, that a teenager's genuine participation in class may not be purchased with unrealistically high marks. In the case of perceived fair assessment, identity display may simply fall into the apparent default of teacher-related duplicitousness.
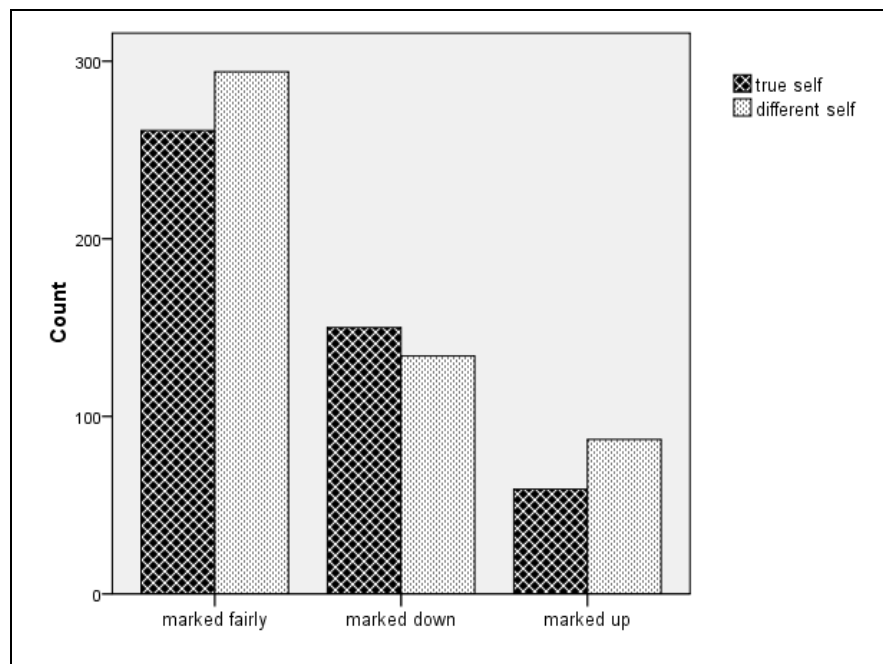
Figure 6.3. *Effects of perceived assessment fairness on the self shown to teacher* (bars represent frequency counts)

Once again, it is also possible that students who show their true self – perhaps an uncomfortable one for the teacher – in the English class might get marked down, or just think they are, because they might normally receive more socio-behavioural rather than academic feedback.

The results of the interview analysis, offering solid support for many of these findings, are presented in the next chapter. The quantitative and qualitative results will then be discussed together in Chapter Eight.

VII. Qualitative results

The role of the 32 interviews in this research project was to illuminate the statistics and provide unexpected insights that would have otherwise been hard or impossible to obtain through a questionnaire. As such, a deductive-inductive approach was adopted for data analysis, seeking confirmation for *a priori* thematic categories (expounded in the Theoretical framework) while at the same time being open to emergent themes (e.g., Miles & Huberman, 1994). Emphasis being placed on qualitative thematic analysis, the interview data were not quantified in any way, especially that not all the participants were asked the same questions from the interview guide (see Appendix B) and not always in the same order. Every individual view expressed in these interviews was appreciated in itself as a source of subjective meaning contributing to the general understanding of the context.

The presentation of the qualitative results will be guided by the four self systems that the students chose on the questionnaire and then justified, illustrated or challenged in the interviews. The four self system types – submissive, duplicitous, rebellious and harmonious – have been described in detail in the Theoretical framework (3.3), as have their four components – the private self, the ideal self, public selves and imposed selves (3.1). The vignettes that students had to choose from for every self system will be included once again below (Table 7.1), but the reader is advised to refer to the Theoretical framework for more details. It must be emphasised that at no time were these notions communicated to the participants, both in the questionnaire and the interviews the four systems being referred to simply as A, B, C, D.

Table 7.1. *Graphic representations and vignettes for the four self systems*

Self system	Graphic representation	Vignette
Submissive		*They know very well what sort of person I am. What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I prefer to give up my intentions and do what they think is better for me. What they want me to do in life is more important than what I'd have liked, so I'll do what they say.*
Duplicitous		*They don't really know what sort of person I really am, and it's not important for me that they do. They would like me to do something else in life than I would, and that's why I'll pursue my own dreams without letting them know. At the same time, I'll give them the impression that I do what they ask me to, even though I'm actually seeing about my own business. I know better.*
Rebellious		*What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I'll pursue my own dreams even if I have to rebel against them. They know me well, I haven't got anything to hide, and if they want to force me into doing something, I am likely to refuse it openly. What they want me to do is less important than what I want.*
Harmonious		*They know me very well and appreciate me for what I am. My dreams for the future are very similar to what they'd like me to do in life. They don't want to impose anything on me, but give me the total liberty to choose, and they always appreciate my decisions about my future. They help me feel really fulfilled.*

Before presenting the qualitative results, short profiles will be included for every participant, which represent both a useful background for the presentation of my qualitative results, and solid support for my proposed self system types.

7.1 Participant profiles

Table 7.2 offers important background information about my 32 interview participants, which will be very useful in understanding their contributions later. The table contains their chosen pseudonym, their gender, age and school, the self system type that they chose for all four relational contexts and a brief summary of their interviews. These summaries were written by myself after the data analysis stage and consist of either direct citation or very close paraphrasing, concentrating on the salience of the students' reference to identity processes. These participant profiles are presented here (rather than in an appendix, for example) because they represent an essential part of my findings that support the four self system types. By comparing the four system types that the students chose for the four relational contexts with their interview summaries, it can be seen quite easily that my Theoretical framework found solid support in the interviews: in most cases, the students' explanations match very closely my hypotheses about the system types, besides demonstrating the complexity of experiencing different self-system configurations in different relational contexts.

For a better understanding of my qualitative results, the reader is advised to read section 7.2 in conjunction with Table 7.2.

Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants*

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
1.	*Aprilie* F 15 A	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	submissive	*Teachers help me learn and become what they want, but what they want is best for me. That's also true for my family. My previous teacher didn't know much about me because she never let me talk and she gave me low marks. Classmates and friends aren't really interested in how well I do in English, but sometimes I'm afraid to answer in class, lest I make mistakes and people laugh at me.*
2.	*Englezu* M 16 A	rebellious	duplicitous	submissive	submissive	*I don't think my English teacher cares about what I want to do in the future; she just teaches her subject. The English class is for relaxation, not taken seriously. I'd be more involved if the teacher were more demanding. I don't talk to my classmates, only my best friends and my family know what I want to do in life. When my parents tell me something, I've got to do it, no grumbling.*
3.	*Boomu* M 16 A	submissive	duplicitous	harmonious	rebellious	*When the teacher says something, I've got to do it – no way out. I don't spend much time with my classmates and they're indifferent. If I were to choose between the teacher and the classmates, I'd always please the teacher: she gives me marks, she teaches me. I also please my family if I please my teacher, and I've got to do it for fear of bad marks. My best friends advise me, but they don't push me to do things.*
4.	*Maestru* M 18 A	submissive	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	*I don't think my classmates need to know what I'm up to – I may say one thing and do another. I've got the full support of my family in what I want to do. I can trust my teacher and family because they've got life experience and they are entitled to influence me, whereas a friend of my age thinks that all that glitters is gold.*
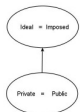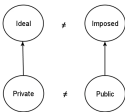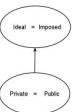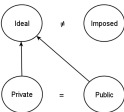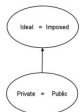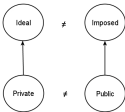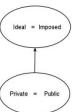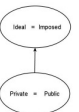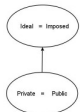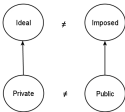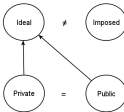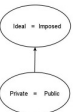
(continued)

Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	Classmates	Friends	Family	
5.	*Mitzu* F 18 A	duplicitous	duplicitous	harmonious	harmonious	*My best friends and my family know what I'm really like – apart from them, I'm not really interested. I don't know and I don't care what my classmates expect of me. I work hard for my English teacher and my parents to be proud of me. I'm not very close to the teacher, so she doesn't know many things about me, but she is kind and gives us high marks so as not to spoil our averages. I feel very good when I can answer her questions.*
6.	*Kiddo* F 14 B	duplicitous	duplicitous	harmonious	rebellious	*I always give a teacher the impression I do what they want. I think all students do this. That's the Romanian system – if you're not on good terms with the teacher, you're in trouble. As for my classmates, I've always said "yes, of course" and gone on to do what I wanted. They want you to make mistakes, so they can laugh. My best friends are much older than me; they understand me and we get on very well. I've always done the opposite of what my parents say: they've got a Communist mentality.*
7.	*Woolf* M 15 B	duplicitous	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	*Nobody should be influenced by anybody else. You can't let your friends decide for you – maybe your family, but not even them. You've got to be the same all the time, otherwise you won't know which person to be when you meet someone – and I'm talking from experience. I want to be perceived as a hard-working student, because I know that first impressions count. I want my teachers to think I'm hardworking, although I'm not. Well, I am, but not as much as they think. I want to create a particular image. As for this interview, I've actually been striving to look more interesting than I am.*
8.	*Pinty* M 16 B	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*I don't know how many teachers really care about students. But you've got to be friends with them, so I give them the impression it's like they say although I still do what I want. But if you're good to the teacher, classmates say you're betraying them. Group influences are dangerous, you can end up doing things you don't want to do. I don't think my friends care about my future, but they know me well – as do my family. I can "negotiate" with my parents, but I always think I mustn't spoil my relationship with them, just like with the teachers.*

(continued)

Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
9.	*Rares* M 16 B	harmonious	duplicitous	harmonious	rebellious	*My English teacher knows me well and doesn't try to impose anything on me (she couldn't, even if she tried). I can always talk to her and she helps me and advises me well. My friends appreciate my decisions and support me. I wouldn't like a friend to tell me what to do. I get on with my classmates, but I haven't really talked to them and I don't think they're interested. Only my family might have a right to tell me what to do, but I won't do a job just because they say so. I've got to like it to be able to be the best I can. Teachers and parents can punish you if you don't work hard.*
10.	*Soare* F 17 B	harmonious	duplicitous	harmonious	harmonious	*I only talk about class matters to my English teacher. She was really shocked when I told her what I'd like to do in the future, that's why I think she doesn't really know me, but she wouldn't push me to do things I don't want to do. My parents and my friends – few as I have – appreciate me and have always been there for me. However, I don't want to show my real face to my classmates, because they are mean and envious, and they can hurt me. I avoid showing them that I am sensitive and let them think I'm a tough person, and never tell them what I do. Let them be shocked when they realise how wrong they've been!*
11.	*Prestige* F 16 B	harmonious	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	*I always do what I want and nobody will ever influence me. My parents leave me total liberty to do what I want, and teachers are there to help us. My classmates can't possibly know what kind of person I really am, as we don't spend much time together, and I don't care what they'd like me to do. I work hard because I want my teacher and family to be proud of me, that's what motivates me. And I'm really pleased when I can show I'm better than others in class.*
12.	*Freddy* M 18 B	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*We've had a new English teacher every year, so it hasn't really mattered for me what they thought. I've just done my duty as a student and that was it. My classmates never have a say: it's my life, my future. We're all on our own. My friends aren't all that interested in my future either, but they give me moral support, and so do my parents. I have no idea what I'd like to do in life, and that's why I've tended to accept what my parents have told me and it's been to my own good.*
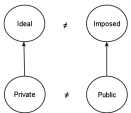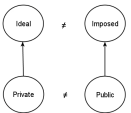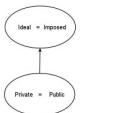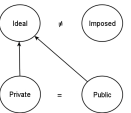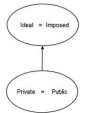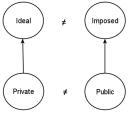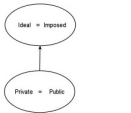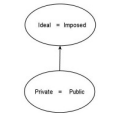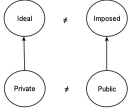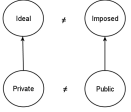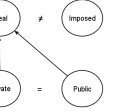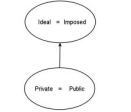
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Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

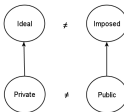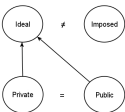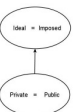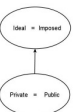| No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
13.	*080081* F 17 B	duplicitous	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	*Although I may have a different opinion, I've learnt it's best to agree with the English teacher, because she gets upset if I don't. There are little cliques in my class, so we're not really close as a group and we hardly ever do things together. I get on well with my friends, but career prospects don't come into it. It's honesty that matters in a friendship, not your future job. There are things that only the family can know, and my parents support me and are always happy for me to do something that I love doing.*
14.	*Anda* F 15 B	rebellious	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*I am what I am and people must get used to me, including my classmates and teachers. I demand more and more of myself because I want to achieve something in life and my parents push me to do the things they know I can do and help me succeed. When the teacher sees you do well, it means they've been good and you feel good in class too. From the very beginning our English teacher asked us about ourselves, what we like, what we don't, what we'd like the class to be like… When you see they're interested, of course you're interested too. I love it.*
15.	*Huggy* M 15 B	harmonious	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*My friends and family have always let me choose what I wanted to do. My parents are very kind and they've created opportunities for me to learn English because they saw I was learning on my own from TV when I was really young. My English teacher has always been my friend and I've always felt great in class. I've got a real passion for English. As for my classmates, they know me as the boy who smiles all the time, but I won't do things they push me to if I don't think they're right.*
16.	*0590* M 19 C	harmonious	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*We've got a really special teacher – different from all the others. She doesn't focus only on English, she knows what we'd like to do and what we'll have to do, and she helps us without stressing us absurdly as others do. I only get on with one classmate, who's also my best friend. Together we want to work really hard to get what we want in life, but the rest of the class don't understand us, so we're seen as different. My friends and I help each other become better. I'm also lucky to have parents who understand and support me.*
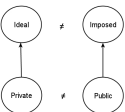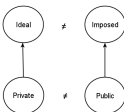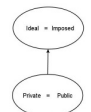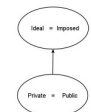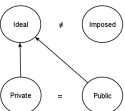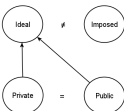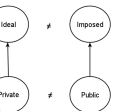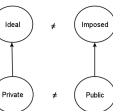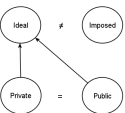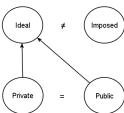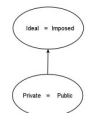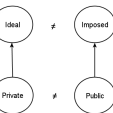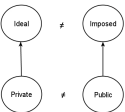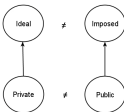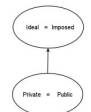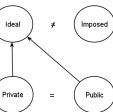
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Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
17.	*418353* M 18 C	duplicitous	duplicitous	harmonious	rebellious	*That's the way education works: the teacher will never know a student as a person. Every new generation brings a change and if the teacher doesn't understand that and tries to manipulate the students, a wall rises between them. I also feel a communication wall between me and my classmates, but they don't matter too much anyway. It's my friends who matter and whom I can open up to. My family understand me and respect my wishes, although they would have liked me to choose a different path in life to the one I have chosen.*
18.	*Airforce* M 17 C	harmonious	duplicitous	harmonious	harmonious	*My English teacher, my best friends and my parents really understand and support me. Nobody should tell you "do this" – they should only help you. But I don't have a good relationship with my classmates, who are envious and don't appreciate the character of a leader. So I've decided not to get involved with them and never tell them about my plans. I am going to do something totally different from what everybody in this vocational school is heading for, but I let them think I will too.*
19.	*Cerul* F 16 C	duplicitous	duplicitous	rebellious	harmonious	*I don't like being influenced by anybody. Teachers generally want us to do something different from what we want, by my English teacher doesn't want to influence us. There are all sorts of little groups in my class and I prefer not to have much to do with them. When they were young, my parents didn't have the liberty to choose their career, and this is why they let me choose what I want. I love them very much.*
20.	*Baubau* F 14 C	submissive	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	*We are very close to our English teacher and she's always been there to advise us when we didn't know what to do. We've seen in time it's good to do what she says, though she can be quite demanding sometimes. Although I get on with everybody, most of my classmates don't agree with the things I want to do, so I don't have much to do with them. My best friends and my family have a very important role in my life. We've got the same dream and this makes the connection even stronger.*

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	Classmates	Friends	Family	
21.	*Cercuri* F 18 E	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	Ideal = Imposed / Private = Public — harmonious	Ideal = Imposed / Private = Public — harmonious	I don't think teachers and classmates are in any way interested in me as a person and we don't have much in common. Teachers can't accept the fact that we are different, so I give the English teacher the impression I'm what she wants me to be, just to avoid problems (which sometimes include bad marks, especially if you don't take private classes with her). My friends and parents support me, although they may not like the idea I'd like to study abroad, away from them.
22.	*Coca-Cola* M 18 E	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private = Public — rebellious	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private = Public — rebellious	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	I can't talk freely to my English teacher, because I was born in democracy and she wasn't. Communist teachers don't recognise our right to have an opinion. My classmates don't know what I want to do in life, because they don't know what they want to do either. Neither my friends nor my parents really know me well. What matters to me is that I live my life the way I want. My parents want me to be a vet and I'm letting them think I will because I don't want to disappoint them, but I know I won't.
23.	*Noiembrie* F 17 E	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private = Public — rebellious	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private = Public — rebellious	Ideal = Imposed / Private = Public — harmonious	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	I've got friends who really know what I want and encourage me, and I do the same. My parents are too busy with their jobs to know me well. We've all got different opinions in my family. People in my class would be happy for me not to go to university and stay below their level. It's all for themselves. To maintain our reputation in class, to be seen a bit better than we are, we often say we'll do a different degree to the one we actually intend to do. My English teacher had a weird reaction when I told her I wouldn't do languages, but I'll stick to my own choice.
24.	*Visator* M 18 E	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private ≠ Public — duplicitous	Ideal = Imposed / Private = Public — harmonious	Ideal ≠ Imposed / Private = Public — rebellious	I've got a strictly professional relationship with my English teachers. They're not so involved so as to care about my future, and I'm not too bothered to share my plans with them. I do my duty as a student and see about my business. Classmates are OK, but I haven't really communicated with many of them. It's natural for one's friends to be supportive and understanding, and so are mine. I've got a cold relationship with my parents – I do my duty, they do theirs. They don't approve of my career choice, but I'll spend 40 years of my life working, so I'll do what I think is best.
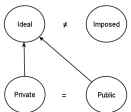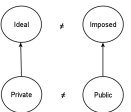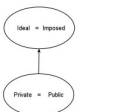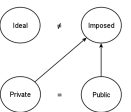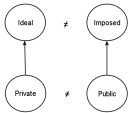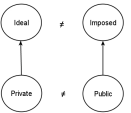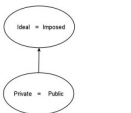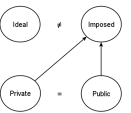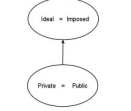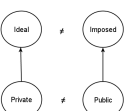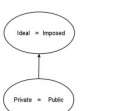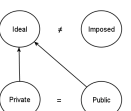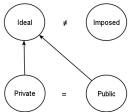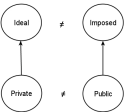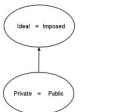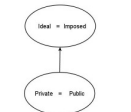
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Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

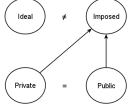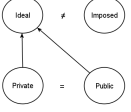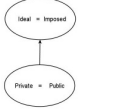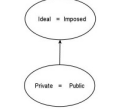| No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
25.	*Foxy* F 16 E	submissive	submissive	harmonious	harmonious	*Being also a form tutor, it's natural for my English teacher to be interested in us all and what we'd like to do in the future. She's a really good teacher. We'll spend four years together in this group, so it's good for classmates to know one another too, although I'm not sure how interested mine are in me. I communicate very well with my best friend and my parents, and they know all my plans and encourage me.*
26.	*2244* F 15 E	rebellious	duplicitous	harmonious	harmonious	*The English teacher is not really interested in every one of us, probably because she's too busy. If a teacher tells me to do a certain degree, I just don't care. I'll do what I want. My classmates don't really know me and they're not interested in me just like I'm not interested in them. Each for himself or herself in my class. My friends and my parents have always supported my decisions, even the wrong ones. You learn from your mistakes and if I want to do something I do it.*
27.	*Titulescu* M 17 E	rebellious	harmonious	harmonious	harmonious	*I think my teacher would like me to do English at the university, but I won't. All students try to please their teacher, because a satisfied teacher is a teacher who's on your side (higher marks, better atmosphere). I do all that, but I won't change my plans for the future. My classmates, friends and family have come to know me well. They know what I intend to do and they're never tried to stop me from anything. I've always done what I wanted and it's been OK so far.*
28.	*Pavel Jr* M 17 E	duplicitous	duplicitous	duplicitous	submissive	*It's not necessary for a teacher to know you as a person. They're there to teach you, that's all. I give mine the impression every teacher expects: that I'm interested (even when I'm not), that I work hard, that I conform to what they say. With the classmates there must be a professional relationship, and not even your friends should know what you're really like. Only your mum and dad should know. Your honesty can be a weapon for other people and there must be a barrier between your personal life and your social life.*

Table 7.2. *Self system types and interview summaries for all 32 participants* (continued)

No.	Participant (gender, age, school)	Self system type				Interview summary
		Teacher	*Classmates*	*Friends*	*Family*	
29.	*FC* M 15 E	rebellious	duplicitous	harmonious	submissive	*I don't know the new English teacher well, but the previous one always wanted me to go to competitions I didn't want, and I never went. My classmates have no right to judge me or to give me marks (which matter most of all) so I don't care much about what they think. I've always wanted to be a model student but it hasn't really worked. So far, only my best friend knows what sort of guy I am. We share all our concerns with each other. My mum always tells me what to do and I realise she's right.*
30.	*Sophie* F 15 E	duplicitous	duplicitous	harmonious	submissive	*Teachers don't really care about us. They don't care that maybe you're ill, or you'd like to do some extra practice – they just come, teach the lesson and they're gone. They're bored, if they ever were interested. But you've got to leave them a good impression. You mustn't look too interested or too clever though, just enough so you're left alone. My classmates will never really know me, but I let them think I'm interested in them. What I am as a person only matters to my family and to myself. You've got to always be careful with the family. Sometimes you've got to do as they tell you or they say you've betrayed them and you haven't observed the family tradition. I love having a lot of trustworthy friends, but we don't talk about school.*
31.	*Piaf* F 18 E	harmonious	duplicitous	harmonious	rebellious	*My English teacher is also my form tutor and she knows me well, she knows my hobbies, she appreciates and encourages me. I don't interact much with my classmates, so we're not close. And with all this competitiveness… My family aren't really involved in my life. They'd like me to study something lucrative, like Medicine, but I want to do Arts. It's strange, but I don't feel I can open up to my family as I do to my friends.*
32.	*Slot* F 17 E	rebellious	duplicitous	harmonious	harmonious	*The English teacher knows me quite well. There have been situations when I didn't agree with her, but I told her and she understood, everything was fine. My classmates think I'm very different from what I am actually, but I'm not too bothered. I live only with my mum and we're very good friends. She encourages and appreciates me for what I am. And so do my friends. Otherwise they wouldn't be my friends, I guess.*

7.2 Self systems

For each of the four self systems, a diagram will be presented which crystallises the main themes that participants kept referring to in their interviews. These diagrams (Figures 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4) are the result of my interpretation of the data.

When specific participants are mentioned, their chosen nickname will be used to identify them, followed by their gender and age between brackets. Table 7.2 offers more background information for each participant, which will facilitate a better understanding of their responses.

7.2.1 Submissive

The submissive self system was governed by a need for authority and guidance from teachers and parents, accompanied by respect for their maturity and experience. Other key concepts associated with it can be seen in Figure 7.1.
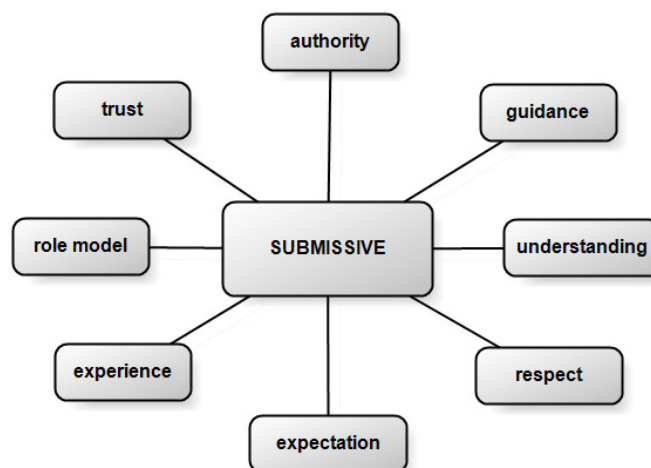
Figure 7.1. *Key concepts associated with the submissive self system*

As opposed to friends and classmates, it was felt that teachers and parents had the right to have expectations and to guide one's path (*Maestru*, M, 18; *FC*, M, 15; *Sophie*, F, 15). They had been through similar experiences themselves and could advise one accordingly (*Pavel Jr*, M, 17), whereas peers were immature, unreliable and believed that "all that glitters is gold" (*Maestru*, M, 18).

Baubau (F, 14) gave a glowing account of her teacher:

> Our English teacher has always been interested in our dreams, and she's always had a word of advice for us at the right moment. And she's been right most of the times. We've often been undecided and she advised us and in the end we saw it was good to do what she said. We've relied on her for so many times, that now we know what she says is right. (…) She's always known how to be both nice and useful. She's always known how to get involved where she needed to. Where she thought it unnecessary, she didn't, and it was very good what she did. (…) We're not the same with all the teachers, but when we see that she shows us this… enormous respect, then we like to do the same.

It is probably exceptional that she maintained this superlative opinion despite believing that she was usually marked down in English. She explained that, although the teacher was "a very, very kind person", she also knew when it was necessary to be strict, so the girl trusted her wisdom. If she were a teacher, she was happy to add, she would do exactly what her teacher did. *Foxy* (F, 16), who liked her teacher's approach very much and admired her for being so successful in helping them understand all English grammar and literature, also considered that strict and demanding teachers were the best, because they helped her pay much more attention in class than lenient ones.

Pavel Jr (M, 17) had very strong views about family. His mum and dad were the only people who knew him well and he believed that was the way it should always be. "It's natural for children to do what parents say", he added, "because they've got a certain age, they've been through the same problems, they know what to do." Conformity, he thought, was the key to a better world:

Nowadays we need capable and responsible people, and my family is an example in this way. I follow their example and I think that's a reasonable way to live in society. I want to be like them, because the family is a model in society and if we all conformed, there would be a better society.

But society could also mean danger, *Pavel Jr* believed:

In your family everything must be in the open, honest. Everything is based on honesty. But in society honesty can cause problems. Your honesty can be a weapon for other people to use against you. And society doesn't need all your information which is useful in the family. There must be a barrier between your personal and your social life.

Pavel also felt he needed the similarly high expectations that teachers and parents were entitled to have of him, in order for him "to conform and get up there". But for these expectations, he could never "get his act together and get up there", he said.

Other interviewees also thought there was no questioning the teachers' or the parents' authority, whether for genuine or instrumental reasons:

With my best friends I could negotiate things, but not with my family. That's something you've just got to do! (*Englezu*, M, 16)

When a teacher asks you to do something, you can't say no! It's the teacher who gives you your marks! (*Maestru*, M, 18)

I generally try to please the teacher, not the classmates, 'cause it's not them who give me marks, it's not them who teach me. (*Boomu*, M, 16)

Boomu too emphasised the link between the teacher's and the parents' expectations:

I try to please my family. If I please my family, I necessarily please the teacher too – if I do my homework, work hard, get good marks and am active in class. [What makes you do that?] It's the fear of bad marks, there's nothing else I fear. Just the marks.

Sophie (F, 15) also thought one had to please one's family, though for different reasons. Recollecting her account conjures up the endearing image of a girl sighing pensively:

> Parents… Oh dear! You've always got to take care of them… Sometimes you've got to do what they say, otherwise they think you've betrayed them or say you haven't observed the family tradition. So you've got to do what they say.

Whatever their reasons, interviewees who were submissive to the English teacher or to their parents appeared to be happy and proud to be so, hardly any negative feelings being mentioned.

7.2.2 Duplicitous

The duplicitous self system stood under the sign of duty: a reluctance to "play the game" doubled by a conscious decision to do so. Other key concepts that the participants associated with this system can be seen in Figure 7.2.
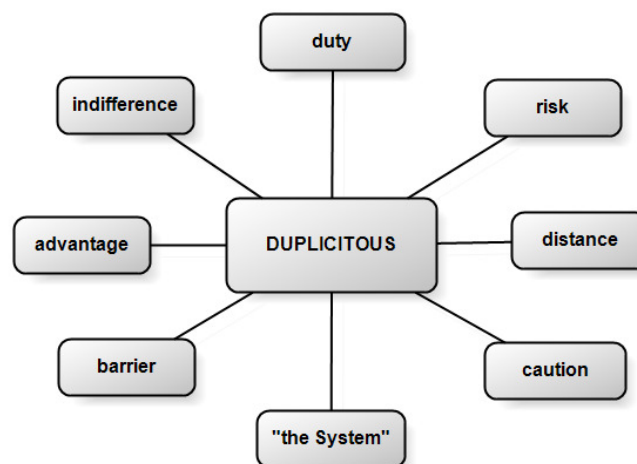
Figure 7.2. *Key concepts associated with the duplicitous self system*

Many interviewees felt duplicitous to their English teacher for a variety of reasons, the most important appearing to be the teachers' lack of personal involvement and students' fear of reprisal.

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A recurrent motif was that the English teacher was not interested in students as individual persons, and while many agreed the main reason was lack of time, every teacher having to work with dozens or even hundreds of students in a school, they still thought that if the teacher knew a few things about each of them the information could be incorporated into the lessons, making them more relevant and enjoyable. *Freddy* (M, 18) said he had had a new English teacher every year, which made it impossible to bond and really care about each other (*Anda*, F, 15, said the same but she chose the rebellious system). *Sophie* (F, 15) and *Woolf* (M, 15) thought teachers were bored, their enthusiasm had run dry and they were only there for the money, simply waiting for retirement.

Several interviewees attributed the teachers' indifference to the generation gap and also a "mentality gap". It was rather interesting to see that these students (*Kiddo*, *418353*, *Coca-Cola*), the oldest of whom had been born four years after the fall of Communism, believed they could not communicate with their teachers because the latter were Communist. *418353* (M, 18) thought this was the origin of the "wall" that prevented genuine communication between teachers and students:

> There's a wall between the student and the teacher. You can't really reach the student. (…) Of course, the blame lies on both sides. Students can't open up for a certain reason – I don't know what that is. But they've both created this wall, both the teachers and the students, I think. [Why?] Because… I suppose every generation brings a change. Maybe an improvement to the previous generation, or just a change. And if you, as a teacher, can't understand this and try to manipulate the students – or maybe not to manipulate them, but to introduce them into the system that you're familiar with, of course you get this rift. And students don't agree with this and they get even further away. I suppose this may lead to defiance… Yes, you can get there. Or simply that "can't be bothered" attitude…

Teachers' alleged boredom and failure to adapt to a new generation of learners also apparently translated into teaching routines that many of the duplicitous

students found demotivating. Exercises on the board and question-and-answer sessions seemed to leave little time for fluency practice, especially that the teacher seemed to talk more than the students (often in Romanian, according to *Visator*):

> Some sit at their desk and dictate and we write stuff for 50 minutes without stopping. (…) Generally, we don't get a chance to speak in the English class – maybe we'll say a word or so in an hour. It's the teacher who talks, talks, talks, and we just sit there… I mean, if we could speak too, if we could show that we know… Or even if we don't know, at least we learn, as long as we can speak… (*Kiddo*, F, 14)

> I'd love something more interactive. I mean, not the teacher sitting at her desk, reading the question, and you answering from your desk. Right, [mark] 10 for an answer! Or for some ticks! That's how we'd develop our oral skills too, which we don't really… (*080081*, F, 17)

> My idea of a perfect English lesson? I can't really describe it, because we've hardly ever had one. I guess one in which we speak freely, in which we express our views on things. Certainly not a class in which we write exercises on the board! (*Freddy*, M, 18)

Private tuition was sometimes thought to influence the teachers' attitude in class too. *Cercuri* (F, 18) had a teacher who only seemed to invest time and attention in the students who took private classes with her:

> My English teacher has never been interested in me. (…) She's got her pet students – who aren't necessarily good at English! It's a question of private tuition. Nearly half the class takes private classes with her. The other half doesn't really matter much.

For *Sophie* (F, 15), a similar experience had a strong emotional impact in elementary school:

> I really loved English and was trying to learn more, but she would say to me: "Oh, you're bound to get it wrong, I won't have you answer this question!" And she always asked the best pupil, who was her private tutee, because it was clear he knew the answer. I used to feel like a real weirdo who didn't know anything and they knew everything. [Did you think you'd get it wrong when you

put your hand up to answer?] I did, but I thought if I got it wrong then she'd correct me and I'd learn something new. But she didn't. [And you still put your hand up...] I did, and at some point she sent me to the board to write it up and when she saw I'd got it right she said I'd cheated. I felt like a right crook then. Really left out, I felt.

Another recurrent justification that interviewees gave for being duplicitous to the English teacher was their fear of reprisal. *Kiddo* (F, 14) and *Cercuri* (F, 18) thought it was typical of "the System" for teachers to bear grudges and take revenge by granting bad marks if one got into trouble with them. It was safer to be on the teacher's side and to create the right impression from the very beginning (*Woolf*, M, 15), or certainly to do your "duty" and avoid conflicts (*Freddy*, M, 18; *Visator*, M, 18). *Pinty* (M, 16) explained that being friends with the teacher was always a big advantage when he wanted to skip a class without being put down as an absentee.

Fear of retaliation sometimes prevented hard-working students from making the best of their English class. The 17-year-old girl who chose the nickname *080081* told of a situation when she got scolded really badly by her teacher for making a mistake in a lesson when they were practising a newly-taught concept, and concluded: "That's what makes people look up the answers at the back and fill them in before the lesson – and what have you done with that?" *Kiddo* (F, 14) also said that sometimes they were frightened to put their hands up and ask a question or confess they had not understood something.

Although *418353* (M, 18) blamed both the teachers and the students for this communication "wall", there were indications that students regretted not being able to talk to teachers openly. Some had tried but did not meet with the desired response:

I've noticed it's best to agree with the teacher, although sometimes I've got a different opinion. Because she often clings on to her view and I can't convince her that this is my opinion and my choice. Career options, for example. Maybe

that's what I like, but she doesn't like it and is against it. It's a subjective thing. I've tried, but I've realised it's not worth it. (*080081*, F, 17)

I'll normally tell you straight all I've got to say, and it's a compromise for me having to hide the truth and to take roundabout routes. I hate this. But I've got to do it to avoid conflicts, especially with the teachers but also with my parents. (*Coca-Cola*[24], M, 17)

Most of the people who felt duplicitous to the English teacher appeared to be responsible and serious about their own learning. *Cercuri* (F, 18) and *Sophie* (F, 15), who were both unhappy in class, emphasised that they loved English and would like to learn as much of it as possible. However, there was also a risk that the negative perception of a teacher might lead to a negative perception of their subject. *Kiddo* (F, 14) explained:

Well, you've noticed that the Romanian education system is very defective. (…) We don't learn the lesson from the classroom, which is very bad! (…) You go home to learn a lesson which maybe you're sick of, because maybe you're sick of the teacher… That's what usually happens: when you don't like a teacher, you don't like the subject they teach either.

Some participants justified their duplicitous attitude through their desire to take English seriously, which appeared to be at odds with the teacher's and classmates' pursuits. A teacher stuck to unchallenging routines because the class was specialising in French so she thought they were not interested in English (*Cercuri*), another used most English classes for administration and form tutoring matters (*Kiddo*), while another one used the English grammar class to discuss superstitions – talking in Romanian (*Visator*). Similar frustrations were generated by classmates, who appeared unwilling to get involved and penalised the students who did: "When I showed in class that I love English, they all went: 'Oh, yeah! Teacher's pet! She takes private classes!'" [which she said she did not] (*Soare*, F, 17).

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[24] However, *Coca-Cola* chose the rebellious system for the teacher.

Of the participants who were duplicitous with their classmates and friends, most agreed that these were not interested in how well they did in school – friends because friendships should be based on honesty, not on how good one is at English, and classmates because they did not communicate enough to become interested in one another. The fact that classmates would only be with them for a few years and that friends may or may not be for life made most participants feel that friends and classmates were certainly not interested in their future. In the classroom context, competitiveness was also an important factor. *Soare* (F, 17) felt that her classmates wished her to fail because they could not stand her being good at many subjects, *Piaf* (F, 18) and *Aprilie* (F, 15) thought that students were afraid to speak in class for fear others might laugh at them and *Kiddo* (F, 14) explained this though her peers' alleged immaturity: "They want you to make mistakes, so they can laugh. They're still children, and that's what children do*."* Competitiveness was also illustrated by two participants who enjoyed appearing better than their peers:

> I love it when I see that I know more than others and I can stand out. (…) I love reading out in class, because many of them can't pronounce some words and that makes me stand out. (*Prestige*, F, 16)

> When people don't know the answer to a question, I really get out of my way to answer it, because for me it is easy and I think: "Ah, come on, you don't know that?!" So then I'm always with my hand up. (*Airforce*, M, 17)

Whether because they spent too little time together and did not get the chance to know one another well *(Prestige*, *418353*, *Englezu*, *Woolf)*, because they were not encouraged to do projects or trips together (*080081*), because classmates were immature and unreliable (*Maestru*, *Kiddo)*, mean and envious (*Soare*, *Airforce*), or simply just indifferent (*Rares, Cercuri, 2244*), it was generally felt to be safer if classmates did not know one well. *Soare* (F, 17) summarised the precaution expressively: "I've got this idea in my mind that if I show them who I

am it can turn against me. So I'd rather show them the person I choose to show, and let them be shocked when they realise they were wrong and I wasn't!"

The interviewee who called himself *418353* (M, 18) justified his indifference to peers by a lack of desire to integrate with their group, suggesting – in my ulterior interpretation – that when one wants to be accepted into a circle one has to "wear" a particular face:

> I'm not keen on being accepted to their group, so I don't feel the need to prove anything. If I wanted to be accepted into the classmates' group, I'd have to wear a face which isn't mine, and that's not worth it.

There were only two cases of duplicity in the family, both related to career choices. *Coca-Cola* (M, 18) felt nobody apart from himself really knew what sort of person he was and both his English teacher and his parents wanted him to choose a different career from what he wanted. Because his parents wanted him to be a vet, he let them think he was considering becoming a vet – "so as not to let them down" – although he knew for sure he would not do that. Confronted with a similar problem, *Noiembrie* (F, 17) felt that only her friends knew her well and justified the communication break-down in the family through insufficient time spent together:

> Parents are busy with their jobs and with housework. They don't know you as you really are and can often be wrong about you. My mum and dad want different things to what I want – we've all got different opinions in my family. For example, my dad wants me to become a teacher because I loved playing teacher with the teddy bears and dolls when I was little. My mum wants me to do Medicine, but the problem is I hate blood and I'm not strong enough to do Medicine. (…) I give my mum the impression that I'm gathering stuff about Medicine, and my dad knows I'm considering getting into teaching[25], but it's hard to work with children – I can see it in my own group how hard it is for the teacher to keep everyone afloat.

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[25] She was actually planning to get a degree in Journalism.

Not everybody agreed with every aspect of vignette B (duplicitous). *Cercuri* (F, 18), for example, felt very strongly that the teacher and classmates would and should never be interested in her future. This would mean that they asked or expected something of her, which, in her view, was not the case – certainly not for the future. *Pinty* (M, 16), in turn, took issue with "I know better" in the vignette, adding that he did not think he knew enough at his age. He also disagreed with the sentence "it's not important for me that they know what sort of person I am", explaining that, in the teacher's case, this was very important for him although apparently not for the teacher. However, he still felt that vignette B was more suitable than the others.

7.2.3 Rebellious

Interviewees who chose the rebellious self system appeared in many ways similar to the duplicitous ones, but while they acknowledged other people's differences and expectations, they chose to go their own way. *Visator* (M, 18) expressed this view in unambiguous terms:

> If I'm told, "Look, we want you to do this and this, and we expect great things from you", I will say, "Fine, but I'll still do what I was going to do anyway, because it's for myself that I do it and I'll do what I feel is best".

Some recurrent themes in these interviews are shown in Figure 7.3.

Career choices seemed to generate most problems, teachers and parents encouraging the teenagers to pursue their own professions. *Coca-Cola* (M, 18) explained with saddening pragmatism why he was not going to follow his teacher's advice and become a teacher of English himself or a translator in Romania, where salaries are so meagre and it is so hard to make ends meet. *Noiembrie* (F, 17) had an adverse reaction from her teacher, when she told her she wanted to study Journalism and not Foreign Languages.
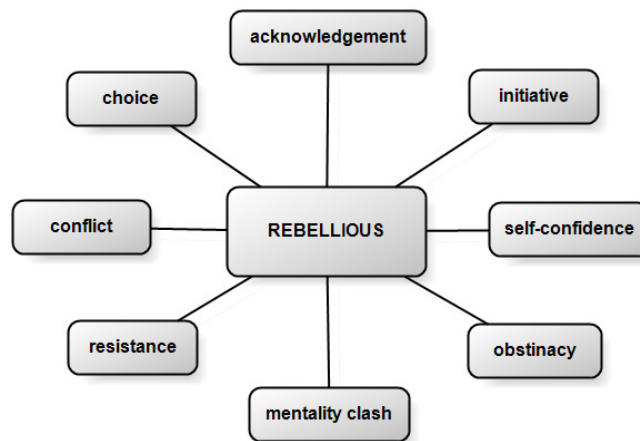
Figure 7.3. *Key concepts associated with the rebellious self system*

The girl with the nickname *2244* also stressed that she would not do the degree her form teacher wanted her to do and *Titulescu* (M, 17) felt the same. A younger *FC* (M, 15) expressed his defiance by refusing to go to the English competitions his teacher wanted him to go to. *Englezu* (M, 16) and *Noiembrie* (F, 17) felt "rebel" was too hard a word when it came to the English teacher. "But you've got to follow your own dreams" – the girl said – "because it's not the teacher who goes to university for you. You will go and you know yourself best of all".

Visator (M, 18) spoke about the "professional" relationship that he had with his parents, each doing his or her own "job" in the family. He explained:

> They know, of course, what I intend to do, but I couldn't say they support me, because they don't. But I'll do what I think is best, because after all I'll spend 40 years of my life doing that job. They'd like me to do what they've done, but I don't want that, because I'm not attracted to it and we're different sorts of people. (…) There have been conflicts with my mum because of that. It's normal for a mum to want her child to succeed and if she's been successful to want the same thing for him, but she may not realise that he wants something else and he won't be happy going her way. (…) I have chosen a career that is right for my personality, my skills and my inclinations.

Rares (M, 16) had had difficulty convincing his parents to let him move to a different school when he realised school B was not right for him. Although he had given up in the end, he was determined to go to a university of his choice, justifying it: "After all, it's me who's going to do that job – I've got to like it in order to feel motivated to be the best I can*."* Although she did not feel too pressurised, *Piaf* (F, 18) also stated that her parents wanted her to get a degree in Medicine, whereas she was attracted to arts and puppeteering. She mentioned later that she did not feel she could open up in her family as she did with her friends and thought this might be strange. *Cerul* (F, 16) said she had a friend who kept pestering her about becoming a doctor, but she was not going to give in: "Yes, I'll do what I want – I'll lead my own my life, nobody will lead it for me."

Communism was again mentioned. *Coca-Cola* (M, 18) felt he could not express his honest point of view in class because the teacher was Communist. Having been born in democracy, he maintained, he respected people's right to a free opinion, but she did not. Because he often preferred to state his view openly, he had had fights and conflicts with teachers ever since he started school, 12 years before. At the end of the interview, he expressed his hope that the results of this study would not be ignored by Romanian teachers, like so many others had been, and added: "That's Romania for you! Many years must pass before something changes."

Kiddo (F, 14) believed her mother was Communist and admitted she had the "sick mentality" to always do the opposite of what her mum said. "The more parents restrict you, the more obstinate you become", she explained. She also felt pressure from the family to be like her cousin, who had just been accepted to study Medicine at the university. *Kiddo*, however, wanted to travel the world, do bungee jumping and save the whales, feeling that her own expectations of herself were far more important than the teachers' or the parents' expectations.

Some students who chose the rebellious vignette for the teacher also expressed their disappointment with the English class. *2244* (F, 15) was sad because she had just been moved to an inferior group and said that the teacher sometimes shrieked angrily and prevented her from concentrating. (Interestingly enough, her best friend – *Foxy* – a girl from the same class, thought the English teacher was wonderful.) *FC* (M, 15) said he only had good marks in English because every time they got a test they were informed beforehand, so they could prepare: "This way, I can study, but I only study that chapter, or that lesson that I need, and that's why I get a high mark. If she were to assess me on the whole syllabus, it would be a disaster*."* The girl with the nickname *Slot* (17) claimed that the English teacher mostly spoke Romanian in class, they did not get enough fluency practice and they were not pushed hard enough to get involved in the lesson. In turn, *Englezu* (M, 16) contrasted his present teacher to his previous one:

> Our English teacher in elementary school took great interest in me. I was the second best in class and I really cared, and she talked to my parents and was interested. She gave me extra work to do and all that. Here, the teacher is not very demanding. (…) Other teachers get us to work hard even if their subjects are not important for our specialism, but English is like… well, let's just do a little thing or two… (…) I love discovering things, but we can't discover much in the English class, because the teacher is not too bothered. (…) There's a monotonous atmosphere: the teacher rambles on, we see to our own business…

Interestingly, he was surprised to be selected for the interview. He had written on the questionnaire that he was interested, but he then confessed that he had not expected the study to be conducted seriously. (One wonders whether he had got to a point where he thought no English teacher was "too bothered" with him at all.)

When it came to classmates or friends, most interviewees felt that rebelling against them was a non issue. *Freddy* (M, 18) explained: "Let's say that a

classmate tells me to go with him to I don't know what university, but maybe I want to go to a different one. (…) It's obvious I'll do what I want. It's my life, my future." *Woolf* (M, 15) gave a similar answer: "I can't let a friend tell me, for example, to go to the Economics high school with him 'cause it's nicer there, when I know I'm much better than that and I can get into a better high school than that!" (Incidentally, "the Economics high school" he was talking about is school A in this project, which offers a useful insight into the inter-school perceptions.)

Pinty (M, 16) spoke about peer pressure pushing one not to do what the teacher said in class so as not to appear better compared to those who created conflicts. He also offered a noteworthy glimpse into a more social aspect of peer pressure:

> At the end of the day, I'm only gonna be with these guys for four years and my future doesn't depend on them, so I'm not afraid to say "no, I don't agree with this". For example, most of them smoke and flaunt it, so when you spend a lot of time with them you feel the pressure to take up smoking too. It's not that they tell you to do it, but you know it would just feel right if you started smoking to be like them. But, no, I'm against it. I will never start smoking!! I hope.

FC (M, 15) did not feel he had been equally successful in his resistance:

> I've always wanted to be a model student, but it hasn't really worked so far. I mean, not to be a rascal, to get reasonable marks, that sort of thing… But I can't always behave the way I want! You see, if I sit next to a classmate, he cracks a joke, I crack another and… I just lose my ideas. I do everything the gang way, as it were. [And you think that's in opposition to the model student you were talking about?] Yes, I think it is.

0590 (M, 19) had thought that in a Music school (C) everybody would be passionate about music and willing to work hard. However, he felt disappointed that he and his best friend (*418353*, M, 18) were considered strange because they wanted to become concert performers and were willing to practise for long hours instead of going to clubs. They were always criticised that they worked too hard and never had fun, he said, but their dream to reach high performance

levels was much stronger than their peers' attitude. *Noiembrie* (F, 17) thought that her classmates would be happy for her not to go to university, so that she stayed below their level. She explained this by being in a group in which they were all "each for themselves", with no collegial feelings. This is why she said she never thought twice when it came to rebelling against them. "I'll either have it my way or not at all", she added.

Nevertheless, many of the students who chose vignette C appeared quite happy in their respective relational contexts and said they would only rebel in the hypothetical case that they were forced to do something they felt was not right: *Aprilie* (F, 15), *Huggy* (M, 15), *Prestige* (F, 16), *Boomu* (M, 16). *Slot* (F, 17) chose the rebellious system for the English teacher for the same reason, but mentioned that in the past, when she expressed different views, the teacher had accepted them without any problem. Another example is *Anda* (F, 15), who admired her English teacher for asking them about their likes and dislikes from the very beginning, so that she would know how to approach the class. *Anda* thought this had an important effect on the students' motivation, who would otherwise think: "If the teacher's not bothered about what I want, why would I care about what she wants?" She felt that when the teacher was interested, students too were interested.

7.2.4 Harmonious

Genuine communication seems to be the thematic thread running through the interviews of the students who chose the harmonious self system, whether with their peers or with their teacher and families. Other recurrent themes are represented in Figure 7.4.
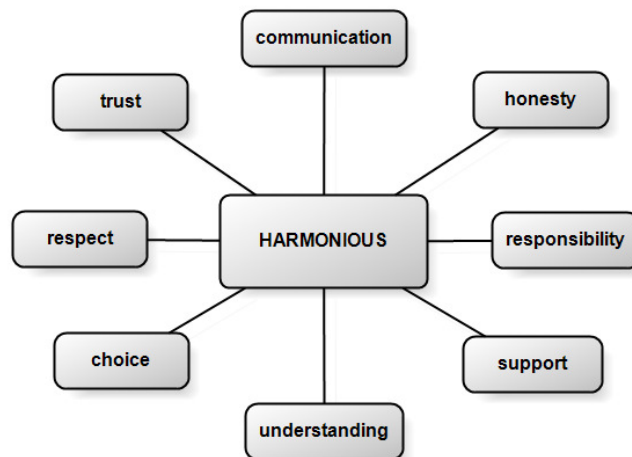
Figure 7.4. *Key concepts associated with the harmonious self system*

Perhaps considering it the default option, participants did not speak at great length about the harmonious system in their family, but many of them emphasised that they had their full support in everything they decided to do: *Soare* (F, 17), *Airforce* (M, 17), *080081* (F, 17), *Huggy* (M, 15). *Cerul* (F, 16) explained that her parents were determined to give her all the freedom of choice and all the support she needed because they had never had these when they were her age. On the contrary, their own parents had forced them to choose careers that they considered suitable, so *Cerul*'s mum and dad promised themselves never to do the same to their children. Similarly, *Huggy* (M, 15) benefitted from his family's generous support in learning English because he had shown a gift for it since he was very young and his parents, who did not speak any English, appreciated this and encouraged him. Expressing similar gratitude for his family's help, *Pinty* (M, 16) nevertheless spoke about a silent pressure that he perceived to come from his parents, which made him feel that, if he wanted their support, he had better do what they told him. Paradoxically, he felt it was his acceptance of their decisions for him that determined them to let him make his own. However, just like with teachers, he explained, it was always safer to be friends with your parents.

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Kiddo (F, 14), *Piaf* (F, 18) and *Noiembrie* (F, 17) felt their best friends understood and knew them much better than their families did. Others (*Titulescu*, M, 17; *0590*, M, 19; *Pinty*, M, 16; *Freddy*, M, 18; *Sophie*, F, 15; also *Noiembrie*) considered that, in order to maintain harmonious relationships with both friends and family, when they were in the same situation with both, great care was necessary in displaying a certain type of behaviour usually expected by parents. *Freddy* and *Pinty* felt they owed their parents the respect to do that. *Titulescu*, who felt harmonious with his classmates, friends and family, but rebellious with the teacher, justified why he believed that in similar classroom situations friends should always understand if one chose to please the teacher rather than them:

> Any student tries to please the teacher, right? Because a satisfied teacher is a teacher who's on your side. [For…?] For marks, for better understanding in class… (…) Classmates and friends can understand, it's normal for them not to have very high expectations, whereas teachers and parents always want us to reach our maximum potential. Peers can understand more easily… not necessarily failure, but… not having such high expectations they are… more understanding? A friend should never ask too much of another friend.

An interesting connection emerges here between expectations and an understanding attitude, which seemed to be indirectly proportional. This was apparently supported by most harmonious students, for whom an understanding attitude appeared to obliterate the very notion of expectation. *Soare* (F, 17), *Anda* (F, 15) *Piaf* (F, 18) and *0590* (M, 19) emphasised that the only expectations they responded to were their own, which simply coincided with what other people wanted them to do. *Airforce* (M, 17) made sure the message was clear:

> They're not really expectations. We simply think in the same way. So if my parents want something, I happen to want the same. Although I do listen to advice! [Are these expectations that you have negotiated together?] Not negotiated together! They are my personal expectations and… theirs. The same as my parents' and teachers'.

In the absence of a developmental study, it is impossible to discern to what extent this is the result of internalisation and what the cause and effect are in the relationship between non-salient expectations and an understanding attitude. (The question, however, would be well worth pursuing.) *418353* (M, 18), who did not feel harmonious either with the teacher or with his family, and for whom their expectations were quite prominent, suggested another intriguing perspective to internalisation: "I'll mostly do what they expect me to do because, in a way, that helps me too. I mean… doing something for somebody else… trains me, in a way."

Although friends were expected to be more understanding, their role was sometimes uncertain. (Classmates whom the interviewees felt harmonious with were also considered friends.) First, friends were not thought to care whether one was good at English or at school, in general: *Aprilie* (F, 15), *Pinty* (M, 16), *Airforce* (M, 17), *Sophie* (F, 15), *Rares* (M, 16), *Slot* (F, 17). (Perhaps this raises the question to what extent English is seen as an important part of these students' lives, or just another academic subject.) Second, friends were not always felt to care about one's future. As *Pinty* explained, the length of a friendship was often uncertain, which made him feel the vignette was not right to refer to the future too:

> "My dreams for the future are very similar to what they'd like me to do in life" – this isn't really suitable for friends. Because I honestly don't know how interested they are in my future. I mean, we're friends at the moment, but you never know how long a friendship will last. You can have a really ugly fight with a guy and he stops being your best friend. [So it applies more in the present?] Yes, yes, that's it!

Nevertheless, *Kiddo* (F, 14) offered important insights into the influence that a peer group can have on a teenager. Emphasising that she thought this was something bad, she told me that all her friends played the guitar, which she had hated at first. However, "in order to integrate better into this group", she was

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planning to buy a guitar and start practising. Asked whether now she liked the idea of playing the instrument better or she would do it just for the group, she answered that although at first she had hated it, she was now getting used to it and thought it was "OK". Talking about this group of friends, she also mentioned: "They really understand me and I can be myself with them", which may suggest interesting differences between being "an individual in a group" and being "a group of individuals". Like most interviewees who had chosen the harmonious self system for their peers, *Kiddo* stressed that if her friends – all much older than her – wanted to do something that she thought was wrong, she simply did not take part. She mentioned occasional drug consumption as an example. Considering the whole situation – and also remembering *Pinty*'s earlier account of pressure to start smoking which ended in a strong "I will never start smoking!!" followed by a not-so-strong "I hope" – we can see that being harmonious with one's peers poses important risks in certain situations, especially that internalisation is probably more likely to occur in a harmonious self system.

The most emotionally laden accounts of harmonious systems were, however, inspired by the English teachers. All the seven interviewees who chose vignette D for the teacher emphasised the importance of being known as an individual in class, which they thought formed the basis for effective pedagogy. *Airforce* (M, 17) explained:

> I've always tried to be very open and very honest in the English class. So my teacher knows all my good and bad sides. She knows what I'm up to, what sort of personality I've got… [How do you think this influences your motivation in class?] In the first place, she can be a better pedagogue through this. If she knows what motivates the pupil, she can use this as a weapon – in a good sense. So she can motivate that pupil by knowing his personality. And I think that's what every teacher should do: try to know the pupil's personality and then try to… manipulate that personality in a very good direction, or at least a good one. And I think this would motivate any pupil.

The condition, of course, is that teachers are interested in students as individuals and, in turn, students are genuine. In this way, teachers can offer them personalised advice when they are confronted with difficult decisions about their English and about their future, as *Rares* (M, 16) and *0590* (M, 19) said it had happened to them. (To *Soare*, F, 17, too, though only in school-related matters.) Other interviewees, who had chosen different systems for the teacher, also thought this was essential, although it did not really happen in their case: *Noiembrie* (F, 18), *Foxy* (F, 16), *2244* (F, 15), *Titulescu* (M, 17). For *Huggy* (M, 15) being genuine in class could not be more natural, being also accompanied by a positive attitude to doing what the teacher asked him to do:

> In the English class, I let my guard down, as it were. And I always feel good, I always try to feel good and… umm… respond well to what I'm asked to do. If, for example, the teacher asks me to describe my personality, I answer very honestly, usually in a jokey way, and everybody loves that. [So you feel you're appreciated for what you are…] Yes, I am!

He also made it clear that his genuine and open attitude in class was heavily dependent on the teacher:

> It depends on the teacher. If it's a good teacher, who knows how to approach the students, who also jokes with them and knows what to do… then I am really pleased to answer correctly, to work hard and all that. But if the teacher's not like that – mm, not really. [How would you define a good teacher?] One who has a sense of humour, who knows his or her subject well, who knows how to connect with the students, who understands them… That's about it!

Incidentally (or perhaps not), *Huggy* also confessed he had a real passion for English, which meant that every time he met somebody who spoke the language he started talking to them immediately, finding it very easy to "connect". He was certainly one student for which English played an important part in his life! *Airforce* (M, 17), who appeared similarly fortunate, explained that relevance for one's life was the whole point of education:

> [If I were a teacher], I'd give many life examples. I'm usually more motivated when I see the consequences in other people's lives. The fact that they didn't work hard, or that they didn't pay attention in class. (…) And we've got a teacher who doesn't only focus on teaching English, she teaches us how to live, she teaches us good manners, and all sorts of things that are related to life. And then I feel much more motivated – I mean, look, that's really gonna help me, I can do something with that thing! (…) That's what school does to you: it teaches you how to live. It teaches you how to speak, how to be a person in society. And the whole thing boils down to society. Nobody would learn anything if they didn't live in social groups.

Anda (F, 15), who had chosen vignette C under the influence of her previous teacher, on the basis that she would refuse to do things she did not agree with if the teacher forced her to, also said that the way she would motivate her students if she were a teacher was to tell them exactly how everything she had done in school contributed to what she was now, considering that her real example would give the students a realistic motivation to work harder. She also mentioned that her favourite class ever had been the first English lesson in her new school, when the teacher asked the group to draw and write something about their personalities and, seeing that the students did not understand exactly what was expected of them, the teacher demonstrated on her own personality. (*Anda* was in the same group with *Huggy*, having the same English teacher.)

418353 (M, 18) considered that knowing the students as individuals would also help the teacher remove the "communication wall": [If I were a teacher] "I'd try to remove that wall I was talking about. I'd try to understand… to find their desire… to see where it comes from. And maybe to channel it in a certain way. If you've got the desire you can change a lot of things*."* The teacher's trust and appreciation were also considered important factors in ensuring the student's wellbeing in class (*Piaf*, F, 19; *Rares*, M, 16). *Piaf* even suggested that the teacher's trustful attitude helped her know herself better: "The trust that my

teacher shows me influences me, yes. It helps me open up. But for myself, not for my classmates to see."

The tutor's care for students as individuals, and perhaps for the relevance that English will have in the students' future, also translated into flexible teaching methodology, as *Rares* (M, 16) described:

> I really do think that our teacher's style is a very good one. I don't know, maybe there is a better one, but I for one can't imagine that. And why? Because we don't stop at solving exercises from the book and writing… I don't know what English word equals I don't know what Romanian translation. And having vocabulary lists in your notebook and homework and that's it. No. We do a lot of essays, so there's room for artistic expression, for imagination, for developing your vocabulary – because we're always looking for new words and then using them in front of the class and speaking freely, and that's how they stick and we learn them.

Most of the interviewees who appeared rather disenchanted with the English class (and not harmonious with the teacher) confessed they would like to have challenging activities, free discussions, interactivity, projects. (*Soare* and *080081* also mentioned that some of their classmates had become their best friends because they had done projects together.) They would all have loved *Huggy*'s (M, 15) description of a perfect English class:

> Desks in a circle, teacher in the middle… and fun! [What sort of fun?] Say we've had to do some reading in English – a book, a story, anything. And the teacher asks: What can you tell us about this? Everything would be relaxed, not tense or stressful. [As a teacher] I would joke very much. But I'd know where to draw the line, I wouldn't be crass, of course! And I'd do things differently, I mean I'd have diversity, to say so. Not just… every lesson: writing on the board, exercises, reading, full stop. I'd bring games and things, people would get involved, team work… stuff like that.

His description was actually not very far from what seemed to happen in his own English class. No wonder everybody knew him as "the boy who laughs all the time".

***

It may be concluded that the 32 interviews provided support for most hypotheses related to the four self systems, although there were some unexpected insights too. For example, the indication that submissive students were proud to be so and showed impressive respect for the source of their imposed self, as well as the suggestion that they thrived when relying on mature and authoritative guidance. The fact that for harmonious students the notion of expectation seemed to disappear altogether was again somewhat unanticipated, as were the indications that rebellious students felt confident, responsible and happy with the choices they had made. Very useful unanticipated insights were also offered by the students' comments on what they thought was not right for them in every vignette. All these findings will be essential in refining the Theoretical framework and shaping the future projects that will emerge from the present one.

An important role in shaping future investigations will also be played by several questions and uncertainties that emerged from the analysis of these interviews. Thus, it was clear that for some students (*Pinty*, *Airforce*, *418353*) self systems had gone through a process of change recently. *Pinty*'s (M, 16) account indicated that he used to be rebellious with the teachers, whereas now he chose the duplicitous system and there were suggestions he might be approaching a harmonious state; *Airforce* (M, 17) and *418353* (M, 18), in turn, explained that they used to care a lot more about what other people thought of them and displayed an identity consciously in order to be accepted to a particular group. The developmental side of these self systems would, therefore, have to be addressed for a clearer understanding of the identity processes involved. This would also clarify the case of the younger participants, who had only just started

their 9th year in a new school, and who were sometimes divided between strong impressions left by the previous teacher and new perceptions of the present one.

My investigation is also limited by only concentrating on the students' perspective – or rather my interpretation of the account they gave me of their perceptions, or of what they felt was right for them to say at that particular moment. It is impossible to know whether all of them where absolutely honest at all times or they were just recreating for me an image that they chose to display, for one reason or another. However, in combination with the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter, this analysis will offer a good starting point for future investigations, which would necessarily have to include at least the teachers, for a more balanced view. The quantitative and qualitative strands of my project will now be integrated in the next chapter, Discussion.

VIII. Discussion

This chapter integrates the quantitative results reported in Chapter Six with the qualitative findings presented in Chapter Seven, offering a holistic interpretation of the data that neither statistics nor thematic analysis would have facilitated separately. Although a limited number of arguments was based on either quantitative or qualitative data on their own, the two have generally been linked or combined into meta-inferences, in line with the principle of parallel mixed data analysis (Caracelli & J. C. Greene, 1993; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; J. C. Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), which guided the research design of this project.

The first part of the chapter is dedicated to explicating the main themes identified in the interviews: the importance of allowing students to be "themselves" in class, the consequences of assessment-driven classroom practices, the crucial difference that an interested teacher will make in students' academic lives, and some unexpected gender differences. The second section of the chapter represents an evaluation of my proposed Quadripolar Model of Identity in the light of the previous results, analyses and discussion, which is then followed by lines of future research and implications for the classroom.

8.1 Emerging themes

The four main themes that emerged from my quantitative and qualitative results will be discussed with reference to my Literature review (Chapter Two) and Theoretical framework (Chapter Three), comparing my findings with the existing

studies that addressed similar concepts in foreign language learning, education or psychology. The four emerging themes and their sub-themes will be followed by brief summaries that essentialise the most important results and implications discussed in that particular unit.

8.1.1 Identity and foreign language learning

The most salient topic in the interviews, which received consistent statistical support in the questionnaires, was that Romanian students felt they could not reveal their perceived "real" self in the English class. Instead, they felt obliged to display particular context-dependent public selves that gained them certain social benefits, and which could actually become part of their self-concept in time. While this presents great risks in the peer relational context, it also has great educational potential – still largely overlooked in English language classes. These thematic threads will be discussed in detail below.

8.1.1.1 To be or not to be "yourself" in the English class

One of the most important findings of this project was that few of the participants felt appreciated personally in the English class – with the corollary that they did not feel they could disclose their "real" selves to their teacher or classmates. The extent to which they felt appreciated was much lower than their declared interest in the class, and several interviewees explained that they had initially tried to communicate with the teacher genuinely, only to realise that it was always safer to "do your duty" and pretend they agreed even when they did not. Of the four self system types, most students chose the duplicitous one for their English teacher and classmates, while for their friends and families a large majority chose the harmonious self system. As we have seen (6.1.3), appreciation as an individual was the only variable that contributed to the

prediction of all four teacher self systems (through multinomial logistic regression), and a large significant effect linked appreciation as an individual and the self shown to the teacher (6.2.1.3). Thus, students' perceived appreciation as individual persons in the English class emerges as an important determinant of whether students are "themselves" in class or not. Both these statistical results and the interviews indicated the existence of a clear barrier between the classroom environment and the after-school environment that seemed to communicate the necessity of a "professional" identity display in the former, whereas being "yourself" and feeling appreciated for it was reserved for the latter. This entailed a distinction between the English class and the English language: while many participants had an affinity with the language and wished to be proficient speakers of it, few seemed to consider the English class part of their true self. In addition, the respondents who felt the pressure to display a hard-working image in the classroom and responded accordingly had lower English private selves than those who did not feel such pressures and did not consider it so important to be a particular type of student in class. This may indicate that students' perceived proficiency in English could originate outside the classroom, and indeed several interviewees declared that they had learnt the language watching TV or communicating with foreign friends over the Internet. The question arises, then, to what extent the English class helps these students become proficient speakers of English, and whether in some cases it does not actually prevent them from doing so by endangering their intrinsic interest in the language.

More importantly, the self that the students showed in the English class had a significant influence on their perceived competence and declared proficiency levels. As we have seen (6.2.1.3), displaying a different self to what students considered to be their "true" identity was associated with significantly lower scores on all language-learning scales. In other words, if English was part of

what they felt they were, or if they felt they were "themselves" in the English class, their scores increased. While students who chose the duplicitous self system for the teacher (52.5% of the 1045 respondents) had the lowest values for all components of the English private self, those who felt harmonious with the English teacher – implying, among other aspects, that their true self was known and valued in class – had the highest scores on all components of the English private self, learning orientation, interest and appreciation in the English class, as well as the highest internal attributions for success (6.1.1). In addition, students who disclosed their true self in class also had stronger English ideal selves and higher declared marks (6.2.1.3). These two types of students are reminiscent of the categories described by Carl Rogers (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994): classroom citizens and classroom tourists. Rogers' theory – later backed up with recent research findings by Jerome Freiberg – indicates that students who can be themselves in the classroom and feel valued for what they are by a caring and interested teacher become responsible citizens (or "shareholders") who take an active and personal interest in their learning process and community. Research has shown that they learn more, are more creative and exhibit stronger problem-solving skills. By contrast, students who work with bored and indifferent teachers learn to be bored and indifferent themselves. These are like tourists who do not take an active responsible interest in classroom activities – "never involved, never excited, never chosen... simply here [in the classroom]" (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994, p. 9).

My participants also declared that when they could not be themselves in class they did not get involved genuinely and only invested enough effort to give the impression they were on task. This confirms the results obtained by Rollett (1985, 1987) and F. Taylor (2008), who found that low levels of autonomy support in class were associated with high levels of avoidance motivation and misleading identity display, as well as truancy and a wide range of escapist

behaviours that students resorted to in order to regain autonomy in the classroom. These findings also corroborate the evidence found by Harter (1981, 1992) to indicate a strong link between intrinsic reasons for learning and increased perceived competence, through the mediation of a positive affect. Preference for challenge was an associated factor in Harter's findings, and this resonates well with my interviewees' declarations: the disaffected ones felt that more challenge in the English class would determine them to engage more, while those who found challenge and appreciation in class declared high levels of engagement and perceived competence.

The link between intrinsic reasons for learning and increased perceived competence has also been documented extensively by the self-determination literature (e.g., Boggiano, Main, & Katz, 1988; Deci & Moller, 2005; Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 1992; La Guardia, 2009; Noels et al., 2000; Reeve & Jang, 2006). However, self-determination theory postulates that increased perceived competence results only if the other two basic human needs – autonomy and social relatedness – are fulfilled. Given that most of my participants felt they could not afford to be themselves in the English class and they were not appreciated for what they were as individuals – either by the teacher or by their peers – it is evident that their need for relatedness was not fulfilled at school. The same seems to be the case with their need for autonomy, as few participants felt they had a say in the organisation of the lessons. As such, it is not surprising that the English class did not seem to have much impact on the perceived competence of the students who had intrinsic reasons for learning the language in their own time.

My participants' precarious level of self-determination is also suggested by their cognitive attributional patterns. As we have seen (6.1.1), there was a tendency to internalise the causes of failure and externalise the causes of success (with some gender differences discussed later), which follows naturally from their

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perceived lack of autonomy and choice in a context where success means high marks – not always matching competence. Thus, when these students do well in English, they explain it through external uncontrollable factors (i.e., "luck", or the teacher's benevolence), whereas when they do not they explain it through lack of ability of effort, as reinforced over and over in the interviews. This is the attributional pattern ascribed in the literature to learned helplessness, a condition which has been proved to impair performance even in the case of high ability and high effort (Burhans & Dweck, 1995; C. I. Diener & Dweck, 1978, 1980; Dweck & Licht, 1980; Jarvis & Seifert, 2002; Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993; Seligman, 1992). As attribution theorists explain, helplessness leads to low achievement motivation and self-handicapping, whereby effort is withdrawn in an attempt to restore ability perceptions (Covington, 1992; Feick & Rhodewalt, 1997; E. E. Jones & Berglas, 1978; Rhodewalt & Hill, 1995; Weiner, 1986, 2005). Other authors have shown that lack of control over one's learning outcomes impairs academic performance (e.g., Boggiano et al., 1988; Dweck, 1985; Stipek & Weisz, 1981) and that a high self-concept leads to internal attributions for success, which in turn strengthen one's self-concept, the same mutual reinforcement principle determining a low self-concept to internalise causes of failure, especially in competitive environments (Ames, 1978, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988).

While in the absence of certain relevant measures it is not possible to infer that these explanations are unquestionably valid for the present project, they do help clarify the academic consequences of not being a fully-functioning autonomous agent in the classroom, as well as the crucial link between internal attributions for success and a strong self-concept (i.e., L2 private self). Other researchers investigating foreign language learning have indeed found that perceived control over the learning process and personal relevance led to more learning engagement and more positive results (Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Landry, Allard,

& Deveau, 2009; Noels, 2005; Noels et al., 2006; Noels et al., 2000; F. Taylor, 2008). The attributional tendency resulting from my data – internal attributions for failure, external attributions for success – is in exact opposition to the attributional pattern that Ushioda (1996a, 1998) identified in her academically successful participants: she found that external attributions for failure and internal attributions for success were related to a positive self-concept, which, in turn, led to higher academic achievement. In addition, the external attributional cues that my participants used to gauge their success in the foreign language class corroborate Williams and Burden's (1999) findings, whose English adolescent participants learning French as a foreign language judged their success by the teacher's approval and the marks they received, without much awareness of communicative skills development.

We have seen (7.2.2) that most of my participants felt they could not show their true self in the classroom, and many interviewees talked about the "duty" they had as students, or the "role" they had to play, or the "image" they had to show, which they thought was expected of them. As some of them explained, this involved attending classes; doing homework (although sometimes by simply copying "the answers" from a classmate or from the end of the book) or pretending to have done it; looking interested – but not too interested, as *Sophie* (F, 15) quickly added; agreeing with the teacher or pretending to; declaring they would pursue a certain university degree even when they knew for sure they would not; hiding their hobbies and declaring others that they thought the teacher would approve of; even sitting "correctly" at their desks, in some cases. Many of them considered that this would guarantee the teacher's friendship and, with it, safe marks and a carefree school life (language proficiency and skill development appearing, once again, unimportant).

However, the classroom is a challenging stage, as the teacher is not the only type of audience expecting and assessing one's identity display. Being "a good

student" – or pretending to be one – may safeguard the teacher's friendship, but at the same time it is sure to cause animosity among peers. Outside the classroom, finding oneself in the presence of one's parents and best friends is likely to cause similar difficulties, as it may not always be easy to be both a dutiful well-mannered child and a "cool" teen at the same time. My qualitative and quantitative data have shown that such self-presentation conflicts were very salient for my participants.

To be or not to be "yourself" in the English class - Summary

- Romanian students feel they cannot be "themselves" in the English class
- they tried to communicate genuinely with the teacher and gave up
- teacher's appreciation and interest predicts the teacher self system and the self students show in class
- strong imposed selves + strong public selves = weak private self
- students: "professional" identity at school, "true" identity after school
- students' competence in English may not originate in class
- "different" self shown in class: lowest English private self
- "true" self shown in class: highest English private self, ideal self, learning orientation, interest and appreciation in the English class, internal attributions for success and declared mark in English
- students cannot be themselves in class: impression management
- preference for challenge ~ perceived competence
- low self-determination: competence from outside the classroom + little autonomy + little relatedness
- helpless attributional patterns (internal causes for failure + external causes for success): low achievement motivation + low self-concept
- "good student" = does (or pretends to do) homework; looks interested (but not too interested); agrees (or pretends to agree) with the teacher; hides his/ her hobbies and professional plans; sits correctly at his/ her desk
- being a "good student" safeguards the teacher's friendship and a carefree school life

8.1.1.2 Differential identity display

In the Theoretical framework (Chapter Three), it was hypothesised that adolescents would tend to display particular public selves in response to perceived imposed selves, and that these would differ from one relational context to another. Based on the literature and on my experience as a teacher and student, four distinct relational contexts were expected to have an impact on language learners' identity: their language teacher, their classmates, their best friends and their families. Indeed, not only were my participants' public selves correlated highly and significantly with their imposed selves, but the correlations between their L2 public selves and their L2 private selves were minimal (6.1.2). The interviews confirmed the statistical results and offered valuable insights into the reasons and mechanism of this context-dependent self-presentation (7.2.2 and elsewhere). In terms of similarity and difference between relational contexts, on the one hand, the teacher was very similar to the family in that they both generated very high public and imposed selves, whereas classmates and friends gave rise to similarly low public and imposed selves. On the other hand, the teacher was very similar to the classmates in inspiring most of my respondents to choose the duplicitous self system, while for the family and friends a large majority chose the harmonious self system. For all relational contexts, the imposed self for the present was stronger than that for the future.

Four important insights follow from these findings:

There is little relationship between one's private self and public selves. When students resort to differential identity display in response to various imposed selves, there seems to be little connection between what these teenagers really think of themselves as language learners and what they choose to show other people about themselves. This indicates that my participants may have a stringent need for social approval, which determines them to display an

identity that may not necessarily be their own in order to acquire a particular social status (Covington, 1984, 1992; Elliott, 2001; Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1995; Leary & R. M. Kowalski, 1990). Given that my research context can be considered a high-competition/ low-achievement motivation environment, performance orientations seem to have understandably superseded learning orientations (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Meece et al., 2006; R. B. Miller, B. A. Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996). What matters, therefore, is that one appears to have particular characteristics, whether or not one truly has them being less important. There are indications that such discrepancies between a student's real self and a school-imposed identity act as barriers to academic engagement and well-being (Faircloth, 2009; Hatt, 2007; Phelan, A. L. Davidson, & Yu, 1993; Wortham, 2006) and it has been suggested that such identity conflicts may be more to blame for poor achievement than lack of intelligence or skills (Klos, 2006).

Public selves are directly proportional to their respective imposed selves.
We have seen that the teacher and the family had high L2 learning expectations of my participants, whereas the expectations of their classmates and friends were quite low. However, the correlation between the public self and the imposed self was very high (in social-science terms) for all four relational contexts, namely a high imposed self was related to a high public self, and a low imposed self to a low public self. (It is not possible on the basis of the data available to know whether this correlation implies causation and, if it does, what its direction is.) This relates well to the impression management literature (e.g., E. E. Jones & T. S. Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1995; Leary & R. M. Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 2003; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992), which shows how the audience determines the salience of a particular public self in a particular social context.

Significant others exert different, context-dependent, types of influence on the adolescents' identity. This is indicated by the two different ways in

which the four contexts cluster, depending on the focus of the analysis: teacher-parents/ classmates-friends (for the public self/ imposed self relationship) and teacher-classmates/ parents-friends (for the self system). In addition, this insight is confirmed by the fact that most students chose different self systems for the four relational contexts, Table 7.2 in the Qualitative results chapter (7.1) showing it very clearly for the 32 interviewees. This is in accordance with the literature demonstrating that different relational contexts influence adolescents in different ways (e.g., Harter, 1996; Harter et al., 1998; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992; Phelan et al., 1993; Roeser & S. Lau, 2002).

There seems to be a distinction between English-as-an-academic-subject (part of students' "professional" lives at school) and English-as-a-communication-tool (part of their personal lives). This is visible in the difference between the L2 imposed selves for the future and the L2 imposed selves for the present – the latter being always stronger (6.1.1, Figure 6.2). As we have seen (6.2.1.4), all these differences were statistically significant, with very large effect sizes for the teacher and parents. In other words, while the teacher and the family wanted my participants to be good language learners in the present, they were less concerned with the role that English might play in their future. This may suggest that English was considered simply an academic subject that one had to study in order to graduate before moving on to more personally relevant pursuits. Friends' indifference to one's English learning at school may be another indication: many interviewees highlighted that their best friends knew them very well and appreciated them for "what they really were", therefore one might surmise that, had the English class been part of "what they really were", their friends would have been more involved. Several interviewees confirmed this bivalent view of the foreign language, stressing that they loved English but not the English class, while others declared that they did not feel the English class helped them develop communicative skills but they had learned the

language through genuine communication in their own free time. Perhaps surprisingly from a cultural point of view, this result confirms S. Ryan's (2009) analysis of English language teaching in Japanese secondary schools, which he found was purely instrumental, with no communicative function.

If students' public selves are in close relation with their imposed selves, it follows that identity conflicts will, at times, be inevitable. We have seen that such accounts surfaced in the interviews, when probing and follow-up opportunities revealed the stress that teenagers have to face at times when they are in the same situation with both their parents and friends, with their friends and classmates, or with their classmates and teachers[26]. My participants did not imply that these situations were characterised by tension or strong negative feelings, but they spoke about the care needed to balance several public selves so as to ensure that the good will of all parties involved was maintained. Although it would be hard to generalise, such identity conflicts seemed to occur particularly in situations when the student could not reveal his/ her true self.

A serious complication of differential identity display and of the discrepancy between one's private and public selves appears in the context that is most relevant for this project: the classroom. *Pinty* (M, 16) explained in no ambiguous terms how doing "your duty as a student" in class entailed conflicts with the classmates, who would turn against one for betraying them and their initial agreement that nobody would bother about the teacher (7.2.3). This is what Van Hook and Higgins (1988, p. 625) called the "chronic double approach-avoidance conflict" appearing when somebody has several conflicting imposed selves[27], and which results in feelings of being "muddled, indecisive, distractible, unsure of self or goals, rebellious, confused about identity". It has been shown that

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[26] No mention was made of such a situation involving one's parents and teacher, but as these two relational contexts generate similarly strong public and imposed selves, conflicts may be less likely to occur.

[27] "ought selves" in their terminology

contradictory self-presentations in challenging conditions can deplete self-regulatory resources (Vohs et al., 2005) and that academic engagement can be impaired by discrepant private/ public identities (Hatt, 2007; Phelan et al., 1993; Phelan et al., 1991; Phelan et al., 1994; Wortham, 2006). As discussed above, my results have shown that duplicitous students had the lowest scores across all four components of the L2 private self, whereas being able to reveal one's real self in class was accompanied by the highest scores in all private-self subscales plus all language learning variables, although it is not possible at this time to comment on the combined effect of contradictory identity display on my participants' academic achievement. Considerable research evidence obtained by Jaana Juvonen and her associates (Juvonen, 1996, 2000, 2006; Juvonen & Murdock, 1993, 1995; Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996) has revealed that impression management is rife in competitive classroom settings, as are manipulative attributional shifts. Because their studies elicited specifically the attributions for success and failure that pupils communicated to their teacher and to their peers, they benefitted from much better understanding of the students' differential public selves than my instruments allowed. Thus, they found that pupils tended to communicate low-effort attributions to peers in order to gain group acceptance as smart teenagers who did not have to work hard, whereas to teachers they communicated low-ability attributions because they believed that if they strived to appear hard-working but not very able they would gain teachers' appreciation for high effort and empathy for low ability. This corroborates the strong correlations revealed by my data between imposed selves and public selves across all four relational contexts (6.1.2), while emphasising the manipulative identity display that students can be driven to in competitive environments (7.2.2).

The tension that sometimes arises when students stride different relational contexts with divergent expectations has also been documented by Phelan and

her colleagues (Phelan et al., 1993; Phelan et al., 1991; Phelan et al., 1994), who showed that this could have debilitating effects on the academic engagement and socio-emotional functioning of their Californian high-school students. They found that excessive pressure to achieve academically (from teachers or parents) led to "learning to play the game" rather than "learning to learn", an emphasis on marks and competition affecting students' intrinsic motivation to participate in classroom activities. While teachers and parents often represented sources of tension through excessive emphasis on academic achievement, friends provided understanding support and release from pressure. However, friends could also be the source of a different type of pressure: that to engage in behaviours that adults would not condone, like truancy, drinking, or excessive partying. Nevertheless, when the different relational contexts[28] that students were involved in were congruent and the transition from one to the other was smooth, they enjoyed a balanced, well-adjusted, academic and social life. Although in a very different cultural context and with a very different approach to the investigation, it is clear that my results confirm Phelan and her colleagues' findings to a considerable extent.

Both Juvonen's and Phelan's work illustrate the danger that some imposed selves can represent in academic settings, where students may be tempted to display particular public selves from a desire to gain peer acceptance. Self-presentation and impression management literature (e.g., E. E. Jones et al., 1981; Leary, 1995; Rhodewalt, 1998; Schlenker, 2003) shows that, under certain circumstances, these public selves can be internalised into one's private self. This can (and does) lead to devastating consequences in academic environments. However, internalisation can also serve as a particularly effective academic motivator when students are helped to see learning as "their own". These negative and positive facets of the process are discussed next.

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[28] "worlds", in the authors' terminology

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│                 Differential identity display - Summary               │
│                                                                       │
│  ▪  little relationship between one's private self and public selves  │
│  ▪  public selves - directly proportional to their respective         │
│     imposed selves                                                    │
│  ▪  the four relational contexts: different influences on             │
│     adolescents' identity                                             │
│  ▪  English-as-an-academic-subject versus English-as-a-               │
│     communication-tool                                                │
│  ▪  conflicts emerging from differential identity display             │
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8.1.1.3 Internalisation

In Chapter Seven (7.2.4) we saw that, in order to integrate better into her friends' group, *Kiddo* (F, 14) had bought herself a guitar and learnt how to play it. She confessed that at first she had hated the very thought of it, but later came to realise that, after all, it was not such a bad thing. All *Kiddo*'s friends played the guitar. They also consumed recreational drugs. In a similar vein, *Pinty* (M, 16) spoke about the silent pressure that his peer group exerted on him to start smoking (7.2.3). "It's not that they tell you to do it" – he explained – "but you know it would just feel right if you started smoking to be like them." *FC* (M, 15) took the peers' influence into the academic context, confessing that, although he had always wanted to be a "model student" he had so far been unsuccessful, as he found himself doing everything "the gang way" despite his resolution "not to be a rascal [and] get reasonable marks". Several other interviewees also mentioned that students were sometimes reluctant to speak in the English class for fear others might laugh at them if they made mistakes (a fear probably exacerbated by question-and-answer practices that were reportedly prevalent in all the five schools). This echoes Bartram's (2006b) findings, which show that teenagers sometimes laugh at their peers who try to produce a correct accent in the foreign language they are learning. I do not have any support for this assertion, but my personal feeling as a language learner in a Romanian classroom was that of a constant battle between "I'll show them what a cool

accent I can produce" and "who does (s)he think (s)he is, talking like that?!" We have also seen that some of my interviewees felt particularly motivated to answer in class when other students did not know "the answer" or – in *Prestige*'s (F, 16) case – when they could not read out a text as nicely as she felt she did.

My quantitative results (6.1.1, Table 6.4) showed that students who were submissive to their friends and classmates had the weakest English private selves of all the four relational contexts – that is, the lowest in 16 values (4 self systems by 4 relational contexts). In other words, relinquishing one's ideal self and adopting a self imposed by peers is associated with a precarious language-learning self. This may indicate the internalisation of the so-called law of generalised mediocrity or norm of low achievement (Covington, 1992; Covington & Omelich, 1979; Dweck, 1999; Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996; Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001). As Dweck (1999, p. 131) explains, this unwritten law is the adolescents' way of rebelling against a "system of winners of losers" which, by focusing on competition and assessment, allows for a few winners at the top and a majority of losers at the bottom. The author further explains that teenagers seek to eliminate these winners through peer pressure, so that "those who would have been the losers no longer stand apart from others", their perceived ability being also protected: if they have not even tried, a poor mark does not mean they are not able to succeed if only they wanted to.

In the absence of a longitudinal investigation, it is not possible to surmise whether or not my participants' public selves will ultimately get internalised into their private ones, or that their present private selves are the result of past public selves adopted in search for social approval in the classroom. However, this is not at all improbable. Ryan and Deci (2003) maintain that the self images a person adopts in society are all in the service of the three basic human needs that self-determination is built on: the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness. We recall that my data suggested a

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problematic level of self-determination in my participants, who appeared to be deprived of autonomy and relatedness in their interactions with the English teacher. But the classroom is an arena where two relational contexts meet, the teenager having to wear the hat of a student and that of a classmate at the same time. If the relational context centred around the teacher does not allow for much self-determination, it would appear that these students compensate by gaining self-determination in the peer relational context, where all three basic needs can be fulfilled through the norm of low achievement: autonomy – because they may feel it is up to them whether or not they do what their peers dictate, being of the same age and social level; competence – because they may protect their perceived ability by withdrawing effort, as Dweck (1999), Covington (1992) and many others explain; and relatedness – because, if nobody works hard or cares too much about the teacher, then the peer group may feel like a big nice fraternity where everyone is accepted and appreciated. If these three human needs get fulfilled through the norm of low achievement in the classroom, then the risk of internalising these practices into one's self-concept is very serious.

However, internalisation can also serve crucial educational purposes. Explaining what determined him to respond to adults' expectations, the student who gave himself the nickname *418353* (M, 19) said (7.2.4): "I'll mostly do what they expect me to do because, in a way, that helps me too. I mean… *doing something for somebody else… trains me*, in a way" (emphasis added). This was one of the uncountable serendipitous insights that the questionnaire alone would never have uncovered, and which offered some compensation for the lack of a longitudinal investigation. This student understood that doing something you do not necessarily believe in can be very educational in itself, opening up developmental possibilities which a teenager of limited experience might never try otherwise. *Pinty* (M, 16), too, gave a revealing account of his turbulent

process of adaptation to his new school ethos. He recalled how in his first year at the present school he used to fight with every teacher, feeling that everybody had something against him. Then his form teacher, who was also a psychologist, advised him to be more reserved in his outbursts with the teachers and he realised she was right. In time, he came to understand that *even the lessons were better* since he had changed. (Unless he had been really disruptive, it is quite unlikely that the quality of the lessons improved all of a sudden. However, his perceptions and wellbeing in class certainly did, as did his potential for acquiring new knowledge.)

These are only two edifying examples which show how internalisation can help a teenager experience a more fulfilling school life. The strong correlations between my participants' public selves and the imposed selves originating in all four relational contexts show a huge potential for internalisation – especially for the adult cluster, in which very strong imposed selves triggered very strong public selves. For a variety of reasons, these adolescents are very eager to please the adults they interact with. However, it is quite clear that, in order for a particular public self to get internalised, teenagers need to trust and respect the source of its corresponding imposed self (as many interviewees explained) and, more importantly, to consider the associated set of behaviours personally relevant.

It is sad to see that, in all the four relational contexts, imposed selves related to the future were significantly lower than those relating to the present, with very large effect sizes for the teacher and parents (6.2.1.4). As I have commented earlier, this is an indication that neither the teacher nor the parents expected English to play an important part in the students' future. In other words, the two main adult agents in the teenagers' lives seem to be concerned more with the students' success in English-as-an-academic-subject (i.e., getting good marks, passing examinations), rather than English-as-a-communication-tool (i.e., the acquisition and development of a skill for life). However, my interviewees could

not emphasise enough how much they wished lessons would prepare them for real life, and how much they wished they could bring their real life into the lessons. This echoes the solid body of literature showing that learning needs to be personally relevant in order to be effective in the long run (Assor et al., 2002; Faircloth, 2009; Lee, 2007; Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2002; Reeve et al., 1999; Roeser et al., 2006; Ushioda, 1996c, 2009; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006; Wortham, 2006).

Quite tellingly, from all my participants, the students with the strongest L2 ideal self were those who felt harmonious with their English teacher and with their parents (6.1.1, Table 6.4). In other words, teenagers who felt understood and appreciated as individuals in the teacher-centred and family-centred relational contexts also felt strong affinities with the English language and a desire to pursue a related career in the future. As for the L2 private self, the highest values were scored by students who felt harmonious with the English teacher and rebellious with their parents. While the teacher-related value is a clear indication that somebody who feels personally appreciated and involved in class also feels more competent in the foreign language, the family-related value is quite intriguing at first sight. Nevertheless, that too is easily understood if we recall that many interviewees were encouraged by their families to pursue careers that would ensure them a more prosperous future than teaching or translating (such as law or medicine). In consequence, it appears that students who feel they have a particular affinity with the English language and would like to make a career of it have to rebel against their parents' wishes in order to pursue a language-related profession.

The motivational potential of the ideal self has been documented extensively in the language-learning literature by researchers working with Dörnyei's (2005, 2009a) L2 Motivational Self System (Al-Shehri, 2009; Busse & M. Williams, 2010; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; S.

Ryan, 2008, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). Of particular interest was Ryan's (2009) discovery that the ideal self can make the difference between students who learn English like any other content matter and students who learn it for communicative purposes. This resonates well with the link that my data show between a strong ideal self and the appreciation and personal relevance associated with the harmonious self system. (If English is part of one's desired future self, presumably this will not be for sitting examinations for a lifetime, but for putting it to real-life uses.)

However, the strong link I found between imposed selves and public selves followed by internalisation into the private self does not confirm the results of the authors affiliated with the L2 Motivational Self System, who found little support for the motivational potential of the ought-to self (possibly because many of them researched university students and, by that age, the strength of imposed/ ought selves might wane). My findings are partially corroborated by Kyriakou and Zhu (2008), whose Chinese learners of English felt that their significant others had some expectations of them as language learners, although these expectations were not as high as the two authors had expected. Given that their participants were less motivated to learn English than other subjects while their parents and teachers were not particularly strong in expecting them to do so, this may mirror the correlations I found between low imposed selves and low public selves. Investigating students' attitudes to learning mathematics, R. B. Miller et al. (1996) showed that desire to please the teacher and desire to please the family were distinct factors which correlated positively with each other but not with the adolescents' learning orientation. In addition, pleasing the teacher was related to cognitive engagement and achievement, but pleasing the family was not. Pleasing the teacher appeared not to be an end in itself, but a strategy used in the pursuit of other goals, while pleasing the family as a rationale for doing academic work emerged as detrimental to students' cognitive engagement

and achievement. Thus, Miller et al.'s (1996) conclusions reinforce my findings that students often do their "duty" and observe what the teachers say in order to secure their friendship and a hassle-free time at school, but they sometimes internalise these public selves and can end up benefiting academically from what was initially just external compliance. As for Miller et al.'s finding that pleasing the family as an end in itself was detrimental to cognitive engagement and achievement, this reflects my own results which showed that, in the family relational context, the lowest L2 private self values came with submissive students (i.e., those who relinquished their own ideal in order to do what parents said), while the strongest L2 private self belonged to rebellious students (i.e., those who, feeling an affinity with the English language, chose to pursue it despite their parents' wish that they progress towards more lucrative vocations). In addition, the fact that the five authors found no correlations between pleasing either the teacher or parents and the students' learning orientation can be seen to confirm my evidence that L2 public selves had barely any relation to a student's L2 private self[29].

Other authors also found that significant others can have a very important influence on students' language learning (Bartram, 2006b, 2006a; Faircloth, 2009; M. Williams & Burden, 1997, 1999), as well as on their general academic standing (e.g., Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; McClun & Merrell, 1998; Murdock & A. Miller, 2003; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008; Phelan et al., 1993; Roeser & S. Lau, 2002; Roeser et al., 2006; R. M. Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005; Tatar, 1998; Wentzel, 1998).

One surprising insight facilitated by the interviews was that students who felt harmonious in the two adult relational contexts seemed to have lost the notion of social expectations altogether (7.2.4). Many of them emphasised that it

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[29] My own correlations between public selves and learning orientation were .32 for the teacher and .28 for the family, both significant at the $p<.01$ level, 2-tailed.

simply happened that they and their teachers or parents wanted the same thing for the future. Given that possible selves are usually rooted in one's immediate social context (Kerpelman & J. F. Pittman, 2001; Markus, 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Marshall et al., 2006; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006; Wurf & Markus, 1991), it is quite probable that these students' ideal selves are former imposed selves which have either been internalised via the public self and then private self, or have simply been transferred from an external possible self (i.e., imposed) to an internal possible self (i.e., ideal).

Moreover, not only did the harmonious students feel that their wishes coincided with their teacher's and parents', but they also declared themselves eager to do what they were told in class, while paradoxically feeling totally free and unrestrained. And, as we have seen, they also had the highest scores in all components of the L2 private self, the L2 ideal self, learning orientation, and internal attributions for success. These students are clearly on their way to becoming fully functioning persons, whom Carl Rogers (e.g., Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) described as self-organising systems which are constantly interacting with the environment but are not causally determined by it. Being trusted and learning to trust themselves, they become integrated, whole, unified individuals whose organismic reactions tell them what is the right thing to do.

This also confirms the autonomy and self-regulation literature (e.g., Grolnick & R. M. Ryan, 1987; van Lier, 1996; Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2003, 2002; Rigby, Deci, Patrick, & R. M. Ryan, 1992; R. M. Ryan, Connell, & Grolnick, 1992; Sansone & J. L. Smith, 2000; Schunk, 2005; Ushioda, 1996c, 2010), which distinguishes between internally regulated behaviours (intrinsically and extrinsically motivated) and externally regulated behaviours (extrinsically motivated). While intrinsically motivated learning rooted in fun and enjoyment is an ideal that every student and teacher would love to see in class, it is clear that not all aspects of language learning would appeal to all students personally at all

times. The crucial solution here is internalisation: students' appropriation of learning goals that they come to see as personally relevant. In this way, even gaining high marks, passing exams or securing lucrative jobs can be highly motivational pursuits, with positive academic and self-actualising consequences. They do, however, need to be internally regulated for their motivational potential to persist. If marks and language certificates are ends in themselves (i.e., purely extrinsic motivators), rather than means to other ends (i.e., internalised, personally relevant, motivators), the students' academic conduct may not exceed the level of instrumental identity display with little connection to skill development, only to be abandoned as soon as the external stimulus is no longer present (Baker, 2004; Deci & Moller, 2005; Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 2000; Flink, Boggiano, Main, Barrett, & Katz, 1992; Hidi, 2000; Noels et al., 2000; Sansone & J. L. Smith, 2000; Shah & Kruglanski, 2000).

Given the intimate connection between language and identity (Block, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2006; Cummins, 2006; Edwards, 2009; Noels, 2009; Ricento, 2005), language classes may be particularly fertile ground for internalisation if students have the freedom to be themselves and to bring their own world into the classroom (Faircloth, 2009; B. T. Williams, 2006). However, there are indications that the potential of internalisation is not utilised much in my chosen research context. As we have seen (7.2.2), many students worked hard (or pretended to) because they felt that was their "duty" or because they were afraid of reprisals – always gravitating around marks. At the same time, they declared themselves very interested in English and yearned to make it part of their lives, as well as to bring their real lives into the classroom. These two opposing poles of the regulation continuum – marks and interest – will be discussed in the next two sections.

Internalisation - Summary

- the classroom norm of low achievement possibly internalised into the private self
- self-determination lost in relation to the teacher is compensated through the norm of low achievement in relation to peers
- public selves get internalised if they are personally relevant and the corresponding imposed self is trusted and respected
- teachers and parents emphasise English-as-an-academic-subject, to the detriment of English-as-a-communication-tool
- students who feel harmonious with the teacher and parents want to pursue careers in English
- students who feel harmonious with the teacher have the highest perceived competence
- students with the highest perceived competence are rebellious with the family (presumably because parents want them to concentrate more on subjects leading to more lucrative vocations)
- harmonious students do not feel pressurised by other people's expectations
- harmonious students are willing to work hard in class
- internalisation can play crucial educational purposes: helping students appropriate learning goals
- language classes – great (wasted) potential for internationalisation, given the link between language and identity

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8.1.2 A mark-centred ethos

Almost all of the 32 interviewees mentioned marks without being prompted, and when *FC* (M, 15) said that marks were "the only thing that matters" he expressed a view held by many. If students do not feel appreciated as individuals in the English class and lessons are often irrelevant for their future, caring about marks appears as a natural part of what many of them called "my duty as a student". The English class may not be part of what they really are or of what they would like to become, but it is a curriculum component that they need to pass in order to graduate. I did not ask explicitly for a definition of "passing", but all evidence would indicate that in my chosen research context it means simply getting a certain mark, sometimes with little relevance for the

student's actual competence in English. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the mean value of their declared mark in the questionnaire was 8.48 (out of 10 – the minimum pass mark being normally 5) and yet most of the interviewees emphasised that the English class did not provide opportunities for much skill development. Another interpretation may again be that their perceived competence originates outside the classroom.

As generalised a practice as it is on an international scale, it is known that marks, like any other form of contingent reward, undermine students' intrinsic motivation to learn through the so-called overjustification effect (Lepper & D. Greene, 1978; Lepper, D. Greene, & Nisbett, 1973; Lepper & Henderlong, 2000): an activity that is intrinsically pleasing loses its appeal when we are rewarded for performing it, as the extrinsic incentive becomes more salient than the intrinsic one. While some authors have contested the detrimental effects of extrinsic incentives (Cameron & Peirce, 1994; Eisenberger & Cameron, 1998), generating animated exchanges in highly subjective overtones [30] (e.g., Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996; Kohn, 1996), there is overwhelming evidence to show that an emphasis on assessment and marks has negative consequences for students' intrinsic motivation and learning engagement (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985; Deci, Koestner, & R. M. Ryan, 1999; Kohn, 1993; Lepper, 1983; Lepper & D. Greene, 1975; Lepper & Greene, 1978; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Vansteenkiste & Deci, 2003). While external incentives – whether good marks, gold stars, praise and so on – can motivate students to act, when the incentive is withdrawn, the motivated behaviour ceases. The more incentives are given, the more they are needed (Kohn, 1993). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that they impair conceptual learning and can only produce immediate rote

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[30] And even a refusal to contribute to a volume of research findings which was being edited by the adverse camp (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 5).

memorisation – which is also lost to a greater extent if rooted in extrinsic incentives, compared to intrinsic motivators (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985).

One of the most serious problems associated with marks and other external incentives, however, is that these are instruments for controlling people's behaviour (e.g., Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985; Kohn, 1993). It is behaviourism in its purest sense: do this and you will get that; work hard and you will get a high mark; behave nicely and I will let you pass. (Pretend to) agree with the teachers and they will be your friends – as some of my interviewees confessed. In such a context, all the control is in the teacher's hands and it is the teacher and the teacher only who decides what is acceptable and what is not in the classroom. From all the data that I have discussed so far, it is quite clear that my Romanian participants were quick to learn the game. If being themselves in class did not bring them the expected friendship and appreciation, as several of them declared, they learnt that if they pretended to agree, to be interested, to work "hard, but not too hard", they were safe (7.2.2). So most of them ended up being duplicitous to the English teacher and having reasonably high marks. As well as the weakest English private selves – which is a very worrying finding indeed, especially that most students were duplicitous to the teacher (6.1.1, 6.2.1.3).

Smith (1986, pp. 82-83) offers a rather unflattering explanation of incentives (i.e., marks, praise, bonuses) as compensation for poor teaching, which prevents learning from being intrinsically rewarding:

> The underlying implication of 'learning should be fun' is that learning *will be* a painful and tedious activity unless it is primped up as entertainment. Learning is never aversive - usually we are not aware of it at all. It is failure to learn that is frustrating and boring, and so is having to attend to nonsensical activities. … It is meaningless teaching, not learning, that demands irrelevant incentives. (emphasis in the original)

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In his book *Punished by Rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise and other bribes*, Kohn (1993) explains that it is not the marks themselves that are the problem, but the way they are used and the messages that they give to pupils – whether they draw their attention to what they are doing or how they are doing it. Dweck (e.g., 1999) and other authors describe this as learning orientation versus performance orientation: are students preoccupied to increase their ability or to show that they are more able than others? Marsh (e.g., 1990b; H. W. Marsh, Hau, & Craven, 2004) describes it in terms of internal frame of reference versus external frame of reference: is the student better at English than other subjects, or is the student better at English than other students? Deci and Ryan (e.g., 1985) explain it in terms of informative versus controlling feedback (the former – constructive and empowering, the latter – restrictive and distrustful). Many of my interviewees mentioned bad marks being granted for bad behaviour or as a form of revenge and punishment, while good marks were given as a prize, as an incentive to work harder, so as not to spoil the student's final average or as a biased token of recognition for the teacher's private tutees. Such feedback could hardly be considered informative, as it does not give the students any clue as to how they could improve their skills, or what their strengths and weaknesses are. As we have seen, their helpless attributional pattern indicates they do not feel much in control of their academic outcomes. When they do well, they explain it through uncontrollable external causes – when they do not do very well, they blame themselves for it, internalising the guilt and shame. Williams and Burden (1999) found a somewhat similar situation with their British learners of French, who did not seem aware of their skill development and gauged their academic success entirely by marks and the teacher's opinion. This led the two authors to conclude that French was taught like any other school subject, with little importance granted to understanding or effective communication in the foreign language. Several other researchers found that students used marks as the main indicator

of progress and competence (Blumenfeld, Pintrich, & Lee Hamilton, 1986; Butler, 1988, 1989; Sansone & Morgan, 1992).

Apart from revealing a strong mark-centred ethos, my data facilitated some very intriguing – and unexpected – insights. We have seen in Chapter Six (6.2.2) that students who believed they were evaluated fairly had the highest scores for all the four components of the English private self, for the English ideal self, for learning orientation and interest in the English class. The difference was substantial and statistically significant for all variables except the affective component of the private self and the ideal self, which showed significance only in the overall model but not in pairwise comparisons (Table 6.10). For these students, it follows, perceived correctness and objectivity in assessment goes hand in hand with perceived competence, interest and desire to improve one's skills. The fact that the effect was not statistically significant for the ideal self and the affective appraisals shows that students who love English and would like to have an English-related profession may not be influenced in their propensity by the results of classroom assessment. The lowest scores in learning orientation, interest and appreciation as an individual in the English class were chosen by the participants who felt they were granted higher marks than they deserved. This is a striking discovery for such a mark-centred environment as my research site, as it suggests that a student's interest, genuine engagement and motivation to learn cannot be bought with over-generous marks, thus confirming the extensive research evidence discussed briefly above. While these students certainly feel happy to get high marks at the moment, the realisation that they are not assessed correctly makes them feel less appreciated for what they are as individuals, even though the assessment is in their (extrinsic) favour. The sad and at the same time encouraging implication is that these students may have a great potential for self-regulation but may not be in the right environment to utilise it fruitfully. As we have seen, though, there are indications that they may

do this outside the classroom, where their apparent self-regulation helps them acquire and use English for real-life purposes.

It also emerged (6.2.2) that pupils who believed they were marked down in English had the highest external attributions for success and highest internal attributions for failure, doubled by the lowest internal attributions for success and the lowest external attributions for failure – all four statistically significant. This shows that teenagers who receive less appreciation than they believe they deserve tend to be helpless, which – in an environment where being successful means getting the right marks – is very understandable, given that they have hardly any control over the outcome. This shows what a detrimental effect lack of fair recognition can have on students, possibly affecting the responsibility they take for their own learning, as well as their perceived competence in English and, subsequently, their learning success.

Perceived fairness in assessment also influenced the self that my participants chose to show to their English teacher – whether their "real" self or a "different" self (6.2.2). Students who thought they were evaluated correctly and those who felt marked up appeared more inclined to show a different self, while students who felt marked down tended to show their true self. As this was a correlational analysis, therefore not implying causation, there are at least two possible interpretations to this result. On the one hand, this may represent a confirmation that an adolescent's genuine participation in class cannot be bartered for unrealistically high marks, while the majority of people who felt evaluated correctly may have lapsed into the apparent default of teacher-related duplicity. On the other hand, it is also possible that students who show their true self in the English class may be marked down more than others for a host of potential reasons: for asking too many questions (from a desire to learn or to challenge the teacher on purpose), for showing a self that is not acceptable in an academic environment, for flouting the apparent unwritten rule that people are not

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supposed to be themselves in class, or it may be that rebellious students defy the teacher by showing what they think is their true (perhaps "cool") self while entertaining unrealistically high self-appraisals. In the light of the previous paragraph, which discussed helpless attributional patterns, it is also possible that students who feel marked down and who, we have seen, tend to be helpless, give up even the generalised practice of being duplicitous to the teacher. These may be teenagers who, without control over their outcomes, have lost hope that even identity display may serve them any purpose at all in the classroom.

A confident definitive interpretation of these results is not possible without further research, but it is fairly clear that the teacher, who controls the marks, controls all these mechanisms in the classroom. Discussing the teacher's role in such processes, Kohn (1993, p. 221) explains:

> Every teacher who is told what material to cover, when to cover it, and how to evaluate children's performance is a teacher who knows that enthusiasm for one's work quickly evaporates in the face of control. Not every teacher, however, realizes that exactly the same is true of students: deprive children of self-determination and you deprive them of motivation. If learning is a matter of following orders, students simply will not take to it in the way they would if they had some say about what they were doing.

This quotation encapsulates two important facts: that teachers themselves are caught in a network of strong imposed selves and hidden private selves that may not be fully appreciated for what they really are, resulting in certain identity display; and that, despite frequent institutional constraints, it still depends largely on the teacher to make learning personally meaningful for students. As Ciani, Middleton, Summers and Sheldon (2010) found, an autonomy-supportive teacher who encourages a community spirit in the classroom can even attenuate the effects of performance orientations typical of a deeply-rooted competitive ethos.

A mark-centred ethos - Summary

- English class not personally relevant, but good marks necessary for passing
- pass marks not necessarily connected to actual competence
- students' communicative competence in English may originate outside the classroom
- marks granted for non-academic purposes
- students marked fairly: highest L2 private self, L2 ideal self, learning orientation and interest in the English class
- students marked up: lowest learning orientation, interest and perceived appreciation as individuals
- students' motivation and genuine engagement cannot be bought with marks
- students - great potential for self-regulation largely overlooked
- their self-regulation may help them acquire and use English outside the classroom, for real-life purposes
- students marked down: helpless (external attributions for success, internal attributions for failure)
- students who feel marked down tend to show their true self in class
- teachers may have their constraints, but students' autonomy is still in their hands

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8.1.3 From interested teachers to interested students

Most of my interviewees thought the teacher had the power to motivate them more, in one way or another. While this may mirror the helpless thought pattern of youth who feel that the teacher holds the key to their positive or negative academic outcomes, it also confirms a massive body of literature emphasising the crucial role that a teacher can have in students' classroom engagement and academic itinerary (e.g., Assor et al., 2005; Benson, 2007; Boggiano & Katz, 1991; Brophy & Good, 1986; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Hardman, 2008; Harter, 1996; Jussim & Harber, 2005; Lamb & Reinders, 2008; Little et al., 2003; Murdock & A. Miller, 2003; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). In addition, not just helpless students thought this. Harmonious and balanced people who felt competent and happy in the English class thought they would feel more

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motivated to invest in the lessons if the teacher could make these more personally relevant to them. Measuring their engagement precisely was not among the objectives of this project, particularly because it would be hard to do it in a reliable way. But where the context facilitated it, students were asked in the interview how much they thought they invested in the class out of their total potential. While a few happy ones gave percentages as high as 90%, many giggled and admitted gingerly to 40%, 10% or even 5% of what they felt they could do in the right circumstances.

It was one of the interviews' leitmotifs that, if teachers knew what motivated students personally, what passions and interests energised them, what made them feel "themselves" in or out of school, then teachers could incorporate this information into lessons and make them more personally meaningful, relevant and engaging. We have seen *Airforce*'s (M, 17) strong opinion of this, whose slightly jarring manipulation-focused discourse might reflect the mores of his speech community (e.g., Mullany, 2007b). *Airforce* – harmonious with the English teacher – explained:

> I've always tried to be very open and very honest in the English class. So my teacher knows all my good and bad sides. She knows what I'm up to, what sort of personality I've got… In the first place, she can be a better pedagogue through this. If she knows what motivates the pupil, she can use this as a weapon – in a good sense. So she can motivate that pupil by knowing his personality. And I think that's what every teacher should do: try to know the pupil's personality and then try to… manipulate that personality in a very good direction, or at least a good one. And I think this would motivate any pupil.

Another young man (*418353*, 19) thought this was the key to removing the "communication wall" that he felt prevented students and teachers from genuine interaction:

> [If I were a teacher] I'd try to remove that wall I was talking about. I'd try to understand… to find their desire… to see where it comes from. And maybe to

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channel it in a certain way. If you've got the desire you can change a lot of things.

Unwittingly, this student almost quoted Kohn (1993, p. 226): "We *can* get children hooked on learning – if that is really what we are determined to do." (emphasis in the original)

Of course, the prerequisite is that both students and teachers are interested in genuine engagement, communication and mutual understanding. However, we saw in an earlier chapter that the situation may be quite different in my research context. A statistically significant effect showed that students felt they were considerably more interested in the English class, than teachers were in the students as real persons, the two correlating quite highly (6.1.1, 6.1.2). This shows that students' interest and teacher's interest are directly proportional – a statistical result that found solid support in the interviews, most students declaring that if the teacher is interested and appreciates them as real persons, then they are more interested in the class themselves (7.2). *Kiddo* (F, 14), we have seen, presented the negative side of this correlation:

> We don't learn the lesson from the classroom, which is very bad! (…) You go home to learn a lesson which maybe you're sick of, because maybe you're sick of the teacher… That's what usually happens: when you don't like a teacher, you don't like the subject they teach either.

The implication is dramatic: if, on the one hand, the teacher is genuinely interested in the students, this increases the students' interest and engagement too; on the other hand, if the teacher has not managed to bond with the students for one reason or another, this may diminish the students' interest and affective propensities for the subject they teach. The beginning of *Kiddo*'s quote is also essential, as she made a direct link between failure to learn in the classroom and not liking the teacher, therefore not liking the subject. The need for student autonomy could not be greater here. It is obvious that not every

teacher will be liked by every student at all times, but if students are autonomous and understand that they are learning for themselves, not for the teacher, then the relationship between not liking the teacher and not liking the subject would be considerably weaker. This would also happen with less emphasis on marks (i.e., a product) and more emphasis on learning (i.e., a process). If students are genuinely interested in improving their skills, they would be more inclined to make the best of every learning situation – including, perhaps, a teacher they may dislike at first.

Whether students focus on products or processes depends, once again, on the teacher in no small measure. We have seen that the teachers' communicative style in the classroom and the type of feedback they normally give can make all the difference. Just like with marks, rewards, and any other event, it is important whether the message is informative or controlling. Even praise – criticised for its potential to orient children towards social comparison and performance rather than mastery (Dweck, 2007a; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998) – can be informative or controlling. The difference between "you've done well" and "you've done well, as you should" is the crucial difference in locus of control: said to a student, "you've done well" means I am appreciating you for your efforts and I am pleased to see you are making progress, whereas "you've done well, as you should" means you are managing to raise to my expectations, which set the limits for how much you can develop (Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985, 1987; Koestner, R. M. Ryan, Bernieri, & Kolt, 1984; T. S. Pittman, Davey, Alafat, Wetherill, & Kramer, 1980; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Research conducted by Carol Dweck and her colleagues (Burhans & Dweck, 1995; Cimpian et al., 2007; C. I. Diener & Dweck, 1980; Dweck, 1999; Dweck & Licht, 1980) has also shown that teacher's feedback can determine whether students are helpless or mastery oriented.

We have seen that my Romanian participants tended to show helpless attributions for success and failure, and that the marks they get tell them little about their actual competence in English. We have also seen that they have little say in the organisation of the lessons and that they hardly ever feel they can be themselves in class. It is not hard to understand that the cues they receive in class may not be particularly informational. Moreover, for students to get constructive informational feedback about how they could improve, the teacher must *know* the student well in order to decide what type of feedback would facilitate development, and genuine communication must be frequent in class. As we have seen, neither of these seems to happen much. Many interviewees maintained that it was mainly the teacher who talked in their English class – sometimes mostly in Romanian. Oral assessment too seemed to consist of little more than question-and-answer sessions and some of them ridiculed the reliability of an educational system in which the teacher, sitting at her desk, reads out a question and the student stands up to answer in order to get a mark. Hardman (2008, p. 133), who calls this pattern the "recitation script", explains that this all too frequent practice "requires students to report someone else's thinking rather than think for themselves, and to be evaluated on their compliance in doing so". It would be hard to find a better definition of control in the classroom. As the author argues, genuine classroom talk, higher order questioning and informative feedback strategies help students develop their thinking skills and shape their engagement, learning and understanding. It is really sad to see that this potential is wasted in foreign language classes that should thrive on communication rather than hanker after it.

Apart from finding out what the students' needs are in order to be able to address them – as teachers' opinions have been known to differ significantly from the students' (e.g., Spratt, 1999) – genuine communication in the foreign language class would allow students to develop communicative and social skills

for life. Many of the students I talked to were saddened that they could not see the real-life relevance of their English lessons. They would have liked to understand why they were expected to do particular things in class and how doing those things had helped the teacher and other adults become successful professionals. They wanted to discuss their view of things, to argue, to debate, to negotiate, to collaborate and to be allowed to make mistakes. With heart-warming insight, some of them explained to me that *even their mistakes* would help them learn – if only they could talk in class. A teacher who cares about students, who respects them and treats them like real people rather than like a passive audience for one's (passive) recitation, would find many ways to get them involved in the organisation of the lesson, negotiation of common responsibilities and decision making (D. F. Clarke, 1991; Kohn, 1993, 1999; Kyriacou, 1992; Ushioda, 1996c, 2008, 2009). It would be hard to think of a better way for these Romanian students to learn the discourse of mutual respect, responsibility and negotiation in a foreign language than putting it to real use in genuine classroom exchanges.

Nonetheless, the solution is not as simple as telling teachers to support their students' communicative competence and autonomous development. It is very unlikely that this would be a novel idea to any of them. Research has shown that controlling teacher behaviour is a consequence of perceived control and administrative pressures (Deci, Spiegel, R. M. Ryan, Koestner, & Kauffman, 1982; Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett, 1990; Reeve et al., 2004). Just like students feel controlled by the teacher and have their autonomy stifled, so too teachers feel controlled by higher order factors. Furthermore, their autonomy and intrinsic joy of teaching can be stifled both "from above", through curriculum constraints, performance standards, challenging colleagues, and "from below", through disruptive and amotivated students (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002). Often excluded from curriculum and syllabus design, deprived of

opportunities for peer interaction and professional development, burdened with too much accountability, teachers can feel "deskilled" and disempowered (Crookes, 1997). Many of them experience high levels of stress, job insecurity and dissatisfaction, low salaries and sleep deprivation deriving from excessive administrative duties and lesson preparation (J. D. Brown, 1995; Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996; Gilbert, 2005; Kyriacou, 1987; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Apart from all these problems, Romanian teachers have had to endure a degrading social status in recent years and to bear the brunt of the very frequent educational reforms brought about by every change in government (Popa & Acedo, 2006).

Elsewhere (F. Taylor, 2009, 2010) I have argued that, whilst change is absolutely necessary in the Romanian education system, it is unlikely that this will be a top-down process in the near future. Rather than bemoan the miserable status quo and move towards burnout in sure large strides, teachers could start their own bottom-up educational reform each in their own classrooms before it is too late. In a previous research project (F. Taylor, 2008), I found that my Romanian participants from three different schools in a different county, deprived of self-determination in their interactions with the teacher, regained their autonomy by resorting to various escapist-manipulative behaviours that allowed them to feel in control of their actions. In the present project, it seems that my participants may try to restore their self-determination in the peer relational context, through the norm of low achievement. Two important insights follow from this: that Romanian teenagers are self-determined and have great potential for self-regulation, doubled by an apparent gift for foreign languages[31]; and that this potential is largely overlooked in the English class. In both my

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[31] My empathy is probably influenced by the fact that, before going to university, I taught myself English by consuming endless piles of dry Communist text books. I belonged to one of the last cohorts to study Russian (and German) at school, English being still unavailable in my small town. More background information on the period was presented in Chapter IV.

previous and current project, it emerged that many students utilised this potential outside the classroom, learning English through real-life encounters and pursuits, showing academically fruitful intrinsic motivation. But when the English class appears not only to do little to help them acquire the necessary language skills, but also to potentially threaten their intrinsic interest in the language, it becomes very clear that immediate change is imperative. Even more so when we read that foreign languages have been identified in other research contexts among the subjects most likely to be skipped by truants (Aplin, 1991; Chambers, 1999; Clark, 1995; Dennis O'Keeffe & Stoll, 1995; Stables & Wikeley, 1999), and occasional truancy can lead to chronic absenteeism and drop-out (Allen-Meares et al., 2000; D. Boyle & Goodall, 2005; Galloway, 1983; K. Henry, 2007; Reid, 1999, 2005; Teasley, 2004; Van Petegem, 1994). Given Romanian teenagers' self-determination, potential self-regulation and love of English, it could not be too hard for English teachers to help reduce truancy and, perhaps, drop-out, besides helping their students develop communicative competence.

From interested teachers to interested students - Summary

- most participants (both helpless and harmonious) believed the teacher could improve their motivation
- if teachers knew students better, they could make lessons more relevant and engaging
- students - more interested in the English class than teachers are interested in students
- teacher interest in students increases student interest in the English class
- teacher disinterest in students may decrease students' love of English
- if students were autonomous, the teacher would not matter so much
- Romanian students get controlling rather than informational feedback
- genuine communication would help the teacher know the students better and would help students develop autonomy and skills for life
- Romanian teachers may be too controlling because they are too controlled
- teachers could start their own bottom-up educational reform in their own classrooms
- Romanian teenagers are self-determined and potentially self-regulated
- this potential is not utilised in the English class, but seems to be outside
- English teachers might be able to help reduce truancy

8.1.4 Gender differences

So far I have discussed the general findings that my results have revealed. There are, however, contextual differences that shed important light on identity processes in Romanian adolescents learning English as a foreign language. These differences are based on gender, on school and on a combination of the two.

One of the most unexpected and intriguing findings of my project is that the boys' L2 private self was stronger than the girls' (6.2.1.1). Are boys in the five Romanian schools better language learners than the girls? This would go against decades of popular stereotypes, as well as the literature suggesting (not without controversy) that girls are better at languages than boys (Barton, 1997; Callaghan, 1998; Clark, 1995; Kobayashi, 2002; Little et al., 2002; Nyikos, 2008; Place, 1997) and that boys may avoid foreign languages – or at least some of them – because they are considered girly (Bartram, 2006b; M. Williams et al., 2002). Yet, there are also a handful of studies that would appear to confirm my finding. For example, Bügel and Buunk (1996) show that Dutch girls obtain slightly but consistently lower scores than boys in national English language examinations, and Boyle (1987) found that male Chinese learners of English had better oral comprehension of vocabulary than girls.

As detailed in Chapter Five, my research design did not include an objective measure of my respondents' actual performance and achievement in English – a measure which would be virtually impossible to obtain even in a carefully designed experimental study, given that actual performance and competence depend on past performance and the emotional processing of past outcomes (Baumeister, 1999; Byrne, 1996; Hattie, 1992; H. W. Marsh, 1993; Oosterwegel & Oppenheimer, 1993; Rosenberg, 1986). Neither did I seek access to registers or other "objective" measures of students' proficiency because, as I have argued before, evaluation and assessment may not always be reliable in Romanian

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education, and it was also important that I maintained the participants' anonymity. I relied instead on students' self-perceptions, as well as their actual declared marks in English compared to the marks they believed they deserved. Under the circumstances, it is impossible to know for sure why boys and girls had different scores, but what we know for sure is that, although effect sizes were not very strong, they were statistically significant. To begin with, I will discuss the two evident possibilities: that boys are better than girls at English, and that they *think* they are.

So far we have found several indications that my participants' competence in English may not originate in the English class, but in their free time, when they watch films, play video games and socialise in virtual environments – all of these using English, all of them using computers. One gender difference that has received consistent research support is that boys are more interested, more confident and more experienced in computer use than girls (Busch, 1995; Shashaani, 1993, 1997; Siann, Macleod, Glissov, & Durndell, 1990), especially in high school (Whitley, 1997), and that girls have less positive attitudes to interactive communication systems (Kay, 2009) and they keep a lower profile in online blogging than boys (Pedersen & Macafee, 2007). In recent years, there have been indications that this gender gap is closing (Imhof, Vollmeyer, & Beierlein, 2007), but even though males and females have started to be equally skilled, girls still tend to have lower perceived competence, which affects their Internet usage patterns (Hargittai & Shafer, 2006). Considering this evidence, it is possible that my male participants are actually better at English than my female participants, as they may use it more for real-life purposes.

There is also evidence to suggest that boys tend to overestimate their abilities, whereas girls tend to be more self-effacing or to underestimate their competence (Cole, Martin, Peeke, Seroczynski, & Fier, 1999; Dweck, 2007b; Licht & Dweck, 1984; R. B. Miller et al., 1996). It is possible, then, that my male respondents

genuinely thought they were better, while the female respondents genuinely thought they were weaker, although their different perceptions may not be doubled by differences in proficiency. Interestingly, there was no significant gender difference in the mark they normally got in English, which may support this second explanation as to why boys' L2 private selves were stronger. Some authors (Dweck, 1999; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; C. Gilligan et al., 1989; Hansen & O'Leary, 1985; Kohn, 1992; J. M. Taylor et al., 1995) maintain that girls tend to underestimate themselves especially in competitive environments, which do not welcome their acknowledged propensity for cooperation, communication and relatedness. As we have seen, my research site is an environment where students do not feel appreciated personally and/ or prefer to hide their true selves, concentrating instead on obtaining high marks and displaying whatever identity brings the most benefits in the classroom. Cooperation was not salient, especially that numerous interviewees claimed they hardly ever did any projects and worked in teams with their classmates. Instead, as many said, everybody followed their own interest, celebrating each other's mistakes and prospects of not going to university so they could appear better by comparison. It would be hard to comment on gender differences in the perceptions of my interviewees, but two of the girls (*Soare* and *080081*) expressed their awareness that there was so much competition in their group precisely because they were never encouraged to work on projects collaboratively. They also mentioned that some of the classmates with whom they had been involved in projects in the past were now among their best friends.

Many authors have shown that gender differences in the classroom often originate in the teachers' differential responses to boys and girls, the consensus being that boys insist on and are given greater attention by the teacher (Sunderland, 2004; Swann, 1992, 1998), that teachers respond more to boys, both to praise and to reprimand them (S. M. Jones & Dindia, 2004; Kelly, 1988;

Merrett & Wheldall, 1992), that boys talk more in the classroom, both to teachers and in group work (Dart & J. Clarke, 1988; Swann & Graddol, 1994), boys are asked more questions, especially more challenging questions, and are given more instructions (Kelly, 1988), boys are reprimanded more because they tend to be more disruptive than girls (Delamont, 1990). The result is that, overall, boys receive more attention and more speaking time in the classroom. If this happened in English classes at my five Romanian schools, the boys' stronger L2 private selves could be explained through extra opportunities for practice and, therefore, better chances of improved proficiency. Nevertheless, we have seen that my participants complained they hardly ever got a chance to speak in the English class, that the teacher spoke most of the time, and sometimes only in Romanian. Even if my male participants had not improved their English skills through more speaking opportunities in class, they could still have improved their perceived competence by receiving extra attention from the teacher. This is sometimes called the "Matthew effect" in the literature, from the Biblical parable which says that the rich will get richer and the poor will get poorer – an effect which has been shown to contribute to individual differences in the classroom (Brophy & Good, 1986; Bügel & Buunk, 1996; Stanovich, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1983).

My data support this interpretation, suggesting that more teacher interest and appreciation are associated with higher perceived competence, whereas less teacher interest is associated with less love of English in the boys from two schools. As I reported in the Quantitative results chapter (6.2.1.1, 6.2.1.2), although there was no gender difference in the boys' and the girls' interest in the English class, overall teachers were allegedly more interested in boys than in girls (boys felt more appreciated as individuals by the teacher), though the effect size was not great. A closer look at the school distribution revealed that differences in teacher's interest singled out school E, where the teacher showed

more interest in boys than girls, and school C, where the teacher showed less interest in boys than girls, both effect sizes being very substantial. Although one school appreciated girls more and another school appreciated boys more, the Matthew effect is still very visible when we look at the students' internal selves. In school E, boys had significantly higher values than girls in three components of the private self: cognitive appraisals, internal frame of reference and external frame of reference. In school C, boys had significantly lower ideal selves and affective appraisals than girls. The attention that the teacher shows to students appears in this light to have a dramatic influence on their perceptions. Boys received more attention in school E and felt more competent in English, but they received less attention than girls in school C, and loved English less and were significantly less likely than girls to choose English-related careers. The teacher's appreciation did not affect love of English in school E, and teacher's lack of appreciation did not affect perceived competence in school C, showing that an intrinsic interest in English may not be influenced by external factors like the teacher's attention. As for the causes, it would be hard to say what might determine teachers to give more attention to boys in school E and less in school C. Given that school E is a Modern Languages school and boys were disproportionately fewer than girls, it is likely that teachers might want to encourage them more and to attract them towards languages, perhaps in response to the popular belief that boys dislike language study. Boys themselves might feel special among so many girls, so they might be more disruptive, or more prone to show off in the classroom, therefore attracting more teacher attention. In school C, which specialises in Music, the gender distribution was fairly balanced. It is not clear why the teacher might be more interested in girls than in boys there, but this was also the only school where the imposed self for the future was significantly higher for girls than boys. This teacher – one lady for all 84 participants in school C – does appear to think that "girls do languages and boys do not". Unfortunately, we have seen that this has a negative impact

on the boys' love of English. The vignette analysis (6.1.1) also revealed that boys were more harmonious with the teacher than girls in school E, and less harmonious with the teacher than girls in school C. Considering the two schools together, it would appear that, in different ways, Romanian teachers might reinforce popular gender stereotypes about foreign language learning.

No gender effect was found in schools A, B and D concerning teacher's individual interest in students. Intriguingly, these are exactly the schools in which another gender difference emerged: girls believed they were marked down more than boys (6.2.1.2; also 6.1.2). All these schools were specialising in science-oriented subjects: school A in Economics, Tourism and Administration; school B in Computer Science; and school D in Mathematics. In the other two schools, on average all students considered they were assessed fairly. These were Arts and Humanities institutions: school C – Music, and school E – Modern Languages. Gender stereotyping is again the first explanation that comes to mind: in science-oriented schools, girls are marked down because "girls are not good at science". But girls were marked down in English, not in science, and according to the stereotype girls should be better than boys at foreign languages. One possible cause for this difference is something that was suggested several times already: that English might be regarded like any other academic subject, therefore girls' superior linguistic ability (if such a thing exists) does not even come into it. Almost all interviewees declared there was very little speaking in their English classes, little genuine communication, and little room for personal expression. Many of them said the lessons consisted of grammar exercises, written translations, multiple choice tests and question-and-answer exchanges. Even if girls were better at languages than boys, there would be little opportunity for them to show it under the circumstances. It is possible that the gender stereotype is again the explanation for girls being considered weaker than boys in sciences, despite the subject being English. (Of course, it is also

possible that girls just *think* they are marked down in these schools – perhaps from a helpless attributional pattern that I will discuss below, and which might lead them to feel they do not have much control over their academic outcomes.)

Whatever the causes of these differences, it is clear that the teacher has a crucial influence on students' cognitions, affections and perceptions. According to Carol Dweck (C. I. Diener & Dweck, 1980; Dweck, 1999, 2007b; Dweck, W. Davidson, Nelson, & Enna, 1978; Dweck, Goetz, & Strauss, 1980; Dweck & Licht, 1980), teachers are actually responsible for generating and perpetuating the very gender stereotype that girls are good at languages and boys are good at science. Using research evidence that she and her colleagues obtained in experimental studies, she explains (in all of the above publications, but particularly in Dweck & Licht, 1980) that the difference originates in the type of feedback teachers give to boys and girls, doubled by the different ways in which boys and girls cope with setbacks. It was observed repeatedly that teachers tend to give behavioural feedback to boys and intellectual feedback to girls, and that generally boys received more negative feedback about their lack of motivation or effort, and girls received more positive feedback about ability. As this happens quite frequently, boys learn that negative feedback does not mean anything about their competence.

When girls get negative feedback, however, knowing that they normally get ability cues, they take it to mean that they are not able. This leads to gender differences in attributions for success and failure: boys explain their success through high ability and their failure through low effort, whereas girls explain their success through high effort and their failure through low ability. Furthermore, boys learn that teachers are not a particularly reliable source of ability cues, therefore any subject in which the criteria for success are objective will be preferred: Mathematics, for example, where the solution to a problem can be either correct or incorrect, with little room for ambiguous teacher feedback.

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In verbal areas, though, there are no such clear-cut answers – and this is precisely the reasons why girls prefer them. As girls internalise the causes of failure, they will avoid challenge and prefer academic subjects in which failure is not very evident, or in which failure in one aspect is compensated by success in others: English, for example. A bad essay that is presented in neat handwriting and impeccable grammar is far less likely to bring a fail mark than a Physics or Mathematics problem, for example, where the only thing that matters is whether the final solution is correct or not. Research shows that no matter how much success girls experience, when failure occurs they always blame low ability for it. This is the helpless attributional pattern, and Dweck maintains that the most vulnerable persons in face of helplessness are bright girls, with a stunning history of academic success.

Merrett and Wheldall (1992) confirm Dweck's theory of gender-dependent teacher feedback. Observing 32 primary- and 38 secondary-school on three occasions, they identified no difference in teacher responses to boys and girls in primary schools, but in secondary schools they found that boys received significantly more attention – both positive and negative – from teachers. Moreover, when they analysed male and female educators separately, they found that female teachers gave significantly more negative responses to boys' social behaviour, whilst male teachers gave significantly more positive responses to boys' academic behaviour. My data appear to fit Merrett & Wheldall's and Dweck's explanations perfectly. Not only were the teachers of the 44 participant groups all female, but the attributional patterns that Dweck describes are exactly the attributional patterns that were revealed in my participants. In Chapter Six we saw that, while overall most participants ticked mostly internal attributions for failure and external attributions for success, indicating a helpless attributional patterns, a closer look (Figure 6.1) revealed that girls and boys used the two main internal attributions – effort and ability – in different ways. Girls tended to

explain their positive outcomes through high effort and negative outcomes through low ability, while boys explained their positive outcomes through high ability and negative outcomes through low effort. In other words, a girl might think: "I succeed when I work hard and I fail because I am not very clever", while a boy might say to himself: "I succeed because I am clever and I fail when I don't work hard". The boys' self-worth is thus well protected in both cases (whether they work or not), actually demonstrating a reasonable level of achievement motivation, whereas girls appear as the actual victims of helplessness (C. I. Diener & Dweck, 1978; Dweck et al., 1978; Seligman, 1992; Weiner, 1972, 1992, 2005). This difference is confirmed (6.2.1.1) by the statistically significant effect that showed boys had stronger English private selves (cognitive appraisals, internal frame of reference and external frame of reference). The affective component of the private self was not statistically significant (but the girls' mean value was a little higher than the boys') and girls had significantly stronger English ideal selves – confirming Ryan's (2009) and Henry's (2009) results – but the effect size was negligible. While female students may appear to love English slightly more than male ones, male students feel significantly more competent.

Another consistent gender effect was in the L2 public and imposed selves – all significantly higher for girls (except in the imposed self – classmates, which was not significant). This reinforces my earlier inference that the private self may not necessarily be related to the public self: a student may display a public self in response to social constraints even though the public self may be very different from their perceived "real" self. In addition, this result shows that girls feel significantly greater pressure to do well in English (perhaps reflecting the societal stereotype that girls must do well in languages) and they strive significantly more to show that they do, although their perceived competence in English is actually lower than the boys'. Thus, my findings resonate well with the

literature showing that girls are less confident, prefer non-challenging tasks, are more performance oriented (i.e., believe that ability is fixed, therefore one must show one is able) and more extrinsically motivated (Ames, 1978; Boggiano, Main, & Katz, 1991; Dweck, 1999, 2007b) and strive to please the teacher more than boys do (R. B. Miller et al., 1996).

One important drawback in discussing the gender differences in my data is that these effects were revealed only in post-hoc statistical analyses. Identifying gender differences was not part of my research objectives and, as such, the matter was neither addressed in the interviews nor did it emerge as something that concerned my participants to such an extent that they volunteered to mention it. However, I have found one statistical effect that received support in the interviews (without differentiating for gender) and which is a strong recurring theme in Romanian schools, though it would be virtually impossible to prove: that students who take private tuition may be marked up undeservedly in class. We have seen in Chapter Six (6.2.1.1) that, overall there were no gender differences in the length of private tuition students had taken and that a large majority said they had not taken any private classes at all. Nevertheless, when selecting just the cases with over two years' tuition outside school, it emerged that, on average, boys had studied English privately more than girls. However, this could not explain the boys' higher L2 confidence: the gender effect was no longer found in the smaller sample. For these 94 students, the only differences were in the internal-reference component of the private self, showing that boys felt they were better at English than at other subjects more than girls did, as well as in the actual mark they received and the mark they believed they deserved. Essentially, the effect size was larger for the actual mark than for the mark deserved, and there was no difference in perceived competence (cognitive appraisals) between the boys and the girls who took private classes, nor did they differ in how competent they felt by comparison to their classmates (external

frame of reference). This shows that boys who take private tuition may receive unrealistically high marks in English at school – with two provisos: I do not know whether these boys studied the language privately with their class teacher, and this sub-sample is now too small to identify any differences between schools. Although, as I said, my interviewees did not refer to gender differences, several of them felt that students who took private tuition with the class teacher received higher marks than they deserved and were privileged in many ways in the English class (7.2.2). For example, *Cercuri* (F, 18) felt that the teacher only paid attention to her "pet students" in class, who were "not necessarily good at English" but were her private tutees. The girl also confessed she showed a face that the teacher wanted in class, to avoid problems that could include bad marks, especially that she was not the teacher's private tutee. *Sophie* (F, 15), too, related her very traumatic experience with the English teacher who only listened to her (male!) private tutee in class because "it was clear he knew the answer", while to *Sophie* she always said: "You're bound to get it wrong, I won't have you answer this question!", then accusing her of cheating when she did give her a chance to "answer" and the girl did well. Of course, the purpose of qualitative analysis is not to seek generalised explanations, but to facilitate in-depth contextualised understanding, therefore it is not possible to comment on the gender implications of these contributions. It is hard not to note, however, that no boy mentioned these problems in the interviews.

This is a very good example of a situation in which neither quantitative nor qualitative data would have revealed much separately, but in consonance they have facilitated a rare glimpse into a widely recognised phenomenon that will always be very hard to prove and even to discuss. However, poststructuralist researchers and critical feminists warn against the use of statistics in the study of gender and, generally, against considering it a "variable". Instead, they recommend regarding gender in larger societal interactions, from perspectives

such as power, (un)equal opportunities and ideology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2006; Delamont, 1990; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1998; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2004; Pavlenko, Blackledge, & Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001; Sunderland, 2000; Swann, 1992). Within such a paradigm, my finding that girls' public selves and imposed selves were significantly higher than the boys', for example, would be explained through the fact that society places excessive constraints on girls to conform to particular social categories and, deprived of the material capital which society tends to reserve for men (higher marks, perhaps?), they are constrained from a young age to accumulate symbolic capital. Consequently, "women have to focus on the production of selves" in order to continually prove their worth (Eckert, 1998, p. 73), which might explain why my female participants *showed* more, while my male participants (thought they) *were* more. Such an approach would certainly be more able to elucidate why my boys and girls had different scores and what could have led to the difference, though a much larger ethnographic project would be needed for that, with a stronger emphasis on qualitative interpretivism than statistical comparisons and necessarily involving other members of the community in which these teenagers function (teachers, head teachers, parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbours and so on).

Gender differences - Summary

- boys have stronger English private selves than girls
- this may be because:
    - they may use English more for real-life purposes (computers)
    - they may overestimate themselves, and girls may underestimate themselves, which is the case in competitive environments
    - teachers may respond to boys and girls differently, influencing their self perceptions
- more teacher interest = more perceived competence (boys, school E)
- less teacher interest = less love of English (boys, school C)
- Romanian teachers may reinforce traditional gender stereotypes about language learning and about science
- boys: mastery-oriented attributions (success = high ability, failure = low effort)
- girls: helpless attributions (success = high effort, failure = low ability)
- girls perceive more pressure to do well in English and strive to *show* that they do well more than boys, even though their perceived competence is lower than boys'
- boys who take private tuition appear to be marked up in English at school

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8.2 A Quadripolar Model of Identity: Evaluation

Having discussed the results of this project, it is now the time to evaluate my proposed Quadripolar Model of Identity, which has shaped my Theoretical framework, has guided my research design and the creation of the data collection instruments, and has helped in the interpretation of the findings. The evaluation will be organised into three sub-sections: 1. Confirmed hypotheses; 2. Unexpected insights; and 3. Remaining questions.

8.2.1 Confirmed hypotheses

It is clear that many notions postulated in the Theoretical framework have been confirmed, the whole Quadripolar Model of Identity receiving substantive support as a comprehensive representation of adolescents as real persons caught in a web of complex social relationships. The four different L2 selves – private, ideal, public and imposed – emerged as separate concepts interacting largely in the predicted manner. The four self systems received very strong support as well, apart from developmental processes, which were not the focus of this cross-sectional study. However, many important insights were gained into self-system evolution too.

Public selves have been shown to fluctuate in tandem with imposed selves – a strong imposed self being associated with a strong public self and a weak imposed self being associated with a weak public self. It was also shown quite clearly that the four main relational contexts generate different imposed selves and, though them, different public selves. The hypothesis that conflictual imposed/ public selves would require skilful self-presentation and impression management was also corroborated.

It was postulated and fully supported that, in the transition from an actual towards a possible identity, both the ideal and the imposed selves can have great motivational potential. This was demonstrated to work towards negative consequences in the peer relational context (through the norm of low achievement) and in the teacher relational context (mainly though the internationalisation of superior social values). Personal relevance and interest was confirmed to play a crucial role in the process of internalisation.

It was expected and confirmed that the Romanian teachers would exhibit controlling behaviours towards their students and that this would thwart the

harmonious development of their language learning selves (though I would not have thought students would label this "Communism"). The fact that many Romanian adolescents learn English through self-directed real-life means in their own free time was another confirmed expectation.

My new data collection instruments were shown to work well, although subsequent fine-tuning of the questionnaire will facilitate the elimination of particular ambiguities and lacunae evident only in hindsight. Finally, a very important confirmation that I have gained is that the Quadripolar Model of Identity can integrate successfully several important theories, with great traditions of research validation and confirmation: self-presentation, impression management, possible selves, self-discrepancy and self-determination. Future research addressing the questions still left unanswered about identity in foreign language learning can thus build upon the solid bases of these theories, as well as on the confirmed hypotheses of this new framework.

8.2.2 Unexpected insights

The most unexpected of all results were gender differences: boys having stronger private selves than girls and a mastery-oriented attributional pattern, and girls being helpless and performance-oriented. Teachers' reinforcement of traditional gender stereotyping was, again, a surprise, as was the realisation that boys received more attention and were marked up when they took private classes, whereas girls were generally marked down in science-oriented schools. It was also unanticipated that increased teacher interest in students would be associated with stronger perceived competence in English, while decreased teacher interest would be linked to diminishing love of English.

Doing "one's duty as a student" emerged as a much stronger trend than I had hypothesised, and the fact that a large majority of students were duplicitous to

their English teacher and to their classmates contradicted my anticipation that most of them would be rebellious. Regarding the rebellious self system itself, I was proved mistaken in expecting it to be associated with disruptive and even aggressive behaviours. Instead, most students felt it was too much to say they would rebel against authority, as even those who chose the rebellious self system manifested rather duplicitous identity display. Then again, perhaps the disruptive rebels would never have volunteered for the interviews, thus giving me a chance to understand their perspective better. A related surprise was that the (male) students who had upset my research assistant most of all with their banter and "messing about" during the questionnaire administration process proved to be some of the most fascinating interviewees I had, when I decided to ignore her advice never to set foot in their classroom again.

I had not realised that submissive students would show so much respect and admiration for the sources of their internalised imposed selves, just as I had not anticipated that they would appear to thrive on authority and to need it for a fruitful academic and social development. The fact that for harmonious students the notion of social expectation seemed to have disappeared altogether was again somewhat unanticipated, although careful consideration indicated that this was very likely the result of complete internalisation of imposed selves.

Finally, I had not expected that some of the students would be so indignant at the possibility that their friends and classmates would give as much as a thought to their English language learning – certainly not for the future. And, generally, I had expected peers and friends to generate stronger L2 imposed and public English selves than they appeared to do.

8.2.3 Remaining questions

Being a cross-sectional study with restricted access to developmental insights only allowed by my participants' limited accounts and reported perceptions, my project could not explain many of the mutual and multidirectional influences that the four self components had been hypothesised to exert. As most analyses were correlational, when a strong association was detected it was not possible to comment on its causes either. Whether two correlated variables influence each other or are both influenced by a third, perhaps not yet identified, is impossible to surmise in the absence of a longitudinal and/ or experimental investigation.

For the same reason, the question still remains whether younger teenagers are pressurised into more identity display, which decreases as they learn to accept themselves and their private self becomes stronger. My present data did reveal various age differences, but they could not be integrated into a coherent conceptual explanation at this time.

On the basis of the literature, it was also hypothesised that, displaying particular public selves, people may learn new things about themselves and subsequently integrate these into their private selves. No apparent support for this assertion emerged from my data, although it is a topic that would be well worth investigating. The hypothesis that public selves would be influenced by the private self is also still unclear, my data indicating there may be no link between the two, but this is very likely to differ from one relational context to another.

An important question that my project could not possibly have answered in its actual form is whether the display of a public self in response to an imposed self is always conscious, always unconscious or both depending on circumstances, and under what circumstances (un)consciousness may influence decision. Also, internalisation processes have not been clarified entirely. Of utmost interest for

this project was whether or not internalisation of imposed/ public selves could be used to motivate students and help them achieve better results in foreign language learning. Unfortunately, as most teachers did not appear to get too involved with the students' future, this question too is still without a definite answer, although internalisation has been shown to work in social domains (both for the better and for the worse).

Starting from the literature reviewed, the ideal self was expected to be much stronger, to energise behaviour and to be accompanied by a strong future vision and clear strategy for reaching the desired state. Little support was found for these postulates, although the ideal self did contribute very important insights into identity and motivational processes. No interviewees mentioned strong future visions of themselves as proficient language learners and it is not clear whether such strong ideal selves can be found in Romanian teenagers. As for the clear strategies, these are very likely to be absent in my research site, where students' autonomy and self-regulation did not appear to receive much support in the classroom. It is also still unclear on the basis of my data whether the private self and the ideal self are unitary entities incorporating different contingent facets.

A final remaining question is to what extent these results can be generalised to other contexts. As we have seen, several similarities have been found between my Romanian participants and Chinese, Dutch, French, English, German and American students. However, some of these similarities are likely to depend more on coincidence than conceptual correspondence, especially that they emerged from very different research designs, with very different research purposes. At the moment is not possible to anticipate whether the Quadripolar Model of Identity would work in the same way in other cultures and with other types of participants, or whether it would work at all in a different context, although theoretically it should have general applicability.

8.3 Drawing the line

Most implications for future research and for classroom practice have already been outlined directly or indirectly, but I would like to emphasise here what I believe are the essential points.

8.3.1 Future studies

The questions left unanswered in my project, as well as the new ones generated by it, would necessarily have to be addressed in a longitudinal and/ or experimental investigation consolidated by in-depth ethnographic analysis of the larger community in which these teenagers function.

For a better understanding of my proposed framework, it is also necessary to test it with other foreign languages and with other academic subjects altogether. A science-oriented analysis would prove particularly revealing by facilitating insights into the extent to which identity processes are involved in the learning of a foreign language by comparison to a positivist academic subject.

Different participants altogether – perhaps teachers and other professional categories – as well as representatives of different ethno-cultural groups would help understand social identity processes better, as well as test the extent to which this framework could possibly be stretched beyond adolescent foreign language learning. It would be particularly interesting to see how it works in reciprocal (perhaps also personal?) relationships: for example, if I feel harmonious or duplicitous with somebody, will that person also feel harmonious or duplicitous with me?

8.3.2 Implications for the classroom

The most salient red thread that has crossed this chapter from beginning to end is also the most important implication for the classroom: unless students are allowed to be themselves – real people, with real hopes, fears, worries, joys, disappointments, thrills and mistakes – and appreciated for what they are as real people, they are very unlikely to engage genuinely in class and develop as language learners and social persons. It was sad to see that the huge potential for internalisation did not seem to be utilised in helping Romanian teenagers integrate English language learning into their private selves by helping them see why it (should have) mattered to them personally. Even sadder still was realising that neither teachers nor parents seemed to consider that English should be more important in the students' future than in their present.

As argued in the Introduction, foreign language classes would appear to be the most suited for identity development of all academic subjects. If the students are allowed to be "themselves" and to express "themselves" freely about what energises them and what helps them learn better, three crucial benefits follow if this communication occurs in the foreign language: the teacher gains invaluable insights into the learners' own motivational processes, the students practise the real-life discourse of genuine communication in a foreign language and they have the opportunity to explore and consolidate their identity as self-determined individuals in society.

Such self-actualising communication in English would leave little room for the question-and-answer exchanges that appeared to be so prevalent in my Romanian research context. If students are appreciated for what they really are, then their answers in class cannot be expected to simply rise to a teacher's expectations, who decides what is and what is not a correct answer. In an environment where students can be themselves and are appreciated for that,

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every one of their contributions is unique and inherently valuable, as it serves the treble purpose of disclosing their "real" identity in a safe nurturing environment, helping to consolidate the very identity thus disclosed in public and offering real-life linguistic practice.

Genuine discoursal exchanges in class would also help eliminate the "communication wall" that my interviewees talked about, which – they felt – prevented teachers from ever knowing what their learners were really like as people and thus missing precious opportunities to make classes relevant and engaging for the learners. Both motivated and demotivated students emphasised that, if the teacher knew them as individuals and incorporated self-relevant information in the lessons, they would feel much more motivated to engage in class genuinely and really work hard (rather than pretend to). In this light, "motivating" learners to work hard appears to be reduced to the necessity of creating a classroom environment in which they feel appreciated and nurtured for what they are as individuals.

But when teachers themselves do not seem to be appreciated for what they are as individuals, in a system driven mainly by assessment and administration, this may not be very easy to put into practice. Romanian teachers are themselves controlled and imposed upon by higher-order factors and it is quite unlikely that many of them feel "themselves" either in the staff room or in the classroom, which is sure to undermine their professional and personal sense of wellbeing. But in contrast to their adolescent students, teachers are mature individuals who are free to make personally relevant choices and – at least in theory – do what they like.

There were strong indications in my data that Romanian students love English and they would love to become more proficient English speakers. There were also indications that they tried to be themselves in class and were not often

appreciated for that. It would appear, then, that a huge learning potential is left unexplored in these classes, increasing students' demotivation and frustration, which is bound to enter a vicious circle with the teachers' demotivation and frustration. It is rather improbable that the Romanian education system will change dramatically in the near future and it is equally improbable that students will be able to change anything on their own soon. The onus, then, is on teachers. They have the wonderful opportunity to work with students who love English, who appear to be talented and self-determined, and who would love to learn more at school – if only they were allowed to be "themselves". The 1,045 voices in my project appeared to be saying the same thing: just let us be ourselves in class and we will learn better. With this, half the motivational battle would be won. Perhaps the other half would be won if teachers, too, tried to be themselves in the classroom.

IX. Conclusion

This research project started from a practice-rooted interest in the factors that may help students feel that they are personally appreciated in the classroom, and in how these factors could be used to enhance their engagement and achievement in the English class. Specifically, the aims of the project were 1) to gain new insights into the identity of Romanian adolescent learners of English as a foreign language and its implications for classroom involvement; and 2) to validate the new theoretical framework, A Quadripolar Model of Identity, and its associated questionnaire.

Considering the analysis and discussion of my findings, it can be concluded that the two aims have been achieved to a very large extent. Of the five research questions (1.1, 5.1), some have been answered fully, some partially. The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire has been shown to work well in gathering quantitative data that confirmed the theoretical insights emerging from the literature reviewed, while also showing very high internal consistency coefficients for all the scales. The four L2 self components (private, public, ideal and imposed) have been shown to represent distinct measurable variables, clustering in different ways depending on the analysis performed (of particular interest being the difference between the L2 private self and the L2 public self displayed in response to various imposed selves). The research questions addressing identity processes and emergent qualitative insights have been answered partially but to satisfactory measure for this project. Question 4 in particular, but quite probably also 3 and 5, could never be given a clear definitive answer. Nevertheless, it is such partial confirmations and the associated host of

uncertainties that make identity such a rewarding research topic, and that stimulate further investigations.

My Literature review ends with five reasons why I consider that more research is needed into the identity of foreign language learners (2.5). These are, briefly, that:

- very little research has addressed the learners' actual self and the host of socio-individual factors that students bring with them into the foreign language class;

- hardly any attention has been given to strategic self-presentation in L2 classes, although there are solid findings to confirm that manipulative identity display is rife in school, especially in competitive performance-oriented environments;

- previous investigations into socially-imposed selves have not found much support for the motivational power that these can have in foreign language learning, especially the potential uses of internalisation being overlooked;

- there is a need for comprehensive models aiming to describe not only the possible, but also the actual identity of foreign language learners, along with their mutual influences and their results in the L2 class; and

- as most identity research in foreign language learning has been conducted with data collection instruments borrowed – totally or partially – from older studies designed for totally different purposes, in totally different research contexts, new purposefully-designed instruments are necessary in order to investigate the topic in a systematic manner.

My findings have depicted foreign language learners as skilled identity negotiators both in the classroom and outside, who choose to disclose what they perceive to be their "true" self only in environments where they feel appreciated as individuals. When they feel they are not appreciated personally, they display

context-induced public selves and sometimes they internalise these into their private selves, although this potential does not appear to be exploited in the English language class. In addition, not only has my project shown that students' private selves sometimes have little in common with the public selves they display in class, but we have also seen that students who feel they cannot show their "true" selves in class have lower language-learning scores than those who do. While further research is certainly needed before drawing any definite conclusions, this link between classroom identity and achievement is an important indication that we do need to care about our students' identity if we care about their achievement.

Teachers appeared to be the decisive factors in determining students' classroom identity, both through the perceived interest and appreciation that they showed to learners and through their perceived assessment fairness. Although overall students felt quite competent in English, few of them considered that their competence originated in the classroom, some even indicating that a dislike for the teacher induced a dislike for their subject matter. There were signs that outside the classroom the participants were self-determined and mastery-oriented, whereas in class they tended to be helpless. Both parents and teachers appeared to reinforce the importance of English-as-an-academic-subject to the detriment of English-as-a-communication-tool, reportedly downplaying the relevance that the foreign language could have in the students' future. Consequently, many participants who had strong affinities with the language and wanted to pursue English-related careers apparently had to rebel against their parents and to be duplicitous to their teachers in order to do so. By contrast, students who felt that their attributes and desires were appreciated were prepared to work hard and do what the teacher and parents asked them without even being aware of any existing "expectations" that might redirect their actions. These students, who felt they could be "themselves" in class and outside,

appeared to be better language learners than those who felt they had to conceal their "true" identity and display various public selves thought to bring immediate beneficial results but that seemed to be detrimental in the long run.

At the end of this thesis, it can be seen clearly that the five reasons for conducting more research have been addressed in the current project quite successfully. We can, therefore, conclude that my investigation has been a worthwhile research project, representing a step forward towards a better understanding of identity in foreign language learning. Further studies will now have to elucidate to what extent my results can be generalised and my model applied in other contexts, as well as how the quadripolar self system evolves in time.

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Appendix A

The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire

(English translation)

Due to thesis pagination constraints, it is only possible to include here a graphically restricted version of the questionnaire that my participants completed in an A4-booklet format with narrow margins. Please see Appendix C (CD-ROM) for the exact format of the questionnaire in Romanian, as well as its English translation.

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An enquiry into Romanian students' attitude to the English class

This study is part of a research doctorate at the University of Nottingham (UK), and it aims to help students have a more rewarding time at school. We would really appreciate it if you could help us understand students' motivation better, by telling us a little about your attitude to the English class. You don't have to complete this questionnaire if you don't want to. If you do, we won't ask for your name and your answers will be used in the strictest confidence, for research purposes only. The results of the study will be published in anonymised form, so that neither you nor your school can be identified.

There is no right or wrong answer: all that matters is your personal opinion. Please read the instructions carefully and choose the answer which you find most suitable for yourself. Please, don't allow other people's answers to influence you. We would really appreciate your honest opinion, as only in this way can we hope to improve the time that students like you spend at school.

Thank you very much!
_____

I. *Please read the following paragraphs very carefully and choose the one that best suits your English teacher, your classmates, your best friends and your family. Please encircle one corresponding letter in every box, as in the example. Thank you!*

A) They know very well what sort of person I am. What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I prefer to give up my intentions and do what they think it's better for me. What they want me to do in life is more important than what I'd have liked, so I'll do what they say.

B) They don't really know what sort of person I really am, and it's not important for me that they do. They would like me to do something else in life than I would, and that's why I'll pursue my own dreams without letting them know. At the same time, I'll give them the impression that I do what they ask me to, even though I'm actually seeing about my own business. I know better.

C) What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I'll pursue my own dreams even if I have to rebel against them. They know me well, I haven't got anything to hide, and if they want to force me into doing something, I am likely to refuse it openly. What they want me to do is less important than what I want.

D) They know me very well and appreciate me for what I am. My dreams for the future are very similar to what they'd like me to do in life. They don't want to impose anything on me, but give me the total liberty to choose, and they always appreciate my decisions about my future. They help me feel really fulfilled.

example	my English teacher	my classmates	my best friends	my family
A B © D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D

*II. Please read the following statements carefully and for each of them encircle one answer that represents you best of all (e.g., if you love hazelnut chocolate but you love plain chocolate even more, choose ⑤; if you hate hazelnut chocolate, choose ①). Please remember: **one** answer for **every line**!*

HOW TRUE FOR YOU? 1 = very untrue 2 = untrue 3 = relatively untrue 4 = relatively true 5 = true 6 = very true	
EXAMPLE: I love hazelnut chocolate.	1 2 3 4 ⑤ 6
I find it very easy to learn English.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
I am better at English than most of my classmates.	1 2 3 4 5 6
English will be a very important part of my future.	1 2 3 4 5 6
English is the hardest class of all.	1 2 3 4 5 6
What I learn during the English classes will be very useful to me in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I feel great when I'm working on my English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am among the best students in my English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I can pick up English stuff faster than my classmates can.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
My English classes will help me become the person I want to be in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I enjoy the challenges of the English class even when I don't get good marks.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The English class really helps me develop as a person.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I really love learning English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I intend to get a degree in English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
If I know an activity is too hard for me, I still try to do it.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am really good at English.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
I have been more successful with English than with other subjects.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I would love to be an English expert in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I have generally been successful in learning English so far.	1 2 3 4 5 6
My future job will have an English language component.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Learning English is an important part of my life.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Learning English is easier for me than learning other subjects.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I work hard to improve my English irrespective of the marks I get.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
The English class is always very interesting.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I feel I am appreciated for what I really am in the English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I have a lot of fun when I work on my English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I have more problems with my English than some of my classmates.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I try an activity for as many times as necessary to do it right.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I can't wait to learn more things about English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The person I would like to be communicates in English very well.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
When an English task is very difficult, I feel motivated to work harder on it.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The English class is boring, always following the same lines.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Compared to other subjects, English poses very few problems for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
My English teacher knows what my hobbies are.	1 2 3 4 5 6

	very untrue very true
I can easily find mistakes in my classmates' English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am really happy with my performance in English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I feel encouraged to grow and develop in the English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
English is one of my favourite subjects.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The English class is just right for me – not too easy, not too difficult.	1 2 3 4 5 6
My personal qualities are very much appreciated in the English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I feel I am really talented at English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I have more problems with my English than with other subjects.	very untrue very true 1 2 3 4 5 6
My English teacher is interested in my hobbies and passions.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The mistakes I make in English motivate me to work harder.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The other students in class struggle with English more than I do.	1 2 3 4 5 6
What I really am as a person doesn't matter in the English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
My English learning experience has been satisfactory to date.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am better at English than at any other subject.	1 2 3 4 5 6

III. *We are all surrounded by people who would like us to do particular things. For the following statements, please think about your English teacher, your classmates, your best friends and your family. How much would they all like you to do these things? Please choose one answer for each of them, so that you have four encircled answers on every line, like in the example. Please remember: **four** answers for **every line**! Thank you!*

HOW MUCH WOULD THESE PEOPLE LIKE ME TO…?				
1 = very little 2 = little 3 = relatively little 4 = relatively much 5 = much 6 = very much				
These people would like me to…	my English teacher	my classmates	my best friends	my family
EXAMPLE: …use paper tissues.	1 ② 3 4 5 6	① 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 ③ 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 ⑥
…work hard to improve my English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…consider English very important for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…really love English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…be really talented at English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…always do my English homework.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…always do what the English teacher asks me.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…get a degree in English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…have a future job with an English language component.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…be a teacher of English, or something similar.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…see English as a very important part of my future.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…be an English expert in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…communicate in English very well in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

*IV. Sometimes, we all want to show other people particular things about ourselves. How important is it that you show the following to your English teacher, your classmates, your best friends and your family? Please choose one answer for each of them, so that you have four encircled answers on every line, like in the example. Please remember: **four** answers for **every line**! Thank you!*

HOW IMPORTANT TO SHOW TO THESE PEOPLE…?

1 = very unimportant   2 = unimportant   3 = relatively unimportant
4 = relatively important   5 = important   6 = very important

It's very important for me to show to these people…	to my English teacher	to my classmates	to my best friends	to my family
EXAMPLE: …that I love sports cars.	① 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 ⑤ 6	1 2 3 4 5 ⑥	1 2 3 ④ 5 6
…that I work hard to improve my English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…that English is very important for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…that I really love English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…that I am really talented at English.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…that I always do my English homework.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
…that I always do what the English teacher asks me.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

*V. How would you explain your successes and failures in the English class? Please read the following statements carefully and tick ☑ all that apply in your case. You may tick as many answers as you feel are right for you, but please remember to mark your answers in **both columns**! Thank you!*

Think about the situations when you did well in English. What do you think helped you do well? Please tick all that apply. ☑		*Now think about the situations when you didn't do very well in English. What do you think were the causes? Please tick all that apply.* ☑	
I had worked really hard on my English.		I spent too little time preparing.	
I was really-really lucky.		I'm not all that good at it.	
I really love English.		My classmates didn't bother to help me at all.	
I always do extra work for English.		The teacher gave me a lower mark than I deserved.	
I have a true gift for English.		I haven't really got a gift for languages.	
My classmates helped me do well.		I was very unlucky.	
The teacher gave me a higher mark than I deserved.		The teacher doesn't always explain things well.	
The lesson was very easy.		I can't understand some rules of English.	
The teacher helped me along.		I couldn't concentrate very well during that lesson.	
I spend a lot of time on my English.		I was having a bad day.	
I was having a really good day.		The tasks were too hard for my level of English.	
I am very interested in English.		I didn't try hard enough.	

VI. Finally, please fill in the following information about yourself:

I have studied English for _____ years at school and _____ years with a private tutor.

My usual mark in English is _____. The mark I think I deserve is _____. *(Please write one number in each space.)*

I am a boy/ a girl. *(Please encircle.)*

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SHORT INTERVIEW ON THE THEME OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE WRITE A PASSWORD IN THIS BOX FOR IDENTIFICATION: [_____]

☺ **THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!** ☺

Appendix B

Interview guide:

Themes covered, with examples of questions and prompts

INTRODUCTION

(Thanks and informal beginning.) How did you find the questionnaire (yesterday)? Any problems? Anything that wasn't right?

MISSING ANSWERS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

There are a few blanks in your questionnaire – could you please fill these in too? I think you've skipped a few items – was that intentional or did you just overlook them?

SECTION 1 OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (VIGNETTES)

Vignettes right?

Have a look at your answers to the first section, please. Would you still choose the same descriptions?

Were they right for your situation? Did you feel the need for more options?

Which one(s) suited you really well/ didn't really suit you? How would you improve it/ them?

Examples and explanations

Could you please give me some examples/ details to support your choices?

Why did you choose this description for those people? Could you go through this description sentence by sentence and give me some examples, please?

SYSTEM SUBTYPE DIFFERENCES/ CONFLICTS

I can see you've chosen different paragraphs for your family and your friends. What happens when you're in the same place both with your family and your friends? How do you feel? Has it ever happened that you were in the same place with your family and your friends and didn't really know how to behave? Can you give me an example? What did you do? Who did you try to 'please' first? Why?

- variants for teacher/ classmates, classmates/ friends

PLAYING SOCIAL ROLES

Do you ever feel you're playing some sort of social role? That you're different from one situation to another, perhaps depending on the person you're talking to? Can you give me an example? How would you explain this? Why do you think this happens?

CONFORMING TO EXPECTATIONS

I can see from your questionnaire that your English teacher/ your family/ friends/ classmates have certain expectations about you and you tend (not) to respond to these expectations. Can you explain a bit, please?

It seems to be quite different with your classmates/ friends/ family/ teacher. How would you explain this? It doesn't seem to matter too much what they expect of you – why is that? It seems to matter a lot – could you expand a bit please?

Your passions and interests

You've said in your questionnaire that your English teacher doesn't really know what passions and interests you've got and doesn't seem to be too interested either. Can you give me an example, please? How would you explain that? Does this have any influence on your/ the students' classroom involvement?

You've said the English teacher knows your passions and is very interested too. Can you give me an example, please? How would you explain that? Does this have any influence on your classroom involvement?

Your personal qualities

According to your questionnaire answers, you think you've got some personal qualities that aren't really appreciated (or known) in the English class. Can you give me an example, please? Does this have any influence on your classroom involvement?

You've said your personal qualities are very appreciated in the English class. An example? How does that make you feel in class? Why is that?

Mark

You've said you deserve a higher/ lower mark than you normally get in English. How would you explain that? Why do you think you're usually marked in this way?

Motivation

What makes you feel really great in the English class? What makes you feel you're really yourself? That you're having a lot of fun and you're learning a lot too?

How would you describe your ideal English class? Has that happened?

Think about the English class of your life (whether it's happened or not) – how would you describe it to me? What's going on in there?

How would you motivate your students if you were a teacher (of English)?

Is there anything you'd change in your English class as it is now? Why?

How much effort would you say you put into the English class? A percentage? Why is that? What would make you work harder/ not so hard?

FUTURE JOB

What would you like to do in the future? How would English come into it?

ANYTHING TO ADD?

THANKS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Appendix C: CD-ROM

Please see the attached CD-ROM for the following documents:

C.1. The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire (English)

C.2. The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire (Romanian)

C.3. The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire with item numbers

C.4. Questionnaire scales with item numbers

C.5. Qualitative data analysis

C.6. Research report for schools (English)

C.7. Research report for schools (Romanian)