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The Role of Learner-Generated Materials in an Online EFL Context: An Exploration of the Links between Emotions, L2 Motivation, Learner Autonomy and Emotional Intelligence

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Dedication

Dedicated to my beloved ones

Acknowledgement

Surely the number of people who contributed to this thesis is more than it is possible to mention in this brief acknowledgement. However, I would like to take this opportunity to express my overwhelming gratitude to some people who have significantly believed in me, encouraged and supported me in numerous ways throughout my PhD journey.

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Abstract

In recent years, research into ELT materials has proliferated. However, there is a dearth of studies in the area of learner-generated materials (LGMs). Previous studies in LGMs have predominately examined learners' involvement in generating learning materials from teachers' perspectives. Few, if any, studies have attempted in-depth explorations of this area from the point of view of learners or provided first-hand accounts of learners' experiences in generating their own learning materials. The aim of the present study is to fill this gap. It provides comprehensive ethnographic and phenomenological accounts delineating the reasons, motivations, perceptions as well as practices of online (remote) EFL learners in a Saudi Arabian university with regards to their involvement in the generation and use of LGMs for their learning. As the phenomenon under investigation spans a period of 9 years, the study employs a triangulation of qualitative methods in an attempt to gain an all-inclusive understanding of the phenomenon. The data were collected through a number of methods: content analysis of Internet forums, virtual ethnographic observation of study groups in forums, WhatsApp and Telegram and through phenomenological interviews. For interpreting the data, the study made references to theoretical frameworks from the areas of L2 motivation, learner autonomy, complex dynamic systems theory, possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000) from educational psychology and emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006) from the positive psychology. The results demonstrate the vital role of emotions in motivating learners' materials writing and learning practices. There was a range of factors that appear to be responsible for the generation and use of LGMs in the investigated context, namely the dissatisfaction with the teachers' digital materials, previous learning practices, learners' emotional needs and learning abilities and styles and learners' levels of English proficiency. The involvement in the generation and use of LGMs appeared to have positively impacted the learning experiences of the online learners both at the emotional and academic level. Further, the study also reports findings of interest relevant to the research of emotions, positive psychology, L2 motivation, learner autonomy, emotional intelligence and complex dynamic systems theory.

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the production and use of learner-generated materials (henceforth LGMs) in an EFL online context in a Saudi Arabian university. In this study LGMs mean materials or learning activities generated by learners and used by learners for self or group study in any form to facilitate learning. Despite the fact that learners are offered digital learning materials prepared by teachers in addition to prescribed textbooks, the learners generate various types of LGMs, on their own and without any involvement whatsoever on the part of their teachers, to be used for language learning and exam study. Hence, this study investigates the reasons and motivations behind such a practice and seeks to understand learners' perceptions and use of their learning materials (both teachers' materials and LGMs) as well as the role of LGMs in this particular context. At the time of conducting the research, it has been seven years since the onset of the online learning programme and the production of LGMs seemed to be extremely central to the online community. The study thus aimed to answer the following main research question:

1. What is the role of LGMs in the online EFL learning context under focus?

However, in order to answer this question, it was also necessary to collect data for the following secondary research questions:

  1.1 How and why did LGMs come into existence?

  1.2 How did LGMs evolve into their current forms?

  1.3 Why do learners engage in the production of LGMs?

  1.4 How do learners perceive LGMs in comparison to their teachers' materials?

Franklin (1997) points out that in qualitative research "research questions emerge and may change as the data is collected" and that the "[r]esearcher starts out with a question and a guiding purpose or design but goes with the flow after they enter the field setting" (p. 270). The formulation of the final secondary research questions went through many stages also in alliance with the development of the research itself. I began with a simple question: why do the online learners produce LGMs? After developing an interest in exploring the emotional experiences and reactions of learners, two questions were added to examine the role of emotions and emotional intelligence in the production of LGMs:

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1.5 Do emotions have a role to play in the production and use of LGMs? If yes, how?

1.6 Does emotional intelligence have a role to play in the production and use of LGMs? If yes, how?

As it might be suggested by the main research question, this study is generally situated within ELT materials research and mainly within LGMs research. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 provide general literature backgrounds on ELT materials and LGMs research as well as a justification for the study. Section 1.4 outlines the significance of the study. Sections 1.5 and 1.6 provide macro and micro contextual backgrounds. First, I present general information on the university offering the online programme within which the EFL context under focus is situated. Following that, more details are given on the online English language programme in terms of method of teaching, types of materials, assessment and learners' profiles. Section 1.7 outlines the organization of the thesis.

1.2 General background to research on ELT materials

Despite wide agreement that ELT materials play a vital role in enabling and facilitating English teaching and learning in EFL/ESL contexts around the globe (Richards, 2001, 2014), it is true that unlike other aspects related to teaching and learning English, materials has been trivialized and "neglected" (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 1) in applied linguistics research (see also Harwood, 2010, 2014; McGrath, 2013; Richards, 2010; Samuda, 2005). Tomlinson (2012) states that ELT materials were not acknowledged as a research field in their own right by academics until the mid-1990s. Richards (2010) contends that the role of materials in teaching has been trivialized in both English teacher-training education and graduate education; TESOL teachers complete their degrees with limited experience in responding to classroom demands related to ELT materials. The reason for this is the assumption that materials design, writing, development, evaluation and implementation are activities that lack a theoretical basis. These activities are instead regarded as being informed by practice and experience.

Nevertheless, the explosion in the production of commercial ELT materials, along with the increasing calls from researchers to explore and investigate ELT materials, has resulted in increasing attention on ELT materials in second language research. More and more universities and teacher-training institutions have included courses and programmes on the development and exploitation of ELT materials for facilitating language teaching, learning and acquisition (Tomlinson, 2012). In addition, there has been an exponential growth in the number of publications on ELT materials in an attempt to establish and demonstrate their theoretical foundations. There are new publications investigating ELT materials from

different perspectives. There are books on the effectiveness of different types of ELT materials (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2010), on the theoretical and practical issues related to design, implementation and evaluation of ELT materials (Harwood, 2010), on materials design and development (Tomlinson, 2011), on teacher training in the use of ELT materials (McGrath, 2013), on the application of applied linguistics theories to material development (Tomlinson, 2013a), on the principles and procedures of materials development, adaptation, and evaluation (Mishan & Timmis, 2015; Tomlinson, 2013b), on the use of materials by teachers and learners in various international contexts (Garton & Graves, 2014), on issues related to content analysis, use, and writing and publication of materials (Harwood, 2014). Furthermore, new editions of old publications have also appeared to cater for the growing interest in ELT materials (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, 2003; McDonough et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 1998, 2011).

Yet, despite this growth of interest in ELT materials, the field is still "under-researched," as Garton and Graves (2014, p. 1) put it. The authors maintain that, with the exception of Harwood (2014), which was not included in their report, there are two important shortcomings with regards to the majority of these publications. First, previous publications lack empirical support: many of the publications basically give advice for teachers on "'how to'…, but they are not based on research studies into materials" (p.1). Garton and Graves (2014) further contend that other publications including Harwood (2010), Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) and Tomlinson (2013a) attempt to link ELT materials with theories of language and language learning, but still lack empirical studies into the materials themselves. Harwood (2010, 2014) and Tomlinson (2012) support this call for empirical studies in ELT research to add credibility to materials research.

The second point made by Garton and Graves (2014) is that these publications have not focused on the use of textbooks in reality. Other aspects of ELT materials such as their writing, design, development, and evaluation have received attention, but the same cannot be said with regards to investigations of their use in the classroom. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) also point to the small number of empirical studies on materials use; their extensive research on various databases for empirical studies yielded only a few studies, which were based on teachers' self-reports, questionnaires, and interviews. It is accepted among materials researchers that attention to materials use in teaching/learning contexts is of great importance. Graves (2000), for instance, states that "success in teaching with a textbook depends also on the students who use it" (p. 176). Tomlinson (2012) contends that theoretical studies into materials are informed by their use in the classroom. Garton and Graves (2014) add that

materials research is incomplete without including the aspect of their use. Littlejohn (2011) also suggests that analysing materials in action reveals facts that cannot be appreciated through analysing materials as a product. McGrath (2013), in the same vein, calls for more studies on the development and use of ELT materials, as materials effectiveness is determined by how they are perceived and used by learners. Finally, Harwood (2014) confirms the importance of understanding how teachers and learners use their textbooks and points to the scarcity of studies on ELT materials use.

1.3 General background to research on LGMs

McGrath (2014) defines LGMs broadly to include materials either selected or produced by learners to be used by the teacher with the learners who authored the materials or to be used with other learners. While the concept of LGMs is not new in TESOL research, this area of research is "quite still a niche area" (Mishan, 2014, p. 201). McGrath has also pointed to the dearth of studies on LGMs (2002, 2013, 2014). Early studies on LGMs started during the last century and were based largely on viewpoint pieces and classroom experiences to encourage the delegation of some of the responsibilities for creating or adapting materials to learners (Allwright, 1978, 1981; Assinder, 1991; Campbell & Kryszewska, 1992; Clarke, 1989; Littlejohn, 1983; Riggenbach, 1988; Swales, 1992, Tudor, 1993; Wessels, 1991; Whitaker, 1983; Wiseman, 1990). The common thread among these works is that they advocate the implementation of LGMs in the teaching and learning of English due to the potential benefits they confer on learners. However, it appears that LGMs research has received little attention to date, resulting in few studies (Gill, 2008 as cited in McGrath, 2014; McGrath, 2002; Mishan, 2004; Simpson, 2006; Willis, 2011). These studies continued the advocacy of the benefit of engaging learners in producing materials. For instance, Simpson (2006) reports that he engaged his students in producing collocation worksheets and found the activity to be an effective motivational tool for learning engagement and fostering of autonomous learning skills. Mishan (2004) also proposes that engaging learners in producing concordances allows them practice in authentic research tasks as learners choose vocabulary and generate definitions and examples for them. Other studies (Lynch, 2007; Stillwell et al., 2010) empirically investigated the linguistic gains of using learners' materials in learning the language. Recently, there has been a noticeable growing interest in LGMs in the EFL context (Akdeniz, 2017; Bakla, 2018; Bradford-Watts, 2011; Brown et al., 2013; Chen & Lui, 2012; Engin; 2014; Green et al., 2014; Hung, 2017; Jankowska & Jankowski, 2017; Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2012; McGrath; 2013, 2014; Mennim, 2012; 2016; Phillips, 2017; Sarıçoban & Bakla, 2012). Most of these studies are empirical and reported evidence-based results on the

benefits of engaging learners in producing LGMs. Apparently, this interest has been revived in part in educational circles due to technological advances, such as video/audio casts, wikis and blogs, as well as educational approaches concerned with allowing learners some opportunities to participate in their learning such as flipped learning, student partnership student-led learning and open educational practice (OEP).

The above general reviews (1.2 and 1.3) present ELT materials research as lacking empirical studies in general and LGMs research in particular. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature through reporting an empirical study on learners' production and use of LGMs in an online EFL context. The context of the present study presents a natural adoption by learners of LGMs over 9 years; hence investigating this context might contribute valuable insights into LGMs research.

1.4 The research context

The context of the present study is an online four-year bachelor degree in English language at KMU (a random pseudonym for a Saudi Arabian university). The programme in English language is one amongst other degree programmes. Similar to all other government universities in Saudi Arabia, KMU is funded by the government and thus on-campus students pay no tuition fees. In addition, all students are entitled to a monthly allowance. Due to the fact that enrolment applications have always outnumbered the available on-campus places, KMU has introduced self-funded courses for students who wish to continue their education but do not meet the competitive entrance requirements. KMU's distance education programme is amongst these self-funded programmes, but with low fees and a variety of payment schemes to suit students' financial situations. In addition to KMU, there are other government and private universities that offer distance learning programmes to meet the growing demands for education opportunities.

In addition to providing access to education to students who could not learn via the conventional on-campus method, the distance education programme seeks to offer similar opportunities to individuals with special circumstances. According to a broadcasted interview, the distance education programme was initiated as a realization of KMU's vision of social partnership. The programme aims to involve numerous parties in the public and private sectors to achieve this vision. There are at least 26 agreements between KMU and various parties in the public and private sectors whereby the programme grants free places to individuals in the custody/care of these sectors. These parties include prison services, orphanages, and welfare organizations (i.e., individuals receiving state benefits). Each year about 18,000-20,000 individuals benefit from these free places to continue their education,

including orphans, individuals from low-income families, individuals with special needs, prisoners and individuals aged over 60. The programme outreaches to students who cannot travel to do exams such as prisoners. Moreover, due to the vast size of the country, KMU has established numerous outreach exam centres in order to enable students to do their exams in centres more conveniently located in relation to their places of residence rather than travelling to do exams on the university's main campus.

1.5 The online English language programme

The teaching and learning environment is Internet-based and utilizes the Blackboard Learning and the Virtual Learning systems. These systems enable provision of lessons in different forms as well as interaction between teachers and learners using several modes of communication. Lectures are video-recorded for learners and made available on these systems where learners at their convenience can access and download lectures in video or audio modes and in various versions compatible with popular technological devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets). Lectures are also provided in the form of SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model, a web-based technology for electronic education) slides prepared by teachers. In addition, there are three live lectures aired in virtual classrooms for each course where attendance is compulsory. This virtual environment allows learners to interact synchronously with their teachers using chat, audio or video facilities. Other modes of communication include a discussion board for discussing topics with relevant threads started by teachers; in these cases, learners' participation is compulsory since 10% of the total assessment is for learners' engagement in discussion. There is also an assignments tool that allows teachers to post assignments and learners to submit their work; another 10% of the total assessment is for assignments.

Content

The English programme, running over eight semesters/levels, consists of 3 courses in general English skills, which are also offered to students of other disciplines; and another 10 courses in the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as in grammar but with an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) orientation. The remaining 24 courses cover topics in linguistics, translation, and literature studies. All courses run over 14 weeks with one video lecture each week for each course.

Learning materials

Learners are not provided with hard-copy learning materials by the university. They are offered video-recorded lectures and SCORM slides (digital materials). In addition to that, teachers prescribe textbooks and references to the learners.

Marks are distributed as follows: 10 marks for watching or downloading lectures, 10 marks for homework, another 10 for contributing to Blackboard discussions, and 70 marks for the exam at the end of the course. It is clear that these are high-stakes exams for students, essential for them to pass and complete their studies. Some courses are a prerequisite for more advanced courses, so doing well in exams is highly important for students who wish to progress to further study. Moreover, failing exams and re-taking courses means paying the course fees again, which can be a financial burden.

Learners' profile

Since there are no stipulations on age, previous education, or other requirements, participants actually display a rich variety of age, backgrounds, and motivations. Learners are also of different nationalities: Arab Gulf nationals and other Arab expatriates who reside in Saudi Arabia. In fact, this diversity in nationalities, at the time of the commencement of the online programme in 2009, was unusual in this particular context. Because government universities are non-profit and pay a monthly allowance to their students as explained in 1.5, admission priority was, before the introduction of the online programme, to Saudi citizens. In terms of learning motivation, according to YouTube testimonials by students of the institution in focus, online education was an opportunity for learners who could not secure a place in on-campus programmes. Some are mature employees who seek to obtain a bachelor degree for various reasons such as career improvement. Others already have a bachelor degree and are attempting a second one for personal development purposes.

1.6 The structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 situates the study within ELT materials and LGMs research and presents the background to the macro and micro contexts of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on LGMs. Chapter 3 reviews a number of areas that intersect with the present study including positive psychology, L2 motivation, learner autonomy, possible selves theory, self-discrepancy theory, the control-value theory of achievement emotions, complex dynamic systems theory and emotional intelligence. Chapter 4 provides an account of the natural history of the study that includes accessing the site, recruiting participants, collecting data and formulating research questions and deciding on an appropriate theoretical framework for data interpretation as well as discussing relevant ethical considerations and trustworthiness measures. Chapters, 5, 6 and 7 are dedicated to answering secondary research questions. Chapter 8 provides findings on the current status of the investigated context. Chapter 9 discusses the findings of the study and answers the main research question. Chapter 10

considers the limitations and implications of the study and offers suggestions for further research.

1.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I began with a general review of ELT materials and LGMs research. I also highlighted the aim of the study, its research questions, its justification and significance. Then I introduced the context where the study is taking place; namely the online learning programme and provided a more detailed account on the online distance English programme by presenting information on the teaching and learning digital environment, content, learning materials, assessment and learners' profile. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2
Literature on LGMs

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the historical background behind the interest in LGMs in the field of language learning. It highlights the main principles of several educational approaches that saw in LGMs a potential to nurture valued skills in learners in addition to facilitating L2 acquisition. The chapter also sheds light on the benefits of LGMs as well as learners' views as reported by previous research.

2.2 Early interests in LGMs

This section will review the historical background that led scholars to consider learners as effective contributors in the provision of language learning materials and resources. The interest in allowing learners some control over their learning materials began during the last century under the influences of the theory and practice of adult learning (andragogy), communicative language teaching, the concept of language proficiency and the humanistic language teaching approach.

According to the theory and practice of adult learning, adult learners learn not for the sake of learning but to realize some immediate or near future life goals. Therefore, their needs and goals should be the centre around which all components of the learning process revolve.

Brindley (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1988, p. 23-24), states that:

> One of the fundamental principles underlying the notion of permanent education is that education should develop in individuals the capacity to control their own destiny and that, therefore, the learner should be seen as being at the centre of the educational process. For the teaching institution and the teacher, this means that instructional programmes should be centred around the learners' needs and that learners themselves should exercise their own responsibility in the choice of learning objectives, content and methods as well as in determining the means used to assess their performance.

The communicative language teaching approach also emphasised the communicative needs of the language learner. This approach advocated a shift from focusing on linguistic competence, in which learners are taught correct grammatical structures to be able to read and write in the target language, to a focus on communicative competence in which learners learn how to use the language to communicate in real situations. This approach placed more importance on the spoken language in addition to communicating through reading and writing. Accordingly, learners' needs are the prime reference for class activities that should "require learners to do in class what they will have to do outside" (Nunan, 1988, p. 26).

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With regard to the concept of language proficiency and specifically to evaluating and assessing learning and learning outcomes, there was a growing awareness that self-assessment had a role to play; learners could help in identifying their own learning shortcomings and weakness. Self-assessment is about the need to have learners involved in the evaluation process of learning. According to Nunan (1988), self-assessment can supplement teacher assessment and make learners effectively engage in their learning. They can develop skills of self-awareness, skills for identifying learning needs and goals, skills for choosing learning materials and learning strategies. However, for learners to be able to perform self-assessment, they need to be aware of the curriculum objectives.

The humanistic approach to education "is related to [a] concern for personal development, self-acceptance and acceptance by others, in other words, making students more human." Humanistic education "takes into consideration that learning is affected by how students feel about themselves… it is concerned with educating the whole person—the intellectual and the emotional dimensions" (Moskowitz, 1978, as cited in Stevick, 1990, p. 24-25).

Stevick (1990) explains that there are five qualities associated with humanism:

1 Feelings: This human quality includes personal emotions and esthetic appreciation. This quality drives the individual to reject emotional disturbances or disturbances to esthetic enjoyment.

2 Social relations: This human quality "encourages friendship and cooperation, and oppose whatever tend to reduce them" (p. 23).

3 Responsibility: This quality "accepts the need for public scrutiny, criticism and correction and disapproves whoever or whatever denies their importance" (p. 23)

4 Intellect: This quality includes knowledge, understanding and reason. It opposes controls over "the free exercise of the mind" (p. 24).

5 Self-actualization: This quality refers to one's quest of full realization of deepest qualities.

Within a humanistic perspective, there is a noticeable emphasis on the affective dimension of the learner. For example, Richards and Rodgers (1986) maintain that "humanistic techniques engage the whole person, including the emotions and feelings" (as cited in Stevick, 1990, p. 26). Roberts (1982) also contends "that the answers to language learning problems are more likely to come from psychology than from linguistics" (as cited in Stevick, 1990, p. 26). Bhanot (1983) agrees that "humanistic approaches draw their inspiration from psychology rather than from other disciplines such as linguistics…, language learners are regarded as "whole persons" with emotional and intellectual needs" (as cited in Stevick, 1990, p. 26).

We see that the quest for developing and nurturing the whole person rather than the learner cannot be accomplished without an equal consideration of the emotional dimension of the learner; and that taking this dimension into account may lead to solving learning problems. Thus, the investigation of emotions is central in any investigation of the learner as a whole person.

According to Stevick (1990), one significant humanistic approach regarding this discussion is the Silent Way by Gattegno; specifically, the way in which Gattegno understands the self. Gattegno views the self as in an evolving state, aiming to acquire full awareness and uniqueness. Amongst the qualities an evolving self needs to develop are *independence*, *autonomy*, *responsibility*, *respect* and *love* for others. Such qualities will free the self and will enable the self to free other selves from all inhibitions that might hinder the self from evolving and expansion. Dependence and emotional anxieties are considered to be amongst the factors that can inhibit this development of the self. In brief, in Gattegno's humanistic approach the aim is to empower the whole person to aid him/her to reach their full potential of awareness and uniqueness.

To sum up, the humanistic approach, the communicative approach, adult learning theory and self-assessment of language level all influenced the emergence of a number of educational concepts which were learner-focused, and with an interest in engaging learners in their learning materials, such as the negotiated syllabus, the learner-centred curriculum and learner autonomy. For instance, within a humanistic perspective, Tudor (1993) argued that "language learning is seen as an activity which involves students as complex human beings, not 'simply' as language learners. Language teaching should therefore exploit students' affective and intellectual resources as fully as possible, and be linked into their continuing experience of life" (p. 22). Hence there is a need to create responsible learners who are capable of making decisions and choices to attain their goals. Tudor identifies material provision by learners as an area for learners to contribute to their decision-making. The argument for the learner-centred curriculum was that adult learners "have a wide experience of life which can be brought to bear in the learning process" (p. 14). Brindley (1984), as quoted in Nunan (1989), argued for the adoption of a learner-centred approach to curricula development rather than a subject-centred approach. Tudor (1996) also contended that "language learners should be the main reference point for decision making with respect to both the content and the form of teaching" (p. x). The role of learners as decision makers would thus involve the selection and evaluation of the materials. For instance, Nunan (1989) proposed that

while a learner-centred curriculum will contain similar elements and processes to

traditional curricula, a key difference will be that information by and from learners will be built into every phase of the curriculum process. Curriculum development becomes a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners will be involved in decisions on content selection, methodology and evaluation. (p. 19)

Allwright (1979) proposed that the notion of "responsibility sharing" is the suitable response to the proposals of the learner-centred approach. Through responsibility sharing teachers are not expected to abdicate their traditional roles; but learners can engage more effectively in their learning. Allwright proposed a number of activities learners can take responsibility for, including materials selection. Allwright begins his proposal by illustrating that there are three basic elements in any teaching and learning situation: samples of the target language, guidance and management activities. Allwright argues that all three elements should not be assumed to be exclusively the function of the teacher. Management activities require more time and effort than any person can afford, especially in teaching contexts where the learners greatly outnumber the teacher. Allwright points out that any dysfunction of any of the management activities poses major threats and risks to the process of learning itself. Hence, it is vital to share classroom responsibilities with learners to ensure the successful operation of the classroom. Materials-related activities, as proposed by Allwright, constitute the greatest portion of the management activities; therefore, based on Allwright's claim, any deficiencies in the teacher's responsibilities in designing and/or using materials may cause a serious negative influence on learners' achievement and progress.

The concept of negotiated syllabus, which means "regularly involving the learners in decision making regarding the goals, content, presentation, and assessment of the course" (Nation, 2000, p. 4), also involves "fundamental decisions" (Clarke, 1991, p. 14) regarding syllabus content and the materials to be used. Clarke (1991) noted that a negotiated syllabus is "radical" and "unconventional" and that neither teachers nor learners might be willing to implement a pure model of a negotiated syllabus. However, he proposed that a negotiated component could at least be implemented. Clarke (1989) called for the creative engagement of learners in materials adaptations. He believed that, even in an imposed syllabus, learners, with the help of the teacher, can engage at the construction level in activities such as substitution tables, generating text questions, adapting computer materials, and testing each other to change their traditionally passive role as language receivers to more active contributors. Clarke proposed five general principles regarding the involvement of learners in the adaptation of materials (p. 135):

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1. Learner commitment: working on the materials generates learners' engagement and interest in the materials.
2. Learner as materials writer and collaborator: participation in adaptation of tasks of materials engages learners in the actual devising and writing of materials. The use of these learner-devised adaptations by other learners creates a higher degree of commitment and collaboration among learners. Also, the role of collaborator would replace the traditional role of language receiver.
3. Learner as problem solver: adaptation of materials develops problem-solving skills in learners.
4. Learner as knower: the construction process of adapted tasks requires learners to research areas of the language. This makes learners into knowers and experts on the researched areas.
5. Learner as evaluator and assessor: Through the construction of adapted tasks, learners will be better able to assess their interest in materials and their learning abilities.

As we see from the list above, Clarke (1989) believed that learners' engagement in content selection helps to maintain their interest and motivation in language learning.

2.2.1 LGMs from a learner autonomy perspective

Learner autonomy was another concept that was developed under the influences of humanistic approaches to education as explained earlier. This concept is extremely relevant to the present study since it investigates the production of LGMs autonomously by learners without the involvement of their teachers. This section will review the concept of learner autonomy, its characteristics and the views of scholars in relation to LGMs production. Learner autonomy, an influential concept in language education, also places importance on allowing learners some control over their learning materials. The concept of learner autonomy was introduced in the 1960s (Sinclair, 1999) and has received great attention in the circles of language education ever since. Holec (1981), a leading contributor in the field, defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). Holec (1981) explains that there are five areas where learners can make decisions about the learning process:

- fixing the objectives
- defining the contents and progressions
- selecting the methods and techniques to be used
- monitoring the acquisition procedure
- evaluating what has been acquired.

With regards to learning materials, "the contents [the materials] are no longer brought in from outside but are to some extent created by the learner" (p. 13). Learner autonomy

advocates that learners can develop autonomous and independent learning skills and thus the concept is usually associated with a view of the learner as an individual and learning as a life-long endeavour for which the aim is to equip the learner with key learning skills that enable him/her to develop knowledge constantly and independently (Littlewood, 1996; McDevitt, 1997; Sinclair, 1999).

A number of researchers supported the usefulness of engaging learners in their learning materials as a strategy to foster learner autonomy. For instance, Myers (1990) contended that it might be very challenging to motivate learners to be autonomous in their learning and she suggested a number of practical ideas to help make learners interested in engaging in some of their learning independently. Among these is making learners design, carry out and evaluate learning activities and tasks that involve their class peers. Littlewood (1996) argued that learner autonomy is in accordance with the purpose of all education, which is to "help people to think, act and learn independently in relevant areas of their lives" (p. 343). Autonomous practices have the potential of increasing the competence of learners as language users and as individuals. Littlewood (1996) suggested areas in which learners can develop autonomous skills that connect to the materials and curriculum to be used. These include choosing the grammar and the vocabulary used in simple tasks, making decisions about materials and learning tasks and participating in determining the syllabus. Littlewood (1996) suggested that technology can assist in promoting autonomy in learners. He proposed using the e-mail and World Wide Web to facilitate group collaborative interaction. In this way learners' input is considered a type of LGMs by the definition suggested in this study. Littlewood argued such practices develop learner autonomy. Esch (1996) proposed five criteria for creating a supportive learning autonomy environment. The criterion of Adaptability/Modifiability represents the management of learning materials by learners, which will help them develop autonomous learning skills. Lee (1998) argued that for the development of learner autonomy it is crucial to allow learners genuine choice regarding their learning materials. During the 1990s, self-access centres were introduced and Lee recommended that these centres need to have various types of language materials to offer learners the opportunity to choose their own learning materials.

From another perspective, some researchers made connections between autonomous learning and motivation (e.g., Dickinson, 1995; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Holec, 1981; Knowles, 1975; Murray, 1999; Ushioda, 1996). Dickinson (1995), for instance, argues that "a common theme in justifications for autonomy, especially in general education but also in language learning, is that autonomous learners become more highly motivated and that autonomy leads to better, more effective work" (p. 165). She goes further, explaining that

both learner autonomy and motivation are supported by the same cognitive theoretical bases, namely self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) and attribution theory. According to self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation is likely to develop when learners' autonomy is supported. Attribution theory of motivation states that learners who attribute their success to their own control and their own abilities tend to have more autonomous and independent learning skills and also tend to be motivated in their learning. Dickinson (1988) emphasizes the need to develop a number of learning strategies and abilities in order for a learner to be autonomous. Amongst these abilities is the ability to select appropriate learning materials. Ushioda (1996, 2011) also maintains that "autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners. This mutual relationship between motivation and autonomy, or affect and meta-cognition, willingness and ability, will and skill, is very much reflected in the literature on autonomy and also self-regulated learning" (2011, p. 223). The connections between learner autonomy and L2 motivation will be discussed further in the following chapter when I discuss the connections between L2 motivation and emotions. For now, I would like to highlight that scholars advocating learner autonomy view learners' engagement in learning materials as a way of fostering autonomous skills in learners, which subsequently will foster motivation.

However, despite the enthusiastic advocacy for the engagement of learners in practices regarding the decision-making, selection or provision of learning material, there was a dearth of studies investigating these practices available in the literature during this early period. Indeed, even at the present time, the field of LGMs is still considered under-researched with a "relative paucity of first-hand reports" available (McGrath, 2014, p. 404). The early forms of LGMs proposed in the literature generally revolved around engaging learners in decisions regarding the selection of syllabus content and the materials to be used in addition to the production of supplementary learning materials such as designing questions and quizzes for assessment, writing comprehension questions, adapting computer materials and making substitution tables.

2.3 Recent interest in LGMs

As mentioned above, McGrath (2014) suggests that the scarcity of studies on LGMs might be attributed to the reluctance of EFL/ESL teachers to embrace the idea of trusting learners with the generation of materials. Alternatively, it could be that there is a more considerable utilization of LGMs in learning contexts than one would think based on the studies available in the literature. Learning materials produced by learners are given various terms in the literature such as "learner-generated materials," "student-generated materials," "student-made materials," learner-generated content," amongst others. Other researchers used more specific

terms such as "learner-produced podcasts." I believe this lack of a unified term has contributed to the lack of a salient, coherent body of research on LGMs. This also caused me difficulties in finding relevant previous research on the topic.

In line with McGrath's speculation, however, it appears that the unavailability of sufficient studies on teachers employing LGMs in their classes does not mean that this kind of materials does not exist in any learning contexts at all. There is evidence that there are some teaching/learning contexts in which LGMs are used for various reasons in spite of the fact that there is a shortage of studies that have investigated such use. In what follows I shall provide some examples of some teaching/learning contexts around the globe where LGMs are used.

Wrigley (1993) argues that LGMs are used successfully in American ESL adult literacy programmes for immigrants and refugees. In those programmes themes for literacy, reading, writing and discussions are generated from stories narrated by learners and compiled in printed copies. The aim is to foster self-confidence and self-esteem in learners through showing them that their ideas are important to facilitate their settlement in the new learning environment. In addition, themes provided by learners are capable of generating discussions amongst learners through sharing personal experiences and community concerns.

In a study conducted on 88 non-formal schools in Kenya providing education to out-of-school children and youths, the issue of appropriate and self-paced learning materials is presented as one of three priority needs by all schools and centres (Thompson, 2001). LGMs are used as a solution to the problem of materials in that learning context that lack appropriate support and resourcing from formal agencies (Kenya Country Team, 2008).

In a paper written for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (Pennells, 2005) on the use of ICT and distance learning for adult literacy, there are references to several cases around the globe where LGMs are used to promote the acquisition of literacy skills. In Australia, many technologies are used to facilitate adult literacy, amongst which are computer-based programs that allow learners to produce their own learning materials and design learning activities for sharing with others and to get feedback from other learners. In a project conducted in India (where learners were illiterate young women) and Zambia (where the majority of learners were women ranging from 10-69 years old), it is reported that as learners gained ICT skills they took charge of the production of their learning materials. This experience reportedly developed learners' self-esteem and commitment. The reason for involving learners in the production of their learner materials is to arouse and sustain their interest by making the materials suit their needs in terms of relevance and familiarity. In Sri Lanka, community resource centres for literacy promotion enable learners to develop their oral LGMs to be shared with learners in the same community by radio broadcasting. The

Department of International Development, UK, has provided support since the 1950s to literacy and numeracy programmes in developing countries such as India, Namibia, Ghana, Kenya, Jamaica, Nepal, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa. One way to get around the problem of the lack of materials was the focus on the production of local LGMs (Barton & Papen, 2005).

The above-mentioned reports indicate that LGMs were used to meet various purposes in many contexts around the globe. Some of the reasons behind the turn to learners to generate their own learning materials were to arouse interest and commitment of learners, to produce materials relevant to the learners and suitable for their learning pace, to instil self-confidence and self-esteem in learners, to solve the problem of the unavailability of learning materials and as a way to equip learners with skills such as ICT skills. Some of the examples are set in learning contexts with non-traditional settings and non-traditional circumstances that require the use of LGMs to make teaching and learning possible (Wrigley, 1993).

Lately, LGMs began to capture some interest in TESOL and non-TESOL educational contexts. The pervasiveness of the Internet, smart phones and tablets along with video-audio casts, wikis, blogs and discussion boards equip learners with some skills to be able to create learning materials. Further, a number of educational approaches such as open educational practice (OEP), student partnership and flipped learning place emphasis on learners as active participants in their learning, all of which has consequently revived the interest in LGMs. One movement in higher education that is highly supportive of LGMs is the Open Access movement. This movement stems from the belief that the Internet and openness have great potential in the production and sharing of rich educational resources for teaching and learning and improving both the teaching and learning experience. This movement started with interest in making widely available Open Educational Resources (OER) that are "materials used to support education that may be freely accessed, reused, modified and shared by anyone" (Downes, 2011). However, the focus of interest in not only on the open availability of learning resources, but on Open Educational Practices (OEP). OEP is the "practices which support the (re)use and production of OER through institutional policies, promote innovative pedagogical models, and respect and empower learners as co-producers on their lifelong learning path" (Andrade et al., 2011, p. 12). OEP is more interested in supporting innovation and quality of both teaching and learning at practical levels. Some language teachers have embraced OEP and made use of digital technologies such as discussion boards, blogs, wikis and online tools in the creation and building of language learning resources to be shared within their communities. One recent publication showcasing a number of case studies is a volume edited by Beaven et al. (2013). The editors explain that the case studies are not

research papers, but "rather, they are short, directed descriptions of tools, projects, or activities with concrete examples of ways for teachers to consider using them in their practice" (p. 2).

For example, Mora and Leeming (2013), teachers of Spanish at the Open University, believe that Open Educational Resources (OERs) "have come to the fore in recent years, as the use of technology within education has flourished" (p. 150). The authors argue that engaging learners in the production of learner materials positively impacts the experience of learners and strengthens their language learning. Instead of being isolated language learners, producing LGMs and sharing them with the wider community of users of the language gives learners a sense of belonging and pride. In order to encourage the production and sharing of LGMs, Iglesias Mora and Leeming (2013) describe how learners were offered tasks, through a group forum, in which they had to engage with language input offered by the teacher and then produce their own response in the form of audio files or written paragraphs. The teachers then provided feedback and corrected the learner's materials. With the permission of learners, the corrected versions of their audio materials were uploaded onto LORO, an online repository of language teaching materials of the Department of Languages at the Open University. The materials were made available online and were downloaded by users. Iglesias Mora and Leeming comment that this initiative of making learners produce LGMs has not been running for enough time at the time of writing. Thus, the results were limited; however, it has great potential for fostering a sense of community, motivation and learner autonomy.

Student partnership from mainstream education is a new approach gaining momentum in higher education which emphasizes "a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, p. 6–7). Collaboration and sharing of responsibility between staff and students would provide students with more opportunities to engage in their learning and to interact with their teachers (Matthews et al., 2018). Within this approach students can take part in various activities such as producing learning materials (Everett & Oswald, 2018) curriculum design (Woolmer et al. 2016), assessment (Deeley & Bovill 2017) and research (Healey & Jenkins 2009). In the study of Everett and Oswald (2018) university students were hired and trained to develop inclusive learning materials for their undergraduate peers with learning disabilities in universities in the UK and USA due to cuts to the disability allowance that is usually used for expensive tailored interventions to make learning materials more accessible to learners with sensory and other print disabilities. Searching for a solution to meet the needs of learners with disabilities with cut funding, "it

was deemed appropriate that students would be best placed to support their peers and academic staff in this process" (p. 809). The recruited learners were required to convert traditional learning materials into a more accessible format for learners with colour blindness and dyslexia. The authors found the project successful in providing cost-effective materials and in increasing a sense of partnership and an understanding of disability challenges and inclusivity to all learners. Another educational approach supportive of LGMs is flipped learning. Flipped learning is an innovative learner-centred approach and is defined as "a pedagogical model that involves inversing the way that instruction is presented and homework is accomplished" (Webb et al., 2004, p. 54). In this model, learners will learn the subject matter at home through written and video materials and demonstrate their learning in class through production and discussion (Bakla, 2018). A number of studies found that flipped learning has increased motivation, autonomy, interaction and engagement of learners (Bakla, 2018; Engin & Donanci, 2014). In what follows I shall discuss some aspects related to LGMs production and use reported by contributors in this area of research.

2.3.1 Materials generation: a source for new responsibilities for learners

The idea of allowing learners assume some responsibility in relation to their learning was rooted in a number of educational approaches as explained in 2.2. A number of early LGMs studies found in learning materials an avenue for learners to share some of the responsibilities with the teacher. Some of those proposed responsibilities include choosing which materials to use (Allwright, 1979, 1981; Tudor, 1993); independent use of materials and other resources (Assinder, 1991; Littlejohn, 1983); and provision of supplementary materials and generation of materials to be used by other learners (Assinder, 1991; Clarke, 1989; McGrath, 2002; Swales, 1992; Wessels, 1991; Whitaker, 1983). Assuming some responsibility reported to have beneficial impacts on the development of autonomous learning skills as well as general independence skills. There is a sparse discussion in the literature with regards to this point; the present study provides empirical evidence showing how learners benefit from assuming responsibility for the production of materials for directing their own learning and in their personal development.

2.3.2 Materials generation: a source for developing learners' skills

Another running theme that is underlined in most of the literature on LGMs is the potential of materials generation to activate and exploit skills and capacities in learners that are overlooked in the classroom because learners are usually "under-involved" (Allwright, 1979, p. 117). For example, learners in Assinder's (1991) report were engaged in many roles in order to devise and deliver learning materials for each other. Learners acted as a team and each was at some stage a materials writer, introducer of vocabulary, video operator, checker

of answers, chairperson of group discussions, typist, expert, problem solver, evaluator and teacher. Assinder asked her learners to try producing materials for a week as an experiment and because they enjoyed the experience they asked to carry on till the end of their course. Assinder pointed to learners' use of some of her techniques such as brainstorming, vocabulary drilling and so on. This indicates learners' ability to learn teaching practices and to apply them in class for their own learning, and their ability to share some responsibility with teachers. Assinder reported the positive feedback from her learners who acknowledged that being involved in producing learning materials made them practise "so many things in one lesson" and that this way of learning "made [them] think" (p. 224). Similar accounts are found in previous studies (e.g., Assinder, 1991; Bakla, 2018; Bradford-Watts, 2011; Brown et al., 2013; Engin, 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka; 2012; McGrath, 2014). These studies provided us with useful accounts of how learners utilize their capabilities to produce materials. However, most of these accounts are reported by teachers and we still do not know much about learners' reflections on the experience of materials generation. The present study fills this gap and presents first-hand experiential accounts by learners to gain more understanding of how learners develop and exploit their skills to produce materials.

2.3.3 Materials generation: effects and benefits

Previous TESOL studies have suggested that learners' involvement in the actual production of materials brings linguistic and affective gains that enrich the learning experiences of learners at various levels. In most of the previous studies the affective benefits were mostly reported and emphasized.

2.3.3.1 Affective benefits

In most of the literature on LGMs, the case was made for engaging learners more actively in responsibilities and decision-making based on affective benefits that were reported to have improved the learning atmosphere and consequently led to progress at the content as well as the personal level. Allwright (1979) argues that affective variables are crucial in impacting positively or negatively the learning experience, and if neglected they might pose serious risks to language learning itself. Affective benefits of producing LGMs as reported in the literature are reflected in three dimensions:

- in relation to **learners**, learners involved in the materials generating process were reported to feel thrilled, proud, delighted, self-accomplished, pleased, and self-confident as a result of producing learning materials to be used by other learners (Assinder, 1991; Goral, 2019; Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2014; Simpson, 2006; Wessels, 1991);

- in relation to **learning**, there was reportedly increased motivation, commitment, enthusiasm, collaborative work, more awareness of the usefulness of activity types, more utilization of skills and capabilities, and more ability to direct learning, increased participation and increased in-depth understanding (Assinder, 1991; Bakla, 2018; Brown et al., 2013; Engin, 2014; Goral, 2019; Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2014; Simpson, 2006; Wessels, 1991).

- in relation to the **learning atmosphere**, the learning environment reported by learners was enjoyable, exciting, open, relaxing, anxiety-free, comfortable, friendly, increased real communication and increased respect for each other (Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2014; Simpson, 2006; Wessels, 1991).

In what follows I shall discuss some of these studies with respect to these dimensions. Littlejohn's (1983) study displays compelling results from making Bahraini learners responsible for their materials. This particular study is significant to my own research as the context of this study and the context of the present study are quite similar. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are neighbouring Gulf countries sharing the same first language with common difficulties concerning the acquisition of the English language as well as a traditionally rigid teacher-led approach. The subjects of Littlejohn's study were 24 low-intermediate Arab university students who failed their preparatory year and were re-taking the compulsory English course. Students were lacking motivation with no experience in group work. The learners were required to research areas of grammar and devise exercises, tasks and other activities for practice. They were also required to lead small group discussions and correct each other's oral and written mistakes. Littlejohn regards the experiment as successful; on average all students showed an improvement in their exam scores after the innovation. The students also developed a sense of responsibility and enthusiasm for their lessons. Littlejohn illustrates that learners in charge of their learning were relaxed, felt more free to use English, make mistakes, ask questions and explain things to each other; whilst in the presence of the teacher it was difficult to persuade them to use English.

In a similar vein, another set of affective benefits are outlined by Singaporean teachers who individually conducted small scale action research on their primary pupils to investigate whether young learners were capable of producing useful materials (McGrath, 2014). 38 teachers asked their pupils (aged 6-11) to produce materials for learning purposes. The produced materials were in the form of classroom activities such as writing invitations, devising questions, creating jumbled sentences and word puzzles, using individual writing for group discussion and editing. The pupils proved their ability to produce materials that are age appropriate, (re)usable and culturally relevant. Teachers' reports focused on the affective

impact on learners as they were highly motivated, highly involved, thrilled and excited because of "the sense of accomplishment" (p. 208) they experienced from producing materials. Serious commitment on the part of learners was also observed as a result of realizing that their work was meant to be seen and used by other learners. Linguistic benefits were also reported as pupils paraphrased their written work to make them grammatically correct and used the correct vocabulary to make their materials easier to understand by other learners. Goral (2019) also reported that her learners were required to make weekly presentations. Additionally, they were required to participate in discussions of their lessons in the online discussion board. These practices made learners more confident and active and developed a sense of community amongst them.

These reports demonstrate the benefits of generating materials for the use of other learners on the producers. However, these studies report the immediate feelings of accomplishment, satisfaction and confidence and do not investigate the long-term effect of these feelings on the producers. The present study contributes to the literature through reporting the affective gains such as the growth of personal and social experiences of LGMs writers from a long-term perspective.

2.3.3.2 Linguistic benefits

The linguistic effectiveness of using LGMs is an important parameter for teachers as learners' progress is the ultimate aim of any teaching situation. Linguistic benefits of generating LGMs have been reported in a number of studies (Engin, 2014; Green et al., 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2102; Littlejohn, 1983; Lynch, 2007; McGrath, 2014; Phillips, 2017; Stillwell et al., 2010). Lynch's (2007) study provides evidence to show that learners' engagement with materials can lead to linguistic progress. Lynch investigated the engagement of his international postgraduate students undertaking a pre-sessional course in a UK university in transcribing their oral output. He included two classes in the study. Class 1 recorded and produced transcripts of their oral presentations. Learners used their transcripts to detect and correct their mistakes and then compared their work to a transcript produced by the teacher. As for Class 2, the teacher transcribed the incorrect parts of learners' presentations and learners were required to correct those mistakes before making final corrections with the teacher. Both classes were required to produce the same presentations twice, after two days and after four weeks. The results indicated that the first group who produced their own transcripts and used them for identifying and correcting mistakes attained higher rates of accuracy than the other group who relied on the teachers' transcripts.

2.3.4 Challenges and resistance

Despite the positive feedback reported by the above studies, there are some studies that highlight some challenges in the utilization of LGMs. There is evidence of some resistance from learners towards the attempts to give learners an authoritative role in traditional settings that view the teacher as the only source for valid and correct knowledge (Campbell & Kryszewska, 1992; Engin, 2014; Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2013, 2014; Sengupta, 1998; Stillwell et al., 2010). Some of these challenges are discussed below with reference to the context of the present study.

2.3.4.1 Teachers' materials vs. learners' materials

Producing materials for teaching purposes is traditionally the responsibility of the teacher. Handing over such a responsibility to learners may be met with refusal on the part of learners themselves, especially in teacher-centred contexts. For example, Sengupta (1998) required teenage female students in a Hong Kong secondary school to generate materials in the form of written feedback to be used as an input for correcting each other's work. The students were first required to write their own texts, then provide feedback and evaluation for each other and finally revise their own texts for correction. The findings revealed that none of the corrections made seemed to be a response to peer feedback. The students argued that it was the teacher's job to correct and they did not trust that their peers would be able to advise on how to improve their writing skills, especially for formal exam preparation. Another study by Stillwell et al. (2010) is on the production of self-transcripts with the purpose to correct one's own oral presentation. This study strongly suggests that generating self-transcripts stimulates a deeper noticing and understanding of the language, which was reflected in an improved oral production in the second presentations. For instance, for some learners their word count increased in the second presentations as they became more able to produce more informative messages, whilst others decreased the word count of their messages as a result of being more direct in the language they used. Nonetheless, although the learners were able to self-correct, they tended to use the teachers' corrections instead of their self-corrections. In a post-analysis questionnaire, learners explained that the teacher who was a native speaker is the best source for corrections. These learners' views were therefore similar to those of the pupils in Sengupta's (1998) case who refused to rely on peer-written feedback as a source of learning. The two studies suggest that teachers' materials are preferred by learners for their perceived accuracy and usefulness. This view is important as teachers' input in class may affect the impetus as well as utilization of LGMs by other learners. My study explores learners' attitudes towards their teachers' materials in comparison to LGMs in an online learning context and in much more detail.

2.3.4.2 Accuracy and reliability concerns

Another area worthy of investigation is the quality of LGMs in terms of accuracy and reliability. Stillwell et al. (2010) pointed out that there was a prevalence of errors in transcripts produced by the learners, however the number of errors decreased in the second transcripts, which suggests that learners can still improve by using the LGMs, despite their inaccuracies. In line with this study, the present study also reports on the deficiencies found sometimes in LGMs. The present study reports on learners' attitudes towards LGMs in terms of their accuracy and reliability and the strategies they employed to control deficiencies in LGMs and to improve their quality. Potential deficiency in LGMs was a reason for learners to reject these materials as in the cases of Sengupta (1998) and Stillwell et al. (2010). However, previous research (Bakla, 2018) also briefly reported that mistakes in LGMs were motivational for learners, in that learners engaged actively in searching for the correct information to amend the errors. This study demonstrates that potential deficiency in itself is a powerful factor in stimulating learners to be critical and to act as assessors, researchers and editors in order to collaboratively improve the quality of their own and each other's LGMs.

2.4 Significance of the present study in relation to previous studies in LGMs

In this section I shall point out the difference between the present study and previous contributions to LGMs research.

- Previous studies reported learners' positive collaboration and engagement in the generation of materials, but there is little detail about what is involved in this engagement or collaboration. As noted by McGrath (2013), what is still lacking is a "systemic attempt to evaluate the experience from learners' perspective" (p. 163), meaning that teachers report what seems to them to be their learners' reflections on the experience. The present study aims to probe deeper into this aspect and provide first-hand reports from learners about their experiences in materials generation as this enterprise is initiated and led by them.

- In previous studies, teachers were involved as idea initiators, monitors, consultants and facilitators, whilst in the present study the whole process is initiated and organized by learners—unlike in the studies I reviewed above, in my study teachers gave no instruction to learners to seek out or produce their own materials. So, whilst previous studies show that learners can take on some responsibility for materials production with the aid of teachers, the present study demonstrates that learners can achieve full responsibility without the involvement of teachers and on their own initiative.

- In most of the previous studies we do not know how learners perceive LGMs in comparison to their teachers' materials, especially in relation to their usefulness for the development of their linguistic proficiency or their usefulness as a revision aid in preparation for final exams. The present study investigates these aspects with regards to both LGMs and teachers' materials.

- In terms of the affective benefits, unlike Littlejohn's (1987) students who felt "freer to use English" or McGrath's (2013) young learners who were "thrilled" and proud to be involved in materials generation, the present study explores the affective aspect of LGMs more deeply and over a longer period than previous studies.

- In most of the previous studies, the implementation of LGMs was:
  - in experimental contexts set up by the teachers;
  - for the use of limited numbers of learners;
  - for limited periods of time;
  - mostly in the form of supplementary tasks and activities.

The present study, on the other hand, reports the use of LGMs in a context that displays a natural and continuous adoption of LGMs by huge numbers of learners as the core materials for learning and exam study. Therefore, the findings of the present study are more likely to be more representative of real practices and attitudes of learners, at least in the context in which they are situated.

Chapter 3

Emotions, L2 Motivation, Learner Autonomy and Emotional Intelligence

3.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research was to explore the role of LGMs in the investigated context. To achieve this goal, it was also essential to understand learners' reasons and motivations for producing their LGMs. The data revealed that LGMs were produced in response to struggles associated with their learning context. These struggles created intense negative emotions in learners; thus, unsurprisingly, the theme of emotions emerged strongly in the dataset, which indicates the critical role of emotions behind the production of LGMs. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate and understand the motivations behind the production of LGMs as well as the value and meaning of LGMs to the online EFL learners it was important to investigate and understand learners' emotions as well as the variation in the emotional responses to the learning struggles.

Dörnyei and Muir (2019) express that "understanding the full psychological tapestry of classroom life calls for an interdisciplinary approach" (p. 1). The present dataset is complex and requires insights from several research domains. Therefore, for the purpose of interpreting the data I will draw from a number of interrelated theoretical constructs. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part will begin with a review of emotions research in the field of language learning followed by a review of the recent growing interest of emotions in the TESOL context from a positive psychology perspective. The second part is devoted to review L2 motivation research and its link to emotions and to learner autonomy. The third part is devoted to further theoretical frameworks relevant to the present study, possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), both from social psychology, the value-control theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000) from educational psychology and finally the construct of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006/2015) from positive psychology.

3.2 Part one: Emotions in language learning

Research in SLA, TESOL and applied linguistics has historically been dominated by cognitive paradigms. This in turn has resulted in underplaying the role of emotions in both language learning and teaching (Dewaele et al., 2019; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; White, 2018). Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) maintain that "the roots of the field of SLA are resolutely cognitivist, with the initial focus of SLA research being on identifying and describing universal patterns and processes of language development" (p. 9). In her review of affect

research, White (2018) explains that the earliest consideration of affect in language acquisition can be found in works of Chastain (1976), Curran (1976), Kleinmann (1977), Scovel (1978) and Krashen (1982). For instance, Krashen's (1982) affective filter drew attention to the connection between negative emotions and processing of language input. The affective filter hypothesizes that language acquisition is hindered when a learner experiences high levels of affective variables such as fear, anxiety or embarrassment. Krashen argues that the affective filter is responsible for individual differences in language learners and that teachers can reduce levels of negative affective variables through nurturing self-confidence and interest in learners and through creating supportive and encouraging learning environments.

Additionally, in the literature on language learning strategies, contributors have emphasized the significance of affective strategies in making language learning successful and enjoyable (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990), for instance, contends that "the affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure" (p. 140). She proposes indirect learning strategies for language learning. They are indirect because their role is supportive and include metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Affective strategies "help to regulate emotions, motivations, and attitudes" (p. 135). Oxford's affective strategies are as follows:

- **lowering anxiety:** through using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, mediation, using music and using laughter.

- **encouraging oneself**: making positive statements, taking risks wisely and rewarding oneself.

- **taking emotional temperature:** listening to your body as negative emotions "tighten the muscles and affect all the organs of the body" (p. 167), using a checklist to assess emotional states "both in general and in regard to specific language tasks and skills" (p. 167), writing a language learning diary, discussing your feelings with someone else.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also maintain that interaction and communication are effective strategies to manage feelings of confidence and motivation. Bachman & Palmer (1996) highlight the role of affective schemata in the interaction between the language test taker and the test performance, which is reflected in activation of metacognitive skills. Affective schemata refer to past emotional experiences and their role in determining the affective responses of the language user and how he/she will approach the language task/test. Finally, they explain that work on anxiety, an extensively researched topic, began some time

ago in the arena of applied linguistics (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Scovel, 1978) and is ongoing.

Nevertheless, these attempts to address the role of emotions in language learning have been seen as insufficient. It seems there is a consensus amongst established contributors to the field that the study of emotions has been neglected despite their vital influence on language learning. Emotions, Dörnyei (2009a) contends, are "a salient part of our everyday lives, affecting both our thinking and our behaviours, yet they have been by and large neglected in L2 individual difference research" (p. 184). Further, he maintains that:

> Everybody knows that classrooms are venues for a great deal of emotional turmoil, yet affect has been an almost completely neglected topic in educational psychology. Everybody knows that the study of a second language can be an emotionally rather taxing experience, yet affect has been an almost completely neglected topic in applied linguistics. (p. 219)

Dewaele et al. (2019) agree that "emotions are the heart of language learning and teaching, and yet they have largely remained in the shadows in the past decades of applied linguistic research" (p. 1). MacIntyre (2002) argues that motivation has widely been recognized as one of the most important variables of individual differences affecting L2 learning. He continues that there is "a close relationship between motivation and emotion", yet the motivational impact of emotions has been "severely underestimated" (p. 61) in L2 motivation research. On the whole, for decades there has been no interest in the affective dimension of language learning beyond the affective constructs of anxiety and attitudes towards language learning (Dewaele et al., 2019), which has resulted in the field suffering from an "emotional deficit" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 10).

Currently, White (2018) believes that there is "an emotional turn" (p. 19) reflected through the introduction of positive psychology in the field by the works of MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) and MacIntyre et al. (2016). Publications on the emotional dimension of L2 learning have recently increased substantially, indicating that "across social sciences, scholars are recognizing the essential role of emotional phenomena" (Mackenzie & Alba Juez, 2019, as cited in Dewaele et al., 2019, p. 1). The following section reviews the field of positive psychology and its current applications in the language classroom.

3.3 Definition of positive psychology

Positive psychology has arisen as a reaction to the dominant focus on negative aspects of human psychology. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, both prominent psychologists, (2000) explain that initially psychology revolved around three aims: "curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high

talent" (p. 6). However, since World War II, psychology has been concerned with healing and repairing the damaged psychological functioning in individuals, whereby neglecting the other two aims. Positive psychology thus was founded as the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive (Seligman, 2018). The following excerpt explains the tenets of positive psychology at the individual and collective level:

> The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5)

Applied positive psychology, which is "the application of positive psychology research to the facilitation of optimal functioning" (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p. 4), has generated a number of intervention programmes in educational settings. According to Seligman et al. (2009) there is substantial evidence that it is possible to teach schoolchildren some skills that increase their engagement, resilience and positive emotions. Positive psychology intervention programmes are aimed to empower individuals with positive emotions about themselves. Researchers argue that in positive emotional states individuals become more capable of success, thriving and flourishing at an individual and collective level (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

3.3.1 Positive psychology: The "emotional turn" in applied linguistics

Regarding the possible contributions of positive psychology in SLA, MacIntyre (2016) contends that:

> Positive psychology has the potential to become a prominent research area in SLA. The field is focused on positive emotion, positive character traits, and institutions that enable individuals to flourish, all of which are major concerns in language learning. (p. 3)

MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) believe that the power of positive psychology is in increasing the interest for L2 learning and exploration, mitigating the effects of negative emotions, promoting resilience and triggering constructive responses to stressful events, promoting personal resources such as the establishment of social bonds and intellectual resources and in maintaining the wellbeing of the individual. They also argue that teachers can exert a positive impact on learners' emotions through creating a positive emotional state in learners.

Dewaele et al. (2019) separates the history of positive psychology in applied linguistics

into two periods. The early period began with the introduction of positive psychology into the field with the paper by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012). During this period most studies aimed at identifying the effects of positive or negative emotions on language learning. A considerable number of researchers showed interest in investigating affective factors in light of positive psychology variables (e.g., Chaffee et al., 2014; Falout, 2014; Gregersen et al., 2014; Lake, 2013; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014). According to Dewaele et al. (2019), however, positive psychology exerted only a peripheral influence on the field of applied linguistics during this first period as major journals were likely to reject works on the emerging topic of positive psychology "even if they had accepted work by the same authors on more traditional topics" (p. 5).

The second period of positive psychology is described as penetrating mainstream applied linguistics research in 2016. This was due to plans to the establishment of the International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning and the launch of a new SLA book series, Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching. Two edited volumes drawing on constructs of positive psychology were also published in 2016, *Positive psychology in SLA* (MacIntyre et al., 2016) and *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching* (Gabryś-Barker & Gałajda, 2016). Further, since 2017, studies utilizing positive psychology in applied linguistics have been accepted in "established and prestigious applied linguistic journals" (Dewaele et al., 2019, p. 5). 2018 witnessed an increase of publications on learners and teachers' emotions (De Costa et al., 2018; Martínez Agudo, 2018; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele & Li, 2018). The following section reviews some of the studies on positive psychology, highlighting the most relevant findings to the present study. These studies investigated ways to improve teaching practices and the emotional atmosphere of the classroom for more successful language learning and well-being.

3.3.2 Positive psychology studies

Chaffee et al. (2014) investigated how 100 Canadian students learning a foreign language achieve and sustain motivation, active engagement and resilience in their learning despite having controlling teachers. The languages included French, Spanish, German, Japanese, Latin, Chinese, Italian, American Sign Language, Cree, Swedish, Ukrainian, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, and Russian. The self-determination theory (SDT) of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) was used as a theoretical framework for measuring learners' motivation. According to DST theory, autonomy, competence and relatedness are basic psychological needs which, when fulfilled, generate self-determined (intrinsic) motivation. The more there are external controls over learning, the more learners feel externally regulated and are more likely to become amotivated (lose motivation). The more learners have autonomy over their

learning, the more they are likely to be intrinsically motivated. Previous research has shown that a controlling language teacher may negatively affect the motivation of learners (Deci & Rayan, 2000). Chaffee et al. (2014) examined whether the use of control strategies (Rothbaum et al., 1982; Weisz et al., 1984) by learners would mitigate the adverse impacts of controlling teachers on motivation. They adapted control strategies measures proposed by Weisz et al. (1984). The control strategies were primary control, "the individual's ability to change the environment to fit the self's need" (as cited in Chaffee et al., 2014, p. 359) and secondary control, "the degree to which individuals express agency by adapting the self to "fit in" with the environment" (as cited in Chaffee et al., 2014, p. 359). The study focuses on three types of secondary control strategies: positive reappraisal, lowering aspirations and vicarious. Positive reappraisal concerns attempts to derive a meaning or a purpose from exiting realities to generate satisfaction. Lowering aspirations concerns lowering expectations of outcomes to control the impact of anxiety, uncertainty and disappointments on the self. Vicarious concerns close alliance with others to derive feelings of comfort through participating in a collective control. The study found that out of the secondary control types only positive reappraisals correlated with the motivational components of autonomy and competence. Learners who use positive reappraisals as a control strategy to maintain positive attitudes were more able to buffer the effects of having a controlling teacher. More specifically, learners with high positive reappraisals experienced moderate anxiety, had more energy to devote to their learning and higher self-determined motivation whereas learners with low positive reappraisals experienced high anxiety, lower energy and lower self-determined motivation. The study thus recommends the investment in changing learners' attitudes and the encouragement of learners to maintain positive thinking about all aspects of their learning, including difficulties they are experiencing. The utilization of writing activities such as sentence completion and journal writing has been empirically tested for fostering positive attitudes and thinking in learners (e.g., Woud et al., 2012). This focus on the positive side of events and aspects of life is at the heart of positive psychology. According to the authors, DST and positive psychology are fundamentally linked (Deci & Vansteenkiste (2004). Further, the authors also emphasize the importance of allowing learners to take responsibility for their learning; senses of autonomy and competence can also stimulate learners' motivation and engagement.

Gregersen et al. (2014) argue that emotions are the "prime source of motivation" (p. 328), yet their role in motivation has been underestimated. The authors conducted a qualitative study to explore how ability emotional intelligence (Salovey et al., 2002) relates to the development of the future ideal L2 self of the motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005/2009).

The participants of the study included two groups: language learners and language teachers. The language learners were enrolled in an intensive program of English for academic purposes in a USA university; the pre-service and in-service language teachers were in the same university. Both groups were first asked to fill in the Perceived Attainability of Possible Selves instrument. Learners stated their imagined 10 possible future selves either as a language learner or a language teacher at 10 time intervals. Learners then were asked to rate the possibility of attaining their imagined future selves. Participants then received treatment for three weeks of three activities from positive psychology, one activity each week. The activities were **identifying three good things**, **savouring** and **learned optimism**. Identifying three good things is about counting blessings to increase individuals' happiness and decrease depression. Savouring a positive experience is about being aware of positive experiences and making them last longer. Learned optimism is about interpreting adverse events optimistically. The purpose of these activities is to create positive emotions in learners. Participants were also asked to produce written narratives for each activity. After the treatment, each participant was given back their list of imagined possible selves and were asked to re-rate the possibility of attaining the desired selves. One learner and one teacher who scored higher gains from the treatment were reported in the study. Salovey et al.'s (2002) ability model of emotional intelligence was used to analyze the narratives. Ability emotional intelligence refers to "the ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem solving and to focus energy on required behaviors" (p. 330). The ability model consists of four branches: **1) emotional perception and expression** (identifying and expressing emotions), **2) emotional facilitation of thought** (use of emotions to facilitate cognitive processes), **3) emotional understanding** (understanding how emotions interact and evolve) and **4) emotional management** (control and regulation of emotions). Awatif, the learner, and Amy, the teacher, were found to utilize elements of EI in their interpretation of and interaction with events inside and outside of the classroom. They could identity their own emotions and the emotions of others and showed how they used this emotional knowledge in regulating their emotions and in thinking and decision-making. Further, the study found that unanticipated multiple variables, some of which are from other aspects of the participants' lives, might affect learning. Awatif, for instance, found in engaging with her child and husband in enjoyable activities a way to encounter the negative emotions which resulted from low exam performance and to obtain a positive attitude about her ability to do better in future exams. The study reported that self-development is facilitated by the effective use of EI; both the learner and the pre-service teacher reported that their future ideal selves were more attainable after receiving treatment

aimed at enhancing their positive emotions. The study suggests that positive emotions, which can be generated through the implementation of positive psychology, facilitate progression towards the desired future selves and "emotionally intelligent teachers and learners work together to move toward who they dream themselves to be" (p. 350).

Falout (2014) shared his experience of several years on the positive effects of circular seating in the language classroom. Falout noticed that there were improvements in listening, speaking, and motivation and group dynamics as well as in verbal and non-verbal communication amongst Japanese EFL university learners. The author argues that "circular seating by itself is not what brings people together; it is the people within this seating arrangement and how they feel, think, respond, and interact with each other (p. 282). Falout discusses the affordances of circular seating and how it has the potential to improve interaction, motivation, interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being as well as personal growth and identity formation. Falout's views are in accordance with positive psychology in that they aim to foster positive emotions in individuals and groups. He first argues that closeness between students creates feelings of immediacy, intimacy and inclusion, which have been proven to improve cognitive learning (Richmond et al., 2008). The sense of belonging is critical for happiness (Baumeister, 2005). The social interaction with other people contributes to the continuous formation of identity and to the way one understands, interacts, feels and responds to the outside world. For instance, seeing others' distress can cause an empathetic feeling of distress in the self. This phenomenon is described by **the empathy-altruism hypothesis**. This states that when people feel the need to help others out for reasons of empathy with no obvious gain, they are in fact doing it partially to relieve their own empathetic suffering. Thus, "the closer people feel to each other, the more they want to help each other" (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010, p. 283). Further, closeness allows effective, committed collaboration where innovative ideas and learning practices may occur as a result of work commitments emerging from interpersonal relationships (Li & Robertson, 2011). Further, a sense of community plays a critical role in instilling motivation and sense of empowerment in individuals, groups and even other groups in the community (McCombs & Miller, 2009). A sense of community also allows the emergence of interest, focused attention and positive emotions such as enthusiasm. Interest is a primary emotion (Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005); it induces and shapes experiences and behaviour that eventually leads to more cognitive practice, creativity and personal development. **The broaden-and-build theory** (Fredrickson, 1998) stipulates that the experience of positive emotions can increase cognitive processes and behaviours as a result. Interaction also enables learners to recognize their own metacognition and that of others. Insights from others also

contribute to sustained motivation (McCombs & Miller, 2009). Falout also argues that learners may get inspired to do learning activities by seeing others doing it, which is called **near peer role modeling** (Murphey & Arao, 2001). A learner whose confidence is low in using the language might get motivated when seeing other peers close to them with similar abilities use the language (Murphey & Arao, 2001). Another possible model for a learner is the coping peer who, despite his/her difficulties, perseveres. Their perseverance and determination may also inspire their peers to follow their lead (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Self-presentation (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010), which is the desire for positive impressions and evaluations by peers, is another advantage of being a member of a close learning circle. Students with a high sense of self-presentation aim to adopt behaviours that gain them a positive reputation and relationship with peers. According to research, adopted behaviours for the sake of good appearance are internalized over time (Tice, 1999). Falout explains that some learners might embrace certain practices with "a false air" (p. 286) because of the expectations of their peers. However, they might end up with a genuine interest in these practices. Circular seating is also suitable for encouraging learners to interact as individuals with unique identities. People express themselves more in circular seating, which is also thought of as a means for increasing motivation. According to Ushioda (2009) when learners are allowed to bring into class their identities and personalities then they are more motivated to participate and engaged in learning. Falout believes that circular seating encourages learners to engage more with each other as persons. Emotional contagion, which is the catching of emotions of others, is also possible through close interaction with others. Physical expressions, vocal tones and rhythms all enhance the contagion process. Emotional contagion is important for the pervasiveness of positive emotions. When positive emotions are spread throughout a learning group then motivation is likely to increase amongst them. This is referred to as **group framing of motivation** (Falout et al., 2013), in which learners formulate more positive views about their learning. Also, emotional and cognitive development of learners is influenced by their social and physical environments (Murphey et al., 2012). Falout argues that circular seating encourages learners to make friends with each other. School friendships have been shown to predict positive outcomes in learning. These include adaptive responses to learning stressors, higher interest in learning and challenges and achievement, positive beliefs of self-competence and positive social behaviours in general (e.g., Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003; Wentzel et al., 2004). Further, friendship is a valuable source for **social capital** (Bourdieu, 1985), which means benefits drawn from social networks such as support for well-being. Much of the discussion presented by Falout is extremely relevant to my study's findings despite my context being an online learning context in which

circular seating has no relevance. However, my study reveals ways in which learners maintained interpersonal relationships and were able to successfully develop a sense of community.

Gabryś-Barker (2014) discusses enthusiasm from the perspective of 50 Polish pre-service EFL trainee teachers. Previous research has identified enthusiasm as one of the primary traits of effective teachers that has a direct effect on learners' interest, motivation, attention and achievement (Metcalfe & Game, 2006). Kunter et al. (2008) define teacher enthusiasm as "a personality trait expressed in certain affectively determined behaviours such as enjoyment, excitement and pleasure in performing classroom actions, deriving from teachers' intrinsic motivation, positive attitude and interest in the subject and teaching it" (as cited in Gabryś-Barker, 2014, p. 304). The literature reports that there are three working mechanisms in which teacher enthusiasm may be manifested. First, learners' attention is captured through enthusiastic, engaging, innovative and person-related materials (Bettencourt et al., 1983). Second, emotional contagion also might arouse the enthusiasm of learners when learners observe emotionally expressive behaviours of the teacher (Mottet & Beebe, 2000). Third, the perception of the teacher as a role model fosters imitative learning whereby the intrinsic motivation of the teacher is transferred to the learner. The participating trainee teachers were required to produce a reflective narrative text of 350 words each reflecting on their perceptions of enthusiasm, enthusiasm's indicators in the classroom and its effects on learners and on them as teachers as well. The results showed that the majority of participants associate enthusiasm with emotional aspects of personality traits and with teaching style. The indicators of enthusiasm were reported to be associated with "overall energy levels, positive emotions and openness to students" (p. 315). With reference to positive emotions, participants regarded as enthusiastic teachers who are happy and "love what they do" (p. 313), empathetic teachers who "help students and … [are] open to their problems" (p. 313) and who are optimistic. An enthusiastic teacher also keeps good contact with other teachers and encourages them to gain knowledge. Enthusiastic teachers are also motivated and make attractive and creative lessons. A sense of humour is also important in an enthusiastic teacher in addition to understanding the needs of their learners and developing their learners' autonomy.

As for the effects of teacher enthusiasm, the participants reported that it has an influence on the affective functioning of learners. The statements provided by the pre-service teachers reflecting on their experiences as learners indicate that teacher enthusiasm is capable of fostering positive emotions and eliminating negative ones. For example, the participants were of the view that:

It is easier to memorise something when it is connected with some emotions and

has some influence on our mood and feelings. (p. 316)

If it is full of energy and positive attitude, students' interest and excitement in language learning may increase. (p. 317)

All these findings are relevant to the present study. The present study further shows how online learners responded when some of their video lectures were delivered by teachers with insufficient enthusiasm as defined by the above reported measures of enthusiasm.

Gregersen et al. (2016) report an intervention study that aimed to investigate whether doing positive psychology activities would increase the positive emotions and social capital of language learners. Three Brazilian and two Japanese female learners who were studying an intensive academic English course in a US university participated in a 12-week extracurricular program, the Conversation Partners program. The Conversation Partners program pairs American or other non-native students whose English is highly proficient with ESL learners. Partners are required to meet an hour per week and exchange conversations in English. For the purpose of the study carried out by Gregersen et al. (2016), each ESL learner was paired with a research assistant. Six positive psychology exercises were tailored to meet the interests of the participants. The six exercises included laughter, physical exercising, interaction with pets, listening to music, expressing gratitude and engaging altruism. Below is a brief justification of each exercise.

- **Laughter** is considered a coping strategy to relieve tension and anxiety (Kuiper & Martin, 1993; Moran & Massam, 1999). Using humour in the learning context makes learning more enjoyable (Bryant & Zillmann, 1988; LoShiavo & Shatz, 2005).
- **Physical exercise** is associated with positive emotional states (Argyle, 2001; Sarafino, 2002). Regular exercise reduces emotions of anxiety and depression.
- **Pet-assisted therapy** helps maintain positive emotions and works as a distraction to emotional stresses (Kaminski et al., 2002). Also, interaction with pets helps develop skills for interactions with people (Wisdom et al., 2009).
- **Music therapy** is helpful for emotional expression, stress/anxiety relief and emotional improvement for ill people. Studies from language learning also show that using music in class can foster positive emotions and motivate learners (Murphy, 2010, 2014).
- **Showing gratitude** is good for health. Individuals who keep diaries about events they feel grateful for have better subjective well-being than those who keep diaries of stressful events (Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Peterson, 2006). According to Gregersen et al. (2016), "expressing gratitude to a specific person in a letter has been shown to

have an enduring positive effect on the letter writer" (p. 152).

- **Altruism** represents our concern to improve the well-being of others. Gregersen et al. (2016) argue that the emotions of empathy towards a person who needs help can create altruistic motivation. Previous research demonstrates that altruistic behaviours are motivated by experiencing emotions of sympathy, compassion and tenderness (Batson, 1991; Batson et al., 2002). Altruistic help fosters feelings of connectedness and sense of community and improves feelings of self-esteem, which in return fosters emotions of happiness. In Gregersen et al. (2016), participants' altruistic acts included placing "thank you" notes on janitors' unattended carts, volunteering at the local food bank, writing "pick-up-me" notes to friends, writing notes for sick children and giving sweets to strangers.

Gregersen et al. (2016) reported that all participants experienced an increase in their positive emotions after completing a positive psychology exercise each week. Further, the positive psychology exercises provided a context in which learners could build interpersonal relationships and enjoy positive emotional experiences with their conversation partners. Interpersonal relationships constructed in such a positive environment provide learners with numerous non-material resources, namely social capital, which is "a sense of personal safety, and feeling integrated into a community and valued by others in that community" (Gregersen et al., 2016, p. 149, citing Nawyn, 2012).

Szymczak (2016) reported findings on the motivations and reactions of participants in two translation competitions. 47 Polish learners at the Institute of English Studies (Warsaw) responded to a questionnaire regarding their experiences in participating in two translation competitions, 29 participants for the Literary Translation Competition and 16 participants for the Business Translation Competition. Szymczak used the PERMA model for interpreting data. The PERMA is a positive psychology model and was developed by Seligman (2011) and it stands for **Positive emotion, Engagement, positive Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment**. These five components are essential for well-being and for the individual to flourish.

Participants viewed winning the competition as a **positive experience**. 86% of the winning participants found success enjoyable or very enjoyable. On the other hand, unsuccessful competitors are likely to experience negative effects because of failure. Szymczak thus recommends that student competitions should have high success rates and include "non-competitive gains in the form of freebies, snacks and positive verbal messaging" (p. 359) and productive feedback. Such elements will add positive elements and gains to the non-winners and diminish the negative effects of failure. **Engagement** refers to "a desirable and energizing

experience of complete immersion in a task (Seligman, 2011, as cited in Szymczak, 2016, p. 360). Most of the participants reported experiencing engagement while working on translations. According to Szymczak, this indicates that competitions have the potential to generate engagement in participants and that competitions should provide clear guidance on procedures, requirements and assessment to aid the engagement experience. The participants viewed **positive relationships** reflected in the emotional support provided by friends and loved ones. 86% of winner participants reported that they shared the news of their success with other people whereas the unsuccessful participants chose to keep the news to themselves. Most of the participants did not aim to establish positive relationships with possible new people. Szymczak argues that meeting new professionals and fellow translators through competitions is a positive experience and "a useful addition to one's network of professional contacts" (p. 361). Thus, Szymczak recommends that students participating in competitions should be encouraged to view the experience as an opportunity to forge positive relationships. **Meaning** involves perceiving a value or a utility of the task. Both competitions have "personal relevance and/or social utility" (p. 362). Winners were able to have their work published or won an internship. 77% of the participants found the competitions personally important to them. Szymczak recommends that competition tasks should be meaningful from participants' perspectives. A sense of **accomplishment** fosters high motivation. 77% of the participants reported that at the personal level the competition was important or very important to them. Failure was reported to have a discouraging impact by 22% of the participants.

Finally, Szymczak recommends that competitions are emotionally intense experiences and they should be designed as positive experiences for learners. Recognition of the efforts of participants is important. Feedback sessions should be provided for participants to make them aware of the positive aspects of competition participation instead of focusing on success and failure aspects.

Gabryś -Barker (2016) investigated the awareness of 55 Polish pre-service EFL teachers of components of a positive classroom climate, its significance for teachers and learners' well-being and ways both teachers and learners can contribute to it. A questionnaire on positive classroom climate and reflective narrative texts produced by the participants on their experience of classroom climate as EFL learners were the tools for data collection.

With regards to the components of a positive classroom climate, participants reported an emphasis of the affective components of the classroom climate, as can be seen in the following excerpts from the reports:

[the] physical setting as well as social and emotional aspects of the classroom (p.

165)

> a process of building the psychological framework for all the activities that
> happen in the classroom. (p. 165)

> deeply rooted in the emotional and affective domains of teaching-learning
> context. (p. 165)

Other components include interactive engagement between the teacher and learners, positive attitudes and willingness to communicate. A good classroom climate motivates and encourages learners to be active in their "small community" (p. 165) whereas a bad classroom climate demotivates learners. On the contributions teachers and learners can make to the classroom climate, the participants reported that the teacher plays the key role in creating a positive classroom climate and learners contribute at a complementary level. Teachers' attitudes toward their job and towards learners influence learners' progress, personal growth, development of social ties with peers and control of destructive behaviour. It is the teacher's role to establish classroom rules and to create an emotionally positive climate that is anxiety-free and secure. The teacher should also accommodate multiple views and provide feedback as expressed by participants below:

> Teachers should focus on developing and reinforcing classroom rules and norms,
> promoting and nurturing positive peer relationships, nurturing positive
> relationships with all students. (p. 167)

> It is teacher's role to [consider learners'] needs and treating them as individuals.
> (p. 167)

As for the significance of a positive classroom climate, the participants believe that a positive classroom climate fosters motivation, positive attitudes towards learning and active engagement. It also builds positive affectivity:

> A negative classroom climate feels hostile, chaotic, and out of control, however, a
> positive one feels safe, respectful, welcoming and supportive of student learning.
> (p. 168)

> A positive classroom climate makes students feel much more comfortable, valued,
> accepted and secure when trying to get involved in the language learning process.
> (p. 168)

In conclusion Gabrys-Barker argues that a positive classroom climate built on humanistic principles of sharing and caring and can promote effective language learning through active participation and visible progress. The affective growth of learners can be promoted through

increased motivation, willingness to participate and creating opportunities for interactions with each other and the teacher. Gabrys-Barker disapproves of the traditional passive view of the participants who place the sole responsibility for creating a positive climate on the teacher. She instead argues that the teacher and learners should create the classroom norms mutually. Further, both teachers and learners should take responsibility for creating a positive classroom climate. Such practice is in accordance with positive psychology concerns for individual well-being. Gabrys-Barker recommends the strength of character and well-being model from positive psychology (Park et al., 2004) to ensure a classroom is inclusive of these strengths to be an enabling positive context supporting positive emotions and positive traits of the individual. The model is composed of six components (Gabrys-Barker, 2016):

- **Wisdom and Knowledge**: represents developing creativity, curiosity, and a desire to learn.
- **Courage**: encouraging persistence, authenticity, and enthusiasm.
- **Humanity**: represents expressing feelings of kindness, generosity, compassion, and emotional intelligence.
- **Justice**: represents creating conditions for fairness and autonomy.
- **Temperance**: represents promoting learners' self-regulation and modesty.
- **Transcendence**: represents introducing humour, appreciation of aesthetics, optimistic attitudes, and spiritual values.

The present study also shares findings on how online learners could create a positive learning climate on their own without the involvement of their teachers. Such findings will shed light on the potential of learners to create a positive and productive climate for their learning, personal and social growth.

The last study I would like to include in this review is the study by Piechurska-Kuciel (2016). This study examined the relationship between self-regulatory efficacy and foreign language (FL) success. Self-regulation and self-efficacy have been investigated as essential cognitive and motivational variables influencing learning success (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of regulating one's cognitive, affective, motivation and behavioral processes (Bandura, 1998). According to Carr (2013), self-efficacy beliefs in achievement and success impact how one will accomplish a task. Self-regulation is defined as "thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclic" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 14).

There are three phases of self-regulation: self-observation, judgment, and self-response. Self-observation represents observing one's behaviour for performance and progress evaluation and flaws identification. Judgment involves the evaluation of performance in relation to personal goals and social standards. Judgments and comparisons have motivational effects on performance. Self-reflection involves evaluation of outcomes. This process induces

affective effects and influences beliefs about performance and progress. Satisfactory progress as the product of effective self-regulation sustains motivation and enhances self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy increases the potential of success and mastery of task accomplishment.

Within a learning context, self-regulation skills include setting goals, strategy selection, performance control and continuous reflection on learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2008). Learning strategies involve the learning cognitive dimension. Self-regulated learners "are capable of actively engaging in a process of meaning formation; they modify their thoughts, feelings, and actions as needed to support their learning and motivation" (p. 339). Further, self-regulated learners

> distinguish themselves as skilled, self-efficacious, and self-directed. They are able choose, organize, and create environments that are optimal for learning. In other words, such students perceive themselves as agents of their own behavior, managing their problem solving and learning autonomously … They are self-motivated, and use strategies to achieve desired academic results. (p. 339)

Learners can establish beliefs about their self-efficacy and subsequently regulate their behaviours based on four sources: previous (mastery) experiences, watching others, external feedback, and somatic and emotional states. Positive emotional states foster in learners effective self-efficacy. Negative emotions adversely impact self-efficacy as "people read their tension, anxiety, and depression as signs of personal deficiency" (Bandura, 2004, p. 623, as cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2016). Piechurska-Kuciel's study involved 621 Polish EFL students from six secondary grammar schools responding to the Self-Regulatory Efficacy scale (Bandura et al., 2003) and to a self-assessment of their EFL skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Their school grades also were assessed on a Likert scale. The participants were divided into two groups: the first group for learners with high levels of self-regulated efficacy and the second group for learners with low levels of self-regulated efficacy. The self-regulated efficacy assessment was the independent variable, and the self-assessment of FL skills and final grades were the dependent variables. The study hypothesized that learners with high levels of self-regulated efficacy would score higher in the self-assessment of FL skills and in their final grades. This hypothesis could only be confirmed in relation to self-assessment of FL skills. The final grades of learners with high and low levels of self-regulatory efficacy did not differ. For learners with high levels of self-regulatory efficacy, this might be explained by the assumption that high self-regulation fosters more confidence and optimism in competence, which led learners to over-estimate their competence. However, Piechurska-Kuciel argues that confidence, optimism and a positive attitude towards learning are important resources for language learning. Their high self-efficacy facilitates their learning and enhances motivation. On the other hand, for learners with low levels of self-

regulatory efficacy, the findings may indicate that learners with low self-regulatory efficacy may succeed in language learning despite a lack of strong belief in their self-efficacy. However, their learning might be hard, tedious and unenjoyable. Piechurska-Kuciel recommends holding workshops for EFL learners to make them aware of self-efficacy skills such as planning, time management, setting short and long term goals as well as learning strategies such as appropriate help seeking and self-monitoring.

In conclusion to the first part of this chapter, due to the interest in the affordances of positive psychology in the language classroom, the investigation of emotions is gaining momentum in language learning research after suffering from neglect in the past. The reviewed studies investigated issues of perseverance, enthusiasm, motivation and future ideal selves in relation to emotional intelligence, sense of community, altruism, gratitude, coping strategies in adverse learning circumstances, positive classroom climate, group cohesiveness resulting from seating arrangements, activities and exercises for fostering positive emotions, motivational and affective effects of competitions for learners and the relationship between positive emotions and of self-efficacy beliefs. All these themes are strongly present in my dataset, placing the present study also in the domain of TESOL positive psychology research. The contribution of my study will be through discussing these themes with regards to language learning materials, a topic, to the best to my knowledge, that has not yet been investigated from a positive psychology perspective. The following part of this chapter will examine the position of emotions in L2 motivation research in an attempt to understand the connection between leaners' emotions and their motivations for producing LGMs.

3.4 Part two: L2 motivation research

It was mentioned earlier that learners' emotions played a role in triggering and sustaining their motivation for the production of LGMs. Hence, it is important to understand the connection between emotions and motivation. This review thus aims to identify and understand the role of emotions in the major theoretical frameworks and approaches of L2 motivation research. A better understanding of learners' emotions and motivations will lead to a better understanding of the role of LGMs in the investigated context.

L2 motivation research has long enjoyed a significant place in language learning research. Researchers agree that motivation is a primary factor in the success and continuation of language learning and they have been interested in finding ways to foster, increase and sustain language learners' motivation. L2 motivation research started as an independent field of inquiry with the work of Gardner and Lambert in 1956, who were psychologists with an interest in second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2019a), whereby preceding "the onset of mainstream second language acquisition (SLA) research in the 1960s" (Ushioda, 2011, p.

200). L2 motivation has attracted an increasing attention from researchers to the extent that in some periods it has generated far more published studies than "most strands within the whole of SLA research" (Boo et al., 2015, p. 145).

Spanning over 60 years, L2 motivation research has gone through four periods: the social-psychological period (1959-1990), the cognitive-situated period (1990s), the process-oriented period (2000s) and the socio-dynamic period (2005-present) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). In the following discussion I will provide an overview of each period and will attempt to highlight how emotions were positioned in L2 motivational processes.

3.4.1 The social-psychological period

The social-psychological period started with the work of Gardner and Lambert (1959) and was influential in L2 motivation research until the 1990s. According to Gardner (2010), motivation is "a multifaceted construct that has behavioral, cognitive, and affective components. The motivated individual exerts efforts to achieve the goal, wants to achieve the goal, and experiences satisfaction when engaged in behavior associated with the goal" (p. 23). Gardner (2010) distinguishes between language learning motivation and language classroom motivation. He explains that **language learning motivation** is the focus of the social-psychological model, within which motivation to learn a foreign language occurs because of positive attitudes towards the L2 and the L2 group; and that the learner's attitudes "toward that group will at least partly determine his success at learning a new language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 267).

The social-psychological model thus focuses on examining the social psychological attitudes of a learner towards a particular culture and his/her desire to integrate within the target culture to determine the desire and motivation in the learner to learn the language of that culture. This model contributed two important concepts to L2 motivation research: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. According to Gardner integrativeness is

> viewed as a complex of affective variables that reflect an individual's openness to other cultures and languages. It includes variables such as attitudes toward other cultural communities and/or the target language community, an interest in learning language in order to communicate with members of the target community, and general social attitudes such as ethnocentrism, anomie, authoritarianism, Xenophilia, etc. (2010, p. 23-24)

Instrumental motivation on the other hand refers to the motivation to learn the target language for pragmatic reasons, such as compulsory educational prerequisites, employment, etc. **Language classroom motivation** is concerned with learners' integrativeness as well as attitudes towards the learning situations, which are influenced by activities and experiences in the classroom.

The social psychological research on L2 motivation was also influential and important in SLA research because it challenged the view at the time that intelligence and aptitude were the primary factors in successful L2 learning. Instead, the emergent motivation research by Gardner and associates drew more attention to the affective variables in successful L2 learning (Al-Hoorie, 2017), namely learners' attitudes towards the L2 and its social group as primary influencers in language learning. This approach also highlights the social aspect in L2 learners and that they may be motivated to be able to communicate with the target community. Gardner and associates developed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery to measure the affective components. The questionnaire measures the attitudes towards learning a foreign language, learning the L2 language, attitudes towards the L2 people, and respondents' integrative motivations with the L2 society. These affective variables remain in L2 motivation questionnaires today.

Other strands of research during the social-psychological period investigated aspects such as L2 motivation in multi-ethnic contexts. For instance, Schumann (1978, 1986) investigated individual acculturation, Clément (1989, 1986) examined quality and quantity of contact and motivation for intercultural communication, and Giles and Byrne (1982) examined how the minor group acquire and use the language of the dominant group. However, the L2 motivation theory offered by Gardner and associates was the most influential during this period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013).

From this brief review of the social psychological period of L2 motivation research, it is clear this major and influential model of motivation revolves around integrative motives, which are affective variables, namely "positive feelings towards the community that speaks the language" (Gardner, 1985 as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 42) that are responsible for inducing motivation. Because the social psychological model is concerned with integrative motivations, it restricts the role of the affective variables to attitudinal (like/dislike) measures towards learning the language. Further, the integrative motivation research took a macro-level approach in addressing the role of affective variables in motivating language learners to learn a foreign language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). This model is concerned with attitudes and affect generated on a general level about the L2 language and L2 culture rather than on the personal learning experience of learners.

A last point about the social psychological motivation is that it is a dynamic process that is subject to change due to exposure to various variables. "That is, environmental factors can give rise to various individual difference variables, particularly affective" (Gardner, 2010, p. 46). Gardner links the dynamic arousal and change of motivation with affective variables a learner might encounter either in the learning context or the wider context.

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3.4.2 The cognitive-situated period

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), the onset of this period was marked by critique of the integrative motivation research in a number of publications, including Brown (1990), Julkunen (1989), Skehan (1989) and Crookes and Schmidt (1991). A number of issues were addressed such as the need to examine L2 motivation through the lens of the cognitive approach adopted in mainstream motivational psychology, the need to examine motivation in the classroom setting rather than focusing on learners' general attitudes towards the target language and community and finally the need to address motivation at the application level from the teacher-practitioner's perspective. These issues led to the inclusion of cognitive motivation constructs into L2 motivation research while retaining aspects of the social psychological perspective (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013), since integrative motivation represents "one of the core aspects of L2 motivation" (Dörnyei, 2019, p. xxi).

Within this period there was a belief that "the motivational sources closely related to the learners' immediate classroom environment" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 47) and there was an adoption of constructs from cognitive theories concerned with how internal mental processes (patterns of thinking) shape (de)motivated behaviours. These include attribution theory, expectancy-value theory, goal-setting theory, and self-determination theory. The following table summarizes key concepts of each.

Table 3.1 Key concepts of cognitive theories of motivation

Theory	Key concepts
Attribution theory (Weiner, 1985)	• Learners who attribute their successes and failures to internal causes (own effort) are more motivated to persist than learners who attribute their successes and failures to external causes (difficulty of task, luck).
Expectancy-value theory (Atkinson, 1964)	• There are two factors affecting the motivation of learners: expectancies (expectation of success of a task) and value (subjective value of the task). • Learners are likely to be motivated if they perceive that the task has a value and that they can succeed in the task.
Goal-setting theory (Locke, 1968)	• Setting specific, attainable, challenging and time bound goals is influential in motivating learners.
Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)	• This theory distinguishes between innate causes for self-motivation (intrinsic motivation) and external regulations (extrinsic motivation). • There are three psychological basic needs responsible for self-motivated behaviour (intrinsic motivation): competence, autonomy and relatedness. • Social conditions have a great influence on the growth and maintenance of intrinsic motivation.

	• There are four subtypes of extrinsic motivation: ▪ **external motivation**: the regulation is followed to gain a reward or avoid punishment, ▪ **introjected motivation**: the regulation is adopted for its social value, ▪ **identified motivation**: the regulation is personally valued, ▪ **integrated motivation**: the regulation is fully assimilated into one's self.

An early motivation model of the cognitive period was proposed by Crookes and Schmidt (1991). They proposed a motivation model adopted from the education-oriented theory of motivation (Keller, 1983). Crookes and Schmidt's model contains four components: interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction. They called for examining motivation from various perspectives such as classroom, syllabus, curriculum and extracurricular. The satisfaction component is concerned with emotions one experiences after achieving a goal. This element was incorporated into Dörnyei's (1994) L2 cognitive motivation model.

Two significant works of this period were developed by Dörnyei (1994) and Williams and Burden (1997). Dörnyei (1994) developed an L2 motivation framework comprising of three levels: language level, learner level and learning situation level. He aimed to conceptualize L2 motivation within a comprehensive framework including a thorough list of motivational variables. The framework draws from components of the social psychological period as well as from education psychology. Dörnyei's framework (1994) contains elements that can be related directly or indirectly to emotions such as language use anxiety, satisfaction in outcome and need for achievement.

Williams and Burden (1997) took a constructivist approach in developing their motivational framework. They focused on the fact that social interaction affects motivation of the individual. They explicitly confirm the entwined relationship between emotions and motivation. They define motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal", which "leads to a conscious decision to act," and gives rise to "a period of sustained intellectual and/ or physical effort" in order to "attain a previously set goal or goals" (1997, p. 120). This model includes a comprehensive list of internal and external motivational factors.

To sum up, both the major motivational models of cognitive motivation include emotional variables—internal and external—affecting motivation in the learning context. These models enlarged the role of emotions as compared to the integrative model that mainly focused on attitudinal aspects. Explicit affective variables such as anxiety, fear, and satisfaction were acknowledged as impacting motivation.

3.4.3 The process-oriented period

In the previous periods of L2 motivation the focus was on identifying factors that might generate motivated action. In this period, researchers were interested in understanding the temporal and dynamic aspects of motivation and how motivation changes over time, either at the task level or the more macro level "during a course of study, over a person's learning history or across the lifespan" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 60). Paying attention to this aspect is significant because it paved the way to consider the complexity and dynamicity of motivation. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), major contributions to this period are attributed to Williams ad Burden (1997), Ushioda (1994, 1996, 1998) and Dörnyei and Otto (1998).

Williams and Burden (1997) distinguished between **motivation for engagement** and **motivation during engagement**. The former is concerned with reasons, wishes, intentions and making choices and decisions. The latter is concerned with how a learner feels and responds during learning. In their model, they draw attention to the different stages of motivation that might start by having reasons/wishes/intentions and then by actions. Ushioda (1996) draws attention to the inability of quantitative research methods to capture the temporal and evolutionary aspects of motivation and calls for more qualitative approaches to investigate the dynamic nature of motivation.

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed a model to describe motivation from a process perspective. It consists of two components: **action sequence** and **motivational influences**. Action sequence is about behavioural processes that transform wishes, desires or hopes to goals, then to actions and to accomplishments. Action sequence has three phases: **pre-actional phase** *(*involves goal selection*)*, **actional phase** *(*involves goal execution*)* and **post-actional phase** *(*involves outcome evaluation*)*. Motivational influences are about the motivational sources that fuel the behavioural process; these are different for each phase.

Dörnyei (2005) identified a number of shortcomings in his process model. Generally, it assumes it is possible to define when a specific motivational process occurs and ends, which is difficult to determine because of the dynamic interference of other motivational processes. Also, it presents a motivational process as occurring in isolation from other motivational processes that might be occurring simultaneously. Further, the model is based on linear cause-effect relations to describe the motivational processes. Dörnyei (2009a) explains that "it was really a matter of time before I realised that such a patchwork of interwoven cause-effect relationships would not do the complexity of the motivation system justice and therefore a more radical reformulation was needed" (p. 197). Thus, the process-oriented model was

reformed through the integration of the complex dynamic systems theory in the fourth and current period of L2 motivation research.

3.4.4 The socio-dynamic period

This period was shaped by influences from approaches in mainstream motivational psychology. Mainstream motivation explores "how motivation develops and emerges through the complex interactions between self and context" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 70). There has been a social turn in SLA emphasizing that learning of a language is not a cognitive psycholinguistic process, but social, cultural and historical factors are also involved in the learning process. Further, it was mentioned earlier that in the social psychological period, L2 motivation was explained in terms of integrative reasons. This view was seen as invalid in learning contexts where learning English is a compulsory subject similar to other basic subjects in the educational system.

Complex dynamic systems theory, which takes into account the interaction of complex and multiple factors, whether cognitive, social and environmental, was also gaining traction in the applied linguistics community. All these influences led to the re-conceptualisation of L2 motivation, drawing upon notions of self, context and complex and dynamic interactions. In this period three approaches emerged conceptualising motivation from a socio-dynamic perspective: the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009b), motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective (Dörnyei, 2009a) and a person-in-context relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009). In what follows I will highlight the important features of each approach.

3.4.4.1 The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009b)

Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system was proposed based on findings of a longitudinal questionnaire-based study over 15 years aimed at examining attitudes/motivation of 13,000 Hungarian teenage students learning English, German, French, Italian and Russian at regular intervals. Questionnaires were administered in 1993, 1999 and 2004. A number of motivational constructs were measured including integrativeness, instrumentality, direct contact with L2 speakers, cultural interest, vitality of L2 community, milieu and linguistic self-confidence.

The results showed that the construct of integrativeness stood out for its predictive capacity for language choice and intended effort, making it a crucial component for L2 motivation. Integrativeness was also found to have a mediating role for all the remaining motivational constructs measured in the study. Attitudes towards the L2 speakers/community and instrumentality were found to be immediate antecedents for integrativeness.

This result was consistent, with slight variation, throughout the three stages of data collection and for all the investigated languages. However, taking into account the absence of a specific L2 community a learner might wish to integrate into or in the case of global English where it is not possible to define the L2 community, it might be difficult to define an external group for integration and thus there is no real integration into a specific L2 group. A number of researchers have expressed reservations about the notion of integrativeness proposed by Gardner. Firstly, it might be applicable in ESL contexts, but not in EFL contexts where there is no or little contact with the L2 community (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Irie, 2003; Lamb, 2004; Ushioda, 2006; Warden & Lin, 2000). Secondly, the issue of globalized English also makes it more problematic to account for and satisfactorily describe integrative motivation in all learning contexts. Yashima (2002) reported that Japanese students were motivated to learn English to be able to communicate with the international community of English speakers and to secure instrumental gains without necessarily wishing to identify with or integrate into a specific native English-speaking community. Yashima termed this motivation the **International Posture**. Such motivation, which is very common in English learning contexts worldwide, casts doubt over the applicability of integrative motivation in such contexts. Dörnyei et al. (2006) also point out that English is now accepted as the language of the international community and it is taught worldwide for instrumental reasons, which "undermines Gardner's theoretical concept of integrativeness" (Dörnyei, 2009b, p. 24).

As a result, Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) felt the need to "extend" (p. 456) the meaning of the notion of integrativeness. Whereas Gardner (2001) believes that integrativeness is a process of identification with the L2 community (**an external identification**), Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) agree that integrativeness is a process of "psychological and emotional identification" (p. 453), but it might happen as well within the learner's self-concept (**an internal identification**). Dörnyei (2005) presents his **L2 Motivational Self System model** (henceforth L2MSS), delineating desired future possible selves as sources for internal identification. Thus, integrativeness in the classical meaning presented by Gardner entails that the L2 learner is motivated to learn the language because of his aspirations to identify with the native L2 speakers. In the L2MSS model, the L2 learner has a desired, imagined future L2 self that is different than the actual L2 self. Motivation occurs because the L2 learner aspires to identify with his/her imagined future L2 self. Thus, Dörnyei (2009b) explains that for the results of the Hungarian study he reinterpreted integrativeness to mean the Ideal L2 Self.

3.4.4.1.1 Theoretical assumptions of the L2MSS

The L2MSS model consists of three components; the first two components, **the Ideal L2**

Self and the Ought-to L2 Self, are also called **future self-guides** and draw their theoretical basis from **possible selves theory** (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the **self-guides** of Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory for relating self and affect. These two components have received an enormous amount of attention from researchers because of their link to the self-system and made the L2MSS an appealing construct: "the potential strength of the L2 self formulation lies in its ability to map out new conceptual linkages by taking the self as the starting point" (MacIntyre et al., 2009, p. 50). Papi et al. (2019) also maintain that the L2MSS has "opened our eyes to the potentials of looking at the self as the core of learners' motivational thinking" (p. 19). Based on a survey of L2 motivation research, it was found that the L2MSS model has dominated the field since its inception (Boo et al., 2015). The third component, **the L2 Learning Experience**, is not theorized under the same constructs or any other constructs related to the self-system. More explanations of the model's components and discussion of them follows below.

1. **Ideal L2 Self**: the learner's own vision of him/herself as a successful L2 user. Gardner's integrative and instrumental motives, i.e., the image of a L2 speaker identifying with the L2 community and/or gaining the pragmatic benefits associated with a successful L2 user can be contained within an image of an Ideal L2 Self.

2. **Ought-to L2 Self**: the external influences on the L2 learner to be a successful L2 user. According to Dörnyei (2009b), this construct concerns "the more extrinsic (i.e. less internalised) types of instrumental motives" (p. 86) to learn the language such as meeting obligations or others' expectations or to avoid negative consequences.

In the L2MSS model, both the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self denote future states (future possible selves) and thus are called **future self-guides.** They are assumed to drive the L2 learner to reduce the discrepancy between his/her actual L2 self and the desired future possible self (ideal or ought-to). According to Dörnyei (2009b), a central component responsible for the effectiveness of the future self-guides as motivational power is imagination. Experiencing vivid mental images of a successfully accomplished goal provides impetus for action. These vivid images are self-states that are experienced as reality (Dörnyei, 2009b) and they are "more than mere long-term goals or future plans in that they involve tangible *images* and *senses*" (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 2, original emphasis). Dörnyei (2009b) states a number of conditions for future self-guides to effectively promote motivation, "triggering the execution of self-regulatory mechanisms" (p. 18):

- The learner possesses a desired future self-image
- There is a noticeable gap between the desired future self and the current self
- The future self-image is elaborate, vivid and detailed
- The future self-image is possible to attain

- The future self-image requires increased effort and will not happen automatically
- The future self-image is in harmony with the social norms of the learner and his social groups
- The future self-image is activated on a regular basis
- The future self-image is accompanied with strategies and target-oriented plans
- The future self-image is accompanied by a counterpart image of a feared possible self.

According to the L2MSS model the motivational power stems from vividly imagined possible selves; the possible selves "give form, meaning, structure, and direction to one's hopes and threats, thereby inciting and directing purposeful behavior. The more vivid and elaborate the possible self, the more motivationally effective it is expected to be" (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 100).

3. **L2 Learning Experience**: This component is concerned with the impacts of day-to-day learning experiences, including the impact of the learning context, the teacher, peer relations, learning tasks, syllabus and teaching materials and the experience of success. It postulates that a positive L2 learning experience is predicted to motivate language learning whereas a negative learning experience is predicted to cause adverse impacts on learners' motivation.

Dörnyei (2009b) explains that he became inclined to research L2 motivation in relation to the learner's self-system because of recent interest in the theories of self and identity in mainstream psychology of motivation. According to Dörnyei (2009b) the ideal and the ought-to L2 selves are the central components of the L2MSS model; they were proposed based on the empirical evidence provided by the Hungarian study, which investigated general, non-situation specific motives. The Hungarian study did not provide any relevant data regarding the learning context. However, Dörnyei (2009b) explains that he added a third component, **the L2 Learning experience**, which is concerned with situation specific motives, based on the abundant empirical evidence provided by the cognitive period of L2 motivation research on the motivational significance of learning context including the teacher, the curriculum and the learner group, the experience of success, etc. The third component thus "concerns situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" and "is conceptualised at a different level from the two self-guides and future research will hopefully elaborate on the self aspects of this bottom-up process" (Dörnyei, 2009b, p. 29). In a recent article, Dörnyei (2019b) describes this component as the Cinderella of the L2MMS model because it has received little attention in the literature. He maintains that the **L2 Learning Experience** has been neglected, receiving no further elaboration and is still undertheorized despite being proved by previous research to be "the most powerful predictor of motivated behaviour" (p. 19). The reasons for the neglect of this component are that a) its

traditional conceptualisation cannot be easily made to correspond with the theoretical basis of the future possible selves and b) its undertheorized nature made it difficult to integrate it into other theories.

The **L2 learning Experience** has been labeled in the literature in different ways (You et al., 2016), for example **attitudes to language learning** (Taguchi, 2013), **L2 learning attitude** (Kormos et al., 2011), **L2 learning experience** (Csizér & Kormos, 2009) and **English learning experience** (Papi, 2010). This variation resulted because of the lack of one specific theoretical conceptualisation. As another resultant consequence, this component was measured in quantitative questionnaire-based studies by generic attitudinal items such as (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009b):

- I like being in the English classroom
- I really enjoy learning English
- I always look forward to my English classes
- I think time passes faster while studying English.

In an attempt to offer a theoretical framework for the **L2 learning Experience** in order to measure this component in more specific items, Dörnyei (2019) suggests directing the investigation on the quality of the learner's engagement with the learning process and the learning environment. He first redefines the **L2 learning Experience** to be "the perceived quality of the learner's engagement with various aspects of the learning process" (p. 20). He also proposes a number of aspects for engagement, including the school context, syllabus and teaching materials, learning tasks, one's peers and the teacher.

In conclusion to this section, the L2MSS model is considered the dominant model in L2 motivation research and since its introduction into the field it has caused "an exceptional wave of interest with literally hundreds of studies appearing worldwide" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 91). One issue expressed regarding the L2MSS model is its lack of connection to the learner's emotional system. MacIntyre et al. (2009) comment on the need for clarifying the role of emotions in possible selves. Without emotions "possible selves exist as cold cognition, and therefore lack motivational potency" (p. 47). In response, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009a) explain that "the imagery component of possible selves offers an obvious link with emotions, as one of the key roles of the sensation generated by experiential images is exactly to evoke emotional responses (p. 352). Although this statement reflects a recognition of the relation between experienced images and evoked emotional responses, nevertheless the role of emotions is underrepresented in the L2MSS model. Emotions are also underplayed in the other L2 motivation approaches of the socio-dynamic period as shown below.

3.4.4.2 Motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective (Dörnyei, 2009a)

This framework, as the title implies, is influenced by the principles of complex and dynamic systems theory (CDST). Before reviewing the framework, I will present a brief review of CDST because of its relevance to the present study as well.

CDST is also known as chaos/complexity theory and dynamic systems theory, a theoretical approach known to be used widely in natural sciences and introduced into SLA by Larsen-Freeman in 1994. Larsen-Freeman came to recognize that positivist paradigms concerned with measuring generalized variables fail to explain the complexity and dynamism associated with language acquisition. CDST offers novel explanations to understand language acquisition and to account for irregularities and abnormalities in this process. From a CDST perspective, the language is a system and the learner is a system (Verspoor, 2017), "a system in which large networks of components with no central control and simple rules of operation give rise to complex collective behavior, sophisticated information processing and adaptation via learning or evolution" (Mitchell, 2009, p. 13). A double pendulum (a simple form of a system consisting of two components only) illustrates the complexity and unpredictability of the behaviour of such systems. Moving the upper arm of the double pendulum will cause the lower arm to move in a chaotic way and disturb the regular movement of the upper arm and the whole system as a whole (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Similarly, the continuous, dynamic interactions between networks of components in a system "make the system's behaviour highly complex and unpredictable" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 89). In addition to the inner interactions, the system is open to change because of the influences of the surrounding environment, which also consists of open systems with networks of components. Byrne (2005) states that CDST examines "the social world and its intersections with the natural world as involving dynamic open systems with emergent properties which have the potential for qualitative transformation" (p. 6).

The theory has the following basic characteristics, presented in alphabetic order:

- **Adaptation/feedback sensitivity**: a change in one area of the system causes a change in the whole system. Also, "an adaptive system changes in response to feedback from its changing environment" (Larsen-Freeman, 2015, p. 16).
- **Attractor state**: a stable state the system shows tendency towards and "the fixed point of this state refers to a unique point of equilibrium that the system tends to settle in over time" (Hiver, 2015, p. 21).

- **Chaos:** a chaotic system does not "unfold over time in a linearly predictable manner" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 4)

- **Chaotic attractor:** is "a region of state space in which the system's behavior become quite wild and unstable" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 57).

- **Context-dependent:** the system and the environment are "coupled, co-constructed and always in transition" (Larsen-Freeman, 2015, p. 16).

- **Cyclic attractor:** is when "the system moves periodically between several attractor states" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 57).

- **Dynamism**: everything in the system is in a changing state all the time.

- **Heterogeneity**: the components and processes of the system are of diverse types.

- **Interconnectedness:** refers to the intricate interaction between the components of a system.

- **Nonlinearity**: one variation in the system can lead to unpredictable various different outcomes.

- **Openness**: complex systems are open to surrounding influences leading to change and adaptation.

- **Repeller state**: a temporary state that reflects "a period of transition where the system moves from one attractor state to another" (Henry, 2015, p. 331).

- **Self-organization**: the components of the system self-organize into a new state after change. The system changes its internal structure and overall functions as a response to external factors.

- **Shift phase**: occurs when the system's stability (attractor state) is disrupted due to internal or external changes altering its components, causing the system to seek another attractor state.

- **The butterfly effect:** represents that "a slight change in initial conditions can have vast implications for future behaviour" (Larsen-Freeman, 2015, p. 15).

The turn to a CDST approach in applied linguistics is relatively recent and there are few empirical studies that have investigated L2 motivation in light of the principles of CDST. According to Dörnyei et al. (2015a) the introduction of CDST in the field has aroused many concerns about its applicability for a number of reasons. The technical terms of CDST were coined to describe processes and phenomena from natural science fields, and it is challenging to relate the novel concepts of CDST with the familiar and traditional concepts of language learning research. The questions which stem from CDST research are different than the

traditional questions in the field. Novel methods are also required to conduct the research. It also means that a number of established concepts in applied linguistics motivation research have to be rethought when taking a CDST approach. There is little known about how to conduct CDST research and little availability of training opportunities to do so. According to Dörnyei et al. (2015a) there are few resources available to research students; there are no "templates or traditions [researchers] could rely on in producing workable and productive research designs" (Dörnyei et al., 2015a. p. 4). Such difficulties may lead to the reluctance to do CDST research resulting in leaving this novel approach "marginalized" and "employed by a few selected 'initiated' scholars" (p. 420).

Contributors have attempted to provide general guidelines as to how to conduct research from a CDST perspective. The unit of analysis should be a complex system (Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020) taking into account its temporal-spatial context. Others recommend "considering the dynamics of a well-defined system…, it means examining the interplay among factors and the iterative processes involved" (p. 424). With regards to what this complex system is in L2 motivation, Papi & Hiver (forthcoming), (as cited in Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020) recommend "casing a system functioning in context" as the system for L2 motivation research, which means that

> regarding what the system should be for L2 motivation research, we are interested in real individuals doing particular things in particular contexts at particular times. Examples of this include a language learner's motivation over a year-long study abroad period, a group of learners' motivation over a semester, or a pair of learners' task-motivation within a class period. Motivation is a component of these relational systems.

According to Hiver and Larsen-Freeman (2020), in their first example the complex systems are the learner and the language programme, taking into account the spatial (abroad) and the temporal (the one-year period) contexts. Motivation will emerge as a result from the relations between these systems.

As to the link of CDST to Dörnyei's motivational proposal, Dörnyei (2010) explains that L2 motivation research has been traditionally investigated within the paradigms of individual differences (IDs). Investigations within SLA have devoted substantial attention over the past decades to understanding individual differences (IDs) of learners and their link to variation in L2 acquisition and attainment. IDs research is concerned with personal traits that serve as "background learner variables that modify and personalise the overall trajectory of the language acquisition processes" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 89). These learner variables have to be "stable", "enduring" (p. 89) and applicable to everybody, but differ in degree. IDs research is concerned with distinct measurable differences. Likewise, L2 motivation research

has traditionally been interested in investigating common distinct motives to explain motivational processes. However, looking at L2 motivation through including "higher-order 'motivation conglomerates' that also include cognitive and affective factors and which act as 'wholes'" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 92) would be more fruitful. Dörnyei contends that motivation, cognition and affect (emotions) continuously interfere with each other in complex patterns and cannot be isolated from each other. Thus, he proposed a motivational approach that takes into account cognitive and affective factors and calls it motivational conglomerates.

Dörnyei proposes four constellations/templates for investigating situated motivational conglomerates. Each constellation accounts for cognitive and affective factors and acts as a whole. The four constellations are: interest, motivational flow, motivational task processing and future-self guides. Cognitive and affective aspects in these constellations are presented below.

- **Interest** has both cognitive and affective dimensions. The cognitive dimension is articulated in the curiosity and engagement in a specific behaviour. The affective dimension denotes joy, enjoyment and satisfaction resulting from engagement.

- **Motivational flow** refers to an intense engagement and extreme focus in a task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This constellation is also associated with enjoyment from being absorbed in a task and cognitive appraisals of the challenges of the task, personal skills and competence, task goals and attention.

- **Motivational task processing** involves various cognitive appraisals, monitoring and evaluations of stimuli and execution strategies. Task processing consists of three interrelated mechanisms: task execution, appraisal and action control (self-regulatory mechanisms to protect the action). Evaluations of the task involve emotional responses.

- **Future self-guides** also combine motivational, cognitive and affective elements. The conditions for the activation of the self-guides underlie a self-appraisal of learners' abilities and circumstances. The ideal images of the self evoke emotional responses.

This framework attempts to present the roles of emotions, motivation and cognition from a complex dynamic systems perspective. However, in this framework emotions are only explicitly mentioned with regards to emotions of enjoyment, joy and satisfaction resulting from engagement in or appraising of a task or imagination of self-guides.

3.4.4.3 Directed motivational currents

A recent construct introduced into L2 motivation research is directed motivational currents (DMC) (Dörnyei et al., 2014; Dörnyei et al., 2015b; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013). DMC describes highly intense and short-term periods of a motivated behavior, entailing "a prolonged process

of engagement in a series of tasks which are rewarding primarily because they transport the individual towards a highly valued end" (Dörnyei et al., 2015b, p. 98). The name of this construct was inspired by ocean currents; according to Dörnyei et al. (2015b), "both motivational and ocean currents represent a formidable flow of energy, carrying the life-forms caught up within them unimaginable distances" (p. xi). Such motivational urges disturb the normal routines of life as the individual is absorbed in executing the tasks that will get him/her to their goal at a level and a time scale beyond expectations. The DMC construct has the following distinguishing characteristics:

- **goal/vision-orientedness** involves directing the individual towards a salient goal. Experiencing sensory images/visions of achieving the goals is an essential element that adds towards heightening the DMC.

- **Salient and facilitative structure** refers to a clear pathway for action in which there is a starting point and a final destination. This clear pathway facilitates the progressing of the action through establishing behavioral routines that link the starting point with the final destination.

- **Participant ownership** refers to the sense of ownership and control over the DMC process. This can be achieved when the individual feels confident that he/she has the necessary capabilities to undertake the process and attain the goal.

- **Clear perception of progress** refers to tangible feedback and signs confirming the progress towards attaining the goal.

- **Positive emotional loading** refers to experiencing high positive emotions during the DMC behaviour. Positive emotions are felt toward the DMC behaviour and also as a result of being engaged in the DMC behaviour. More specifically, positive emotions stem from experiencing goal visions of goal attainment, which in turn energizes the DMC behaviour.

With regards to the position of emotions in this construct, positive emotions that are usually felt in association with goal attainment have an important role in energizing the DMC behaviour. Positive emotions are also linked to experiencing sensory visions of attaining the goal.

3.4.4.4 A person-in-context relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009)

According to Ushioda (2009) L2 motivation research originated in a tradition based on detecting cause-effect relationships. Researchers were concerned with identifying variables affecting motivation to be able to design applicable pedagogical interventions for the purpose of improving learning. Section 3.3.2 reviews the most salient theoretical frameworks and

variables that have been assumed responsible for triggering and/or affecting motivation in L2 learners. Quantitative studies utilizing questionnaires have dominated L2 motivation inquiry since its onset; they are assumed to be suitable for empirical testing, predictability and generalizability, control and intervention measures. However, Ushioda (2009) maintains the view that frameworks based on linear variables are "reductionist" and "parsimonious" (p. 76)) as they only focus attention on limited variables that might partially explain motivational processes, but fail to take into account holistically the complex reality of internal, situational and temporal factors that might contribute to learners' motivation. Moreover, Ushioda (2009) contends that linear frameworks reduce language learners to "abstractions or bundles of variables behaving and responding in theoretically predictable ways" (p. 76). For example, there will be learners who are motivated/unmotivated or are high self-efficient/low self-efficient, etc. Linear frameworks are incapable of capturing the unique individuality of learners as they interact with their learning.

Where the learning context is concerned, Ushioda (2009) argues that the situational factors of the learning environment are also treated as stable, generalizable variables in linear relationships by these quantitative studies. Ushioda believes that the learning context is a dynamic, developing agency "which individuals are involved in shaping through their actions and responses" (p. 77). The learner is also a complex individual with multiple identities. Therefore, she calls for a relational approach that focuses on learners as real persons with multiple identities such as being an immigrant, a mother, Chinese, a doctor and so on. From the interaction of these various aspects of a learner with multi contextual factors, "motivation emerges organically" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009a, p. 354). Ushioda's "person-in-context relational" approach corresponds well to a CDST approach discussed in section 3.3.4.2 as can be seen clearly from this excerpt:

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

Other researchers share the view that "L2 motivation can no longer be conceived of exclusively as a conventional, modular independent variable" (Hiver & Papi, 2019, p. 4). New strands of L2 motivation research such as multilingualism, long-term motivation, small group

dynamics, learner in context, the teacher-learner relationship and demotivation investigate L2 motivation from a context-dependent and dynamic point of view. This new way of conceptualising L2 motivation is attributed to influences of the CDST (Hiver & Papi, 2019); "motivational outcomes and processes arise from a web of relationships that continually grow, change, and adapt to new situations" (Hiver & Papi, 2019, p. 5).

Ushioda argues that such an approach makes it challenging for analysis purposes because the focus will not be on the learner alone but will need to be broader to include dynamic and combined interactions between the learner as an individual and manifold, dynamic contexts as well. Motivation research needs to attempt to inquire into the motivational processes of learners in their learning contexts. Ushioda proposes taking a micro-analytical approach through the analysis of teacher-student and student-student talk as a strategy to observe the emergence of motivation. Ushioda thinks that this strategy might offer an opportunity to examine triggered motivation. However, she expresses that there are methodological concerns associated with this strategy of inquiry. For instance, will learners be speaking as themselves whereby they are allowing their real identities to engage, or will they be engaged in the talk as language learners only thereby merely playing roles expected from them? Ushioda argues that qualitative studies are highly beneficial for understanding the complex and dynamic nature of motivation. However, motivation research has largely focused on quantitative methods, despite the fact that "most scholars would agree that longitudinal studies can offer far more meaningful insights into motivational matters than cross-sectional ones, and only by collecting longitudinal data can we fully explore the dynamic nature of the mental processes underlying motivation." (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 208). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) think that "qualitative exploratory investigations of language learners' self-reports might contain sufficient clues about the right angle to motivation and motivated behaviour to adopt" (p. 98). Ushioda (2016) has proposed investigating L2 motivation "through a small lens" (p. 567); she means attempting a very narrow, focused and situated angle for investigation. She contends that such focused inquiry will enable us to understand how motivation relates to SLA acquisition/development, to classroom events and to teacher-learner interactions. Motivation researchers, teacher-researchers or student researchers are suggested a number of research tasks for this purpose (Ushioda, 2016). These include:

- examining the role of intrinsic motivation in learners' noticing of pragmalinguistic features in implicit input conditions.
- exploring the role of motivation in learners' noticing of specific target language features in implicit input conditions.
- investigating how teachers motivate learners to think through problems and difficulties

in their learning.

- experimenting with different verbal approaches to encouraging learners to think through problems and difficulties in their learning.
- investigating how learners co-construct their motivation to think through problems and difficulties in collaborative language tasks.
- investigating the motivations of teacher and learner participants during 'critical events' in a lesson.
- identifying and analyzing critical events in a lesson where issues of motivation have surfaced.

Although the present study was not designed in advance to explore motivation, it features some of these questions posed by Ushioda, namely how learners think through their problems, how learners co-construct motivation in collaborative learning and motivations of learners participating in critical events in their learning. The reported findings might be interesting for researchers wishing to follow Ushioda's suggested research tasks.

In conclusion, Ushioda's approach acknowledges emotions as an aspect that should make us consider language learners as real individuals, not mere abstractions. Nonetheless, in her approach there is no specific emphasis on the role of emotions on the interactions that might occur between the learner as an individual and his/her learning environment and on the motivated behaviour that may occur as a result.

3.4.5 Connection between emotions, learner autonomy and motivation

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) explain that during the increased interest in the cognitive approach to L2 motivation in the 1990s there was also a growing interest in learner autonomy and language learning strategies. This resulted in exploring how L2 motivation relates to learner autonomy and learning strategies. Both understandings learner autonomy and motivation derive from cognitive theories of self-determination theory and attribution theory. Further, both are "centrally concerned with the learner's active engagement with and involvement in the learning process" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013. p.58). Some studies investigated how skills associated with learner autonomy such as metacognitive and self-regulation skills are strongly linked to L2 motivation (Grainger, 1997; Okada et al. 1996). The interest in investigating the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy has continued till the present time (e.g., Bravo et al., 2017; Salehi & Vaez-Dalili, 2017; Vandergrift, 2005).

Because the present dataset contains themes related to learner autonomy and because of the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy, in what follows I will examine the

position of emotions in three models of learner autonomy to elicit some insights for interpreting the present data. The models are Littlewood's (1996), Oxford's (2003) and Murase's (2015).

3.4.5.1 Littlewood's autonomy model (1996)

Littlewood (1996) defines an autonomous person "as one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions. This capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness" (p. 428). Ability involves having knowledge and necessary skills whereas willingness involves having motivation and confidence to take on learning responsibilities. Littlewood maintains that learning autonomy depends on the availability of all of these components. These components are interrelated; when a learner possesses the necessary knowledge and skills, he/she will feel more confident to carry out learning tasks independently and when the learner has sufficient confidence he/she will utilize his/her knowledge and skills more effectively. Autonomy also can be seen through three domains: autonomy as a communicator (communicating through L2), autonomy as a learner (learning how to use L2 for communication) and autonomy as an individual (making choices independently in life). Littlewood points out six areas where teachers can help develop the components of autonomy. In the area of **independent work** teachers may focus on developing learners' motivation and confidence and acquainting learners with the skills and knowledge they need to accomplish their work. For **communication strategies** teachers need to focus on communication rather than on accuracy. The area of **learning strategies** is concerned with "the gradual and planned development of students" ability to use their individual learning strategies" (p. 433). Littlewood refers the reader to works by Ellis and Sinclair (1989) and Oxford (1990) for more details on such strategies (explained further below). The area of **personal learning context** concerns engaging learners in experiential learning in class or helping develop their ability to use the language in the wider community. **Expression of personal meaning** concerns engaging learners' personalities in language use. The final area concerns the use of techniques for developing the creative use of language. Littlewood's model is influenced by humanistic approaches to education (discussed in section 2.2) in which there is an emphasis on developing autonomous skills not only for learning purposes but also to develop life skills for the individual.

When looking at Oxford's model for **learning strategies,** Oxford (1990) divides learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies include metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Figure 3.1 highlights the elements of affective strategies.

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Figure 3.1 Affective learning strategies (Oxford, 1990)

3.4.5.2 Oxford's autonomy model (2003)

This model is based on a model offered by Benson (1997) that consists of three components of learner autonomy: technical, psychological and political. Oxford's model is composed of four perspectives: technical, psychological, sociocultural and political-critical. The **technical perspective** is concerned with the external situational conditions necessary for the development of learner autonomy such as self-access learning centres, the classroom or the home setting. The **psychological perspective** is concerned with "the mental and emotional characteristics of learners" (p. 83). From a psychological perspective, autonomous learners have high motivation and high self-efficacy, positive attitudes as well as a need for achievement and meaning seeking. In numerous studies, motivation is a key factor for learners' use of learning strategies (e.g., Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Oxford & Leaver, 1996; Nunan, 1997). The **sociocultural** perspective stresses the importance of social interaction in the development of cognition and language on the development of the "human capacity" (Oxford, 2003, p. 85) of the learner. Mediation can also aid in the development of the social aspect of an autonomous learner. Finally, the **political-critical** perspective is concerned with enabling the learner to develop their own voices and power to control their situations and to

be critical and seek alternatives.

3.4.5.3 Murase's autonomy model (2015)

In this model learner autonomy has four main dimensions: technical, psychological, political-philosophical and socio-cultural. The **technical dimension** refers to the independent learning of the language outside the classroom and without the aid of the teacher. This dimension includes behavioural and situational sub-dimensions. Behavioural autonomy is "the ability to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies" (Murase, 2015, p. 47), whereas situational autonomy is "the ability to take control of one's learning in the situation where the learner is required to study independently" (Murase, 2015, p. 47). The **psychological autonomy** dimension represents the capacity of the learner to take responsibility of his/her learning. This dimension contains three sub-dimensions: metacognitive, motivational and affective. The metacognitive sub-dimension concerns the use of metacognitive strategies. The motivational sub-dimension concerns knowledge about self-motivation strategies. The affective sub-dimension focuses on learners' emotions, anxiety and self-esteem and the learner's "capacity to take control of one's learning by knowing about one's affective states… and how to control these affective factors" (Murase, 2015, p. 45). The **political-philosophical** dimension is concerned with group autonomy and individual autonomy. Group autonomy is seen as a higher level of autonomy because it exerts a degree of power and influence over the group members. Lastly, the **socio-cultural** dimension includes social-interactive and cultural sub-dimensions and focuses on social interaction and social interdependence to develop autonomy in the immediate social and in the wider cultural context of the learner.

We can see from the above review that emotions have had an essential role in learner autonomy models since the 1990s till the present time. Psychological aspects of autonomy emphasize the capability of the learner to understand his/her affective states and to use affective strategies to manage these affective states. Thus, in the view of the learner autonomy literature, autonomous learners have, amongst other characteristics, autonomy in understanding and managing their emotions. According to Oxford (1990), affective strategies regulate emotions, motivation and attitude and they support learning similar to the way that metacognitive skills do. The connection between L2 motivation and learner autonomy is well established in the literature (discussed in section 2.2.1). Dörnyei (1998), for instance, states that "it has been generally accepted that motivation to learn and learner autonomy go hand in hand" (p.55) and he recommends learner autonomy as one of ten motivational macrostrategies for promoting learners' motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Thus, if it is accepted that motivated learners are autonomous and that autonomous learners are affectively autonomous,

then motivated learners are predicted to be affectively autonomous (i.e., have the capability to know and control their affective states) (Murase, 2015). This conclusion about the role of emotions in fostering and regulating motivation is reflected in L2 self-motivation strategies proposed by Dörnyei (2005). He briefly explains that **emotion control strategies** are strategies for "managing disruptive emotional states or moods, and for generating emotions that are conducive to implementing one's intentions (e.g., self-encouragement; using relaxation and meditation" (p. 115). The component of emotion control strategies indicates a connection between emotional management and fostering and maintaining of self-motivation. Again, the addressing of the connection between emotional strategies and motivation is very brief, and in their brief discussion of "affective issues", Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 10), comment that their cursory treatment reflects the "emotional deficit" of the field.

3.4.6 Concluding remarks

In this part I reviewed the history of L2 motivation research and attempted to highlight the position of emotions in salient motivation models. Emotions have had a presence, albeit marginalized, with the exception of Weiner, who viewed emotions as motivators. In the concept of integrative motivation proposed by Gardner and associates in 1957 emotions are restricted to attitudinal views about the target language and community. The most dominant model of L2 motivation research at present, the L2MSS model, does not offer an explanation as to the role of emotions in motivated behaviour; it only limits the role of emotions to experiencing emotions of joy, enjoyment and satisfaction as a result of imagining vivid visions of future selves. In the complex dynamic systems perspective of motivation (Dörnyei, 2009) and the DMC construct, positive emotions of joy, enjoyment and satisfaction are experienced because of goal attainment or engaging in the task or in having vivid imagery of future selves. Ushioda's perspective does not offer any particular emphasis or explanation on how emotions generate the motivation of the learner as an individual. The exploration of the emotional role in L2 motivation research is very brief and does not explain the role of negative emotions or the wide range of other positive emotions that might be experienced in the learning context or experienced due to external factors, but with influences on learning motivated behaviours. It is clear from the reviews offered above on L2 motivation models that they fall short in providing any explanation regarding the connection between motivations for LGMs production and emotions, for example, of anxiety, frustration, anger, pride, sympathy, gratitude, love, admiration, jealousy and embarrassment. The following part of this chapter will offer a review of a number of theoretical constructs for the purpose of analyzing emotions-related themes associated with the motivations for LGMs production, namely the connection between emotions and motivated behaviour and between emotional strategies and

skills and motivation.

3.5 Part three: Understanding the connection between emotions and L2 motivation

Part 2 of this chapter reviewed the theoretical frameworks of L2 motivation and learner autonomy in order to identify and understand the role of emotions in these theoretical frameworks to assist in understanding the connection between emotions and motivated behaviours as well as between emotions and autonomous learning in the present study. The review revealed there is an emphasis on the employment of emotional strategies, understanding of one's emotions and managing of emotions to aid learner autonomy. As for L2 motivation theoretical frameworks, there is an under-representation of emotions without a sufficient explanation of their connection to (de)motivated behaviours. However, emotion control is considered a strategy for fostering self-motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, Dörnyei & Muir, 2019). Thus, it was concluded that attending to emotions is important for both learner autonomy and L2 motivation since autonomous learners are simultaneously motivated learners (e.g., Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dickinson, 1995; Ushioda, 1996). However, there is a gap in the literature showing how motivated learners manage their emotions; respond to negative emotions and foster positive ones. This lack of empirical studies is in line with the lack of theoretical conceptualisation as to the link between emotions and motivation. A growing number of researchers have begun to realize the importance of integrating emotions into L2 motivation models to better understand motivation in language learning processes (e.ge., Al-Hoorie, 2017; López & Aguilar, 2013; MacIntyre et al., 2009; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Maehr, 2001; Ross, 2015; Teimouri, 2017).

Maehr (2001), for example, maintains that "the focus on self and self-worth reinforces the need to rediscover the role of the emotions in motivation" (p. 184). Teimouri (2017) contends that the inclusion of emotions in the L2MSS model as mediating factors would increase the understanding of learners' motivational processes. López and Aguilar (2013) also point out that motivational theories, namely self-worth theory, self-efficacy, self-determination theory and attribution theory, "imply an array of emotions and feelings aroused in intra- and interpersonal interactions" (p. 112). They conducted a study to examine the effects of emotions experienced during classroom instruction on the motivation of undergraduate EFL Mexican learners. Participants produced personal narratives at the beginning of their study, reported their emotional experiences in the classroom over 12 weeks using an emotional reaction journal and sat semi-structured interviews to elicit in-depth accounts of their emotional experiences. Their study reported that their informants experienced a diverse range of both negative and positive emotions and these were found to have a crucial impact on

learners' motivational behaviours. For instance, some learners reported that experiencing a negative emotion made them reflect and adopt learning strategies to prevent themselves from enduring negative emotions in the future. López and Aguilar (2013) argue that the reflection process, induced by writing the emotional reaction journal, involved an attribution stage, where learners understood the causes of their emotions. The study reported that most of the participants used emotional self-regulation and self-encouragement to keep themselves motivated. The study concluded that "motivation in language learning cannot be developed in a vacuum; certain conditions need to be present before motivation can be initiated. Language learning is a process replete with negative and positive emotions, thus appropriate management of students' emotions is necessary" (p. 220). López and Aguilar recommend the creation of positive learning environment, consisting of group cohesion, quality teacher-student relations and the fostering of interest to create a motivating learning atmosphere.

MacIntyre and Vincze (2017) conducted a quantitative study to examine the link between a range of negative and positive emotions and key motivational constructs in SLA, namely, Gardner's (2010) socio-educational model, Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS and Clément's (1980, 1986) socio-contextual model. Based on these motivational constructs, 11 motivational variables were generated, including competence, confidence, quality of contact, effort, ideal self, ought-to self, anxiety, integrative, acculturation, quantity of contact and instrumental. These variables were examined against 19 emotions by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed by secondary school Italian speakers learning German. The results showed that emotions were strongly associated with motivational variables, especially positive emotions. The experience of positive emotions in learning situations appears to support the initiating and sustaining of the motivational process. The findings suggest that emotions appear to have a role in sustaining motivation in language learning. Based on their results, MacIntyre and Vincze (2017) contend that "the study of emotion in SLA in general, and positive emotion in particular, is a potentially rich and powerful avenue for future investigations…positive and negative emotions interact and … correlate well with language learning motivation" (p. 82-3).

Ross (2015) also argues that emotions have been significantly neglected in SLA research. His study aimed at gaining understanding of the nature and range of emotions experienced by international language learners in an Australian university and on their impact on language learning. This was achieved through a series of semi-structured interviews in which he gained detailed accounts from learners of their emotional experiences. Second, he explored the features of the relationship between ESL learners' emotions and motivation through conducting two questionnaires, one developed based on the emotions emerging from the

interviews and the second based on Dörnyei's ideal L2 self. The findings confirmed that emotions have a significant impact on the ideal L2 selves of language learners. Learners connected their emotional experiences to a wide range of aspects of their lives. Emotional experiences are present, and they impact the images of the ideal self. Ross also agrees on the use of the reflection technique to aid learners to understand their emotions as well as collaborative learning approaches for fostering emotional engagement. For practical classroom-based suggestions, Ross proposes that learners utilize emotional intelligence as a source for reinforcing motivation and pursuing of their ideal L2 self.

Based on the above-mentioned studies, it is clear that there is a growing interest in understanding the connection between emotions and L2 motivation and in nurturing strategies for emotional awareness and management in learners for effective and motivating learning. Taking into account L2 motivation theoretical frameworks are not suitable to interpret and understand the emotions-related themes of the present study, in the following sections, I will review a number of constructs that will aid in understanding the connection between emotions and motivation in relation to the self and in understanding the emotional strategies/skills used by autonomous and motivated learners of the present study. The reviewed constructs include the possible selves theory (Markus & Nurrius, 1986), the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), both from social psychology, the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000) from educational psychology and the construct of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006) from positive psychology.

I will begin by presenting the constructs of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and future-self guides of the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). The L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005) derives its theoretical basis from these two constructs as explained in section 3.2.

3.5.1 Possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986)

Markus and Nurius (1986) proposed the concept of possible selves as a domain of self-knowledge. This domain of self-knowledge is about

> how individuals think about their potential and about their future. Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming. The possible selves that are hoped for might include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self, whereas the dreaded possible selves could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self. (p. 954)

The possible selves are not just a set of imaginations about possible different states of the self; the possible selves differ from the current self. They are internalized hopes, fears and

goals. They are social constructions; they are the direct product of social comparisons in which the person compares his/her own characteristics, behaviours, feeling and thoughts with those of remarkable persons in his/her social context. In these comparisons, the person aspires to become what the remarkable persons in his/her social context are now. Markus and Nurius (1986) explain that the self-concept is "a complex dynamic phenomenon" (p. 957) that extends beyond the boundaries of the present time; it encompasses the past, the present and the future. A person can have multiple possible selves that derive from representations of the self in the past and the future. The individual's socio-cultural and historical contexts, immediate social experiences as well as the media provides models, images and symbols from which the person envisages his/her possible selves. Given this, the possible selves are changing, dynamic, constructed and impacted by changing social influences. Some aspects of the past self also shape a future possible self. Positive/successful aspects of past selves might be translated into a desire to acquire these aspects in a future self. Similarly, negative/unwanted aspects of the past self might result in avoiding and resisting behaviours against such a feared future self.

Markus and Nurius (1986) explain that the self-concept is a system made up of both affective and cognitive schemas (also called structures and theories) about the self "that lends structure and coherence to the individual's self-relevant experiences" (p. 955). The schemas are constructed from past experiences and have a number of influences on the self-concept. The schemas, as shown by empirical evidence, are "the most important in the psychological field" (p. 955). They influence information processing about the self, shape the way we interpret the world, regulate the individuals' behaviour through determining which stimuli the individual pays attention to and remembers, and what kinds of inferences he/she draws.

Markus and Nurius (1986) distinguish between the general self-concept, which is "a single, generalized view of the self" (p. 957), and **the working self-concept**. They explain that a person does not process his/her self-concept as a whole at any given time; the whole knowledge of the self will not be available in memory and thought all at once. Rather, the person will process only specific arrays of his/her self-concept (specific information) at any given time. Different internal states and different social circumstances activate certain arrays of self-concept and make them present in memory and thought. With regards to the content of the working self-concept, Markus and Nurius explain that it

> depends on what self-conceptions have been active just before, on what has been elicited or made dominant by the particular social environment, and on what has been more purposefully invoked by the individual in response to a given experience, event, or situation. (p. 957)

Some arrays of self-concepts are more activated than others. This depends on their

importance, relevance to the core self such as "attributed characteristics, major roles and memberships" (p. 957) as well as on the social influences and the individual's affective and motivational states. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), possible selves have two important functions. Firstly, they represent to the individual what is possible for he/she to achieve or be and thus they function as motivators for selecting and directing future behaviour. The possible selves need to be elaborated, envisaged and "accompanied by specific plans and strategies" (p. 961) for realizing them. Secondly, they function as an evaluative measurement against which the individual assesses his/her current self in terms of abilities, attributes and actions. Possible selves give context of meaning to the "now self". For instance, a possible ill self will greatly influence the feelings and actions of the current self.

To sum up the role of emotions in the discussion offered by Markus and Nurius, emotions are presented in terms of affective schemas. Affective schemas (information about past emotional experiences) occupy a central position in the self-concept, which is a system made up of cognitive-affective schemas. This is in line with previous research as noted by Markus and Nurisus (1986) (e.g., Bower, 1981; Clark & Isen, 1982; Salovey & Rodin, 1985) that contends that for each self-conception there is a particular affect attached to it. Markus & Nurius (1986) refer briefly to the affect control theory (Heise, 1977), which stipulates that "identities are accompanied by particular feelings that serve as guidelines for interpreting and creating events" (p. 958) and that individuals behave to maintain feelings associated with a particular identity.

The following excerpt from Robinson et al. (2006) highlights the main tenets of Heise's affect control theory:

> Heise's work has become a central part of the new sociology of emotions for three main reasons. First, one of the theory's fundamental assumptions is that cognitive understandings of social interaction around us cannot be separated from our affective reactions to them. Every cognitive label—every way that we think or talk about our social life—brings with it an affective meaning. Affect is irrevocably linked to all of our thoughts, identities, and actions. Second, the core affect control principle is that people act to maintain the affective meanings that are evoked by a definition of the situation. Therefore, affect control theory makes *the control of affect* (italics added) the key feature underlying social life. (p. 179)

To summarize the role of emotions as applied by affective schemas we can draw the following conclusions:

- Emotions participate along with cognition in the construction of the self-concept and the various domains of the self-concept including possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958).

- Emotions influence the way we perceive and evaluate ourselves and the way we

understand and interpret the world because they are an integral part of the self-concept in its single generalized meaning and its collective meaning (i.e. various arrays of self-concepts) (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955).

- Emotions can be the direct trigger for activating specific arrays of the self-concept (i.e. a particular working self-concept) (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 957).

- Emotions can also play an indirect role in activating specific arrays of the self-concept (i.e. a particular working self-concept) through their interpretive role of external stimuli (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955).

- Emotions will also accompany the activated arrays of self-concepts including possible selves because for each self-concept there is a particular affect attached to it (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958).

- Emotions then influence the subsequent decision-making and behaviour resulting from activating a specific self-concept. To illustrate, when a negative or a positive possible self is activated it triggers with it a related affect, which impacts on the form and content of behaviour to follow; "[a particular affect], in turn, can have a marked impact on the form and content of subsequent behavior" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958). This view is supported by affect control theory as individuals "respond affectively to every social event" (Robinson et al., 2006, p. 182) and individuals are motivated to take an action "to maintain an "equilibrium" in the [affective] meanings they assign to an interaction" (Robinson et al., 2006, p. 180).

- Further, affect is generated because of conflicts or discrepancies within the self-concept. The possibility or the impossibility of resolving discrepancies will accordingly generate positive or negative emotions in the individual (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958)

So we see that the role of emotions is cyclical, interwoven, complex and that emotions operate at multiple levels. Emotions have a complex and extensive role in the creation and activation of possible selves and in how an individual evaluates the possible selves and how the individual approaches or avoids these possible selves. And as stated by Markus and Nurius (1986), "a focus on possible selves is broadly construed as an effort to tie self-cognition to motivation, *but* as a consequence *it also relates self-cognitions to self-feelings or affect*" (italics added) (p. 958). Thus, investigations into possible selves are not only aimed at understanding how self-cognition triggers motivation, but possible selves also explain how self-cognition and affect are related. In conclusion, as the self-concept is a system made up of cognitive and affective schemas (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955) and as possible selves are also a domain of the self-concept, then possible selves are also made up of cognitive and

affective schemas whose construction, activation and evaluation (their appraisals) is the function of both cognition and affect.

3.5.2 Self-discrepancy theory for relating self and affect (Higgins, 1987)

The second theoretical basis for the L2MSS model is the self-discrepancy theory for relating self and affect (Higgins, 1987). As the name states this theory relates self to affect. Self-discrepancy refers to the discrepancy between the actual attributes a person possesses and the attributes a person aspires/wishes/hopes to possess and/or the attributes he thinks he ought to possess. The primary focus of this theory is to investigate which types of self-discrepancies will induce which kinds of negative emotions. More specifically, it investigates how two clusters of negative emotions emerge as a result of different types of self-discrepancies. According to the theory, when there is a discrepancy between the actual and the desired attributes the individual is likely to suffer from "negative psychological situations" (p. 322). These include dejection-related emotions such as sadness, dissatisfaction, disappointment, depression and shame and/or agitation-related emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, resentment and guilt. According to the theory, the self-concept has three basic representations:

(a) **the actual self:** representation of the attributes one actually possesses,

(b) **the ideal self:** representation of the attributes one ideally aspires, wishes or hopes to possess.

c) **the ought self:** representation of the attributes one thinks he/she is ought to possess.

These attributes are relevant to a sense of duty, obligations and morals.

It was mentioned earlier that possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which are equivalent to ideal and ought selves (Higgins, 1987), are socially constructed, meaning that they derive their meaning and value from the interaction between the self and the social context. Higgins (1987) also contends it is critical to distinguish whether the self-representations are judged from a personal standpoint or from the standpoint of a significant other such as a parent, teacher, friend, etc. Considering the actual, ideal and ought selves from the standpoints of "own" and "other" results in six types of self-representation, as follows:

- **actual/own**   constitutes a person's self concept
- **actual/other**

_____

- **ideal/own**
- **ideal/other**   are called **self-guides** and function as self-directive standards against which a person compares his/her actual self-representation
- **ought/own**
- **ought/other**

It was mentioned in section 3.2 that in the L2MSS model the ideal L2 self refers to the personal aspirations of the individual **(ideal/own)** whereas the ought-to L2 self represents the wishes of others **(ought-to/other)**. The L2MSS model does not include the two other self-representations by Higgins, namely the **ideal/other and the ought/own**. Dörnyei (2009b) explains this omission:

> In his 1987 paper Higgins points out that both the ideal and the ought selves can derive from either the individual's own or someone else's views, which means that the ideal self might represent attributes that another person would like the individual to possess in an ideal case. However, because it is not clear how this meaning would be different from an ought self, it has typically not been included in subsequent uses of the term, and the ideal sense has been usually interpreted in the literature as the individual's own vision for him/herself, while the ought self as someone else's vision for the individual. (p. 13-4)

This reduced version of the original model proposed by Higgins in which he makes both the individual and others sources for feeding both ideal and ought selves appears to have generated some confusion in the L2 motivation literature. A number of studies reported difficulties in distinguishing ideal L2 and ought-to selves (e.g., Asker, 2012, Csizér and Kormos, 2008; Kim, 2009, Taguchi et al, 2009). Papi et al. (2018) suggest the importance of including the original four components proposed by Higgins.

The L2MSS model defines the **ought-to self** as concerned with extrinsic, less internalised, instrumental motives. Whereas according to Higgins **the ought self** could be internally or externally constructed. Higgins (1987) argues that different judging standpoints of "own" and "other" produce different clusters of negative emotions and motivational experiences for self-discrepancies. He explains that other research has also used the notions of "own" and "other" to classify emotions and motivations (e.g., Dahl, 1979; Freud, 1915/1957; Buss, 1980; Scheier & Carver, 1983).

3.5.2.1 The assumptions of Higgins' theory of self-discrepancy

The theory stipulates that people compare their own self-concepts (actual/own and actual/other) against ideal and ought representations of the self (also called **self-guides**) they aspire to or ought to acquire. Self-discrepancies refer to the mismatches between the actual self and the desired self-guides. The discrepancy between the actual self and the self-guides is predicted to have both emotional and motivational effects.

Higgins (1987) also explains that self-discrepancies are cognitive constructs and for them to be able to exert their impact and induce emotions two conditions must be met: availability and accessibility. First, self-discrepancies need to be present and available in the memory

(**availability**). Second, self-discrepancies need to be used in thinking (information processing) (**accessibility**). According to Higgins, individual differences are the result of the differences of cognitive constructs available and the way individuals process them. This corresponds to what Markus and Nurius (1986) referred to as **the working self-concept** that is available in memory and thought (discussed in 3.3.3). Further, according to Higgins, social contexts provide the individual with various stimuli that can activate related cognitive constructs, including self-discrepancies. This point is also congruent with Markus and Nurius' view that the social context can be a source for activating a particular array of **the working self-concept**.

3.5.2.2 The impact of self-discrepancies

Each type of self-discrepancy is assumed to induce a specific type of "negative psychological situation that is associated with specific emotional/motivational problems" (p. 322). Higgins relates his theory to other theories that share the view that self-discrepancies cause emotional problems (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958; Holt, 1976; Kemper, 1978; Plutchik, 1962; Schlenker, 1985). Negative psychological situations are the result of both external events, and the way individuals interpret these events. Negative psychological situation can be classified into two basic types:

- **the absence of positive outcomes**, whether actual or expected. This type is connected with dejection-related emotions.
- **the presence of negative outcomes**, whether actual or expected. This type is connected with agitation-related emotions.

The theory is used to investigate what types of emotional problems/discomforts result from experiencing different types of self-discrepancies. More specifically, the theory provides predictions mainly on the emotional effects. It addresses four scenarios of self-discrepancies as explained below.

1) **actual/own versus ideal/own**: in this type of discrepancy the individual is predicted to suffer from dejection-related emotions (sadness, disappointment, dissatisfaction) because of the absence of positive outcomes such as the nonattainment of personal hopes.

2) **actual/own versus ideal/other**: in this type of discrepancy the individual is predicted to suffer from dejection-related emotions (shame, embarrassment) because of the absence of positive outcomes such as the nonattainment of others' expectations.

3) **actual/own versus ought/own**: in this type of discrepancy the individual is predicted to suffer from agitation-related emotions (uneasiness, guilt, self-contempt) because of the presence of negative outcomes such as the readiness for self-punishment.

4) **actual/own versus ought/other**: in this type of discrepancy the individual is predicted

to suffer from agitation-related emotions (fear, anxiety, stress) because of the presence of negative outcomes such punishment, judgment or degradation.

From a motivational perspective, the theory proposes that individuals are motivated to take action to make the actual self-representations (self-concept) match their self-guides (ideal and/or ought). This part of the theory is the focus of interest of the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005/2009); L2 motivation occurs when the L2 learner perceives a discrepancy between his actual L2 self and the L2 ideal or L2 ought-to selves and as a result the L2 learner is predicted to be motivated to reach the desired L2 self. Further, the L2MSS model assumes that the motivational tool is the function of vivid images of self-guides (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Dörnyei (2009b) explains that:

> the main personal attraction of possible selves theory for me lay in its imagery component. Language learning is a sustained and often tedious process with lots of temporary ups and downs, and I felt that the secret of successful learners was their possession of a superordinate vision that kept them on track. Indeed, language learning can be compared in many ways to the training of professional athletes, and the literature is very clear about the fact that a successful sports career is often motivated by imagery and vision. (p. 29)

However, for Higgins (1987) the motivational power that initiates and sustains action to make the actual self match the desired self-guide does not lie in the self guides, but rather in the negative emotions associated with negative psychological situations resulted from self-discrepancies. Higgins (1987) explains that:

> If children believe that it is essential to meet their parents' guides to avoid experiencing a negative psychological situation, then a failure to do so (as reflected in a discrepancy between their current state and the end-state represented by their parents' guides for them) is likely to induce intense emotional discomfort. In order to avoid this intense pain, the child must attempt to meet the parents' guides, which requires in turn that the child monitor his or her progress toward meeting the guide. Such monitoring involves comparing a current performance or attribute to the standard represented by the guide.

According to Higgins then, the desire to avoid emotional pain and discomfort motivates a child to take action to achieve his parents' guides and to monitor his progress by comparing his/her current attributes with the guide. Making progress (motivated action) is then a requirement for avoiding emotional discomfort. Therefore, the motivational power is not in the guide, but it stems from the negative emotions experienced or expected to be experienced by the child.

To sum up the sections reviewing the theoretical basis of the L2MSS model, the L2MSS model (2005/2009b) incorporated from Higgins (1987) the concepts of "ideal self", "ought self" and "self-guides" (equal to possible selves by Markus and Nurius (1986)) and the

assumption that motivation occurs as a desire to make the actual self match a self-guide. As for the possible selves construct (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the L2MSS model incorporated the imagery component in a possible self, which is assumed to have a central role in creating the motivational component of a possible self. Both views of Higgins and Markus and Nurius attribute the activation of possible selves or self-guides in thought (cognitive processing) to social factors. The way individuals perceive themselves (self-concept) and the way individuals perceive their possible selves or self-guides is attributed to social factors and the way the individual interprets these social factors. For the interpreting process, the individual uses his/her cognitive-affective schemas. Thus, the possible selves (Markus & Nurius) and the self-guides (Higgins) are social, emotional and cognitive artefacts.

Where motivation is concerned, by contrast, there is the motivational power of negative emotions caused by self-discrepancies between the actual self and self-guides (Higgins, 1987) versus the motivational power of vividly imagined possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Thus, it appears worth investigating whether it is the vivid images of desired selves that cause motivated behaviour or the emotions associated with the desired selves. The present study will attempt to investigate this issue.

3.5.3 The control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000)

This theory originates in the field of educational psychology and is interested in understanding the role of emotions in learning. According to Pekrun (2006), "self-related and situational appraisals are assumed to be important proximal determinants of human emotions" (p. 317). Hence this theory is based on the assumption that appraisals of value of and control over a learning activity are central to the arousal of achievement emotions. Achievement is defined "simply as the quality of activities or their outcomes as evaluated by some standard of excellence" (Heckhausen, 1991, as cited in Pekrun et al., 2007, p. 15). Achievement emotions refer to emotions induced by achievement activities or achievement outcomes.

Control-value theory classifies emotions in term of their **valence** (negative vs. positive and pleasant vs. unpleasant) and **activation** (activating vs. deactivating). Activation degree means that some emotions have an activating impact, causing an individual to take action such as enjoyment, hope, pride, gratitude, anger, frustration, anxiety and shame. Deactivating emotions such as relief, contentment, boredom, hopelessness, sadness and disappointment cause an individual to relax. For example, relief is a positive emotion but has a deactivating effect. In contrast, anxiety is a negative emotion but has an activating effect. This theory shows a connection between emotions and motivation to take action.

The major assumption of the theory is that "**appraisals** of ongoing achievement activities, and their past and future outcomes" (p. 16) are the source for arousing of achievement

emotions. Appraisals involve individuals assessing their control over achievement activities and outcomes (control appraisal) in addition to assessing the value of achievement to them (value appraisal). Accordingly, both control appraisals and value appraisals are key determinants in the arousal of achievement emotions. For instance, for the **outcome in prospective** situation, if a student values an upcoming exam positively as important and he/she has high control over the exam then the theory predicts that the student will experience an anticipatory joy. Similarly, if he/she values positively an upcoming exam but has medium control he/she is likely to experience anxiety. For **the outcome in retrospective** situation, for example, if the student attributes a previous success he/she values to him/her self, he/she is likely to experience pride. If he /she attributes the success he/she values to others, he/ she is likely to experience gratitude to them. Similarly, if the student attributes a previous failure to him/her self, he /she is likely to experience shame. If he /she attributes the failure to others, he/she is likely to experience anger towards them. When the **activity** is the object focus, if the student has a high control over an activity he/she positively values, he/she is predicted to experience enjoyment. If he/she has low control over an activity, he/she is predicted to experience frustration whether he/she positively or negatively values the activity.

The control-value theory of achievement emotions draws its theoretical basis from a number of constructs from a variety of theories on emotions. According to Pekrun (2006), these include "the expectancy-value theories of emotions (Pekrun, 1984, 1988, 1992a; Turner & Schallert, 2001), transactional theories of stress appraisals and related emotions (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), theories of perceived control (Patrick, Skinner & Connell1993; Perry, 1991, 2003), attributional theories of achievement emotions (Weiner, 1985) and models addressing the effects of emotions on learning and performance (Fredrickson, 2001; Pekrun, 1992b; Pekrun et al 2002a; Zeidner, 1998, 2007)" (p. 14).

The theoretical basis of the assumptions of the theory is similar to that of key theoretical frameworks in L2 Motivation. The expectancy-value theory, in which the individual assesses the value of the activity and the control he/she has over an activity, was one of the influential L2 motivation theories during the cognitive-situated period. Appraisals are also present in the self-discrepancy theory and the L2MSS model, in which the individual appraises his/her current self and the future self he/she wishes to become as well as appraises the discrepancy between the two selves.

Further, it was identified earlier that for the current models and approaches to L2 motivation research, emotions of joy and enjoyment result from being engaged in an activity and experiencing positive future visions of the self. These views are in harmony with the assumptions of the control-value theory in that both anticipatory joy and enjoyment result

when the student has high control over the activity and positively values the outcome, which is the case for a highly motivated learner. Additionally, the theory highlights that joy and enjoyment are activating emotions; they motivate one to take an action. Whereas emotions are addressed very briefly in current models of L2 motivation, the control-value theory provides a more comprehensive conceptualisation on the arousal of positive and negative emotions in relation to activating motivation to take an action.

Pekrun et al. (2002, p. 92) outline achievement emotions related to success and failure in learning activities and their outcome. These include positive and negative emotions that are likely to be experienced in learning situations in relation to the learning process and social relations.

Table 3.2 Example of the domains of academic emotions (Pekrun et al., 2002, p. 92)

Positive	*Negative*
Enjoyment	Boredom
Anticipatory Joy	Hopelessness
Hope	Anxiety
Joy about success	Sadness
Satisfaction	Disappointment
Pride	Shame and guilt
Gratitude	Anger
Empathy	Jealousy and envy
Admiration	Contempt
Sympathy and love	Antipathy and hate

The control-value theory first included the appraisals of the learning activities and their outcomes. Later, it was expanded to include self-related and task-related appraisals as well as appraisals of the process of learning and social factors (Pekrun et al. (2002). Whereas the focus in the L2MMS model is on appraisals of the self and a future self and the discrepancy between the two, the control-value theory relates appraisals of self-related, task-related and social factors and the learning process to the arousal of emotions, which in return have either an activating or deactivating impact on motivation.

The control-value theory identifies a number of factors affecting the appraising process, including distal individual antecedents (individual achievement goals, achievement-related control and value beliefs), non-cognitive factors (including genetic dispositions and physiologically bound temperaments), classroom interaction, social environments, and the broader socio-historical context. This view is also in harmony with the view of Markus and

Nurius (1986) and Higgins (1987) in acknowledging the influences of the social environment as well as the individual's agency in impacting the appraising process and the invoking of a particular self-concept (cognitive-affective schemas) in memory and thought. Pekrun et al. (2007) argues that the control-value theory has important pedagogical implications. Emotionally positive environments are extremely important for learners in relation to motivation, interest, creative problem solving and academic achievement. Pekrun et al. (2007) recommends developing intervention programmes to foster in learners skills of self-regulation of emotions through skills for regulating appraisals of learning activities and learning outcomes, which will have positive impacts on motivation. These views are in line with the views of learner autonomy models in that affective strategies are important for autonomous and motivated learning.

3.5.4 Emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006)

It was mentioned earlier that the aim of this part is to review theoretical constructs that will aid us in understanding a) the connection between emotions and motivation from a self-based perspective, and b) the variation in learners' emotional responses and their subsequent behaviours in the present dataset. To achieve the first aim, the first sections of this part reviewed the constructs of possible selves, self-discrepancy theory and the control-value theory of achievement emotions. In an attempt to understand the differences in learners' emotional reactions to their learning struggles as well their learning, collaborative and social practices, this section will utilize the construct of emotional intelligence (henceforth EI); specifically, the Bar-On model (2006/2015). It is vital for the present study to understand the differences in learners' emotional reactions and subsequent behaviours for two reasons. First, the present dataset is replete with emotions-related findings. One key finding is that learners of the present study display various emotional reactions followed by varying learning behaviours. Understanding these differences is vital for understanding the evolution and development of LGMs as well as the dynamics of the online community. Second, part 2 of this chapter concluded that both autonomous and self-motivated learners use emotional strategies to support their autonomy and L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, Dörnyei & Muir, 2019; Murase, 2015; Oxford, 1990, 2003). Hence, there is also a need to understand the emotional dimension of the motivated and autonomous learners of the present study, which will add insight as to the connections between emotions, L2 motivation and learning autonomy. Before reviewing the construct of EI, I would like to present a brief review of the use of EI in the literature on language learning, discussed below.

3.5.4.1 Emotional intelligence in SLA positive psychology

Part 1 of this chapter reviewed the recent growing interest in emotions and in applying the

principles of positive psychology for fostering positive emotions in language learning contexts. EI is one of the applications of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002). Since the present study overlaps with numerous themes of positive psychology (section 3.1) then the review of EI is appropriate. Several studies investigated EI and found it beneficial for language teaching and learning. The construct of EI has been drawn on because of its mooted role in reducing learning difficulties in educational settings and in maintaining an emotionally healthy environment for learners and teachers in order to promote effective performance. Oxford (2015), for instance, holds the view that EI is "an important factor in language learning" (p. 17). Dewaele (2018) reported that EFL teachers with sufficient EI could effectively manage their emotions as well as their students' emotions. Gregersen et al. (2014) found that the participants who scored higher on the attainment of their ideal selves (the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005) were utilizing EI to manage negative emotions and foster positive ones. Gkonou and Mercer (2017) maintain that EI is a core competency for language teachers.

3.5.5 Emotional intelligence: Definition and significance

Since the publication of Goleman's bestselling book "Emotional Intelligence" in 1995, the concept of EI has captured, over two decades, substantial attention from researchers in various disciplines and scientific circles including psychology, education, higher education, language learning, management studies, artificial intelligence, child-rearing, adolescent behaviour, family dynamics, work performance, human resources, counselling, healthcare, politics and personal growth, to mention a few (Bar-On, 2006; Dewaele et al., 2008; Di Fabio et al., 2012; James, 2014; Pishghadam, 2009; Salovey et al., 2008; Shao et al., 2013a).

According to Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) EI is "the set of abilities (verbal and non-verbal) that enable a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own and others' emotions in order to guide thinking and action that successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 72). This intelligence is different from cognitive abilities that are tested by IQ tests. Goleman (1995) refers to several studies in which individuals with formidable intellectual or academic abilities "were not particularly successful compared to their lower-scoring peers in terms of salary, productivity, or status in their fields" (p. 35), nor had they achieved any particular success in terms of life satisfaction, happiness or relationships. EI was thus viewed as a more powerful and, most importantly, a reachable type of intelligence rather than the more rigid cognitive intelligence. EI research has resulted in a growing belief that EI could play an important role in making individuals more happy, successful and productive. For instance, Bar-On (1997) agrees that emotional and social intelligences have greater potential to predict success in life than IQ does. The findings of six

studies conducted on workplace performance showed that EQ (emotional quotient, another term for EI) accounts for 30% of performance, which is five times more than cognitive intelligence, as revealed by an extensive meta-analysis by Wagner (1997). In another study, it was found that EI has the potential to account for variances affecting success that cannot be measured by IQ tests alone (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003).

3.5.6 Models of EI

Interest in EI has generated several models to understand and measure EI competencies in individuals. According to most classifications by researchers, EI models fall under three types: the ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), the mixed model (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 1997/2006/2015) and the trait model (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Although these models agree that EI has considerable importance in the individual's success, they differ in terms of their conceptualisation and measurements.

For the purpose of the present study, I shall employ the Bar-On model (2006/2015), detailed in 3.5.6.3.2 Therefore, I shall give a more detailed review of this model and provide brief reviews of other models.

3.5.6.1 The ability model: the Salovey-Mayer model (1990)

The Salovey-Mayer model defines EI as "the ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem-solving and to focus energy on required behaviours" (Salovey et al., 2008, p. 185). This emotional ability is comprised of four branches of abilities: the ability to perceive emotions, the ability to use emotions, the ability to understand emotions and the ability to manage emotions. These abilities are argued to be more important than mental abilities in acquiring success in life, home, education or workplace. However, unlike other EI models, the ability model insists that EI is a cognitive ability that can be scientifically tested, thus it measures the four branches of EI through an ability-based test.

3.5.6.2 The trait model: Petrides & Furnham (2001/2003)

Petrides and Furnham (2001), based on a content analysis of models proposed by Bar-On (1997), Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Mayer (1990), identified a number of facets, which are the components of their trait model. However, they emphasize that their model conceptualises EI as a personality trait, "not distinct from personality constructs, but part of them" (p. 5). Petrides and Furnham claim that their model is the only EI model that can provide psychological explanations that fit within the existing taxonomies of personality. Their trait EI model consists of 15 facets that include: Adaptability, Assertiveness, Emotion Expression, Emotional Perception (self and others), Emotion Regulation, Impulsiveness,

Relationships, Self-esteem, Self-motivation, Social Awareness, Stress Management, Trait Empathy, Trait Happiness, and Trait Optimism. Their EI model EI is measured through self-report.

3.5.6.3 The mixed model: the Goleman and Bar-On models

Goleman's (1995) model views EI as a combination of cognitive and affective skills, whereas Bar-On's model (1997/2006/2015) views EI as a combination of emotional and social skills.

3.5.6.3.1 The Goleman model (1995)

According to Goleman (2000), EI is human abilities that lie "between the mind and heart, or more technically, between cognition and emotion. Some [human] abilities are purely cognitive, like IQ or technical expertise. Other abilities integrate thought and feeling and fall within the domain of emotional intelligence" (p. 1). Therefore, Goleman does not perceive EI as a cognitive ability like the ability model, nor a personal tendency like the trait model. The mixed model of Goleman perceives EI as an integration between cognition and emotion that results in EI skills.

Goleman places his model under the theory of performance, with a particular applicability to the work setting. He first introduced a theoretical framework in his book (1998) and then developed an EI model with a focus on organizational settings. His model comprises four clusters: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management and Relationship Management and is measured by using a combination of self-assessment and multiple raters questionnaires (feedback from multiple people).

3.5.6.3.2 The Bar-On model (1997, 2006, 2015)

Bar-On (2006) declared that he prefers to call EI emotional-social intelligence, because of the strong interrelation between emotional and social skills in human behaviour. However, in all publications since 2007, Bar-On has used the term emotional intelligence to refer to his model. For Bar-On (2006) emotional-social intelligence is a "cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands" (p. 3). Bar-On's model derived its theoretical foundation from a number of works, including Darwin's observations on the role of emotional expression in survival and adaptation, Thorndike's views on social intelligence and its impact on human behaviour (1920), Wechsler's concept of intelligent behaviour and the role of non-cognitive factors in shaping intelligent behaviour (1940, 1943), as well as later findings of research on alexithymia (Sifneos, 1967) and psychological mindedness (Appelbaum, 1973). Bar-On's

model identifies five areas of competencies, skills and facilitators that were proposed by previous contributors to the emotional-social intelligence literature. According to Bar-On, these five areas are vital to face daily pressures and challenges. These areas are Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability and General Mood. The following table shows the competencies/skills under each area.

Table 3.3 Bar-On's EI model (Bar-On, 2006, p. 21)

EI Areas	EI Skills
Intrapersonal	▪ Self-Regard ▪ Emotional Self-Awareness ▪ Assertiveness ▪ Independence ▪ Self-Actualization
Interpersonal	▪ Empathy ▪ Social Responsibility ▪ Interpersonal Relationship
Stress Management	▪ Stress Tolerance ▪ Impulse Control
Adaptability	▪ Reality-Testing ▪ Flexibility ▪ Problem-Solving
General Mood	▪ Optimism ▪ Happiness

Bar-On (2006) claims that EI skills can be increased within a few weeks with training. He believes this is a distinct property of emotional intelligence, for cognitive competences and personality traits do not show such a great degree of malleability (2006). In addition, neurological research constitutes strong support for the existence of EI and for Bar-On's model particularly. Studies have shown that neural centres responsible for EI and IQ skills are located in different parts of the brain (Bar-On et al., 2003), which distinguishes emotional intelligence from cognitive intelligence.

Bar-On developed the Emotional Quotient Inventory (the EQ-i) to measure properties of emotional-social intelligence. The EQ-i is the first inventory of its kind and the most widely used. Bar-On explains that his model and its measure were developed and moulded over two decades (2006). A considerable number of reliability and validity studies were conducted worldwide with the participation of large populations of various ethnicities (for extensive details, see Bar-On, 2006).

For the purpose of the present study, I shall utilize the Bar-On model (2006/2015) for data interpretation. The Salovey-Mayer ability model is perceived to be measured by mental processes, which does not suit the design of the present study as I shall examine practices of

learners and not mental processes. The Goleman model is more oriented towards work settings. The trait model perceives EI skills as personal traits that are less malleable, which is unlike the Bar-On model with its conceptualisation of EI as a set of competencies and skills that can be learned and acquired over time. Thus, the Bar-On model seems the most appropriate EI model for the present study, given my focus on learning and education.

3.6 EI and language learning

Since early conceptualisations of EI, there has been an extensive body of research on the role of EI in educational settings (e.g., Downey et al., 2008; Golden, 2014; Goodwin, 2016; James, 2014; Parker et al., 2004); and indeed it appears that more recent EFL research is showing an increasing interest in utilizing EI to address emotional issues that are said to have an impact on language learning (e.g., Balasubramanian & Al-Mahrooqi, 2016; Genç et al., 2016; Mehdiabadi & Arabmofrad, 2014; Pishghadam, 2009; Shao et al., 2013a; Oz et al., 2015).

Pishghadam (2009) explains that the strong relationship between language learning and EI is not surprising, as learning a language demands effort and is full of stress and pressure, especially in some learning contexts where learners may be subject to lots of pressures by the teaching methods or the institutional requirements for success. Therefore, it is of great importance to consider EI skills and competencies in such learning contexts. In sum, EI is believed to control EFL anxiety and improve learning experiences.

Nonetheless, in spite of the growing interest in EI in the EFL context, EI in this particular field is still under-researched (Motallebzadeh, 2009; Niroomand et al., 2014). Employing mainly quantitative methods, EFL researchers have approached EI from a variety of issues, including the relationship between language skills and EI and the ability to develop EI skills in learners. In what follows I shall review some of these studies, highlighting their main purposes and relevance to language learning.

3.6.1 EI and academic success

This is an early type of EI study, which has been widely conducted in educational research (James, 2014). In this type of study, researchers examined whether there is a connection between EI and academic success, either in schools or in higher education, by comparing learners' academic achievement over a period of study and their EI assessments. Usually in these studies, the GPA, grades record or test results are viewed as the determinant of academic success. Numerous non-EFL studies have shown that EI has a significant influence on students' academic achievement (e.g., Barchard, 2003; MacCann et al., 2011; Parker et al., 2004; Qualter et al., 2012). Such positive findings support the predictive validity of EI (Abdolrezapour & Tavakoli, 2012, James, 2014), making it a useful tool for educational

settings to identify successful learners and those who need additional support (Sai & Lin, 2011).

The early EI studies in EFL contexts followed this line of research in an attempt to examine the role of EI in foreign language learning and to determine whether learners with high levels of EI would show more success in L2 learning. Findings have supported the positive influence of EI on academic achievement as EFL learners with high results in EI have been shown to achieve higher marks in their academic studies (e.g., Aki, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Pishghadam, 2009; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011).

In a study by Balasubramanian and Al-Mahrooqi (2016), in the Omani context, the authors aimed to determine the levels of EI of Omani students and whether doing so can help explain students' poor language proficiency. It was revealed that Omani students suffered from an inability to take care of their personal affairs, for instance, managing their time and solving their problems, an inability to deal with other people and an inability to cope with the greater demands of university classes compared to secondary school, all of which are linked to the lack of sufficient EI skills. This study is highly relevant to the current study. Despite the similarity between both teaching contexts in terms of an overemphasis on traditional English grammar rather than communicative skills and a tendency towards rote memorization, nonetheless, there is a distinct difference between the two contexts which may play a crucial role. Learners in the Omani study are aged 19-21, whereas learners in the present study are of a diverse range in terms of age, personal experiences and emotional maturity. The findings of this study are important in shedding light on how young learners need help in developing fundamental EI skills to cope with their learning demands. However, there is a need for further research to investigate how mature online learners utilize EI skills to deal with their EFL learning difficulties.

3.6.2 EI and L2 skills

Subsequent EI studies have moved from investigating the relationship between general language learning achievement and EI to focusing on specific L2 skills and aspects of language learning. For example, reading comprehension (Abdolrezapour & Tavakoli, 2012; Ghabanchi, 2014; Motallebzadeh, 2009), writing achievement (Sadeghi & Farzizadeh, 2014; Shao et al., 2013a), listening proficiency (Alavinia & Mollahossein, 2012; Jahandar et al., 2012), speaking abilities (Afshar & Rahimi, 2014), learners' perceptions towards speaking classes (Bora, 2012), productive language skills of writing and speaking (Genç et al., 2016; Karimi, 2012), and vocabulary learning (Skourdi et al., 2014) have been examined in relation to their connection to EI.

In spite of the variety in EI measurements employed, all the above-mentioned studies reported a positive and significant correlation between EI and the area of investigation and suggested raising EFL learners' EI would lead to enhanced learning outcomes. Such positive results support the idea of "the centrality of an individual's EI to various areas of language achievement" (Oz et al., 2015, p. 417). Genç et al. (2016), for instance, suggest that students in possession of Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control skills could score higher in writing. The authors explain that the ability to keep calm in stressful situations enable learners to organize their thoughts and express themselves better in terms of the writing skill.

In addition to EFL skills studies, a handful of studies have examined various issues pertinent to the EFL classroom. For example, Motallebzadeh and Azizi (2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between EI and the performance on the TOEFL test. A similar study investigated the connection between EI and learners' performance on cloze tests (Esfandiari & Ekradi (2014). Learners' attitudes towards EFL learning also were investigated in Oz et al. (2015).

This section shows that EFL researchers have explored EI in various areas of EFL learning, including academic achievement and language skills. It is noteworthy that there are no studies that have attempted to explore the role of EI in relation to ELT materials despite the importance of the latter in EFL learning. This recalls the argument that ELT materials have been "neglected" and "trivialized" in SLA (Garton & Graves, 2014; Richards, 2010). EFL research into EI has focused on other aspects of learning and is silent on the role of ELT materials. Hence, to the best of knowledge, this study is the first study to examine EI in relation to ELT materials.

3.7 Developing EI skills

There are several studies implying that EI skills can be developed and nurtured through training and instruction. Researchers have explored the development of EI skills in educational settings for both teachers and students. There are reports from around the globe about school-based intervention programmes to enhance social and emotional skills (more details in Bar-On, 2006). The desire to implement EI awareness programmes stems from its positive outcomes in controlling non-desirable behaviours such as bullying, depression, and dropping out from school. As for university students, there is some research on the possibility of increasing EI skills through intervention programmes (e.g., Fletcher et al., 2009; Nelis et al., 2009; Pool & Qualter, 2012; Reuben et al., 2009). These studies used mostly theoretically-based instruction on EI skills for university students from various disciplines. Results of these studies demonstrate an improvement in participants' scores in EI skills. Luckily, given the growing number of studies corroborating the effective role of EI in

improving the outcomes of foreign language learning, there are a handful of studies dedicated to finding ways to develop EI skills in EFL learners. Some have investigated the use of literature-based activities (e.g., Abdolrezapour et al., 2013; Rouhani, 2008; Shao et al., 2013a). Another way for increasing EI in EFL learners is presented in the study of Mehdiabadi and Arabmofrad (2014) and through the use of dictogloss.

Literature-based EI raising studies derive their theoretical grounding from the findings of previous studies that promote the use of literature-based activities to activate positive emotional capacities of learners, including emotional awareness, empathy, perseverance and motivation and the like through reflection, contemplation, identification with and discussion of characters of literature excerpts. Results of the studies of Abdolrezapour et al. (2013), Rouhani (2008), and Shao et al. (2013a) showed that learners' EI improved significantly after being exposed to treatment based on reading literature excerpts. EFL learners were required to engage emotionally with characters in the reading excerpts to increase awareness and management of their emotions and the emotions of others. The emotional treatment was shown to have a strong positive influence on L2 skills in general.

The EI developing studies show that it is possible to develop and improve EI in EFL learners through planned activities by the instructor in a very short time as claimed by proponents of EI (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 1995). These studies have relevance to the current study as I would like to shed light on another aspect of EI development, arguing that it is also possible to develop some of the EI competencies and skills in EFL learners naturally, i.e., through being exposed to a learning environment that embraces EI. Previous studies discussed the development of EI skills at the individual level by comparing learners' EI test scores before and after treatment. In contrast, the present study, in addition to discussing EI skills at the individual level, discusses the development and nurturing of EI skills at the collective level, showing how the community of online learners has developed and become more emotionally intelligent through comparing online learning practices over a period of time.

3.8 Debates over emotional intelligence

Despite being widely accepted in numerous domains, EI has also generated a fervent debate about its scientific credibility. When it was first introduced, EI became "a media buzzword" (Bar-On, 2001, p. 84), capturing the attention of the general public (Zeidner et al., 2001). The steadily increasing popularity of EI has increased the scrutiny of the construct in both lay and academic circles (Freeland et al. (2008). Spector and Johnson (2006) note that "there is perhaps no construct in the social sciences that has produced more controversy in recent years than emotional intelligence" (p. 325). According to Cherniss (2010), on the one hand, there are clinical and neurological examples providing evidence that some people score

high in IQ tests but perform poorly on self regulation or social relationships as reported by Damasio (1994). On the other hand, the construct of EI suffers from a number of "core problems" (Harms & Crede, 2010, p. 154). Most of the criticism targeted against EI is concerned with its broad conceptualisation and multiple definitions, limitations of its measurement tools, its significance for effective outcomes (i.e. leadership and performance), and the use of EI tests in high-stakes decisions (e.g., Cherniss, 2010; Harms & Crede, 2010; Locke, 2005; Matthews et al., 2002; Thingujam, 2002; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran 2004; Waterhouse, 2006).

Cherniss (2010) contends that the most fundamental criticism against EI revolves around the lack of agreement about its definition. He argues that resolving the other problematic issues depends on resolving first what EI is. There is a lack of a consensus about the conceptualisation of the construct of EI. For instance, trait EI assumes personality traits are the determinant of EI, the ability model views EI in terms of mental processing of emotional information and finally the mixed models propose EI to be a collection of skills that can be taught. These disagreements over the nature of the construct are associated with the failure to sufficiently develop and operationalize EI as a theoretical construct (Cherniss, 2010). Locke (2005) argues that the definitions of EI are unintelligible, arbitrary and they include numerous components to the extent that he wonders, "what does EI *not* include? (original italics) (p. 428)". He also contends that the components of EI are "so variegated" (p. 426) and lacking an integrating element that they thus cannot be contained under one concept. Matthews et al. (2002) also comment on the lack of specificity of EI, which means it "represents all those positive qualities that are not IQ" (p. 12).

According to James (2014), one source of the scepticism regarding the construct of EI stems from the traditional dichotomy between emotions and cognition. Intelligence is generally viewed as a cognitive capacity and is associated with rationality. Emotions, on the other hand, have always been associated with the non-cognitive and non-rational domains.

Matthews et al. (2006) wonder: "can we ever say that a subjective feeling states opposed to cognitively based understanding is intelligent?" (p. 11). Locke (2005) also argues that:

> Emotions—automatic productions of the subconscious mind—are not tools of knowledge. The psychological function of emotions is not to know the world but to make automatic evaluations and motivate action. (p. 427)

Locke (2005) concludes that "one cannot, therefore, 'reason with emotion;' one can only reason about it. Reason is also the key to self-regulation, not only of one's emotions…, but also of one's life in general" (p. 427) and "it is through reason that we have the power to decide whether and how to act in the face of emotions" (p. 430). He rejects the use of the

word "intelligence" in the construct of emotional intelligence; he believes that advocates of EI have a "hidden agenda… the ultimate motive is egalitarianism: redefining what it means to be intelligent so that everyone will, in some form, be equal in intelligence to everyone else" (p. 426). Locke's view is in contrast with the views presented in sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2 in which emotions occupied a central position in the self-concept. Both cognitive and affective schemas constitute knowledge and interpretation of the self and the world.

Thus, because of the lack of a well-defined conceptualisation of the construct, a number of critics reject EI (Landy, 2005; Locke, 2005; Waterhouse, 2006). However, on the other hand there are some critics who maintain a more accepting yet cautious stance in relation to the construct. EI is still a relatively new construct, and it is not surprising there are a number of issues regarding its conceptualisation and measurement tools in the early stages of theory development; indeed, "the generation of several versions of EI theory is a sign of vitality in the field not a weakness" (Cherniss et al., 2006, p. 239). Cherniss (2010) notes that the lack of agreed-on definition is not "unique" to EI; "there is still considerable disagreement about how to define general intelligence, even after 100 years of active research on the topic" (p. 113). Another commentator, James (2014), contends the construct of EI has some support from multiple intelligences theories. For instance, theories of intelligence are categorized into two types: general intelligence and multiple intelligences. General intelligence theorists view intelligence in terms of cognitive abilities such as reasoning, memory, attention and perception (Burt, 1949; Spearman, 1904; Vernon, 1960). Multiple intelligence theorists believe that there are distinct types of intelligence (e.g., Gardner, 1983, 2004; Guilford, 1967; Thorndike, 1920; Thurstone, 1936). Thorndike (1920), for instance, maintains that there are three types of intelligence: **abstract** (ability to understand ideas and symbols, **mechanical** (ability to understand and manage mechanics) and **social**, "ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls and to act wisely in human relations" (p. 228 as cited in James, 2014, p. 39). Gardner (1983) opposes reducing human intelligence to algorithmic abilities or to an ability that is measured through numerical tests. To Gardner (1999), human intelligence is "a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 33-4). Gardner and Hatch (1989) propose seven types of intelligences, including logical-mathematical, linguistics, musical, spatial, Bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Cherniss (2010) also points out that EI fits within the general definition of intelligence offered by Wechsler (1958), in which intelligence is defined as "a global concept that involves an individual's ability to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment"; thus "EI should still be considered a type of intelligence" (Cherniss, 2010,

p. 114). In the same vein, Zeidner et al. (2001) "do not rule out the possibility that EI might be a form of intelligence" (p. 66), despite believing EI is elusive and lacks a clear definition (p. 274). In order to solve the problem of the conflicting definitions, Cherniss (2010) contends that despite their differences, the four major models of EI include one or more of the key components as stated by Bar-On:

> (a) the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings; (b) the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them; (c) the ability to manage and control emotions; (d) the ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature; and (e) the ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated (Bar-On, 2006, p. 3).

Thus, he proposes defining EI in terms of emotional perception ability, which fits the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model. As for the other models of EI, they are best defined as emotional and social competencies (ESC), such as empathy and stress tolerance. As to the relationship between EI and ESC, Cherniss explains that when the individual has high EI ability he/she will be able to better develop emotional and social competencies. For instance, a person with high perception and understanding of people's emotions will be more able to develop strategies to influence people.

With regards to EI measurement tools, the broad and various definitions of EI have yielded different measurement tools with a number of limitations. According to Cherniss, (2010), in IQ tests there always will be one correct answer, whereas in EI tests (and even in real-life situations) it is challenging to determine what is the correct response in specific emotion-related situations. The Bar-On and trait EI models use self-reports, the ability model uses test-based problem solving tasks and the Goleman model uses multi-rater reports. The validity and reliability of self-reports are usually questioned for fake responses provided by the respondents. The multi-rater instrument is also subject to bias, but bias can be balanced out by asking different people in different roles to do the assessment. However, this method is expensive and complex (Cherniss, 2010). For the ability EI test, Zeidner et al (2001) argue that the emotional problem-solving tasks are "too broad and ill-defined" (p. 273).

However, despite these core problems associated with EI, there is a large and growing body of research interested in applications of EI in real life situations as explained in 3.1. In this strand of EI research the broad focus is "on uncovering the mechanisms by which high EI confers benefits to those who possess it" (Bucich & MacCann, 2019, p. 63). For instance, what strategies emotionally intelligent people use to promote positive outcomes for day-to-day processes, how they cope with stresses and anxieties and maintain a healthy emotional well-being. Numerous EI-based intervention programmes in various domains have reported positive effects and improvements in the lives of participants. Additionally, various

institutions offer EI-based training workshops and programmes to enhance emotional, social and leadership skills. James (2014) believes that "the power of emotional intelligence is not so much in predicting behaviour, but rather in reflecting on, understanding and affecting change in behaviour" (p. 168). Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) agree that EI is beneficial in understanding behaviour, performance and activity of individuals and groups in organizations:

> emotional intelligence is attracting deserved continuing research interest as an individual difference variable in organizational behavior related to the way members perceive, understand, and manage their emotions…The study of emotions in organizations was for too long neglected, and the idea of an individual difference variable that focuses on emotional abilities… is an entirely appropriate focus for researchers working in this field. (p. 441, 449)

Recent interest in EI in SLA positive psychology research belongs to this type of research. From a positive psychology perspective, it is important for learners and teachers to possess emotional competencies to positively impact their performance outcomes and to maintain an emotionally healthy environment. Richards (2018) expresses that "effective management of emotions can lead to a better uptake of content and pedagogical knowledge, contributing to what can be called the teacher's emotional competence" (p. 448). According to Oxford (2015), "emotional intelligence theory is useful for understanding differences in the attitudes and behavior of language learners and users" (p. 377). Given the recent interest in EI in SLA positive psychology research, the present study is interested in examining whether the components of the Bar-On EI model are displayed in the motivated and autonomous learners of the present study. Dörnyei (2005) notes that research on individual differences has neglected the role of emotions, which might have a more important role than the traditional variables that have received the greatest attention, including motivation, language aptitude and learning styles. With the recent interest in emotions, examining the connection between emotional skills and learning behaviours might also be valuable to individual differences research in SLA.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed several research fields with relevance to the present study. The review included emotions in SLA research, TESOL positive psychology, L2 motivation, learner autonomy, the construct of possible selves, the self-discrepancy theory, the control-value theory of achievement emotions and EI.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

There is an ongoing discussion in qualitative research about the importance of writing in showing the value, rigour and potential of qualitative research (Alasuutari, 1995; Holliday, 2007; Sandelowski, 1998; Woods, 2005). Some authors believe that the usual journal format, which was invented for quantitative research, destroys the essence of qualitative research and does not do justice to the phases of undertaking qualitative research. Holliday (2007) argues that "qualitative researchers...can easily underestimate the need for detail in their description of procedure, thus overlooking an important aspect of the demonstration of rigour. One area that requires such detail is the degree of engagement with the setting" (p. 53). Thus, the writing style of this chapter is influenced by these views.

In addition to showing rigour, I aim through my detailed presentation to contribute to the qualitative research literature through giving a narrative account on how qualitative research develops inductively and how the emergent themes of the researched context shaped the design and the proceedings of the present study in addition to giving explanations of the rationale behind the proceedings of the research.

The following presentation is divided into scenes to describe the natural history of the present research as well as to show my interaction as a researcher with the researched context and the decisions I made accordingly. The scenes are aimed to make the reader engage more with the evolution and process of the study as well as to inform the reader about "the key and decisive moments in the development of the study, which have influenced the production of the final study structure and results presented" (Gastaldo, 2015, p. 1).

Scene One: Starting Out

When I started out my research, I did not have any particular interest in LGMs, online learning, L2 motivation, learner autonomy, emotions or emotional intelligence. I started out the classical way, drawing on the work of my supervisor and intending to produce a more conventional investigation into the use of global textbooks by both teachers and learners. The main method of data collection was to be classroom observation besides interviews; however, I was not successful in several attempts in finding a site for conducting my research. As a result, I then considered researching online EFL contexts as I thought that my observation of online lectures would not feel intrusive to the same degree.

<p style="text-align:center">Scene Two: Entering the Field</p>

4.2 Finding sources for data collection

At this stage I decided to rule out teachers and focus on learners as users of ELT materials. I acquired the data about the programme from its official website and from YouTube interviews (these interviews were produced for a public T.V. broadcast, but published on YouTube by KMU's official YouTube channel as well) and from online discussion forums.

I relied on three discussion forums that host online students of KMU for initial exploration. One forum is the official discussion forum provided by the university for its students (henceforth UF). The other forum was an independent forum (henceforth IF), meaning it is run by individuals who have no official relationship with the university. The IF was established for KMU on-campus students and after the introduction of the online education programme, distance learners were hosted in the same forum. The third forum, the new forum (Henceforth NF), was established exclusively for KMU distance learners by some distance learners themselves.

4.3 Observation of discussion forums

I observed these discussion forums to detect any salient features related to the research purpose, basically to the use of ELT materials. It was found that in these independent virtual platforms and without the involvement of teachers, learners engaged in a great deal of collaboration. The most interesting finding was that learners produce learning materials for their own use and the use of other learners. Moreover, local print shops print learners' materials in bound format and sell them to learners. This discovery shifted the research focus from investigating how learners use their ELT materials to investigating why learners produce LGMs.

4.4 Identifying potential participants

Based on the activities carried out by learners I categorized learners into three groups:
1. Learner-writers who produce LGMs for learning purposes for the community.
2. Learner-users who use LGMs produced by their peers.
3. Learner-leaders who assume leading roles in the organization and management of collaborative activities and/or in decision-making. Learner-leaders in the context of the present study could refer to forum moderators or to virtual leaders on social media platforms.

For the initial phase of data collection, I made a list of learner-LGMs writers and learner-leaders and contacted some of them through the email facility in the IF and the NF as it was not available for me to register on the UF as someone with no institutional affiliation. I

explained to them the purpose of the research and provided them with an information sheet and a consent form (Appendices A & B).

I was able to recruit some participants who introduced me to other independent Internet-based study environments, which were founded and are run by learners themselves. As a result, I signed up also to Twitter to follow some learners who promote and disseminate learning activities in this way. In addition to that, other learners invited me to join their Telegram and WhatsApp study groups, which also are organized by learners for learning and collaborative purposes without the involvement of teachers.

At this stage of research, I came to appreciate the amount of potentially valuable data that was available from Internet-based sources. However, there was a need to make ethical decisions before proceeding with the research. In the following section I discuss the ethical decisions I made regarding the use of Internet-based sites for data collection.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical decisions made regarding data collection and participants were informed by the recommendations provided by the AoIR (Association of Internet Researchers) Ethics Working Committee for Internet-based research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). AoIR recommends a general guideline in which researchers should observe "the fundamental rights of human dignity, autonomy, protection, safety, maximization of benefits and minimization of harms" (p. 4). AoIR does not present a set of rules to be followed strictly by researchers, because it is not feasible to formulate global ethical rules that fit the innumerable, context-bound circumstances of research projects worldwide. Rather, AoIR pinpoints to the researcher the important issues that need to be taken into consideration when making ethical decisions. Researchers are required to make ethical decisions on a case-by-case basis through a realistic assessment of the ethical issues raised in different research contexts (Elgesem, 2015; McKee & Porter, 2009). For the present study, there were three issues to be considered: accessing the Internet sites (public discussion forums and social media groups) for data collection, obtaining consent from participants and anonymity of participants. Since my data were collected from more than one source so different ethical decisions were made for each source of data as discussed below.

4.5.1 Public discussion forums

According to McKee and Porter (2009) there are four variables that influence the decision about obtaining informed consent: the degree of publicity vs. privacy, topic sensitivity, degree of interaction with the researcher and vulnerability of participants. The researcher has to decide the degree of each variable from low to high. The higher the degree for each variable, the more there is a need for obtaining informed consent.

For the present study, the discussion forums are public. Also, posts can be read and searched without the requirement to register on the forums. Thus, regarding the variable of privacy, the degree is very low with no risk of violating privacy rights of the members. As for the variable of sensitivity of the topic, Lee (1993), as cited in Dickson-Swift et al. (2008), explains that sensitive topics are topics that potentially pose a serious harm or threat to participants such as private, stressful, stigmatizing or incriminating topics. This definition of sensitivity is not applicable as the topic of the present study is learning-related. For the third variable, the process of observing the posts on the discussion forums for data collection does not require an immediate or constant involvement of the forums' members. Finally, with respect to vulnerability, I agree with Liamputtong (2007) who argues that this term is "problematic as the concept is culturally constructed" (p. 5). The definition that best fits the context of the present study is offered by Silva (1995), as cited in Liamputtong (2007). Silva (1995) defines a vulnerable person as someone with diminished autonomy. This includes children, adolescents and individuals with mental illness or disorders that prevent them from conducting their affairs or making binding decisions. The present study's interest is online university learners of the English language and is not focused on vulnerable groups. Based on McKee and Porter's (2009) model, the risk of harm to participants in terms of privacy, sensitivity, interaction and vulnerability is not likely; therefore, I did not feel there was the need to acquire informed consent from the forums' members for data collection.

Other contributors to discussions of Internet-based research methodology are of the same view. Elgesem (2015) explains that it is neither practical nor reasonable to seek to acquire informed consent from all those who participated in a discussion, especially given their awareness that their contribution to the discussion is available to the public. Skitka and Sargis (2006) indicate that according to the regulations of many Institutional Review Boards, researchers do not need informed consent to analyse online posts as these are in the public domain (p. 549). Furthermore, Charles Ess and the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (2002) recommend that "the greater the acknowledged publicity of the venue, the less obligation there may be to protect individual privacy, confidentiality, right to informed consent, etc" (p. 5). Therefore, in light of the above stated recommendations, I made the decision to use the discussion forums for data collection without the need to obtain informed consent from the forums' members and received ethical approval for my project designed in this way.

4.5.2 Telegram and WhatsApp study groups

These two Internet-based social media environments are used in the context of the present study as virtual classrooms where learners learn together, support each other and share learning resources, especially materials, via instant chatting, sending links, photos and

documents. These smartphone applications create a strong sense of belonging to a learning environment because of this facility for instant communication. The groups are established/owned by senior/experienced student leaders who mentor, consult and teach the groups' members.

Telegram channels and study groups are considered public, because anyone can join and have access to the contents of the channels without the need to acquire the permission of anyone. Thus, I needed to acquire no consent for observing the Telegram channels because they are as public as the discussion forums I monitored.

WhatsApp study groups presented a more private domain. I was introduced to the WhatsApp group's members through the group's founder and owner as a PhD researcher who wanted to learn about their online learning practices and views. When considering including these groups in my plans for data collection I had to make two decisions relating to research ethics: one concerning observation of the members of these groups and the other concerning the use of quotations.

For the decision on observation, I had to choose between seeking the consent of the group's founder or seeking the consent of all members. I decided obtaining the consent of the group's founder was sufficient to monitor the group, and that if I wished to use any quotations, I would then contact the writer of the quotations for permission. There are many reasons that guided this decision. First, it would have been impractical to obtain consent from each member. The number of members of each group varies between 60 and 180 (for each of the 6 groups I monitored). Another crucial factor behind my decision is that obtaining consent at an early stage of the research from all the members may have influenced members' natural behaviour (Halvarson & Lilliengren, 2003). As advised by McKee and Porter (2009) who were commenting on the case of Hudson and Bruckman (2004), who were thrown out by four chat rooms when they announced that they were doing a study: "trust is a key element in online communication" (p. 109). Therefore, I felt asking for consent from all members straightaway may have hindered the development of trust between members and me. In conclusion, my decision to obtain consent from group members to reproduce quotes at a later stage is in line with the recommendations of AoIR Ethics Working Committee, which advises that consent forms can be obtained at any stage of the research; and that it is even more ethical to obtain the consent form at the end of the research when specific quotes are desired to be presented in the research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Finally, I communicated the ethical decisions I made regarding the WhatsApp groups to the ethical committee of the University of Sheffield and they approved my decisions and recommended I made an online

information sheet available to members of the observed WhatsApp groups (Appendices C & D).

4.5.3 Anonymity

The participants I recruited use pseudonyms as a digital identity. Some learners granted me permission to use their online names (handles); however, I made the decision to anonymise these names. The reason is that some of them use the same digital pseudonyms in other social media domains, especially Twitter (Halvarson & Lilliengren, 2003). Learners in Twitter expose more of their personality and sometimes family members are included in the circle of followers or followed people. So I felt that through using search engines it would be possible to reveal personal information about those participants. I explained this to participants and they agreed I could use new pseudonyms. Also, I anonymised names of places (cities and bookshops) and names of people (academic and administrative staff).

Scene Three: Becoming a virtual ethnographer

4.6 Research design

At this stage of research, I did not adopt any particular research design or any methodological approach; my intention was to conduct a basic qualitative research study, as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Basic qualitative research is

> the most common form… and has as its goal understanding how people make sense of their experiences. Data are collected through interviews, observations, and documents and are analysed inductively to address the research question posed… The other types of qualitative research… share exactly the same characteristics of a basic qualitative research… [but] each also has an *added* [original italics] dimension. (p. 24)

Other types of qualitative research are ethnography, grounded theory, qualitative case study, phenomenology and narrative analysis.

Thus, I embarked on the second phase of my research with the purpose of understanding the meaning of LGMs for learners. Nevertheless, as the research progressed it appeared that virtual ethnography best described my research approach; the nature of the researched context invited an ethnographic approach. To fulfil the purpose of the research I had first to observe the online community to construct a meaning of their world and this was my first step into ethnography.

4.6.1 Virtual ethnography

Ethnographic research focuses on understanding the experience, behaviours, values, beliefs and interactions of a group sharing one culture (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It involves observing a group/culture first hand in their natural setting for a lengthy, sustained

period of time (Hammersley, 2006). The ethnographic researcher is "open towards the field and collecting any sorts of data for understanding it" (Flick, 2014, p. 42), and thus "research questions are formulated *in situ* and in response to situations observed" (Cohen, 2011, p. 173). Virtual ethnography applies the same principles in online cultures, "namely the immersion of the researcher in the social or cultural situation, attempting to learn how life is lived there as opposed to the researcher approaching it with a particular preemptive research question(s) or assumption(s)" (Lenihan & Kelly-Holmes, 2016, p. 256).

Just as there are debates over the participation of the researcher in the examined culture in offline ethnography, there are similar debates in virtual ethnography. Thomsen et al. (1998) contend that a virtual ethnographer needs to be an active member of the observed culture in order to effectively understand and analyse "the world of his subjects". Likewise, Rutter and Smith (2005) emphasise the importance of participating in the communication in the researched culture. In contrast, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) hold the view that a researcher can perform virtual observation without necessarily being a participant in the observed culture; while Maloney-Krichmar and Preece (2005) maintain that virtual ethnography is possible through immersion and does not require active participation in the community. I share the view of Maloney-Krichmar and Preece (2005). After my prolonged and sustained immersion in the online community, I believe I have developed an understanding and knowledge about some aspects of the online community more than most of the current members. For instance, I went through archived posts dating back more than 9 years. The facts I learned about the reasons behind the development and spread of LGMs are unknown to current active members of the community. Also, all LGMs writers show that they produce and share LGMs publicly under the spirit of collaboration, but some learners explained to me how totally different motives such as love of praise, recognition by other community members and a competitive drive fuelled by the achievements of other learners led them to author LGMs. In this sense, and according to ethnographic standards, I am more capable of presenting some insiders' views than some of the insider members themselves. Therefore, I see a virtual ethnographer more like a narrator who can tell the story of the "world of his subjects" without necessarily being an active member/character in that world.

Scene Four: Driven by data

After I identified the context of my research, I focused on collecting data from various sources, reflecting on them and attempting to elicit links between them. It is a salient feature of inductive research to let data drive the research design.

4.7 Data collection

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that "collection and analysis should be a *simultaneous* (original italics) process" (p.195). For me this happened with no preplanning, simply because I was in a state of exploration with no definite analytic scheme. Therefore, in an attempt to understand the context of the research, I conducted data analysis constantly for each set of collected data. Therefore, various rounds of data collection and analysis took place at different stages of the research. This technique influenced the research design greatly as I subsequently modified the focus of research, interview questions, themes and stance of the research. This technique is called "progressive focusing" (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972) (more discussion about this technique in 4.10.4).

The present research utilized a "multi-method triangulation" (Thomsen et al., 1998) for data collection, namely **observation**, **interviews** and **content analysis**. Triangulation is especially important in ethnographic research; multi-sourced data increase "the possibilities of discovery about the aspects of life under investigation" (Flick et al., 2014, p.180). The online culture was extended, dynamic and multifaceted and thus it was essential to collect data from various sources using different methods for better understanding.

4.7.1 Observation

Observation is "a key data collection method in ethnography" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 158) and indeed it was fundamental in my research. Through observation I was able to devise and modify research questions, identify participants, devise interview questions, extract major themes, produce an initial list of codes, decide the process of the research and, most importantly, be sufficiently immersed in the context of the research. Sufficient immersion is necessary for the researcher to be able to "see how events evolve over time, catching the dynamics of situations, the people, personalities, contexts, resources, roles, etc" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 466). Sufficient immersion also "helps the researcher to view the later analysis of the data from an insider's point of view and take into account not only the messages, but also the context" (Pfeil & Zaphiris 2010, p. 9).

The online community operates on numerous virtual platforms: discussion forums, Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram. Through these platforms I was able to secure sustained and prolonged access to the community and to the researched culture, essential requirements of ethnographic research. Indeed, the online nature of the investigation gave me 24/7 access which more traditional (physical) observation arrangements cannot provide.

In conventional observation, audio/video recordings are used as techniques for recording observations (Lynch, 2003). In my case, as I was observing written messages on a screen, I used screen capturing to record observations featuring potentially relevant and interesting

information. I also generated observational notes (memos) for the captured observations to document important findings, my first interpretations of the findings and any possible relationships between the findings (Patton, 2015) (more details in 4.8.2). The table below provides information about the observed sites.

Table 4.1 List of observed sites

Site	No.
Discussion forums	3
Twitter	82
WhatsApp groups	6
Telegram groups	6
Telegram channels	12

4.7.2 Interviews: An emic approach

The nature of my research questions required the employment of different approaches and data collection methods. Both etic and emic approaches were employed to construct a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the "world" under investigation.

An emic approach focuses on the views of the researched culture. Interviews were utilized to reveal the motivations of learners for producing and using LGMs. My observations greatly facilitated the design of the interviews. Through my observation of the community, I was able to classify potential participants into three groups: leaders (Learner-moderators and virtual learning group learner-leaders) writers (learners who write LGMs for the community) and users (learners who use LGMs for their learning). I also was able to devise interview questions for all three groups. Questions for LGMs writers revolved around their experiences in producing LGMs, their motivations and techniques, etc. Questions for learner-leaders revolved around their experiences as leaders, reasons for becoming leaders, their responsibilities, characteristics of leaders, etc. Questions for users revolved around the views of and reasons for using LGMs, benefits, views of teachers' materials, etc. (see Appendix F). Considering that there were several themes to be explored for each group, and because the interviews were conducted virtually, mainly through the medium of writing, I decided it was better to distribute questions per theme among interviewees in each group instead of investigating the whole set of themes with all group members. This was to elicit intensive responses about each theme through follow-up interview questions.

4.7.2.1 Logic for sampling of interviewees

My criteria for selecting participants were simple and basic: any learner who is a member

of the online community. This could be a learner-leader who has leadership responsibilities, or a learner-writer who writes LGMs for the community and/or a learner-user who uses LGMs.

However, for some participants I made the selection based on their influence on the online community either in terms of leadership or LGMs production. For instance, through my observation I identified Tariq and Rania (pseudonyms) as very influential members of the community due to their leadership activities and popularity. Similarly, Yasmeen and Malik are two prolific LGMs writers, and they produced LGMs for each single course they took. Again, I felt it was interesting to learn about their experiences and motivations.

I secured cooperation from some participants through direct correspondence; however, for a significant number of participants I relied on Rania and Nawal to vouch for me and help secure cooperation from participants. I had no strict criteria for participation or cut-off in the number of interviewees I recruited, so all learners were welcome to expand the representativeness of the data and to increase my understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Before conducting interviews, whenever it was possible, I read through forum threads initiated by the interviewees in order to gain some knowledge about them and the practices they were involved in. This technique also helped to check the accuracy and trustworthiness of what I was told by the participants (Silverman, 2010) (more discussion of this technique in section 4.10.7). Below are some methodological aspects of these interviews.

4.7.2.2 Format of the interviews

All interviews were conducted in Arabic and through the medium of writing with the exception of three participants as explained in table 4.2. Written messages are the normal format of communication amongst members of the online community, so this method of collecting data presented itself. On the one hand, I felt that learners would be more comfortable communicating with me using the same method they communicate with each other. The unfamiliar format of oral communication might affect the naturality and quality of responses. On the other hand, I worried that written responses might not be as informative as conventional oral interview format, because it might not be possible to establish rapport between the interviewees and me for effective conversation flow. However, the instant written chatting proved to be effective. First, because of the anonymity associated with written chats, some learners were open and disclosed facts that might not have been given in a conventional oral interview. Further, it appeared that the written format gave learners enough time to collect their thoughts. I mainly used WhatsApp and Telegram (chat application) for interviewing participants. This saved me a great deal of time and effort transcribing

interviews, which allowed me to interview more participants as a result. Gaskell (2000) recommends that for the single researcher the number of interviews should be between 15 and 25. However, because of the built-in transcription feature of the written chat interviewing format, I was able to conduct 44 interviews in addition to constructing a corpus comprising 1731 units of forum posts and other social media contents. Moreover, transcripts are usually questioned for the extent to which they accurately convey interview exchanges (Gibbs, 2007), while the chat format sidesteps some of these fears over transcription accuracy.

Further, I conducted interviews at the convenience of participants, so I was able to interview them in non-working hours and at evening or even after midnight. I also noted that participants who asked to have their interviews at evening eventually ended up giving me more time than they had promised initially for the interview. It could be that during the day, people are more aware of time pressures on their other daily obligations. At evening, as they have no worries over work, they may be in a more relaxed frame of mind. For instance, Noura, who was interviewed during the day, asked me twice: "Are we done?". She eventually said she had to go because her kids needed her; our interview lasted 45 minutes. On the contrary, Nawal and Tariq asked to be interviewed late evening; and chatted for about 4 hours. I also noticed that the more time an interviewee spent chatting, the more open they became. Indeed, some learners talked freely about their inner emotions that motivated them to produce LGMs, which provided me with deep, personal and intimate data (Murthy, 2008). Overall, I think I would not have had such personal responses in face-to-face interviews. Anonymous communication relieves participants from anxiety over the consequences of exposing their inner feelings and views (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2010).

4.7.2.3 Types of the interviews

Interviews can be divided into three phases:

1) Initial phase: as I was exploring the context and trying to understand the reasons for producing LGMs I utilized the unstructured interview. I had no prior set of themes or topics to be covered; I only inquired from my interviewees about the reasons for producing LGMs.

2) Second phase: I adopted the semi-structured interview. Based on the analysis of the preliminary data, I devised research questions to elicit more responses around certain themes.

3) Final phase: at this stage I was more definite about the key themes and topics I wanted to cover with the interviewees. Although I maintained the semi-structured interview format to make space for new information to emerge, I also adopted some structured techniques such as prompts and probes in this final phase of interviews. The purpose was to elicit sufficient and in-depth details about certain themes (Davies & Hughes, 2014) and prevent unnecessary diversion from the targeted themes. The following table presents the participants' profiles. All

were learners except for Bandar who joined the community to help his brother who was an

online learner.

Table 4.2 Profiles of interviewees arranged alphabetically

No.	Participant (Gender)	Role	Method of interview	First Interview Duration	Second Interview Duration
1	Ameera F	LGMs writer Leader	Telegram	2 hours 10 min	56 min
2	Angie F	LGMs writer	WhatsApp	1 hour 46 minutes	
3	Anood F	Moderator	Instagram	2 hours	
4	Badr M	User	WhatsApp	1 hour 26 min	
5	Bandar M	LGMs writer	Twitter	1 hour 40 minutes	
6	Basma F	User	Telegram	1 hour 6 min	
7	Ehsan M	Moderator	Email discussion forum	N/A	
9	Fadwa F	LGMs team member	WhatsApp	1 hour 28 minutes	
10	Faisal M	User	Telegram	53 min	
11	Fawaz M	LGMs team member	WhatsApp	1 hour 10 minutes	39 min 3 hours 7 min
12	Galia F	LGMs writer	WhatsApp	2 hours 30 min	
13	Hana F	Leader Assistant	Telegram	1 hour 18 minutes	
14	Jasser M	User	Telegram	2 hours 17 minutes	
15	Joman F	User	Telegram	1 hour 25 min	
16	Jood F	User Team member	WhatsApp	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 3 minutes
17	Kareem M	Leader LGMs writer	Skype WhatsApp audio	1 hour 29 minutes	1 hour 38 minutes
18	Latifa F	LGMs writer	WhatsApp	3 hours	
19	Leena F	User	WhatsApp	3 hours 45 minutes	
20	Majda F	User	Telegram	1 hour 48 minutes	
21	Malik M	LGMs writer	Twitter	2 hours 20 min	2 hours 10 min
22	Mansour M	User Print shop worker	WhatsApp	3 hours 28 minutes	
23	Mariam F	User	WhatsApp	1 hour 22 min	37 min
24	Mona F	User	Telegram	1 hour 48 minutes	
25	Muneera F	Leader LGMs writer	WhatsApp	1 hour 44 minutes	
26	Nadia F	Moderator LGMs writer	Line	50 min	2 hours 1 min
27	Nawaf M	LGMs writer	WhatsApp	1 hour 42 minutes	
28	Nawal F	Leader LGMs writer	Telegram	4 hours 9 minutes	

29	Noura F	User	Telegram	45 min	
30	Osama M	Leader	Skype	1 hour 15 minutes	
31	Rania F	Leader Moderator	WhatsApp audio WhatsApp writing	2 hours 20 min	
32	Riyad M	Moderator LGMs writer	Twitter	2 hours 15 min	1 hour 45 min
33	Saif M	Leader	WhatsApp	1 hour 28 min	
34	Salim M	 User	Telegram	1 hour 18 min	
35	Salma F	Team LGMs writer	WhatsApp	1 hour 34 minutes	
36	Sami M	User	WhatsApp	1 hour 18 minutes	
37	Shahir M	LGMs writer	Telegram	1 hour 51 min	
38	Sultan M	Team member	WhatsApp	2 hours 50 minutes	
39	Suzan F	User	WhatsApp	1 hour 53 minutes	
40	Taiseer F	User	Telegram	1 hour 28 min	59 min
41	Tariq M	Moderator LGMs writer leader	WhatsApp	4 hours 7 min	
42	Yasmeen F	LGMs writer	Email discussion forum	N/A	
43	Zaina F	User	WhatsApp	2 hours 22 minutes	
44	Zuhair M	Moderator	WhatsApp	2 hours 27 minutes	1 hour 44 minutes
Total time of interviews				**97 hours 29 minutes**	

4.7.3 Content analysis: An etic approach

When I began the research, I first used observation and interviews for data collection. However, as I immersed myself in the researched context, I developed an interest in and an appreciation of the importance of understanding how LGMs came into existence and evolved into their current form. It was clear that it was not possible to find a thorough answer simply by means of interviews because LGMs had first begun to be written years before my interviewees joined the online programme. This being the case, I decided to add to my research questions a question on how LGMs evolved and developed into their current shape. Investigating this part of LGMs certainly illuminated a great deal on the role of LGMs in the context of the present study. To answer this question, I needed to utilize content analysis as a further tool for data collection. Content analysis is commonly used in virtual ethnographic studies (Lenihan & Kelly-Holmes, 2016; Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2010; Postill & Pink, 2012). LGMs have been written for over 9 years, with the involvement of many individuals. Therefore, emic accounts of past and current online learners, which are mainly restricted to their own

experience, fail indeed to capture the full picture of LGMs in all their complexity. Therefore, an etic approach complemented the emic interview-based approach to investigate the evolution and development of LGMs thoroughly.

I identified both the university forum (UF) and the independent forum (IF) as sites for data collection because they were the virtual campus of the first cohort of online learners, allowing me to trace back the history of LGMs. Indeed "web content analysis of large data sets can… offer useful backgrounds for ethnographic work," (Postill & Pink, 2012, p. 3), as will be revealed in Chapter 5.

4.7.3.1 Sampling

The population of the two forums is huge so I employed purposeful sampling, which "focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2015, p. 264). From discussion forums and other social media platforms (YouTube, Twitter, Telegram, WhatsApp), I built a corpus comprising of (1731) text (written posts) and media (images, video or audio contents) units. The sample size of qualitative studies of online communities differs according to the type of data and the research question (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2010); however, it should be large enough to enable a meaningful analysis (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2007). As I aimed to investigate LGMs' evolution and developments over 9 years, I could not find guidelines from the literature. I therefore crafted the following sampling procedures to ensure a thorough and in-depth answer for my question.

- I first read through all the very first threads in the UF, which correspond to the commencement of the online programme, till the end of the first semester, covering the period from September 2009 until February 2010. I also read through all early threads available in the IF, covering the period from December 2009 until February 2010. Earlier posts were lost due to a hacking incident.

- I read through posts in the UF posted in March and June 2010. I wanted to learn about the learning environment, particularly the emotional state of learners at the beginning of the second semester and at its end towards the exam period.

- For threads posted since September 2010 I focused my content analysis on the IF as it became more active and provided me with a search facility and the ability to go through all posts and threads of any particular member. Usually towards the end of the semester because of the exam period LGMs were in high demand and accordingly the amount of LGMs uploaded increased. Therefore, I went through posts at the end of each semester and identified LGMs posted and their writers. This enabled me to trace back LGMs and their writers through the search facility in the IF to identify any significant data such as change in the format and quantity of LGMs.

- The corpus is comprised of 1731 units of observational notes and extracted text and media units (explained in 4.7.3.2) based on a pre-list of codes (explained in 4.8.3.3).
- I assigned an ID for each unit to identify its source. Each ID is comprised of the initial of the source from which the unit is extracted and a number, for example UF230.
- To distinguish direct quotes from observational notes I included the acronym ON before each ID to distinguish observational notes.

Table 4.3 List of corpus conventions

Convention	Meaning
UF	Text unit from the University forum
IF	Text unit from the Independent forum
NF	Text unit from the New forum
MUF	Media unit from the University forum
MIF	Media unit from the University forum
MT	Text or media unit from Twitter
MTG	Text or media unit from Telegram
MW	Text or media unit from WhatsApp
MY	Text or media unit from YouTube

Image 4.1 Sample of the corpus

Unit ID	Code	Source of the Unit	Child Code/ Unit or Obs. Note
UF86	Emotional state	http://l_____a/showthread.php?35357-%DF%ED%DD-%DA%D1%DD%CA-%C8%DC-%C7%E1%C7%E4%CA%D3%C7%C8-%C7%E1%E3%D8%E6%D1-%E6%E1%ED%E5-%C3%CE%CA%D1%CA-%E5%C7%E1%CA%CE%D5%D5-%C8%DC-%C7%E1%D0%C7%CA-!17	Emotional need to join the online programme "I want to succeed and make up for my lost years"
UF87		http:_____showthread.php?30604-%C7%E1%CF%DF%CF%E6%D1-%C7%E1%DB%C7%E1%ED-(%C3%CD%E3%CF-%C7%E1%D4%DA%ED%C8%ED)	"I feel drained. All my friends have graduated and I could not even get an online place to study"

- For some data, it was not possible to extract direct texts from the forums because sometimes a meaning is conveyed indirectly. Therefore, I had to use observational notes. For instance, in a number of exchanges between some learners, the data I was interested in was that some learners lack sufficient IT skills to effectively use their teachers' materials. This lack of IT literacy was not stated directly in posts, but was understood. So as there was no direct text to express this meaning, I used observational notes to capture the meaning (Holliday, 2007) (see Appendix G).

- For media units I also generated observational notes describing their contents and meanings (Holliday, 2007) (see examples in Appendix H).

- It was not possible to use NVivo to work with the contents of the discussion forums because it does not support Arabic texts. Therefore, I built my corpus manually and provided the URL address or a screen capture for each extracted unit and the code and child code it belongs to.

4.7.3.2 Unit of analysis

For coding texts posted in the discussion forums, I had to define the scope of the text (unit of analysis). For qualitative online communities studies there are three units of analysis: unit of a message (the whole post is treated as one unit and given one code), unit of a sentence (the post is segmented into sentences and a code is given to each sentence) and unit of a meaning (the post is segmented into meanings and a code is given for each meaning) (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2010).

I have adopted the unit of meaning for collecting data, meaning that "consecutive sentences within one message that share the same meaning are taken as one text unit and coded into a single code" (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2007, 921). The reason for choosing the unit of meaning for defining the scope of texts is that some posts are long and include various topics (meanings), thus giving one code for a whole post entails overlooking other aspects of meaning. Likewise, attempting to code every single sentence is time-consuming and might yield irrelevant themes to research questions (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2007). Unit of meaning is the most appropriate segmentation for posts; it enabled me to assign relevant codes to segments of one post in an effective manner (see an example in Appendix I).

4.7.3.3 Pre-list of codes

I employed purposeful sampling with the aid of a pre-list of codes (Appendix J) to sort out irrelevant posts and to increase objectivity in sampling. My pre-list of codes was informed by both literature and my earlier immersion in data. Through my observation of the various virtual platforms of the online community in addition to interviews, I was able to acquire impressions about the context and important themes relevant to research questions (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2007, 2010).

4.8. Data analysis

Data analysis is "the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 202). To prepare the data for analysis, I copied each written chat (interview) into a

separate electronic document and saved it under the name of the interviewee. I also generated electronic memos for my interviews and virtual observations to reflect and make possible links between learners' views and attitudes as well as salient themes in the online community. As data collection and analysis occurred at the same time, I kept updating the memos and reflecting on possible links and meanings after each intake of data. I analysed data as they were produced in Arabic. It was important to keep the raw data in their original language as some essence of meaning might have been lost in translation. Then, I translated the excerpts to be included in the presentation of data. The coding process was conducted electronically and included **open coding**, **memos**, and **selective coding**, as explained below.

4.8.1 Open coding

For the preliminary data I collected through exploratory observation and three unstructured interviews, I employed open coding (see Appendices E for a sample). Open coding involves going through the entire dataset. The purpose of open coding is to "pull out from the data what is happening and not impose an interpretation based on a pre-existing theory" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 46). My coding approach followed approaches described by Saldaña (2009). In the first-cycle of coding, I identified and grouped significant words or phrases that convey similar messages of meaning. I made use of two types of first-cycle coding: descriptive coding and simultaneous coding. Descriptive coding was used to describe the participants' practices or the main topic suggested in the data. Also, simultaneous coding was applied to each piece of datum suggesting more than one interpretation. In the second-cycle of coding, I organized the first-cycle codes and generated a list of general codes that were grouped into categories and themes.

4.8.2 Memos

The themes generated from the preliminary data focused my investigation on certain aspects, thus in the subsequent data collection I used semi-structured interviews. My analysis of the findings of the interviews and observation was in the form of memos (observational notes). Memos have become popular "as a way for performing qualitative analysis" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 30). Memos allowed for more analytical thinking, reflection and interaction with the data without rushing into a second round of open coding on a substantially larger set of data, which might have made the issues more tangled rather than clarifying my view. I utilized memos to reflect on the behaviours and attitudes of learners and compare them initially against the construct of emotional intelligence. This influenced the following round of coding and data analysis as I employed both "pre-figured" and "theory-driven" coding.

Scene Five: Driven by theory

At the early stage of collecting the data, my inductive approach meant that the design and process of research were directed by data. Nonetheless, after formulating an understanding of the researched phenomenon based on the extracted themes, I shifted to a more deductive mode. In this stage and after deciding on emotional intelligence as a theoretical framework for understanding the emotional competencies of learners, I began collecting data through content analysis based on codes generated from my initial data and from concepts of emotional intelligence. The deductive mode helped greatly in building the corpus from the discussion forums. With the deductive mode I was able to narrow my corpus to posts related to emotions and aspects of emotional intelligence. Further, at the early stages of data collection until saturation is achieved, it is normal for an inductive approach to become deductive eventually as the researcher checks his/her early findings against the new data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To sum up, during the early stages of the research I collected data inductively and employed open coding whereas in the later stages I employed a more deductive approach and used a pre-list of codes, based on the theory of emotional intelligence and themes extracted from initial data. The deductive approach at the end was effective in managing data collection and analysis.

4.8.3 Selective coding

Selective coding refers to "the final stage of data analysis to be completed after core concepts emerged from the coded data categories and subcategories have been identified through open and/or axial coding" (Mills et al., 2010, p. 157). As I conducted most of the interviews and did an initial round of open coding before deciding on the theoretical framework of the study, I went through all the interviews again and employed selective coding. I first identified the key themes, based on theory and prefigured themes, then selectively coded the data related to the key themes. I employed selective coding largely with data collected through content analysis from the discussion forums. Open coding for small sets of data is beneficial as it opens all possibilities. Once a researcher has developed an impression of key themes, then selective coding is more capable of managing data analysis, especially for large sets of data.

Scene Six: Incorporating phenomenology

It is a characteristic of naturalistic inquiry that "research designs emerge over time" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 168). I explained earlier how I approached the study with no pre-methodological approach in mind. As I progressed in the research, my research workings

naturally corresponded to ethnographic research features. However, as I became more aware of the peculiarities of the phenomenon under investigation, I became more aware of theoretical frames I would like to relate my research to. After acquiring in-depth accounts from some participants in which they shared their inner emotions about their experience of LGMs generation and use, I realized I wanted to delve deeper in this direction and explore the extent to which emotions can be such a dominant player in shaping learners' motivations and behaviours, or more generally our motivations and behaviours as human beings. This was when another methodological approach presented itself, namely phenomenology.

4.9 Defining phenomenology

I found phenomenology suitable for investigating deeper the involvement of emotions in LGMs production. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "a phenomenological qualitative study is well suited to studying emotions and affective states" (p. 28). Phenomenology is defined as "a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and *one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality*" (Italics added) (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 22, citing English and English 1958). A key moment in my investigation occurred when I discovered that behind the external reality well established in the researched culture, there were other realities, a unique reality described by each participant. Early findings of the research pointed at a strong collaborative attitude shared by the members of the community. The data contained words showing an altruistic spirit as well as religious and cultural influences that call for benevolent and kin-like relations. LGMs writers themselves in the discussion forums would embed their contributions with religious and cultural statements about giving and collective cooperation. Being a member of the wider cultural background of the researched community, I could have fallen into believing that *all* learners are cooperative as a result of the shared norms of Islamic and Arabic culture. However, the investigation revealed a *subjective reality* about why learners produced LGMs. LGMs writers could be influenced to some extent by the cultural norms of cooperation and giving (the external common reality), but there was a "subjective experience of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, 78) for each LGMs writer. The subjective experience exists in the mind of the individual rather in the outside world (external reality). Understanding the behaviour from a subjective experience point of view means understanding the individual's own, unique experience as they lived it to understand his/her behaviour instead of relying on external assumptions for interpreting his/her behaviour. Hence, phenomenology is "powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and

actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom" (Lester, 1999, p.1).

In a phenomenological study the researcher seeks to "come as close as possible to a participant's lived experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 20). Further, "the purpose of a phenomenology study is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence, what they experienced and how they experienced it" (Creswell, 2013, 78). Participants revealed their unique motivations for LGMs production, but all motivations can be reduced to one motivation, *approaching and/or avoiding a possible self*. Therefore, I decided to embrace phenomenology besides ethnography to account for the subjective and unique lived experiences of participants on their production and use of LGMs.

4.9.1 Phenomenological research methods

The phenomenological interview is the main method for data collection. I conducted follow up interviews with some participants to explore their emotional experiences on LGMs production and use in more depth. Also, for newly recruited participants I focused on the emotional experiences of interviewees. The number of phenomenological interviews for the single study typically ranges between 1-10 (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Therefore, I did not need to have in-depth interviews with all my participants, but focused on cooperative participants till I reached a deeply depicted experience.

According to Creswell (2013), a phenomenological study "ends with a descriptive passage that discusses the essence of the experience for individuals incorporating "what" they have experienced and "how" they experienced it" (p. 79). My presentation of some of the individuals' experiences is mixed with my interpretation to understand the experience through a number of constructs, including the possible selves, the self-discrepancy theory, the value-control theory of achievement emotions, emotional intelligence and learner autonomy.

4.10 Ensuring Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers have proposed several measures for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. These measures differ from the quantitative ones concerned about internal validation, external validation and reliability. These terms are replaced with other terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity and conformability (Creswell, 2013). Trustworthiness in qualitative research "requires transparency, integrity, reflexivity and a degree of metacognition, i.e. "thinking about how and why one works in a particular way" (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012, p.27).

Qualitative researchers also have proposed alternative techniques to quantitative measures to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. Creswell (2013) recommends that qualitative researchers need to utilize at least two of these techniques in any given study. The present

study has employed several techniques to ensure trustworthiness as discussed below. These techniques are also salient characteristics of ethnographic research, which accentuate the ethnographic orientation of the present research. In what follows, I shall give brief examples from the data about my treatment of data using trustworthiness techniques; the full analysis of the quoted examples is provided in the Data Analysis chapters.

4.10.1 Prolonged engagement

Ethnographic description "can only emerge from a lengthy period of intimate study and residence in a given social setting" (Van Maanen, 1982, p. 103). Thus, prolonged engagement with the researched context allows for understanding as well as for the development of an insider's view (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This view is important for the researcher to retell the story of the researched culture "through the words of its members" (Maloney-Krichmar & Preece, 2005, p. 220). I joined the online community for over two years (February 2016-April 2018). I observed their routines at the start and end of each semester a number of times, including semester preparations, revision plans, exam study, reflections after exams and results announcements and summer activities. I got to know celebrity and influential members of the community, teachers they like and teachers they dislike, their common problems and concerns.

4.10.2 Thick description

Thick description is at the heart of ethnography (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is not narrating bare facts (thin description), but it is providing clarifying details about the narrated facts and their context and explaining the incentives behind them for a full understanding of these facts (Holliday, 2007; Packer, 2017; Sensing; 2011). I did not only investigate the views and motivations for LGMs production and use by current learners. I thoroughly investigated the incentives behind the initial production of LGMs through content analysis of discussion forums and produced a thick description about the circumstances (emotional and learning environment related) in which LGMs came into existence as well as how LGMs production developed over the years. This background knowledge is an important element that needs to be taken into account in order to understand fully the role of LGMs in the investigated context. Hence, I offer the reader hidden meanings behind learners' behaviour regarding the production of LGMs instead of a simple reporting of their current behaviours (Sensing, 2011).

The thick description technique validates evidence for the presented findings as findings are linked to "the different facets of the social matrix or culture" within which the researched phenomenon is found (Holliday, 2007, p.75) and "make[s] explicit the fullness of [the researcher's] understanding of the implied range of meaning of the social settings, actions or words" (Sensing, 2011, p. 195), which in return adds to the trustworthiness of the study.

4.10.3 Triangulation

Triangulation means the use of more than one method for data collection (Cohen et al., 2011). It is also a characteristic of good ethnographies, for the "hybrid use of different ways of collecting data" (Patton, 2015, p. 663). The purpose of triangulation is to corroborate evidence from different sources. When the same themes emerge from different sources of data then this validates findings (Creswell, 2013). For instance, through content analysis of 9 year-old posts, certain themes emerged regarding the attitudes towards teachers' materials; the same themes emerged through interviews with current online learners. Emergence of the same themes enhances evidence for the trustworthiness of both sets of findings. Another advantage of triangulation is the expansion of knowledge of issues under investigation; "triangulation should produce knowledge on different levels, which means insights that go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus contribute to promoting quality in research" (Flick, 2014, p. 184). For instance, content analysis yielded certain reasons as to why online learners have developed negative attitudes towards teachers' digital materials, mainly because of the technical problems in accessing these materials. Interviews expanded this knowledge as learners expressed dissatisfaction with some teachers' teaching style. Similarly, content analysis revealed some vital facts that were overlooked by interviewees. For example, when being asked about her motivations for developing LGMs, Noura explained that she did not like to use LGMs with translations and thus she produced LGMs without translations for her own use and shared them with her peers because she is supportive of collaboration amongst learners. However, content analysis illuminated further important aspects. It was revealed that Noura indeed planned to produce bound LGMs for her own use during the summer, but she could not bring this to fruition because of her obligations as a mother. However, what made her eventually achieve this was connected with the motivational and emotional tactics played by the moderator in the IF who wanted forum members to produce LGMs for the use of the whole community. Noura in my opinion was sincere in delineating her motivations for producing the LGMs, but she was not aware of the importance of the emotional dimension in causing the actual production of the LGMs. It is clear how triangulation helped greatly in expanding the scope of knowledge and complement insufficient data from different sources.

4.10.4 Progressive focusing

Progressive focusing, a term coined by Parlett and Hamilton (1976), is another characteristic typical in ethnographic research (Cohen et al., 2011). It

> starts with the researcher taking a wide-angle lens to gather data, and then, by
> sifting, sorting, reviewing and reflecting on them, the salient features of the

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situation emerge. These are then used as the agenda for subsequent focusing. The process is like funnelling from the wide to the narrow. (p.184)

Progressive focusing is important in managing the development of the research, which is considered an important element in establishing credibility of the research (Shenton, 2004). I explained how I adopted this technique in previous sections and how various rounds of data collection and analysis informed the proceedings of the research. I started inductively with open comprehensive coding and open interviews, then ended up with selective coding and semi-structured interviews with structured probes and prompts.

4.10.5 Coding checklist

To ensure objective and focused coding of data I generated a pre-coding list (checklist) for coding (Appendix J). This technique was inspired by Pfeil and Zaphiris (2010), who developed a coding rule-sheet in the form of yes/no questions to assess whether a piece of data corresponds to certain codes to ensure objectivity and enhance inter-reliability among various coders. My coding checklist was informed by key themes extracted from both data and literature. As I have no other coder, the coding checklist was effective in ensuring systematic and accurate coding and for checking the whole set of data used for the research arguments more easily.

4.10.6 Member checking

Member checking, also known as host recognition and respondent validation (Murphy & Dingwall, 2017), is a technique in which the researcher shares the research's findings with the participants to corroborate the interpretations. Some researchers include the reviewing of "field notes, working hypothesis and report drafts" in the member checking process (Klenke, 2016, p. 46) and state it could have a therapeutic effect on participants as they feel that there are others who share their feelings and perspective (Babione, 2015). Contrary to that, others believe that member checking is problematic as it could make participants feel that their privacy has been invaded (Goldblatt et al., 2011). Silverman (2010) argues that member checking is best not applied to results or interpretations because not all learners are capable of deeply understanding their actions or even agree on them. However, member checking is considered an important technique to ensure trustworthiness of data against misinterpretations or the researcher's bias (Babione, 2015).

In the light of the above views, I employed member checking with some caution. As my data is concerned with various topics, I could isolate general findings (about the learning context) from personal ones (about inner emotions of participants). I judged it would be unfeasible to employ member checking on the whole set of data. It would be sensitive and

irrational to provide participants with an interpretation about their emotional and social skills and expect them to employ the constructs of emotional intelligence and reach the same or similar conclusions to me. The example of Noura mentioned earlier illustrates this point very well. Noura reported that she produced LGMs because she wanted LGMs that suit her learning style and she was proud of her achievement, seeing herself contributing to her community. It would have been unpleasant to present her with an interpretation of her motivation, evidenced by my searching of her forum posts, saying that she lacked sufficient emotional skills to keep herself motivated to complete the production of the LGMs by herself and that she completed the LGMs because she was emotionally induced to do so by the moderator. Therefore, I decided to check only major themes and findings of the general data. I checked general themes in subsequent interviews with other participants through the use of prompts. This way I could corroborate and explore major themes thoroughly. It might be true that a theme exists but the learner at the time of interview overlooked it. So by employing the prompt technique, learners had the time to reflect and either confirm or negate the theme. And indeed, there were several instances where learners gave the impression that the prompts really reminded them of something they had overlooked. Further, in order to rule out the possibility a learner might only be confirming a theme because they felt this was what I wished to hear, I asked for elaborations and examples from their own experience to enhance the trustworthiness of their responses. And it turned out there were few instances where learners disagreed with the themes I raised (see 4.10.8 for a full discussion).

4.10.7 Checking validity of responses

The issue of validity of interview responses has received some discussion in literature. While it is generally acknowledged it is unfeasible to unambiguously confirm the truthfulness of accounts given by interviewees, there are some strategies suggested by researchers to at least guard against the dangers of blindly taking responses at face value and to ensure some basic truthfulness. Some researchers suggest that personal accounts "may be considered authentic" (Brennen, 2017, p. 40). Others propose checking the truthfulness of factual information disclosed by respondents from other sources of data (Silverman, 2010).

For my general dataset concerning the learning context, the emergence of the same themes by various interviewees corroborates their truthfulness, especially when supported by my observations of the online community. Regarding the dataset generated from interviews, I was able to verify certain information disclosed by some participants. Before holding interviews with participants, I read through their threads, if there were any, in the IF or NF to acquire some knowledge about their learning activities and impact on the online community and to enable me to better devise some specific interview questions. This technique helped me to

validate some data offered by some interviewees. For instance, when I asked Tariq why he produced LGMs while he was an online learner, he claimed that he wished to make learning materials affordable to all learners as printing teachers' materials was very expensive. As I examined all threads Tariq posted when he was a learner, I found that during his four years of study he was committed to donating his learning materials to new learners and initiated donation campaigns to benefit the whole community. Moreover, I know from his threads he voluntarily travelled by car to nearby cities to distribute softcopies of LGMs to print shops to make it cheaper for learners to go and buy them and he recruited other learners to do the same to cover all areas of the country. Hence, with these findings acquired from content analysis, I was able to verify the truthfulness of Tariq's responses, because I could corroborate his giving characteristic and his concerns for economically less-privileged learners. In other words, I could confirm the Empathy component in Tariq.

4.10.8 Deviant case analysis

Silverman (2010) suggested that comprehensive treatment of data means accounting for deviant responses to see whether they depart from the general argument made by the majority of responses or can incorporated within it. This technique is to ensure the researcher is not selective in presenting instances that support their interpretation.

For instance, there were frequent claims that lectures were not easily comprehensible. However, in contrast, there are instances where interviewees claimed that lectures were comprehensible. One possible explanation is that the listening proficiency of learners is uneven; those who found lectures comprehensible and easy to follow might be in possession of superior listening skills. In sum, this deviance does not negate the theme, but on the contrary, it supports my overall finding that there are different levels of learning/academic abilities and those who found video lectures comprehensible and easy to follow might not be in such need of LGMs as those who found lectures difficult.

4.10.9 The skills of the researcher

The last point is not a technique, but rather a criterion that has been highlighted in the literature for establishing the role of the researcher in achieving trustworthiness in the research (Holliday, 2007; Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2004). Qualitative researchers have emphasised the critical role of the researcher in the analysis and presentation of data. Patton (2015), for instance argues that the researcher is the instrument of data analysis and therefore the "qualitative report should include information about … the researcher" such as prior experience, training and knowledge brought to the study (p. 80). Holliday (2007) also states

"another essential criterion [to ensure valid data] is what the researcher does with the data, the sense that she makes of it, and how well she communicates this sense (p.88).

Although I had benefitted from attending master's research methods lectures on coding qualitative data, I had not received intensive, extended training. Neither had I coded an original qualitative dataset myself. However, my previous education in English literature greatly facilitated managing the analysis of data. I did numerous courses (at both undergraduate and graduate level) that involved the analysis of various types of literary texts and making thorough interpretations based on extracting evidence from the texts themselves. These courses focused on extracting themes, hidden messages and possible interpretations of the texts as well as of deep analysis of characters. Literary analysis also involves the application of theories and approaches to actions and words of characters. I did also other courses in discourse analysis which focused on various discourse markers. I found coding and extracting themes of qualitative data similar to the analysis of literary texts. I believe I unconsciously applied some techniques of literary analysis when conducting my data analysis. For instance, I paid attention to potential patterns in learners' posts (drawing on the lens of emotional intelligence), including the purpose, mode and style of the posts, use of colours, font, use of emoticons, and any other salient characteristic of the language and impact of the post on learners' peers. The purpose was to understand how active learners and leaders employed interpersonal skills (a component of emotional intelligence) to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships in a virtual community through the medium of writing. Further, elements of discourse analysis are also evident in my analysis of how moderators write announcements and acknowledgments in LGMs production competitions. Overall, my training in literary texts analysis aided me in establishing connections between the various clues spread throughout the various datasets to *make sense* out of them as Holliday (2007) puts it.

4.11 Translation Issues

According to Al-Amer et al. (2016), the "translation process can impact on the trustworthiness of qualitative data (p. 150). Successful translation is pivotal for conveying actual meanings constructed from data. I conducted coding and analysis of data in their original language, Arabic. It was important to keep data intact for thorough and continuous reflections to generate insights and hunches. Translation was required for the presentation of findings. I did the translation myself; I did courses on translation theories and types (both at undergraduate and graduate level). I worked as a translator in a governmental establishment for four years.

Generally speaking, it is inevitable some elements of meaning in translation will be lost because of the cultural peculiarities of and differences between languages. Therefore, word-for-word translation was avoided and a meaning-based approach to translation was employed (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). In qualitative research, the technique of back translation is often recommended to ensure accuracy of translation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on my work experience, back translation might work effectively with technical or short texts such as survey statements or instructions wherein meanings are bound to the texts and are independent from their larger cultural context. In contrast, Arabic culturally-bound texts such as narratives would pose challenges for successful back translation. Al-Amer et al. (2016) agree that "it is likely that back translation in qualitative research is one reason for losing or significantly changing the meaning of the data" (p. 154).

Translation involves sacrificing some elements of meaning for the sake of maintaining more important elements. In my dataset I faced this challenge of maintaining and conveying the intended effect. The following example illustrates this point. A participant, Nadia, explained that converting of teachers' video lectures into print LGMs by a subset of learners saved other learners the effort of making the LGMs themselves. What follows shows my treatment of the translation of Nadia's comments to maintain an intended effect:

1) Literal translation:

They saved us the burden of doing the LGMs and doing the formatting in word documents, ***and saved our eyes from getting crossed***.

2) Meaning-based translation:

They saved us the burden of doing the LGMs and doing the formatting in word documents, ***and saved us the trouble of doing it ourselves.***

3) Intended-effect translation:

They saved us the burden of doing the LGMs and doing the formatting in word documents, ***and saved our eyes from getting crossed*** ( ).

The first part of the quote is sufficient in conveying the *meaning* Nadia intended to convey, which is effort saving. The second part of the quote is aimed to create *a humorous effect*. This humorous element is important in analysing the leadership skills of Nadia, who is a moderator. The content analysis of posts revealed the use of humour by influential learners in the community, especially by moderators. The second part of the translated quote may not convey this humorous effect (the funny side of Nadia's character) to the English-speaking reader; therefore, I added an exhaustedly cross-eyed emoticon to create the intended

humorous effect and help the reader visualize Nadia's funny image of a learner exhausted from preparing LGMs. My additions are in round brackets to notify the reader that what is between the brackets is an addition to faciltate conveying the humorous effect.

Additionally, to ensure the translations convey the intended meanings, I accompanied translated quotes with commentaries to guide the reader to the intended meaning, when required. Further, I tested and negotiated the translations with my supervisor (a native speaker) and made amendments to ensure they convey the meaning of the original statements in a way comprehsible in the target language.

4.12 Chapter summary

In this chapter I aimed to provide the reader with an account of the stages marking the evolution and development of the present research, which reflects the inductive nature of qualitative research. I highlighted the process of the research, starting from defining a topic and finding research sites, to exploring the research context, to recruiting participants, to methods and procedures of data collection and analysis. Moreover, I defined both ethnography and phenomenology and explained how they were adopted as a response to the needs of the researched context. Finally, I discussed issues related to ensuring the trustworthiness of the reported results and issues related to translation of data.

Chapter 5

The emotional state of online learners

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to understand the emotional circumstances associated with the evolution and production of LGMs. I am approaching this aim etically rather than emically. Etic "refers to a trained observer's analysis of "raw" data" to represent a reality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p, 522), whereas "in the emic approach an attempt is made to look at the phenomena and their interrelationships (structure) through the eyes of the people native to a particular culture"(Berry et al., 2002, p. 291).

The evolution of LGMs took place during the very first semester of the online programme back in 2009 and has continued to advance ever since. My interviewees did not witness the events of the first semester of the online programme and could not provide accounts about the evolution of LGMs. When I asked one interviewee, who is a current learner, about how LGMs came into existence, she admitted that she had no idea and that when she joined the programme, LGMs were already used by all the learners. Therefore, I had to rely on the discussion forums used by the first cohort of online learners to investigate the reasons behind the emergence of LGMs. The presentation below highlights the problems faced by learners in their virtual learning environment (5.2 & 5.3) in order to recognize the emotions they created in learners. Next, given that in qualitative research it is "the role of the researcher to bring understanding, interpretation and meaning" (Lichtman, 2013, p. 17) to the reported and described human phenomena, I move beyond simple description of learners' responses to their problems and attempt to provide a possible interpretation of learners' responses (5.4 & 5.5).

5.2 The general emotional state of learners

The present study does not only aim to identify what emotions are experienced by learners, but also to examine how learners reacted towards their emotions regarding their learning materials. It is essential to consider learners' emotions at the commencement of the programme in order to realize the depth of their later emotional reactions as well as their learning decisions and behaviours. From a CDST point of view, understanding the initial conditions of the system is vital for understanding the su§bsequent behaviours of the system. The following section presents findings on learners' emotional state when they joined the online programme, their emotional initial conditions.

5.2.1 Predominance of negative emotions

The data gained from early enquiry posts revealed that learners experienced both positive and negative emotions. For instance, there were emotions of happiness, excitement, enthusiasm and gratitude, given the opportunity to continue their education.

> I cannot express enough gratitude for having the opportunity to continue my education after I lost hope of doing so.

However, it appears that feelings of unfamiliarity were responsible for fostering negative emotions including confusion, anxiety and fear, as can be seen from the quotes below:

> End the confusion. Is watching the lecture enough to notify the teacher I did watch the lecture, or do I have to do something else after watching the lecture? I am asking out of concern.

> I am very anxious please provide me with an answer. The question is: Has study started today or shall we start next week?

The data revealed that some learners were subject to emotional disturbances because they failed to watch the introductory videos in the university's website due to high pressure on server:

> I fear what shall come. I am drained of thinking, of making efforts, of criticizing and of emotional reactions. I wish everything gets fixed, because it is us who shall suffer. I was happy and dreaming of studying and progressing but now I am in shock and feel confused.

On the whole, negative emotions seem to be predominant in the early enquiries posted by online learners in the university's forum (UF). There were lots of enquiring posts containing emotional words used by learners to describe their emotions while asking for answers to their enquiries such as "concern," "fear," "confused," "reassure me," "tired," etc. Learners posted lots of questions to understand regulations, procedures and requirements of their new learning environment. The university had prepared guides and training videos about the programme and the use of the web-based learning interface and there were some staff answering learners' enquiries in the UF. Nonetheless, apparently these measures were not sufficient to manage learners' intense emotions.

5.2.2 Negative emotions and dropping out

There was a number of dropout requests at the very beginning of the programme. The reasons behind such requests were not stated. However, the data suggest that negative emotions experienced by some learners might be the reason:

> Please Mr… make me understand. Honestly I feel I have not understood this system. How do we know the times of lectures? They are not stated on Blackboard. Is it true that there will be attendance signing in? If I do not have the Internet and cannot access it regularly shall I lose attendance marks or is it ok to sign in and access lectures at any time? Finally, can I withdraw from the programme and how? Thanks.

It appears that this particular learner experienced some sort of confusion over the programme and that she considered withdrawal from the programme as an option to end her confusion.

Another factor related to the online programme that appeared to have intensified the emotional state of some learners was the fact that the university announced at the commencement of the programme that learners who achieved a high GPA during their first year had the right to apply to continue their education on campus. Some learners were determined and motivated to do well in online learning to achieve this goal. As a result, it appears that these learners were easily emotionally provoked whenever they faced any problems at the beginning of their learning:

> I strongly want to fulfil the condition for transferring to campus study… I want to achieve my dream in continuing my education on campus and I do not want any obstacle to prevent me from achieving this dream.

5.2.3 Negative emotions and self-related causes

In addition to the negative emotions created by the unfamiliarity of online learning, there was evidence that some learners had enrolled on the online programme with intense emotions created by external sources, which might have aggravated their emotional state, especially during the initial stages of their experiences in the online programme. Some learners viewed the online programme as the only opportunity they had to continue their education. Thus, they experienced fears of being deprived of such an opportunity:

> The online programme is the only hope for the majority of us to continue their education and to realize a dream for which we have been waiting for so long… these problems [technical problems of Blackboard] have begun to affect us.

Some learners appear to have had intense emotional needs to continue their education. Learners who had previous learning disappointments or failures were anxious about any emerging problems that posed a hurdle to continuing their education. The learner below, for

example, was extremely anxious because her documents were not received by the university on time and her registration was temporarily put on hold. Although the university announced several times that once all documents were received, all registrations would be reactivated, this learner's reaction reveals the existence of intense emotions caused by previous disappointments:

> Why did this happen to me? I broke down when I received a notification that my registration was put on hold; I felt I had a stroke. I was excited I am going to study and this happened to me. I want to continue my education; surely I want to continue my education. I have had enough. I am fed up I cannot find a place to accept me. What is happening to me is impossible. I graduated from secondary school with good marks and no place accepted me, neither on-campus nor distance learning. It is impoooooosible, three years passed and I am chasing after universities and no university offered me a place as if someone had put a curse on me. I have developed a psychological complex. Enooooough.

Another learner expressed great happiness at being accepted onto the online programme, but underneath her happiness lie intense negative emotions caused by previous disappointments:

> I felt oppressed; there was no joy or meaning left for me. Everything felt black; I lost all hope in studying at university. I applied to many places. I even bought some new clothes for university but never found a place to accept me. I was in such a heartbroken state. I never thought there would come a day when I became a university student and finally this day became true and now I am a university student. I felt I soar hiiiiiiiiiigh high in the sky when I learned I was accepted onto the programme.

Other learners were formerly on-campus students, but their performances were deemed unsatisfactory, and they therefore failed to complete their degrees:

> I was studying on campus for two years but was expelled. My family were nagging and hurting and I was fed up. When I got the acceptance on the online programme they were not supportive; I did not feel they were happy for me. Even my husband said I have first to succeed and then they can celebrate it (she implies they do not believe she can succeed).

Some learners were experiencing other emotions created by a desire to make their family proud:

> No place accepted me. I felt life spat at my face. I was sure I had no chance of studying in any university at all. I thought I had as much chance as the chances of the Devil entering Heaven. My father was so happy I was accepted; my birthday was in the same week and he bought me two cakes, one for my birthday and one to celebrate my acceptance onto the online programme. I was so happy to see happiness in my father's eyes. I was happier for him more than I was for myself at getting a place at university.

I said to myself I have to continue my education to make my children proud of
me.

Some learners experienced intense emotions related to self-esteem:

When I saw the message saying I was accepted onto the programme I jumped up
and ran to my parents. My mother was speechless and my father was excited. I
immediately phoned my female cousins (on the father's side) and told them I had
been accepted by the university. They always mocked me for not being accepted
before. My aunties (on the mother's side) were so happy for me; my eldest auntie
was extremely happy. I cannot forget that day. My cousin (on the mother's side)
was discouraging me; she said it would be difficult to succeed on the online
programme. Even if I do not have the desire to study, I am determined to study
and succeed and to humble all those who said I have no ambition.

I want to prove to myself I can do it (completing university education). I do not
want anyone to belittle me for not continuing my education.

To sum up, the data revealed that some learners were motivated to enrol onto the online
programme to satisfy various emotional needs. The fears, anxieties, frustrations or emotional
needs of learners, either as a response to the unfamiliarity of the learning programme or as a
result of individual antecedents, appear to have made the start on the programme for some
learners emotionally stressful and negatively affected the way they dealt with the obstacles
they faced at the beginning of their learning. After introducing the general emotional state of
the first cohort of online learners, in what follows I focus the discussion on learners'
emotional state regarding their learning materials.

5.3 Emotional state of learners regarding their learning materials

Online learners were offered digital learning materials, compromising of video lectures
and SCORM slides prepared by teachers and uploaded to Blackboard, the web-based learning
interface. In addition to the teachers' materials, teachers prescribed textbooks for their
courses. There were a number of attitudes and emotions associated with the learning materials
offered to the first cohort of online learners. I shall briefly draw attention to the negative
emotions created in learners because of the prescribed textbooks and then give more details
on their emotions towards teachers' digital materials.

5.3.1 Negative emotions caused by textbooks

Learners had lots of questions and concerns regarding learning materials. This was
unsurprising considering the fact that learning materials, namely textbooks, play an important
part in learning in the Saudi context. Throughout their schooling, students are provided with
free textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education for all subjects in the national
curriculum. These textbooks organize both the teaching and learning processes for teachers

and students. Teachers are expected to follow these textbooks in class teaching, whereas students rely on the textbooks for learning the subject matter and for exam study. Thus, textbooks in the Saudi context "provide a visible framework that both teachers and students can follow" (Garton & Graves, 2014, pp. 8-9).

It appears that learners, based on their pre-university learning experience, believed that it was important to acquire all prescribed textbooks for their study on the online programme. Numerous early posts enquired about how and where to acquire the prescribed textbooks:

> My dear brothers and sisters, I would like to let you know that most of the prescribed textbooks are available at bookstore A and bookstore B (in his city), except for the English textbook. I searched for it in most bookstores, but it was not available. The Basics of Writing textbook is not available either. I searched for them online and they were not available either. Please if anyone has any information let us know.

Learners were willing to go to considerable trouble to acquire the textbooks. They provided addresses and contact details of bookstores selling the required textbooks in various cities to save their colleagues time and effort in their search. Some learners travelled to various bookstores in other cities across the country. Other Saudi and Bahraini learners travelled to Kuwait searching for the textbooks. Similarly, some Kuwaiti learners travelled to Saudi Arabia for the same purpose (a journey of about several hours by car).

However, not all learners were able to get copies of the textbooks. Considering the fact that the first cohort of online learners included about 5,000 learners, it is understandable why there were insufficient numbers of textbooks available in bookstores, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. The unavailability of textbooks created intense negative emotions in some learners. Unsuccessful efforts to acquire textbooks induced emotions of anger, frustration and anxiety in some learners:

> The problem is that I could not find most of the textbooks ![red angry face emoji] neither in A bookstore, nor in B bookstore, nor at any bookstore in X city ![orange angry face emoji] .

> I feel I am lost because I have not acquired the textbook yet ![anxious face emoji]

Consequently, while the first semester was still ongoing, some learners requested the university to provide titles of textbooks for the second semester because they worried about difficulties in finding them in the second semester:

> Please provide us with the titles of textbooks for the next semester so we have enough time to search for them. It has been one month since the beginning of the

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semester and till now there are learners who could not find the textbooks. I even asked my relatives to search for the textbooks for me in two big cities.

Moreover, learners who had acquired the textbooks started complaining that the textbooks did not match exactly what the teachers said in the video lectures. This then appears to have caused confusion and anxiety among learners as to which learning materials (the textbook or the teachers' materials) to rely on for exam study:

> Frankly, I do not understand. I feel my mind is shutting down because of confusion and disorder. I want to know exactly from where to study, from lectures or from the prescribed textbook? I opened the textbook and listened to the lectures and they are not the same; there is much more stuff. Honestly this is confusing and baffling.

> This is how most of the courses are; the textbook is different from what the teacher says in the lecture and I feel I am solving crossword puzzles while trying to match between them.

> I have a question that confuses me and cannot start studying because of it. I have all textbooks, but shall I use them for study or is it enough to study from the teachers' materials? Are exam questions derived from textbooks as well or from teachers' materials, taking into account there is a big difference between textbooks and teachers' materials?

> Lectures do not match textbooks. I am very worried please help me .

To sum up, learners were subject to a range of negative emotions because of problems in searching for and learning from the textbooks. In particular, some learners suffered from anxiety, confusion and frustration in attempting to determine the utility of textbooks for their exams.

5.3.2 Negative emotions caused by teachers' materials

This section highlights the negative emotions experienced by learners that were the result of problems caused by teachers' materials. Some learners were in a state of constant alert waiting for the uploading of video lectures and the SCORM slides. They were keen on having access to teachers' materials promptly in order to study in a timely manner. However, learners struggled with a number of problems using these materials as explained below. Although it was not possible to estimate exactly the number of learners affected by these problems, the data suggest that the number was substantial as the discussion forums were replete with posts complaining about technical problems as well as with assistance requests with regards to technical problems. Further, the problems were dealt with as the community's problems rather than individual problems, suggesting these difficulties were widespread:

We all have the same problem. There is nothing we can do (to control this problem).

5.3.2.1 Technical problems in accessing teachers' materials

At the beginning of the online programme, the university did not allow learners to save lectures onto their devices for copyright reasons; thus, learners had to sign into the system each time they wanted to watch lectures. Since there were about 5,000 online learners, this caused huge pressure on the servers, which made accessing lectures either impossible or an arduous task. Learners complained that the loading of lectures was extremely slow or was frequently unsuccessful, which was frustrating and time consuming:

> Loading of lectures takes a very long time. One of the lectures needed 9 hours and 45 minutes for loading. This way I need a whole week only to load all the lectures.

Learners feared that their inability to access lectures might impact their learning negatively:

> Please find us a solution. We fear we cannot finish studying all of the lectures on time.

> So far we have missed 21 lectures. We shall have no enough time to watch lectures, nor to summarize and study them. What shall we do? 😩 .

Fears over losing marks because of a failure to sign into Blackboard promptly (to register attendance) or to submit assignments electronically on time caused additional concern for learners:

> I am so frightened I might lose attendance or assignment marks. Please solve this dilemma; it has become a problem for me and for others as well.

Some learners sought assistance from IT shops to increase their Internet speed and downloaded supporting software or even acquired new devices to enable them to watch lectures more quickly and easily:

> I have bought a new computer and increased the Internet speed, but lectures are still not working.

Others tried accessing lectures at different times including at dawn in the hope that there would less server traffic caused by many other learners attempting to access the system. Other learners could not load lectures at all and were unable to discover the reason why. Other learners in rural areas suffered from poor Internet connection and thus accessing digital materials was a constant problem for them. Others could not increase their Internet speed to

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enable optimal downloading of video files because of their financial position. Other learners appeared to lack sufficient IT knowledge to enable them to deal with any technical problems.

The technical problems fostered in some learners negative emotions of distress, frustration, stress, anxiety, anger, confusion, exhaustion and fear. During the period covering the first semester, UF was indeed replete with posts showing intense negative emotions of this nature:

> I am drained. Each time I make a timetable for my study, Blackboard breaks down. I do not know how we shall find time to make study notes and to revise them. I am wasting three quarters of my day in front of the computer; I am suspending my whole life in the hope that His Highness the Blackboard is humble to us and opens. I swear by God my nerves are stretched to the max and I am stretching the nerves of everybody in the house.

> Please help me. I am in distress. I am fatigued by sitting all day in front of the computer trying to load lectures, but all in vain. Please help so I can keep pace with other learners.

> Enough is enough. What is the solution? I considered myself trapped. I beg you to save us from this hell and solve this problem. 3 days passed and I only reached the minute 17 [the learner's device has been loading the lecture for three days but is only up to 17 minutes].

> I feel I will end up in the mental health hospital because of this [online learning] programme.

> Until when? I am seriously fed up . It has been a week or more and I cannot have access to lectures.

> I suffer; I feel I have lost hope. Lectures do not work properly and each time they stop I feel I am helpless and do not know what to do.

> I am extreeeeeemely drained, the lectures cut off when I play them and they do not work. They take sooooo long time, 19 hours and [lectures] are still not loaded!!! I do not know what to do; lectures are accumulating to the extent that I have no time for my family. The system is frustrating me.

Those learners who were employed particularly felt pressurized as they only had limited free time for study and seeing that time being spent trying to resolve technical problems rather than studying induced intense negative emotions:

> These constant faults of the system decrease learners' enthusiasm. We do not need anything to disturb our learning. Most learners are employed and you can imagine how such faults make their lives even more difficult.

In order to deal with accessing lectures and because of a fear of system/server failure, some learners took advantage of the few times they were able to access lectures successfully.

The problem was that these could be at times when they should have been asleep; or they decided to watch a block of lectures rather than one per session, exhausting themselves. Unsurprisingly, this intensified the emotional state of learners as learning became stressful and learners' ability to focus was negatively affected:

> I was able to access the system last Thursday and I sat from 2:30 am to 12:30 pm. For 10 hours I was watching all the lectures of the two previous weeks. This week I could not access the system and I could not watch any lecture. I am drained. Because of this system I feel I am a fool; I felt some lectures were difficult 😭.

Learners demanded improvements to enable them to save lectures onto their devices, hoping that this solution would make watching lectures much easier:

> It is urgent we have a solution to this problem. I have specified certain times for watching lectures so if I cannot access lectures at the specified times I have to wait till the following week, which is totally impractical. Also, it is impractical if I want to watch a lecture more than once—I have to access the system again and suffer from loading [problems] again and again.

5.3.2.1.1 University's response to the technical problems

The personnel responsible for the online programme communicated to learners that the online programme implemented systems developed by American companies, the Blackboard and Echo360 systems, which were the latest state-of-the-art technologies in online learning. The university communicated to the American companies all the problems encountered by learners in an attempt to find solutions. However, the solutions offered by the companies did not seem to solve the technical problems encountered by learners because the large size of the video files continued to cause problems in accessing lectures:

> We are not the only ones affected by this problem. It is a global problem in many universities around the world. There are some technical problems that cannot be avoided.

> I recently visited an Australian university, … University, which is one of the pioneering universities in online learning. They use the same systems we use, Blackboard and Echo360. They also suffer besides other Australian universities from the same problem we suffer from, that is the tremendous size of video lectures. They made lectures available in sound format only, which greatly reduced the size of lectures and made accessing lectures easy for their learners. We try our best to find technical solutions to make learning easy for you.

Also, it was revealed that despite the university managing to reduce the technical problems to some extent, they did not disappear entirely. In fact, technical problems continued throughout the semester and even during the exam period, which denied learners access to the

teachers' materials. In addition to the technical problems of Blackboard, there were other problems that caused negative emotions in learners as well, discussed below.

5.3.2.2 Delays in uploading teachers' materials

Another problem that caused a lot of negative emotions in learners was the delay in uploading either video lectures, SCORM slides or both for some courses. Learners were registered on 7 courses in the first semester; there were 14 lectures to be viewed for each course. According to the regulations, a lecture for each course would be uploaded onto Blackboard per week. However, teachers' materials were not available to learners when they should have been. Many days would pass and no lectures would be available:

> It is important that they [university] specify when lectures are going to be uploaded; I am tired checking every now and then. Yes, we are tired logging into the system and find nothing.

> Dear teachers, have mercy on us. Where are the lectures? What is going on? Please answer us; I have got insomnia because of overthinking and fear that I might miss a lecture.

> It is exhausting to check every day; this is exhausting. Please find us a solution.

5.3.2.3 Accumulation of teachers' materials

The technical problems that denied learners prompt access to lectures besides the delay in uploading teachers' materials led to another problem. This was the accumulation of many lectures to be watched and studied. The emotional state of learners was further disturbed by this problem. Learners made requests to the university to stop uploading new lectures until they had finished studying the ones already made available:

> Why do you not upload only two lectures per day instead of uploading all lectures on one day? This is better so we do not feel that the lectures are piling up and do not know how to start.

Some learners panicked as a result of downloading the lectures for all their courses in one day. They preferred to download lectures on different days to ease the pressure and escape the feeling that there were many lectures to be studied:

> Lectures are uploaded to the system all at once. We have not enough time, why is there no organized uploading of lectures? [Uploading lectures at once] pressurizes us, we need time to write down the lectures and need time to study them. We need the loading speed to be increased also. We have no time. I feel I am hard-pressed, suddenly an extra lecture for each course was uploaded onto the system in one day. Help us so we can succeed in our study.

I am tired. More lectures to be watched and I feel I cannot catch up

.

When shall they stop uploading new lectures, so I do not worry about more lectures? Each time I am about to finish a course I feel crushed by two new lectures

It appears that planning and managing learning was a challenging task for some learners, given it required a shift from a system where the teacher manages and organizes learning to an autonomous, self-study system. With so many uploaded lectures to choose from, some learners felt that they did not know how to start or organize their learning. They asked the university to provide them with timetables to organize their learning for them:

Pleeeease we want a study timetable so we can know how to study. Please we want anything because we are lost :(.

We need a timetable to organize our times; life without organization has no meaning.

Some learners were concerned over their ability to cover all lectures before exams:

I am extreeemely worried. After a long time suffering I can now access Blackboard. Please help me. How can I catch up and watch all lectures I have missed (asking advice from learners)?

I want to study and succeed but I do not know how. Please help me. I am extremely afraid . I am choked up with tears

5.3.2.4 Need for hard-copy materials

Understandably, learners were not satisfied with the new type of digital materials they were offered because of the problems in accessing them and the labour required to transform them into print learning materials:

I needed 5 hours to write down four lectures and summarize them. Thus, it is really unbearable to let lectures accumulate this way. We need the university to find us a solution.

There were some requests made in the UF to provide teachers' materials in print format to facilitate learning:

We hope you can find us a better way to watch lectures. Some learners could only watch a lecture or two. If the system continues this way, then learning this way is

difficult. We hope teachers provide us with hard copies of lectures to make learning easier for us.

We need a textbook to study from, teachers' handouts and excirces similar to exams.

Other learners doubted their ability to study from digital learning materials and requested print materials:

I am confused; I fear I cannot study from digital materials. There are many suffering from this problem and other worse problems. I missed out many lectures but for till when? 😟. I wish teachers would provide us with written lectures; I have no time to watch lectures.

The video lectures are not sufficient and besides that they are hurting my ears because of use of earphones. So please we need teachers to prepare print materials instead 🤓.

There was no definite official response from university with regard to these requests apart from saying that it is up to teachers to make decisions on learning materials for their courses. Eventually, it appears that learners had to accept and adjust to the digital materials prepared by teachers.

5.4 Impact of the problems of the learning context on learners

Facing numerous struggles and challenges related to the learning context will likely impact on learners' motivation, learning progress or their retention on the programme. The L2MSS model, more specifically the third component (Dörnyei, 2005), stipulates that a negative learning experience that is related to the learning context, the teacher, peers or learning materials is predicted to have a negative impact on learners' motivation. He explains that:

being demotivated does not necessarily mean that all the positive influences that originally made up the motivational basis of a behavior have been annulled; rather, it is only the resultant force that has been dampened by a strong negative component. (p. 90)

Indeed, the constant problems of the learning context worked as a strong negative force creating constant negative emotions in learners:

We live in a state of anxiety and pressure.

Consequently, negative emotion began to damage some learners' high motivation. Some learners complained that their inability to access the lectures negatively affected their motivation and enthusiasm for learning; others thought of dropping out:

Blackboard robbed us of our motivation, destroyed our enthusiasm and smashed our dreams.

The chaos in Blackboard does not motivate us to watch lectures.

I reached a state that I want to drop out. All my dreams about completing my education have gone up in smoke because of Blackboard and its problems.

Further, as problems in accessing lectures continued throughout the first semester, there were considerable numbers of requests to drop some courses before exams. It appears that some learners who feared their inability to cover and pass their courses preferred to drop them and to take them in the coming semesters instead, which meant they would have to repay the fees:

I am thinking of dropping the English course. The lectures are being delayed. When shall I have time to finish all lectures? I fear I shall only pressurize myself and eventually I shall not comprehend the content. Please advise me what to do (asking advice from learners).

On the other hand, the data also revealed that there were some learners who responded more positively and constructively to the problems of their learning context. They attempted to find solutions to the problems of Blackboard and to aid other learners to deal with these problems, as we shall see in the following section. For the learners with positive responses, the prediction of the L2MSS model regarding the impacts of negative learning contexts on motivation does not hold. In their case, there might exist (a) factor(s) that enabled them to resist the adverse impacts of the "strong negative component" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 90) in their learning context, to maintain their motivation and to generate positive behaviours. In the case of the negatively affected learners, such factor(s) might not exist which resulted in dampening their motivation.

A recent strand of L2 motivation research has focused on the adoption of CDST principles to better understand the complexity and dynamism of motivation. A 3-year, large-scale project aimed to test the sustainability of dynamic approaches in the investigation of motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2015a). In this section I shall refer to CDST principles in order to understand the behaviours of the positive learners and to specifically identify the factors that sustained their motivation and protected them from the negative impact of their learning context. The positive learners might possess particular **control parameters** that initiated and shaped their constructive behaviours. According to Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008):

motivation might seem a candidate control parameter in that it will help keep the learning system moving ... In classrooms, the actions and intentions of the teacher may work as control parameters that take the system of learners and teacher forward for new learning experiences. (p. 54)

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Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) suggest motivation and teachers as possible control parameters capable of positively influencing the behaviours of learners. However, in the case under focus, there is little presence of teachers in the online learning context as learners learn from video lectures and learners could not reach to their teacher while Blackboard is shut down. As for motivation, the quotes presented so far in this chapter show that the online learners were highly motivated and enthusiastic to continue their education. Nonetheless, when learners struggled with strong negative components in their learning context, their high motivation *alone* did not seem to have a helpful impact either on their emotional state or their behaviours. On the contrary, their high motivation, when faced by hurdles threatening achievement of their goals, caused a harmful impact on learners, such as suffering from intense emotional disturbances or engaging in maladaptive behaviours. As revealed by the quotes above, some learners obsessively attempted to access the shutdown Blackboard in a way adversely affecting other aspects of their lives or watch lectures for prolonged periods when they could access the system. With the persistence of the problems, some thought of dropping out from the programme altogether despite being previously highly motivated. The data show that motivation alone could not keep some learners moving in their learning, because their motivation was "robbed" by the strong negative components as described in one of the quotes above.

Thus, there must be other control parameters other than motivation that helped the positive learners keep moving in their learning. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) express that "control parameters are the key to understanding changes in [behaviours of] complex systems—if they can be identified, then we know what drives the system and are able to intervene" (p. 54). The following section will attempt to identify first the adaptive behaviours of the positive learners and then to identify potential control parameters that kept them driven (motivated) and made them engage in adaptive behaviours to resist their chaotic learning context. Due to space constraints, I will first present an overview of the adaptive attitudes and behaviours of the positive learners in response to their negative learning context and then present a detailed case of one positive learner whose behaviours enabled her to keep moving in her learning.

5.4.1 Adaptive behaviours of the positive learners: A CDST Reading

Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) state that "response to energy and matter [external forces] coming from outside…leads to adaptive change [adaptive behaviour] that maintain order or stability" (p. 43-44). Stability does not mean a static state; it means "a dynamic

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system that maintains its overall identity, without being subject to wild fluctuations or chaotic changes (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Earlier quotes show that the learners were highly motivated and enthusiastic to be accepted onto the online programme, for being moving towards a desired goal (**a desired attractor state**). However, the problems of the learning context (**perturbations/fluctuations**) were threating learners' retention (**stability**) on the programme, which turned out to be a negative learning context (**a chaotic attractor state**). In a chaotic attractor state, a system "changes adaptively to maintain stability" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 58). This means that learners who will keep moving in their learning have to adapt in their chaotic attractor state (**the negative learning context**). Learners who will fail to adapt might behave "chaotically" (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011, p. 8). In our case, this is manifested in intense emotional disturbances and maladaptive behaviours of some learners. And eventually, if the learners can no longer tolerate chaos or emotional disturbances and/or are exhausted from fruitless maladaptive behaviours, they might choose to drop out of the programme (**undergo a phase shift by leaving the attractor basin**).

The positive learners were adaptive to their negative learning context and the data revealed that they employed two types of adaptation: psychological and behavioural. **Psychological adaptation** refers to "the way individuals handle their life stress in a new environment" (Shafaei & Razak, 2018, p. 40), resulting in an "internal phenomenon characterized by "feeling well"… [and the adaptation] includes the lack of psychological problems (e.g., depression, anxiety), presence of well-being such as satisfaction with life" (Sam et al., 2015, p. 158). Strategies for psychological adaptation include positive reappraisals (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000), having a sense of control (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010), problem-focused coping and acceptance (Martz & Livneh, 2016). The quotes below show that the positive learners employed psychological adaptation to resist their adverse learning context. These learners accepted their difficult situation, maintained an optimistic attitude, avoided pessimistic thinking and showed a sense of control in that they appreciated their learning problems could be overcome by an effective learning plan:

> Control your nerves and organize your time and gradually you can catch up. There are many who suffer because of the dysfunctionality of the system. It is true we have missed three lectures (for each course), but it is better than missing 10 lectures.

> Relax! We are still at the beginning; there will be a solution. We are the first cohort of online learners so it is normal there are some problems; we just need to be patient.

> Do not get mad and make the problem bigger than it is; we still have time to catch up and finish (watching) all lectures on time.

In addition to psychological adaptation, the positive learners employed **behavioural adaptation**, which refers to behaviours an individual develops to adapt to his/her environment. There were two main struggles in the online context: a) deprivation of a physical learning context that provides intimacy and face-to-face interaction and b) Blackboard's problems that denied learners constant, stable and prompt access to their learning materials. To cope with the lack of physical presence and immediacy, the online learners established group cohesiveness as an adaptive behaviour in their virtual space, the discussion forum. The forum represented a point of relative stability in the chaotic learning context for the first cohort of online learners. It was their virtual learning space, through which they could post enquiries on regulations, procedures, and learning requirements to administrative and technical staff. The forum also enabled learners to vent their fears and frustrations, and ask for help and advice. The online learners made effective use of the forum in that they used it to communicate with each other and answer their peers' enquiries or attend to their anxieties. However, the university hosted all online learners in one space (section) regardless of their prospective majors since the first cohort were taking the same courses. Some learners wanted a more learning-oriented communication; thus they initiated threads to gather all learners wishing to study in the same major in one thread to establish a sense of belonging, communication and cooperation. Further, some learners exchanged personal emails to enable them to communicate through Windows Messenger; whereby they quickly self-organized into smaller groups where it was possible to communicate more effectively and instantly with each other and provide stronger feelings of stability and intimacy with each other.

The positive learners enhanced group cohesiveness through attempting to find solutions to the technical problems and attending to the anxieties of other learners and trying to discourage learners wishing to withdraw from the programme and encouraging them to persist instead:

> Do not withdraw. I shall support you. We all have difficult circumstances; do not let your circumstances be chains holding you back. You're better than a dropout.

> I advise you not to withdraw. There is enough time; you just organize your time and study hard.

> Why withdraw? Be strong and defy challenges.

In addition to calming down the anxious learners, they attempted to implement some solutions to overcome the learning difficulties of their peers. In the previous section, we saw

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that some learners lack autonomous learning skills in managing to download and study their delayed lectures and asked the university to organize this for them. In contrast, the positive learners showed more autonomy in managing their own learning and shared the benefits of their autonomy skills with their peers by sharing their own study timetables, study plans and learning diaries to aid anxious learners to manage their learning.

With respect to the second struggle, difficulties in accessing Blackboard, some learners who had sufficient IT knowledge provided technical support and advice to enable learners access to lectures. They provided instructions and links to software programs to enhance the performance of learners' desktops and laptops, to enable them to download the materials. Others recorded the lectures they could access in audio format and uploaded them on sharing websites for the community to access:

> As you all know the problem of Blackboard is a problem for lots of students. We all need to cooperate; whoever can access lectures please record them and upload them for learners who cannot access them.

Other learners who watched lectures and produced study notes, summaries and/or transcriptions for their own use made these available for other learners who were unable to access lectures in order to let learners have an idea about the content of lectures:

> Until you find a solution to your problem (inability to access lectures), review the summaries provided by our brothers and sisters (other learners). I myself have collected several summaries from this forum, which is cooperative in every sense of the word. Most importantly, do not let this problem curb your enthusiasm. Copy all the summaries into Word documents and if you find any difficulties understanding (the content) ask for explanations and you shall find answers from our brothers and sisters.

The data revealed that this sharing of personal study notes, summaries and transcriptions was the seed from which LGMs germinated. Sharing of LGMs was the main adaptive behaviour to cope with difficulties to access Blackboard and watch video lectures.

In sum, group cohesiveness and the sharing of LGMs were vital adaptive behaviours for learners to inject some stability into their learning. The adaptive behaviours were initiated by a few at the beginning; nonetheless, they succeeded in positively resisting chaos in their learning context. Many other learners began to follow their lead and copy their behaviours, which resulted in creating an adaptive learning community within their negative learning context (**the chaotic attractor state**). The following section will present a detailed account of one particular positive learner, and I will attempt to identify the control parameters that were instrumental in influencing her behavioural and psychological adaptations and kept her moving in her learning.

5.4.2 The case of Maisa

Maisa contributed to the early production of LGMs in the online community as discussed in what follows, but I will first provide some details of Maisa's profile. Maisa was amongst the first cohort of online learners who were taking all first year courses together including three courses of General English. In the second year, she majored in a major other than English. At the beginning of the online programme Maisa was one of the learners who posted several times a day asking for help in accessing Blackboard. The data suggest that she lacked sufficient IT skills; whenever she had a problem, she posted an enquiry asking for instructions. She was amongst the group of learners who could not access the video lectures at all. After being confused and frustrated for a while about the cause of the problem, based on a diagnosis given by other learners she learned that her Internet connection was far too slow to play video files. However, she could not afford a high-speed Internet connection. Academically, the data revealed that Maisa graduated from secondary school with an overall average equal to a D. This average is the lowest passing grade and explains why Maisa was not offered a place for on-campus study. Maisa encountered problems with the academic content of the courses; she often asked for help from other online learners to provide her with explanations to understand some of her lessons. She described herself as "slow in memorizing 😬". She also had particular problems with English and with understanding the materials used in English classes; she was largely dependent on other learners:

> I could hardly decipher the (English) lecture.

5.4.2.1 Maisa's control parameters

Despite the hurdles and difficulties that denied her access to video lectures, Maisa showed an ability to adapt to be able to retain her place on the programme. Adaptation is a form of change "in which a system adjusts itself in response to changes in its environment" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 33). Control parameters refer to the principles or the rules that guide how a system moves from one attractor state to another (changes its behaviour). Hiver (2015) explains that "awareness of the system parameters can allow us to better describe how and why a system came to settle into a certain pattern or outcome" (p. 22). In the case of a learner, control parameters are aspects related to the learner that guide and influence the learner's behaviour. In what follows, I will describe Maisa's adaptations and will identify her control parameters that maintained and protected her motivation from negative influences. It was established in section 3.4.5 that motivated learners are simultaneously autonomous and need to employ affective autonomous skills to understand and manage their emotional states

to support their learning. Accordingly, I will examine whether her control parameters show any connections between emotions and EI skills and motivation.

5.4.2.1.1 Investment in social capital

Maisa's posts revealed that she did not overthink about the problems of Blackboard, she was not overwhelmed by anxieties and worries about her chances of success, nor did she engage in maladaptive behaviours as was the case with anxious and demotivated learners. Instead, she focused on nurturing **social capital** in her chaotic context. Social capital has been featured in recent SLA positive psychology studies for its affordances in creating a positive learning context and interpersonal engagement (Falout, 2014; Gregersen et al., 2016). Social capital refers to "networks that have the potential to provide either material or non-material resources (including achieving physical and mental health, a sense of personal safety, and feeling integrated into a community and valued by others in that community)" (Gregersen et al., 2016, p. 149, citing Nawyn, 2012).

Maisa resorted to investing in social capital to be able to embark on her learning. She joined one of the Windows Messenger groups and asked the group members to provide her with summaries of lectures. Some learners transcribed lectures for her; others provided her with summaries and/or study notes. This solution enabled Maisa to start making some progress in her learning. Maisa's adaptive behaviour is in line with **EI Adaptability**. According to Bar-On (2016), adaptability "means being aware of the immediate environment as well as realistically and flexibly attempting to understand and address challenges when they arise" (p. 296). EI Adaptability consists of three skills: **Reality-testing, Flexibility** and **Problem-solving**. Maisa displayed a proper assessment of her situation and her learning context, was flexible to accept and adjust to her situation and found a partial solution to her inability to access lectures. EI Adaptability skills resonate with **environmental control strategies** for self-motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Muir, 2019). This strategy is about "eliminating negative environmental influences and exploiting positive environmental influences by making the environment an ally in the pursuit of a difficult goal (e.g., eliminating distractions; asking friends to help)" (Dörnyei & Muir, 2019, p. 731). EI Adaptability skills then seem also to contribute to self-motivation; EI Adaptability skills support adapting to negative environmental influences and investing in positive environmental components such as relying on social capital resources (i.e., peers).

When Maisa got LGMs from her Messenger group members, she constantly shared them on the forum to make them available for other learners who similarly suffered from the inability to access lectures. When other more tech-savvy learners uploaded some recorded lectures in audio format to other sharing websites, Maisa posted threads updating the links

regularly and began herself to make LGMs and shared them with the community. Additionally, she started a thread where she shared her own planned study timetable and a daily dairy of her study and study notes. These behaviours reflect a problem-focused and action-oriented coping, which are strategies for psychological adaptation. Engaging and focusing on a possible solution is a psychological adaptation in that the individual aims to disengage mentally and psychologically from the problem and its possible negative impacts.

Instead of being overwhelmed by thinking and negative emotions, Maisa engaged with her peers. She showed a supportive stance and concern towards them and thus helped other learners to keep progressing despite the technical problems affecting the whole community. Gregersen et al. (2016) maintain that altruistic help fosters happiness and "enhances our self-esteem and makes us feel useful" (p. 153). The online community duly acknowledged Maisa's efforts in supporting other learners:

> Thanks to Maisa; she has adopted all online learners (as her own children).

Further, being unable at all to access teachers' materials seemed to have enabled Maisa to develop a sense of empathy towards learners who had similar problems:

> I feel for those who cannot access lectures. I have the same problem and I depend on brother Shahir (a tech-savvy who managed to record lectures) to provide me with lectures.

Indeed, Maisa posted empathetic and supporting comments in response to learners complaining about problems with watching lectures. She considered the feelings of other learners and when some learners made a request to the university to postpone end of semester exams because they were not properly prepared because of the technical problems that caused the delays in watching lectures, Maisa supported them against other learners who wanted exams to be held as originally scheduled:

> Although I do not want the postponement of exams, we should feel the suffering of other students.

Maisa became known in the community within a few weeks of the commencement of the programme for her helpful and constructive interactions with other learners. She was called 'Precious Maisa' and received great social recognition and appreciation from her community as a result:

> I do not like to post in any thread, but the writer of this thread makes one feel they are obliged to respond due to her great efforts and dedication to the community.

> These are the links to lectures collected by Maisa. May she be rewarded greatly; she has shown care towards all online learners.

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You are the light of the forum.

Some learners began to ask for assistance from Maisa as they were confident she would help them. Indeed, a learner explained to Maisa he was asking for help because it was known she cared about others:

I always follow your topics and have noticed you care for others.

Maisa also was involved in a number of activities that she made available to the online community. For instance, she arranged discussion groups before exams and feedback and reflection threads after exams. She arranged competitions on the forum before exams to encourage learners to revise lectures in a timely manner:

The purpose (of competitions) is to spread enthusiasm amongst learners and lift our spirits for exams.

In recognition to her active engagement and contribution to the community, Maisa was appointed as a moderator in the following semester. The characteristics of Maisa's interpersonal behaviours in the online community correspond to EI **Interpersonal skills**, which include **Social Responsibility**, **Empathy** and **Interpersonal Relationship.** According to Bar-On (2015) socially responsible individuals have "social consciousness" and show concern for others and assume "group- and community-oriented responsibilities." Further Empathy is important for "social-awareness" and for being "a dependable, responsible and loyal group member… and being a cooperative, contributing and trustworthy team player". The EI skill of Interpersonal Relationship is about "meaningful social interactions that are potentially rewarding and enjoyable for those involved" (Bar-On, 2015). This is in line with the assumption that, as a psychological adaption strategy, Maisa utilized social capital for its immediate rewarding impacts. Further, EI interpersonal skills are related to **social learning strategies** (Oxford, 1990) needed for autonomous learning, which include cooperating and empathizing with others. It appears that engaging in interpersonal relationships that are based on a sense of social responsibility, cooperation and empathy are valuable social capital resources. These resources are also important for behavioural and psychological adaptations and for motivated and autonomous learning as well. The data show that EI Interpersonal Relationships support the establishing of social capital, which supports motivation and social strategies for learning autonomy. Clearly, Maisa' desire to invest in social capital influenced and directed her interpersonal behaviours.

5.4.2.1.2 Emotional awareness

The following excerpt shows how Maisa, while using humour, advises learners to control their emotions during a period when Blackboard was completely shutdown, which conveys Maisa's understanding of the importance of taking care of one's emotional state (affective autonomy) as well as her ability to pay attention to the emotions of others:

> Please do not be afraid
> Please do not upset yourself
> Please take it easy
> Please do not be stressed because I see that some people started to show some symptoms including a short temper :)
>
> Peace be upon your hearts. Please do not feel upset
> Eventually Blackboard shall open and you shall watch all lectures till you are bored to death with them
> Please do not be afraid
> If you take it so seriously you might get ill; you might develop high blood pressure or heart attack or disabilities or white blood cell inflammation :)
>
>
>
> Stay calm so we can get through this year peacefully
> I say to our dear learners: patience is the key to feeling better.
>
> I advise you when you want to open Blackboard do not forget to take pain killers, a cup of coffee, two bottles of chocolate milk, a toothbrush and a hammer to smash things up
>
>
>
> You might not understand the point of this gibberish, but laughter is beneficial for blocked arteries around the lips.
>
> Seriously, seriously no one should feel upset or sad at all
> Soon things will get better
> Iron Man and The Incredible Hulk are standing by at the borders
> Robin Hood is ready to take risks for us
>
> I just wanted to get rid of the mood of anger and sadness sweeping over the forum
> I say to learners who are stressed because of Blackboard and the lectures they haven't had the chance to watch yet go and watch again the old lectures. I collected them all here [link]. Open the textbooks and study hard. Now is your chance to do so; later you might not have the time to do so.
>
> Finally, I have a confession; it is me who shut down Blackboard.
>
> .
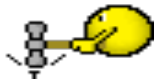
Maisa appears to be aware of the relationship between negative emotions and well-being and learning atmosphere as well. Thus, she is advising learners not to let negative emotions work against them as there is no point in being upset. She advised them to be patient, which corresponds to the **acceptance strategy** (Martz & Livneh, 2016) of psychological adaptation. It appears that her way of dealing with the shutdown of Blackboard is through maintaining an optimistic way of thinking; she assures learners that things will get better, and everyone will get the chance to watch lectures till they are bored with them. Instead of being negatively affected by Blackboard's problems, she focused on the positive side and advised learners to utilize this opportunity to study from textbooks or by reviewing old lectures. Maisa appears to draw on optimism, hope, resilience and efficacy, which are considered to be psychological capital resources important for psychological adaptation (Luthans et al., 2007). According to Luthans et al. (2007), **psychological capital** is defined as

> an individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: 1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; 2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; 3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and 4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success. (p. 3)

The more psychological capital individuals have, the more they are likely to cope through change and acceptance (Rabenu et al., 2017). Maisa appears to have high levels of psychological capital as she uses several coping strategies. She uses distraction of negative emotions through humour and laughter. Maisa maintained a happy and humorous mood to stay stable in the face of the unpredictable perturbations of Blackboard. Maisa's upbeat outlook is reflected in her posts. She tried to make her peers laugh in an attempt to change their bad mood. She was used to telling forum members funny stories from her personal life, such as a story about her little brother whom she struggled with to help him learn his lessons. Unlike the majority of posts complaining about learning conditions or reflecting intense emotional strains, Maisa distinguished herself as someone who is capable of spreading feelings of happiness in the community. As a result of her happy and humorous mood, learners were attracted to read Maisa's threads:

> When I see your name and read your topics I feel life is sweet.

> Thank you Maisa. You always put a smile on learners' faces.

> Your topics are always distinguished and exciting.

> Your topics always amuse me.

Maisa employed psychological adaptation through utilizing her psychological capital to remain "feeling well" (Sam et al., 2015, p. 158), as a result of which her motivation was sustained and she was still eager to watch again old lectures and revise from the textbooks instead of feeling anxious and worried about the new missed lectures. Her strategies for psychological adaptation are in line with **self-motivation** as described by Corno (1993), which is "a dynamic system of psychological control processes that protect concentration and directed effort in the face of personal and/or environmental distractions, and so aid learning and performance" (as cited in Dörnyei & Muir, 2019, p. 731). Dörnyei (2005) and Dörnyei and Muir (2019) also propose that management of disruptive emotional states and generating of positive emotions are **emotion control strategies** for self-motivation.

The psychological control involves emotional awareness and management as well which is evident in Maisa's above excerpt. She seems to have the ability to regulate her emotions in the interests of her well-being and to maintain progress in her learning. A number of EI skills seem to respond with her behaviours: **Emotional Awareness**, **Happiness**, and **Optimism**.

Emotional awareness involves awareness of one's emotions, an understanding of causes of emotional arousal, and a management of emotions. Individuals with high levels of emotional awareness are """in touch with their feelings" and have a good understanding of their inner being" (Bar-On, 2015). Happiness is about the ability to enjoy various aspects in life and enjoy the company of other people. Optimism is the ability to maintain a positive attitude towards life; which is important for coping with stresses and being confident in achieving one's goals. Bar-On (2015) also maintains that Happiness and Optimism are important for self-motivation. Maisa's behaviours also correspond to **affective learning strategies** for autonomous learning. Oxford (1990) proposes lowering anxiety through laughter, music, relaxation and mediation, encouraging oneself through positive statements, and finally taking one's emotional temperature, which includes paying attention to emotional impacts on the physical body and discussing feelings with others. Murase (2015) also proposes that learning autonomy has a psychological dimension, which includes the "capacity to take control of one's learning by knowing about one's affective states… and how to control these affective factors" (p. 45).

Several SLA positive psychology studies investigated the impacts of laughter, humour, happiness and optimism in learning contexts. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) maintain that "positive emotion helps to undo the lingering effects of negative emotional arousal… [and] promote resilience by triggering productive reactions to stressful events, such as improving cardiovascular recovery and making salient feelings of happiness and interest while under

stress" (p. 197).

The data suggest that Maisa's emotional awareness worked as a control parameter that kept her progressing in her learning. It equipped her with strategies for psychological adaptation that made her a self-motivated and affectively autonomous learner. This quote shows that she is seeking to induce the emotion of jealousy to motivate herself:

> We want some enthusiasm. We want to know what have you studied so far so jealousy works on me and I get motivated and I continue my study. I only work this way.

Finally, the data also show strong links between EI skills of Emotional Awareness, Optimism and Happiness and psychological adaptation, self-motivation and affective strategies for learning autonomy.

5.4.2.1.3 Core desired selves

The data also revealed that Maisa had more than one desired future self. The following excerpt shows how Maisa used her imagined future selves to resist in the face of annoyances and problems in her immediate learning context:

> When I have this feeling, I feel I want to devour the textbooks (to show her extreme enthusiasm).
> Let us forget for a while about the exam timetable, the chaos of the system and the English course and its annoyances
> Let us imagine we have completed the first year successfully
> Wait, wait
> Let me imagine alone <<<< each one imagines alone so you really get immersed in your imagination
> Imagine I have completed this semester successfully and the following semester and the second year as well and the third and the fourth years
> Then imagine I have taken a one-year diploma to become a teacher
> Imagine I am doing my teacher training
> I imagine myself walking confidently and all children surrounding me saying Ms. Maisa Ms. Maisa <<<< such a sweet feeling
> I shall talk to them kindly and explain things to them in my own special way
> I shall do all things I wished our teachers did for us
> I shall give my first salary to my father
> I shall give my second salary to my mother
> I shall give my third salary to my brother (he appears to be older than her)
> I shall distribute my fourth salary amongst the rest of my siblings (they appear to be younger than her)
> I shall give my fifth salary to charity
> I feel extremely happy I will be able to support myself financially
> I want to be the best teacher in the world and everyone to praise my work
> Ms. Maisa did this Ms. Maisa did that
> I swear I feeeeel I want to study and study until I make this dream true
> To be honest I am not sure if the other half of my dream shall come true (getting a job after graduation) <<< but the most important thing is I am dreaming.

Maisa here employs imagination of her desired future selves as a psychological adaptation strategy to cope with the annoyances caused by the release of the exam timetable, the chaos of Blackboard and the general English course and to foster positive emotions instead. She first imagines she has successfully completed her course and her teacher training. She then imagines herself walking confidently surrounded by children—her pupils. This particular image gives her a sweet feeling. She imagines explaining and doing things for them. Then, she imagines giving her first salaries to family and charity (this practice is common in the cultural context of this study). Maisa also feels extremely happy imagining that she will be financially independent. She also imagines herself as an accomplished, praiseworthy professional. She is eager to approach **the kind and dedicated teacher self**, **the financially independent employed self**, and **the successful and praiseworthy professional self**. These future selves appear to be core selves to Maisa. A core self is important for "identifying or defining the self [and] is likely to be chronically accessible" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 957). These desired selves are important for Maisa's self-concept and thus might have stronger effects on her than any other secondary desired future selves. Being engaged with her core desired future selves instills in her a strong motivation "to study and study" to make her dream true. Maisa's employment of vivid images of her desired selves to protect her motivation from annoyances she was experiencing aligns partially with the assumption of the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005). The L2MSS model places the motivational power in the imagined selves that "give form, meaning, structure, and direction to one's hopes and threats, thereby inciting and directing purposeful behavior. The more vivid and elaborate the possible self, the more motivationally effective it is expected to be" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 100). However, Maisa conveys that when she has these images, she experiences extreme happiness and sweet feelings, and when she has these feelings, she feels she wants to "devour the textbooks." She, in effect, through imagination and vivid images, generates anticipatory emotion and anticipated emotion. Anticipatory emotions are "current affective responses to the prospect of future events that have positive or negative consequences" (Baumgartner, et al., 2008, p. 686). Anticipated emotions are "any emotional reaction to mental simulations of future events and behaviors" (Baumgartner, et al .2008, p. 694). Maisa derives happiness now from imagining herself as a successful teacher receiving love from her students and recognition from others and a financially independent individual capable of supporting herself (anticipatory emotion). She also realizes that she will be happy in the future when she achieved her dream (anticipated emotion). Therefore, the positive emotions experienced in the present or which would be experienced in the future seemed to be the fuel that motivates Maisa to study hard and persist in her learning despite the annoyances she is experiencing. It

appears that the exam timetable, the problems of Blackboard and the English course (the main sources of annoyances) had a demotivating impact on her. As a result, she copes with these annoyances through imagination to foster happiness and sweet feelings in order to motivate herself to study.

Maisa's use of imagination to escape negative emotions also indicates that her imaginative behaviour is directed and influenced by the control parameter of emotional awareness; she is aware that in order to feel motivated she needs first to eliminate negative emotions and replace them with positive emotions instead. Thus, **EI Emotional Awareness** plays a role in utilizing imagined desired selves to induce **Happiness** that consequently triggers motivation. Additionally, the possible selves construct suggests that a person will have desired future selves and will take action to approach these selves. This corresponds with the EI skill of **Self-actualization**. Self-actualization also involves having definite conceptions about what a person wants to achieve in life and directing behaviour to actualize one's self potential. According to Bar-On (2015) the skills of Self-actualization, Optimism, and Happiness are the "trio that fuels" the other skills of EI and that generates self-motivation. The motivational impact associated with high levels of Self-actualization is in line with Markus and Nurius' (1987) assumption that elaborated possible selves "function as incentives for future behavior" (p. 955). However, Bar-On (2015) claims that "self-actualization is an ongoing process of striving toward maximum development of our competencies... It generates emotional energy, which helps motivate us to do our best." So, Bar-On thinks that it is emotions related to the desire to achieve self-actualization that motivate behaviour, which agrees with the understanding that Maisa generates extreme happiness and sweet feelings from her imagined selves to feel highly motivated and ready to "devour the textbooks."

The data so far have suggested that Maisa employed psychological and behavioural adaptations to cope with influences negatively affecting her learning. Within a CDST perspective, the change of behaviour is guided by control parameters. In the case of Maisa, the data suggest that the control parameters that shape Maisa's adaptive behaviours include investment in social capital, emotional awareness and core desired selves. The data also show that emotional awareness is essential for effective investment in social capital; consideration of people's feelings, showing empathy and using humour and laughter to generate good feelings in people all contribute to the establishment of effective interpersonal relationships which is the basis for social capital. Additionally, emotional awareness is also central to induce the desired emotional energizing impact for self-motivation. As described by Corno (1993) self-motivation is a psychological control process. Psychological control involves awareness and control of emotion.

Further, the data show that EI skills of Emotional Awareness, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Happiness, Optimism, Empathy and Self-actualization describe the psychological and behavioural adaptations employed by Maisa that protected her motivation. The data suggest that these EI skills support both motivation and affective and social strategies for autonomous learning. Maisa did not show great autonomy with her cognitive learning; she used to ask her peers to explain the contents of lessons for her and described herself as "slow" in learning. However, the findings suggest she was very autonomous in affective and social learning strategies. The findings suggest that autonomous learners (autonomous in the affective and social dimensions) are emotionally intelligent. They use positive emotions and focus on the positive side of things to keep themselves motivated and contented.

The data suggest that Maisa were emotionally intelligent in coping with her learning difficulties. According to Goleman (1995), it is our emotional intelligence, not our cognitive abilities, that can determine our success at the educational, occupational and personal level. Although Maisa was not the most academically gifted, she appears to have had a successful and joyful learning experience on the online programme. The following excerpt is the last post from Maisa years after she graduated:

> My regards to all of you.
> Wish you all pleasant times.
> It has been so long since I last logged into this forum. This forum gave lots and lots to my colleagues and me
> I remember our classes in the forum studying with each other and revising with each other
> Such lovely days
> I found myself back on the forum today by chance and all the feelings of university study days came back to me.
> I went through a number of topics and I wanted to write this:
> My colleagues and I were amongst the first cohort of the online learners
> One of my colleagues did a master degree and now she is a qualified trainer.
> Another colleague did a medical qualification and now she works in a hospital as a social worker.
> Another one got a job in the Higher Education sector
> And I got a job that suits my major in the private sector.
>
> Thus, do not listen to those who try to discourage you
> Study and do your best
> Doomsters always appear at sensitive times of the year
> at exam times
> So be careful

Maisa did not realize her dream of being a teacher surrounded by children calling her Miss Maisa, but she got another job and appeared to be content because she had achieved something and was financially independent and proud to take her place alongside her other

successful colleagues. Maisa's last piece of advice is a warning against negative emotions caused by pessimistic learners. Maisa told her success story as well as the success stories of her colleagues to instil motivation and hope in learners to keep on with their learning while having positive dreams about their future.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter consisted of three parts. Part 1 presented the emotional state of the online learners when they first joined the programme, and it was revealed that some learners were motivated by intense emotional reasons to continue their education. Part 2 discussed the problems learners encountered with regards to textbooks, Blackboard and teachers' materials and how these problems aggregated negative emotions in learners that had a negative impact on learners' emotional state and motivation. Part 3 examined the psychological and behavioural adaptations employed by learners who could protect their motivation and it was found that EI skills were displayed in learners' adaptive psychological processes and adaptive behaviours.

Chapter 6
On the production and developments of LGMs

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is consisted of two parts. The first part presents and describes the forms LGMs took, learners' attitudes towards LGMs and developments in the production of LGMs. The second part reports learners' motivations for producing LGMs.

6.2 Part one: LGMs' definition, early forms and characteristics

ELT materials, according to Tomlinson (2005), "include anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, CD-ROM, DVD or the internet" (p. 2). Also, ELT materials "encompass both texts and language-learning tasks: texts presented to the learner in paper-based, audio, or visual form, and / or exercises and activities built around such texts" (Harwood, 2010, p. 3). McGrath (2014) describes LGMs as learning materials either selected or produced by learners to be used by the teacher with the learners who authored the materials or to be used with other learners. In contrast, in the present study LGMs mean materials or activities selected or generated by learners and used by learners for self or group study in any form to facilitate learning.

The early forms of LGMs were individual initiatives by which learners aimed to provide the online community with learning materials to aid learners who could not access teachers' materials, to make the learning task easier for these learners or to encourage others to stay on track with their study. The early LGMs did not have a fixed form; they were produced according to the study style or ability of their writers and could take any of the following forms. Learners generally use the word "summaries" to refer to any form of materials they produce. I shall use the acronym LGMs to refer to any form of their materials:

- Study notes
- Summaries of lectures with the focus on important points from the authors' point of view
- Summaries of lectures including learners' comments and input
- Transcriptions of lectures
- Lecture transcripts converted into question-answer format

For English courses (as opposed to LGMs generated for other discipline-specific courses), the language proficiency of the writers also played a key role in defining the type and volume of EFL LGMs generated. EFL LGMs took the following additional forms:

- Lists of vocabulary with or without Arabic equivalents

- Grammar explanations
- Translations of reading passages

The production of early LGMs was arbitrary with no obligation or expectation on the part of the writer that LGMs would be provided for all of the lectures of a single course. Also, early LGMs were shared largely as posts on the forums (UF and IF), thus despite aiming to provide specific knowledge about lecture content, they were sometimes produced with a personal touch as learners included humorous comments and emoticons, the LGMs taking on an informal, chatty style.

Image 6.1 Early forms of LGMs produced as a forum post
to aid EFL learners to understand the WH-Question rule
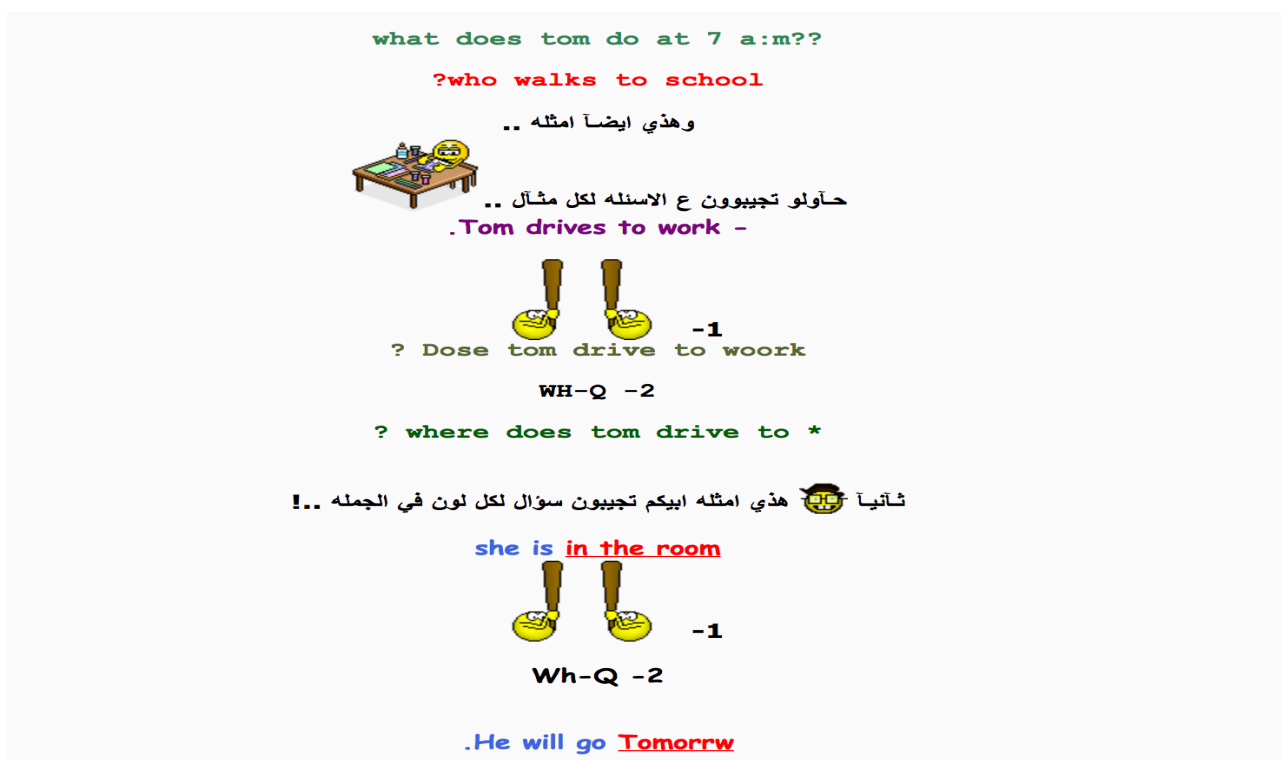
6.2.1 Attitudes towards LGMs

Learners generally responded positively to other learners' efforts in producing LGMs. However, it appears that LGMs were seen initially as an aid that should be used only with caution; but as the technical problems in accessing lectures persisted throughout the semester, learners came to depend more heavily on LGMs for exam study.

6.2.1.1 General positive attitude towards LGMs

Given the intense negative emotions caused by the technical problems associated with teachers' materials, it appears that the production of LGMs was met with appreciation from and approval of the community:

Brother Nadir and Sister Maisa you have no idea how much we were thrilled when you shared with us the contents of the first and second lectures. We are impatiently waiting for the third one.

LGMs writers gained recognition from their community. In fact, in subsequent semesters of the online programme, they usually got chosen to be IF moderators:

We feel speechless in thanking you for your great efforts in aiding us. We are waiting for your summaries. Your wonderful style makes things much easier for us.

6.2.1.2 Cautious attitude towards LGMs

At the commencement of the production of LGMs and despite learners responding positively, there were some misgivings. Some learners warned that they should not neglect teachers' materials and rely solely on LGMs; rather, they should use them with caution:

LGMs are only aids; teacher's materials are the basis for learning.

Watch lectures while you follow from the LGMs; maybe there are some important points missed (in LGMs).

6.2.1.3 Coming to depend on LGMs

Initially learners viewed LGMs as a temporary solution, enabling them to grasp the gist of the contents of lectures until the technical problems with Blackboard were solved. However, as time went by and as exams were approaching, learners began to seriously consider using LGMs for exam study:

I suffered for weeks from inability to access Blackboard and I eventually decided to rely on LGMs. There are many students whose circumstances prevent them from watching lectures.

The problems of Blackboard drove us to rely on LGMs.

Indeed, learners began to make more requests for LGMs as exams drew near:

Can you provide me please with LGMs with clear explanations? The slides' contents are difficult and it is stressful to watch all lectures now. There is hardly any time left (before exams).

6.2.2 Benefits of LGMs

The data revealed LGMs were felt to confer a number of benefits to their users, as described below.

6.2.2.1 A solution to the inability to access teachers' materials

One principal benefit of LGMs was that they were a solution to the technical problems that prevented some learners from accessing all or some of the teachers' materials:

The forum members have shared LGMs for all lectures; the only solution to your problem (inability to access lectures) is to rely on learners' LGMs.

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6.2.2.2 A relief from negative emotions

LGMs enabled learners to keep busy with their learning rather than being preoccupied by their inability to access lectures:

> Leave stresses and worries (caused by Blackboard) behind and study from LGMs till Blackboard gets fixed. There is not much time to be wasted.

> Do not stress yourself if Blackboard is not working, the girls shall provide you with contents of all lectures.

6.2.2.3 A source for positive emotions

LGMs were not only a source of relief from negative emotions, but also a source of motivation and enthusiasm to keep learners on track in their academic journey:

> This way (producing LGMs) we maintain our enthusiasm till the end.

Some learners were motivated to produce some LGMs themselves in response to the cooperative spirit fostered through others' LGMs:

> After seeing all learners studying hard , except me, I decided to do something to aid those who need help with their study.

6.2.2.4 An Aid for learners who lack sufficient academic skills

LGMs drew attention to key pieces of information and aided learners who lacked academic skills such as critical thinking, note-taking, summarising and other metacognitive skills such as planning and organizing learning:

> Some students have sharp minds indeed; they wrote notes about important points mentioned subtly in lectures. Not all students can identify important points themselves. I have noticed this myself.

> There are students who lack the skill of summarizing and identifying important information from lectures. These learners in particular need LGMs more than anyone else.

> I have not opened a single book in 10 years. How can I study now? I feel I am afraaaaid; I am lacking concentration and my self-confidence is low. I want someone to comfort me, to tell me exams are easy and tell me *how to study* (italics added), especially those who have little children with lots of responsibilities.

6.2.2.5 A Solution for learners with special circumstances

LGMs were a solution for learners with responsibilities and busy lives who had insufficient time to commit to their study:

> I need hard-copy LGMs, how to get them? I am employed and I have just started studying. I feel very stressed.

6.2.2.6 Saving time and effort in making hard-copy materials

It was revealed earlier that learners preferred hard-copy materials to digital ones. Thus, they made themselves hard-copy materials based on the contents of lectures and textbooks, which required considerable time and effort:

> I need days for summarizing lectures; sometimes 4 days to summarize lectures (of the week).

Some learners found this process tiring and had no time to prepare hard-copy materials themselves. Thus, about 3 weeks before exams, there were numerous requests for print-ready LGMs for revision aids:

> If you have any LGMs please share them as I am exhausted writing down lectures.

Some learners made LGMs in hard-copy format and made them available in print shops in some cities, providing the community with the address of the shop. Other learners travelled to that city, took the LGMs and duly made them available in print shops in their own cities. This practice benefitted learners with no access to printers, learners who had little free time to prepare materials for printing and learners who lacked basic MS Office Word skills:

> LGMs are made available in the print shop X in city L so that learners (living in
>
> the same city) who have no access to printers can buy LGMs ready for study.

6.2.2.7 An aid for EFL learners with low English proficiency

Some learners struggled with their general EFL courses and some sought private tutors to aid them to prepare for exams. LGMs were said to be particularly useful for those learners for whom EFL courses were compulsory, but who struggled with English to prepare for exams:

> I feel depressed whenever I learned there is a new lecture uploaded because Blackboard does not open for several days. But as you promised to share with us a summary of the English lecture, I feel relieved as you are making it easier (learning the lecture) for me.

6.2.2.8 Exam aid

The fullest acknowledgment of the value of LGMs was after sitting and passing exams. Some learners believed that LGMs were the reason behind their success:

> Thank you to all who have aided us passing our exams with their beneficial contributions.

> Special thanks to Asim and Lubna; their explanations helped me. The points they explained came in the exam. Thanks are also due to all sisters and brothers for their efforts.

Given the numerous benefits of LGMs and as some of the technical problems persisted in the second semester, LGMs continued to be produced and used in the second semester by the first cohort of learners. Moreover, the second cohort of learners joining the online programme began to use the LGMs of the previous cohort and to copy the practice of producing their own LGMs as well.

Table 6.1 Significant developments in the production of LGMs in the first year of the online programme

Period	Developments
2009 (First semester) and Second semester 2010	- Sharing of arbitrary LGMs in the form of study notes, summaries, transcriptions, and in the form of questions and answers - Establishing of study and revision groups before exams for explanations - Making revision activities in the form of competitions - Sharing LGMs via external sharing sites in Word files mainly and occasionally in PDF files - Gathering of all LGMs in one thread for easy access - After sitting some exams, some learners began devising questions in their exam style for the remaining courses for revision purposes. - Provision of LGMs in a limited number of print shops

In the following section I shall focus my discussion on the production and developments of EFL LGMs produced by learners majoring in English.

6.2.3 Production of EFL LGMs

LGMs production continued in the second year (third semester) of the programme by learners majoring in different disciplines. However, the first cohort of the English major online learners did not produce the same volume of EFL LGMs in their third semester as they had produced in their first year of the programme. One obvious reason was that the total population of online learners doing the first year was much greater than the number of learners who majored in English in the second year of the programme. A second explanation as suggested by the data is that, unlike general English courses taken in the first year, learners were focusing on their own study, without being confident enough in their EFL level or having enough time to resume the production of transcriptions, summaries or explanations for other learners:

> Things are no longer like they used to be. No cooperation. No sharing. I do not know why the English section is dormant. Where are the members of the English section?

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> Interaction in the English section (of the forum) is very, very bad. Why is that? We need to help each other. We need to cooperate.

EFL learners' contributions at the beginning of their third semester were largely in the form of sharing answers to their assignments and making lists of vocabulary from lectures. There was also a suggestion to form groups of learners to produce LGMs where one group takes responsibility for producing LGMs for one whole course:

> What do you think if we divide into groups and each group make LGMs for one course? I hope we all help each other.

This proposal came to nothing at the time. It happened later with the efforts of Rania who joined the programme later (see section 6.2.4.7). It appears that such a proposal required a person of a particular type; a person capable of motivating and recruiting committed learners. However, there were some occasional contributions from a few learners who attempted to produce some LGMs.

Generally speaking, for two semesters EFL LGMs were produced towards the end of the semester while learners were getting ready for exams and by a limited number of learners. Nevertheless, over time the production of EFL LGMs had prospered and various LGMs had been produced for each EFL course. The causes behind the growth of EFL LGMs are discussed below.

6.2.4 Developments of EFL LGMs

LGMs have undergone several advancements since their commencement, with various forms and formats. Throughout the years there were some significant efforts by some influential learners that led to advancing the production of LGMs. So far, I have presented data collected through content analysis of the forums only. In the following discussion I shall also include data collected through interviews as the data collected from participants clarified aspects that were not apparent from my analysis of the forums. Extracts from interviews shall be followed by the pseudonym of the interviewee.

6.2.4.1 Uploading of video lectures to external websites and in various formats

It was revealed earlier that learners suffered from the dysfunctionality of Blackboard that denied them access to learning materials in an effective manner. Therefore, learners established the practice of uploading lectures to various external websites including the IF and YouTube for their use and the use of future cohorts of learners:

> I invite you to aid the new cohort of learners. Provide them with the links to the saved lectures.

For some courses, the same video lectures were reused in the following semesters, which served as a point of **stability** for the following cohorts of learners. The new cohorts of learners had enough time to watch lectures in advance (in the summer holidays, for instance) and to produce LGMs ready to be used when the semester commenced.

Image 6.2 Uploading of lectures in audio files in an external sharing website

Name	Size
homework_ex (2).mp3	4.6 MB
homework_ex(1).mp3	5.4 MB
المحاضرة الاولى .mp3	23.8 MB
المحاضرة التاسعة .mp3	27.9 MB
المحاضرة التمهيدية .mp3	7.5 MB
المحاضرة الثالثة .mp3	18.1 MB
المحاضرة الثالثة عشرة .mp3	25.9 MB
المحاضرة الثامنة .mp3	19.2 MB

6.2.4.2 The hack incident and the sharing of LGMs on external websites

During the first semester and only a few weeks before the final exams, the IF, specifically the Distance Education section, was hacked. As a result, a considerable portion of its content including uploaded LGMs was lost. This incident caused a lot of anger and anxiety amongst learners who were benefiting and/or who were counting on benefiting from LGMs for exam study:

Exams are approaching and all the efforts and all LGMs are gone 😱😱😱.

What a business!

😡 😡

Learners began to ask for the re-uploading of all LGMs because they needed them for exam study:

Hopefully things shall get better. For those who have saved the LGMs on their devices, please upload them, each course separately. Exams are coming soon and there are many who have not saved the LGMs on their devices.

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This incident affected LGMs in two ways. First, learners uploaded LGMs again onto the forum in a more organized manner, meaning that instead of being spread throughout the forum in individual threads, various LGMs for each course were collected under one thread. Second, in order to minimise the risks of a similar incident in the future and further data loss, learners began sharing LGMs on external sharing websites mainly in Word and occasionally in PDF files. Converting LGMs to document format was a significant advancement in the production of LGMs as LGMs now began to be generated in printer-friendly form.

6.2.4.3 Production and distribution of hard-copies of LGMs in local print shops

This practice started in the first semester. Learners wanted hard-copy materials and as it was time consuming to transfer the contents of video lectures and SCORM slides to Word files ready to print, some learners made LGMs available in print shops. This practice depended on the initiative of some learners and thus it remained limited and only some learners benefited from this practice as many other learners from other cities and towns had to print their own LGMs.

Tariq, a previous forum moderator and a well-known forum contributor in the online community, played a key role in making LGMs available in many print shops throughout the country. He was a very active moderator in the IF and he made his LGMs available on a regular basis in print shops in his city and nearby cities as well and provided addresses and contact details of the print shops to learners. He also encouraged and recruited learners from elsewhere and from the various majors to make LGMs available in their own cities. This practice made learners search for LGMs in print shops and made print shops aware of the needs of the online community.

Indeed, print shops found a profitable market for LGMs. Learners no longer needed to distribute LGMs at local shops because workers in some print shops registered on the IF in search of LGMs. Print shops therefore had a great impact on the growth of LGMs. As online learners made their LGMs available in printer-friendly files on the forum or external websites, it was easy for workers in print shops to collect whatever LGMs were available and sell them in print bound format for learners:

> In my opinion, print shops contributed to the spread and diversity of LGMs. My job in the print shop is to search for the best LGMs. (**Mansour**)

It appears that there were a number of competing print shops and as a result the print shops employed some strategies to attract learners to purchase their products. One strategy was to focus on well-known LGMs writers' products in particular:

> I observe the forum (IF) and scan for learners' views about distinguished learners.

Learners made orders for LGMs by specific learners. Their LGMs were remarkable; therefore, there was demand for their LGMs. If I sell LGMs by unknown learners, learners would ask "Do you have LGMs by other learners?" or "Do you have LGMs by such and such learners?". (**Mansour**)

Another strategy employed by the print shops was to approach distinguished LGMs writers to produce exclusive LGMs for them:

Some print shops make agreements with some distinguished learners to provide them with exclusive LGMs for an amount of money agreed on by the two parties. (**Mansour**)

To support Mansour's claims, I cite the example of Bandar who joined the forum to provide technical support to his older brother and his colleagues and ended up contributing posts on the forum and live audio explanations in external chat rooms with reference to aspects of the English General Course. He was approached by a print shop to produce his explanations posted on the forum in bound format exclusively for the shop:

I agreed to their proposal. I did not accept money, but asked that they sell the LGMs at a low price for learners. I priced the LGMs for them to ensure the bound LGMs were sold at a low price. (**Bandar**)

Bandar's bound LGMs were a tremendous success; he produced three editions of his LGMs. And in fact, the professionalism of the manner in which presented his materials impacted subsequent LGMs produced by other writers. He included a table of contents, number of pages, instructions, pictures, and exercises. Some LGMs writers followed his lead and aimed to produce their materials to a high professional standard in a bound format for each course.

The data revealed that print shops pay for ads in the various digital platforms of the community as well as hold prize draws to ensure good sales of LGMs in a competitive market full of rival print shops. The picture below, for instance, shows an offer of 2 IPhones 7 in a prize draw for learners buying LGMs from a particular print shop.

Image 6.3 Two IPhones 7 offered for learners

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6.2.4.4 Introduction of collective production of LGMs

The moderators were appointed for their active engagement on the forum. Indeed, some moderators were influential and inspirational in engaging learners in a number of activities related to LGMs production. Learners who participated in the forum's activities always received appreciation, acknowledgment and emotional reward for their efforts. The encouragement and appreciation aimed to motivate the whole community and encourage more and more learners to engage in activities for the collective good, such as participating in study groups, devising revision exercises and taking part in LGMs production competitions. These certificates and accomplishments appeared next to the author of a post.

Image 6.4 Digital certifies and badges of appreciation for LGMs' production[1]

Image 6.5 Badges of honour collected by a learner for his activities including devising quizzes[2]

---
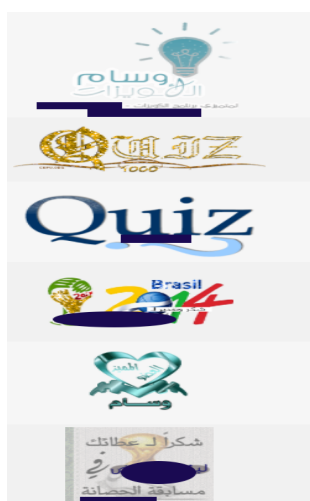
[1] Idiomatic translation of the Arabic: (from top left to bottom right) thank you for supporting the LGMs competition, 1 place, your efforts acknowledged, distinction badge, active member badge.

[2] Idiomatic translation of the Arabic: Quizzes badge, distinguished member badge.

6.2.4.5 Introduction of competitions to produce LGMs

The provision of whole-course LGMs depended on the contributions of a limited number of able learners. Zuhair, a moderator in the IF, did much to stimulate the production of whole-course LGMs through his introduction of LGMs production competitions on the forum. By means of support, encouragement, supervision and emotional rewards, these competitions guaranteed the continuous production of LGMs to meet the needs of the community and also guaranteed the high quality of LGMs produced. Furthermore, these competitions appeared to foster confidence in some learners in their ability to produce LGMs.

It appears that the elevation of LGMs production from casual study notes, summaries, or explanations to a professional level as well as the recognition by the community of the contribution of LGMs writers gave LGMs writers a special status in the online community. The special status implicitly associated with LGMs production motivated some learners to engage in the production of LGMs:

> When I see that some learners have put some efforts to make LGMs, then those learners are remarkable. So why cannot I be better than them and do something honourable? Maybe there are learners who produce LGMs to make learning easier for others, but talking about myself the factor of competition triggers me to make LGMs. (**Anood**)

6.2.4.6 Breaking away from the IF

At the commencement of the online programme, learners were active in both the UF and the IF. They were active in the UF because it was the official forum of the university where some administrative staff were answering their enquiries. However, the IF quickly became the main platform of the online community and its activities. Some influential members had some disputes with the administrators of the IF and as a result the administration banned some of these learners whereas others decided to leave the forum on their own. This incident led to angry demands to overturn these bans by other IF users:

> Precious … 🌺
> Sincerely I have loved the forum because of you and because of …, …, … and the others. I truly feel this forum is our campus and you are the teachers. I am not exaggerating when I say you all really act as our teachers. I felt extreme gloominess in my heart when I learned you have left the forum. Please our teachers do not leave us and stay for our sake. 🌹

Subsequently, some of those who were banned or left the forum moved to another forum for online learners and many learners joined the forum to be with them:

> Finally I found you …. I was asking about you and about … and … as well. Seriously we are missing you. Brother Fadi told us you are here (in this new

forum). I received a warning from the forum (IF) 🛑 and they deleted my post because I was asking about you all and because I was at your side.

Rania, who was one of the organizers of the new forum and who was an IF moderator, worked to make the new forum successful through attracting more and more learners to join. As LGMs, either in bound format or in the form of online posts, were the priority for all learners, Rania strove to attract some LGMs writers to join the new forum. But as EFL LGMs writers were limited in number, Rania also established additional teams of learners to produce LGMs.

6.2.4.7 Formation of supervised LGMs production teams

Rania established LGMs production teams under the supervision of a leader. Instead of having LGMs for one course produced by one learner, one team would work on one course. This accelerated and regularised the production of LGMs. Further, learners who could not produce complete LGMs for a whole course felt more able to produce LGMs for single lectures:

> I started making LGMs for a course, but I could not complete it. It was a difficult course and it required effort. Working in a team makes things easier; cooperation is better. (**Fadwa**)

Print shops, who were keeping a keen eye on these LGMs releases, also helped support the teams. There were agreements between some leaders of the production teams and some print shops to produce exclusive LGMs for the sponsoring print shop, some leaders receiving monthly salaries from the print shop. For their part, members of the production teams received discounts, free hard-copy LGMs or small allowances from the print shop. Further, the print shops hired learners to do the formatting and the final design of LGMs produced by other learners. Again, financial benefits and professional recognition from the print shops appear to have enhanced the status of LGMs writers and consequently the production of LGMs as well. LGMs production became a source of power and influence in the online community, which motivated more learners to get involved in LGMs production:

> Since I have started working with them (the print shop), I have been deriving strength from them and all (learners) became respectful to me. (**Nawal**)

6.2.4.8 Impact of social media platforms

Discussion forums were the only major platform for the community; therefore, moderators in the forum exercised influence, being able to arrange activities, competitions or form teams of LGMs writers. Becoming an influential member in the community depended to a great extent on being a moderator, which was not a role afforded to anyone. However, the introduction of social media platforms, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram, gave the

opportunity to many individuals to form their own leadership platforms and provide the community with leadership services including provision of LGMs through the formation of teams of LGMs writers as well as other various forms of LGMs such as explanations, quizzes, and interactive activities, without the need to be a moderator on the community forums:

> The beginning was in the wonderful Twitter. I was active in aiding my colleagues and answering their questions especially before exams. Then, I received invitations from two teams to join them in producing LGMs. Afterwards, we moved onto Telegram; we formed channels for our level and then channels for learners of lower levels as well. (**Fawaz**)

Image 6.6 An LGMs production team advertises their work on Twitter

Social media influenced the production of LGMs in many ways. For instance, social media enhanced the special status of LGMs writers, conferring upon them something of a celebrity status. Galia, who produced LGMs for two courses on her own, explained her feelings when her first LGMs were circulated through the various social media platforms:

> Galia: It was a great feeling. The prominent figures contacted me to thank and congratulate me. And when my father passed away lots and lots of learners including the prominent figures sent their condolences. I became known to everyone. The prominent figures know about me and even the print shops began to ask for Galia to do exclusive LGMs for them.
>
> Int: *What do you mean by the prominent figures?*
>
> Galia: I mean people like Osama, Nawal and Tariq and the ones with over 500 followers per channel.

Moreover, the various platforms available on social media enhanced competition:

> To some extent there is a competitive air. When the other team knew that we were working on LGMs for the X course, they decided to do LGMs for the same course 😂. They (the members of the competitive team) kept asking me via Twitter when shall I finish doing the LGMs and they never mentioned to me they were doing LGMs for the same course. When I learned they were doing LGMs for the same course I was surprised. (**Nawal**)

This competition may lead to increased quality of the LGMs on offer (although of course such a claim would need empirical testing to see whether the LGMs are truly pedagogically effective):

> There is competition between all channels and all leaders. Competition fosters work and generates creativity. (**Galia**)

Gaining large numbers of learner-followers on Telegram channels is an important concern for competing learner-leaders. Learner-leaders can benefit financially through securing advertising on their channels with print shops: Nawal, a well-known learner-leader, reported that she receives the equivalent of £360 monthly from a print shop for advertising services on her channels. Growing one's followers appears to mean special status in the community as well as financial benefit; both secured mainly through LGMs production.

The following table outlines significant advancements in the production of EFL LGMs, and there follows a good selection of sample LGMs activities to give the reader a flavour of the range of materials available.

Table 6.2 Types of LGMs and significant developments in the production of EFL LGMs

Third semester October 2010 - January 2011	- LGMs become more organized (there is a thread for gathering all LGMs for each course) - LGMs shared on the IF (it appeared that this facility was added later to the forum to allow learners to share their LGMs)
February 2011	• LGMs became widely available in print shops
October 2011	• Print shops join the forum and recruit LGMs writers
December 2011	• Explanations of lectures in chat rooms
March 2012	• Production of LGMs in a print shop by Bandar
April 2012	- Introduction of electronic quizzes in the IF - Some learners introduced their electronic quizzes onto the forum. This encouraged many learners to try themselves devising quizzes.
September 2012	• Introduction of LGMs production competitions
2013/2014	• Introduction of social media: Twitter and Telegram
2014	• Virtual leaders and formation of LGMs teams

Main Types of LGMs:

1. Whole-course LGMs
2. Explanations (live in chat rooms, written, videoed)
3. Mind maps
4. Exercises
5. Grammar rules
6. Question-Answer LGMs
7. Electronic Quizzes
8. Learning activities in study groups
9. Vocabulary lists

10. Definitions lists
11. Translations
12. Study notes
13. Summer activities
14. Transcriptions of questions and answers of live lectures
15. Guidelines /workshops for writing Graduation Project

Image 6.7 LGMs in the form of shared personal study notes
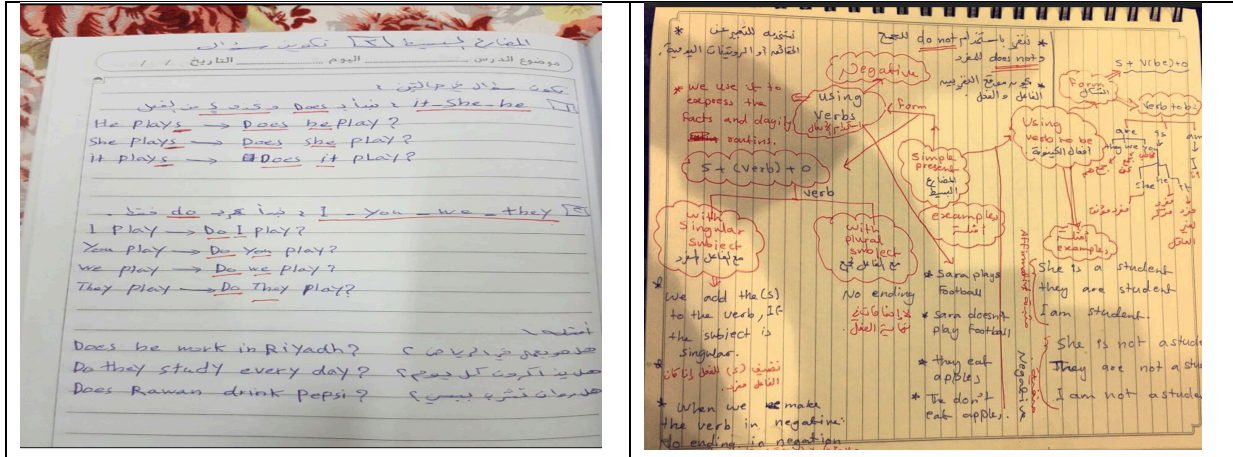
Image 6.8 LGMs in the form of mind maps
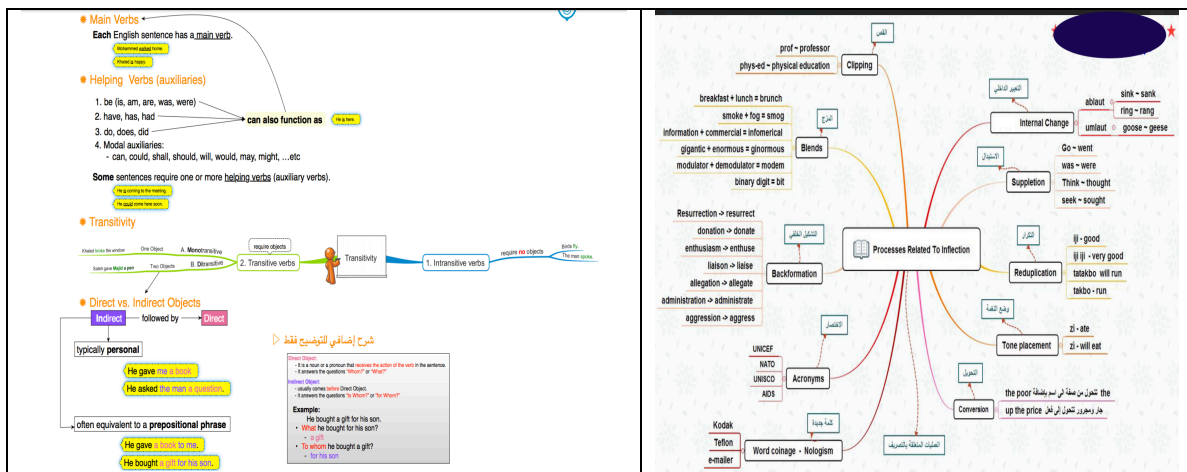
Image 6.9 LGMs in the form of grammar rules

Image 6.10 LGMs in the form of vocabulary lists with translations

Image 6.11 LGMs in the form of translations of reading passages

Image 6.12 LGMs in the form of an electronic quiz

Image 6.13 LGMs in the form of interactive learning activities in a Telegram study group

Image 6.14 LGMs in the form of audio explanations provided in a study group
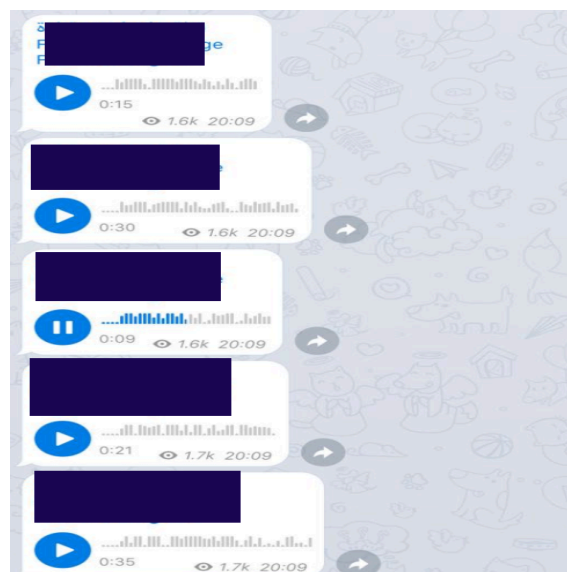
Image 6.15 LGMs in the form of video explanations
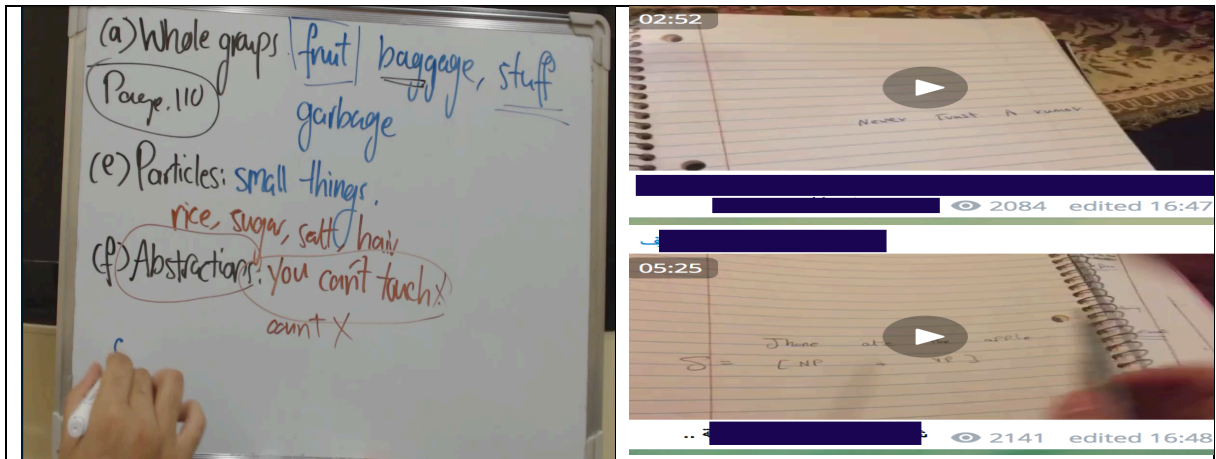
Image 6.16 LGMs for summer activities in the form of translation of video clips

Image 6.17 Bound LGMs produced by teams of online learners

6.3 Part two: Learners' motivations for producing LGMs: Emic reflections

This part will report findings on learners' motivations for engaging in the production of LGMs. It was not possible for me to reach the first cohort of online learners who graduated several years ago, however, in addition to interviewing current learners I was able to reach some graduates who made significant contributions to the advancement of the production of LGMs. The aim of this part is to present narratives of LGMs writers who explain their motivations for producing LGMs. For interpreting their motivations, I shall rely on the possible selves construct (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) for identifying LGMs writers' possible desired selves and examining them utilizing the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000). Additionally, section 5.4.2.1 suggested that Masia's adaptive behaviours could be explained through the construct of EI (Bar-On, 2006/2015), which also suggested that her autonomous and motivated behaviours could be linked to EI skills that worked as control parameters for directing her behaviours. Thus, I will also attempt to examine whether there is a connection between LGMs writers' motivated behaviours and EI skills. Hiver (2015) explains that:

> Relevant parameters [of language acquisition] are likely to include various attributes of the teacher, students, classroom setup, interpersonal relationships and cultural context, to name but a few. In brief, a system will tend to settle in one or another attractor state that can be more effectively understood and described by referencing a set of system parameters. An engaged L2 classroom might be described with parameters such as an active and creative teacher, motivated non-anxious students, variety in classroom activities, positive relationships among students and support for the language in the local culture. (p. 24)

After identifying the motivations and behaviours of the LGMs writers I will examine whether their behaviours can be described with reference to specific EI skills that might work as control parameters influencing their behaviours.

6.3.1 Motivations of Nawal

Nawal has a university degree obtained by on-campus study, but she joined the online programme because of her strong desire to master the English language. In regard to her beginnings in the online community, Nawal explained that when she first joined the programme, the production of LGMs was already popular and usually was led and supervised by forum moderators. As explained earlier, LGMs production was viewed favourably by the community and associated with many desired outcomes. Nawal was motivated and produced her first whole-course LGMs and wanted to share these on the forum, presenting herself as a capable, productive learner. However, the moderator of the forum wanted to revise the LGMs produced by Nawal and to add her name as a supervisor to Nawal's work. Nawal refused because she had produced the LGMs on her own and no one had supervised her. This meant

that Nawal could not share her LGMs on the forum. Nawal also refused to be a member of a writing team supervised by a moderator on the forum:

> I could not share my LGMs on the forum, the moderator wanted to revise my
> LGMs and put her name as the supervisor of my work. I chose to be independent.
> I left the forum and based myself on Twitter.

Nawal decided instead to publicize her LGMs on her personal page on Twitter. She also started contacting print shops and offered her LGMs to them. Being sponsored by a print shop would give Nawal's LGMs a degree of credibility, which would encourage learners to use her LGMs. Nawal reported that her goal was not financial gain; her goals were rather popularity and recognition in her community. Thus, because Nawal could not publish her LGMs on the forum, she made efforts to convince print shops that her LGMs were good:

> I contacted print shops that have a delivery service to students. I had a desire to
> have my LGMs accepted at two print shops that deliver to all areas of the country.

Nawal succeeded in having her LGMs accepted by two print shops, and on top of that, she received an offer of monthly advertising revenue from one of the print shops. She accepted that, but she also wanted to be a supervisor of LGMs, vetting LGMs packages and forming teams of learners to produce LGMs to be printed by the print shop. In addition, Nawal made the decision to circulate her LGMs across all digital platforms, and not to make them exclusively available via the print shop. She justified this by explaining once again that her goals were not financially oriented but rather to have her LGMs available to all learners:

> This decision is for me to make, I could have made my LGMs exclusively
> available, but I love my friends and other learners to see my LGMs and have an
> opinion about them. A learner described my LGMs as the best ever made for the
> X course.

At first, Nawal had a possible desired self, **the community recognized LGMs writer self**. This self is associated with anticipatory joy (Pekrun, 2000) because Nawal appears to highly value achieving this outcome, which is being recognized by her community. Nawal as a result was motivated to produce LGMs for a whole course on her own. Nawal refused to let the moderator revise her LGMs and add her name as a supervisor because this would have reduced the recognition she aspires to gain for her possible **community recognized LGMs writer self**. However, she could not approach her **recognized LGMs writer self** through the forum, which would have induced dejection-related emotions such as sadness, dissatisfaction and disappointment as a result of not being able to achieve the positive outcomes associated with being an LGMs writer in the community (Higgins, 1987). The incident with the moderator apparently impacted Nawals' motivation. Her motivation for publicising her LGMs in print shops that deliver to the whole country indicates that Nawal was additionally

determined to approach another self, **the competent LGMs writer self**. According to the control-value theory (Pekrun, 2000), attributing unpleasant outcomes to others is likely to cause anger. Thus, it is likely that Nawal experienced anger because the moderator did not allow her to post her LGMs in the forum. Anger is an activating emotion, which might have contributed to Nawal's desire to have her LGMs sold in print shops like any other competent LGMs writer in the community. In other words, anger might be responsible for or at least contributing to the construction of Nawal's **competent LGMs writer self**. When one of the print shops offered to host paid ads on her Twitter page, Nawal accepted this because she saw in that offer another possible self for her, **a community leader self**. Her motivation to accept this offer might also have been influenced by her incident with the moderator. Nawal could not post her LGMs on the forum because of the authority of the moderator. To have an agreement with a print shop meant that she also would have authority in the community similar to the authority of the moderator and could easily form teams and recruit team members and be the supervisor of their LGMs. This outcome appears also to have been highly valued by Nawal who had just endured unpleasant treatment from an authoritarian moderator. Achieving highly valued outcomes is associated with anticipatory joy (Pekrun, 2000). Regarding her official recognition by the print shop as a competent LGMs writer, Nawal reported:

> Since I have started working with them (the print shop), I have derived strength from them and everybody (learners) became respectful of me.

The case of Nawal shows that her initial motivation for producing LGMs changed and was open to influences from her context. When Nawal produced LGMs for the first time her motivation was to be recognized in the community as a capable LGMs writer. However, her incident with the moderator triggered another motivation associated with emotions of anger and pride. Also, accepting to work with a print shop and to form teams for LGMs was because of Nawal's motivation to gain authority and influence in the community. However, her insistence that she would not make her LGMs exclusive to a particular print shop means that she was also still motivated by a desire to gain a wide recognition of her skills as an LGMs writer.

The data show that there are various desired selves inducing Nawal's current motivation to produce LGMs, which points to the complex nature of motivation. From the first time Nawal wanted to produce LGMs till the present, further desired selves were added to her self-concept, causing her motivation to change over time. As a result, her initial motivation developed by incorporating other motivations for producing LGMs, resulting in a strong amalgamated motivational power reflected in Nawal's active presence in her community.

Additionally, the desired selves Nawal aspires to achieve exist in the present time as opposed to being existent in a distal future. Nawal produces LGMs now to achieve the now-desired selves that include **the recognized LGMs writer self**, **the competent LGMs writer self** and **the community leader self**. These desired selves were created because of influences of her learning context. According to Markus and Nurius (1986) "many of these possible selves are the direct result of previous social comparisons in which the individual's own thoughts, feelings, characteristics, and behaviors have been contrasted to those of salient others. What others are now, I could become" (p. 954). This also is in harmony with **near peer role modeling** (Murphey & Arao, 2001), in which a learner is inspired to do a learning activity by seeing his/her peers doing it.

With respect to possible EI skills Nawal might possess, her motivated behaviours could be influenced by EI skills of **Independence** (ability to be self-directed in thinking and behaviour), **Assertiveness** (ability to defend one's rights constructively), and **Self-actualization** (ability to actualize one's potential). She succeeded in achieving her goal of gaining recognition in the community. The data suggest that these EI skills work as control parameters that affected Nawal's behaviours; she refused to be a member in an LGMs production team and instead became a leader capable of forming LGMs production teams under her own supervision. According to Bar-On (2015) both Assertiveness and Independence are important attributes for leaders. Although she first produced LGMs out of a desire to gain recognition from her community, she ended up being a prominent learner-leader in the community; she organizes study groups as well as announcements and instructions groups on Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram. She also produces LGMs and forms teams of LGMs writers to produce LGMs under her planning and supervision. Nawal reported that she receives a monthly amount equal to £360 from advertising revenue through her digital platforms and has secured various benefits for her team members such as small allowances, free LGMs and discounts from the print shop. One of the interviewees, Galia, mentioned Nawal as one of "the prominent figures in the community." High levels of Self-actualization, Independence and Assertiveness seem to be the control parameters for Nawal's behaviours; control parameters "guide the way a system can move in its state space from one attractor state to the next" (Hiver, 2015, p. 24).

6.3.2 Motivations of Ameera

Ameera is a well-known digital leader and a prolific producer of LGMs. She conveys her reason for studying the English language as follows:

> I am extremely in love with the English language, and I have a great passion for learning the language.

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Her statement entails that **the L2 self** might constitute a meaningful part of Ameera's self-concept. Regarding her motivations for LGMs production, Ameera explained that she first started helping peers in a Telegram study group and then because the atmosphere of her study group was extremely positive, enthusiastic and motivating she ended up providing LGMs in the form of explanations for the English course, which was her first step into LGMs production:

> I was ignorant of the world of social media until I met a girl in the exam centre in level 1 and she told me that there are study groups in Telegram. I then uploaded the application and I joined a study group. I started helping others. I found that atmosphere the best thing in life. Really you cannot imagine my feelings. Maybe if I describe my feelings people would think I exaggerate. Those moments were the best moments in my life, moments of learning and motivation. I am extremely in love with the atmosphere of learning. I provided explanations for the general English course. It was clear that my enthusiasm was strong; therefore, and when we finished level 2 the leaders of the channel advised me to start a channel and I established a channel for English level 3.

In addition to her love for learning and her supportive study group, Ameera's high motivation and enthusiastic behaviours appear to be fueled by other sources:

> You cannot imagine the extent of my happiness (for being able to continue education). It was the greatest happiness I had in my life second to the happiness I had when I gave birth to my children. This dream was the most important dream in my life, especially since I was deprived early from the chance of pursuing this dream. It was not easy for me to see my friends and those my age with qualifications and with social and educational recognition (whereas she had nothing).

Ameera appears to have more than one desired self, **the educationally qualified self** and **the socially respected self**. These possible selves are derived from comparisons Ameera made in which she contrasted herself with her friends and others her age in her wider social context (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Ameera reported she experienced high levels of happiness when she was accepted on the programme and continued to derive strong feelings of happiness from being engaged in learning activities with her supportive study group. Ameera's extreme happiness can be seen as a result of her belief that she is on track to achieve her desired selves. This is in line with Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2013) view that positive emotions of joy and enjoyment accompany engagement in a task and progressing towards attainment of a goal.

Moreover, Ameera revealed another source triggering further her motivation:

> I want to tell you something. I was nothing; I was only a helpless wife who was trying hard to please her cruel husband. I tried to make our marriage work, but he insisted on divorce; he threw everything away, the sacrifices I made, my

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suffering, my tears and begging. I came out of marriage with a broken heart. When I learned that I could continue my education I felt I was revived, I felt I am still that girl who could learn and study hard and then eventually she shall achieve something. Continuing my education was that thing through which I could prove to myself I am a capable person; to prove I am now better than how I used to be during the wasted 5 years (of marriage).

Ameera's other desired selves include **the capable self**, **the ambitious self** and the **better self**. Ameera described negative sides of her life such as being deprived of her dream to continue her education, feeling inferior and being an abandoned wife. On the other hand, all her desired selves, **the educationally qualified, the socially respected, the capable, the ambitious and the better selves** are associated with a more positive side of life. Some of these selves can be achieved at the present time such as the better self, the ambitious self and the capable self. The educationally qualified and the socially respected selves exist in the future. All these desired selves feed her initial motivation for producing LGMs. Feared selves derived from Ameera's past life also seem to motivate her further and greatly add to her enthusiasm, **the nothing self, the helpless self** and **the deserted self**. These negative selves are associated with both dejection- and agitation-related emotions such as sadness, dissatisfaction, shame, anger, fear, stress, restlessness, etc. According to Higgins (1987), some emotions tend to cluster, meaning that the individual experiences a collection of emotions in response to a single stimulus:

> researchers have reported that dissatisfaction, feeling discouraged, feeling pitiful, feeling sad, feeling gloomy, and feeling miserable tend to cluster…whereas guilt, anxiety, worry, fear, feeling tense, feeling alarmed, and feeling threatened form another cluster. (Higgins, 1987, p. 319)

Ameera listened to the advice of her first study group leaders and opened her own channel and various channels for other levels followed. Ameera now has thousands of followers and has recruited several assistant leaders to help her. Ameera also reported that she hosts various paid ads on her channels. The success of her channels, the supportive and enthusiastic learning atmosphere she enjoys and the financial gain from paid ads are additional context-related sources motivating her to continue the production of LGMs. These contextual factors create for Ameera **the happy self**, **the successful leader self** and **the entrepreneurial self**. Clearly, Ameera's motivation is intricately complex as it is induced and fed by internal and contextual triggers.

EI **Self-actualization** (strong desire to actualize herself), **Self-regard** (strong desire to replace inferiority feelings with feelings of self-respect), **Interpersonal Relationship** (feelings of self-worth she gained from her study groups who value her efforts in producing LGMs), **Happiness** (gained from engaging in activities leading to achievement of her goals),

and **Optimism** (in having a better life after divorce) also could be working as control parameters guiding and sustaining Ameera's highly motivated behaviours.

6.3.3 Motivations of Jood

Jood is a mother of three children; she studied for 3 semesters as an on-campus student majoring in the English language, but dropped out for health reasons. After a gap of about 16 years, she returned to education through the online programme. She conveyed that she majored in English for instrumental reasons to equip herself with the English language. Jood only produces LGMs collaboratively for her study group; she is not an acclaimed LGMs writer in the online community. With regard to how she joined the study group, Jood explained that her first communication with learners was in order to help her overcome the difficulties she was experiencing with teachers' materials:

> My first personal acquaintance with learners happened because of the X course (in level 2). I was exhausted because of it; it had lots of difficult vocabulary and the teacher himself was very difficult. The teacher was not cooperative with learners that much. His (teaching) style was purely academic; he used difficult words as if we were at the end of our graduation year. He did not consider that we were at the beginning of our journey of learning English. Therefore, I could not understand the course at all. I was afraid that his exam questions would be the same as his teaching. I am a diligent person, but in that course I was frustrated. I was searching for a solution and I only found the forum. I resorted to the forum to share my concerns with the learners.

A leaner responded to Jood's request for help and added her to a private study group on WhatsApp where her peers provided her with explanations to help her understand the course content:

> The explanations made the course very easy; all the frustration disappeared, especially with the extraordinary encouragement from learners when we overcame something that we had not understood.

Regarding her motivations for producing LGMs for her study group, she reported that she could not be dependent on her peers all the time; she felt she needed to develop some autonomy and contribute to the production of LGMs for her study group. As a result, she discovered that she has creative skills she was not aware of before:

> Creativity might be born when a person is born, but for me my creativity was born due to being in my beautiful study group. The learning community I found has brought out something lost or rather something suppressed in me. I discovered I am capable of doing something; I discovered I can search for information and do translations. Before, I did not even know how to use a computer. Now I make reports and PowerPoint presentations for schools. I could not keep asking for help from my group members all the time. I had to depend on myself. I started learning from YouTube how to make and format documents (LGMs) for our lessons to share with the group. Now I am skillful at making school leaflets and posters. I work from home.

Jood was dependent on her peers; she did not know how to use a computer or how to search for information or do translation. Her study group members used to produce LGMs for the use of the whole group and they were helpful and responsive to Jood's learning needs. In other words, Jood had a **dependent learner self** and was motivated to achieve an **independent learner self**. This positive desired self might have been activated from a number of sources. From the standpoint of Jood, the **independent learner self** is an ideal/own because Jood felt the need to depend on herself. Also, Jood was aware she was a member in a collaborative study group and she understood she should contribute to the production of learning activities like everybody else, which represents an ought/own **independent learner self** that is capable of contributing to the activities of the study group. Jood also might have thought of the standpoint of her group members; how her group members viewed her dependency on them and that they might have expected her to contribute as well, which represents an ought/other dimension of the **independent learner self**. The discrepancy between Jood's **dependent self** and a desired **independent self** is predicted to induce both dejection- and agitation-related emotions (Higgins, 1987). Because of her **dependent self,** Jood might have experienced embarrassment, dissatisfaction, anxiety, etc. For each help request she made, it is likely that she made ongoing appraisals assessing herself as someone who asks for help all the time and assessing how her study peers view her and whether they would respond to her requests or not.

Eventually, Jood acquired some autonomy learning skills and transformed herself from being only a LGMs user to a LGMs producer and gained a number of skills that contributed to her growth and development as a learner and an individual, which has positively changed her self-concept. Over time, Jood reported that she developed affection towards her study group and this changed her motivations for producing LGMs for them:

> My peers became part of me; I feel them "myself". When they struggle with a course I find myself studying the course hard to make it easy for them as much as I can.

Jood's initial motivation for producing LGMs was to achieve **the independent learner self** and the **contributing member self**. After developing the necessary skills for producing LGMs herself and investing these skills in a home-based business, Jood has developed **a grateful self** and **an affectionate self** for her study group; she is motivated to produce LGMs for them out of affection and gratitude because she believes that her creativity emerged because of them. This is in line with predictions of the control-value theory (Pekrun, 2000), in that attributing success to others is likely to foster the emotion of gratitude to them. Jood's initial motivation has changed over time as a result of interpersonal interactions in her study

group. Her motivation is fed by an external factor, which is to meet a requirement for collaborative learning in a private study group, and by an internal factor, which is her feelings of gratitude and affection to her study group.

Desired possible selves are not desired arbitrarily by the individual; there must be some control parameters of the individual that will lead to the construction of specific desired selves and not others. For example, if empathy is a control parameter in an individual, he/she is very likely to show empathy whenever encountering an empathy-evoking stimulus. Additionally, if the desired self constitutes an essential part of the individual's self-concept, it also works as a control parameter affecting the behaviours of the individual. The EI skills that might have worked as control parameters guiding Jood's behaviours are **Interpersonal Relationship**, **Independence** and **Emotional Awareness**; Jood felt that she needed to depend on herself instead of depending on her study group. She also wanted to be useful to them as they are useful to her, and finally she was influenced by feelings of affection and gratitude to her study group. All these parameters guided Jood's construction of the **independent learner self**, the **contributing member self** and **the grateful self** and her subsequent motivations for the production of LGMs.

6.3.4 Motivations of Latifa

Most of the online learners I interviewed were in their 30s. Latifa was 24 and I enquired why she was studying online when she could study on campus. She answered that she was "very scared." She further explained that she is the youngest and the only female child amongst many male siblings. She described herself as the baby of the family who is highly dependent on them. She spent her childhood and teenage years in the USA and returned to Saudi Arabia when she was almost 18 years old. She reported that she was a very shy person to the extent that she found difficulties talking to people, expressing her thoughts or making friends. Thus, she refused to study at university to avoid mixing with people:

> I was so shy to the extent that my head was always facing the ground and I could not look at the face of a stranger or raise my voice when I talked.

After her refusal to go to university, Latifa reported that her family had concerns over her loneliness and extreme lack of social skills; thus, her father found her a job as a teacher assistant in an international kindergarten:

> My family insisted I should work, and my father used to drive me every day to work himself to make me mix with people. I had difficulties speaking easily to people (this was not due to speech disabilities but to lack of self-confidence and social skills).

However, Latifa could not adjust and quit her job. Continuing her education was another

option suggested by her family:

> My family insisted that I should continue my education so I decided to study online.

She majored in English because English is an important part of her life. Latifa was motivated to do LGMs when she was in level 2. She reported that when she was in level 1 she could not study from textbooks; she used to make herself summaries of the important points and use these for exam study. She first used to write the summaries in a notebook. Then she decided to do this in Word files to make the summaries neater:

> I first did LGMs for myself and I said to myself it is good to share LGMs with other learners. Learners were struggling and I had something (materials) ready and simple so I decided to let other learners benefit from my materials. The first experience was around two weeks before exams and my LGMs were not very organized, yet they all (learners) thanked me so much and I was astonished at that.

Int. *Why? Can you explain more?*

> I mean I did not expect that all would like the LGMs I made for myself. There were some learners who direct messaged me only to thank me. It was something unexpected. I felt happy I could do something beneficial for them. They thanked me a lot and made me feel I did something great although I felt it was something very little and simple.

Int. *Yes?*
> When I discovered that all found my explanations beneficial this impacted me positively because I used to feel that no one can understand me easily and I could not say a couple of sentences in a coherent way. When I talk, I feel I talk awkwardly; I feel my sentences are incomprehensible or not suitable to the situation. But when everyone said my explanations were beautiful or "we understood things we did not understand from the teachers' explanations" my view of myself began to change to some extent.

Latifa explained that she had a negative conception of herself; **the incomprehensible self,** who cannot express her thoughts in a comprehensible manner. Although she said her materials were simple and disorganized, her peers showed great gratitude and some direct messaged her only to thank her. This greatly impacted her view of herself:

> I used to believe that I do not know how to do things. I felt I had no capability to do anything. Everything is ready for me. Even when I am poorly my dad gives me my medication. I did not have to depend on myself to do anything. But when I started producing LGMs I felt I started having a different image of myself than the image my family have of me. I became more confident about my ability to do things.

In addition to **the incompressible self**, Latifa had another negative conception of herself, **the incompetent self**. The warm emotions she received from her peers as well as their supportive feedback of her LGMs motivated Latifa to make more LGMs for them until she

received an invitation to join an LGMs production team. This motivated Latifa further to work harder on the quality of her work. Because LGMs contain Arabic explanations, Latifa was motivated to improve her Arabic:

> I did not use Arabic that much and if I spoke in Arabic, it would be difficult for me to express correctly what I wanted to say. But because I began to provide explanations and make LGMs for learners I had to use Arabic so I used to consult my brother about meanings of vocabulary and how to structure sentences and as a result my speaking improved. Without exaggeration my speaking has improved and everybody at home has noticed that.

Latifa's initial motivation for producing LGMs also underwent change. She was first motivated to produce LGMs for her own use to make learning easier for herself. The great transformation for her occurred when she shared her LGMs with the online community. After receiving grateful and supportive reactions, she was motivated to produce more LGMs because she found in LGMs production a way for her to get over **the incompetent self** and the **incomprehensibly self**. Her current motivation is also influenced by her desire to be **the competent self** who can do something beneficial for others and the **comprehensible self** whose peers find her explanations more comprehensible than those of the teacher:

> Their positive reactions gave me a greater drive for more giving. It feels sweet when I saw (read posts) all talking about my explanations and how they (learners) found them more comprehensible and more beneficial than the explanations provided by the teacher.

Latifa associates sweet feelings and happiness with her **comprehensible** and **competent selves**. The inability to achieve these **ideal/own** selves is likely to cause Latifa to experience dejection-related emotions such as sadness and dissatisfaction. Latifa continued to be motivated to produce LGMs to keep attaining these desired selves now and in the future. Latifa reported that she had no interpersonal skills, was extremely dependent on her family and had a negative conception about herself. However, it appears that the positive feedback, gratitude and encouragement she received from her community worked as control parameters that guided Latifa towards change through the production of LGMs. The grateful and encouraging behaviour of the community can be linked with **EI Interpersonal Relationship**, which involves maintaining mutually satisfying relationships through giving and receiving warmth. The community found Latifa's LGMs beneficial and Latifa enjoyed sweet feelings and happiness from her community. According to Gregersen et al. (2015), "expressing gratitude to a specific person in a letter has been shown to have an enduring positive effect on the letter writer" (p. 152). Latifa's case also shows that receiving gratitude had dramatically transformed her view of herself as incapable of doing anything to developing some confidence in her capabilities. Her grateful peers made her construct a new knowledge about

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her abilities and herself. According to Markus and Nurius (1987), "this type of self-knowledge [domain of possible selves] pertains to how individuals think about their potential and about their future. Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become" (p. 954). Receiving gratitude opened possible domains for Latifa's self-concept; as a result, she was motivated to produce more LGMs and join an LGMs production team in pursuit of her desired possible selves. Latifa's case shows how the emotion of gratitude she received created a possible self for her. Further, as a result of creating possible selves for herself, she had to develop attributes that support her desired possible selves such as independence and positive conceptions of herself. These attributes correspond to the EI skills of **Independence**, **Self-regard** and **Interpersonal**, meaning that Latifa had to develop these skills to match her desired selves. The below excerpt reveals the change in Latifa who in the past lacked self-confidence and social skills and her current interaction in her private study group:

> We learners are all the time together, day and night through WhatsApp, Twitter and the forum. We even make phone calls to each other. My peers are more important and more valuable to me than the teachers.

Being a member of an intimate, friendly and appreciative group appears to have developed interpersonal skills in Latifa and made her enjoy and seek their company after being "very scared" to mix with people. The continuous virtual interaction allowed her gradually to get over her fears and build her self-confidence and interpersonal skills as well.

6.3.5 Motivations of Malik

Malik works as a teacher, and he wanted to study English online to be able to better read international journal articles related to his work that are published in English. Malik has produced LGMs for all courses he has taken so far; he produces LGMs in question-answer format for his own use in the first place to satisfy his learning style. Before the commencement of each term, Malik makes a file for each course he is going to study. He organizes, analyzes and translates the contents of all lectures and starts gathering whatever information is available about the courses such as previous exam questions produced by learners. Then, he transforms the content of each lecture into questions and answers and studies them for the exam:

> My main strategy is to figure out what questions to expect in the exam; what is the teacher's strategy in devising exam questions. I will give you an example. In the grammatical structures course, after analysing the data I have collected about this course, I found that there are about 50 points around which all questions revolve. Then I wrote each point in a file and attempted to write all possible questions for that single point. Teachers use a method called weighted percentage to determine how many items there should be in the exam to cover a specific

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learning objective. For me it means that for each part of the course, there will be a percentage of questions. I analyze the previous exam questions I've collected and calculate the percentage of questions given to each topic in the course. This helps you to know which parts of the course deserve full focus and which parts can be taken care of with just a quick reading. So first I analyze questions and decide which parts of the course deserve a thorough study.

The above excerpts illustrate that Malik employs high metacognitive skills, which are necessary for autonomous learning. It is clear that Malik's style of learning requires a lot of time and effort, but he is happy about this style because:

Having an expected range of questions and translated contents makes you feel safe and makes one feels relieved at an early stage of study.

Malik explains that he plans and starts revising very early in order to feel safe and relieved from stresses or worries that might occur if he has insufficient time for study. Malik appears to be employing affective autonomous learning strategies, which are to "take control of one's learning by knowing about one's affective states… and how to control these affective factors" (Murase, 2015, p. 45). In this sense, Malik is motivated to plan and revise early to avoid **the anxious self** and/or to achieve **the safe and relived self**. This might be linked to EI **Emotional Awareness**, meaning that he is aware that he is likely to suffer unpleasant feelings (i.e., exam anxiety) if he is not prepared well before exams. He is utilizing his awareness of his emotional reactions for avoiding **a possible anxious self** through using early planning, revision, and prediction of exam questions as techniques for avoiding **the possible anxious self**. His metacognitive skills could also be linked to **EI Problem-Solving**, which is an adaptive skill. From a CDST perspective, adaptive behaviours (changes of the system) are influenced by control parameters of the system. In the previous chapter, it was argued that Maisa's adaptive behaviours are influenced by a number of control parameters, including **Emotional Awareness**. Malik's adaptive behaviours also appear to be influenced by **Emotional Awareness** as a control parameter. Behaviours (adaptations or changes) occur as a result of the system being influenced by external and internal factors (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Malik works as a teacher which means that his university exams will fall during a period of time when he is likely to be busy preparing his own students for exams, marking their papers, and/or working on exam committees. Being busy with his duties as a teacher might influence the time and energy left for his own university study and consequently will increase his anxiety. This might be the reason why he always prepares LGMs in question-answer format. The question-answer format is convenient for quick revision to refresh information in case he cannot commit to deep revision during exam periods. Thus, his control parameter, in this case, his Emotional Awareness, is deciding his

adaptive behaviours, which include early planning and revision and prediction of exam questions to avoid **the possible anxious self**.

Although Malik produces LGMs for his own use, he shares them via the various digital platforms of the online community with other learners. In addition, Malik hosts virtual learning classes and summer activities for the community. Before exams, he also holds review sessions where he provides lengthy explanations to discuss important topics in the courses with learners. Malik devotes considerable time to other learners. When asked about the motivations for this behaviour, Malik reported that because he was privileged to enjoy previous experience of on-campus university study, he believes he should help learners who lack such experience:

> When I enrolled in the university, I joined the forum and you know humans are social beings. I committed to offer whatever I could to my colleagues, especially in studying difficult courses. Because I have previous experience of on-campus study and how to study and prepare for exams so I help my colleagues through sharing with them my own learning style.

Malik attributed his motivations to a sense of responsibility he has towards his peers who are inexperienced in study skills, meaning that he has **a socially responsible self**. Further, it appears that social contact is very important to Malik, which means he also has **a social self** that enjoys the company of others:

> Maybe when someone is alone, they might give up, especially during exams. But when, for example, one is in a group where there are about 200 learners sharing the same concerns, emotionally this makes a difference. Maybe one can pass exams, but after all we are social beings; we need to communicate with others.

Malik reportedly views social relationships with other learners as a valuable source of knowledge. He even travels long distances to attend some learners' social occasions, which suggested that he also has **a sociable self** that seeks making the acquaintance of people from all paths of life. Malik appreciates learning from his peers to expand his understanding of the various attitudes people might have and to improve himself:

> The greatest benefit I got (from this programme) was from my colleagues, not from my teachers. The benefit is not only in terms of learning and study, but when communicating with other learners in such a free space, one learns other sides of people. It is possible to benefit from their experiences in other aspects of life. There are many learners who have formed social networks through their communication as distance learners. One of my best friends I met through this online programme.

> When you make acquaintance with someone (a peer), it goes beyond a learning relationship to a deeper social level. We attend social occasions of each other; we benefit from experiences of each other. I am from X, but made acquaintances with learners from different areas. I made acquaintance with people from areas that I

have never been before in all my life. Also, through chats one learns people's attitudes in life. This communication makes one more mature. You learn how to control yourself more and deal with various mentalities.

Malik's motivations for sharing his own LGMs with others and also his dedication to provide them with various types of LGMs (explanations, revision classes and summer activities) indicate his current **socially responsible self**, **social self** and **sociable self**. These selves are associated with joy and enjoyment because he appears highly value the company of others (Pekrun, 2000). Gregersen et al. (2015, p. 164) contend that social capital is important in learning contexts as it "provides access to nonmaterial resources such as '"a sense of personal safety, and feeling integrated into a community and valued by others in that community"'" (citing Nawyn, 2012, p. 257). Failure to satisfy his current **ideal/own selves** is predicted to cause in Malik dejection-related emotions disappointment or dissatisfaction (Higgins, 1987). Malik accordingly acts to satisfy the desires of these selves and as a result he is motivated to produce LGMs for his peers as means to establish social relationships and invest in social capital.

These behaviours motivated by the **socially responsible**, **social** and **sociable selves** can be linked to **EI Interpersonal Relationship** and **Social Responsibility**. Malik is keen on maintaining good interpersonal relationships with other learners. Although Malik reported that his exam predictions were correct most of the time, he is very careful not to make any predictions unless he is sure, otherwise he would keep silent to avoid causing dissatisfaction and anger in his peers:

Malik: We have some combustible colleagues ☺.

Int: What do you mean?

Malik: I mean if I tell them to study only such and such for the exam and there were no questions on those parts, their reaction will be very strong.

The fear of the negative emotions of his peers if he gives them wrong information controls Malik's willingness to share his predictions on which questions are likely to come up in exams. This behaviour also can be linked to **EI Emotional Awareness**. Malik uses his knowledge of the possible emotional reactions of his peers if he gives them wrong predictions and decided not to share predictions with them.

In conclusion, Malik's motivations for producing LGMs are triggered by internal factors related to his desire to avoid anxiety and attain relief early in the semester as well as by contextual factors reflected in his desire to invest in the social capital of his learning context.

6.3.6 Motivations of Riyad

Concerning his motivations for becoming involved in LGMs production, Riyad explained that:

> There is a love of giving and help, but there are other reasons that enhance the desire to be active and helpful to others. It is a desire to attain distinction and appreciation. When I do something and get 100-200 thank yous, it is something wonderful. Your name (the handle) gets known and you have a good reputation (in the community). Words of praise sometimes have the power of magic. With lots of thank yous as well as a good reputation a member can be considered for a moderator role.

Although Riyad reported that he loves to help others, he is fully aware that there are other motivations involved; he wanted to attain **the distinguished self**, **the continuously praised self**, **the appreciated self**, and **the moderator self**. All these selves are **ideal/own** and if they are not realized then Riyad is likely to experience dejection-related emotions of sadness and dissatisfaction (Higgins, 1987). In order to attain these selves for the sake of the wonderful feelings associated with them as described by Riyad, he invested lots of time and effort in learning English in order to be qualified to produce quality LGMs. Regarding his procedures for producing LGMs, Riyad reported that he would download lectures in MP3 files and listen to each lecture several times from his mobile phone or while driving. He also would download the SCORM slides and devise questions for each point discussed. For each quiz he would spend 1-2 days thinking about how to write good distractors. For example, he said the distractor sentences should make learners think deeply about the lecture content. For his translations and explanations, he worked hard to improve his English through using the Internet and dictionaries, watching English movies, reading English newspapers as well as listening to English radio channels while at work. As a result, he reported that his grammar improved, his vocabulary increased and his knowledge of the subject-matter of the courses became greater:

> Because for me to be able to explain or devise quizzes, then I needed to be competent, really competent and ready for any questions (from learners).

Apparently, Riyad was motivated to engage deeply in learning behaviours to be "really competent" in the eyes of his peers and ready for any question; otherwise, he would not be able to gain the praise and appreciation he aspires to. Thus, he engaged in developing **the L2 competent self** as a means to meet his other desired selves that provide him with *wonderful feelings*. In this sense, Riyad also invests in the social capital of his community to derive from them appreciation and praise for his efforts.

Riyad's behaviour can be linked to **EI Emotional Awareness**; he is aware that he needs appreciation and praise from his learning community which directed him towards engaging actively in his learning to be able to produce LGMs worthy of praise and appreciation. It appears that Riyad has a tendency to behave based on his emotional needs; he reported that his desire to acquire a bachelor degree as well as his choice to study English were influenced by affective reasons. He first thought of studying a major related to his work, but then decided to study the English language because he wanted to study something he loves:

> I had a desire to acquire a higher education degree without any financial or job-related purposes. It is an emotional thing. I said to myself, let me study something I love.

After becoming a moderator Riyad had to avoid a negative possible self, **the negative moderator self**:

> I could control my anger and emotions more. In the past, before becoming a moderator, I used to get very emotional about any arguments and would get angry. But after I became a moderator, I learned how to bite my tongue and observe myself, taking into account that my words might be taken against me and would reflect a negative image of me as a moderator and of the administration of the forum as well.

In order to avoid this unfavourable possible self, Riyad was motivated to control his emotions. A negatively viewed moderator might lose his/her post. His behaviour might be linked to **EI Flexibility**, which refers to "readiness to change our behaviours in response to our emotional needs." Riyad wants high esteem and recognition generated from his post as a moderator. Thus, he was motivated to more tightly control his responses to keep the moderator post, an important social presence in the community.

In sum, Riyad's motivation for producing LGMs also resulted from an interaction of Riyad's internal factors (his emotional needs for praise and appreciation) and external factors (community recognition of LGMs writers) for which Riyad found in the production of LGMs a means to satisfy his emotional needs for social recognition.

6.3.7 Motivations of Sami

Sami has no previous experience of university education. He always used LGMs produced by other learners to aid his learning. Based on the teachers' lectures, slides and the prescribed textbook for the course he produced bound LGMs for one of the courses. Sami reported that his motivation for producing his LGMs was to aid other learners to deal with anxiety:

> The LGMs I developed were my first experience. I did not develop the LGMs for my own use; I did it for other learners in the first place. They expressed their frustration in their posts. The teacher and the content (materials) were both new and there were no previous LGMs on this course so I felt sympathetic. I attempted through developing the LGMs to make it [the course content] easier and

simplified for learners when they study and for them not to suffer from anxiety or stress because of the exam and also to encourage them to study well when they see they have LGMs they can rely on.

I myself used many other learners' LGMs for previous courses and those LGMs were a great relief for me from stress, anxiety and fear.

Sami did not have prior motivations to produce LGMs, but what motivated him was the behaviour of his group. Struggling learners expressed their anxieties and frustration to the online community to find a way to solve their struggles. Expression of fears and anxieties is an adaptive strategy and is in line with Oxford's (1990) affective autonomous learning strategy for lowering anxiety, which is discussing feelings with someone else. The struggling learners turned to their social capital to seek help. As a result of his previous use of LGMs by other learners and feeling relieved from his fears and anxieties, Sami identified with the struggling learners and was sympathetic accordingly; he had a **sympathetic self**. Based on the affect control theory (Heise, 1977), Markus and Nurius (1987) state that "an individual's behavior is determined by efforts to confirm … fundamental self-feelings". Thus, Sami is likely motivated to produce LGMs to confirm and satisfy the feelings of his **sympathetic self**. Additionally, he appears to be motivated by another possible self:

It was a challenging task, but I decided to try to see if I can do it or not.

Sami was also motivated to see whether he can be **the capable LGMs writer self** or not. Sami managed to produce the LGMs and could approach **the capable LGMs writer self** and was recognized for his efforts by his peers:

Many learners have used my LGMs and thanked me. Also, they acted like editors; I mean they notified me about mistakes and missing parts in my LGMs.

Sami's motivation for producing LGMs is also a unique combination. It derives from two sources: sympathy resulting from interaction with his learning context and a desire to see if he can produce LGMs like other learners who produce LGMs in the community. According to Mercer (2016), "in positive psychology, there is a strong emphasis on the value of positive relationships for our well-being" and having sympathy for others is fundamental to "support and nurture positive relationships and facilitate understanding between individuals" (p. 96). Sami's case shows that showing sympathy also could be a way of starting relationships. It appears that sympathetic behaviours give members of the community a sign that the responding sympathetic person is approachable, which encourages them to direct message him/her to show their gratitude, which in turn allows interpersonal relationships to be created. When Sami produced LGMs as a sympathetic reaction, he was approached by peers from the

wider online community to thank him and help to improve his LGMs. Sami's sympathetic behaviour might have a positive impact on his self-esteem and social capital as well. In section 5.4.2.1.1, it was found that a learner was encouraged to ask help from Maisa, because he noticed she is sympathetic and cares for others. Thus, the EI skill of **Empathy** might serve to encourage interaction or start interpersonal relationships in online learning contexts, which might lead to a positive learning atmosphere and increased chances for establishing social capital.

6.3.8 Motivations of Tariq and Bandar

Tariq and Bandar also attribute their production of LGMs to feelings of sympathy:

> My aim was for learners; not all learners have the financial ability to buy or print the teachers' materials. Teachers' materials were expensive to print. Instead of printing 200 pages, you can reduce them into 50 pages. So, I wanted to help learners and made the materials available for them at the lowest cost possible. (**Tariq**)

Tariq is a prominent virtual leader who majored in a major other than English, but produced EFL LGMs in collaboration with EFL learners. He enjoys great popularity in the whole online community with its various majors. Tariq played a significant role in introducing LGMs in print shops and he collaborated with various teams from different majors for LGMs production. Content analysis of his threads revealed that he was used to donating his learning materials after each semester to the community and also used to initiate donation campaigns to encourage peers to do the same. Tariq reported that he was motivated by feelings of sympathy towards learners with limited finances; he appears to have a **sympathetic self** and found in LGMs production a way to confirm the feelings of his sympathetic self (Heise, 1977).

As for the motivation of Bandar, he explains that

> I am not a distance learner. I was introduced to this distance learning environment through my older brother; he is a distance learner. Learners had problems dealing with Blackboard and other technical issues so I joined the discussion forum to help my brother and his friends. I started posting threads on computer support issues. My brother was extremely frustrated because of the General English course and I could see a lot of students suffering too much in their attempts to learn. I could see how difficult the English course was for them. Many students were anxious as they were not able to understand anything. I read their stories on the discussion forum. Their difficult situation hurt me a lot. I felt so sorry for them. Some were wasting their money on private tuition and some were thinking of dropping out of the programme. How come this [English] course should be a reason to withdraw from the programme? They were like someone who was drowning in the ocean. Finally, I decided to do something to help them. I did not want them to lose the opportunity to continue their education, because I know some people whose lives improved significantly because they got an online

degree and I did not want anyone to lose such an opportunity. I reviewed the content made by the teacher and made some modifications and simplifications to suit someone who is not familiar with the English language; the content [prepared by the teacher] does not suit distance learners, especially the older ones. How come they teach, for example, skimming and scanning skills to someone who barely knows the English alphabet? (**Bandar**)

Bandar also has a strong sense of sympathy (**sympathetic self**) with struggling learners who are at risk of losing the opportunity of continuing their education because of difficulties in the General English course, thus he decided to produce LGMs to support those learners and aid them to pass the English course and to complete their degree and improve their lives accordingly. Bandar's behaviour is also aiming to confirm the feelings of his **sympathetic self**. The **sympathetic self**, in the example of Sami, Tariq and Bandar, represents a self constructed from **an ought/own standpoint**. They might have felt they are obliged to help out of moral reasons. According to Higgins (1987), failing to attend to ought/own self-guide is predicted to induce emotions of uneasiness, guilt and self-contempt. Thus, in order to avoid these negative emotions the **sympathetic self** must be met and confirmed. This assumption is in line with **the empathy-altruism hypothesis** (Batson, 2011), which states that when people feel the need to help others out of empathetic reasons, they actually seek to relieve their own emotional suffering caused by feelings of empathy.

Moreover, Bandar's case offers an important example, showing how systems are open to external influences. He is not a distance learner, but engaged in the community and played a significant role in advancing LGMs production because of his concern for his brother and the sympathy he developed towards other learners struggling with the General English course. His involvement in the community greatly affected the production of LGMs as explained in 6.2.4.3.

6.3.9 Motivations of Nadia and Kareem

In the examples of Nadia and Kareem discussed below, we see that both started with a personal motivation and then developed into something more interpersonal.

> I was a lurker for three semesters; I studied English since primary school so I never felt I needed help from other learners. But in semester 4, there were three members whose posts I always followed. I loved them and wished I could make their acquaintance. Those members used to do exam study groups, so I joined their groups and only posted when I was asked directly. After a while I noticed that my answers (posts) benefited them (the study groups) and that my presence amongst them is beneficial to them. So I decided to cooperate and make LGMs. (**Nadia**)

Nadia originally isolated herself from the community and never felt the desire to help struggling learners despite her good command of English. However, when she was driven by

her emotions of love to establish some social relationships, she was motivated by her **loving self** to interact with learners and contribute to their learning. When she later felt that her LGMs were beneficial to learners she developed another self, the **beneficial self** and she continued producing LGMs. Nadia contributed greatly and in recognition of her efforts she was offered a moderator post. When asked whether she was going to resign her role as a moderator after graduation, Nadia said:

> I cannot leave the cohort of learners after me. I shall remain to take care of them till they graduate. When they joined the programme after us I noticed they were confused and lost. They were so amiable. I found them lovable and decided to adopt them as my children, hahahaha. Each term I make for them an encyclopedic file about all courses I completed and leave it for them as a reference.

Nadia's motivation for engaging in her community and in taking part in LGMs production was first triggered by emotions of love towards particular members (**the loving self**), then by her realization her LGMs really helped her peers (**the beneficial self**) and currently by feelings of attachment, caring and responsibility towards her peers (**the loving and responsible selves**). The desire to satisfy these selves motivated Nadia's engaging behaviours, otherwise she would experience dejection-related emotions such as dissatisfaction (Higgins, 1987). Nadia's initial motivation was induced by internal factors (personal emotions of love) towards some members in her learning context and was later greatly influenced by her interaction with her peers who benefitted from her LGMs and the cohort after her, whom she finds amiable and lovable. Nadia's case shows that she has the tendency to behave in response to her emotions and that she has developed an "emotional belonging" (Murphey et al., 2010) towards the three members of her learning context which led to further interactions and further emotional belonging that motivated Nadia to continue LGMs production and taking care of other learners even after her graduation. Murphey et al. (2010) assert that "a sense of belonging stimulates motivation and investment in group goals and thus is extremely important for productive communities" (p. 43). Baracelos and Coelho (2016) contend that a loving learning environment "promote[s] students' and teachers' well-being, better quality of life, positivity, and better learning and teaching" (p. 139). Pavelescu and Petrić (2018) found that experiencing love for the English language by Romanian EFL high school learners "acted as the driving force in the learning process, maintaining engagement in learning even when there were obstacles in the classroom" (p. 95). The case of Nadia shows that experiencing love towards peers motivated her to engage actively and positively with them and instead of remaining a lurker she is now enjoying her role as a moderator caring for her amiable peers. Nadia's behaviours can be linked to her **Emotional Awareness**; her responses towards her emotions regarding her peers guided her decision to interact with and help them.

We now turn to Kareem:

> I am fond of toastmastering (public speaking). I participated once in a competition but I did not win. I needed to practice so I decided to practice my public speech skills on learners. I started making very short videos about technical problems that learners often face when dealing with Blackboard; these are not course-related; they just teach how to do practical computer things. After that many learners started to follow me on Twitter and joined my channel on Telegram and I began to receive really warm thank you messages and others asked for more videos (hence he began making general English course videos). It was really touching; they depend on me and trust me and are so grateful; they named our cohort after my name in a gesture of gratitude. Then I found these things are really rewarding. I think my life has improved in many ways just because I helped other learners. I do not do this for myself any more; I do it for the value of collective work, of volunteer work, I could not let them down and was deeply touched by how much gratitude they felt for me. (**Kareem**)

Kareem was motivated to produce computer-related videos for his own benefit because he wanted to approach his **toastmaster self**. However, when he developed emotions of gratitude and appreciation for his grateful peers the toastmaster self was no longer a source of motivation. His current motivation is triggered by the emotions of gratitude he received from his cohort. Kareem reported that he felt his life improved in many ways after helping his peers altruistically. According to Gregersen et al. (2015), "altruistic behaviors promote a feeling of connectedness and community, which has been shown to be one of the robust elements to enriching our happiness" (p. 153). Similar to Latifa, gratitude received from peers replaced Kareem's **toastmaster self** with the **reliable self, the grateful self** and **the helping self** and was engaged in cooperative work because he could not let down his appreciative and trusting peers. From a self-discrepancy theory perspective, Kareem has ideal/own self (**the toastmaster self**) and he realized that his cohort had formed positive views of him as a helpful and reliable person, which represents **ideal/other** conceptions. Any discrepancy in this regard is predicted to cause in Kareem dejection-related emotions such as shame and embarrassment because his intentions and behaviours do not match his peers' conceptions of him (Higgins, 1987). Therefore, the positive views about him made him approach the **reliable, the grateful** and **the helping selves** that match the conceptions of his peers, whereas **the toastmaster self** became irrelevant to his learning context and accordingly was deactivated.

Kareem's example also shows that new possible selves can be created and pursued because of influences of contextual interactions. Positive emotions of gratitude, appreciation and affection received from peers motivated Kareem to produce EFL LGMs instead of technical instructions as a way to show his gratitude towards his peers' emotions.

6.3.10 Motivations of Noura

Noura is a mother who is busy with family responsibilities. She depends on LGMs produced by other learners for her learning:

> I am a mother and a full-time housewife. Sometimes I have difficult circumstances. It is difficult for me to make LGMs (for her own learning) for all courses.

She likes to use LGMs with no translations to improve her English through doing the translation herself and to get an idea about the contents of video lectures before watching them. She became used to writing English-Arabic translations as she progressed through the LGMs prepared by her peers during the first four levels. When she was in level 5 and as her language improved, she began doing English-English explanations and paraphrasing for herself. Concerning her first attempt to make LGMs, Noura explained that there were a number of LGMs with translations for one of the courses, but they did not align with her learning style. Thus, she decided to generate LGMs based on the teachers' content for her own use and share the materials because "there might be other learners who do not like to use LGMs with translations".

Noura had originally planned to produce LGMs during the summer holiday, because she could not find the time to do the additional work this would require during the semester. However, by the end of the summer holiday she had not completed the LGMs and abandoned the idea. However, when Noura learnt about a competition on the forum for producing LGMs, she was motivated to resume her work and complete her LGMs to participate in the competition:

> It is a beautiful and wonderful idea for encouraging (us). I started only generating some materials, but the summer holiday finished and I have not completed what I have planned, which caused me depression. But the competition motivates me to complete the LGMs. (forum post by Noura)

Apparently, Noura was incapable of sustaining her motivation in terms of producing LGMs, even if they were to meet her own learning needs. She claimed that she felt depression because she could not finish on time and had developed as a result **the depressed self**. According to the control-value theory, depression is a deactivating emotion (Pekrun, 2000), which explains why Noura did not persist in completing her LGMs.

However, the competition triggered and sustained Noura's motivation till the end. According to Dörnyei and Muir (2019) increasing learners' goal-orientedness generates learner motivation. The competition aided Noura to be more goal-oriented in completing LGMs production; there was the commitment she made, the deadline she had to meet, peers

waiting for her LGMs and community recognition of her efforts. The competition created for Noura **the competitor self**, which she had to adopt at the time of the competition, and **the community recognized self**, which she aspired to achieve in the near future, as a result of the competition. These selves are both **ideal/own** and **ought/other** because Noura personally aspired to participate in the competition, complete her LGMs and gain recognition and at the same time she realized that taking part in the competition meant that she is obliged to fulfill the commitment she made to the community. Failure to meet these selves would be likely to lead Noura to experience both dejection and agitation related emotions such as sadness, embarrassment, anxiety and guilt (Higgins, 1987). On the other hand, both these selves are associated with anticipatory joy for a prospective outcome (Pekrun, 2000). Joy is an activating emotion that contributed also in maintaining Noura's motivation. This assumption is in line with the findings reported by Szymczak (2016) who found that competitions have the potential to generate engagement in participants and that successful participants found wining enjoyable or very enjoyable. Noura won first place in the competition; she received acknowledgment from the forum administration, moderators and members; and she also won a digital badge for creativity and 4000 points (see Image 6.19 below)

Image 6.18 Noura's reward for producing LGMs (1ˢᵗ place, Creativity Badge +4000 points)

The excerpt below includes excerpts from the announcement about the competition results:

We invited you to get creative and you accepted.
You offered your work to be shared with your brothers and sisters.
You have made their dreams come true by helping them when they couldn't help themselves because of their family and work obligations
.... I see your LGMs of Noble purpose…
I see you generous with noble souls.

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The moderators use words and phrases such as 'brothers and sisters,' 'noble purpose,' 'generous and noble souls' to create desired possible selves for anyone who produces LGMs for the community. The social context is the source from which an individual creates his/her self-conceptions (Markus & Nurius, 1986). These possible selves constructed by the moderators are aimed to evoke altruistic motivation and/or social motivation in participants. Subsequently, the participants will aim to gain the recognition and endorsement of the community that they have achieved **the noble self, the generous self** and **the altruistic self**. Being recognized for efforts or contributions in the community is essential for self-esteem (Honneth, 1995). This aligns with the view of Gregersen at al. (2016) that "altruistic behaviors promote a feeling of connectedness and community… [and] acting upon our altruistic tendencies enhances our self-esteem and makes us feel useful, offering a means to exercise our strengths and talents in a meaningful ways" (p. 153). Showing recognition and gratitude and honouring of participants in the LGMs competitions, who are seen as noble for helping struggling learners, is likely to enhance or develop EI skills of **Social Responsibility**, **Interpersonal Relationship** and **Empathy**. Noura produced additional LGMs on her own initiative in the following semester for the community. It appears that the positive selves constructed by the moderators and the recognition she received from the community enhanced her self-esteem and made her believe in her capability to produce more LGMs despite her duties as a mother. When Noura was first motivated to write LGMs for herself, she could not maintain her motivation. However, when she was extrinsically motivated by the competition and the positive possible selves she would gain as a reward, she was able to maintain her motivation and completed her LGMs. Her success in addition to the recognition gained by extrinsic motivation induced stronger self-motivation in her to do LGMs for a second time. Thus, Noura's supportive learning context that encouraged her to complete the task successfully enhanced her self-motivation as a result of increased self-esteem with respect to her capabilities. Noura's example shows that her initial demotivation changed into extrinsic motivation by means of the competition and the positive selves associated with completing the competition. Her extrinsic motivation changed into self-motivation because of the community recognition that enhanced her self-esteem and endorsed her attainment of the positive selves.

One interesting finding is that competition announcements do not address the community with reference to them as L2 learners; they rather address the individual and the community member and offer the competitors desired selves other than ideal L2 selves. **The noble self**, **the generous self**, **the altruistic self** and **the community recognized self** are the triggers that will generate motivation for producing EFL LGMs. This pattern is recurrent in

announcements for activities aiming to engage learners, as shown in the announcement for a competition in the excerpt below:

<div style="border:1px solid; background:#e8eed8; padding:1em; text-align:center;">

The Competition of
Ambition and Determination

Vision

Shaking clouds to bring rain down

As the English section abounds with bright minds, endless energies and giving hearts, it is a must to offer them the opportunity to spread the fragrance of their creativity in a way that is beneficial to our educational journey
Thus, this competition is from you, by you and for you and for those coming after you

Goal
Competitive spirit, creativity, learning, aspiration, active participation and helping others

Rewards
Acknowledgement certificate
Extra 300 message capacity in mailbox
1000 points

</div>

Dörnyei and Muir (2019) propose that for generating motivation in learners teachers need to enhance "learners' language related values and attitudes" (p. 11). This includes enhancing values related to enjoyment experienced from learning, values related towards the L2 and values related to pragmatic benefits resulting from mastering the L2. All these values focus on the personal gain of L2 learning.

Interestingly, the announcements by the moderators also aim to enhance certain values and attitudes, but these are not relevant to the L2 learner. The announcements enhance values and attitudes relevant to the whole individual and to the community member and connect these values and attitudes to the standpoint of the community **(ideal/other)**. The announcement above, for instance, creates a collection of desired possible selves: **the bright self**, **the creative self**, **the energetic self**, **the ambitious self**, **the determined self**, **the competitive self**, **the giving self**, **the altruistic self** and **the community recognized self**. There is little reference to the value of the competition with respect to the L2 gains a participant might achieve as a result of taking part in the competition. This important finding will be discussed in the Discussion chapter.

6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter consists of two parts. Part 1 reviewed the definitions, characteristics of LGMs produced by learners as well as learners' attitudes towards the first LGMs. It also presented an

account regarding the major factors that led to various advancements in the production of LGMs in the online community. Part 2 presented findings on learners' motivations for producing LGMs. I utilized the possible selves construct (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) and the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000) to examine LGMs writers' motivations. Additionally, I attempted to highlight EI skills that potentially worked as control parameters influencing and directing the motivated behaviours of LGMs writers. A discussion of these findings is offered in section 9.2.

Chapter 7

Perception and use of LGMs vs. teachers' materials by learners

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the perception and use of LGMs by learners. Additionally, it aims to gain deeper understanding of the factors influencing learners' perception and use of LGMs as well as the materials' affordances and weaknesses.

7.2 Perceptions and use of teachers' materials: video-lectures and SCORM slides

It was explained earlier that teachers' materials are digital and they consist of video lectures and SCORM slides that can be accessed via the Blackboard system. In order for learners to fully learn the contents of their courses, they need to study the contents of the video lectures and the SCORM slides. However, as explained in Chapter 5, there were technical problems that impeded the full and effective utilization of teachers' materials. Further, it was revealed that the technical problems caused a number of negative emotions in learners and primarily contributed to the emergence of LGMs. In this section I investigate this issue more deeply through the use of interviews to learn directly from learners about their views about teachers' materials.

7.2.1 Perceptions and use of video lectures

Learners reported that the contents specified in teachers' materials are important for their exam study, because exams are based on these materials. Further, teachers do not correct the exams themselves, the exams being assessed via automated scoring instead:

> Our teachers cannot include exam questions from outside of the contents (of their own materials). Thus, we have to stick to the contents. In our case, we have to stick to the contents (of teachers' materials). Our teachers do not mark our exam papers because of our huge numbers. Automatic exam marking machines are programmed to accept only specific answers as correct. (**Noura**)

Learners are generally satisfied with the idea of having recorded lectures in addition to having three live lectures throughout the semester as opposed to all lectures being in the live mode. The recorded lectures were convenient for those studying around their work and family commitments:

> I prefer the recorded lectures (rather than live lectures), but I want them updated every now and then. We can understand the content and facts clearly without interruptions (that might happen in class). We can replay any part of the lecture several times from anywhere and at any time. (**Noura**)

The three live lectures are provided for each course in order to give learners the opportunity to meet online with the teachers to enquire about lectures, exams and other related issues. Thus, the recorded lectures suit learners with work and family commitments. However, learners were not fully contented with teachers' materials. Learners reported a number of problems associated with teachers' materials. These problems apparently are chiefly responsible for the continuation of the production and use of LGMs. It seems that, unlike teachers' materials, LGMs are more responsive to learners' learning styles and needs.

7.2.1.1 Lectures are boring

Some learners complained that some teachers fail to create an interesting atmosphere while delivering lectures. As a result, some learners reported that they only rarely watch lectures:

> When the teacher seems bored, his voice is low and is only sitting reading to us; I also feel bored and turn off the lecture. (**Nadia**)

It appears that because of the virtual rather than face-to-face lecture format, some teachers do not deliver lectures interactively, which causes feelings of boredom in learners. In the excerpt below, Leena compares and contrasts less interactive styles of lecturing with that of her X course teacher who has created an interactive and interesting learning atmosphere for learners when they watch the recorded lectures. Leena reported that this teacher's style made watching lectures interesting and helped her retain information from lectures:

> The problem of recorded lectures is that they are a mere presentation of information. The dullness in the lectures of some teachers causes you to feel very bored. I liked the style of teacher… last semester; he had a remarkable style. He would ask learners individually by calling out the last digits of their registration numbers (imagining learners' presence) and would repeat information (in an interactive way with an imaginary learner). Despite being recorded lectures (not live ones) we felt his (the teacher's) interaction with us and I still remember some information because of his way of presenting information. (**Leena**)

The data gained through content analysis of posts from the forum supports this finding. It was found that the first cohort of online learners appreciated the efforts of this teacher to engage them in learning while watching the recorded lectures as well as his consideration of their emotions:

> Teacher … considers all, young and mature. He really senses our feelings. Of course, his major makes him realize what is going on around him and makes him realize what is going on inside us. We see him as very keen on making us comfortable and on clearing up anything we're unsure about. In all of his lectures he really tries hard; we really thank him and wish him all the best.

Truuuuuuuuely this teacher is totally different than all other teachers. He is the only teacher whose lectures I watch, hahaha. I find them entertaining; I do not feel I am attending a lesson.

Further, the forum data also revealed that some of the first cohort of learners, who majored in English, were complaining about the teaching style of the teacher of the X2 course who apparently could not create an interesting atmosphere for learners:

There is no teacher's spirit in his teaching. I am thinking of dropping this course. I often compare his teaching with teacher… (who taught X1 course). There is a great difference.

He adds nothing special in lectures. It is enough to read the slides 😦

It seems that the teacher is used to teach in front of students who interact with him. Clearly, he is unable to teach in front of the camera with no students in front of him. That is why he seems as if he is talking to himself.

We need to do something about this course. At least we need to make it interesting so we can study.

In sum, it seems that the lack of an interactive and interesting atmosphere in some recorded lectures made learners feel bored and lose motivation to watch the recorded lectures.

7.2.1.2 Lectures lack technological sophistication

Some learners believed that the lectures were too simply made, lack visual effects and other technical enhancements. Some learners found this basic style of presentation uninteresting when compared to more professionally made videos:

When you compare our recorded lectures with lectures or explanations of engVid for example, you will see a huge difference. The digital generation is not like the previous generations. The virtual world enables access to everything, which entails comparison. (**Malik**)

Lectures are kind of monotonous; they are all the same. There is only a sitting person who reads with even no intonation. If there are some effects, they might be better. However, there are some teachers who make their lectures enjoyable. (**Latifa**)

Some teachers use the smart board, but I was shocked that others do not; they just read from slides. This is why for those teachers I stopped watching lectures; I could listen to lectures while doing something else. Using the smart board attracts the attention of learners; it requires focus, follow up and even taking notes. (**Yasmeen**)

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7.2.1.3 Teachers have various English accents

Some learners reported that teachers have various English accents, since they have different nationalities. Some learners found it difficult to understand the teachers' various accents which consequently impacted the comprehension of lectures:

> Some teachers are from countries of North Africa and their accents in both Arabic and English are incomprehensible to learners. (**Mansour**)

> The teachers' language is a big barrier (for comprehending lectures), because of their different nationalities and accented English. (**Hana**)

7.2.1.4 Teachers' speed of speech

Another problem reported by learners was the fast speech of some teachers. Some learners complained that fast speech is not suitable for language learners who need to have sufficient time to pay attention to the features of the spoken language:

> I want to comment on teachers' speed of speech. There are some teachers who are really good at teaching, but regretfully others are below expectations, too quick speech. Some teachers talk fast, and some cannot deliver information accessibly. Considering us as learners, teachers should speak more slowly and make information more simplified. (**Mariam**)

Some learners complained that some teachers do not consider learners as an audience for whom speed of speech needs to be adjusted if teaching is to be effective:

> Some teachers speak fast as if they were talking to themselves or reading a newspaper or a magazine, as if they were not teachers talking in front of students. When this is the case, I immediately turn off the lecture and work on something else. If I know I am not going to benefit then why should I watch the lecture? (**Zaina**)

To sum up, it appears that despite the convenience of being able to access them at any time, the recorded lectures nonetheless suffer from a number of drawbacks impacting their effectiveness and appeal to learners. The following section presents learners' views on the SCORM slides.

7.2.2 Perceptions and use of the SCORM slides

Most teachers make the content of each lecture available in SCORM slides and go through them to explain the lesson in the recorded lectures.

However, it was found that some learners were not interested in reviewing the SCORM slides from the learning interface in the Blackboard system:

> Mostly I do not review the content of the SCORM slides; I review lectures and LGMs. (**Mariam**)

It appears that SCORM slides also fail to meet all learners' needs, as discussed in what follows, where learners explain their dissatisfaction with the slides in particular, and the teachers' lecture materials in general.

7.2.2.1 The slides are not formatted to students' satisfaction

It was found that learners were not satisfied with the formatting of the SCORM slides. Some learners found the formatting of the contents of the slides suitable neither for reading nor printing:

> Some slides are bad; they are confusing. Sentences are mixed and uncoloured. (**Jood**)

Other learners reported that SCORM slides are inappropriate for self-study on the screen because of their huge fonts. The huge fonts also increase the number of slides, which makes slides impractical for printing:

> The slides are difficult to study from; they have huge fonts and require much more pages for printing. (**Mansour**)

7.2.2.2 The slides are not well-organized

Some of the SCORM slide content was said to be incoherent, which makes demands on learners seeking to decode their meaning:

> Many of teachers do not organize the content of the course. You have the feeling that this teacher is only copying and pasting from a book. Truly one struggles only to organize the content and to put it in a coherent order. It is so exhausting for learners to read about a certain topic at one point and then suddenly the second point talks about a different topic. (**Malik**)

Some learners reported that they search the Internet in order to fill any gaps in the contents of the SCORM slides to make them coherent:

> Some teachers develop their content from several references. You have the feeling that the pieces of information are taken from some sources and are compiled in a non-coherent way. We have to search the Internet to understand some points. (**Nadia**)

7.2.2.3 The slides are not comprehensive in their coverage of content

Another problem reported was the lack of depth of the content of the slides. Some learners complained that sometimes the contents of the SCORM slides do not sufficiently and comprehensively cover the discussed topics, which makes it necessary for learners to search for more details themselves:

> The contents provided by teachers are sometimes not comprehensive. LGMs fill this shortage. Some teachers assume you already have an understanding of (topics

of) the lectures and they do not explain sufficiently. This is why learners make their own learning materials relying on the textbooks and references prescribed by the teachers. (**Hana**)

7.2.2.4 Teachers' materials are pitched at too high a level for some learners

Learners also reported that teachers' materials are not always at the right level for them, wishing for simpler and extended explanations to make the content fully comprehensible:

> Honestly some teachers do not give courses sufficient efforts in terms of explanations; they cannot make information accessible to all learners. Therefore, it was necessary to find a solution to such a dilemma through LGMs, through learners' explanations and mind maps. For instance, teaching grammar needs examples and extended explanations to make sure it is accessible to all groups of learners in terms of their comprehension and learning abilities. (**Sultan**)

> Some teachers teach us as if we were taught in international schools or our English is perfect. They should consider that not all learners are competent in English. (**Suzan**)

To sum up, learners reported a number of issues that negatively affected their views and use of teachers' materials, both lectures and slides. The data revealed that learners are aware of the fact that the contents of all courses specified in teachers' materials are required for exam study; however, learners seem to be not fully satisfied with teachers' digital materials for the above reported reasons. Therefore, learners have transformed the contents of teachers' digital materials into LGMs where they attempted to fulfil their learning needs and styles. The following section reports learners' views on LGMs.

7.3 Learners' perception and use of LGMs

The following section sheds light on learners' views on LGMs and how they meet their needs and aid in compensating shortcomings reported in teachers' materials. It was found that some learners hold positive views of LGMs, believing that they are the basis of their learning and success, which resulted in either reducing or abandoning the use of teachers' materials and relying largely on LGMs for their affordances:

> LGMs are the materials we depend on. They contain Internet-searched information, organization of information, delivery of information in an easy way, explanations of difficult points, and techniques for linking and retaining information. In brief, LGMs are the vessel to carry us to the shore of safety. (**Fawaz**)

It appears that there is a general consensus on the usefulness of LGMs in this particular context, which encourages new learners joining the programme to quickly adopt LGMs:

Lots of learners who produce LGMs put a lot of sincere effort into their LGMs; they are very organized and accessible. Learners truly deserve to be thanked for their efforts for formatting and for making the contents accessible. Generally, they (LGMs) are excellent. (**Mariam**)

7.3.1 Affordances of LGMs

This section reports more detailed views of learners on LGMs. It presents the affordances of LGMs, which also highlight the reasons for the popularity of LGMs amongst learners and how LGMs address the flaws of teachers' materials presented in section 7.2.

7.3.1.1 LGMs align with learners' learning styles and previous learning experiences

Some learners believe that LGMs are a better alternative to video lectures. LGMs deliver teachers' content in a desirable format that suits their previous learning experiences and styles. Learners reported their preference for traditional learning materials over digital ones:

Tariq's LGMs saved me in my first level. They were wonderful. They contained all the contents of teachers' materials with translations and with questions. Everything (teachers' digital materials) was on the laptop, which was something new to us. We are used to a pen and paper. Thus, Tariq's LGMs were my security blanket. They reminded me of my study days in secondary school where my textbooks were in front of me, and I was sitting studying them. I was concerned if I studied from the laptop what my exams would look like. We cannot do without paper-based learning materials. No matter how much we are technologically advanced; we still need paper and pens. (**Salma**)

Learners explained that they need paper-based learning materials to allow more engagement and interaction with the materials being studied. Learners need, for example, the written medium to help their note-taking and memorization:

Watching lectures gives a general idea about what the topic is about, but does not help with memorizing information. I am slow in memorizing and I need something written in front of me to follow and make sense of what I listen to. Also, I can write down my own notes on the paper-based LGMs and use highlighters to help me memorize (information). (**Nadia**)

I cannot study without using colours. They help me to memorize information. Sometimes if I forget a piece of information I remember its colour, its position on the paper or the notes I wrote around it and this helps me remember the information. (**Taiseer**)

The data gained through virtual observation revealed the use of highlighters and the need to annotate paper-based materials for learners

Image 1 Learners' use of highlighters on LGMs

In addition, learners reported that LGMs are more convenient in terms of mode of use. Learners reported that it is easier for them to study from paper-based LGMs irrespective of their location, as opposed to the restrictions of accessing the video lectures:

> It is easier to take LGMs to any place such as a coffee shop. If I am out and I know I shall have some free time I take my LGMs with me to revise. (**Taiseer**)

> I need to change places when studying; being in one place all the time makes me feel bored. You cannot carry your device everywhere and revise from it the same way as from papers. With papers it is much easier, you can even revise during the time preceding the start of the exam (in exam halls). Also, I suffer from fatigue caused from looking at the screen for a long time. (**Fawaz**)

The data gained through virtual observation also showed that some learners study from LGMs outdoors in preparation for exams:

Image 7.2 Learners studying from LGMs outdoors in preparation for exams
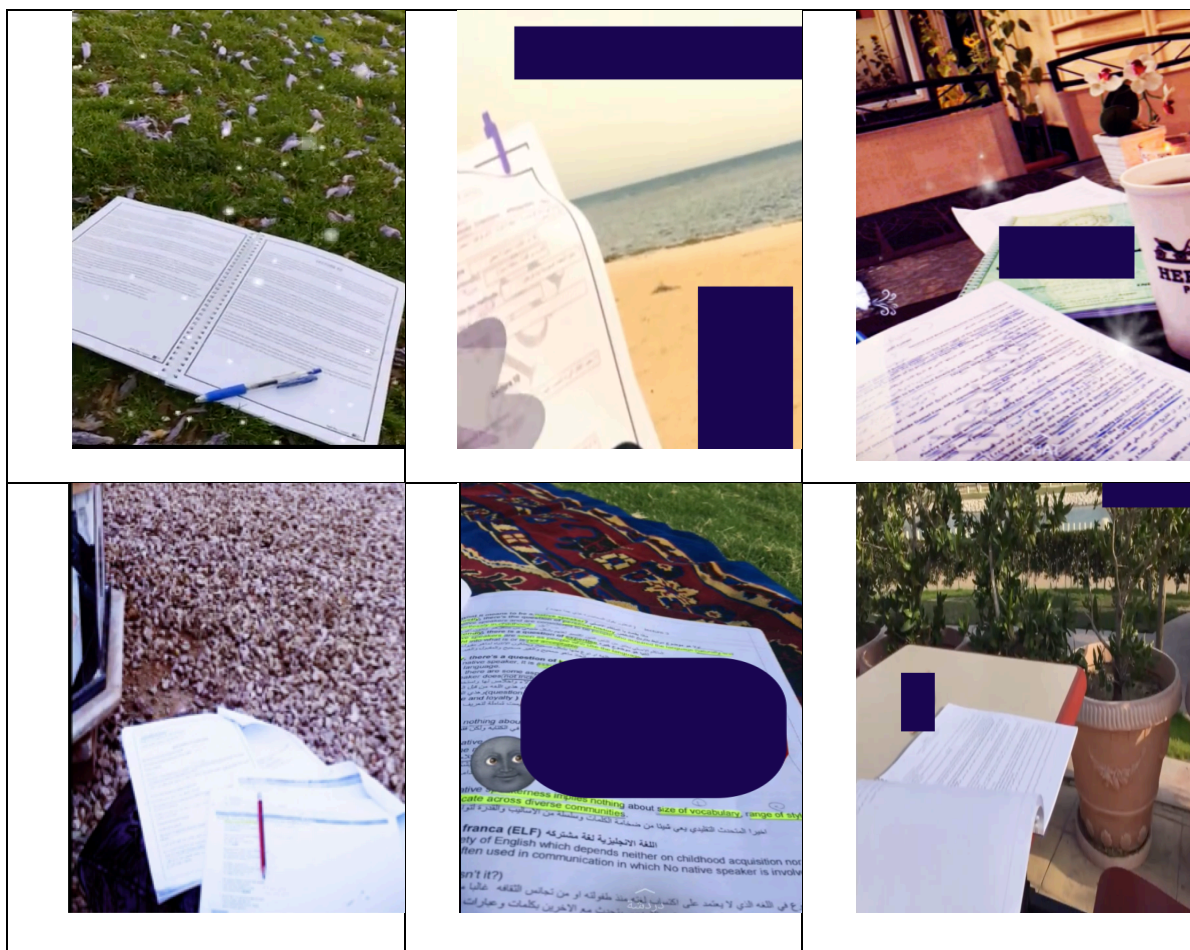
7.3.1.2 LGMs save time and effort

The transformation of the contents from SCORM slides to a printable document requires time and effort. As a result, learners prefer to use LGMs offered by other learners instead of doing this task themselves. Learners reported that instead of spending time preparing materials for study, this time and effort can be spent on studying the materials:

> They (learners) saved us the burden of doing the LGMs and do the formatting in
>
> word documents, and from getting our eyes crossed (😜). (**Nadia**)

> I do not have time to watch lectures, watching lectures requires time. LGMs have benefited me in saving time. Instead of looking for explanations on the Internet, LGMs contain comprehensive and accurate explanations. (**Zaina**)

> Some do not have the time to watch over 100 video lectures. LGMs are easier. (**Nawal**)

7.3.1.3 LGMs are more accessible to all abilities

A key benefit of LGMs is their accessibility to all abilities of learners. It was reported that LGMs might be more accessible to learners than teachers' materials as learners add more explanations and examples to make their LGMs more suitable for the varying abilities of their fellow learners:

> LGMs contain more explanations and more details than the teachers' materials. They are more accessible to me than the teachers' materials. (**Zaina**)

> There are some creative learners whose work (LGMs) surpasses that of the teachers; they are more (creative) than the teachers in delivering information to learners in a comprehensive and accessible way. (**Jasser**)

> Some students are so able and have a comprehensive understanding of the courses. Thus, their explanations are easier and more simplified than the teachers' because some teachers explain without giving details. (**Basma**)

Other learners also reported that since lectures require certain academic skills such as note-taking, critical thinking and identifying of important points, LGMs thus are a great help for learners who lack the necessary academic skills for autonomous learning. In the previous chapter, I presented the example of Malik who does thorough searches about each course and provides learners with explanations of the contents and guidance and instructions of important points in each course, and in the excerpts below, we see learners referring to how well-made LGMs cater to their needs and are pitched at their level:

> LGMs make it easier for some learners with weak learning abilities to grasp the important points from the course. (**Sultan**)

> Some learners are slow in comprehending video lectures especially when some teachers do not explain sufficiently as some teachers only read to us. So, we provide each other with the explanation bit. Some learners unquestionably need help through extra explanations. (**Anood**)

> For some learners, the level of their English proficiency hinders their comprehension (of lectures), thus they want comprehensive LGMs with explanations, translations and correct answers. (**Nawal**)

7.3.1.4 LGMs aid learning

Learners also reported that they believe that LGMs aid their learning in various ways. Some LGMs focus learners' attention on linguistic features explicitly:

Some LGMs are well-organized in focusing on grammar and vocabulary and in the way vocabulary and grammar are delivered to learners, which allows language learning. (**Mariam**)

LGMs might aid learning through motivating learners to review the explanations of other learners to benefit from their input. Learning in this case occurs as a result of exposure to more than one source of knowledge:

Honestly, when I see that a learner provides an explanation, I like to review it and see how certain points discussed in lectures are explained and covered (by learners). (**Mona**)

7.3.1.5 LGMs contain creative ways of delivering information

Moreover, learners reported that LGMs are more appealing and interesting for study. Some learners associate them with creative learning techniques that make learning both enjoyable and accessible:

They (learners) put the vocabulary in sentences in the form of stories; some drew funny pictures of the vocabulary so we could link drawings with the vocabulary and thus it would be easy to learn and retain them. (**Jood**)

We learned about suffixes and a learner in our group made us a video about suffixes. She put them in a family of a father and a mother with children. Similar suffixes were the twins of the family. She did this to aid us to understand and memorize suffixes. (**Leena**)

Some learners claimed these creative materials played a major part in helping them to process and retain language as well as to pass their exams:

Some learners explain the content in a different way than the teachers' way. For example, they use mind maps or linking information techniques. I benefitted from these ways in my study a lot and they were the reason for my success. (**Mariam**)

7.3.1.6 LGMs draw attention to important points

Learners also reported that LGMs focus learners' attention on important points and thus prevent confusion or paying attention to irrelevant points in relation to the exam. Learners appreciate that specifying important points with relevance to exam study serves them greatly when they have limited time available:

LGMs save time and effort. The student gets the content of teachers' materials in an organized format. LGM writers highlight important information that has been covered in the teacher's exams. (**Leena**)

Some teachers are boring...You know, unnecessary elaborations and stuffing irrelevant jargon into lectures cause boredom. Online learners are busy and they prefer to-the-point information. (**Fawaz**)

7.3.1.7 LGMs provide an interactive learning environment

A recurrent theme in the dataset is the provision of an interactive learning atmosphere through LGM explanations. Learners claimed this compensated for a lack of interactivity in the video lectures. Learners reported that in their virtual study groups they participated in interactive learning activities that promote learning in an engaging, interactive and responsible way. Leena, for instance, enjoyed and benefitted from using the audio recording facility in the WhatsApp application, where all members have to record themselves reading in English and then share the audio files with the whole group for their comments and feedback:

> We made explanation groups for the English courses. We explain one lecture to each other. Each one of us has to read something in English for the group (using the audio recording facility) and then we devise questions and everyone has to answer. Everyone has to participate even if we make mistakes. Learning English requires an audio interaction; it requires practice and speaking. (**Leena**)

Another group of learners managed through a WhatsApp group to do role-play to practise and improve their language:

> Our group has two WhatsApp groups. One for everything related to our courses and one for practising English. We try to apply grammar rules in our daily life. For example we ask what would you say if you have an embarrassing situation. We make conversations with each other. We try to do practical drills for the rules. We practice translating anything. (**Zaina**)

It appears that learners employ organizational and managerial as well as lesson planning skills to ensure interactivity and engagement of all group members in the production of LGMs:

> In our group we have an activity called the Revision activity, we set up a time and everyone has to be available at that time on WhatsApp. Each time there will be two supervisors to manage the activity, they have to study one lecture carefully, devise questions to be asked to the group members and to highlight important points in the lecture for the whole group. We divide the lecture into activities, grammar rules activities, then vocabulary and so on. (**Majda**)

Image 7.3 Interactive learning environment (practicing listening)

We have a special skill for you
It's listening which is one of the most skills you need to improve
Alright, i'm going to post some Audios and you have to listen
carefully then write what you have listened !

ARE YOU READY GUYS 😍!

Keep going 😍 👏 22:48

Yup 👏 22:49

01:01 ●
22:50

First audio, 👆 start edited 22:50
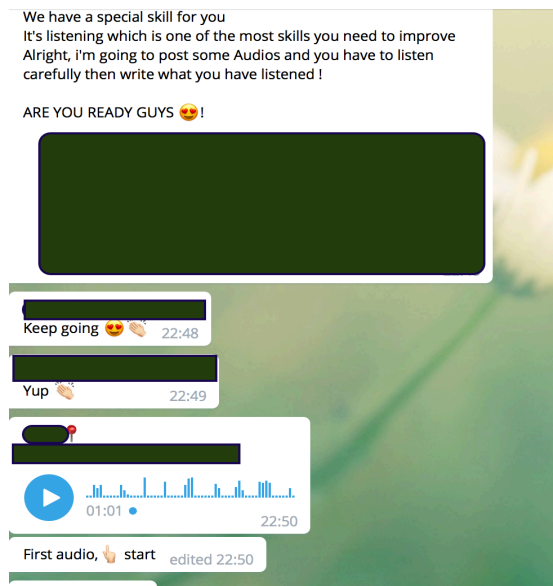
Image 7.4 Interactive learning environment (practicing reading)

DOVER · THRIFT · EDITIONS
STEPHEN CRANE
THE OPEN
BOAT
AND OTHER
STORIES

15:31

Our story today is called "The Open Boat" It was written by
Stephen Crane and is based on what really happened to him in
1896

Crane was traveling from the United States to Cuba as a
newspaper reporter. One night, his ship hit a sandbar. It sank in
the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Florida. Most of the people on
board got into lifeboats. Crane was among the last to leave.
There were three others with him: the ship's captain, the cook, and

Image 7.5 An enjoyable learning environment
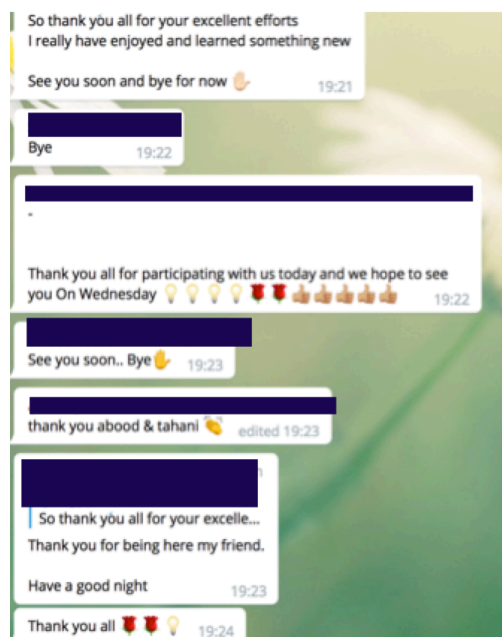
7.3.1.8 LGMs compensate for the absence of the teacher

Some learners reported that they find in LGMs' explanations a way to compensate for the absence of teachers:

> LGMs and explanations in groups make it easier for us to access lectures. Some teachers only read their lecture notes aloud. I personally have understood most of the grammar rules through LGMs with explanations and through members of (study) groups. The lecture is something recorded, but in groups you interact with a person trying to deliver information to you, someone you can enquire from until you comprehend well. Enquiring makes one think. (**Leena**)

> We only have each other; we explain to each other. It is difficult to reach teachers. (**Jumana**)

7.3.1.9 LGMs improve the affective environment of learning

Another important theme in the dataset is the impact of LGMs on the emotions of learners. Learners reported that LGMs aid learners to control the negative emotions associated with learning and to replace them with positive emotions that are necessary for successful learning:

> In a previous course, learners' explanations removed fear and anxiety and transformed the course from being difficult and vague into being smooth and enjoyable. (**Mona**)

Some learners reported that LGMs provide them with a sense of security and save them from emotional disturbances such as anxiety and stress:

> We had a difficult course and we thought of dropping the course. Everybody was scared and very anxious. I had horrible nightmares about the course. There were

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two students in our group. One made us paper-based LGMs and the other gave us audio and video explanations. They made the course extremely easy for us. I cannot forget their favour. We were relieved. During group study, our worries became less serious. When you are in a study group you start to understand, you can ask questions and interact. You know these things help you remember the answers to the exam questions. You know while answering some exam questions I remembered the answers because I was remembering the voice of our friend who was giving us explanations. The drawings in the LGMs also helped in remembering answers. The other students' comments all had a role in making me remember answers. I am grateful I passed the exam. (**Taiseer**)

Mariam felt pressurized by the difficulty of one of her courses to the extent that she decided to drop that course before exams. Her group members, who had already reviewed the course for the exam, supported her and provided her with revision questions that she could study for the course. As a result, she was able to control her anxiety, focus on learning and eventually she passed the exam:

Some learners devised very meticulous questions for the course. The learners told me their questions covered the whole content (of the teacher's materials) and indeed the teacher's exam questions were covered in the questions devised by the learners. So, thankfully I passed. (**Mariam**)

7.3.1.10 Practical drills for final exams

The data revealed that one popular type of LGMs is learner-generated quizzes. The quizzes first were developed using external online websites. The quiz developers then shared the links on the forums. As a result of the great popularity of this type of LGMs, the IF introduced this facility to its members, which encouraged many learners to attempt to produce quizzes themselves:

Our exams are of MCQ type so these quizzes were a practical and direct drill for our real exams. Learner-generated quizzes are much easier than reading the whole content, especially when these quizzes are inclusive of the whole content. (**Riyad**)

7.3.1.11 LGMs are suitable for learners with commitments

Another recurrent theme is the suitability of LGMs for learners with commitments who do not have sufficient time to watch lectures and take notes or to transform the SCORM contents into paper-based materials. It is reported that LGMs are a practical solution for learners with responsibilities and who have limited time for exam study:

Online learning has been a solution for lots of employed learners and mothers. LGM writers are doing a great favour for them. Without LGMs writers, learning would be very difficult for those learners with very limited time for study. (**Basma**)

Some learners, who cannot watch lectures because of their commitments, reported that LGMs can fill the gap:

> I think teachers' materials should come before LGMs, but because of my work commitment and the difficulty of being free on a regular basis, then LGMs are the alternative for learners without enough free time. They (LGMs) serve the purpose. (**Ammar**)

> Most online learners have obligations that affect them (their study). I, for instance, could not watch lectures this semester. I studied only from LGMs during exam periods and I passed. (**Faisal**)

In sum, learners found LGMs beneficial for their learning in many ways that include catering for learning styles, making teachers' materials more accessible and comprehensible to all abilities of learners, making learning more interactive and enjoyable, meeting learners' learning needs, aiding learning for exam preparation as well as improving the emotional well-being of learners as a result.

7.3.2 Weaknesses of LGMs

This section presents views on the weaknesses reported by some learners and to what extent these weaknesses seem to pose a threat to learning as well as how learners deal with the weaknesses of LGMs.

7.3.2.1 Automated translations

Some learners reported that a serious flaw associated with LGMs is the use of automated translations such as Google Translate in an attempt to make the English contents comprehensible and accessible to learners. However, it was found that this flaw resulted in two approaches towards the use of LGMs with translations: rejection of LGMs with translations or cautious use of LGMs with translations.

7.3.2.1.1 Rejection of LGMs with translations

Some learners do not use LGMs with translations, justifying their choice by explaining that they feared the materials might feature incorrect and inaccurate translations, which would distract learners instead of helping them:

> The problem in LGMs with translations is that it might be right or wrong. Some learners use Google Translate, which in my opinion is a big mistake. (**Noura**)

Other learners reported that they do prefer to avoid LGMs with translations because they impede the learning of new vocabulary and discourage learners from using the dictionary themselves to search for unknown vocabulary:

LGMs without translations are better; in the end exam questions are in English. I love to learn and acquire new vocabulary; if I use LGMs with translations then I shall rely on them and there will be no benefit even if I do well in exams. (**Mona**)

7.3.2.1.2 Cautious use of LGMs with translations

On the other hand, other learners prefer to use LGMs with translations because they think translation is a good way of learning English:

Translation is beneficial because it aids learners to understand the content. However, in all cases Arabic translations require learning the English equivalent because our exams are in English. (**Mariam**)

I prefer the LGMs with translations because they help me understand better and increase my vocabulary more. When I am exposed to the same information in both Arabic and English then the information is retained (in my mind) and I shall never forget it. (**Zaina**)

Learners also reported that Arabic translations are very useful for learners of low language skills as these translations make the course more accessible to these learners in particular:

I prefer LGMs with translations. Honestly, I still feel my language is not good enough to enable me to understand the contents fully. I help myself learning through the use of Arabic translations. (**Taiseer**)

Learners also reported that they are aware of possible mistakes in translations, but they do not think it is a big issue because they can double check themselves or just ignore the wrong translation as the English content is what is required for the exam rather than correct translations:

If I feel there is something wrong in the translation, I double check using the Internet and correct the translation myself. If I am still unsure of the translation, I ask my group members to help me. Other members of the group also notify us if there is anything wrong in the translation. (**Zaina**)

7.3.2.2 Incorrect answers

Another flaw in LGMs is that they might contain incorrect answers or information:

Answers (to questions) are attempts of learners that might be wrong or right. (**Yasmeen**)

However, some learners reported that the mistakes found in LGMs are minimal and they do not think they pose a serious issue:

When you use trustworthy LGMs, even if there are any mistakes, they are very few. It has never happened that we found LGMs, trustworthy LGMs, to have many mistakes. We do not use bad LGMs with many mistakes or with bad translations. You as a user can develop a judgement about LGMs, you can

develop a sense and explore for yourself. You search for yourself and check for yourself. You can consult with other peers who you feel are better than you. (**Taiseer**)

There is nothing free of mistakes. Through my experience throughout the previous years and through our examining of LGMs, the mistakes are really next to nothing. (**Saif**)

7.3.2.3 Dependency

Another theme related to the weaknesses of LGMs is the debate amongst learners over the dependency LGMs might create in some learners. Some learners argued that each learner should produce their own learning materials as well as studying autonomously:

Some learners find lectures difficult, but they search for solutions given by other learners and do not work harder to make lectures comprehensible. There are learners who make LGMs and explanations available for all learners. Cooperation is important, thus LGMs help them a lot (learners who find lectures difficult). This (help from able learners) should not prevent (less able) learners from making personal efforts. (**Fadwa**)

There are some learners who make excuses connected with their work or family obligations and only study during exams depending on LGMs; they do not devote sufficient time before exams. It is not compulsory (studying at university), if they cannot do it then they should not. (**Yasmeen**)

However, other learners defended helping their peers through producing various forms of LGMs and refuted the idea that helping other learners breeds dependency. Instead, these learners view the sharing of their LGMs with less able learners or learners with commitments from a humanistic perspective. Learners argued that such groups of learners need help, support and guidance to help them fulfil their personal dreams of obtaining a degree:

When you learn with a group of students, you feel they are like your brothers and sisters; then the love to collaborate and support each other to reach our goal emerges. People have different capabilities, we complete each other, we put these different capabilities together and this enables us to reach our goal; we all have the same goal. Some learners such as mothers who are responsible for a husband and children and others who cannot use the computer (elderly learners), for these learners, you feel the ultimate happiness when you help them, because you help them to achieve the goal they cannot achieve alone because of their circumstances. These learners need help more than anyone else. (**Tariq**)

7.3.2.4 Strategies for overcoming weaknesses of LGMs

It appears that learners are aware of the possible weaknesses associated with LGMs. Thus, learners employed a number of strategies to overcome any anticipated flaws in the LGMs they

use for their learning. These strategies take place throughout a number of phases: selection, consumption and evaluation.

7.3.2.4.1 Selection: Pre-use procedures

Learners employ a number of pre-use procedures to ensure as much as possible the selection of high quality LGMs and the obliteration of any anticipated flaws in them. The pre-use procedures found were individual checks, consultations with previous peers and recommendations and guidance provided by leaders and/or moderators.

7.3.2.4.1.1 Individual checks

Some learners reported that they take responsibility for selecting appropriate LGMs by conducting thorough checks on the selected LGMs:

> If there are a number of different LGMs I could use I compare them with the contents of lectures. Then I go through views of learners posted on the forum about the best LGMs. If I have chosen specific LGMs and other learners suggested different ones, I ask for clarification as to why they are better. **(Saif)**

7.3.2.4.1.2 Consultations with previous users

There is a continuous cycle of LGM evaluation by learners, as they consult previous users to evaluate their quality and their usefulness for exam study:

> Each group of learners benefits from the preceding group of learners, who provides guidance for them about good LGMs and warns them about LGMs with flaws. (**Sultan**)

Zhuhair, who was a moderator, explained that after finishing each semester he used to collect all LGMs he used for his exams and pinned them in the IF for new users:

> I was keen to provide new learners with the LGMs I used for my own study, because I trust (the quality of) my collected LGMs. (**Zuhair**)

7.3.2.4.1.3 Recommendations from leaders

Another technique used by learners for the selection of LGMs is seeking the advice of leaders and/or moderators as to which LGMs are of good quality. It appears that leaders' views influence some of the selections by learners:

> I do not have time to do checks myself (she is employed). I rely on the advice provided by my group leaders; they recommend for us the best LGMs. (**Zaina**)

There are leaders who produce LGMs themselves through collaboration with a LGMs production team, as in the case of Essra:

> Essra (virtual leader) is cautious that everything should be perfect. She uploads (on her Telegram channels and Twitter page) only reliable LGMs. She only collaborates with the most outstanding learners. She also runs groups for revision

and editing of LGMs. She does not write LGMs herself, but she invests a lot of effort (in managing their production). (**Latifa**)

Other learners with leadership responsibilities were found to be responsible for the selection of appropriate LGMs already available on the various digital platforms, as in the case of Hana. Hana is an assistant leader; she offers her help within a team based on Telegram. The channel posts announcements, instructions, quizzes and core LGMs. Hana is responsible for selecting appropriate LGMs for learners as well as any news related to courses or exams. As discussed above, there are a plenty of LGMs available, which might cause confusion to some learners as to the quality of LGMs. Hana explains that she reviews available LGMs and selects good quality LGMs for the followers of their Telegram channel and Twitter page. As for her criteria for selecting LGMs, she explains:

> The written language should be free from spelling and grammatical mistakes for both English and Arabic. Also, I do not encourage using LGMs with translations if they are below the expected level. LGMs should be comprehensive, covering all topics required in the (course) content. Also, there should be revision questions for information retention. (**Hana**)

7.3.2.4.1.4 Reputation of LGMs writers

Learners reported that they seek LGMs authored by well-known, outstanding learners, which ensures their high quality. It appears that learners form a good opinion about some LGMs writers through experience:

> I rely on trustworthy LGMs writers whose LGMs I have tried before. (**Mona**)

> There are certain writers whose LGMs I prefer to rely on such as Malik's. I trust his work and his explanations about what to expect in the exams. He guides us and supports us. (**Taiseer**)

7.3.2.4.2 Consumption: In-use procedures

In addition to the pre-use procedures, it was found that learners are keen on carrying out, either individually or as a group, in-use evaluative procedures in order to detect and amend any potential flaws in LGMs. It appears that being aware of the potential flaws in LGMs, learners are more cautious, discriminating users who contribute to the editing and improvement of LGMs by conducting searches themselves to ensure the provision of correct and high-quality materials.

Tariq reported that learners are vigilant and are very active in providing missing points or correct answers to help ensure the materials are improved:

> If any writer misses out a point of the content, definitely there will appear someone who notifies them, to the extent that if you make a 60-page LGMs, a

learner shall appear saying you have forgotten to include this single word (exaggerated rhetoric to show high degree of scrutiny employed by some learners). (**Tariq**)

Some learners reported that if they come across a point that seems incorrect or inaccurate to them, they would search individually or consult other peers and then notify other learners of any flaws:

> I consult my peers. I established a study group of the most outstanding learners for this purpose. I trust them and trust their hard work. So I consult them about any doubts about the content of LGMs. (**Saif**)

> If I suspect any point, I double check from the recorded lectures. I email the teacher for clarifications. If I do not receive an answer from the teacher, then I consult peers and we search the Internet for the correct answer. I also notify other learners about the mistake. Also, if the mistake is by the teacher, I send him an email to notify him (that there is a mistake in his lecture). (**Basma**)

Other learners reported that while watching lectures they compare the contents of lectures to the content of the LGMs as a technique to ascertain there are no missing or inaccurate parts in the LGMs:

> Watching lectures while using LGMs enables you to discover and correct mistakes. (**Mona**)

Group in-use evaluative procedures are also carried on the IF under the supervision of moderators:

> On the forum we usually have a study group led by 2-4 member-supervisors for each course (for all learners) and we use some LGMs. While studying if we find any mistakes there is one member responsible for correcting mistakes. If the LGMs are old and we cannot reach the writers, then we do the correction ourselves and stamp the LGMs as being corrected. If the LGMs writer is studying with us, then they are given instructions by the supervisors about the needed corrections and amendments and they do the corrections themselves. (**Zuhair**)

7.3.2.4.3 Overall Evaluation: Post-use procedures

One of the most salient characteristics of this particular learning environment is the commitment of its members to the sharing of all aspects of their learning experiences with future cohorts with the purpose of improving the learning experiences of the new learners. Thus, the provision of feedback on LGMs used by learners is considered one of the most important components of feedback to be passed on. Learners' feedback and impressions are used by new users in the pre-use selection.

Nadia, who is a moderator, reported that one of her duties is to initiate a thread after the end of each course where all used and tried LGMs are posted to the new learners for their use. Learners would share their opinions about each set of LGMs after use and whether they were helpful for exam study.

7.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented learners' views on their teachers' materials, both video lectures and SCORM slides as well as their views on LGMs including their affordances and weakness. Further, learners' strategies for overcoming flaws in LGMs were explained in detail.

Chapter 8
Revenue of Social Capital

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presented findings on the state of the online learner community in 2009. This chapter presents findings on the current state of the community at the time of investigation. It first provides an overview of the various activities conducted by the community. Then it identifies the elements contributing to the effective bonds amongst its members. Although I do not have a research question which focuses on the current state of the community, an analysis of this will help us better understand the role of LGMs in the community at the collective level.

8.2 The current state of the online community

At the commencement of the online programme there was a strong presence of negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, confusion and anger. There were lots of enquiring posts and requests for guidance and help from the administrators of the programme. The community as a whole appeared anxious and unstable because of the unfamiliarity of the programme and the technical problems at the time.

On the other hand, at the time of investigation (February 2016-April 2018) the online community appears to be generally stable, ordered, organized, cohesive, independent, confident, collaborative, self-sufficient, vibrant and joyful with numerous active virtual learning environments. On these independent virtual platforms and without the involvement of teachers, learners devotedly and systematically collaborate together and support each other in every possible way. Table 8.1 presents an outline of the kinds of various activities initiated, organized and practised by learners in their virtual learning environments. I categorize these under six themes.

Table 2.1 A list of learners' collaborative activities

Category	Activities
Materials and learning provision	1. Generating learning materials in various forms. These efforts were either self-initiated or in response to organized competitions or collaborative teams. LGMs forms include: • paper-based LGMs for core study. LGMs writers make these available in PDF formats ready for print • video and audio LGMs with explanations about the content of teachers' materials • supplementary learning materials (translations, grammar rules, vocabulary lists, exercises, learning activities and electronic quizzes)

	• sharing various multimedia learning resources such as YouTube links or smartphone applications • establishing study groups for each course and/or each level via virtual settings of discussion forums, WhatsApp, Telegram and Twitter • holding revision workshops before exams • sharing of written assignments and providing feedback before submission • sharing reflections after exams • creating follow-up forms (for learners to track completion of their learning tasks) • providing encouragement for learning such as slogans, themes and topics to motivate each other to learn and excel • LGMs and learning materials donations for future learners
Technical provision	2. Lectures downloading and sharing in different forms (for those who have difficulties downloading or with less technological knowledge) 3. Technical support (making instructional threads with pictures or videos to show learners how to download lectures or deal with technical problems, etc.) 4. Administrative support (for general queries about the programme or university regulations, and for providing consultations on administrative issues and problem solving, and keeping a record of contact details of teachers and administrative staff) 5. Posting announcements and university-related news to keep members updated regarding university decisions
Emotional provision	6. Providing a sense of group belonging, bonding, identification and social capital 7. Providing a sense of personal value (recognition, appreciation, gratitude, reliance and importance) 8. Providing a space for expression of views and ideas 9. Providing a space for expression of fear, anxiety and frustration of struggles in studying and in exam preparation 10. Providing a space to show sympathy, encouragement, support and caring (for struggling learners) 11. Social interaction (having friendly, relaxing and fun times together, exchanging personal news, making friends, socialization) 12. Providing advice (on personal matters) 13. Welcoming threads for new cohorts of learners 14. End-of semester-honouring of active members and moderators in recognition of their efforts 15. End-of-semester celebrations (sharing videos, pictures, emojis, congratulating each other) 16. End-of-exams tea parties in exam centres 17. Graduation parties to celebrate their success, as the University does not hold graduation ceremonies for online learners.
Tactical provision	18. Clustering strategies (to ensure that a sufficiently large number of learners do a course together to provide sufficient support to each other; the clustering announcement takes place before the commencement of the semester during course-registration period) 19. Evaluation of teachers' personality, performance and exam styles (for new learners; some learners may choose to postpone or take a course depending on other learners' evaluation of the teacher) 20. Evaluation of the requirement and difficulty of courses (to help new learners choose their quota of courses; some learners find it demanding to do more than one difficult course per semester)

	21. Arranging official group complaints (via questionnaires and Twitter hashtags)
	22. Collecting complaint letters as samples for future use
	23. Group editing and consultations on complaint letters
	24. Arranging campaigns for course reforms (via Twitter hashtags and collective action targeted at university officials to make their voice heard and put pressure on these parties to make the changes requested)
	25. Contacting newspapers and TV channels to recognize their complaints or demands
	26. Disseminating academic and administrative staff replies to their emails to keep members informed and updated
	27. Travelling to the university's campus to meet teachers and administrators and solicit answers to their concerns and to disseminate teachers' and administrators' responses to learners
	28. Following Twitter pages of academic and administrative staff
	29. Discussion of administrative decisions (for those that affect learners and need a response)
Miscellaneous (activities by leaders)	30. Hosting of language professionals in their study groups to answer learners' questions
	31. Job announcements for job seekers
	32. Announcements of non-university related courses and workshops for personal development
	33. Announcements of discounts for students from a variety of shops
	34. Money donations to pay fees for learners experiencing financial hardship

All the above-mentioned collaborative activities indicate the substantial investment in social capital, which resulted in a strong sense of community in learners. Indeed, it is noteworthy that what all of these activities have in common is that they are unofficial, without involving the teachers or the institution at all. McMillan and Chavis (1986) define a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9), which nicely sums up the communal spirit behind these activities.

The findings thus strongly show that emotions cannot be separated from a collaborative and bonded community:

> I felt sadness when I graduated because I knew I would miss the good people (colleagues). The outside world does not know what I went through (to complete the online learning) nor understands my achievements. I only live these feelings with my colleagues because they were the ones who helped, who supported and who checked on me. This exam period (first semester after his graduation) I felt so nostalgic; I wished for our beautiful days to return. (**Fawaz**)

The findings identified a number of elements that seem to be responsible for developing and strengthening the sense of community amongst learners. In what follows I shall discuss

each element and link it to LGMs. The purpose is to show how the production of LGMs serves as the means through which learners create a sense of community.

8.3 Elements for developing a sense of community

The findings revealed that communication, emotional interaction, learning interaction, social interaction and leaders appear to be essential for developing a sense of community in learners.

8.3.1 Communication

Communication here means a basic form of interaction between learners. Learners communicated with each other in order to fulfil certain needs such as passing on or asking for information, asking for help and advice, expressing emotions and needs and sharing views. Indeed, the need for various types of LGMs was a driving force for making learners communicate with each other. Communication amongst learners is a prerequisite for allowing interaction, that is, a deeper level of engagement between learners (Hornbæk & Oulasvirta 2017). The findings revealed that there were three types of interaction amongst learners: emotional, learning and social.

8.3.2 Emotional interaction

Emotional interaction played a major role in creating constructive responses in and consequently bonds amongst learners. It entails expression and reception of emotions. For instance, learners who expressed their fears and anxieties because of their inability to access teachers' materials or fears over exams received sympathy, which resulted in constructive responses (the production of LGMs). In return, learners who received sympathy and/or benefitted from sympathetic acts showed emotions of gratitude/appreciation. And in response to gratitude/appreciation, learners were inclined to produce more LGMs. For instance, Rania said she is usually exhausted from her leadership responsibilities, attempting to attend to the needs of her various group members, but the appreciation she receives causes all her fatigue to disappear:

> When I see all that (appreciation) I cannot leave them. The other day a learner whom I helped to solve his problems with the system told me that he had a baby girl recently and he named her after me (this practice is common in the cultural context of the study to show deep appreciation for someone. Thus, it is very common that people name their children after their parents). I did not believe him; I thought he was joking. When he sent me a photo of her birth certificate, I was literally speechless. I was deeply touched and could not reply to him till the following day. (**Rania**)

Hence emotional interaction played a major role in increasing the number of LGMs writers in the community. Many learners benefitted from receiving emotional gratification from the community and LGMs were a point of emotional interaction.

8.3.3 Learning interaction

Learning interaction is an important aspect of a bonded learning community. Sharing a learning goal and collaborating to achieve that goal creates a strong sense of identification and belonging. The production of LGMs worked as a common learning goal for learners; thus, they were obliged to interact with each other to achieve that goal:

Image 8.1 Avatar of a female WhatsApp study group
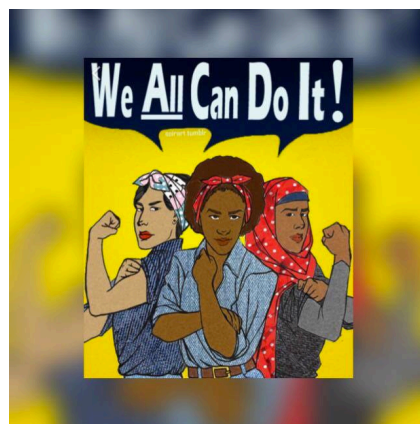
Also, even during learning interaction, emotions seem to be present. Learners need to vent their emotions of anxiety and fears or share moments of joy and happiness. The images bellow show that learners share their emotions with each other during exams.

Image 8.2 The need for emotional expression during exams
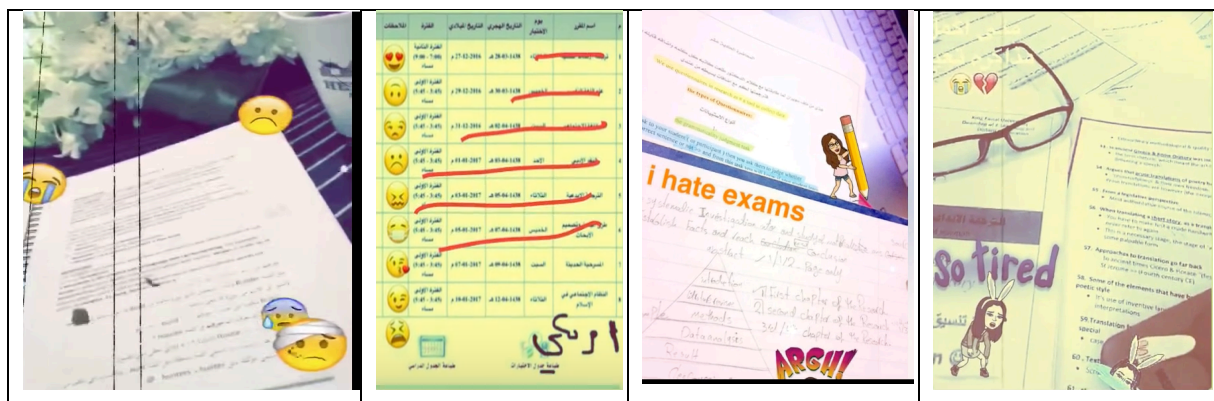
8.3.4 Social interaction

Social interaction also contributes to enhancing the learning experience of learners. Learners can benefit from social interaction, in that learning becomes more enjoyable.

Engaging in producing LGMs in one group encouraged learners to socialize. Some learners reported they formed social bonds with others and go out together, attend social occasions and visit each other's homes. A common type of social gathering is the end-of-semester tea party, in which members of one group celebrate the end of their hard work during the semester. Apparently because of the collaborative activities learners do together, they have a need to express their emotions of joy and relief together. So it appears that emotional needs do indeed bring learners together either for learning or socializing purposes.

Image 8.3 Social interactions

8.3.5 Leaders

The leaders played a key role in uniting learners and establishing the sense of one team, which in turn contributes to the sense of community. Large numbers of learners joined groups under the supervision of leaders. It was found that learners admire and trust their leaders and feel proud to be members of their group, and almost all leaders produce LGMs or organize their production. We saw earlier that some learners who aspired for social recognition and/or leadership positions used the production of LGMs to achieve their goal as in the case of Riyad, Nawal and Anood. So, the production of LGMs allows learners with leadership aspirations to emerge and to practise leadership skills. In return, these leaders contribute greatly to organizing various activities, which benefits the community and enriches its experience as a whole. They represent Hook and Vass' (2000) view that "leadership is the fabled elixir. It can turn failing schools into centers of excellence" (p. 5). So, leaders can play a very important role in creating a strong sense of belonging in learners. A leader in the community received the following gift as a gesture of gratitude:

Image 8.4 Interpersonal relations

- The best gift ever; I received it today from one of my peers,
  a water well in … in my name
  so humbled by her gesture.

- Congratulations and you truly deserve it;
  you gave us your precious time.

8.4 Importance of a strong sense of community

A bonded learning community is valuable for enriching and improving the learning experience of learners to a great extent as shown below. The data revealed that the University does not hold a graduation ceremony for online learners and that learners themselves arrange and pay for their own celebrations—to celebrate their success and achievement together and to enjoy priceless moments of happiness, satisfaction, pride, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect. The determination of learners to celebrate their success and graduation in an official-like way emphasizes the claim that learning involves strong emotions. Learners gratify their emotions through celebrating their success. Chapter 5 began by highlighting the negative emotions of learners when they first joined the online programme. We saw how some learners were motivated to continue their education for emotional needs and how they experienced intense negative emotions because of struggles threating their progression in learning. I conclude this chapter with a happy ending; the images below illustrate a graduation celebration of members of the online community, experiencing strong positive emotions of happiness, joy, pride and satisfaction. Needless to say, the arrangements as well as the value of such priceless graduation celebrations is the fruit of a cohesive community in which members need each other for fulfilment (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Image 8.5 Graduation celebrations arranged by learners

Image 8.6 Learners expressing their emotions after graduation

Congratulations 2017
To you who endured lots of struggles to achieve success,
To you who dreamed and invested a lot of effort,
You worked hard tirelessly to achieve your dream
Now those days are gone and today you are seeing your dream coming true
You really deserve to be proud of yourselves for your achievement
Congratulations on your graduation, my precious cohort
You have always been the best friends ever; I am proud of you and will always be so.
Your loving [her name]

Thank you, Giving cohort (nickname of their cohort), thank you for your special devotion, for your efforts and for your generous helping hands.

My thanks and acknowledgment are to my colleagues and friends, to the ones with whom I have lived the most beautiful learning experience ever. With you my dream came true ❤️

Congratulations [inside the image]
My thanks and gratitude are to you. You have been lighthouses by which I was guided; you have been shining examples from which I learned; you have been my guiding stars throughout my educational journey. A big thank you to you, as big as the sky
🌺🌺

8.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed how the online community is effectively cohesive. I also specified the elements for building a unified community: communication, emotional interaction, learning interaction, social interaction and leaders. The findings demonstrate the effective role of LGMs in bringing learners together.

Chapter 9

Discussion: The Role of LGMs

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the main research question: what is the role of LGMs in the researched online EFL context? The answer to this question is based on the findings presented in the previous four Data Analysis chapters. The first three parts of this discussion chapter will discuss findings related to emotions, L2 motivation and emotional intelligence, which shall set the stage for illustrating and discussing the role of LGMs in the researched context in the last part of this chapter.

9.2 Part 1: Findings related to emotions

Chapter 5 investigated the learning environment of the online programme when it started in 2009 with a particular focus on the emotional circumstances in which LGMs came into existence. The study began by investigating the general emotional state of learners as well as their emotions and attitudes towards their learning materials. Chapter 7 also investigated the emotions and attitudes of current learners with regards to their learning materials. The discussion below focuses on the main findings related to emotions from these two chapters.

9.2.1 The emotional state of learners in online learning

The findings revealed that the first cohort of the online learners experienced a range of intense emotions, experiencing both positive and negative emotions. Learners were hopeful, enthusiastic and joyful to have an opportunity to continue their education. Yet, on the other hand, learners experienced intense negative emotions of fear, anxiety, confusion and anger. These findings corroborate the findings reported in previous research conducted on online learners (Angelaki & Mavroidis, 2013; Clarke, 2015; Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Kalogiannakis & Touvlatzis, 2015; Kennedy & Gray, 2016; Zembylas, 2008; Zembylas et al., 2008). Like the present study, these studies showed that online learners are subject to both positive and negative emotions in response to various aspects of their online learning.

Further, my findings revealed that at the commencement of the online programme the online learners seem to have experienced more negative emotions than positive ones. This claim draws support from five facts: the predominance of negative emotions in the online community as shown in the forum posts, the huge quantities of learners' enquiry posts, the existence of persistent problems and factors responsible for breeding negative emotions (i.e., problems in accessing teachers' materials), dropout requests and finally individual antecedents responsible for intensifying learners' emotions. These findings are congruent with

previous studies (Clarke, 2015; Conrad, 2002). Conrad (2002), for instance, using a survey, asked students taking an online course in an American university to use adjectives to describe their feelings towards their first online class and the findings revealed the predominance of negative emotions of fear and anxiety. Clarke (2015) also reported that her BSc Jamaican undergraduate adult online learners, who are similar to the majority of learners of my study, in that they were employed and returning to education after a gap, experienced many more negative emotions than positive ones, and that frustration was the most commonly reported emotion. Her participants experienced frustration over their interaction with their tutors, technological matters and issues related to the programme.

The huge quantities of enquiries in the university forum for both administrative staff and fellow students as well also suggest the existence of negative emotions. This finding is in line with previous studies (Blackmon & Cullen, 2016; Kalogiannakis & Touvlatzis, 2015). Kalogiannakis and Touvlatzis (2015) reported that online learners enrolled in both graduate and postgraduate programmes were led to communicate with their tutor-counsellors mainly by the negative emotions they were experiencing, namely, stress, despair, alienation, indignation and vexation. In contrast, positive emotions of joy, satisfaction, enthusiasm, trust/safety and relief were reported as much more infrequent factors motivating learners to contact their tutor-counsellors.

The findings suggest that the huge amounts of enquiries for both administrative staff and fellow students are likely attributable to the feelings of alienation and disconnectedness in the new remote learning context. The unfamiliarity with the online learning environment in addition to the disconnectedness from staff and other learners created negative emotions experienced by a considerable number of learners when they first joined the online learning programme, which in return triggered numerous enquiries. These findings are congruent with the findings of some online learning studies (Conrad, 2002; Juutinen & Saariluoma, 2010; 2011; Kalogiannakis & Touvlatzis, 2015; Kim et al., 2005; Morgan & Tam, 1999; O'Regan, 2003; Rovai & Wighting, 2005; Zembylas, 2008; Zembylas et al., 2008), in which negative emotions were reported to be caused by lack of face-to-face communication, lack of emotional connection, unfamiliarity with the learning method, lack of student integration, unfamiliarity with the learning system and unfamiliarity with technology. Moreover, feelings of disconnectedness also caused learners to post very frequently to express their fears and anxieties and to get connected with others. Previous research on online learning provides support for this claim. For instance, Zembylas (2008) reported that one of his informants, Nick, used to send frequent emails to his online study groups because "I constantly feel the

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need to be in touch with others in order to share my fears, my anxieties, and my concerns" (Zembylas, 2008, p. 80).

Also, it was revealed that there were a number of dropout requests at the beginning of the programme as a result of experiencing confusion, anxiety and anger over the technical problems of the programme. This finding is in line with previous studies that linked negative emotions with dropout from online learning. For instance, Juutinen and Saariluoma (2010) in their investigation of the emotional barriers in e-learning reported that their students, who were Finnish Tax Administration employees taking online courses for training purposes, experienced anxiety and frustration over some features of the learning system. They added that frustration caused learners to lose their interest in learning. Similarly, Kalogiannakis and Touvlatzis (2015), who conducted a study on Greek undergraduate and post-graduates students of the Open University, found that experiencing negative emotions of stress, despair, loneliness, alienation, vexation and indignation was the main reason that led learners to consider dropping out from their studies.

The present study further highlights individual antecedents that could exacerbate the negative emotions online learners experienced. Some learners appeared to have personal emotional reasons to continue their education such as previous learning disappointments, low self-esteem or anxieties concerning disappointing their families or others' judgment of them.

Previous research (Conrad, 2002, Juutinen & Saariluoma, 2010; Kalogiannakis & Touvlatzis, 2015; Morgan & Tam, 1999; O'Regan, 2003; Rovai & Wighting, 2005; Zembylas et al., 2008) has focused largely on examining the emotions caused by the online learning environment and its impact on the learning process. The present study contributes to the literature through highlighting the impact of external individual antecedents on learners' emotions and how external and personal-related emotions intensify the general emotional state of learners, which impacts learners' emotional needs in learning contexts.

9.2.2 Learning materials and the emotional state of learners

One significant contribution of the present study is the investigation of the relationship between learners' emotions and their learning materials. As explained in Chapter 3, there is a dearth of studies on the use of learning materials, particularly from a learner's perspective (Garton & Graves, 2014; Harwood, 2014; Littlejohn, 2011; McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012); thus, to the best of my knowledge this is the first qualitative study dedicated to investigating the links between learning materials and learners' emotions in an EFL context.

The findings demonstrate that learning materials have a crucial role in affecting the emotional state of learners, which consequently has an impact on their learning and learning experience generally. This claim finds support from two different situations illustrated by the

findings. In the first situation at the commencement of the online programme, we saw how the first cohort of online learners made concerted efforts to acquire the prescribed textbooks and to access the video lectures and the SCORM slides prepared by the teachers, which demonstrates the essential role of learning materials in this particular context. The findings revealed that the unavailability of the textbooks and the technical problems that made accessing the video lectures difficult caused intense negative emotions in considerable numbers of learners. These intense negative emotions included anxiety, stress, fear, frustration, confusion, anger and hopelessness. All these damaging negative emotions could have negatively affected the retention of some of the learners as there were indeed big numbers of withdrawal requests for some of the courses around the exam period. It could be that learners felt that their inability to access learning materials in sufficient time made them unprepared to sit the exams.

In the second situation, and according to the accounts given by learners who were able to access the video lectures easily in subsequent years, the learning materials prepared by the teachers caused emotions of boredom, disappointment, frustration, anxiety or fear. Although in the first situation the negative emotions seem to be severer and more damaging to learner retention and achievement, even in the second situation emotions of boredom and disappointment associated with teachers' materials could have a negative impact on learning, enjoyment of learning and academic achievement. To some extent, these findings resonate with the findings reported in the literature on the demotivating impact of negative emotions such as boredom and disappointment on learning performance (Kahu et al., 2014; Pekrun et al., 2014; Sharp et al., 2017; Tze et al., 2016). Kahu et al. (2014) conducted a study on first-semester students taking online courses in a New Zealand university from various disciplines and reported that the emotion of disappointment reduces motivation, which negatively affects learning engagement. Sharp et al. (2017) also reported that boredom could have an adverse impact on learning, ranging from negatively affecting engagement with the learning content, hindering progress or even causing termination of study. Their study found that the lecture is a main source that could arouse boredom in learners. In the context of the present study, video lectures are the main learning materials offered to learners by teachers and they were reportedly associated with emotions of boredom (see section 9.2.2.2).

In what follows, the discussion provides further details on certain aspects pertaining to learning materials that caused negative emotions in learners.

9.2.2.1 Prescribed textbooks and their value for learning and exam revision

It was found that despite the fact that the first cohort of online learners were keen to acquire the prescribed textbooks, learners began to experience negative emotions of anxiety

and frustration once they experienced doubts as to the utility of textbooks for their learning and exam study.

Similar findings were revealed in a quantitative study by Marchand and Gutierrez (2012) that examined the relationship between emotions and the learning process for both online and face-to-face graduate students enrolled an introductory research methods course. The authors reported that online students with stronger beliefs in task value (belief in the utility of learning research methods) "were more hopeful about the course and had lower levels of frustration" (p. 157) as a result. A similar relationship was not noted in the face-to-face students. The authors concluded that if learners develop a belief in the value / utility of their learning tasks then "they are more likely to have more positive emotional experiences in learning situations" (p.152).

9.2.2.2 Drawbacks inherent to digital learning materials

The findings revealed that digital learning materials are prone to a number of drawbacks. Some drawbacks are technical in nature. We have seen that at the commencement of the online programme back in 2009 these problems were predominant as the online learning technology was new and enhancements were needed to meet the needs of the users. For instance, because of the huge numbers of learners there were huge pressure on the servers and learners were unable to access the system. In addition to this problem, learners had difficulties accessing the video lectures or referring back to them because of the huge size of video files. These technical problems caused intense negative emotions in learners and could have been a major cause of dropouts.

Indeed, even with the massive advances in online learning technology, the findings reported some inconvenience associated with the digital learning materials. The following list provides more detail:

- Frequent inability to access the system because of maintenance, troubleshooting or other technical reasons such as Internet failures in rural areas.
- The requirement for certain IT skills to effectively use the systems and solve any emerging problems.
- High speed Internet, which could be a financial obstacle for some learners to acquire.
- Access to the Internet and a device, which may not be readily available at any time.
- Difficulties in adjusting to digital instead of paper-based materials because of learning preferences or cognitive styles for processing and retaining information

(see section 9.2.2.3). Some learners reported that digital materials are not effective for their engagement and information retention. Similar findings were reported in the literature (Foasberg, 2014; Rose, 2011), in that print materials were found to be more effective for long readings and their comprehension.

- Unsuitability of digital materials for studying outdoors, while travelling or during breaks.

- Unsuitability for quick revision, skimming or searching for certain points.

- Health concerns. Some learners reported they preferred paper-based materials over digital materials because they experienced hearing and vision issues due to long hours watching lectures on the screen and using earphones while watching. Previous studies connected Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) with the barriers of online learning (Hussain, 2007).

The same problems associated with digital learning materials reported in the present study were reported in previous online learning literature (Blackmon & Cullen, 2016; de la Varre et al., 2014; Hussain, 2007; Kizilcec & Halawa, 2015; Mahmodi & Ebrahimzade, 2015; Onah et al., 2014). For instance, in Blackmon and Cullen (2016), Australian learners enrolled in a massive online community course also spoke of their inability to watch lectures offline and difficulties in printing written materials to be used for reading and referring back to from the digital versions available.

In common with my study, these other studies also reported that problems accessing online learning materials were amongst the factors leading to dropouts. The present study additionally highlights a connection between the problems of accessing digital learning materials and the arousing of negative emotions in learners.

9.2.2.3 Lack of multi-level learning materials

The findings also highlighted the connection between the lack of multi-level learning materials and negative emotions online learners experienced. It was found that the learning materials prepared by the teachers reportedly failed to suit the various learning abilities of learners. The online programme contains lots of learners who had struggled at secondary school and students with undeveloped self-study skills as well as learners who had returned to education after many years and found it challenging to progress quickly. In addition, there was the issue of EFL learners who were required to take general English courses as part of their degree. We have seen in Chapter 5 that those learners struggled to access the EFL materials and were dependent on their peers to provide explanations for them.

The findings revealed that the online programme does not provide supplemental materials for learners who are incapable of accessing the teachers' materials. The findings demonstrated

that those learners are subject to experience negative emotions of fear, anxiety, frustration and hopelessness because of their inability to engage with the teachers' materials.

Previous literature touched upon the lack of multi-level or differentiated learning materials as an obstacle for online learning. Onah et al. (2014), for instance, stated that one reason behind high rates of dropouts in online learning is that the learning materials are usually provided in one format that does not "adapt to individual needs of learners." Previous literature acknowledged the need for providing differentiated levels of learning materials to accommodate the various learning capabilities of learners, though from different perspectives (Everett & Oswald, 2018, Nuangpolmak, 2014). Nuangpolmak (2014), for instance, argued for the need for multi-level learning materials to cater for the mixed ability of EFL classes. Based on his experience as an EFL teacher at a Thai university, Nuangpolmak explained that learning English is compulsory at his educational establishment, in common with my study, and he had to teach a prescribed coursebook to all students regardless of their age, English proficiency, their interest and motivation or their learning styles. Nuangpolmak found that the prescribed coursebook was insufficient to meet the EFL writing needs of his students and thus he incorporated multi-level materials into his course to suit the mixed abilities of his students.

Within non-EFL contexts also, there is research on providing support with learning materials for learners with visual or hearing disabilities (Everett & Oswald, 2018). In contrast, there seems to be a lack of focus on learners who may not have physical disabilities yet need support to access and engage with their learning. These learners might have cognitive or emotional issues that prevent them from being capable of full independent study. The findings of the present study revealed that there are slow learners who need simplified materials. Other learners seem to lack metacognitive skills (planning, organizing, identifying important points) or lack emotion management skills to deal with stressors, and to keep themselves motivated and self-confident. The findings demonstrated that these learners benefitted greatly from differentiated and simplified LGMs in addition to peer-support.

9.2.2.4 Lack of interesting learning materials

The findings also identified the lack of interesting materials capable of motivating and engaging the learners as a source of negative emotions. The learners reportedly experienced negative emotions of boredom, disappointment and contempt. Some learners described their video lectures as boring and dull because some teachers only read to them and the video lectures were simply recorded with a lack of visual effects or interactive features. Some learners relied on more interesting and appealing external resources for improving their language proficiency and for explanations for topics related to their courses such as engVid or YouTube. It was reported that because of the availability of more interesting external video

learning resources, some learners found their video lectures less interesting than what is available on the Internet.

These findings contribute to the literature on the effects of different types of video lectures on learners' emotions (Chen & Wang, 2011; Chen & Sun, 2012; Chen & Wu, 2015). These studies utilized the emWave system to detect positive, neutral and negative responses. Chen and Wu (2015), for instance, reported no differences in emotions when their participants watched three main types of video lectures. These types were the lecture capture type, also called the talking-head lecture (showing an instructor giving a lecture for online viewing together with accompanying slides), the picture-in-picture type (consisting of an instructor's image, slides, subtitles and animation) and the voice-over presentation type (consisting of an audio recording of a lecture accompanied by slides). The video lecture type used in the context of the present study is best described as lecture capture. The present study revealed different findings than those of the above study in that learners reportedly experienced negative emotions of boredom, disappointment and contempt in response to their video lectures. There are some factors that might explain the differences in the reported results. Learners described their teachers as "sitting reading," which makes the lectures more like Chen and Wu's audio format, given the absence of visual attention-arousing features. Another factor is that the setting of the previous study was experimental, such as with reference to the length and quantities of video lectures learners viewed. Participants of Chen and Wu's study were required to watch one 15-mintue-video for each type, whereas learners of the present study were required to watch over 100 videos of about 1-2 hours per semester. Such being the case, it is possible that Chen and Wu's participants' emotional responses might not reflect natural and authentic responses more extended viewing of the different types of the video lectures might have attracted. This could be the reason why no emotional differences were detected in watching the three types of lectures by Chen and Wu. Further, the previous studies relied on a device attached to the heart, the emWave system, that only can distinguish emotions as positive, neutral or negative, whereas the findings of the present study are derived from first-hand accounts of learners who described their emotions in more detail. The present findings contribute to the literature through highlighting the importance of considering the effects of length and quantities of the various types of video lectures learners may be exposed to; in addition to the potential differences in participants' emotional responses in authentic and experimental settings when examining the relationships between types of video lectures and emotions. Such findings indicate the importance of incorporating qualitative research in the investigation of learners' emotions to enrich the literature of design and development of

video lectures. Qualitative research is more capable of capturing more complex details than quantitative designs.

Another aspect related to the lack of appealing learning materials is the lack of learning materials with various formats to suit the learning styles of learners. Some learners reported that they cannot learn or comprehend information in the digital format and that they need to see information written in front of them, which explains their need for paper-based learning materials. Some learners also reported their need for paper-based LGMs to enable them to use highlighters with different colours, thereby allowing them to use visual effects as memorizing techniques. The findings revealed that there is a huge demand for paper-based LGMs from print shops, which indicates the importance of the provision of paper-based learning materials besides the video lectures and SCORM slides. Similar findings were revealed in the study of Ilioudi et al. (2013), where American students reported enjoyment from learning from paper-based books was higher than enjoyment reported from learning from videos of both the lecture capture type and the Khan Academy type (digitally handwritten lessons, using a digital pen and tablet, accompanied by the voice of the instructor). The authors contend that learners' preferences might be attributed to cultural or personal parameters or to their previous learning experience and exposure to video learning. These findings are in line with my results, in that learners prefer paper-based materials in their learning because of factors such as their pre-university learning practices, learning styles and information processing and memorizing techniques. My findings therefore demonstrate the importance of the provision of paper-based learning materials along with multimedia materials to cater for the various needs and preferences of learners.

Moreover, some learners commented on the "lengthy," "repetitive" format of some lectures, containing "irrelevant jargon" and reported that they preferred LGMs because they are "concise" and "to-the-point." These reasons reportedly contributed to the limited or non-use of teachers' video lectures and the reasons for using LGMs instead. Human cognition theories may be "useful for interpreting user interaction with resources in multimodal environments" (Matusiak, 2013, p. 1597). Some cognition theories offer explanations on how people process verbal and visual information, such as cognitive load theory (Sweller et al., 1998) and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 1997, 2009). In light of human cognition theories, Chen and Wu (2015) investigated the relationship between learning performance and three types of video lectures, the picture capture, the picture-in-picture type and the voice over presentation type. The study indicated that verbalizers (verbal learners) perform the same in response to the three types of video lectures, whereas the cognitive load was significantly higher for visualizers (visual learners) when watching the voice-over

presentation. A high cognitive load reduces working memory and attention and causes poor learning performance. The results of the previous studies aid us in understanding the views and preferences of some of the learners of the present study. As mentioned earlier, the video lectures in my study fit the description of Chen and Wu's lecture capture type; however, as reported by learners, most teachers made little use of visual elements, making the audio element more prominent. Therefore, it might be that some learners find the video lectures highly demanding on their cognitive load; hence, they found the lectures "lengthy" in the sense that their cognitive capacity is incapable of processing the verbal information. As a result, these learners do not watch the video lectures and prefer to rely on the various types of LGMs that better suit their cognitive processing of information.

The video lecture type used in my study reportedly failed to appeal to a considerable number of participants. This finding is in contrast to the findings of other studies that reported the lecture capture type is a successful teaching tool, which is also the most common type and is used by most universities (Ilioudi et al., 2013; Wiese & Newton, 2013). For example, in Ilioudi et al. (2013) it was found that the lecture capture type led to better academic performance than the Khan Academy style and this could be attributed to the similarity of a lecture capture to actual class teaching. Shaw and Molnar (2011) reported that the use of lecture capture as a replacement for the traditional face-to-face style of lectures significantly increased the academic achievement of medical students, especially for non-native speakers of English. Guo et al. (2014) reported that lecture capture could be a more engaging teaching tool than high-budget video productions simply because the presence of the instructor in the video added an "intimate and personal feel and broke up the monotony of PowerPoint slides and code screencasts" (videos made up of successive pictures with an audio narration). In the study of Cross et al. (2013) it was also revealed that the use of handwriting in videos was found to be more engaging and personal and enjoyable while watching the lecture than a typeface style. However, my participants reported different views. This discrepancy of findings might indicate that there is a poor exploitation of the lecture capture type by some teachers in my context. For instance, the findings revealed that there is a lack of exploitation of the smart board by some teachers, which means that learners were deprived of the benefit of an effective engaging tool.

Moreover, the findings revealed that whereas some teacher successfully engaged the interest of their learners in their lectures, other teachers were described as "bored," "boring" and "as if they were talking to themselves." Therefore, the findings suggest that the success of the lecture capture style depends also on the skills of the teacher to engage learners and sustain their attention through creating a lively lecture. Similar findings were reported in the

study of Sharp et al. (2017), where UK on-campus undergraduates reported lectures as the main source of academic boredom and that the lecturers could make lectures interesting and engaging through qualities pertaining to the personality of the lecturers such as "lively personality, humorous, stimulating, animated, enthusiastic, energetic, motivated and motivating, passionate" (p. 667). The findings thus necessitate the need to consult the literature on the best recommendations for designing and making video lectures with regards to learning styles and abilities of learners, cognitive processing of audio and visual information as well as on the skills of online teaching.

9.3 Part 2: Findings related to L2 motivation research

In this section I will discuss findings relevant to current approaches to L2 motivation research, namely the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005) and "person-in-context" relational view to motivation (Ushioda, 2009). A CDST perspective is adopted in the discussion of the findings.

9.3.1 A mutually influencing relationship between context and learners

The findings demonstrate that both learners and their context were dynamic, interacting with each other and contributing to changes to the characteristics of each other. When learners first joined the online programme, they encountered challenging components of their learning context. These included unfamiliarity with the virtual learning system, deprivation from the physical learning context, deprivation from immediate, face-to-face communication with teachers and peers, problems in accessing Blackboard, difficulties and struggles in learning from teachers' materials, as well as emotional disturbances resulting from these issues. These issues made the learning context instable and chaotic, threatening learners' learning progress and retention on the programme. On the other hand, learners had personal reasons to continue their education, either emotional or instrumental. As a result, the interaction between the challenging contextual factors (**external forces**) and personal factors (**internal forces**) caused learners to engage in adaptive behaviours in response to their challenging context to ensure their learning progress and success.

Learners' primary adaptive behaviours included **group cohesiveness**, which was reflected in discussion forums, and **production of LGMs**, which were in the form of posts in discussion forums. These two adaptive behaviours were learner-made components added to the learning context. Group cohesiveness and LGMs production also began to exert influences on learners' subsequent behaviours, as specified below.

Group cohesiveness' influenced learners' behaviours as follows:
- answering each other's enquiries

- offering of solutions to technical problems

- providing advice to each other

- formation of study and collegial groups, both public (in discussion forums) and private (Messenger)

- initiating revision threads in the discussion forums

- sharing feedback and reflections after exams

- initiating thank you threads for learners who helped their peers

- initiating social threads to offer congratulations and good wishes for holiday periods

LGMs productions influenced learners' behaviours as follows:

- sharing various form of LGMs with the whole community

- archiving of video lectures on sharing websites

- making LGMs available in Microsoft Word format

- recognising LGMs writers in the online community

- making LGMs available in print shops.

These learners' adaptive behaviours became at that time central components/characteristics of the learning context and some of these components began to influence learners' subsequent behaviours as explained below.

Print shops, which were introduced to the learning context by learners themselves, also began to influence learners' behaviours and features of the learning context. Print shops enhanced the high status of LGMs writers in the learning context by adding professional and financial components to LGMs production. Further, print shops enhanced the status of learner-moderators who organize the production of LGMs and make agreements with print shops. In response to these influences, LGMs production increased and took on a more professional status in the learning context. Group cohesiveness that was first made manifest in the form of study and collegial groups to enhance feelings of familiarity and belonging evolved to include establishment of competing teams with dedicated members for producing LGMs.

Social media platforms, i.e., Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram, were introduced in the learning context by learners and replaced Windows Messenger, which was a significant adaptive behaviour. These platforms became central to the learning context and began to exert further influences on learners.

Influences of social media on group cohesiveness

- Social media platforms enhanced group cohesiveness greatly as learners could communicate with each other more conveniently and reach each other quickly at any time.

- Learners could quickly share documents, materials and links to learning resources quickly and conveniently.

- WhatsApp and Telegram enhanced emotional and social interaction amongst learners as they could exchange non-learning related messages, videos and pictures.

- Social media platforms also enhanced cooperative learning. During exam periods, learners were able to send chat messages to their groups asking for explanations after midnight and received answers immediately as lots of learners were awake revising. Such behaviours would not have been possible through forums, emails, or Windows Messenger.

Influences of social media on LGMs production

- Social media also impacted LGMs production. Previously, organizing LGMs production was exclusive to forum moderators, and not readily in the gift of all learners. But with Twitter and Telegram, any learner who wished to be a leader in the community needed only to initiate his/her page on Twitter or channel on Telegram.

- Social media also enhanced the virtual presence of a significant population of online learners. This feature became a component of the learning context and affected subsequent behaviours of leaners. Social recognition of LGMs writers and leaders were greatly enhanced by social media. Being a learner-leader or LGMs writer or both was the gateway to celebrity and social recognition in the community.

- Additionally, the significant and vibrant presence of the online learning community in the virtual sphere attracted small businesses seeking virtual marketing. These businesses began to approach learner-leaders (owners of Telegram Channels and/or Twitter pages) to request them to host paid ads on their platforms. This impacted learners' subsequent behaviours; a learner-leader needs to have huge number of learner-followers to attract paid ads. Therefore, to have a huge number of learner-followers, learner-leaders had to offer creative and various LGMs to their learner-followers. Further, some learner-leaders began hosting language professionals to answer learners' questions. Others included miscellaneous services such as announcements of non-learning related courses for personal development, job vacancy announcements and exclusive shops discounts.

- Having a successful virtual platform caused learners to adapt and acquire business-related skills such as the abilities to negotiate, make agreements, market, recruit and cooperate with team members, which also created a particular form of group cohesiveness.

In sum, both learners and their online context were constantly and dynamically undergoing numerous co-adaptive processes over time. Co-adaptation refers to "the interaction of two or more complex systems, each changing in response to the other" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 67). Table 8.1 displays a wide range of learners' behaviours that came about in response to features of their learning context. By contrasting the initial state of the learning context and the behaviours of the first cohort of online learners back in 2009 with the behaviour of the current cohorts of learners and their learning context at the time of investigation (2016-2018), we see very significant changes. With regards to behaviours related to group cohesiveness and LGMs production, the behaviours of the current cohorts of online learners are qualitatively and quantitatively different than that of the first cohort of learners who joined the programme in 2009. Although the technical problems of Blackboard were eliminated and learners could access lectures via their tablets and smartphones, the production of LGMs continued and increased although materials production was no longer triggered by problems associated with Blackboard. LGMs production is now triggered by interactions of unique personal motives and contextual factors such as social recognition and influence in the online community, financial gains from print shops and paid ads and competitions amongst leaders, channels and LGMs production teams.

These findings are in line with Ushioda's (2009, 2016) views regarding the dynamic interaction between context and persons. Ushioda (2009) explains that L2 motivation research has been dominated by positivist methodologies that aimed to examine how certain contextual factors affect motivation in linear models. Context thus was treated as a static, independent variable without paying attention to the mutually influencing, dynamic relationship between individuals and context in which both impact and respond to each other:

> in mainstream motivational psychology there is now a growing move away from this 'context as variable' perspective towards a dynamic integrated view of motivation, self and context, where context is conceived not in static terms but as a developing process which individuals are involved in shaping through their actions and responses. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 77)

The findings related to the mutually influencing relationship between online learners and their learning context provide data-based evidence to support the view that the learning context is not an independent, stable variable that will only impact learners' motivated

behaviours. In fact, learners were very active in exerting their agency and dramatically contributed to shaping their learning context, which caused a cyclical mutual influencing relationship between learners and their context.

9.3.2 Motivated individuals performing L2 learning activities

I explained in Chapter 3 that the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005) is dominating L2 motivation research because it employs a self-based approach attempting to relate motivation to the self-concept of the learner. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) explain that "contemporary approaches in mainstream motivational psychology are shaped by situative perspectives that aim to integrate the notions of self and context in a dynamic and a holistic way, and to explore how motivation develops and emerges through the complex interactions between self and context" (p. 70). Thus, I aimed to utilize the constructs of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1986), both constituting the theoretical basis for the L2MSS model, in order to investigate how LGMs writers' motivations emerged from a perspective focusing on the interaction between self and context. To begin with, the L2MSS model stipulates that L2 learners will have desired future L2 selves (also called self-states), either ideal L2 or ought-to L2 selves, and will be motivated towards achieving these future selves to reduce the discrepancy between their current L2 selves and the desired selves if they are frequently engaged in vivid imagery with the desired possible selves. So basically, the L2MSS model provides predictions on vividly imagined L2 desired selves that exist in the future and are capable of motivating L2 learners at the present time.

The motivations of LGMs writers, who were L2 learners, to produce LGMs revealed interesting findings with respect to the L2 possible self element, the future time element and the imagery element, as discussed below.

9.3.2.1 Kinds of possible selves experienced by the L2 learners

Most of the L2 learners reported that they decided to study English because they love the language whereas the remaining L2 learners reported instrumental reasons. This means that the L2 self is a part of their self-concept, because they majored in English to achieve **the L2 user self**.

- However, the L2 learners had other desired selves that do not belong to the domain of the L2 self such as the sympathetic self, the loving self, the social self, the grateful self, the independent self, the jealous self, the socially recognized self, the distinguished self, the competitive self, the leader self and so on.
- Similarly, the L2 learners had feared selves constructed from past experiences that do not belong to the domain of the L2 self such as the failed self, the unaccomplished

self, the helpless self, the incapable self, the dependent self, the inferior self, the disappointed self, the abandoned self and so on.

- Through engaging in LGMs production, an EFL learning activity, the L2 learners could achieve their desired selves and/or avoid their feared selves. Hence, L2 learners were motivated to engage in various forms of L2 learning activities to be able to produce LGMs in order to achieve their desired selves or avoid the feared selves.

- There were combinations of desired and/or feared selves linked to motivations of some of the L2 learners for producing LGMs.

- Some of the desired and/or feared selves were brought to the learning context, meaning that the L2 learners already have a set of desired and feared selves before being exposed to influences from the learning context.

- Some of the desired and/or feared selves were created in response to contextual factors such as interactions with learners and/or problems and/or affordances of the learning context.

- Desired or feared selves might be associated with very intricate personal and private motivations which learners are not likely to reveal in their learning contexts. This indicates the uniqueness and unpredictability of motivational processes and the impossibility of identifying and measuring learners' motivations using pre-defined variables.

The L2MSS model is concerned with the motivational impact of future desired L2 selves. However, the present findings show that desired and/or feared selves other than a future desired L2 self can also have a motivational impact on engaging in L2 learning activities and L2 learning as a whole. The findings show that negative past life experiences also functioned as sources for the construction of feared and/or desired selves in an individuals' self-concept, either to be achieved and/or avoided at the present time or in the future. This is in line with Markus and Nurius' (1986) view that

> past selves, to the extent that they may define an individual again in the future, can also be possible selves... the selves of the past that remain and that are carried within the self-concept as possible selves are representative of the individual's enduring concerns and the actions that gave rise to these concerns. (p. 955)

For instance, the past selves of Ameera, the helpless self and the nothing self from her previous marriage experience, represent feared selves in response to which Ameera is engaging highly in her learning to avoid these negative selves now and in the future. Similarly, Ameera is highly motivated in her learning to achieve her better self in the present and in the future.

9.3.2.2 Imagery in motivational possible selves

Dörnyei (2009b) proposes that "the more elaborate the possible self in terms of imaginative, visual and other content elements, the more motivational power it is expected to have" (p. 9) and "a possible self with insufficient specificity and detail may not be able to evoke the necessary motivation" (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 4). Looking at my dataset as a whole, only Maisa showed that she had vivid and detailed images about her desired selves, and I will discuss her case in the following section on the connection between emotions and motivation. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that the motivational impact of the desired and/or feared selves do not seem to necessitate students having vivid images about these selves; albeit the imagery component might enhance their motivational power. The findings suggest that if the desired and/or feared selves are *core* in that they denote important and/or urgent meanings to the self-concept then these selves will have motivational power on behaviour. According to Markus and Nurius (1986):

> some conceptions of the self, because of their importance in identifying or defining the self, are likely to be chronically accessible, and these views can be considered as "core" self. These may include what Gordon (1968) referred to as factual self-conceptions; those of maximum perceived "actuality" (e.g., ascribed characteristics, major roles and memberships), as well as self-conceptions that are especially significant, conceptions that have been called self-schemas. (p. 957)

For example, the findings revealed that Tariq produced LGMs because of his sympathetic self. The sympathetic self appears to be core in Tariq's self-concept because it defines him more "chronically" than some other self-conceptions. This means that because of the sympathetic self Tariq is likely to act sympathetically whenever he encounters sympathy-arousal triggers. Similarly, Anood conveyed that she committed herself to producing LGMs because:

> When I see that some learners have put some efforts to make LGMs, then those learners are remarkable. So why can't I be better than them and do something honourable? Maybe there are learners who produce LGMs to make learning easier for others, but talking about myself the factor of competition triggers me to make LGMs.

The competitive self of Anood appears to be core in her self-concept; whenever she encounters triggers causing arousal to her competitive self, she is likely to act to satisfy it.

A core self will be activated more frequently and be available in thought and memory "chronically", meaning that the core self will be frequently the working self-concept available in memory and thought (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In other words, an individual on a frequent basis will cognitively process a core self. Frequent cognitive

processing about a core self might involve imagination and allow images to develop over time from being simple to more detailed and vivid images, which consequently enhances motivation associated with this core self. Thus, engaging in cognitive processing is a prerequisite for engaging in imagination; one cannot engage frequently in vivid images about a particular desired self without the desired self first being frequently cognitively processed. However, frequent cognitive processing about a core self does not necessarily involve engaging in vivid images as well. Thus, the motivational impact of future possible selves does not depend on the existence of an imagery component, but rather on whether these selves are core or not. A recent study (Hiver & Al-Hoorie (2019) also casts doubt over the role of vivid visions in motivating behaviour. In their study, they found that there was only weak support for the assumption that visions will influence learners' desire to put more effort into their learning. Instead, there was stronger support for the assumption that "learners' intention to spend time and effort on learning the language can lead to vision and motivation" (p. 54). Their findings are in harmony with the assumption presented by this study that intending to put effort into learning means that there has been a cognitive processing prior to intention formation. One cannot form strong intentions about something without cognitive processing; the more there is cognitive processing regarding something, the more the chances of forming intentions in relation to it. This is in line with Dörnyei's **motivational task processing** (2013), showing how motivation is negotiated and finalized. In this model stimulus appraisal occurs in the brain (Dörnyei, 2005) and "appraisal refers to the learner's continuous processing of the multitude of stimuli coming from the environment and of the progress made toward the action outcome" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 81). If the stimulus for motivation is a particular self-conception activated in memory and thought, then it will undergo ongoing cognitive appraisals. The more core it is the more it will undergo cognitive appraisals and the more the chances of incorporating imagination in the ongoing cognitive appraisals.

9.3.2.3 Timeframe of possible selves

The findings show that the desired or feared selves that motivate learners do not necessarily exist in the future. They might exist in the present or in the very near future and the L2 learners were motivated to attain or avoid these selves in the present. For example, when Latifa received positive encouragement from her peers about how her LGMs were beneficial and aided their understanding of course content more than the teacher's materials, this opened for Latifa the possibility to eliminate **the incompetent self** and **the incomprehensible self** from her self-concept at the present time and in the future as well and add **the competent self** and **the comprehensible self** instead. Thus, she continued producing more LGMs and even worked harder on her Arabic to keep the negative self-conceptions

eliminated and to keep attaining the positive ones at the present. Riyad also kept himself engaged in various L2 learning activities to be "really competent" to produce quality LGMs and be ready to answer his peers' questions in order to attain **the recognized self**, **the praiseworthy self** and **the distinguished self** now and in the near future. This is in line with Ushioda's (2009) view, although she is speaking about the L2 selves, in that "future self representations or possible selves are entirely continuous with language learners' current selves" (p. 225). My findings show that attaining some or all aspects of a desired self or eliminating some or all aspects of a feared (or undesired) self in the present time motivates learners to continuously retain the behaviours necessary to attain or avoid the desired or feared self. Thus, a future desired or feared self is not fully attained or avoided all at once in the future. It is attained or avoided gradually over time, starting from the point of time when relevant motivated behaviours were first initiated till a point in time when relevant motivated behaviours are terminated. Success of attempts to attain or avoid some aspects of the desired or feared selves triggers more motivated behaviors for more success. This can be explained in terms of short-term and long-term goals. The now or proximal desired selves might contain the elements of immediate satisfaction, urgency or relevance, which in return may increase their motivational impacts. They provide closer and more attainable short-term goals as opposed to future L2 selves that are long-term goals. According to goal setting theory (Locke, 1968), short-term goals increase and maintain motivation because once achieved they have a positive impact on learners' self-esteem, self-confidence and overall satisfaction and well-being, which provides further motivation for more short-term goals (i.e., now or proximal desired selves versus long-term goals of future desired selves).

9.3.3 The connection between emotions and motivation

MacIntyre et al. (2009) comment on the need to clarify the role of emotions in possible selves offered in the L2MSS model:

> The emotions experienced are critical to understanding the motivational properties of possible selves … Emotions are fundamentally important motivators…without a strong tie to the learner's emotional system, possible selves exist as cold cognition, and therefore lack motivational potency. When emotion is a prominent feature of a possible self, including a strong sense of fear, hope, or even obligation a clear path exists by which to influence motivation and action. (p. 47)

In response to this comment, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009a) say that:

> We fully agree with this claim and would also add that the imagery component of possible selves offers an obvious link with emotions, as one of the key roles of the sensation generated by experiential images is exactly to evoke emotional responses. (p. 352)

In order to understand the connection between emotions and motivational possible selves, I will first examine Maisa's case because she used vivid imagery to engage in her future desired selves and then examine possible connections in other examples. The findings revealed that Maisa used her lively imagination to engage with her desired future selves; **the kind teacher self**, **the financially capable self** and **the socially recognized professional self** as a psychological adaptation strategy to escape the anxieties and stresses caused by problems of Blackboard, exam table and struggles in studying the English course content. This psychological adaptation strategy fostered in Maisa sweet feelings and happiness resulting from both anticipated emotions and anticipatory emotion. Anticipatory emotions are "current affective responses to the prospect of future events that have positive or negative consequences" (Baumgartner et al., 2008, p. 686), whereas anticipated emotions are "any emotional reaction to mental simulations of future events and behaviors" (Baumgartner et al., 2008, p. 694). Maisa explained that experiencing happiness and sweet feelings generated from her imagining her desired future selves instills in her high motivation to study in order to actualize her desired selves. As explained in Chapter 3, for each self-conception there is an affective meaning attached to it, which is the outcome of appraisal processes of the self-conception that involve both cognitive and affective schemas. Happiness and sweet feelings Maisa experienced are the affective meanings attached to her desired selves. Maisa's example shows that it is positive emotions generated from imagination that highly motivated her and not the future desired selves as mere self-conceptions. This interpretation finds support from the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000). Anticipatory joy is predicted to have an activating impact, meaning that a learner is motivated to take an action towards an outcome that is predicted to cause joy when attaining it.

All LGMs writers' desired and/or feared selves were found to be associated with positive and negative emotions. Attainment of desired selves was associated with positive emotions, whereas non-attainment of desired selves was associated with negative emotions. Similarly, avoidance of feared selves was associated with positive emotions, whereas non-avoidance of feared selves was associated with negative emotions (Higgins, 1987; Pekrun, 2000). For example, Sami, Bandar and Tariq were motivated to produce LGMs in response to sympathy they experienced towards online learners. They acted to confirm feelings of a sympathetic self (Heise, 1977); and non-achievement (non-confirmation) of an **ought/own sympathetic self** would induce emotions of uneasiness, guilt and self-contempt (Higgins, 1987). A desire to avoid such negative emotions motivates sympathetic behaviours (Higgins, 1987; the empathy-altruism hypothesis by Batson, 1987, 2011). A detailed discussion of other examples was

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provided in Chapter 6. Thus, the findings show that emotions, not vivid images, associated with desired and/or feared selves are responsible for motivating behaviour.

Another interesting finding was that the affective meanings and values associated with desired and/or feared selves were found to be connected to the social context of the individual. For instance, the findings about competition announcements show that self-conceptions an L2 learner might aspire to possess are in fact **ideal/other**; they are self-representations but from the standpoint of the social context of the L2 learners (Higgins, 1987). It was explained in section 3.4.4.1 that the L2MSS model is concerned with the ideal L2 self, which represents **ideal/own** standpoint, and with the ought-to L2 self, which represents **ought/other** standpoint. The findings reveal that the **ideal/other** standpoint plays a crucial role in the construction of desired and/or feared selves and their subsequent motivations for the production of LGMs. For instance, an examination of Maisa's desired selves, **the kind teacher self**, **the financially capable self** who can give finances to her family and charity and **the socially recognized professional self**, reveals two important points: all these selves are strongly linked to Maisa's sense of herself as a person, and these selves derive meaning and value from Maisa's social context. Maisa wanted her students to surround her with affection, wanted to show her love and gratitude to her family and her kindness to the needy and wanted to be socially recognized as a distinguished professional. Maisa needed her social context to provide for the making of meaning of her self. Maisa's self needs reflected in her desired selves can be explained through the social philosophical recognition theory (Honneth, 1995). This theory, based on the thinking of Hegel and Mead, argues that a person develops and maintains his/her identity from the recognition he/she derives from social relationships. Identity formation depends on self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem; Honneth calls them modes of self-relation. These three modes of how one relates to his/her self can be developed and maintained through recognition an individual receives from social relationships. Recognition of one's needs is nurtured through feelings of love and care received from family and friendship relationships. This level of recognition is crucial for developing self-confidence. Recognition of one's rights such as human, equality, legal, education and employment develops self-respect. Recognition of one's contributions to his/her community develops self-esteem.

Honneth (1995) contends that personal identity is an intersubjective structure; one's relation-to-self is connected to experiences of recognition from others. He argues that "the only way in which individuals are constituted as persons is by learning to refer to themselves, from the perspective of an approving or encouraging other, as beings with certain positive traits and abilities" (p. 173) and that individuals struggle for recognition "in order to have

their identity claims confirmed" (Honneth, 2005, p. 46). Thus, the three levels of recognition are important for a healthy relation-to-self and individuals need each other to provide recognition to each other; in Honneth's words "subjects recognize each other reciprocally as living, emotionally needy beings"(1995, p. 18). Further, struggle for recognition is "a driving force in the development of social structures" (p. 97) and distortions of the balance of recognition are linked to psychological disturbances. Practical relation-to-self involves "a dynamic process in which individuals come to experience themselves as having a certain status, be it as a focus of concern, a responsible agent, or a valued contributor to shared projects" (p. xii). In terms of desired and/or feared selves, individuals dynamically will need to struggle for achieving positive desired selves and/or avoid feared ones in order to achieve recognition crucial for healthy relation to one's self, which means "having a successful life" (Honneth, 1995, p. 174). In other words, individuals inevitably will aim to achieve or avoid some possible selves from the **ideal/other standpoint** to gain social recognition essential for a healthy relation to one's self.

Based on the above discussion, **the kind teacher self** who receives affection from her students nurtures Maisa's self-confidence, **the financially capable self** by which Maisa will be able to support herself financially nurtures Maisa's self-respect, **the financially capable self** who will be able to give money to her family out of love and to charity nurtures both Maisa's self-confidence and self-esteem and the **socially recognized professional self** nurtures Maisa's self-esteem. Maisa then felt happiness from imagining the achievement of her desired selves because in fact through imagination she was able to confirm her identity, relate to her self and achieve self-realization, which is a crucial source for happiness and contentment in life.

Now I will turn to other examples from the dataset and discuss how the above discussion applies to them as well. First of all, the quotes of online learners who showed extreme happiness at being able to continue their education reveal the learners' need for recognition from others (e.g., "make my children proud," "I do not want anyone to belittle me" and "I am determined to humble all those who said I have no ambition"). Continuing their education was vital for attaining self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem and to confirm their identities in their social contexts. When the online learners encountered problems threatening their learning progress, some learners experienced intensive negative emotional disturbances because their attempt to gain recognition to confirm their identities was threatened; according to Honneth (1995), distortions of the balance of recognition are linked to psychological disturbances.

The LGMs writers presented in Chapter 6 were also motivated to produce LGMs for their peers because LGMs production nurtures their self-confidence, self-respect and/or self esteem, as explained below.

- Nawal nurtured her self-esteem through achieving **the recognized LGMs writer self**, **the competent LGMs writer self** and **the community leader self**, which might explain why she was very keen on making her LGMs available to all learners. She also nurtured her self-respect through insisting on achieving her **competent LGMs writer self** that was constructed in response to the moderator's attempt to falsely claim credit for what were Nawal's LGMs.

- Ameera nurtured self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem through eliminating **the helpless self** and **the nothing self** and through achieving **the better self** and seeking **the educationally qualified self** and **the socially respected self**.

- The supportive and encouraging feedback Latifa received from her peers nurtured her self-confidence and as a result she was highly motivated to produce more LGMs to develop her self-esteem and self-respect through achieving her **capable** and **comprehensible selves** and eliminating the **incomprehensible** and **incapable selves**.

- Jood wanted to be independent in making LGMs and also to contribute to her study group out of a need to protect her self-respect and self-esteem.

- Tariq, Bandar and Sami aimed for self-esteem through satisfying their **sympathetic selves**. Additionally, Sami wanted to nurture his self-respect through seeing if he could be equal to other learners who produce LGMs, through achieving **the competent LGMs writer self**.

- Malik aimed to enjoy social relationships to nurture his self-confidence as he would derive affection and care from such relationships. At the same time, he was able to nurture his self-esteem as he was making valuable contributions to his community. He nurtured both self-confidence and self-esteem through achieving his **socially responsible**, **social and sociable selves**.

- Riyad also needed self-esteem because he aimed to achieve **the recognized self**, **the constantly praiseworthy self**, **the distinguished self**, **the competent L2 self**, and **the moderator self**. Riyad wanted lots of recognition from his community to nurture and maintain his self-esteem.

- When he first began authoring LGMs, Kareem was aiming to achieve **the toastmaster self**, but when he saw how grateful his peers were for seemingly

efforts to help them, he gave up pursuing **the toastmaster self** and maybe out of a desire to maintain his self-respect he decided to focus on creating LGMs to help his peers in recognition of their recognition of him. Thus, Kareem's **helping and grateful selves** over time nurtured his self-esteem and self-confidence because he was contributing to the learning of his peers who showed their gratitude and affection.

- Nadia was a lurker and did not feel the need to interact with her peers. When she developed love for some members in the community, she was motivated to interact with them in some study groups and contribute some LGMs to acquire self-confidence social relationships. She continued to produce LGMs to be able to further nurture her self-esteem through **the beneficial self** and her self-confidence through **the loving self**.

- **The current competitor self** and **the future community recognized self** created for Noura through the LGMs production competition opened for her a way to nurture her self-esteem by contributing to her community. Her second LGMs production on her own indicates that she was satisfied by the feelings of self-esteem, which enhanced her pursuit of another portion of self-esteem.

On the whole, the desired selves involve affective values, the values of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. What motivates behaviour is not a desired self, but its affective values and meanings because they are crucial for relating to one's self. Distortions to any of these affective values and meanings are associated with psychological disturbances.

The ideal/other standpoint thus seems very important for motivating behaviour aimed at fostering self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. The findings suggest that the desired and feared selves are constructed in reference to the social context. Learners in the present study aimed to meet social ideals (ideal/other) to gain recognition. Although some of the desired and/or feared selves appeared to be ideal/own, their meanings also depend on social ideals.

9.3.3.1 A proposed conceptualisation for the connection between emotions and motivation

In light of the above discussion, I propose the following conceptualisation of the connection between emotions and motivation.

- The L2 learner will be exposed to numerous stimuli in the learning context,

- A stimuli will be processed (process of appraisal). The appraisal processes will involve the cognitive-affective schemas of the **whole self** (not only of the L2 self),

- The appraisal outcomes will have cognitive meanings and affective meanings (Heise, 1977),

- In response to the resulting meanings, **a related working self-concept** will be activated (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and related emotions will be aroused as every concept has an emotional meaning attached to it (Hiese, 1977) and appraisals of activities and their outcomes cause emotional arousals (Pekrun, 2000). With every activation of a particular working self-concept there will be an emotional arousal (Heise, 1977, Markus & Nurius, 1986, Pekrun, 2000).

- It could be that more than one working self-concept is activated. However, particular working-self concepts will be more dominant and urgent. They are either core to the self-concept or accompanied with more intense emotional arousals or both.

- From the activated self-concept, a desired or feared self might be created or evoked and with each created or evoked self (either desired or feared) there will an emotional arousal.

- Some emotional arousals have activating impacts on behaviour (they cause one to take an action) whereas other emotional arousals have no activating impacts (Pekrun, 2000).

How do the activating emotional arousals motivate behaviour?

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of "negative psychological situations" causing negative emotions; a person will be motivated to take action to escape these negative emotions (Higgins, 1987)

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of anticipated emotions or anticipatory emotions resulted from mental stimulation or current emotional responses to future events (Baumgartner, et al., 2008)

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of vivid images of L2 Ideal and/or Ought-to selves (Dörnyeir & Ushioda, 2013)

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of self-related or situational-related appraisals (Pekrun 2000)

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of the constant desire to confirm identity (Heise, 1977)

- **Emotional arousal** could occur because of distortions to the balance of recognition the individual needs to relate well to his/herself (Hommenth, 1995)

In sum, for each desired or feared self there will be an affective meaning, for each activity there will be an affective meaning, for each outcome (achieved or expected) there will be an affective meaning, for each goal there will be an affective meaning, for each success and each failure there will be an affective meaning. The various affective meanings resulted from ongoing appraisals of self-related and contextual-related stimuli contribute to emotional arousals. This is why an individual might experience a collection of positive and negative emotions linked to a particular stimulus such as a particular desired self.

What concerns us here is: what does emotional arousal entail? It entails the self system being disturbed and unsettled. And as a result, i**t will be motivated to take an action to restore emotional balance**. This assumption finds support in the balance theory by Heider (1958). Heider describes a 'balanced state' and the balance theory as follows:

> By a balanced state is meant a situation in which the relations among the entities fit together harmoniously; there is no stress toward change. A basic assumption is that sentiment relations and unit relations tend toward a balanced state. This means that sentiments are not entirely independent of the perceptions of unit connections between entities and that the latter, in turn, are not entirely independent of sentiments. Sentiments and unit relations are mutually interdependent. It also means that if a balanced state does not exist, then forces toward this state will arise. If a change is not possible, the state of imbalance will produce tension. (Heider, 1958, p. 201 as cited in Woodside & Chebat, 2001, p. 477)

Unit relations mean cognitive meanings and interpretations inferred about an entity and sentiment relations refer to feelings towards an entity. An individual will seek a balanced state between cognitive and affective meanings. This conceptualisation finds support from CDS theory, which works as a supra-theory whose principles can be applied to all systems (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2007). From a CDST perspective, perturbations (**self-related or situational related triggers**) cause system disturbances (**emotional arousal**). These disturbances cause the system to change (**take action**), either through self-organization or adaptation, into an attractor state that represents "a point of equilibrium that the system tends to settle in" (Hiver, 2015, p. 21), which represents (**restoring of emotional balance**).

Self-discrepancy theory also predicts that an individual will be motivated to take an action in order to avoid negative emotions caused by discrepancies between his/her actual self and his/her self guides. The affect control theory (Heise, 1977) also stipulates that individuals are motivated to take an action "to maintain an "equilibrium" in the [affective] meanings they assign to an interaction" (as cited in Robinson et al., 2006, p. 180). Additionally, research on the fields of marketing and advertising makes use of several theoretical frameworks that explain the relationship between emotions and behaviour in order to motivate consumption

behaviours through inducing proper emotions in targeted consumers. These theoretical frameworks include the psychoevolutionary theory of emotion (Plutchik, 1980), attributional theory of emotion and action (Weiner, 1985), the communicative theory of emotions (Oatley & Johnson-Liard, 1987), emotional action readiness (Frijda, 1989), the control-process of affect (Carver & Scheier, 1990), the cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotions (Lazarus, 1991), unfolding the emotion episode (stein et al., 1993), regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1998).

9.3.3.1.1 A proposed conceptualisation for the L2 Learning Experience

It was discussed earlier that the first and second components of the L2MSS model were theorized based on the constructs of **possible selves** (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and **self-discrepancy** (Higgins, 1987), whereas the third component, the **L2 Learning Experience**, has remained untheorized. Dörnyei (2019) proposes that the underthorized nature of the third component made it difficult to theorize it using the same self-based constructs used for the other components. Further, data of the Hungarian study provided validation for the **ideal and ought-to L2 selves**, which are concerned with generic motives. However, the **L2 Learning Experience** was added to the L2MSS model as a component accounting for situation-specific motives, based on empirical evidence provided by past L2 motivation research.

> I can see that I was aware of the fact that the theoretical justification of the *L2 Learning Experience* fell short of the level of detail offered for the other two components, as I added a caveat: "This component is conceptualized at a different level from the two self-guides and future research will hopefully elaborate on the *self aspects* [Italics added] of this bottom-up process" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). Unfortunately, no such elaboration has been offered over the past decade. (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 22)

The findings of the present study enable us to unlock the puzzle of the **L2 Learning Experience** of the L2MSS model and theorize it using the same theoretical constructs used for **the ideal and ought-to L2 selves**. Based on the findings, I propose redefining the **L2 Learning Experience** to be **the Whole Self in relation to the L2 Learning Experience**.

Contextual factors of the learning experience (related to the learning context, the teacher, peers, learning materials, etc.) will work as stimuli triggering both appraisal processes and emotional arousal for stimuli-related working self-concepts of **the whole self of the L2 learner**. Desired and/or feared selves might be constructed or activated as an outcome of the appraisals processes and will be accompanied by emotional arousals. Emotional arousals will motivate behaviour to restore a state of emotional balance through achieving the desired selves and/or avoiding the feared selves as explained in 9.3.3.1.

- The findings showed that the desired selves and the feared selves constructed or activated in response to contextual factors could be subjective, personal, private, unique, unpredictable, heterogeneous and intricate. For instance, LGMs writers processed LGMs production (a contextual stimulus) through their unique cognitive-affective schemas and created different and various values for this contextual stimulus. Latifa, for example, found in LGMs production, a way to avoid her current **incompetent self** and **incomprehensible self** and to achieve instead **the comprehensible self** and **the competent self**. Malik is engaged in LGMs production to avoid **the anxious self** and to confirm his **social** and **sociable selves**. Chapter 6 provides a detailed discussion of the collections of desired and feared selves LGMs writers were found to approach and/or avoid.

- The L2 selves (ideal and ought-to) are contained in **the Whole Self in relation to the L2 Learning Experience**. The L2 selves constitute domains (self-conceptions) of **the whole self** of the L2 learner and they can be activated in response to any stimulus like any other self-conceptions of **the whole self** such as the sympathetic self, the capable self, the social self, etc. Other views in L2 motivation research also can be accounted for. For example, **the L2 integrative self** and **the L2 global community member self**. In the discussion about the desired or feared selves of the LGMs writers, it appears that some selves are active and guiding behaviour unconsciously, meaning that some LGMs writers do not pay attention to the mental processes involved in their motivated behaviours as opposed to the view that "the Ideal and Ought- to L2 Selves are by definition involved in pre-actional deliberation" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 107). For instance, I do not assume, for instance, that Tariq mentally engages with his **sympathetic self** and acts with full awareness that he acts to satisfy his sympathetic self. He simply experiences some emotions that drive him to act sympathetically whereas his sympathetic self exists in his unconsciousness and directs his behaviour by means of arousing certain emotions in him. Riyad, on the other hand, seems to be very aware that the more he engages with L2 learning activities the more his gains will be, which are **the distinguished self**, **the recognized self**, **the praiseworthy self** and **the moderator self**. Riyad fits Lanvers' (2016) assumption that "many students calculate the benefits of languages as a formula" and that "this calculation might lead students to consider language learning as worthwhile, or not" (as cited in Al-Hoorie, 2016, p.424).

- Including **the whole self** instead of the L2 self (ideal and ought-to) enables us to theorize the third component, **the L2 Learning Experience**, based on the same

theoretical basis used for theorizing the other components of the L2MSS. This conceptualisation dissolves "the existing theoretical discordancy amongst the three main dimensions of the L2 Motivational Self System" (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 27).

- Further, it integrates together the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005) and the "person-in-context relational view of motivation" (Ushioda, 2009). The discrepancy between the two approaches to investigating motivation has been described a "schizophrenic situation" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009a, p. 355). Including **the whole self** in the L2MSS model instead of the L2 self only allows us to recognize L2 learners as persons with unique identities and with emotional needs for recognition from their learning contexts and answers Ushioda's (2009) call for "a focus on people or 'persons', rather than on learners...we should not position the central participants in our research simply as language learners, since this is just one aspect of their identity" (p. 216).

- This conceptualisation also fits within a CDST perspective. It accommodates the characteristics of unpredictability, complexity, dynamism, openness, context-dependence, heterogeneity and a relational view of motivation (Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020).

From a self-based approach, the findings show that emotions are a strong driving force for motivation because for each single conception of the self there are various emotional meanings attached to it. If a particular self-conception is desired or feared, it will be accompanied also by an emotional arousal that will motivate behaviour to restore the emotional balance of the self.

9.3.3.2 Emotional skills and motivation

Given the central role of emotional arousal and emotional balance in driving behaviour then there is a need to have some skills/abilities in managing emotional arousals constructively. The findings demonstrate that not all learners were able to manage the arousal of negative emotions they experienced which resulted in their losing motivation. Other learners managed and/or hindered the arousal of negative emotions by finding ways to keep their emotions balanced such as by thinking optimistically, investing in social capital such as offering assistance and by using joyful interpersonal relations. They showed an awareness of the effects of emotions on attitude and well-being. EI skills (Bar-On, 2006) were found to resonate with the adaptive behaviours necessary for a healthy, balanced emotional state. Thus EI-based interventions for developing adaptive behavioural skills in learners might develop awareness of effective strategies for maintaining a positive emotional state that is vital for fostering and maintaining motivation.

9.4 Part three: Findings related to emotional intelligence

The study's results have so far demonstrated the strong link between learning materials and learners' emotions. In addition, it was found that learners were triggered by different emotions to engage in the production of LGMs. The desired and the feared selves of the LGMs' writers were found to have affective meanings and values important for LGMs' writers. Pekrun et al. (2002), in their much-quoted work on emotions research, generated a list of academic emotions; these denote emotions related to academic learning, classroom instruction and achievement. Drawing on Pekrun et al.'s (2002) list, we saw, for instance, Maisa was extremely triggered by enthusiasm and hope. Anood responded to a desire to compete with other LGMs writers, which can be related to the academic emotions of jealousy/envy. Riyad responded to his desire to gain praise, which is related to the academic emotion of admiration. Ameera was driven be emotions of sadness and disappointment of her past life to pursue a better one. Malik was responsive to exam anxiety. Tariq, Sami and Bandar were motivated by emotions of sympathy. Nawal was driven by anticipatory joy about establishing herself as an able LGMs writer. Nadia was motivated by the emotion of love. Kareem was driven by emotions of gratitude for his thankful followers and/or shame and embarrassment for his practising toastmastering on them.

Thus, these learners produced LGMs in response to certain emotions in them. However, despite the surface differences in the emotions, all these learners share a distinct trait, which is their ability to recognize their emotions and to act accordingly, which is an EI skill. I provided a detailed discussion linking EI skills with practices of learners by focusing on learners who supported the community in dealing with the technical problems and the case of Maisa (Chapter 5) and other LGMs writers (Chapter 6), using the Bar-On model as a theoretical framework. The discussion below illuminates findings related to EI, which enhances our understanding of how emotionally intelligent learners/individuals behave.

9.4.1 Acquisition and development of EI skills

EI skills can be acquired and improved, both at the individual and collective levels. The findings identify two inseparable factors that appear to be responsible for developing EI skills in learners. First, the production of LGMs has been the chief medium through which the online learners had the opportunity to acquire and develop effective EI skills; LGMs were an urgent need that brought learners together as a community (explained in Chapter 8). Second, the collective practices, including the interpersonal norms of the learning community, also encouraged the development of EI skills. The role of LGMs in developing learners' EI skills is discussed in 9.4.3.1. The discussion here is focused on the role of the community's practices in developing EI skills of its members.

There were EI learners who initiated effective and successful practices to fulfil their needs and the needs of the community. Additionally, other learners have copied these successful practices and added to them. For instance,

- The archiving of all aspects of their learning including LGMs, video lectures, feedback on teachers and exams for future cohorts of learners. This practice foregrounds the skill of Social Responsibility.

- The techniques of using competitions and production teams for producing LGMs were introduced by individual learners, Zuhair and Rania, respectively. These practices are associated with the skill of Interpersonal Relationship, where there is an understanding that satisfying the needs of the individual can be achieved through satisfying the needs of the community. Again, these practices proved to be successful and thus they are copied and practised, not only by moderators or virtual leaders but also in small study groups by regular learners. We have learned how members of study groups organize and divide learning tasks amongst themselves, which entails an effective Interpersonal Relationship amongst study group members.

- The skills of Stress Tolerance and Problem-Solving enable pre-planning for the whole semester in advance. As a solution for controlling anxiety and stress, learners produce LGMs early and start studying in advance. This practice has spread throughout the community. Also, to control fear and anxiety learners came up with the clustering strategy, meaning that a good number of learners do certain courses together to support each other and divide tasks amongst themselves to avoid the negative emotions which can surface when struggling alone.

- Some EI learners have established certain interpersonal norms that support the skills of Empathy and Social Responsibility. For instance, there are donations of learning materials as well as money donations for learners incapable of paying their fees.

- Some EI learners established social interaction amongst learners where they share personal news such as weddings, births, deaths, getting a job and so on, and members of the community join to express their congratulations, condolences or good wishes. There are a number of social threads which welcome new learners, offer advice ranging from learning to personal matters, discuss learning problems, share views and impressions about courses, teachers and exams, honour and show gratitude to active members of the community and host end-of-semester virtual celebrations. Some learners have gatherings during exams or organize last-exam-day tea parties in exam centres. These practices allow learners to show sympathy and show some responsibility towards each other and also to appreciate the value of satisfying

members of their community/group. These practices allow the growth of skills relating to Interpersonal Relationship, Empathy and Social Responsibility.

- Some EI learners also established practices that minimized the need for learners to contact the university for assistance. For instance, they make threads and channels with instructions and video tutorials on all technical and administrative aspects related to their learning. Also, learners arrange and pay for their graduation parties on their own. These practices reflect and foster the skill of Independence.

- Other practices allow the development of the skill of Self-actualization. Some EI leaders, in order to increase their number of followers to establish themselves as influential leaders, began to offer further services such as job announcements, news about personal development courses, hosting language professionals in their groups to answer their followers' questions or even secured discounts for their followers from shops such as opticians, stationary, food shops and so on.

- Finally, the community celebrates their success and achievement at the end of each semester and also by organizing graduation parties. They share congratulations and make celebration videos to show their emotions of happiness and joy. These practices reflect the skill of Happiness, which is an important EI skill responsible for motivation and activating other skills of EI.

By comparing the state of the online community when it started in 2009 (section 5.2) and its current state (table 8.1), it is clear that the community has developed to a great extent. The community became organized, independent, confident, productive, self-sufficient and affectionately bonded because of successful practices initiated by some learners and supported and followed by the whole community. The results suggest that these learners are emotionally intelligent; they achieved their own goals, served their community and implanted EI practices in their community, making the community an emotionally intelligent one. This finding is in line with the results reported by Han and Johnson (2012) who demonstrated the connection between EI and social bonds and interaction in synchronous online learning settings. The authors found that learners with greater EI were more socially bonded to peers. Chapter 8 presented the community as strongly bonded; hence, their strong bonds indicate the EI skills of the community. Further, Han and Johnson's (2012) results were on synchronous settings and called for investigation into the relationship between EI, social bonds and interaction in asynchronous settings. The interaction between learners in the present context is asynchronous, yet connection between EI and social bonds was also revealed.

The above discussion demonstrates that EI skills can be learned collectively and individually as learners have also improved their EI skills as seen in the case of Latifa, Jood,

and Noura. It appears that when learners with low EI skills are in the same study group with learners with high EI skills or even in the larger learning community, these learners feel obliged to participate in their groups which results in them learning EI skills through interaction. Also, interaction with learners in itself contributes to the development and fine-tuning of EI skills such as awareness of the emotions of others and the ability to empathize or change behaviour as a result of being grateful to others, or being independent or self-actualized as a result of competing with others. Further, the discussion also demonstrates that EI skills can be acquired and developed through being a part of a learning community that embeds EI skills within its norms.

These findings support previous studies in the EFL context confirming the possibility of developing and increasing EI skills in learners (e.g., Abdolrezapour et al., 2013; Mehdiabadi & Arabmofrad 2014; Rouhani, 2008; Shao et al., 2013a). In these studies, EFL participants were exposed to treatment interventions such as literature-based activities and the use of dictogloss to develop their EI skills. The literature-based treatments aimed to make learners sympathize with the characters through understanding their emotions and struggles, which creates a desire to take some responsibility towards the struggles of others. The dictogloss activity aimed to make learners collaborate and interact with each other to also be able to appreciate each other's needs and emotions. Participants' EI competencies were measured before and after the treatment and an increase of EI was reported as a result of learners' working together. My results show that EI skills can be developed in an EI learning environment. Additionally, whereas these studies confirmed the possibility of developing EI skills in individual learners, my study demonstrates the possibility of developing EI skills collectively as well as individually. Further, the findings show that it is possible to develop EI skills in large populations of learners, which could be more effective than limited and restricted intervention treatments and theoretically based training programmes. This finding is important for educational establishments keen to provide EI training courses for their students. For instance, in Carter (2015) and Brown-McClure (2015), students were exposed to training programmes to cultivate their EI skills to prepare them to assume leadership responsibilities to orientate new students and to support campus residents, respectively. The EI training opportunities were very limited in number and available for on-campus students. On the other hand, embedding EI skills in the practices of learning communities can aid the development of EI skills on a larger scale and with very low costs in comparison to the funding of tailored EI training programmes.

9.4.2 Techniques used by EI learners

The results revealed a number of practices and techniques used by EI learners who successfully impacted the community. Most of these learners in fact assumed leadership roles, which confirms the need for EI skills in leaders (Bar-On, 2015). The results highlight an important fact, which is that EI learners' own goals were dependent on the community for fulfilment. For instance, Nawal's dream of establishing herself as an able LGMs writer comes from members of the community acknowledging her as so; Malik's desire for social interaction also comes from members of the community socializing with him and so on. It appears that these learners realize that their goals are dependent on the members of their community. According to Barker (2017), "emotionally intelligent individuals are good at reading into people's emotions and choosing an appropriate reaction accordingly". Also, they have "a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

Chapter 6 highlighted what EI skills appear to be present in these learners. Here the focus is on their behaviours that reflect their EI skills.

9.4.2.1 The establishment of quality interpersonal relationships

The findings indicate that EI learners appear to be keen on establishing quality interpersonal relationships. In a largely anonymous online community where writing is the means of communication, they stand out from the crowd through the following strategies.

9.4.2.1.1 The use of an empathetic language

Generally, these learners' language is friendly and polite, showing respect and concern for the reader. In most cases, they made use of humour to amuse the reader and ensure their message was delivered pleasantly without arousing any misunderstandings or clashes. Posts by Maisa, Tariq, Nawal, Nadia and Zuhair typify this (samples of Maisa's post discussed at length in 5.4.2.1.2). They also made use of different attractive fonts, colours and funny emoticons. Some used elegant backgrounds and some used visual effects to make their posts look attractive. We saw earlier that this kind of language made Maisa very popular and that learners said that her posts made them happy and amused them, especially at difficult times when the community struggled because of technical problems.

9.4.2.1.2 Show of sympathy and support

The findings also show that these learners were not passive in their community, meaning that they offered help and support and showed sympathy and concern to the community's members. However, the offering of help and showing of sympathy does not necessarily entail genuine sympathetic emotions and altruistic help all the time; we saw in Chapter 6 some

LGMs writers had their own interest in producing LGMs although they were offered to the community under the spirit of general goodwill. Thus, I only present the showing of sympathy and support as a technique for building interpersonal relationships regardless of learners' real motivation. Indeed, this particular practice was the reason for some learners achieving moderator status. Nevertheless, the data suggest that this practice is important for leaders.

9.4.2.1.3 Networking and investing in social capital

The results also revealed that networking is important for the success of EI learners. They make connections and acquaintances expanding their social networks, thus increasing the number of their supporters and the chances of success of their ideas. Tariq, for instance, did not confine himself to his section on the forum; his posts showed that he also posted and offered help to other learners in various majors. He also collaborated in producing various LGMs with learners from various majors. His successful networking gained him high esteem across the whole community and benefited his business after graduation. Other learners reported that they interact with each other personally where they attend social occasions or go out together. It was reported that such personal interacting strengthened the bonds between members of study groups.

Generally, the practices for establishing quality interpersonal relationships are congruent with findings reported by EFL/ESL teachers in the study of Gkonou and Mercer (2017). In Gkonou and Mercer, EFL/ESL teachers with high EI skills revealed that to establish quality interpersonal relationships with their learners they used humour because "it lightens the atmosphere" (p. 25), interacted with learners at the individual level by finding out about aspects of their learners' lives and showed empathy with learners so their students "feel that they are wanted and…liked and…valued as people" (p. 23).

9.4.2.2 Motivation maintenance

The results also showed that EI learners keep themselves motivated through a number of techniques. One technique is through maintaining a happy and optimistic attitude. We saw earlier how Maisa uses imagination to generate feelings of happiness, which in turns fuels her with motivation to study and achieve her dream. Some learners appear to keep themselves happy as a means to maintain their motivation to persist in their studies. This finding supports other findings on the instrumental role of happiness in EI learners. Bar-On (2015) explains that happiness works as a motivation for better performance and it activates other EI skills. The skill of happiness is reflected also in the language used by EI learners (discussed above in 9.3.2.1.1); it appears that they spread a humorous atmosphere in their posts to make their readers happy and ensure an appropriate reaction.

Another technique for keeping EI learners motivated is the element of competition. Maisa and Riyad revealed that learning about other's academic progress or marks made them more motivated to excel in their studies. Also, it was reported that some learners produced LGMs because of competitive feelings and that the competition between LGMs teams was reportedly a reason behind the increase in quantity and quality of LGMs. The results indicate that EI learners might like to compete with others; their desire for excellence keeps them motivated.

Another factor that keeps EI learners motivated is their group support. Members tend to encourage and support each other's study either emotionally or through the help they provide to enhance learning. Another source for motivation is emotional gratification. It was explained earlier that EI learners derive gratification from their community so the continuous provision of this gratification keeps these learners motivated. The gratification could be a leader post, acknowledgement, praise, social company, academic success or the feeling of security depending on the needs of the EI learners. In other words, gratification can come from any means that nurture their self-respect, self-confidence and/or self-esteem. We saw for example, how Riyad was studying English hard to gain praise from the community and to be prepared to answer any questions from his followers. So his aim to receive praise from his community kept him motivated in learning English.

These findings confirm results reported by previous research. Previous research on online EFL learners and motivation confirmed the importance of maintaining motivation for online study completion (Andrade, 2014; Budiman, 2018; Gedera et al., 2015; Xiao, 2012). Xiao (2012) reported a number of measures by his informants to maintain their motivation that include "seeking help, self-encouragement, reviewing the progress made, and taking a break from the course materials to enjoy pastimes such as reading English novels, watching English films, singing English songs, and chatting online in English" (p. 127). Andrade (2014) also argued that motivation is fundamental for autonomous online learning and that peer-to-peer discussion boards allowed the formation of connections amongst learners, which in turn strengthened English learners' motivation. Gedera et al. (2015) reported that the aspect of a learning community where members of a learning group could encourage each other with encouraging words enhances learners' motivation. These findings echo some of the findings of the present study, namely the importance of maintaining a happy mood and gaining support and encouragement from study groups and the learning community.

Further, there are a number of EI studies that confirm the highly significant relationship between motivation and EI skills through quantitative measures (Ibrahim & Al-Ali, 2016; Dubey, 2012; Niroomand et al., 2014; Roy et al., 2013; Sontakke, 2016). However, such quantitative studies do not explain how EI learners activate or maintain motivation in actual

learning situations. The current results report a number of techniques that appear to keep EI learners highly motivated, which include maintaining a happy mood, competing with other learners, getting support, encouragement and aid from study groups and deriving emotional gratification from their learning community.

9.4.2.3 Coping strategies of negative emotions

I argued above that the online community is emotionally intelligent and here I discuss findings that illuminate a number of practices by the online community to deal with their negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration. It was found that emotional expression is a healthy practice for learners. The learners who expressed their negative emotions allowed themselves the opportunity to receive helpful responses from other learners, as in the cases of Jood and Sami. Although one may expect students to instinctively unburden themselves to their peers, this does not always happen, as in the case of Omani undergraduate students who were found to have low social EI skills: "students don't like to talk or ask someone for help," (Balasubramanian & Al-Mahrooqi, 2016, p. 156).

Another practice related to emotional expression is effective EI response; without effective responses learners would have stopped expressing their emotions and needs. The results showed that EI learners were readily available to show sympathy and offered help when possible (this practice is discussed in 9.3.2.1.2). Previous research showed that EI skills training aided university Residential Assistants to acquire better listening skills to attend to the needs of their fellow student residents and also to create "emotional space" to encourage the students to express themselves (Brown-McClure, 2015). The contribution shown by my results is that the identification of EI learners is important for learning communities, so these learners can help others cope with negative emotions. Previous research has investigated the relationship between EI and anxiety (Austin et al., 2010; Bryant & Malone, 2015; Dewaele et al., 2008; Houghton et al., 2012; Parker et al. 2006; Por et al., 2011; Shao et al., 2013b; Saklofske et al., 2012). For instance, Shao et al. (2013b) reported that learners with high EI skills were found to suffer less foreign language anxiety. As most of the cited studies are quantitative, the authors called for qualitative research to examine how learners use EI skills to manage their anxieties. The present results report some of these coping strategies as practised by an EI learning community. The results show that emotional expression and effective responding, pre-planning, group bonding and distracting activities such as fun activities and imagining a successful future self are all potential techniques for coping with negative emotions (all these practices were discussed earlier). Some of these results are in line with those reported by Gregersen et al. (2014) who reported that their informant, Awatif, who was doing an EFL course and who seems to have high EI skills, used to engage in happy

events and human interaction as strategies to detach herself from negative emotions induced by low grades or negative events in class. Mehdiabadi and Arabmofrad (2014) also agree that "when students work in a group the amount of stress and anxiety can be decreased", which also enhances learners' EI (p. 137).

Further, it was found that most leaders/ EI learners had previous experience in traditional education and/or work experience. This makes them more mature in terms of age and EI and more able to deal with the struggles of online learning. This finding is in line with findings reported by Berenson et al. (2008) in that older students scored higher in EI skills, which is also in line with claims that of Bar-On (2006) and Goleman (1995) that EI increases with age.

9.5 Part 4: Findings related to LGMs

This part addresses the study's main research question investigating the role of LGMs in the researched online EFL context.

The findings revealed that LGMs occupy a pivotal position in the EFL online community. LGMs have evolved from their humble beginnings at the commencement of the programme in 2009; they have developed in terms of importance, format, content, organization, quality and quantity. Although the initial data collected suggested the categorization of learners into LGMs writers and users, further investigation revealed that learners generally are both LGMs writers and users at the same time. Acclaimed LGMs writers use LGMs produced by other learners and users produce LGMs in their private study groups.

The production and use of LGMs benefitted learners in several ways: emotionally, academically, personally and collectively. To acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of LGMs, the study investigated the role of LGMs in their earliest incarnation in the online community (Chapter 5) through virtual observation of forums as well as the current role of LGMs through first-hand accounts of learners (Chapter 7). The following section discusses in more detail the reported benefits of LGMs.

9.5.1 LGMs improve learners' emotional well-being

Through the engagement in the production and use of LGMs learners gained numerous emotional benefits. The emotional benefits can be seen in two ways: the minimizing and controlling of negative emotions associated with academic issues, such as boredom, fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, sadness and disappointment; and the attainment and development of positive emotions such as enthusiasm, hope, joy, enjoyment, gratitude, appreciation, sympathy and love. For instance, some learners reportedly found in LGMs a relief from fear, frustration, and exam anxiety. Other learners developed more sympathy and affectionate bonds towards their peers. Other learners participated in interactive LGMs joyfully and enthusiastically. Positive emotional balance found to be responsible for protecting and

improving motivation. To an extent, similar findings were reported in previous studies in EFL contexts (Assinder, 1991; Bakla, 2018; Brown et al., 2013; Engin, 2014; Green et al., 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2012; Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2014, Simpson, 2006; Wessels, 1991). However, these studies mostly highlight the immediate positive emotional gains experienced by LGMs producers. For instance, we are told LGMs producers experienced emotions of pride, excitement and joy. The present study additionally reports on the long-term emotional gains associated with using LGMs for LGMs writers and users as well as the learning community. The study demonstrates that these emotional gains can go beyond experiencing immediate positive emotions that can enhance the learning atmosphere in class, as reported by the cited studies, to long-term emotional gains, including positively impacting the learning experience as a whole, the personal development of learners and the development of effective EI skills, as discussed in the following sections. The emotional gains can also include therapeutic effects as in the case of Ameera and Latifa who found in LGMs a way for reconstructing self-esteem and self-confidence.

The presence of positive emotions amongst learners is instrumental in building a sense of community. Emotions were associated with motivation to communicate, with learning and social interactions amongst learners and with successful relationships between leaders and their mentees (Chapter 8). Such a healthy emotional atmosphere is essential to allow cooperative and collaborative learning in the language classroom (e.g., Alm, 2016; Khajavy et al., 2018; Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2018; Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

9.5.2 LGMs allow learners to assume learning responsibilities

LGMs appear to be a successful way to give learners some responsibilities. Taking some responsibility makes learners active, productive and engaged instead of being passive receivers. The benefits of taking responsibility impact the personal development of learners and learning, discussed further in 9.4.3 and 9.4.5 respectively.

The discussion here addresses the ability of learners to assume various learning responsibilities competently. To begin with, the first cohort of learners made numerous requests to the university to provide them with paper-based materials. When these requests were not met, learners themselves took the initiative and led the production of paper-based LGMs. Learners succeeded in taking responsibility for LGMs production, which involved various planning, organizing and creative processes to ensure continuous production and engagement, including formation of teams, competitions, emotional recognition and appreciation of LGMs writers and distributing LGMs via print shops. The learners showed a great ability to respond to their learning needs independently; and they transformed the production of LGMs into a profitable, professional venture.

Moreover, learners showed the ability to produce various formats of LGMs to meet various learning needs. There are core LGMs that could be used for self-study. There are collaborative learning activities for motivation and language practice. There are exercises, quizzes and mind maps for revision and information retention. There are simplified LGMs and LGMs with accompanying Arabic translations to provide input in a less challenging form for learners who are struggling. Reportedly some LGMs writers were able to explain the contents better than some teachers and supposedly presented their material in a more creative and comprehensive manner. Learners included many examples and simplifications to make their LGMs accessible to all.

Furthermore, learners were able to successfully assume learning responsibilities to a high level independently. For instance, we saw how learners employed on a regular basis systematic and cyclical evaluation of their LGMs, both by leaders as part of their duties as well as by learners themselves. Learners' evaluation strategies resemble types of evaluation for ELT materials suggested by researchers in the field, namely pre-use, in-use and post use evaluation (e.g., Cunningsworth, 1984; Ellis, 1997; McGrath, 2002). It seems that learners in this context have realized through their active engagement in the production and use of LGMs the importance of conducting a cyclical process of evaluation before, whilst and after their use of LGMs to ensure the highest quality of LGMs and to minimize any anticipated flaws in them. Further, learners' evaluation strategies also resemble the evaluation techniques identified in the literature. They distinguish between what McDonough and Shaw (2003) call external and internal evaluation. Some learners reportedly conduct an external/impressionistic evaluation first by scanning candidate LGMs for their inclusiveness of the teachers' content and then move on to conduct a more in-depth/internal evaluation according to their own criteria.

All these practices demonstrate learners' ability to take various responsibilities competently and seriously. This finding to some extent resonates with the findings of previous studies. Brown et al. (2013) reported that their students generated more comprehensive and detailed research notes when preparing for their LGMs than when they used teacher-generated materials, which indicates that their students worked harder to produce their LGMs.

These results will be of interest to researchers concerned with engaging learners in the learning process, such as via student partnerships, student-led learning and flipped learning. These results show learners' ability to take responsibility to develop their own learning in numerous ways, discussed further below.

9.5.3 LGMs develop learners' skills

The findings show that due to the need to pre-plan and pre-organize the production of LGMs before exam time and because of the collective production of LGMs in a competitive environment, learners learn, acquire and develop a range of skills while producing LGMs.

For instance, learners who produced LGMs for print shops and leaders who hosted other parties' paid ads on their own social media learned some business and negotiation skills. A learner, for instance, gained skills and experience on how to prepare LGMs for printing and after graduation he started a print shop business that has been successfully running now for four years. Rania is also a prominent leader who came up with the idea of forming LGMs teams working on a single course. She started as a forum moderator and then expanded as a virtual leader on Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram. Rania worked hard to get learners to join her LGMs production teams. Rania invested in her skills of networking and social media and opened an online shop to sell books for the online community.

Furthermore, even learners who produce LGMs for their private study groups gained some useful workplace skills. Jood, for instance, as a result of producing simple LGMs for her study group, reportedly acquired valuable skills that enhanced her self-esteem and self-confidence and made her able to start her own home-based business producing educational materials for schools such as leaflets and posters when she had formerly described herself as computer illiterate.

The findings revealed that learners divide tasks among themselves, teach and explain to each other the contents of their courses and EFL learning-related aspects, write and edit LGMs, search for information related to their courses and learn new software programs to make videos, clips, mind maps and quizzes. For example, we see Malik established a group to do BBC news translations as a summer activity, which included learning how to use a software program for adding subtitles and other useful digital skills. All these skills are transferable and valuable for the workplace, and the range of the skills fostered by LGMs production is diverse. In addition to learning Microsoft Office skills and other digital skills, comes the skills of planning, organizing, researching, working to deadlines, creativity, negotiation and marketing, teamwork, leadership, mentoring, collaboration, interpersonal skills, networking and communication and social media skills. Of course, I do not claim that all learners inevitably acquired such skills; rather I argue that the production of LGMs offers numerous opportunities for learners to acquire and develop such skills. It is up to learners themselves to decide to what extent they want to engage, develop and learn these skills. To an extent similar findings were presented in the EFL literature (e.g., Assinder, 1991; Bakla, 2018; Bradford-Watts, 2011; Brown et al., 2013; Engin, 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka; 2012;

McGrath, 2014). For example, Brown et al. (2013) reported that LGMs develop skills of critical thinking, autonomy, discussion and taking the initiative. Bakla (2018) also argues that production of digital LGMs allow learners to acquire digital skills. Kılıçkaya and Krajka (2012) also agree that the creation of computer-based materials develops learners' metacognitive strategies. Bradford-Watts (2011) reported that her participants developed teamwork skills.

Additionally, similar results were reported in student partnership research and student-led learning research (Carr et al., 2018; Giles et al., 2016; Keenan, 2014; West et al., 2017). These studies reported similar benefits for learners engaging in learning with their peers; including acquisition of social skills, teamwork, time management, confidence and leadership, which are valuable employability skills.

All the cited studies reported particularly about the fact that learners learn beneficial skills while producing LGMs. The present study contributes through providing accounts from learners and showing how the skills acquired through engaging in the production of LGMs do indeed benefit LGMs producers beyond their immediate learning context.

9.5.3.1 LGMs improve learners' EI skills

Very relevant to the development of valuable and transferable skills, the findings also demonstrate that the production of LGMs improves and develops EI skills in learners at the individual as well as the collective level. It was discussed in 9.3.1 how EI learners have imparted EI practices to the community and thus the norms of the community allow the development of EI skills. The engagement of producing LGMs appears to be the chief medium through which learners had the opportunity also to develop EI skills. The need for LGMs has brought learners together; the learners were able to learn and acquire certain skills to produce LGMs (production related skills) and to maintain the continuity of their production (collaboration-related skills)

The production-related skills meant that learners learned such skills as planning, punctuality, commitment, confidence and persistence which all contribute to the development of the EI skills of Self-actualization, Independence and Stress Tolerance. Learners had to maintain collaboration to be able to produce LGMs, and in so doing, they acquired interpersonal skills, such as showing respect and courtesy and the ability to control anger, the ability to appreciate the importance of pleasing each other, be attentive to the needs of each other, and learned about the circumstances and struggles of each other. Also collaborating together gives learners the opportunity to encourage each other, help overcome struggles and maintain an optimistic and a happy mood. These skills lead to the development of the EI skills of Social Responsibility, Empathy, Interpersonal Relationship, Impulse Control, Happiness

and Optimism. The table below presents some examples of how LGMs production leads to the development of EI skills. Mehdiabadi and Arabmofrad (2014) reported that when learners collaborate with each other, they observe their behaviour and increase their connections with each other, which explains the increase in their participants' EI after being exposed to a collaboration-based treatment.

Table 9.1 Development of EI skills through LGMs production

Data excerpts	EI skills
I used to believe that I do not know how to do things. I felt I had no capability to do anything. Everything is ready for me. Even when I am poorly my dad gives me my medication. I did not have to depend on myself to do anything. But when I started producing LGMs I felt I started having a different image of myself than the image my family have of me. I became more confident about my ability to do things. (**Latifa**)	• Self-Regard • Independence
Last semester, I had very difficult circumstances and thought of dropping the whole semester, but because of my commitment with the print shop and my commitment to my team I thought of the impact of my dropping on my team. My dropping might be so difficult on them. These things motivate you to persist. (**Salma**)	• Stress Tolerance • Social Responsibility
Some learners have chronic diseases and they want to continue their education; some have spousal problems and despite that they resist and do whatever they could to succeed; some have autistic or disabled children, and a lot of other problems. When any learner talks about their struggles, you cannot believe how all members support them in words and actions. They would say positive and motivating words to them and would remind them of people with worse circumstances and would prepare for them everything they need to study for their exams, making use of LGMs and providing explanations in order to help them succeed despite their circumstances and suffering. (**Jood**)	• Empathy • Social Responsibility • Optimism

Such results show that it is possible to develop EI skills as claimed by Bar-On (2006) and Goleman (1995). These results are in line with previous results in the EFL context reporting the ability to develop and improve EI skills (e.g., Abdolrezapour & Tavakoli, 2012; Abdolrezapour et al., 2013; Mehdiabadi & Arabmofrad 2014; Rouhani, 2008; Shao et al., 2013a) (see 9.3.1). In these studies, the intervention treatments engaged learners in activities to develop their EI skill through sympathy and collaboration. LGMs production provides learners with the opportunity to communicate, interact, sympathize, socialize and understand the needs of other learners in addition to other production-related skills, discussed earlier.

9.5.4 LGMs promote a sense of community

There are a number of elements associated with LGMs production focused on developing a sense of community, which were effective communication, emotional, learning and social interaction and efforts of leaders (Chapter 8). The production of LGMs was the main driving factor causing learners to communicate and interact with each other. Further, the production of LGMs gives learners with high EI/leadership skills the opportunity to lead as well as giving all the community the opportunity to profit from interactive learning activities. Put differently, the need for LGMs has united the community in terms of communication and interaction.

Similar findings were reported in previous EFL research. Mennim (2012, 2016) for instance reported that LGMs require collaboration and generate patterns of interaction. Bakla (2018) similarly noted that LGMs create active and collaborative learning as learners share ideas, help understand unclear points and provide feedback for each other. Participants in Bradford-Watts's (2011) peer-teaching programme were required to work as groups in constructing practice activities and teach them to their peers.

The participants through working as a group were able to communicate, cooperate and make friends. However, the present findings additionally show that the continuous and effective communication, interaction and collaboration through LGMs production contributed to building a sense of community.

9.5.5 LGMs and learning progress

Learning progress here means improvement in language proficiency and/or successful completion of courses. It was not possible for the present study to investigate the actual learning progress of learners as a result of using or producing LGMs. The findings only report learners' accounts of the perceived value of LGMs for their learning and progress. Learners reported that LGMs were the basis for course success, guided their learning, prepared them for exams, controlled exam anxiety and motivated them to complete their study. Learners enthusiastically reported that LGMs were the main reason for their continued registration on the online programme. Generally, such reports warrant further research to examine the impact of LGMs on learning progress (for instance, by resorting to pre- and post-test designs). The present findings only revealed indicators implying the possibility that LGMs have, to varying degrees, a positive impact on learning.

Considering the findings of previous research on reasons behind attrition of attendance on online programmes such as negative emotions, lack of motivation and support and encouragement, teachers' remoteness (real and metaphorical), technological challenges, inappropriate learning materials, lack of peer communication and lack of effective self-study

skills (Section 9.2.1), the present findings on the benefits of LGMs show that the production and use of LGMs appears to eliminate or at least reduce the effect of the above-mentioned reasons behind online learners' attrition. In brief, LGMs offer learners the support and resources needed to prevent attrition.

Additionally, the constant exposure to and engagement with language input associated with LGMs might result in learning progress. For instance, Riyad reported that he constantly surrounded himself with various sources of English input in the car and at work such as listening to lectures several times, watching movies and writing down new vocabulary and reading English newspapers. Clearly, in the case of Riyad there is intensive work on the receptive reading and listening skills as well as dedication to the productive skill of writing in the production of his quizzes, explanations and translations. Such intensive and focused exposure to the language suggests the possibility of learning progress.

Yasmeen also reported that transcribing teachers' lectures requires an intensive focus on listening. She found transcribing daunting at the beginning but over time it became enjoyable, and she reportedly came to easily understand academic vocabulary because of constant exposure. Nawal also reported that her translation was improved due to constant practice, and she always advised her mentees to practise translation to improve their English. Further, Salma reported that after producing LGMs she became more interested in writing essays in English and reading essays in English which improved her vocabulary and grammar and made learning English easier for her.

Further, the simplified LGMs, accompanied by various tasks and explanations, reportedly enabled learners to have a deeper understanding of their course contents. It was reported that learners with low learning abilities benefit from various types of LGMs. Other learners reported that LGMs focus on linguistic features and aided acquisition of grammar and vocabulary.

These findings are in line with findings of previous studies reporting linguistic gains for EFL learners who produced LGMs (e.g., Engin, 2014; Green et al., 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2102; Littlejohn, 1983; Lynch, 2007; McGrath, 2014; Phillips, 2017; Stillwell et al., 2010). For instance, Stillwell et al. (2010) reported that self-transcripts, in which learners were required to record their own oral presentations, transcribe them and then correct any mistakes, promoted a deeper noticing and understanding of linguistic features and improved oral input in participants. Green et al. (2014) also reported that collaborative production of vidcasts (video clips) encourages negotiation of meaning, which contributes to language development. Phillips (2017) argues that the multi-staged process of producing podcasts focuses learners' attention on linguistic aspects. Kılıçkaya and Krajka (2012) reported that their leaners

attempted to use more complex structures and longer sentences in their comic strips than they usually did. Finally, Engin (2014) argues that simplifying the contents of LGMs involves a number of processes that develop language acquisition, including paraphrasing, selecting vocabulary and focusing on form.

9.5.6 Downsides of LGMs

The findings also reported two downsides of LGMs according to the views of some learners: LGMs might contain some mistakes and LGMs might breed dependency. A deeper investigation revealed a number of facts associated with each point.

9.5.6.1 Possible mistakes in LGMs

Being conscious of the fact that mistakes could be included in LGMs, some learners employ a number of techniques to ensure and double check the accuracy of LGMs as writers and users. Writers reported they employ revision several times, peer review and editing by leaders. The competition amongst writers and the work (or the aspiration to work) with print shops makes learners focus on the form and content of their LGMs. User-learners also engage actively and critically. They also employ a number of evaluation techniques to ensure and double check the accuracy of LGMs, including watching lectures to compare the contents of LGMs with lectures, checking the accuracy of the content of the LGMs against Internet sources, group evaluation of LGMs content and group discussion and consultation about suspect content. So, what appears to be a downside of LGMs in fact has several advantages in transforming learners from being passive users into researchers, reviewers, editors and evaluators, using higher-level thinking skills. Such focused engagement with form and content fosters learning progress. Previous studies agree that researching for information increases learning and activates higher-order thinking skills. For instance, Clarke (1989) proposed that engaging learners in learning materials adaptation activities benefits them in making them researchers, knowers, evaluators and problem-solvers and increases their collaboration. Engin (2014) reported that learners' awareness of the fact that their materials would be used by their classmates made them design these resources particularly carefully. Bakla (2018) also states that the "less-than-perfect nature of the materials helped the participants do research to gain access to relevant and accurate information" (p. 29). Some of his learners view mistakes positively in that mistakes motivated learners to do research themselves.

Moreover, it appears that because of extended use of LGMs, learners of the present study realize that they can trust the accuracy of LGMs generally and are able to spot the few mistakes in them. This finding is at odds with some studies that reported that despite the perceived benefits of LGMs, learners preferred to use teachers' materials because of their

perceived accuracy and usefulness. Sengupta's (1998) secondary school learners did not trust their peers were capable of providing correct input to improve their writing. Stillwell et al. (2010) also reported that Japanese learners preferred to use teachers' corrections instead of their self-corrections because they felt the teacher is the best source for language input although they could correct the mistakes themselves. Finally, Engin (2014) reported that Emirati learners stated they would use teachers' materials instead of LGMs because of concerns over their accuracy. Possible reasons for these different views is that in the present context the teacher is not readily available to learners as in the reported contexts, thus learners had to rely on and support each other. Also, extended use of LGMs has established them as a trustworthy source for learning in the context of the present study.

9.5.6.2 Dependency breeding

Another reported downside is that some less dedicated learners might use LGMs only to cram for exams depending on the hard work of other learners who designed the materials for them. Some learners reported that they could pass exams relying only on LGMs for exam study. However, the investigation does not reveal that LGMs have a direct negative impact on learners' attitudes towards learning. There is awareness that language learning requires effort and engagement. Drawing on evidence from over two years of observation in a number of study groups using LGMs, the results revealed genuine efforts to engage in EFL learning besides understanding and learning the contents of the courses, which took place outside of exam time. Also, during summer holidays learners focus their activities on EFL learning, which is not aimed at cramming for exams.

Instead, another factor seems more genuinely responsible for dependency breeding in learners is the MCQ assessment method. This method makes it possible for learners to use LGMs to cram for exams. If the assessment method were more focused on measuring deeper understanding and knowledge and academic abilities, then the study of LGMs alone (in their present form) would not lead to success in exams. Learners who invested in their learning would find LGMs an invaluable aid to accessing the content and engage more with EFL learning. Thus, it appears that it depends on learners to decide how they use LGMs, whether as a medium to enhance and improve learning or for cramming for exams.

9.6 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the study's findings on emotions, L2 motivation, emotional intelligence and the role of LGMs in the researched context. Online learners are more likely to experience a wide range of intense negative emotions due to the unfamiliarity of the learning context, teachers' (literal and metaphorical) remoteness, and other individual antecedents.

Learning materials are a principal element in learning for this particular context; thus the failure in providing suitable materials resulted in arousing intense negative emotion in learners. Deficiencies in learning materials were found to be associated with incompatibility with learning styles and preferences, unsuitability for students of various learning abilities and lack of interesting and engaging components. Some learners were however found to have more ability to manage their emotions and thus responded more constructively to their learning problems. LGMs came into existence as a solution by EI learners to overcome the technical problems of the online community. The benefits of LGMs were found to be the maintaining of emotional well-being of learners, the fostering of learning responsibilities and transferable skills, the ability to develop EI skills, to build a strong sense of community amongst learners and to provide opportunities for knowledge construction and active engagement with learning. The results also reported a number of drawbacks of LGMs, centred on the possible mistakes in the materials and the breeding of dependency.

In general, however, LGMs production has been a positive influence on online learners; yet to maximize the benefits of this practice I recommend the engagement of the educational institution in supervising LGMs production. The production of LGMs has proven to be beneficial in numerous ways to learners and the work done by learners is impressive. A growing body of research promotes the use of LGMs to provide learners with opportunities to engage in their learning more actively and productively. Nonetheless, this endeavour is best conducted with the involvement of academic staff and in collaboration with the supervision of the educational institution. Their involvement is important to provide guidance and supervision for LGMs production to maximize the opportunities for learners to learn and to develop and enhance communication between learners and teachers.

Chapter 10
Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The previous chapters (5-9) reported and discussed the study's findings. This chapter begins by summarizing the main findings in light of my research questions. Next, I present the implications and recommendations. Following that I discuss the contribution of the present research to knowledge in terms of LGMs, emotions and EI research. I conclude this chapter by pinpointing limitations of the study and suggesting avenues for future research.

10.2 Summary of the main findings

This research investigated the role of LGMs in an online EFL context in a Saudi Arabian university. The construct of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000) and the construct of EI proposed by Bar-On (2006/2015) were utilized to understand the reasons behind the generation and use of LGMs in this particular context since 2009 as well as to capture the role of LGMs in the learners' learning experience.

Chapter 5 revealed that emotions are inseparable from learning and that online learning could arouse intense negative emotions in learners because of the unfamiliarity of the learning environment as well as the physical detachment of learners from a learning context, teachers and peers. Additionally, some learners had emotional needs to continue their education, which negatively affected their emotional and behavioural responses when faced with challenges. This was evident in the quantities and contents of enquiry posts and help requests to administrative staff and peers. As a result, the technical problems of the Blackboard system that denied learners stable access to teachers' materials caused a wide range of intense negative emotions in the learning community, which demonstrated the connection between learning materials and academic emotions. The inaccessibility of teachers' materials could have negatively impacted learners' retention and the success of the online programme itself.

Amidst the chaos, which ensued due to these technical difficulties, a number of learners attempted to find some solutions to lessen the negative emotional state of learners through sharing study notes and summaries (LGMs) of lectures to provide their peers with an overview of the contents of their lectures. Further, motivated learners produced and shared LGMs promptly to motivate and encourage each other. As the problems of accessing teachers' materials continued, so the production and sharing of LGMs continued. LGMs were initially seen as a learning aid, but subsequently were used as the main source for learning and

exam preparation by learners. Learners then realized that LGMs were important for them because they suited their learning needs. LGMs were paper-based, and from the learners' perspective, were comprehensible, eliminated their negative emotions caused by the technical problems associated with the teachers' materials, aided them in exam preparation and compensated for the absence of teachers. Chapter 5 also revealed that some learners involved in the production and sharing of early LGMs appeared to have an ability to positively control their emotions and act productively.

Section 5.8 and Chapter 6 discussed the link between emotional intelligence skills and the motivations behind LGMs production of a number of LGMs writers utilizing the Bar-On model (2015). Most LGMs were authored by leaders in the community. Section 9.3 revealed a number of leadership and EI practices employed by EI learners for establishing quality relationships, maintaining motivation and coping with negative emotions. It was revealed that due to the EI practices established in the community, strong bonds developed amongst members, making it an emotionally intelligent community.

Chapter 7 investigated the views of learners as to the affordances and weaknesses of LGMs. The reported affordances of LGMs included accessibility to all learning abilities, provision of an interactive and enjoyable learning environment, suitability of format (paper-based), and provision of guidance on important points for exam study. The weaknesses included the possibility of the LGMs containing mistakes and dependency breeding.

Section 9.4 discusses the benefits of LGMs to the online community, which included the promoting of strong bonds amongst learners, ensuring emotional well-being, allowing the uptake of learning responsibilities and equipping learners with valuable transferable skills, improving their EI skills and providing them with opportunities for increasing knowledge and active engagement with learning.

10.3 Recommendations to improve the online programme

In light of the findings, I put forward a number of recommendations to improve the online programme below.

10.3.1 Provision of suitable learning materials

The findings demonstrated the need for suitable paper-based multi-level learning materials in order to engage learners with the contents of their courses more effectively. I therefore recommend a needs analysis of the online learners regarding their learning materials as well as consultation of the literature by the institution on the design and delivery of digital learning materials and video lectures, various learning abilities and learning styles, cognitive processing of audio and visual information and the skills of online teaching.

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10.3.2 Partnership with online learners

The student partnership approach is "gathering momentum" in various higher education institutions around the globe because of its "precious gains" and "highly treasured prizes" for learners and institutions (Marshall, 2014, p. 4). Higher education institutions are interested in investing in learners and engaging them in cost effectively (Everett & Oswald, 2018; Keenan, 2014). The findings indeed revealed impressive outcomes with regard to the engagement of learners in their learning. The online community is full of dedicated learners who seem to be willing to play their part in helping their peers engage by offering their services for free as seen in the production of LGMs or digital leadership. I therefore recommend the promotion of a student partnership approach between the institution and its learners.

Given the huge size of the online community, it was not possible for the university to accommodate learners' reported communication and mentorship needs. This created a gap between learners, teachers and the institution. But with the considerable number of learners willing to serve their online community, the university can assume its role in being an active, supportive part in the academic life of its learners and attending to the needs of the learners. There could be numerous collaborative projects between the university and learners, for instance, in producing learning materials and in conducting dialogic schemes between staff, university and learners. For example, some learners reported that they stopped watching video lectures because they found them incomprehensible because of the accents and speed of delivery of the teachers. As the findings revealed that some learners transcribed and made videos with translated subtitles available as LGMs, the university could work with learners to make and disseminate these video lectures to the rest of the cohort. Learners can also add visual effects to make learning materials suitable and appealing to their peers. Learners on their own arranged and paid for end-of-semester and graduation parties, which indicates their need for social interaction with peers. With the support of the university, teachers could attend such gatherings to enhance communication between learners and staff, provide encouragement, guidance and support to learners. As the LGMs writer Malik puts it, "communication between the learner and the university should go beyond a teaching-learning process." We saw some leaders with their limited resources secured some discounts for their followers in a number of shops. If the university with its huge resources gets involved, then learners can benefit greatly from such a partnership. The university might also need to consult learners on ideas about future initiatives and projects to fulfil their needs.

10.3.3 Suitable assessment methods

A major factor that seems responsible for learning practices is the assessment method, the MCQ assessment. It appears that the university's adoption of MCQ as an assessment method is to deal with the huge numbers of students through the use of automated marking machines. However, such a method of assessment is not adequate to assess the wide range of academic skills and knowledge to be developed by learners. It does not allow the development of the skills of critical thinking, discussion, negotiation, presentation, deep knowledge and understanding, etc. On the contrary, it makes cramming for exams easier, which raises questions as to the quality of learning outcomes. Thus, there is a need to implement appropriate assessment methods to ensure genuine learning and adequate learning outcomes.

10.4 Further Implications

The results also have a number of implications for other contexts beside the context of the present study, especially for audiences interested in the research on emotions and EI.

10.4.1 Incorporation of EI education

Emotions are universal and they are inseparable from learning. As "emotions have recently received special emphasis in education" (Martínez Agudo, 2018, p.8), it is important to increase the awareness of emotions and the skills necessary to better manage emotions in learning contexts for all those involved in the learning-teaching process. The study thus strongly supports the calls for incorporating EI training in teacher education and in-service training (e.g., Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; Koçoğlu, 2011; Kalangestani, 2017; Lillis, 2011). Previous studies reported important findings including that teachers with high EI skills aid students' retention because of their ability to detect negative emotions and serve students better and that there is a connection between teachers' EI skills and their performance. It is evident that learning situations are full of intense emotions that are likely to impact learning and/or academic progress of learners and/or teachers' performance and satisfaction. Unfortunately, my study showed that the importance of communication between teachers and learners is not sufficiently appreciated by some teachers in the present context. EI education may enhance various aspects of the relationship between teachers and learners.

Learners also need to be educated about EI skills to understand their emotions and to learn how to manage them effectively. It is important to include emotional awareness and EI skills in the curriculum; my study demonstrates that EI skills are not less important than any other study skills offered to learners as part of their learning courses. EI skills can greatly improve the learning atmosphere and contribute to create collaborative and supportive learning

environments as well as to autonomous learning. Further, they help learners to regulate their emotions and deal with stressors, which improves performance and aids learners to maximize their potential while maintaining a healthy emotional state.

10.4.2 Embracement of EI-based norms for learning contexts

I propose the incorporation and application of EI-based norms in learning contexts, for instance, in communication between teachers and learners and in interpersonal relationships for all involved in the learning context. However, theoretical knowledge about EI skills alone might not be enough to ensure the application of EI skills in learning contexts. EI-based norms in learning contexts and in group activities seem to be valuable in developing and improving effective EI skills at the practical level. My results revealed a number of EI norms implanted in the learning community such as norms to enhance interpersonal relationships, empathy and collaboration amongst members. Practitioners interested in sense of community research, especially online communities, might benefit greatly from adopting EI norms to build successful learning communities.

10.4.3 Investment in IE learners

Learners with high EI skills were instrumental in building a bonded and successful learning community in my study. They provided the lead for their peers. I therefore recommend the identification of and investment in EI learners in learning contexts, especially approaches adopting a student partnership approach. Such learners are likely to be competent in leader roles and be key players for successful communities. Previous research reported challenges in students' engagement and commitment in partnership projects (Healey et al., 2014; Keenan, 2014). I propose that since EI learners can be motivated by the emotional gratification received from those around them, thus it might be that educational institutions consider the identification, through EI assessment tools, and utilization of EI learners in partnership projects as well as the provision of emotional gratification to EI learners to ensure commitment. Emotional rewards, recognition in the community, competitions and thank you posters might "have the power of magic" (Riyad) to motivate and engage EI learners.

10.5 Contribution to knowledge

The present study contributes to knowledge in several ways. With regards to LGMs and ELT research, the study provides an empirically based investigation of LGMs in particular and ELT materials in general, an under-researched area lacking empirical studies. Second, learners' perspectives "are very under-represented in the literature" (McGrath, 2014, p.166). The study fills this gap and contributes an in-depth representation of EFL learners' views regarding their learning materials as well as their emotional needs. Third, to the best of my

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knowledge this is the first qualitative study dedicated to investigating the connection between learning materials and learners' emotions in an EFL context. Fourth, this is also the first qualitative study to investigate the relationship between LGMs and EI. Fifth, previous research on LGMs has acknowledged in passing the emotional benefits from engaging learners in producing learning materials (Assinder, 1991; Bakla, 2018; Brown et al., 2013; Engin, 2014; Green et al., 2014; Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2012; Littlejohn, 1983; McGrath, 2014; Simpson, 2006; Wessels, 1991). This study also highlights the emotional gains but from a deeper perspective, utilizing the concepts of EI. Doing so highlights the strong link between emotions and LGMs. Finally, the study also contributes to literature on designing video lectures in relation to emotions through showing the role of teaching skills in making successful and effective video lectures and the importance of using qualitative methods for understanding learners' emotions regarding types of video lectures.

With regards to the research on emotions and EI, first, most studies simply aim to identify what emotions are experienced by learners. My study contributes by showing not only learners' emotions, but also how learners reacted towards their emotions and how their emotions shaped their learning practices. Second, most EI studies in the EFL context have employed quantitative methods. This study employs qualitative ethnographic and phenomenological methods, resulting in in-depth and rich details on EI practices that were not reported by previous studies. Third, previous studies in EFL contexts demonstrated the possibility to develop EI skills at the individual level through the use of intervention treatments. My study shows that it is possible to foster EI skills collectively as well as individually through engaging learners in LGMs production and through embedding EI-based norms in the learning context. Finally, my study demonstrates the vital presence of emotions in all various aspects of learning, beginning from the emotional needs of learners as individuals, the strong connection between emotions and learning materials, the impact of negative emotions as well as positive emotions on learners' learning progress and enjoyment of learning, the critical role of emotions in building a strong sense of community as well as in interaction, communication and quality relationships between members of the community, and the need to acquire effective EI skills to respond to and manage emotions. The study thus supports the call to include the study of emotions in SLA (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

With regards to L2 motivation and emotions, the present study demonstrates the central role of emotions in triggering motivated behaviours of learners. A comprehensive understanding of motivation cannot be achieved without paying attention to learners' emotions. The present study offers a re-conceptualisation of **the L2MSS** model (Dörnyei, 2005) from a CDST perspective, allowing emotions to occupy a central position in

understanding the motivations of L2 learners as individuals. It shows how emotions play a vital role in the construction and (de)activating of desired and/or feared selves and how emotional arousals associated with desired and/or feared selves motivate behaviour to restore emotional balance. Whereas **the L2MSS** model (Dörnyei, 2005) assumes that the motivational power lies in having vivid images about desired selves, the proposed re-conceptualisation assumes that emotional arousals associated with desired and/or feared selves are responsible for inducing motivation for behaviour to restore emotional balance.

The re-conceptualisation also theorizes the undertheorized **L2 Learning Experience** using the same theoretical basis used for the ideal L2 and ought-to L2 selves (Higgins, 1987, Markus & Nurius, 1986), making the third component corresponds harmoniously to the other two components. Whereas **the L2MSS** model (Dörnyei, 2005) addresses only **the ideal L2 self** and **the ought-to L2 self** of the L2 learner, the proposed re-conceptualisation addresses the **whole self** of the L2 learner and explains how **the whole self** interacts with external factors as well as with internal factors in deciding and guiding the consequent motivated behaviours of the L2 learner. Additionally, **the L2MSS** model focuses only on the **ideal/own** or **ought/other** standpoints in understanding motivation. My re-conceptualisation shows how L2 learners' motivations can be attributed to a collection of intricate and changing standpoints including **ideal/own**, **ought/other, ought/own** and **ideal/other**. Further, the re-conceptualisation merge together Ushioda's **person-in-context relational** approach and Dörnyei's **L2MSS** model.

10.6 Limitations and suggestions for further research

First, as the experience of the online learners in the present study is from only one context, this might limit claims to generalizability, which is the case with most qualitative research. However, there are numerous findings revealed in this study that resonate with and/or add to findings in the literature. For instance, all of the following have the potential to be transferable to other educational settings: the findings on negative emotions in online learning, on the strategies of EI learners for establishing quality interpersonal relationships, maintaining motivation and coping with negative emotions, on how a sense of community was fostered, on the benefits of LGMs, on the design of video lectures and on the presences of various desired and/or feared selves responsible for motivations the learning behaviours of L2 learners.

Second, this study investigated only the views of learners due to time and word limits. For instance, I could not investigate why teachers do not prepare hard-copy materials for learners despite being asked to, teachers' views on communication between them and their learners, the challenges they face as online teachers to massive numbers of students, whether they

experience any difficulties in teaching in front of a camera with no audience, their views on the MCQ assessment method, etc. The study therefore recommends further research to explore the views of teachers and administrators to explore the above-mentioned issues comprehensively.

Third, it was beyond the capacity of the present study to assess EI skills quantitatively, using Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory, of learners who appear to have high EI skills. It would be interesting to examine whether the successful behaviours of those learners do indeed score highly quantitatively. Certainly, this would illuminate some aspects pertaining to the behaviours and qualities associated with EI learners. Future research would include both qualitative and quantitative methods to capture a comprehensive understanding of behaviours and qualities of EI learners.

10.7 Chapter summary

This chapter summed up the findings of the research, addressed its implications for the online programme, which were the provision of suitable learning materials, partnership with learners and provision of appropriate assessment methods. Further implications included the importance of EI education for teachers and learners, incorporation of EI-based norms in learning contexts and investment in EI learners. The contributions of the study to the research of LGMs, L2 motivation, EI and emotions were underscored. The chapter concludes by presenting a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

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Appendices

Appendix (A)

Participants' information sheet

The University Of Sheffield.

School Of English.

Information Sheet

Title of Research: An exploration of the Use of ELT Materials in a Distance Learning Program of English

Who am I?

I am a PhD student studying at the University of Sheffield.

Why do I want your help?

I am currently carrying out research on the use of English language teaching materials for academic purposes. In order to conduct the research, I would like to invite you to share your own reflections and suggestions on how you use your learning materials for learning English.

What does my participation involve?

Your participation will involve a questionnaire and a short interview through writing. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Data collected shall be used only for research purposes.

Are there any risks in taking part in the research?

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You do not have to reveal your identity to the researcher in order to participate in this study. All information you provide is online with no face-to-face contact. All information you provide is completely confidential. Only my supervisor, Dr. Nigel Harwood, will have access to your anonymised responses. Usual practices of anonymity shall be observed; names of places shall be removed in the thesis and subsequent publications. However, anonymous quotations from interviews may be used.

You can withdraw from participation at any time without telling me what your reasons are.

If you have any enquiries regarding this participation please contact me via my email: ████████@gmail.com or via my whatsApp: ████████

Alternatively, if you wish to speak to my PhD supervisor, Dr Nigel Harwood, he can be contacted at: n.harwood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix (B)

Participant's consent form

The
University
Of
Sheffield.

School
Of
English.

Participation Consent Form

Title of Research: An exploration of the Use of ELT Materials in a Distance
Learning Program of English

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research into the use of ELT materials in
teaching and learning English for academic purposes. I would like to have a written
record of your consent, so please tick the boxes that apply below.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet
dated [_____] explaining the above research project and I have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at
any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative
consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or
questions, I am free to decline. ☐

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my
anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the
research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or
reports that result from the research. ☐

4. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

_____ _____
Date   Signature

Appendix (C)

Participants' electronic information sheet

Information Sheet

Title of Research: An exploration of the Use and Generation of ELT Materials by Learners in an English Language Distance Learning Programme

Why do I want your help?
I am currently carrying out research on the use and generation of English language materials for learning English for academic purposes. In order to conduct the research, I would like to invite you to share your own reflections and suggestions on how you use and generate your learning materials for learning English.

What does my participation involve?
Your participation will involve a questionnaire and interview(s). You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Our interview(s) will be through online writing or Skype, as you prefer. Data collected shall be used only for research purposes.

Are there any risks in taking part in the research?
There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You do not have to reveal your identity to the researcher in order to participate in this study. All information you provide is online with no face-to-face contact. All information you provide is completely confidential. Only my supervisor, Dr. Nigel Harwood, and myself will have access to your anonymised responses. Usual practices of anonymity shall be observed; names of places shall be removed in the thesis and subsequent publications. However, anonymous quotations from interviews may be used with your approval. You are free to exclude any part(s) from the interview if you do not want it/them to be used in the research.

You can withdraw from participation at any time without telling me what your reasons are.
If you have any enquiries regarding this participation please contact me via my email account: ▊▊▊▊▊▊g@gmail.com
Alternatively, if you wish to speak to my PhD supervisor, Dr Nigel Harwood, he can be contacted at: n.harwood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix (D)

Participants' electronic consent form

Consent Form

Title of Research: An exploration of the Use and Generation of ELT Materials by Learners in an English Language Distance Learning Programme

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research into the use and generation of ELT materials in learning English for academic purposes. I would like to have a written record of your consent, so please tick the boxes that apply below.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining *
the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions
about the project.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to *
withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any
negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any
particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

☐

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.I give *
permission for members of the research team to have access to my
anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the
research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or
reports that result from the research.

☐

4. I agree to take part in the above research project. *

☐

Appendix (E)

Initial list of codes and a sample of open coding process of excerpts of content analysis

Motivation	Active, responsible and independent activities of learners	Collaborative activities	Personal development	Learners' communication and needs expression
Learners' attitudes towards learner-generated materials	Types of learner-generated materials	Practices in developing materials for learners	Shortcomings in learner-generated materials	Types of digital virtual environments
Learner's tactical strategies	Issues with teachers	Learners' attitudes towards teacher-offered materials	Learners' struggles (educational/ technical)	Affective provision

-I developed the initial list of codes after many cycles of coding, but I put it here in the beginning to make it easier for the reader to follow the coding process.

- One segment with more than one color means that the segment fits more than one category

-The meanings of emojis are as offered by Emoji Pedia on http://emojipedia.org/

1. Segmentation of data

Example1	
A Wreath of Jasmine	
1	Hi gals
2	how's things going with the XX course
3	I'm in a valley and he's [the teacher] in a different valley
4	[extremely frustrated emoji cat]
5	I'm struggling
6	and don't know what to do
7	I feel him [the teacher]…I don't know, talking to himself.

Example 2	
Miss. Selfridge:	
8	Hi gals, how are you?
9	Which textbook [learner-generated] are you using for the composition course?
Sweet Shyness:	
10	Deep Ocean's
My Children are My Life:	
11	I am using Orchard's and The Delicate's

Example 3	
The Ambitious Girl:	
12	Do we have to buy it [textbook prescribed by the teacher]?
Sweet Shyness:	
13	I am using X textbook [generated by a learner]
Lollypop:	

14	Previous semester, we did not need it [textbook prescribed by the teacher] at all.

Example 4

Feelings of Violet Flowers:

15	I do not watch any lectures.
16	I study from learners' textbooks.
17	Well-done to them [learners]
18	their explanations are sufficient.

Example 5

Lilies:

19	Please be careful not to ask the teacher (in the live lecture) which is better Deep Ocean's textbook [learner-generated textbook] or I do not know what else.
20	They have [teachers] started changing their exams' questions and styles because of this kind of questions.
21	Thank you

May Your Soul Rest in Peace:

22	Truly, you are right
23	👍🙈🙈🙈 [monkeyemoji means my lips are sealed, I won't say anything]

Terrific Me:

24	ha ha ha ha, seriously, Deep Ocean's textbook?
25	This question destroys [the ego of the teacher]
26	as if we do not like the teacher's [offered]-content
27	and as if Deep Ocean is our teacher

Murmurs:

27	😂😂😂😂😂

Travelling Amongst Waves:

28	Yes, please avoid irritating questions

Drizzle:

29	Circulate this message to all groups;
30	we do not want any troubles

Example 6

Fragrance Whispers:

30	I have finished this course
31	before I forget in lecture 13 you will learn about passivization, he [the teacher] will tell you this rule is not included in the exam
32	Do not believe[him]
33	He gave us two questions about passivization

Example 7

Wounded Melodies:

34   The teacher told us during the live lecture that all texts in the exam shall be taken from the content; no text

shall be from outside the content

Scheherazade:

35   Good, wish you success

36   But do not take that as a guarantee;

37   he kept telling us he wouldn't include in the exam anything from outside the content

38   but he actually shocked us because he did [include texts from outside the content].

Coding of data and extraction of themes

Words /phrases	First cycle code	Type of first-cycle code	Second-cycle code	Theme
3 I'm in a valley and he's [the teacher] in a different valley 7 talking to himself 20 They have [teachers] started changing their exams' questions 25 This question destroys [the ego of the teacher] 28 avoid irritating questions 30 we do not want any troubles 32 Do not believe[him] 33 He gave us two question about passivization 36 But do not take that as a guarantee; 38 but he actually shocked us because he did	1) Lack of teacher-learner interaction 2) Inaccessibility of electronic materials 3) Trust-issues with teachers	Simultaneous coding	Learners' attitudes of teachers in terms of their offered materials and as a source of study advice	Learners' attitudes of teachers' materials and interactive practices as an impacting factor in their materials use choices
4 [extremely frustrated emoji cat] 5 I'm struggling 6 and don't know what to do	Learners' struggles with teacher-offered materials	Descriptive Coding		
9 which textbook [learner-generated] are you using for the Composition course? 10 [I'm using] Deep Ocean's 11 I am using Orchard's and The Delecate's 13 I am using X textbook [generated by a learner] 16 I study from learners' textbooks.	1) Learners' use of learner-generated materials 2) learners' satisfaction with learner-generated materials	Simultaneous coding	1) Learners' attitudes and use of learner-generated materials	Factors underlying learners' preference of learner-generated materials over teacher-offered materials

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17 Well-done to them [learners
18 their explanations are
   sufficient.
27 as if Deep Ocean is out
teacher
12 Do we have to buy it
[textbook prescribed by the
   teacher]?
14 we did not need it
[textbook prescribed by the
teacher]
15 I do not watch any lectures
26 as if we do not like the
teacher's [offered]-content
	3) non-reliance on
	teacher-offered materials
			2) Learners' attitudes
			about collaborative
			experienced learners	

14 previous semester 19 Please be careful not to ask the teacher 20 They have [teachers] started changing their exams' questions 28 Yes, please avoid irritating questions 29 Circulate this message to all groups 30 I have finished this course 31 before I forget in lecture 13 you will learn about 34 The teacher told us 37 he kept telling us	1) Previous learners as a source of advice , guidance and trusted information 2) Experiences of previous learners as a source of learning strategies.	Simultaneous coding		

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Appendix (F)

Interview Schedule for LGMs writers, users and leaders

These questions were for all three groups of participants

1) Background Information

1. Why are you doing an online bachelor's degree?
2. What is you major?
3. Why did you choose your major?
4. Which level are you studying at currently?
5. How many years since you graduated from secondary school?
6. Do you work beside your study?
7. Do you have any previous experience in on-campus degree learning?

LGMs writers

1. What materials have you produced for learning? Can you provide me with a list of these materials?
2. When did you start producing learning materials?
3. Why have you produced such materials?
4. What is the purpose of such materials? What objective did it aim to achieve?
5. Do you work alone or within a team? And why?
6. How do you produce your materials? What steps/techniques do you follow?
7. Do you use dictionaries/ YouTube explanations/ Internet resources? Why?
8. Do you consult the prescribed textbook or do you only rely on the lectures and/or the PowerPoint slides? Why?
9. Do you include everything the teacher says or delete some parts and why?
10. How long does it take to produce a piece of material?
11. What do you do if you face any difficulties in the production process?
12. Do you consult anyone throughout the production process? Whom and why?
13. What things do you include in your materials?
14. I have noticed you add translations/ exercises/pictures/vocabulary/coloured fonts, why do you add these things?
15. How do you make sure your materials are good?
16. Have you received any feedback from colleagues? What were they? Do you ensure you find out your colleagues' views about your materials? And why?
17. How do you feel about this experience?
18. Do you think this experience have impacted your language learning? And how?
19. Do you think this experience have impacted you personally? And how?
20. Is there anything you would like to add at the end?

LGMs users

1. Do you use learner-generated materials? How often (all courses, some courses, none), and why?
2. What is your opinion about the production of learner-generated materials? Do you like them? Do you think they are helpful, and why?

3. What are the things you like and dislike about learner-generated materials?
4. If you use learner-generated materials for learning, in what ways do these materials help you learn?
5. Do you prefer to use learner-generated materials, teachers' content or both and why?
6. What is your opinion about teachers' materials? And why?
7. What are the things you like and dislike about teachers' materials?
8. How do you use teachers' materials? Do you use the prescribed textbook?
9. What things do you want from materials? What types of exercises do you think are beneficial in learning English? Why?
10. What things help you more understand the contents? Help you to learn?
11. Is there anything you would like to add at the end?

Leaders

1. How did you start virtual leadership? For how long have you been engaged in virtual leadership? What virtual platforms do you use for your activities?
2. What are the reasons behind your engagement in leadership?
3. What activities do you do for other learners? Do you think these activities are important and why?
4. Do you think it is important to have learners-leaders in online learning contexts, and why?
5. Do you think the leader role requires certain characteristics in the individual? If yes, what are these characteristics?
6. Do you think being a leader has affected you personally? If yes, how?
7. I have noticed that the provision of good and sufficient learner-generated materials is a task carried out and organized by leaders? What is your role as a leader with regards to learning materials? And why do you think learners need a leader to provide and advise on learning materials?
8. Is there anything you would like to add at the end?

Appendix (G)

Generation of an observational note and reflections based on a number of forum exchanges

Exchanges (posts in the IF)	Generated observational notes and reflections
• Good morning to all, • How to convert a PowerPoint presentation to a Word document? • Please accept my thanks and appreciation.	Some learners lack basic IT skills. Some use laborious and time consuming ways to convert digital slides into hard-copy materials. Some learners provide IT advice to their peers.
▪ You just open the PowerPoint file and copy the texts you want and then paste them into a Word file. I did it this way and was able to print the contents of the slides. ▪ I hope this helps you. • This is a real problem when there are big numbers of PowerPoint slides, copying and pasting each single slide. • Many thanks for your input. ○ I have an easier and a quicker way. ○ Open the PowerPoint file and keep pressing on the ctrl button and also at the same time click on each slide you want to copy. Then give the Print order then a document containing all the slides shall open. You can save it as a document. ➢ I also do it the copy-paste way.	The lack of sufficient IT skills besides the time and effort required for converting slides into hard copy materials might have negatively affected learners' attitudes towards digital materials. This might explain why there are numerous requests to the online programme's administration to provide hard copies of teachers' materials. Also, it could well be a contributing reason as to why some learners prefer to use LGMs by other learners that are either in print and bound format or in print friendly format (PDF or Word documents).

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Appendix (H)

Generation of an observational notes and reflections from media units

Media Unit	Generated observational notes and reflections
⚠ الابلاغ عن خطأ محتمل في السؤال رقم 4 **Possessive pronouns (5** ضمائر الملكية المتصلة رأسها لغير العاقل ✓Its head · Our pens ○ Your hats ○ Their cars ○ ⚠ الابلاغ عن خطأ محتمل في السؤال رقم 5 **Possessive pronouns (6** ضمائر الملكية المتصلة أقلامنا Its head ○ ✓Our pens ○ Your hats ○ Their cars ○ ⚠ الابلاغ عن خطأ محتمل في السؤال رقم 6 **Possessive pronouns (7** ضمائر الملكية المتصلة برانيطكم Its head ○ Our pens ○ ✓Your hats · Their cars ○ ⚠ الابلاغ عن خطأ محتمل في السؤال رقم 7	This quiz is for learners taking General English. It is very simplified; it suits EFL learners with very little background in English. It uses Arabic to make the meaning of each single possessive pronoun clear. The quiz is generated on the forum where all quizzes benefit from a mistake-reporting tool ⚠ for each question. This way all quiz takers can edit and correct any mistakes in the quizzes and ensure their quality.
	LGMs in the form of summer activity. The activity involves producing translated subtitles for BBC news video clips. This activity is initiated and led by Malik who is also an IT teacher. Besides doing translations (focused language engagement) learners are also required to learn how to make subtitles for the video clip (digital skills).

Segmentation of a post into units of meaning

Complete post	Segmented Units of Meaning	Code /Child Code	Theme(s)
O friends, before we leave Second-level Section this thread is going to be our gathering station to congratulate each other and say good bye to each other. We have been a one family, I feel lonely everywhere else. For months this place (IF) has been my home and you have been my family. Here we have cooperated, here we were happy and here we worried. Lots of things happened here. Here I came to love many of you. I am posting now to express my thanks and gratitude and to establish a reunion station to gather again. This place (section of first year student) is going to be our reunion station to offer guidance and services to the new learners. This is an invitation to join our good-bye celebration. I invite you to attend from the bottom of my heart so I hope my words reach your hearts. With love and appreciation.	O friends, before we leave Second-level Section, this thread is going to be our gathering station,	Communication	EI Interpersonal skills: • Interpersonal relationship • Social responsibility EI Intrapersonal skills: • Emotional expression • Emotional awareness EI General Mood skills: • Happiness A sense of community • Communication • Social interaction • Emotional interaction • Social bonds • Cooperation
	to congratulate each other and say good bye to each other.	Social interaction	
	We have been a one family, I feel lonely everywhere else. For months this place (IF) has been my home and you have been my family.	Social bonds + Emotional awareness and expression	
	Here we have cooperated,	Cooperation (learning interaction)	
	here we were happy and here we worried. Lots of things happened here. Here I came to love many of you.	Emotional interaction + Emotional awareness and expression	
	I am posting now to express my thanks and gratitude	Emotional expression + Child Code: Expressing gratitude (a social norm in the community)	
	and to establish a reunion station to gather again.	Social bonds + communication	
	This place (section of first year student) is going to be our reunion station to offer guidance and services to the new learners.	Social responsibility Child Code: Commitment to aid new learners (a social norm in the community)	
	This is an invitation to join our good-bye celebration.	Social interaction + Happiness Child code: Celebrations (End-of-semester celebrations -a social norm in the community)	
	I invite you to attend from the bottom of my heart so I hope my words reach your hearts. With love and appreciation	Emotional expression Emotional interaction	

Appendix (J)

A pre-list of codes

This list is informed by pre-figured themes from my first open coding as well as by the theory of emotional intelligence

This list is used as a coding checklist; details of each code are meant to ensure objective and systematic coding

Code	Child code	Explanation of Code	Instantiation of Code
Enquiries	Procedural ENQ	Enquiries regarding how to enrol in the programme, how to contact the university, how to pay fees, how to acquire a student ID number, how to register courses, how to access timetables, etc	"I was an on-campus student but was expelled many years ago. Can I still enrol in this programme?"
	Technical ENQ	Enquiries regarding how to use the web-based learning interface, how to download video lectures and how to solve technical issues, etc	"Do I have to sign in the system at certain times or can I watch lectures at any time?"
	Learning ENQ	Enquiries regarding how to get access to learning materials, resolve questions about study requirements, ascertain how assessments and exams are carried out, and how to study for exams, etc	"Where shall we get our textbooks from? This matter is very important to me so please provide me with an immediate answer."
Emotional State	Positive emotions	Emotions of joy, enjoyment, hope, gratitude, satisfaction, relief, pride, sympathy, love, admiration,	"I cannot express enough gratitude for having the opportunity to continue my education after I lost hope of doing so"
	Negative emotions	Emotions of fear, anxiety, anger, boredom, hopelessness, sadness, jealousy, envy, contempt, antipathy, hate, disappointment, shame/guilt	"I am very anxious; please provide me with an answer. The question is: Has study started today or shall we start next week? "
	Emotional needs to join the online programme	Personal reasons to continue education/ join the online programme	"So my father won't lose hope in me and my mother feels optimistic about me"
	Attitudes towards textbooks	Learners' views and opinions towards the prescribed textbooks.	"No need to buy textbooks, except the English. All my efforts to acquire them were a waste of time. I only benefitted from the English textbook"

			"I feel I am lost because I have not acquired the textbook yet "
Textbooks	Efforts to acquire textbooks	Learners' efforts to acquire textbooks	"I am from Kafji and travelled to Dammam only to get the book and now it turned out it is not the correct version. This is such an irritation, indeed such an irritation"
	Difficulties in acquiring textbooks	Difficulties learners face in their attempts to acquire the textbooks	"Where did you get the textbooks from? Please help me. I have been looking for them for a week. I even travelled to other cities in search for them"
	Solutions to unavailability of textbooks	Learners' solutions to the unavailability of textbooks (e.g., borrowing from central libraries, ordering from abroad or online, etc)	"Go and ask in bookstores in your city whether they can order the textbook from abroad for you"
	Emotions associated with textbooks	Negative emotions created in learners because of unavailability of textbooks (anger, anxiety, frustration, etc)	"I searched at many bookstores and could not find the textbooks. Half of the term passed and I am still searching for the textbooks."
Teachers' materials (lectures and SCORM slides)	Technical problems associated with teachers' materials	Technical problems in accessing teachers' materials (e.g., troubleshooting of the Blackboard system, cutting off of video lectures, slow downloading of video lectures, Internet problems, insufficient IT skills, etc)	"Video lectures do not play although I have a very high Internet speed"
	Learners' solutions to the technical problems	Learners' attempted solutions to solve/reduce the technical problems (e.g., offering IT advice, increasing Internet speed, using software to enhance downloading of video files, recording video lectures and sharing them in external sites, etc)	"As you all know, the Blackboard problem is affecting lots of students. We all need to cooperate; who can access lectures please upload them (on the forum) for learners who cannot access them" "I have bought a new computer and increased the Internet speed, but lectures are still not working"
	Administrative responses to technical problems	Responses of administrators regarding the technical problems of the Blackboard system (e.g., official statements, solutions to solve the technical problems, etc)	"It is a global problem in many universities around the world. There are some technical problems that cannot be avoided"

	Persistence of the problems associated with teachers' materials	Persistence of the technical problems throughout the semester	"Till now lectures are not uploaded. We always face this problem each semester. Some lectures are uploaded after three weeks which makes lectures accumulate"
	Lecture delays	Delays in uploading teachers' materials (video lectures and/or slides) to the Blackboard system	"When are you going to upload lectures? We are bored of waiting"
	Accumulation of lectures	Accumulation of huge volumes of lectures to be watched and studied due to technical access problems and delays in uploading	"I'm tired. More lectures to watch and I feel I cannot catch up"
	Attitudes towards teachers' materials	Learners' attitudes towards teacher materials (e.g., satisfaction/ dissatisfaction)	"I wish teachers would provide us with written lectures, I have no time to listen to lectures"
	Emotions associated with teachers' materials	Negative emotions created in learners because of the technical problems, delays in uploading lectures and accumulation of lectures (anger, anxiety, frustration, etc)	"We live in a state of anxiety and pressure"
LGMs (Materials produced by learners for study purposes)	Reasons	Learner' reasons/motivation for producing LGMs	"Until you find a solution to your problem (inability to access lectures), review the study notes provided by our brothers and sisters (other learners)"
	Format	Formats of LGMs produced by learners (e.g., summaries, transcriptions, vocabulary lists, grammar rules explanations, question-answer format, audio, video, etc)	"Brothers and sisters have transcribed and posted all lectures here (on the forum)"
	Developments	Developments of LGMS (e.g., in their forms, formats, contents, writing style	"It is better to have them (LGMs) in word documents so we can benefit from them"
	Benefits	Benefits learners gain from LGMs: 1. A solution to have access to the content of inaccessible lectures 2. A solution to deal with anxiety and stress caused by the inability to access lectures	"Can you provide me please with LGMs with clear explanations…The slides' contents are difficult and it is strenuous to watch all lectures now. There is hardly any time left (before exams)"

		3. A solution to deal with accumulated lectures because of the technical problems 4. Aid to learners taking compulsory General English courses 5. Aid for learners who lack sufficient academic skills 6. Aid for employed learners who could not watch lectures 7. A revision of the courses and practice for exams 8. Save time and effort in making hard copies of materials 9. Some learners lack sufficient Microsoft Office skills and unable to prepare their own materials 10. Exam aid 11. Motivational tool to engage more with learning	
	Attitudes towards LGMs	Learners' attitudes towards LGMs (e.g., positive attitudes, cautious attitudes, views about their value, etc)	"The textbook is confusing whereas LGMs are more organized and motivate one to study. In addition to that they are inclusive"
	Attitudes towards LGMs' writers	Learners' attitudes towards LGMs writers (e.g., appreciation, gratitude, recognition, social status, etc)	"Thank you to all learners who make us study summaries"
EI Skills	Intrapersonal	Data related to aspects such as • emotional awareness • emotional expression • independence • self-regard	"I want to study and succeed but I do not know how. Please help me. I am extremely afraid 😣 I am choked up with tears 🥹"
	Interpersonal	Data related to interpersonal aspects such as • sympathy • social responsibility	"We have to cooperate so we all can succeed"

		• interpersonal relationship	
	Stress Management	Data related to interpersonal aspects such as • Stress Tolerance • Impulse Control	"Do not let fear from exams control you, you should control your fear 👍😊„
	Adaptability	Data related to interpersonal aspects such as • Reality-testing • Flexibility • Problem-Solving	"We may register for the same courses in order to advise each other and cooperate in making LGMs and in exam revision"
	General Mood	Data related to • Happiness • Optimism	"Step by step we can watch all lectures" "Keep away from pessimistic thinking"
	Characteristics of EI learners/ leaders	Characteristics of EI leaders/leaders and characteristics of their posts (e.g., • Active presence in the community • Responsive to enquiries and requests of others • Showing of sympathy • Showing support to others • Attractive posts (use of colours, emotions, images, colourful backgrounds) • Intimate (use of friendly and intimate language personal aspects) • Humorous • Socializing (networking, team-working) • Creative and beneficial ideas for the community (e.g., discussion groups, competitions, quizzes, reflections and feedback, donation campaigns)	 Personalized congratulation posts by leaders to their followers.