Title

Motivation in British adult learners of Greek as a foreign language: a Case Study analysis of adult learners at a language centre in London.

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A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

I, Thomas Vogiatzis, declare that this PhD thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complexities faced by British adult learners studying Greek at a language institution in London. It aims to explore the intersection between learners' motivation and sociological factors, contributing to the limited research on adult foreign language acquisition, particularly Greek. The research focuses on how learners perceive their motivation as well as the sociological factors that affect their language learning journey. The study employs a qualitative Case Study methodology to provide in-depth descriptions of participants' Greek learning experiences. It focuses on how learners perceive the development of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and how these perceptions, influenced by sociological factors, contribute to their success or challenges in learning Greek. Participants' insights revealed the central role of satisfying psychological needs in fostering motivation and overcoming barriers posed by socio-economic conditions and other sociological factors. The findings reinforce Ryan and Deci's claim that intrinsic motivation emerges when learners' psychological needs — autonomy, competence, and relatedness — are adequately fulfilled. However, social and economic struggles often pose challenges to maintaining motivation. The study identifies the need for relatedness playing a critical role in the satisfaction of the other two needs in some cases, highlighting the interconnectedness of these psychological factors. Motivation, when nurtured through the satisfaction of these interconnected psychological needs, enables learners to overcome external struggles and achieve optimal language learning outcomes. This research emphasises the importance of designing person-centred language programs that account for learners' backgrounds, motivations, and needs and calls for further research into British adult language learning to better understand the motivational struggles British adult learners face.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This thesis was conducted with the aim to academically contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding how adult learners learn foreign languages and how differently they position themselves towards the other learners and the learning of a foreign language itself. Despite the many research studies and attempts made on focusing on different learning groups, British adult learners have been under-researched as a particular population of learners in this context. Emphasizing the diversity rather than homogeneity among learners, this study amplifies diverse voices within the discourse.

Beyond academia, this thesis seeks to inform and engage stakeholders responsible for designing and delivering language study programs in adult educational and foreign language Centres. This includes language instructors, senior management staff of educational institutions, and collaborators from both academic and non-academic backgrounds, as well as educational departments of foreign embassies and cultural institutions. The goal is to highlight aspects of British learners' identities that influence their progress in acquiring foreign languages effectively.

British adult learners represent a significant and distinct group within UK adult education Centres, particularly in London, where they coexist with adult learners from diverse global backgrounds, all motivated by various reasons to learn foreign languages. Successful L2 acquisition involves more than the transmission of linguistic knowledge; it necessitates a deep understanding of learners' backgrounds, needs, and motivations to tailor effective teaching approaches.

This thesis aims to bridge this gap by communicating its findings to language instructors, particularly those unfamiliar with British learners, thereby enriching their pedagogical practices. Moreover, this research on British adults learning Greek as a foreign language promises several significant impacts on stakeholders and policymakers. It can inform Curriculum Development planners through guiding the design of Greek language courses that resonate with learners' motivations and identity needs, fostering more engaging and effective learning experiences. It can help provide insights to enhance the professional development of language instructors, equipping them with strategies to better support adult learners. It can support facilitating more efficient resource allocation in educational institutions by understanding the motivational and identity-related factors influencing learners. It advocates for policies that recognise the role of motivation and social identity in language learning, promoting inclusive and diverse language education programs. It can additionally contribute to cultural exchange programs through strengthening cultural exchange initiatives by making them more appealing and relevant to British adult learners, thereby enhancing cross-cultural understanding. Overall, it can help the ones in charge of making education policies to develop targeted motivational strategies to boost learner motivation by identifying what drives British adults to learn Greek, including cultural and practical considerations. As a conclusion, this thesis aims to discuss multiculturalism in the UK, underscoring the benefits of linguistic diversity.

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A Learning Metaphor:

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp **by Rembrandt**

Pic1

Learning a foreign language): a Learning Metaphor

In an attempt to create my own metaphor as a researcher about learning a foreign language, Rembrandt's painting attracted my attention. I have always believed that there is something almost surgical in the way a lesson is conducted between a teacher and a learner. Inviting my students to participate and reflect on their learning of Modern Greek as a foreign language, it has been enlightening for me both as a teacher and a researcher to understand how differently my students viewed their learning process from the way I did or they believed they did. Rembrandt, in his painting, ignores the usual anatomical conventions and focuses instead on the psychological aspects of the anatomy lesson as led by the famous anatomist, the lecturer Dr. Tulp. In his famous group portrait of the Dutch-Baroque era, Rembrandt chooses to highlight the keen inquisitiveness of the onlookers and their close proximity to the dead body.

The famous painter uses anatomy as an excuse to achieve something else; that is, to demonstrate that through anatomy one can reach knowledge. As Schupbach (in Steiner, 2010) demonstrated in his Rembrandt publication, Tulp belonged to a religious medical tradition which considered the hand as the supreme instrument bestowed by God on the human body. Thus, since the body was God's creation, the anatomy was a pathway to the knowledge of God.

This thesis aimed to approach the language learning event from a closer proximity than ever before. It engaged with six students' experiences of learning Modern Greek

as a foreign language, taking into account the very particular learning context of these students. This was one that could be described as disadvantaged, given that the amount of exposure they had practising speaking the target language in their everyday lives was limited.

I therefore decided to offer my students the opportunity to have a language anatomy lesson and see their learning process from within the learning process and thus, follow the footsteps of a pathway that hopefully might lead them to overcome any obstacles and have a better understanding of their knowledge of Greek.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 SL/ L2 Learning

L2 learning refers to the second language of the speaker; in other words, the language that is not the native speaker's language but is learned at a later stage. Richards and Schmidt (2002) suggest that 'second language' refers to the language that is not the mother language of the speaker and that is used for public communication, higher education and/or administration purposes in the country of the learner. It is, in other words, a non-native language that is officially recognised in a multicultural country and one learns it in addition to his/her mother language. Such is the case, for instance, of English used in India, or languages such as Russian, Spanish and French which are recognised officially by certain countries in which people learn them in addition to their mother language. FL, however, refers to foreign languages other than the native language that do not have a certain official status in the country of the learner. These languages are not commonly used as a medium of instruction by the government or schools but are, instead, learned out of personal interest or because of a forthcoming travel visit. Richards and Schmidt (2002) note that foreign languages differ from second languages in terms of purpose of use. They associate second language learning with the immediate and direct use of the language within naturalistic environments since the purpose of its use is for the learners to help them work and manage various aspects of their lives. Consequently, the learners can receive input for learning these languages both inside and outside the classroom or other institutional settings. In contrast, foreign languages are not associated with such purpose as they are learned due to personal interests; learners might not have the opportunity to use these languages in their day-to-day tasks, and thus they are exclusively learned within more institutional environments such as schools, university and adult centers (such as our case with The Hellenic Centre) and less naturalistic ones. Therefore, according to the two theorists (Richards and Schmidt, 2002), L2 and SL learning are not two different types of languages; they are rather two different situations of learning.

In my thesis, I do not aim to explore the distinction between foreign and second language learning, as any language learned after the first language can be considered a second language. Whether an adult student made the decision to learn a second (chronologically) or another foreign language, or whether the language he/she learned is the second best after his or her first language, or whether a 'foreign language' refers to a language that generally lacks a direct connection to an individual's immediate social or personal environment, is not an issue I discuss as any choice made by the learner to learn a foreign language is a personal decision for the learner. Therefore, I opted for the term SL to encompass all such instances uniformly when it comes to learning process (SL learning) as well as SL acquisition (or L2 acquisition being the shorthand of SLA), though I will be making use of the term foreign language (FL) when I refer to foreign language learners or foreign languages where appropriately. Therefore, I decided to include both SL learning as well as keep using the term foreign

as there are students who attended the language courses at the Hellenic Centre either because Greek was their second language (see heritage learner such as Valerie) or because Greek was to them another foreign language they attempted to learn in the course of their lives (see participants such as Omar, Elinor, Virginia, Rita), or even because it was the participant's first attempt to learn a foreign language as an adult (Alex).

1.2 Aim of the thesis

The context in which I decided to conduct my thesis itself is determined by the identity of the students as well as the identity of the learning site. It can be therefore described as: British adult students learning modern Greek as a foreign language at an adult cultural and language institution in London (the Hellenic Centre) – (APPENDIX 6 - Topos).

The aim of my research is to focus on British adult learners' perceptions of how certain factors that shape their sense of self as learners can influence their learning of Greek. This research investigates the advancement of academic progress in SL learning from a perspective that illuminates the role of an individual's efforts to achieve an integrated sense of self. More specifically, according to Kuhl, the concept of an integrated sense of self refers to a coherent alignment of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours (Kuhl et al., 2015). Consequently, an integrated and unified self is characterised by the harmonious integration of diverse self-aspects into a cohesive whole.

The primary concept for discussion and analysis is motivation, in relation to sociocultural context. This study aims to elucidate the role of an adult learner's perceptions of self, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their successful acquisition of Greek. Additionally, it examines how certain sociological factors influence the fulfilment of these needs and impact the academic progress in the target language. Essentially, this research seeks to describe the sociological and motivational factors influencing the SL learning process of British adult learners.

In Chapter 2 (in the literature review chapter), I will examine Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (1985, 2000, 2002, 2017), which emphasises the facilitation of intrinsic motivation through the fulfilment of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Following this, I will expand on the influence of sociological and sociocultural factors that impact learners' views and attitudes towards learning, including their motivation. This discussion will encompass social class, gender, power dynamics, and social divisions.

Exploring these sociological factors that shape a learner's beliefs and attitudes towards SL learning has enhanced my understanding of Self-Determination Theory. By integrating both psychological and sociological dimensions, I will discuss the findings of my thesis and evaluate whether the participants successfully progressed in their Greek language learning. This evaluation will include an investigation of the challenges faced by the learners within the theoretical framework provided. By addressing these factors, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between psychological needs and sociological influences in the context of adult SL learning.

The particularity of the context in which the learning event takes place, as well as the one in which this study was conducted, is itself one aspect that makes my thesis original. Thus, I proposed to locate the language learning event within a specific social context and place it amongst two different cultures: the British and the Greek. This way, I am trying to research how a specific population of learners with the same nationality but varying professional standing, gender, social, political and educational backgrounds are included in the studies of Modern Greek as SL / L2 language.

The specific situation in which the SL learning is happening requests recognition of two factors. The first is the spatial dimension, which is an adult language institution in central London, UK, in which adult students are taught Greek. The second is the language factor itself. Greek is a foreign language that lacks significant economic influence on the global stage. Assigning economic value to a language in the linguistic marketplace entails endowing it with privileges and power associated with that language. According to the economics of languages (Coulmas, 1992), a field of study that examines topics such as the effect of language skills on income and trade, the costs and benefits of language planning and the preservation of minority languages, Greek does not seem to hold a central position. Instead, its role and significance are quite peripheral within this theoretical framework. The Greek language does not function as a robust economic system with the capacity to influence the global economy. Consequently, the socio-economic ecologies are unfavourable to Greek, resulting in limited state funding support. Thus, we are dealing with a particular population of learners learning a specific foreign language in an equally specific context. More precisely, I focused on adult British learners, speakers of the global language of English, who decided to learn Greek, a more restricted, in terms of financial influence, language, as foreign or second language at an adult foreign language institution in London, UK, outside the target country where the language is spoken. The third aspect that is addressed in the title and links the context with the learning itself, is the factor of the advancement. These learners researched in the already-described particular context are learning the language with the aim to advance their knowledge of Greek and consequently become more advanced learners of the Greek language. Thus, their level of Greek (at the time this study was conducted) was taken into consideration as this was essential to demonstrate the efforts they made to advance their already acquired intermediate knowledge of the language and climb up to more advanced and proficient levels.

My intention was, therefore, to understand how the learning of Greek within such a context is happening. In my attempt to acquire knowledge about the details of such a learning process, I searched for the answers in the learners' responses, as the social aspect of the language learning is at the heart of this thesis. Both ontologically and epistemologically, I stand on the same path as the interpretivists who view reality as being an interpretation of multiple subjective experiences (Schwartz and Yanow, 2011). Thus, I decided to focus on personal views and the many diverse perspectives that adult students have when experiencing their learning of Greek as SL / L2. This is because I find the students' perspectives significant as they are informative of the

learning process and as such will be examined thoroughly through extensive interviews which engage with the social aspects of their identity.

Adult education research has struggled to assert itself, possibly because of its wide remit. According to Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007, p. 53), adult education is defined as a "large and amorphous field of practice, with no neat boundaries such as age, as in the case of elementary and secondary education, or mission as higher education. Adult education with its myriads of content areas, delivery systems, goals and learners defies simple categorisation". Difficult and challenging as it may be to define adult education, I will follow the working definitions of the above authors as well as of Gravett (2005), who view adult learners as individuals whose main life task is not related to education and who typically add the role of learner to their other full-time roles and responsibilities.

It is important at this stage to clarify that the aim is not to research the collective experience of the learners or how they learn collaboratively. Rather, I am interested in investigating their individual experiences in relation to academic progress, since as in Polanyi's words, "ultimately, every language learner is alone with a unique experience, an experience tailored to, by and for that individual" (Polanyi, 1995, p. 287).

In the view of these British adult learners who tried to advance their knowledge and learning of Greek, three leading questions emerged and guided this study.

In the view of these adult British learners

1. *How do they perceive their sense of self as learners?*
2. *How do they perceive the role of autonomy, competence and relatedness in the successful learning of Greek*
3. *How do sociological factors that informed the participants' social identity, such as social class, educational and professional background, gender, family relations, influence these perceptions?*

1.3 Why focusing on Modern Greek?

As previously mentioned, Greek is a foreign language that lacks substantial economic influence on the global stage. The Greek language does not operate as a significant economic entity with the capacity to impact the global economy. Therefore, learning such a language, one with very little influence and impact on global economy, raises the question of what is the benefit of doing it? This thesis seeks to find some answers to this question. Should the value of learning a foreign language be restricted to how many people speak that language? Are we looking to learn only alternatives to English? English is one of the most dominant languages in the market globally and has dominated social and business interactions throughout the world. Should we learn and research, therefore, only the languages that have a certain value in the market like English does? The moment at which I conducted my study is interesting, as Britain decided to leave a certain community of countries, the European Union (EU), and thus extricate itself from certain trading conditions of the EU as well as cultural ones,

revealing at the same time a more nationalistic face and embracing, more than ever, traditional and patriotic values that do not help the country and its citizens to communicate comfortably with others. Thus, I decided to focus on an understudied foreign language, which is not a popular choice among adult learners, in order to reveal more enlightening aspects of what it is that hinders and prevents British adult learners from approaching and effectively learning another foreign language that has, to them, more of a social, personal and cultural value than a business one.

1.4 Changes at the Hellenic Centre since the time this thesis was conducted, and data was collected

An elderly student of mine (not one of the six participants, but an ex-student of mine) commented that:

> I need more support from the Centre than just an improved version of a textbook. Textbooks help me - a prop like a walking stick. But I want the Centre to understand where I come from and what I need, some sort of learning physiotherapy. This will help me walk better. And when I will learn how to walk properly, I will throw the stick away.

This response was a good wakeup call for me as a teacher and researcher as it made me realise that the reality of the learning process was in fact far more complex than I had previously appreciated. It felt as if there was something missing to complete the full picture. In my attempt to find the answers that I was looking for, I decided to delve into the students' backgrounds and investigate their responses that would inform the specific areas to focus on in my research. I consciously made the distinction between beginners and intermediate / advanced learners, as I strongly believe that sustaining the learning process of a foreign language requires a more in-depth investigation of the learners' needs, motives and their backgrounds. This was the starting point for this thesis.

1.5 Context

The Hellenic Centre where the students studied Greek experienced a change in terms of face-to-face lessons being offered at the Centre, as well as a significant dropout in students registering for courses at the Centre, which was due to Covid-19. According to the Centre's records, during the two years that the Hellenic Centre remained closed as a learning site offering lessons face to face, the dropout rate was 38%, while in the second academic year of 2021-2022, the dropout rate reached 41%.

Both students and teachers were highly affected by such dramatic cuts in student numbers. On the one hand, teachers were affected, as many students decided to continue with online learning rather than being present in class and many decided to opt for other teaching sources or online platforms. Thus, their work balance was deeply affected. In addition, students' learning was equally affected as there was a lack of socialising, interacting and learning from peers. There was a time when lessons used to offer far more opportunities for social interaction within the classroom environment

as well as after the lessons took place. Language instructors used to socialise with their students after the classes and that was a great opportunity the teachers had to get to know their students better. Such interactions allowed the teachers to detect areas to work on according to the students' needs as the latter were quite vocal in such a fun and friendly environment allowing the teachers to assess the students' learning thoroughly.

The Hellenic Centre has made significant efforts since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted to invite its students back to attend lessons onsite. Change has been very slow. However, knowing the students well, and in particular the British adult students who are a significant group in number that attend such courses, is important for the teachers and the adults' learning. By knowing each other well, adults can acknowledge their needs in depth to help them advance and progress in their learning of Greek.

This thesis therefore aims to approach the learning process of a foreign / second language as a socially constructed, context-dependent and individually centred reality. My interest stems from my own role as a long-standing teacher in this institution. The academic progress of the students' knowledge of Greek has always been an issue that has been extensively discussed at the Hellenic Centre, especially during the annual review meetings conducted.

My PhD thesis is an extension of my MA research attempt to contribute and help in eliminating the dropout rate of the students at the intermediate and advanced levels. The aim of my MA dissertation was to comment on the nature of textbooks and what constitutes good learning and assessment activities that should be used and what other changes should be made to improve the overall learning of students at these levels and thus increase their motivation in continuing their studies. I concluded then that it was not just the learning and teaching material that needed improvement but equally it was essential for other factors to be acknowledged by both the teachers and the senior leadership team of the Hellenic Centre; such factors included the motivational needs of students. The responses of the students in the study suggested that there was not enough acknowledgment of their needs to help them become independent learners of Greek when completing the classes and levels offered at the Centre.

I therefore decided to focus on this specific group of adult students, the British adult learners, who have been learning Greek for a few years and were about to make the transition to more advanced levels of the language. As a Greek national, living and working myself in London for years, I personally taught many British adult students. Having socialised with many of them, I noticed that there has always been the myth that British people are notoriously bad at languages at the Centre. As a researcher and a professional teacher who has taught languages for years, whether this has been Greek to adults or Latin and Ancient Greek to teenagers, I never believed that a particular ethnic group was innately bad at languages. Instead, I have always believed in the power of opportunities given to students and the meeting of their needs. Thus, I decided to challenge such a myth through my research by exploring how and whether their needs were being met. It felt more legitimate to locate my research interest within

the higher intermediate / advanced British students as the time they had already invested to learn the Greek language and become familiar with Greek culture proved to be helpful for me to collect the necessary data for my thesis and make an extended investigation into their needs in learning Greek.

I made the deliberate choice to select students of different class backgrounds, professions, genders, sexualities, ethnic backgrounds and education, although all with British nationality, with the aim of allowing a plurality of voices to be heard and simultaneously generating rich and valuable data. Empowering students means permitting their responses and views to be expressed and informing teachers of the learners' lived experiences.

It became apparent that measuring and assessing the already acquired knowledge of Greek as well as improving material or teaching methods, did not offer significant change to advanced learners' grasp of Greek. Thus, the question of how to advance the students' progress switched to how we (as the Hellenic Centre) can help them advance their progress in the Greek language. It became gradually more evident that instead of implementing new teaching methods and changing learning material according to already existing SLA (second language acquisition) theories, a practice we followed for years at the Hellenic Centre, we had to first listen to our students' views and understand their needs. At this stage the change we were looking for needed to come from the students; their views should be studied and placed within a broader context of SLA as well as existing research. Such 'research interaction' would eventually enable us to develop our own advanced theories and thereby make the right decisions on implementing new ideas.

As noted, advancing students' knowledge would not be another form of measuring their knowledge through competence tests; it would instead suggest effective ways to meet their needs to help them advance their knowledge and progress with their studies, reaching an advanced or proficient level. My decision then was to check the population of students attending lessons at the Hellenic Centre. The Centre is in the heart of London and over the years, as expected, it has attracted the attention of so many students of different ethnic, professional, educational, racial and religious backgrounds, that it makes it almost impossible to address the same issues without receiving very different responses related to each student's personal diverse circumstances. The contextual factors quickly emerged as dominant and integral to the students' specific needs in the way they shaped their learning process of Greek.

Some initial interviews were held at a diagnostic level, and they proved to be informative enough to make me realise that there was a particular group which shared similar concerns about learning Greek and these were the British learners. This was an illuminating moment for me as the responses I kept receiving affirmed that there was a particular population that had particular needs in their learning of the Greek language. This group had no, limited or some exposure to practice with and speaking the Greek language outside the classroom environment.

Most existing research focuses on language learners in immigrant contexts and how their identity is shaped when learning in the host country of the target language (Norton, 2000; Duff, 2012; Pavlenko and Norton, 2004). My thesis, in contrast, aims

to shed light on the identities of students who are members of the country that hosts the learning of an-other language. These are not immigrants; instead, they are native speakers of a dominant language trying to access the learning of an-other while learning the latter in their own familiar space. It is almost a reversed case of what has been researched so far but one that aims to contribute to the call for broadening the horizons of studying more diverse populations of learners.

That made me realise how significant it is for the teachers to acknowledge the students' backgrounds and the cultural capital the learners bring within them to lessons. Through reflecting on my readings as well as on my professional experience, I came to realise how the learners' prevailing ideologies predisposed them to think in certain ways about SL learning and present them with specific challenges in meeting their needs.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework I have based my thesis on. My research was conducted within the context of adult education and SL learning. Academic progress in SL learning will be researched not from a linguistic viewpoint but instead from the perspective of an individual's attempts to achieve an integrated sense of self by meeting their motivational needs. Since a person's needs are influenced by sociological context, the concepts I consider for discussion and analysis are motivation and sociological factors. I will start by exploring Ryan and Deci's (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) Self-Determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation through the fulfilment of the three psychological needs they identify, those for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. I will then discuss the sociological factors that influence and shape students' attitudes towards motivation for learning. I will then discuss sociological issues, concerning social class, gender, power and social division. By exploring factors related to both psychological and sociological factors that relate to self, I am able to discuss whether the participants interviewed achieved progress in their learning of Greek or not.

2. 1 Adult students and SL learning

Adult language learners are an understudied population in the academic scholarship of Second Language Acquisition (Hubenthal, 2004; La Grassa and Villarini, 2008; Warhol, 2004). Very little research has been done, particularly, on English adult speakers learning a foreign language in settings that are not purely academic. Adult learners are a very particular group of learners as they arrive in the learning event already carrying within them preconceived ideas about learning and education. They have prevailing political beliefs about how society functions and carry over an emotional baggage from previous lived experiences that make it essential to acknowledge and appreciate these factors. Consequently, their language learning cannot be considered as taking place in an ideological vacuum but must instead be viewed as a process that is constantly informed by the zeitgeist challenges the adult learners face every day. The increased interest and awareness of the impact of the socio-political context in language learning in SLA in academia became nearly inevitable as such increased interest reflects the zeitgeist as described above. The language learning context therefore helps us understand in more depth any constraints and limitations regarding the acquisition and learning of the new and foreign language.

In adult education, SL learning is not a static phenomenon; it is instead an ever-changing one, dependent on the social context and the relationships developed among the learners (and teachers). Researchers in the SLA field therefore call for a more holistic approach when it comes to studies of adult language learning (Larsen – Freeman, 2018). Such holistic approaches, ones that function on both temporal and spatial levels, help illuminate the relational systems affecting the language learning. Relational systems consist of internal and external components interconnected in

unanticipated and nonlinear ways. These systems affect the language learning process of the adults in ways that can be unpredictable. Thus, such studies should be conducted with an appreciation of their fragile and elusive nature at the time and the place they were conducted as well as the highly individual nature of the learning itself. Kramsch (2000, 2009) and P. Benson (2013) call for more person-centred studies to be conducted, which recognise the unique developmental trajectory of each individual. In adult learners, this more person-centred approach can take place through studying the individual identities of the learners as they are able to express challenging issues happening to them during their course of learning. Thus, with identity being a vastly subjective construct that greatly depends on lived individual experiences, acquisition of the language cannot be considered independently from the learning aspect.

This differs from Krashen's theory (1981), in which L2 acquisition and L2 learning are two separate processes. The first one (acquisition) is a subconscious process in which learning a language occurs through the acquisition of grammar and other morphosyntactical structures of the language unconsciously in naturalistic and non-formal settings. In contrast to acquisition, learning is a conscious process of receiving / getting the opportunity to perform a second language in formal settings, such as a classroom. Improvement in language ability, according to Krashen, is dependent on acquisition and not on learning.

Such theory has met with a lot of criticism over the years. For instance, Watson-Gegeo and Nielsen (2003), commenting on Krashen's input hypothesis, call for language socialisation and argue that such a distinction is illegitimate. Language socialisation (LS) is the study of the socialisation of language and socialisation through language. It is both a theoretical approach and a method to study human development in cultural contexts. According to Watson-Gegeo, critical language socialisation (LS) allows the learners to express their opinions and functions as a site to restore silenced voices into discourse about opportunity and access to society's resources. This is very much in line with my thinking, as I strongly believe that allowing students to voice their opinions, while socialising and interacting in classrooms with their peers and their language instructors, can help them critically reflect on what they are learning. For British adult learners, this is a necessity as some never had such opportunities in the past due to various reasons discussed in the data section.

2.2 Advancing the learning in SL

A desire in academic progression in Greek language is what the participants interviewed shared in common as they all spent a certain amount of time learning Greek, and they wanted to progress beyond the intermediate level into a higher level in their knowledge of the Greek language. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in what constitutes being an advanced or proficient language learner. Questions addressed by various scholars focus on both linguistic knowledge and linguistic descriptors to measure L2 proficiency (Birdsong, 2008). The main question, however, remains as to what is considered an advanced student of a language; what does an advanced learner 'look like' in terms of linguistic abilities and competence to communicate? Consequently, additional relevant questions regarding such achievement of advancedness have been addressed, such as: is studying abroad a

possible way for a student to become an advanced speaker? Are native speakers' perceptions indicators of achieving advanced knowledge of L2 language? Ortega and Byrnes (2011), in their volume on advanced L2 capacities, call for the need to reconceptualise the notion of such advancedness to address questions like the above.

Advancing one's knowledge of the L2 within the context of an institution outside of where the target language is spoken is a particular circumstance that many adult learners experience around the world. Therefore, is it worth investing time in doing that? Kimberly Geeslin, in the *Handbook of Spanish Second Language Acquisition* (2014), suggests that there should be more work done to understand and appreciate the diverse nature of such a complex concept as the advancedness of L2 learning. She calls for more research to be conducted with the aim of capturing the differences across studies arising from varying research methods, varying learner groups and varying internal and external factors including the site of learning. Within the broad spectrum of research taking place in advancedness, I decided to focus on this concept of advancedness and contribute to the extensive discussion of the learners' variables related to language advancement. Notions of identity, motivation, individual speaker variables, and the role of institution will be discussed in the data chapter and how these factors impact language development.

Regarding individual differences and beliefs, a useful article that focuses on individual differences in advanced proficiency is Winke's and Gass's (2018). The two researchers conducted a study in which only a very small number of the advanced learners who participated proved to be advanced across the three competences and skills (listening, speaking, reading). Most of them proved to be advanced in one of the three (reading). According to Winke and Gass, advancedness proved to be a far more elusive reality than expected and they conclude that advancedness is not an absolute skill, as it is largely defined as in the literature (e.g. Ortega and Norris 2000, 2008), regarding descriptors to measure linguistic skills in cross-cultural communicative settings. The question for Winke and Gass was therefore: "how do language learners move from *somewhat advanced* (advanced in one or more skills but not all) to *fully advanced* in all skills?" (2018, p.174). Their study focused on students' individual differences that may contribute to their language learning trajectories, though their aim was to focus mainly on linguistic features of the language learning and not on the cultural awareness and knowledge of the learners.

Winke and Gass decided to address in their study several non-linguistic variables, which they believed to be essential to L2 acquisition and should be seen in correlation with the linguistic aspects of L2 proficiency. These were: the studying and / or living abroad experience, the students' motivation, their contact with heritage speakers of the target language and the use of authentic L2 resources. By incorporating sociological factors in their study, Winke and Gass concluded that for study programs to be effective, the language teachers, the administrators and anyone involved in these must identify these broader characteristics of the advanced learners so that they can also learn from them. They argue that a more nuanced approach to identifying the individual circumstances of learners will reveal characteristics that are essential to consider in their successful transition to advanced proficiency. This would make these programs more democratic and inclusive of all students, regardless of their heritage

status or experiences abroad, while also helping them enhance their language learning further.

Talebinejad and Nekouei (2013) observe that there has been a significant change in SLA which suggests a shift towards learning characteristics rather than teaching methods and thus, the success in learning a SL /foreign language heavily depends on the individual learners' efforts and characteristics. The significance of the students' 'beliefs and individual differences' in SL learning has been supported by various scholars. Fazilatfar et al. (2015) argue that beliefs should be taken into consideration by researchers as they function as cognitive entities and guide human behaviour in community. Kalaja and Barcelos (2015) equally emphasise paying attention to individual responses of learners as they can inform the students' learning experiences, essential for their L2 acquisition and SL learning. Specific contextual factors are also important alongside individual beliefs as they inform the learning process (White, 2011). Additionally, Ellis (2008) mentions how important it is for educators to understand learners' beliefs as what they bring into the classroom as lived experiences can influence their overall learning process.

Research on adult learning has had to deal with various myths that needed to be deconstructed. One of them was the myth that adult language learners are less competent than children in language learning. Merrit (2013) and A. Smith and Strong (2009) suggest that adult learners can bring better results in language learning if the adult students experienced controlled and more goal-oriented conditions or if they were directed to fulfil particular needs. What is essential in adult language learning is for the educators to appreciate the wide range of sociological variables, such as age, gender, class, education, involved in adult learning and how these are inextricably interwoven with individual beliefs, attitudes and motivations (Hurd, 2006). It is only when such diversity and plurality in beliefs is appreciated that the educators can design successful material and conduct programs of study that will enable the learners to react, respond and reflect differently and thus, more efficiently.

2. 3 Justification of the use of Self-Determination Theory

Before providing a detailed discussion of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) later in this chapter, it is important to first outline the rationale for employing this theory in the context of my thesis. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a comprehensive macro-theory of human motivation and personality, focusing on two central factors: individuals' inherent tendencies for growth and their innate psychological needs. As Lanvers (2022) suggests, SDT, being grounded in psychology rather than linguistics, offers a versatile model applicable to a wide range of learner groups, including those whose first language is English. This is particularly significant for this thesis, which investigates the motivation of British adult learners whose first language (L1) is English and who are studying Greek as a second / foreign language (L2).

SDT is a psychological motivational theory with broad applicability across various contexts. Its theoretical framework is expansive, offering valuable insights across a variety of learning environments. Given that the purpose of this thesis is to explore how motivation can support adult English L1 learners in progressing with their acquisition of Greek, I selected a theory that emphasises fostering high-quality

motivation. This motivation should enable learners to act and learn autonomously and competently (Ryan and Deci, 2019, 2020). Consequently, I opted for a theory that closely aligns with intrinsically regulated motivation.

As Lanvers (2022) posits, the key to enhancing motivation and academic performance in language learning, as well as L2 proficiency, lies in developing learners who are intrinsically motivated. Self-Determination Theory offers the optimal framework for fostering intrinsic motivation, which, in turn, leads to academic development. The theory emphasises that internalised forms of motivation drive learning efforts, which ultimately lead to L2 proficiency in the context of language learning. This suggests that L2 proficiency can be attained through a heightened level of self-awareness, enabling learners to meet the needs necessary to make autonomous decisions and take deliberate actions in language learning.

Furthermore, Lanvers (2017a) notes that the conditions under which learners become motivated are complex social and psychological phenomena. Therefore, a motivational theory must address influences that operate on both the macro level, such as societal attitudes towards different people and their language learning, and the micro level, such as learner preferences for a specific teacher or classroom atmosphere. SDT effectively encompasses and addresses the diverse motivational factors that operate within specific social contexts. SDT addresses how social contexts interact with individual differences to facilitate or debilitate learning motivation. I chose to employ this theory in my research because I aimed to explore the motivations driving this particular group of adult learners to study Greek. Given its alignment with my research objectives, SDT appeared to be the most suitable framework to achieve this goal. I will additionally look at the sociological factors beyond SDT.

2.4 Motivation for language learning in English L1 learners

The aim of this section is to discuss the motivations and challenges the English L1 learners face when learning foreign languages other than English (LOTE), such as Greek.

However, before discussing the motivations and challenges faced by English speakers learning foreign languages, it is crucial to situate this discussion within the broader context of British language learning, as outlined in Lanvers's recent book (2024). Currently, many learners of English are driven by the professional and personal benefits the language offers (Lamb et al., 2019, cited in Lanvers, 2024). However, motivation for learning other languages has significantly declined (Busse, 2017, cited in Lanvers, 2024). Historically, learning additional languages has often been regarded as unnecessary, while the acquisition of a lingua franca, like English, has consistently been viewed positively. This situation particularly applies to anglophone countries, where the demand for language learning is relatively low (Lanvers et al., 2021a). Lanvers (2024) highlights the crisis in language learning within the UK. To address this crisis, particularly in anglophone contexts, requires an urgent research agenda to determine how learners can be encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward language learning and how pedagogical approaches can support this (Lanvers, 2024).

In this context, various discourses and beliefs that support English monolingualism have become dominant, such as the erroneous notion that “English is enough”. This

has led to a tendency toward Anglocentrism and monolingualism. Graddol (2006) asserts that as English becomes more widely available, it no longer provides a competitive advantage. Instead, it has become a basic requirement. The concept of Global English suggests that English is spoken worldwide, both among speakers within a country who share a first language and across speakers from different countries and linguistic backgrounds. Marsh (2006) argues that globalisation has further strengthened the use of English in professional settings and educational curricula across all age groups, to the extent that the terms globalisation and "Englishisation" are now inseparable. The rise of English as a global language has fostered the widespread belief that learning other languages is unnecessary, as everyone speaks English. Within such an environment, attitudes toward Global English significantly influence how individuals interpret the language learning crisis in anglophone countries. For some, the crisis reflects xenophobia, native speakerism, and a chauvinistic, imperialistic attitude toward English (Lanvers, 2024).

When examining the motivations and challenges faced by native English speakers in learning other languages, it is essential to consider the diverse reasons why they choose to study foreign languages. These motivations range from personal interests to utilitarian purposes. Therefore, there is a need for a classification system that can guide policymakers and educators in developing effective language policies (Kelly and Jones, 2003, cited in Lanvers, 2024). Such a classification would better reflect the interdependence of these rationales and provide a robust foundation to holistically motivate learners, thereby addressing the challenges posed by the dominance of a global lingua franca. Lanvers (2024) responds to criticism of the term LOTE (Languages Other Than English) by Cunningham (2019) by arguing that LOTE has become an established term that clarifies the contrast between learning English and learning other languages. LOTE juxtaposes thousands of existing languages against one language, which is not even the most widely spoken as a first language globally.

Given that Greek is a LOTE language and lacks the global influence of English, it is important to explore the reasons why native English speakers choose to learn it. This group of British adult learners at the Hellenic Centre are motivated by a variety of personal, non-material benefits, such as cognitive, cultural, and emotional enrichment. Each learner's motivation is unique, whether it involves cultural enrichment, cognitive challenge, learning a community language to strengthen relationships, or preserving a heritage.

The motives behind (in particular British) adult learners who decide to learn Greek as foreign language are varied and have been explored in existing research. Some obvious motives that drive adults to learn Greek are suggested by Γεωργογιάννης (Georgogiannis – my attempt to transliterate his name) (2007). These motives, I can suggest, being myself one of the oldest members of the teaching staff at the Hellenic Centre and having taught many classes there, are common amongst the main motives that drive our students to begin Greek lessons. Γεωργογιάννης singles out the following motives. These are: family motives (students want to stay close to their Greek culture and heritage and be able to communicate with members of their family when they visit Greece); the Greek Diaspora (heritage learners of second or third generation along with other Philhellenes who want to keep the Greek spirit alive via their contact with the Greek language); Greek words with English derivatives or

scientific terminology (many words in the field of mathematics, science, astronomy, philosophy, medicine, chemistry etc. derive from Greek words); and tourism (a huge motive that drives many adults to learn Greek having visited Greece for a holiday). With Greece being a popular tourist destination, the number of travellers to Greece is big and learning Greek makes the student feel less of a visitor and more of a local. Moreover, like Spain or other Mediterranean countries, many adult students have chosen to buy properties there and either use them as their summer holiday house or a permanent residence when they retire from work. This has been the reason why various academics have chosen to study Greek at the Hellenic Centre, given the academic challenges the language offers. On top of these obvious motives, I would add two more that are discussed at the Hellenic Centre: social reasons (with the increased number of Greek immigrants in the UK during the last 15 years, many adult students develop good friendships with Greek natives or they are involved in romantic relationships with them, particularly in London due to it being such a multicultural city) and culture (huge admiration of the ancient Greek world and history, contact with contemporary Greek culture via Greek songs and music or even food, all cultural aspects being recognised as culturally significant globally).

Overall, motivational factors can differ in each case as the reasons behind what motivates each student are very personal and context based. Being by nature highly context-dependent, motivation is such a fluid and variable dependent that one cannot proceed to quantitative measurements. Instead, as Mercer (2011) comments, qualitative approaches to motivation, though they cannot lead to generalisable results with the potential to radically change educational policies and practices, can still influence the latter by informing them with new findings. Therefore, with motivation being heavily associated with learning gains, it is important to glean as much valuable inside information as possible to appreciate the true nature of motives and capture in all its essence the particular way the internal is linked with the contextual factors.

Alongside considering what motivates a British learner to learn Greek, one should address the question: what demotivates an adult British learner from learning a SL/ foreign language? According to Ensslin and Johnson (2006, p. 179), “the endorsement of English as a language of power and social prestige appears to sanction the downwards trend in the institutionalised enthusiasm for, and encouragement of, foreign language education”. In relation to the group of learners examined in my thesis, the challenges they encountered align with the broader difficulties experienced by English L1 learners when acquiring additional foreign languages.

2. 5 Challenges of the English L1 learners

When examining the challenges faced by native English speakers learning languages other than English (LOTE), Lanvers (2024) provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors that have significantly impacted language learning in the UK. These factors have created substantial obstacles for learners attempting to acquire additional languages.

2.5.1 Embedded Attitudes and Beliefs

One of the primary challenges faced by this group of learners is the need to overcome deeply ingrained sociocultural beliefs that language learning is not suitable for everyone, but only for a select few (Lanvers, 2017a). Such beliefs have discouraged many native English speakers from developing strong motivational profiles for learning foreign languages. However, as noted by Thompson (2017) and Lanvers (2016b), some learners actively reject the stereotype of anglophones being “bad at languages” and engage in LOTE learning to challenge these stereotypes and connect with cultures they feel an affinity toward. Nevertheless, overcoming the pervasive fallacy that “English is enough” remains difficult, making it challenging for learners to invest motivationally in learning other languages. In addition, public discourse on the UK's poor language skills (Graham and Santos, 2015) has created a negative climate, further eroding the motivation of British language learners.

Such challenge arises from public discourse and commentary in the media, which has shaped the perception among anglophones that learning other languages is unnecessary since English is deemed the most practical and instrumentally valuable language. Attitudes such as “English is enough” are particularly difficult to dismantle, as they serve to defend the dominance of Global English while contributing to the suppression of multilingualism. Negative public discourses, such as shaming language learners for poor achievements, can further demotivate students (Lanvers, 2017a). Efforts to motivate learners through instrumental orientations alone tend to have limited success among native English speakers (Lanvers, 2024; Lanvers, 2017a). Moreover, negative media commentary on the state of language learning in anglophone countries has discouraged students from pursuing foreign language study (Graham and Santos, 2015; Lanvers and Coleman, 2017).

2.5.2 Utilitarian Rationales and Language Education Policy

Another challenge faced by anglophone learners of LOTE is the prevailing emphasis on material benefits as the primary motivation for language learning. In the UK, there is a strong focus on the utilitarian advantages of language learning, which further reinforces the dominance of English (Lanvers, 2017a). The belief that one language, particularly English, offers the greatest practical functionality can diminish the perceived value of learning other languages. This utilitarian emphasis has created a significant division between the rationales for learning English and other languages, ultimately affecting anglophones' motivation and choices in language learning.

Utilitarian rationales have historically been used to justify formal and compulsory language education (Mitchell, 2003). This division between utilitarian and educational rationales has been employed to defend the dominance of Global English over LOTE learning by associating English with practical benefits and other languages with less utilitarian rationales. This association has contributed to the challenges faced by native English speakers in pursuing language learning.

Language education policy has also played a crucial role in shaping learners' attitudes toward language learning. In the UK, policymakers have maintained a distinction between instrumental and educational rationales, leading to the decision to make language study optional beyond the age of fourteen in England. This decision has reinforced the view that learning other languages is less or not beneficial, associating it with educational rather than vocational purposes. Scholars such as Williams (2001)

have criticised this policy, arguing that poor learning outcomes do not provide a strong enough foundation for language teaching based on utilitarian purposes alone. The polarisation between utilitarian and non-utilitarian rationales has thus posed a significant challenge, undermining the educational value of language learning for native English speakers.

2.5.3 Social Division

The challenges faced by native English speakers learning foreign languages are also linked to how language education has been delivered in the UK, which has resulted in the association of language learning with privilege and elitism (Lanvers, 2024). Elitist tendencies in language learning are evident in the UK education system, where private schools have been more likely to encourage language learning, making the subject appear exclusive to those who attend prestigious and expensive schools. The accompanying erosion of language education in state schools has further strengthened the notion that language learning is only for those who can afford it.

Language learning in the UK is therefore heavily influenced by social class, with students' success in language study closely tied to their socioeconomic status. Lanvers (2024) highlights that students in deprived areas are likely to have their aspirations for language study curtailed, regardless of their personal choices. The increasing social divide in language learning is also associated with decisions made by policy makers, which can lead to social segregation (Lanvers, 2017a). There is strong evidence from England that students from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to choose to study languages beyond the compulsory phase, suggesting that they are more easily motivated to engage in language learning than their less affluent peers.

2.5.4 Political Changes

Political changes, such as Brexit, have also exacerbated the challenges faced by native English speakers in learning other languages. Brexit has jeopardised efforts to increase language learning, as the UK has long relied on EU nationals to fill language teaching positions due to a shortage of language teachers from England (Broady, 2020). Moreover, Brexit has increased nationalism and xenophobia, particularly towards Europe. Coleman et al. (2007) point to the press, which has contributed to a “hostile climate” in the UK, where a nationalistic press promotes ethnocentrism and xenophobia as expressions of Britishness or Euroscepticism. Coleman (2009, p. 117) further notes that “casual xenophobia is, regrettably, an accepted and widely unchallenged feature of British society”.

2. 6 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination theory (SDT), formally introduced in the mid-1980s by Ryan and Deci (1985, 2017, 2019) is a widely applied theory of motivation as well as of personality development and wellbeing. It is an organismic theory based on empirical observation of the human conduct and behaviour. Ryan and Deci name it a metatheory of human motivation and personality development, “an organismic

metatheory that highlights the importance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioural self-regulation" (2000, p. 68).

Self-Determination theory is one of the most applied theories in the field of social psychology and it focuses on the different types of motivation along a continuum from controlled to autonomous. It is well evidenced and deeply researched and has been applied to diverse environments, not exclusively educational ones. It is a theory that draws heavily on the social context of the individual, with the aim of understanding the motivational basis of personality and social behaviour. It aims to relate the various needs that must be fulfilled for motivation to support academic performance, engagement and wellbeing of learners.

According to Ryan and Deci self-determination theory is all about the "investigation of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster those positive processes" (2000, p. 68). SDT is particularly concerned with how the social and contextual factors assist or hinder the individuals' achievements, including academic ones, through the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs, the need for competence, the need for autonomy and the need for relatedness. Although the theory is socio-psychological, it overlaps with the field of sociology as it pays attention to the societal factors that shape an individual's sense of self that constantly develops. In short, SDT aims to understand human motivation and functioning and how social contexts function as significant catalysts for motivation and personal growth (Ryan and Deci, 2010).

SDT consists of various 'mini theories'. Each theory was developed at different times to explain specific motivational phenomena arising from research in both laboratory and applied settings (Ryan and Deci, 2019).

The first mini theory is the cognitive evaluation theory (CET). This centres on the factors and the social contextual conditions that inform (either help or maintain or undermine) intrinsic motivation and how the social context affects perceived competence and autonomy. The second theory is the organismic integration theory (OIT). This refers to the way extrinsic motivation is internalised by individuals through the three regulation processes: the external, the introjected and the integrated. Competence and autonomy are discussed in relation to these three regulatory processes. Out of the three regulations, the one that was proven to be the most successful in leading the individual to acts of perceived competency and autonomy was the third one, the integrated regulation, in which the individual reaches a stage of personal integration.

The third mini theory is the causality orientations theory (COT). This describes how individuals differ in the way they position themselves in relation to their environments and the way they orient themselves toward their environments. This third theory is concerned with personality dispositions, and it aims to understand how differently people perceive being autonomous or controlled. The fourth theory is the basic psychological need (BPNT) theory. This claims that the three psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness can impact on people's wellbeing through being satisfied or undermined, and that social environments can neglect or satisfy

people's needs. The fifth mini theory is the goal content theory (GCT) which addresses how people's different intrinsic and extrinsic goals can lead to psychological health and wellbeing. The sixth is the relationships motivation theory (RMT). This is concerned with the close relationships people develop and how significant it is for people to maintain close optimal relationships that can lead to fulfilment of their basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness.

The primary theories I focus on in this thesis are the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, the Organismic Integration Theory, and the Relationships Motivation Theory. My interest in the Cognitive Evaluation Theory stems from my intention to examine how social contextual factors influence intrinsic motivation. The Organismic Integration Theory allows me to explore how individuals achieve a stage of personal integration. Lastly, the Relationships Motivation Theory provides insight into how individuals attain satisfaction of their three fundamental psychological needs through the development of close, optimal relationships.

While human desires, goals, and preferences are varied and numerous, the three needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are regarded as essential for achieving positive outcomes. Social environments that support the satisfaction of these psychological needs foster individuals' capacities for self-regulation, social relationships, and well-being. In contrast, environments that obstruct the fulfilment of these needs lead to a range of diminished outcomes both at the individual and interpersonal levels. Indeed, it is theorised that both the manner and extent to which individuals satisfy their psychological needs are influenced not only by their own abilities but, more importantly, by the prevailing demands, barriers, and opportunities present in their sociocultural contexts (Ryan and Deci, 2019). SDT emphasises the significance of social environments and contexts as determinant factors that can either undermine or help such needs to be supported. It is, however, not just the external factors and conditions that inform and shape an individual's identity; it is also the way the individual internally processes such factors to motivate or demotivate him/her to academically achieve and learn, in our case, a foreign language. There is a clear dynamic relationship between the self and the social that is constantly negotiated between the learner and his/her social environment and one that can either help or undermine the process of learning.

SDT explores the motivations and conditions that lead a human being to integrative and self-regulating functioning rather than researching isolated motives. It distinguishes between conditions that can lead a human to positive natural growth as opposed to conditions that can lead to controlled, alienated and fragmented experiences. At this stage it is important to distinguish between motives and motivations; a motive is a stable dispositional tendency whereas motivation refers to a volatile internal state that is changeful and unpredictable. In this theory, Ryan and Deci (2000, 2010) made a distinction between autonomous and controlled motivations with the aim of highlighting the ones that empower the individuals and lead them to conditions of positive experience, fulfilment, and self-regulation i.e. the autonomous motivations. Being autonomous means acting in a volitional way, as opposed to being controlled, which means one feels pressured or constrained to behave in particular

ways. These behaviours may be directed by external factors such as fear, punishment or promises of receiving rewards.

Ryan and Deci (2000) approach the construct of motivation by emphasising two types of motives related to learning activities. They define the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and suggest that when intrinsically motivated, a learner gets satisfaction and personal pleasure from the activity itself without receiving an external reward for completing it. Being intrinsically motivated means that satisfaction derives from an internal process of self-rewarding during which feelings of competence and self-determination emerge. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is related to external regulations. In this case satisfaction and motivation derive from the anticipation of receiving extrinsic rewards that come from beyond the self, for instance money, prizes, or even feedback. More specifically, extrinsic motivation involves the engagement in activities that are not inherently interesting to the individual but instead they are imposed on the individual because of external rewards or constraints. As a result, once external incentives are removed, the individual loses his/her commitment and engagement in performing the activity, as the initial motivation has been diminished. Due to its complex nature, such a construct has been viewed and researched from a cognitive, linguistic, psychological, psychosocial, sociological and a socio-linguistic perspective. In recent years, the construct of motivation has gained momentum and increased interest within SLA research, as scholars increasingly becoming interested in investigating its complex and very particular nature (Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015).

Ryan and Deci (2017), by making the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in their empirical research, suggest that humans will develop a more positive attitude to learning overall and will achieve confidence and thus a satisfactory academic performance through the help and assistance of intrinsic motivation or through a well-internalised process of extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is therefore associated with acts perceived as competent and autonomous, through engagement in activities that will offer enjoyment, satisfaction and confidence, as opposed to extrinsic motivation that arises from factors imposed on the individual by external forces. The difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation lies in the individual experience of enjoyment and satisfaction that is associated with the activity and the behaviour that emerges from performing a learning activity. SDT suggests that when an act is performed without being controlled or directed by external factors, it can lead to intrinsic enjoyment freed from external pressures. This can lead to a situation of psychological well-being and a more eudaemonic, positive and satisfied condition for the individual (Ryan and Deci, 2001). In other words, intrinsic motivation is the prototype of self-determination that lies at the heart of this theory.

On the opposite side of the self-determination continuum is amotivation, which is characterised by the absence of intention to act. When individuals are amotivated, they either refrain from action entirely or engage in behaviour without genuine intention — merely performing the actions without purpose. Amotivation can result from a lack of value attributed to an activity, a perceived lack of competence, or the belief that the activity will not generate a desired outcome (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The process of internalising external factors, mastering challenges and integrating new experiences is referred to an ‘organismic integration’ (Ryan and Deci, 2017), which is a clear manifestation of people’s determination to become self-functioning. According to Ryan and Deci (2000, 2017), there are three types of regulation: the external, introjected and integrated regulation. The external regulation is the least autonomous type of regulation and refers to the way behaviour is shaped and informed by external consequences and factors, which leads to people assuming that the decisions are imposed by others. This leads to a sense of dissatisfaction and feeling controlled. However, there are times that such external regulation can be internalised by people. Such regulation is the second type of regulation, the introjected regulation, in which people’s behaviour is dictated by a sense of guilt, remorse, disapproval or need to gain approval by third parties. In contrast to external regulation, introjected regulation involves the performance of activities to deal with and ease negative feelings of shame or guilt and thus, to internally endorse the activity itself. Such regulation is also contradictory to one’s desire to gain autonomy over his/her actions as it is dictated and directed by others. The third type of regulation is the integrated regulation in which an individual has internalised and personally identified with the value of his/her actions and therefore, it is the one closest to achieving a sense of ‘intrinsic’ motivation. Integrated regulation is the highest of all acts of self-determination as the values attributed to the activity affiliate in a balanced way with the individual’s personal values.

In Ryan and Deci’s view (2000, 2017, 2019), both external and introjected motivations are considered as controlled forms of motivation due to how dependent they are on external and internal pressures. This is as opposed to identified and intrinsic / integrated motivations that derive from personal endorsements and the value of the activities performed. In this way, through an internalised and personally identified process, humans will feel less controlled by external factors and will achieve better in their academic pursuits because they will be able to freely make choices based on the fulfilment and satisfaction of their three major psychological needs, to perceive themselves to be competent, autonomous and cared for.

2. 7 Self in Self-Determination Theory

In my attempt to discuss how self is defined within SDT, I need to first proceed to a distinction between two terms that have been problematic in the way they have been used; these are “identity” and “self”. SDT posits that one's identity may or may not align with the self and its fundamental growth tendencies (La Guardia, 2009; Ryan and Deci, 2003). While the identity literature often treats self and identity as synonymous, SDT differentiates these concepts, emphasising that the terms should not be used interchangeably as they possess distinct meanings. Although Self-Determination Theory was not originally crafted to explore identity formation in a direct way, several of its foundational principles bear relevance to this developmental endeavour and process (La Guardia, 2009; Ryan and Deci, 2003).

In SDT, the self is conceptualised as an inherent and intrinsic dimension of human-beings, guiding them towards enhanced integration and optimal functioning, sustained

mainly by the fulfilment of three fundamental psychological needs, the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness.

According to SDT, self (autonomous versus controlled) is formed, constructed and developed through goals and motives (extrinsic versus intrinsic), which leads to an individual's optimal functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2003). According to La Guardia (2009) and Soenens (2005) the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs helps shape the individual's ability to formulate an integrated personal stance on significant matters such as ideology, relationships and life goals, and this constitutes a strong sense of self.

SDT underscores the dynamic interplay between self-formation and need satisfaction. Together, these contribute to and assist in the development of adaptive self-processes and create the conditions for further volitional and optimal functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2003). Within SDT, the self is understood as a source of energy that ideally enables individuals to utilise increasingly self-regulated strategies, including those related to identity construction (Ryan and Deci, 2003).

When an individual's basic psychological needs are satisfied, they possess the vitality and energy necessary to engage in effective identity construction strategies. Conversely, when these needs are not satisfied, individuals may choose to not invest on the path to identity formation and disengage in successful identity construction strategies. SDT employs the concept of basic psychological needs to explain individuals' inherent tendencies to pursue their intrinsic potential. It also claims that support for these needs within a social context influences the internalisation of and motivation for engaging in significant extrinsic identity activities. Moreover, the interaction between these innate tendencies and social context affects overall well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2003). Thus, SDT suggests that identities are adopted in service of fulfilling basic psychological needs (Ryan and Deci, 2003). Individuals are naturally inclined to invest energy in activities, roles, and relationships that promote the satisfaction of these needs. Consequently, identity and self are not interchangeable terms; rather, the self plays a critical role in shaping the development of identity activities.

Moreover, whereas identity theory addresses self-perceptions and the views an individual has on his/her current status while reflecting on his/her past and life background, SDT aims to make a link between these perceptions and the life goals and aspirations of the individual. This is with the aim of broadening the opportunities the individual has to change and develop their learning situation while overcoming present challenges in an attempt to evolve into an envisioned future self. Thus, while identity theories suggest a temporal aspect of self-conceptualisation, SDT, in contrast, suggests a more dynamic and evolving stance in the construction of self over time. Although identity exploration elucidates how past experiences inform the present situation of an individual, SDT projects such attempts into the future and aims to consider not only how past experiences inform and impact on present conditions, but also how such perceptions inform and shape the needs necessary for the realisation of a planned future self.

SDT encapsulates the three-time dimensions (past, present and future) of self-conceptualisation and suggests that self can only be appreciated in the temporal continuity of life rather that viewed as a static phenomenon. This thesis is an attempt to view the development of self in its continuity through time and research the obstacles some British adult learners face in their learning of Greek. It identifies those who managed to overcome these obstacles imposed on them by their past experiences and life background and those who managed to improve their present situation through the satisfaction of the three psychological needs. These individuals did so with the aim to create an optimal functioning situation that could help them envision their future selves as successful learners of the Greek language.

2. 8 Three Psychological Needs: Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness

As mentioned, there are six mini theories that constitute SDT and through which the three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are addressed and discussed. The three psychological needs lie at the heart of these six theories (Ryan and Deci, 2019). Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 229) define needs as “innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being”. These three needs are conceptualised as both innate and universal. The characterisation of a need as an essential nutriment implies that its satisfaction leads to positive outcomes, while its failure to be met results in negative consequences. According to Ryan and Brown (2003, p. 73), need-fulfilment must serve as “the basic 'satisfier' responsible for the functional advantage regarding growth, integrity, or well-being”. Ryan and Deci (2002) identify competence, autonomy, and relatedness as the only psychological constructs that qualify as basic, innate needs. In distinguishing “needs” from “desires”, SDT emphasises that needs are essential for psychological health, whereas desires, such as the pursuit of power, wealth, or fame, do not necessarily contribute to well-being or intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000 and 2020). At this point, I need to further comment and expand on the three psychological needs which function as cross-theoretical variables and constructs commonly shared across the six theories. According to Ryan and Deci’s (2000, 2017) SDT framework, intrinsic motivation can be experienced by the individual learner on the condition that the three needs are all met and constantly reinforcing each other. Thus, intrinsic motivation occurs when the links between the fulfilment of the three needs are strong.

2.8.1 Competence

The need for competence refers to an individual's innate drive to feel effective in their interactions with the environment (Deci and Ryan, 2000; White, 1959). It manifests in individuals' tendency to explore and manipulate their surroundings while seeking challenges that enhance their skills. Satisfaction of the need for competence enables individuals to adapt efficiently to complex and dynamic environments, whereas frustration of this need may lead to feelings of helplessness and diminished motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000 and 2020).

A sense of competence results when an individual believes that he/she has mastered a task successfully and that it is systemically valued within the context where the individual is operating. Competence-need satisfaction and appreciation are

particularly important as this was suggested to have a positive impact on both motivation and achievement (Oga-Baldwin and Nakata, 2015). The need for competence functions as the strongest predictor for autonomous motives or controlled ones. Such need is supported by providing the individual with optimal opportunities and challenges, encouragement and feedback (Oga-Baldwin and Nakata, 2015). When individuals feel that they have been efficiently supported, they develop the necessary skills needed for a perception of competence and they are likely to take actions to achieve their goals successfully. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), it is the socially contextualised events, such as feedback, admiration and appreciation, that contribute toward an individual feeling competent, which can enhance intrinsic motivation and positive performance. When there is lack of such external social support, this can lead to feelings of competence being undermined and no further development of capacities and skills.

According to Ryan and Deci, competence is intrinsic to human beings' natural inclination to explore, manipulate their surroundings, and seek optimal challenges (Ryan and Deci, 2002). In the context of SDT, the need for competence is not an objective measure of ability, but rather a perceived sense of one’s capacity to master a task. As individuals perceive themselves to be more competent in an activity, their intrinsic motivation towards that activity increases (Deci and Ryan, 1985). To maintain a high level of perceived competence, Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that individuals seek challenges that align with their abilities, leading them to strive for continual skill development. Competence is not fixed but one’s perception of it influences social interpretations of the self and others. However, competence is easily undermined in contexts where challenges exceed an individual's capabilities, such as negative feedback on a very difficult task, personal criticism or negative social comparison (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

However, even when the contextual and external support and tangible rewards are present, competence cannot necessarily lead to intrinsic motivation as such support and rewards can be acted on out of guilt or fear of not achieving the goal. Passing a difficult exam, for example, and obtaining a coveted certificate in foreign languages can be a drive or motive but it may not be a fully personal and individual choice made by the learner; rather, it might be a forced act controlled by family or other external factors that put pressure on the learner. For perception of competence to be achieved, external and contextual events need to be internalised so that internal conditions are created to facilitate satisfaction of the individual’s needs and this will increase intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2022). According to Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 70):

> Feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless accompanied by a sense of autonomy or, in attributional terms, by an internal perceived locus of causality…people must not only experience competence or efficacy, they must also experience their behaviour as self-determined for intrinsic motivation to be in evidence. This requires either immediate contextual supports for autonomy and competence or abiding inner resources.

2.8.2 Autonomy

The need for autonomy reflects individuals' inherent desire to experience volition, choice, and psychological freedom in their actions (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2002) describe autonomy as the capacity for “self-rule” or the initiation and regulation of actions by the self. Autonomy refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as the source and initiator of their behaviour (Ryan and Deci, 2002). Greater perceived autonomy in activities is associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation. When individuals act with autonomy, their behaviours are engaged with full commitment, whereas actions contrary to one's volition generate incongruence and internal conflict. Among the three basic psychological needs proposed by SDT, autonomy remains one of the most contentious, primarily due to misconceptions surrounding its nature (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Specifically, the need for autonomy should not be equated with a desire to act independently of others' wishes; rather, it denotes the requirement to act with a sense of choice and volition, even if this involves conforming to others' preferences.

Fulfilment of the need for autonomy is key for a learner to achieve his/her academic goals. The learner has to recognise that they can act in ways that reflect their agency as well as have full control over their actions without being controlled by others. Ryan and Deci (2000, 2017) explain that extrinsic rewards can undermine perceived self-control over choice in which individuals perceive a greater sense of autonomy.

The difference between the needs of competence and autonomy is that autonomy refers to the intrinsic need an individual feels to be self–directed and self–endorsed in action without being controlled or constrained. This is in contrast to competence, which refers to the need for being and feeling effective as one’s actions are beneficial in achieving anticipated and valued outcomes (Ryan and Deci, 2002). As Ryan and Deci (2017) argue, it requires the external factors (teachers, institutions, policy makers, the ones in charge of designing the syllabus of subjects) to create relevant tasks for students so that they feel that their autonomy is supported. This way, the learners, through appreciating and feeling confident about the relevant and appropriate tasks created for them, will commit to and endorse such acts of learning and the purpose of achieving their academic targets. In other words, learners need to be convinced that what they decide to learn is the right choice and one they made themselves; they must feel that they are capable of the tasks required from them and that they are surrounded by people who trust them to make wise decisions.

2.8.3 Relatedness

The third basic psychological need in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), relatedness, is characterised by individuals' intrinsic tendency to feel connected to others, to be part of a group, and to engage in loving and caring relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). This need is fulfilled when individuals experience a sense of communion and cultivate close, intimate relationships with others (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The sense of relatedness is an essential pre-requisite for an individual to feel competent, irrespective of academic achievement. According to Ryan and Deci

(2020), an individual learner experiences a sense of relatedness when he/she experiences a sense of belonging and attachment to other people. As for those surrounding the individual, they need to be actively involved and show interest in the individual's activities and empathy regarding his/her feelings; they must make the individual feel cared for and loved (Ryan and Deci, 2002). Relatedness, therefore, involves feeling integrated within social organisations and connected to others on a deeper level. The need for relatedness is met through close relationships and by being a significant member of social groups. Individuals experience relatedness and belonging by contributing to the group and demonstrating benevolence towards others.

The satisfaction of the need of relatedness is important for personal growth. Ryan, Couchman, Deci and La Guardia (2000) argue that the relationships individuals develop within a community should happen in a way that allows all members to have their needs represented and supported by others.

Relatedness is a broad term, and it represents a psychological need that can be experienced in different ways and 'stages' by learners (Ryan and Deci, 2019, 2022). Relatedness can include: experiences of an individual feeling cared for by the other; feeling appreciated; feeling included within a broader community; assimilated with elements of the Other's identity in a way that he/she will feel partially or wholly transformed; feeling personally related to certain elements, aspects and beliefs as represented by the other; or feeling engaged in an activity that will lead to personal self-determination of achieving a goal.

The dynamic of the interpersonal relationship between the individual and the social group is at the heart of such a need. Lanvers (2022) emphasises the significance of relatedness in L2 motivation and addresses the concept of being and feeling related as a two-fold one. She argues that relatedness is a key component for learners to feel motivated and it is expressed through their need to feel included, connected and that they belong to a broader community. In addition, she views the construct of relatedness as one that should be directed in reverse, from the social group to the individual. It is a mutual effort of these two to communicate.

SDT argues that relatedness is fundamental in human motivation and well-being, with Ryan and Deci (2000) suggesting that secure relational attachments are both the means and the goal of the individual's positive progress. Ryan and Deci (2010) call for high-quality attachments and address the significance of all three needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) to be equally satisfied as each one can affect the others. There is a mutuality in the support and satisfaction of all three needs as they are closely interconnected. According to Ryan, Deci, Couchman and La Guardia (2000), in a high-quality relationship, individuals should not only feel being volitional in a relationship themselves, but they should also feel that the other is both volitionally and autonomously involved in the relationship as well. This expectation of a positive association and synergy must occur between all three needs to reach a successful outcome in motivation.

At this stage it is important to refer to studies that discuss the need for relatedness in certain contexts. Crandall (1999), in her study, references the high correlation

observed between autonomy and relatedness, and addresses the significance of the role of the instructor, whose attempts to lead a cooperative, inclusive, approachable and supportive lesson led to students experiencing a sense of relatedness, collaboration and belonging which led to effective and successful learning results in classrooms. Other studies in Japanese learning contexts (Hiromori, 2006) found that there was only a marginal positive impact of relatedness satisfaction on the motivation of Japanese students learning English as foreign language. Instead, what motivated those students was integrated within the autonomy factor and the instructor's autonomy supportiveness. Hiromori (2006) also found that there was a negative correlation between relatedness and intrinsic motivation among highly motivated learners, arguing that although certain types of students might benefit from collaboration, for others (highly motivated / high achievers) such acts of collaboration did not work as successfully as they did with others. Rather, these students preferred to have more independent learning approaches. Thus, Hiromori suggested that more diverse learning activities, which encompass both individual and group work, should be implemented by the teachers to satisfy the students' different motivational and learning preferences.

Another study conducted in the Chinese context by Markus and Kitayama (2010) suggested that relatedness satisfaction plays a significant role in explaining the variance of regulatory styles and it was shown to be more vital in people's development and well-being than the other two needs for autonomy and competence. The authors emphasise how important the relationship with significant others is, such as parents and teachers, and how important the relationship is between relatedness and autonomy (interdependent self-construal) in the Chinese context. Markus and Kitayama argue that in particular contexts, the need for relatedness might be stronger in relation to regulatory styles, compared to the needs for competence or autonomy. It is important, therefore, that the need for relatedness is not undermined in comparison to the needs for autonomy and competence, as all three can play a vital role in an individual's learning process.

According to SDT, the satisfaction of these three needs – autonomy, competence and relatedness – is essential and can lead to psychological well-being as well as optimal functioning of all people. Therefore, the support of social contexts that promote the satisfaction of these needs is imperative. This will allow processes of internalisation and integration to flourish as well as help the development of the autonomous motivational orientations (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This perspective contrasts with theories that propose a hierarchical arrangement of needs, such as Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which suggests that higher-order needs are only activated when lower-order needs are satisfied. Ryan and Deci (2000) stress the importance of evaluating the various life contexts in which individuals exist, such as school, work, and family, as these contexts can significantly influence the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs.

SDT emphasises the importance of each person perceiving that they have satisfied their essential psychological needs rather than the strength of the needs themselves. However, it does not dismiss the existence of individual differences in the strength of the perception of these needs. According to SDT, even individuals who do not have a

strong desire for the fulfilment of a particular psychological need would still benefit from its satisfaction (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

2. 9 Additional motivational factors: etymology, intellectual curiosity

Another aspect examined in my thesis, relating to the motivational factors influencing students' academic progress, is the concept of intellectual curiosity and etymology, both of which warrant consideration here. Etymology, the study of the origins and historical development of words, can play a motivational role in language acquisition, perhaps because of its reinforcement of a sense of competence, autonomy and relatedness by the learner who masters this study. Understanding the roots, prefixes, and suffixes derived from Latin and Greek allows learners to comprehend and retain vocabulary more effectively, as these elements are foundational to many English words. Moreover, the exploration of word origins reveals historical connections between languages, offering insights into cultural influences and linguistic diversity, which potentially enhance a learner's sense of relatedness to history (Quigley, 2018). This awareness fosters a global perspective and promotes an inclusive approach to language learning. By uncovering the rich history embedded within a language, learners find greater motivation and purpose in their studies. Quigley (2018) asserts that such an approach aids English learners in decoding unfamiliar words, thereby expanding their receptive vocabulary.

Etymological study is particularly beneficial for students who have attained an advanced level of education, as it requires an understanding of how affixes and prefixes can alter word meanings (Baumann, Edwards, Font, Tereshinski, Kameenui and Olejnik, 2002). Intermediate and advanced learners can leverage this technique to enhance their vocabulary (Zolfagharkhani and Moghadam, 2011). The etymological approach not only serves as a motivational tool but also enables learners to associate new vocabulary with existing knowledge, making memorising easier (Yule, 2017). This method can act as a shortcut to vocabulary acquisition, providing learners with a strategy to decipher most English words (Quigley, 2018).

This relatedness potentially fosters a global perspective and promotes an inclusive approach to language learning, while simultaneously boosting motivation for learning. By uncovering the rich history embedded within a language, learners find greater motivation and purpose in their studies. Quigley (2018) asserts that such an approach also aids English learners in decoding unfamiliar words, thereby expanding their competence in recalling vocabulary.

Etymology falls within the domain of intellectual curiosity, also known as epistemic curiosity, which is a key factor in fostering linguistic motivation in learners, leading to creative learning. Intellectual curiosity drives the desire to learn and understand more about people, cultures, ideas and concepts (Mussel, 2010). In recent decades, researchers in language education have increasingly recognised the significance of curiosity as a motivating force, in particular because of its links to the learner's sense of autonomy. They have explored how curiosity, as a natural human trait, can therefore stimulate further learning, particularly in the context of language education (Tulgar, 2018). Yuen (2007) suggests that the pursuit of new morphosyntactic aspects of a

language links intellectual curiosity with competence and academic achievement. When students' intellectual curiosity is satisfied, it becomes a strong motivational force that encourages continued language learning.

The literature further indicates that intellectual curiosity in language education is closely tied to motivation, as claimed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which is essential for sustaining the desire to learn a language. Dörnyei (1998) highlights the dynamic relationship between motivation and intellectual curiosity. Tulgar (2018) discusses the concept of 'information gaps' and the role of inquiry-based learning in stimulating intellectual curiosity in adult learners. Her study on intellectual curiosity among English education students reveals that exposure to new forms of the target language, both inside and outside the classroom, increases learners' curiosity and motivation to deepen their linguistic knowledge. These links align with Ryan and Deci's motivational theory (2000), suggesting that etymology can foster motivation by helping students feel competent and related through their learning experiences.

In conclusion, intellectual curiosity serves as a powerful motivator for language learners, and through the study of etymology, can enhance their language learning experiences and improve their linguistic competence.

2.10 Norton on Social Identity: sociological factors influencing motivation and language learning

The way this thesis views the concept of SL learners' social identity has been informed by the work of Bonny Norton, who has researched this concept in depth (1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2010, 2013). Norton's important contribution in defining the learner's social identity lies in the significance she places on how diverse the learning contexts are in which the learners position themselves and are positioned. She suggests that SL learners' learning styles and their motivations are directly associated with the diverse social contexts within which they practice their learning, including the cultural and historical aspects of this context. The implication of her theory is that research into SL languages needs to focus on the social contexts where language learning is taking place. Even though, Norton emphasises an even wider picture of sociological influence than SDT, the contribution of the individual's immediate social context is significant as it influences the fulfilment of the three needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, which in turn affect the learner's sense of an integrated self, which ultimately helps determine their achievement of SL language learning.

Norton (2013, p. 4) defines this concept of social identity as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future". In Norton's view, social identity is a construct that is negotiated through language and is affected in its construction by various sociological factors. These include race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, religion and lifestyle choices; Social identity is also constantly affected by the world that is shifting nonstop (Darvin, 2015). Social identity, according to Norton (2013), reveals its dynamic, multifaceted and often-times contradictory nature within the social context that surrounds the individual. This

contrasts with Ryan and Deci's "sense of self", which is the fluctuating outcome of the satisfaction of the three essential needs rather than the result of social positioning.

According to Norton (2010), the relationship between social identity and learning is multifaceted, involving the interplay of both individual sense-making and social and cultural processes. Social identity is shaped by how individuals are positioned by others and through their participation in various cultural and communal activities, remaining fluid across different times and places. In essence, social identity encompasses both individuality and group membership, each governed by internal cognitive processes and the expectations and interactions within social and cultural contexts. Learning a SL language necessitates some exploration of one's social identity because of the sociological roots and functions of language. Social identity could be seen as a connective thread linking individuals to each other, to communities, and to the land or the globe. Exploring one's social identity involves developing an understanding of one's place in the world, and myriad factors will contribute to this self-perception.

According to Norton (2001), our sociological contexts, and hence our subjectivities, are marked by various inequalities of gender, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. In Norton's view (2013), this suggests that social identity is a site of multiple struggles which is subject to change with possibilities for the future. Lanvers (2017a) argues that SL learning is strongly influenced by social class. The author brings into discussion parental involvement through which their children acquire already established attitudes to SL learning, both positive and negative. As noted above, positive attitudes in SL learning are associated with families that come from a particular socio-economic background, a wealthy and educated one, as opposed to negative attitudes that are associated with families that come from a lower socio-economic background. Lanvers very interestingly suggests that it is certain social-class-based aspects of the social identity of a learner that particularly impact positively or negatively the motivation of a learner. Consequently, social identity is bound to influence a child's perception of their competence, autonomy and relatedness in relation to SL learning, impacting on their motivation and to some degree determining how successful or not the learning outcome will be.

2.11 Social Class, Social Mobility, Privilege and Marginalisation

Learning a foreign language can be viewed as a process to acquire more valued linguistic, cultural and economic capital and consequently it functions as a marker for social distinction. With English being a lingua franca, there have been many studies conducted that attest that learning a foreign language is associated with acquisition of privilege and rise in income (Shin, 2012 and 2014; Gao, 2010). Such studies affirm that learning standard English leads to access to chances and opportunities for wealth and professional and personal development. Similarly, the same happens with English middle / upper class speakers learning French as second or foreign language as they see French leading to the acquisition of cultural capital for their children's education (Heller, 2006). Thus, learning a foreign language has been traditionally seen in Britain as a medium for success, being a privilege of the middle and upper classes.

Social class is a difficult construct to be conceptualised in its entirety and has been a largely unacknowledged but key component in shaping a learner's identity. Over the years, various theorists have called for social class to be acknowledged as an identity marker (Skeggs, 2013; Block, 2007; Norton, 2013). Collins (2006) makes a clear mention of how unacknowledged the role of social class has been in language education. Additionally, Kubota (2003) argues that class and identity are two interrelated constructs, as class is positioned to individuals via social practices, and the individuals are then positioned within society based on their class.

Vandrick (2014), in her study on privilege and class, identifies a new group of affluent students that feel complacent, fully aware and very comfortable with the privileges they inherited from their families. This 'new global elite group' of learners, as she terms them, manages to achieve their academic goals due to the credentials, resources and privilege they hold from the past. In her work (2011), Vandrick associates social class privilege, or lack of it, with the learner's identity, arguing that it has a great impact on the students' learning progress and influences factors such as confidence or a sense of competence. Class, in the case of these students, is a part of their lived experience and integral to the formation of their identity. In a heavily class-segregated society, class is a part of the human experience and impacts on the opportunities available for accessing communities of practice. This group of elite students studying at a private university are fully aware of their class status and realise that their class position offers them the learning outcomes they desire.

Norton (2013) argues that it is important for SLA to acknowledge the significant role of class and incorporate it as an integral part of identity construction. In her study on identity, Norton calls for "a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context" (1995, p. 12). In a credentialist society in which social mobility is difficult to achieve, the hierarchical stratification of people only increases the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest. This is a reality and a lived experience for all humans and as such it should be considered as part of the formation of one's social identity. Social class, through intersecting and interacting with other identity dimensions such as gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, is important to an individual's subjectivity and takes place in particular conditions that are defined by the different social environments of students. Thus, according to Norton, social class can greatly impact on how one will acquire SL learning, and she calls for L2 educators to pay more attention to social class positioning, of both their students and themselves, and how their role in this world impacts others. Moreover, she argues that the idea of social class being an identity marker should continue to be productively employed by SLA researchers and academics. Norton (1995) concludes by associating her well-established concept of investment with the construct of social class by commenting that both class and investment are constructed systems of dominant ideologies imposed on learners, through which repetitive practices of power are recognised by the learners as legitimate and impose modes of inclusion or exclusion. Norton (2013), influenced by her readings on Foucault (1980), views power as a force operating at both macro level (institutional power) as well as at a micro level in people's social encounters with different access to material resources and symbolic capital.

Tupas (2011, 2019), suggests that social class should be acknowledged, appreciated and read along with language learning and not dismissed and ignored. Tupas points out that as of recent years there have been attempts in academia to shift away from social class as an important construct in sociolinguistics. Tupas refers to several areas and disciplines in academia where there have been attempts to, as he calls 'erase the class', such as bi/multilingual research, literacy research, second language acquisition and TESOL and language education. Tupas points out that "the sidestepping of erasure of class is part of a general intellectual trend in academia which privileges the problem of culture and identity over the problem of structure and political economy" (2019, p.5).

It is important at this stage to acknowledge the pivotal work from academics such as Weis (2008), who view class in the context of school education (though in the US context rather than the UK) and how privilege is exercised and demonstrated in such a context. Clarke and Morgan (2011) researched the different ways neoliberalism helped in the reproduction of social inequalities and privilege through corporate influences on education. These included government decisions and implementation of assessment, testing and textbooks that aimed to disintegrate the teachers' autonomy. According to Clarke and Morgan, such social inequalities maintained their status because of the neoliberal economic attitudes that prevailed in education over the years, as well as the globalization of English as lingua franca.

The above scholars are among many others who research social class impact on learning and the reproduction of privilege. They suggest that privilege is not a unidirectional concept. Instead, as Vandrick (2009) demonstrates in her research on interrogating the notion of privilege, exercising privilege is a highly subjective matter as it depends heavily on the previous institutional experiences that impacted individuals' personal and cultural circumstances. Thus, participants can position themselves in a favourable or unfavourable way towards privilege regarding the specific contexts of interaction they had within such institutions. Kumashiro's (2000) work on marginalisation and privilege as seen in women's educational journeys illuminates the way one intersects in the other. Kumashiro comments on the way privilege and marginalisation intersect in the lives of the participants through the exercise of power. Kumashiro (2000, pp. 26-27) defines marginalisation as follows: "the social dynamic in which certain ways of being or identified in the world are normalised or privileged while others are disadvantaged and marginalised and in this way the privilege experienced by one group of learners may contribute to the marginalisation of another". If such an approach, as described by Kumashiro, is combined with Bourdieu's (1984, 1991) notion of capital and the access one has to resources and status, it is easy to understand that such forms of capital can lead to a certain acquisition of privilege that some students hold in contrast to the marginalisation that others feel. In this thesis, these two notions of privilege and marginalisation are explored in participants' views because they are essential in the shaping of these views; any sense of entitlement, inclusion or exclusion are key elements that inform a student's emotional attitude towards learning overall. By emotional attitude I refer to Ryan and Deci (2010), the desire of the students to fulfil

and satisfy their need for relatedness – their need to feel related and included within a broader group of learners whose members share the same values.

2.12 Social Class in UK

One of the most significant works on class in recent years is the highly publicised *Social Class in the 21st Century* by Mike Savage (2015). Savage and his collaborators (2013) in LSE designed a class survey originally published in the *Guardian online* in April 2013, which attracted the public's attention in the UK. It was based on the results of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS), conducted in conjunction with the BBC and launched on its website in 2011.[1] The survey asked participants to fill in a questionnaire about their jobs, living conditions, earnings and social networking. The respondents were then assigned to seven occupational categories, which they identified as being the new class structure in Britain. These were: the elite, the established middle class, the technical middle class, the new affluent workers, the traditional working class, the emergent service workers and the precariat. The survey was based on an updated version of Bourdieu's (1991) capitals (economic, social and cultural). According to Block (2015, p. 242), Savage's work is important. Savage found that the middle-class is multi-layered as there is a new 'elite' of technical experts whose wealth separates them from an established middle-class. He manages to move beyond the elusive terminologies of "middle" and "working" class, arguing that it is important to describe people's class positions in a more accurate way. In this way, he succeeds in updating our understanding of British contemporary class division enabling comparisons to other societies around the world. The survey's wider classification allows people who would traditionally find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid to be viewed in a more sympathetic way. On the other hand, by making these class distinctions, Savage is critical of the people who possess capital and find themselves at the top of the pyramid. A publication such as Savage's is hugely indicative of the enduring relevance of class in the UK.

Biressi and Nunn (2013), in their book on class and contemporary British culture, present a series of contributions that demonstrate a persistence in discussing class in the UK. The authors enlist several scholars, such as Conley (2008, cited in Biressi and Nunn, 2013) who support the idea that class has been used by people in ways that favour approaching the concept as a series of evaluative descriptors rather than as a whole. Conley argues that categories that denote class are in fact, "deeply embedded in common sense because they are thought to have real explanatory force" (Biressin and Nunn, 2013, p. 17). In Bourdieu's terms (1991), these are embodied past social structures, which are internalised in the minds of the social agents (the individuals) and are reproduced through their in-between social encounters in present time. As a result, the individuals assume that such descriptors hold a power to elucidate the reasons behind their actions in given contexts and conditions, which accordingly explain their successes or failures. According to Biressi and Nunn (2013, p. 17), the social categories (working / middle class) or class labels "are often deployed as evaluative descriptors, helping to form moral judgements and distinctions, to include

[1] https://archive.ph/20130504221302/http://ssl.bbc.co.uk/labuk/experiments/class/

some and to exclude others, to defend entitlements and to establish and maintain what is ‘normal’, socially acceptable and desirable”.

In Britain, it is quite ordinary for people to make use of such class labels to explain situations or even to make judgements and express their emotions of shame or disgust towards certain issues. Class as a concept is fortified through its embeddedness in various forms of discourse and media, such as political commentary, current affairs, social media, lifestyle and popular culture, television and many others. In 2008, the global recession led to a major financial downturn. As expected, such turmoil caused a greater division among social classes and consequently deepened social inequalities. Such a polarised effect was highly publicised via media, and resulted in people making extensive use of the class labels again and feeling ‘comfortable’ to explain the lack of opportunities and collapse of social mobility in this way. Additionally, even though class is a very complex construct, people seem to effortlessly and inconsiderately make use of class labels in their attempt to demonstrate either their superiority or inferiority towards others. In a similar vein, labelling to affirm one’s power or status can be observed when people exercise their imperialistic attitudes towards other foreign languages. In linguistic imperialism, it is common practice to make use of labels to promote the notion of the assumed inferiority of second languages with respect to the norms imposed by dominant cultures (Phillipson, 1992), as it is characterised by inequality and injustice. This is very relevant to my study as all participants are British native speakers and Greek has an inferior status language.

Lanvers (2017c) makes an interesting point about the increasing level of elitism in the context of foreign languages and the opportunities that affluent students have to study them that leads to a social division in their learning. According to Lanvers (2017c), hesitation and demotivation in language learning from students from disadvantaged backgrounds is quite common as they cannot easily see the purpose and immediate use of studying them. In contrast, students from more advantaged backgrounds, due to the opportunities offered at school or due to parental beliefs who appreciate such learning, can draw on the cultural values of learning languages that can motivate them to study and thus are differently motivated or invested, as they have both the family and institutional support to do this.

To avoid such division between disadvantaged and advantaged learners, Lanvers (2017c) calls for education policies to be reformed so that all students can acquire the economic and cultural benefits available to those who have the language skills. In her view, the way to avoid English monolingualism and promote linguistic diversity is to improve the education system through policies; more specifically, to introduce policies that would allow, on the one hand, equal opportunities to all students to easily access learning and improve their linguistic skills, and, on the other hand, the chance for personal self-development, cognitive development and intercultural communication. This would help the learners justify the need to invest in such learning processes as it would ensure they gain professional and societal benefits.

Lanvers’ extensive research in language education policy in the UK and her academic interest in the impact of global English in SL learning as well as aspects of the psychology of language learning such as motivation, attitude and affect, all greatly

informed my study about social class issues in past and contemporary Britain and shed light on the identity of British adult foreign language learners. Lanvers' case is of particular interest for this thesis as she has previously studied and taught foreign language modules at a university to adult students in the UK while publishing various articles on how British educational systems impact on students' foreign language learning. Her contribution to this thesis is significant as her insights and views on the changes which occurred in the British educational system helped me explore more rigorously the different attitudes several interviewees demonstrated when asked questions about their learning experience, as in many cases these attitudes were associated with the learners' social and educational background.

Importantly, Lanvers (2017a, b, c) emphasises the UK's language learning crisis as well as the social divide between those who choose to learn languages and those who do not. She associates the political dimension of education with the learner's social class background to explain the reasons why British citizens have poorer motivation to learn foreign languages than other EU citizens. Besides the obvious global impact and significance English has as an official language in commerce, trade and markets, Lanvers (2017c) refers to the declining interest of education policy in the UK (in fact, she included examples across the different education policies in all 4 nations in the UK) about SL learning which has resulted in a decline in students' interest. Through numerical evidence that confirms the decline in SL learning in compulsory education, Lanvers (2017c) explicitly demonstrates how both the education system and the schools do not invest time and effort to support students to reach the learning of a foreign language at a satisfactory level. There is a gap between the need for language skills and language provision, this provision being mainly in either very selective and academic schools or private ones. This is strong evidence that SL learning is closely associated with the schools' and families' socioeconomic background. Another interesting point Lanvers (2017c) makes about the privilege certain pupils enjoy that helps them learn foreign languages is the social segregation that happens in schools. This is related to housing market, as successful and academic state schools increase the value of local housing and so only affluent families can afford to buy properties nearby and do this so that they can send their children to these particular schools. Lanvers (2017a) additionally provides statistics that illustrate that gender is also linked with attitudes in SL learning in the UK, with boys from poorer backgrounds showing less interest in studying languages beyond the compulsory phase than girls do. Through examining the necessity and significance of language learning in the contexts of schools and universities, Lanvers' conclusion is the association of affluent socioeconomic background with the choice to study foreign languages.

Moreover, Lanvers (2017a) makes an explicit reference to specific factors that future researchers should take into consideration when researching what motivates and demotivates SL learning in the UK. Such factors include the systematic teaching difficulties at schools, social milieu, peer and parental influences, gender and age issues, preference over certain languages, a school's admission system favoring students with strong academic performances in exams or even the impact of a school's leadership and teachers' attitudes towards students' motivation. Moreover, the scholar suggests that there is an obvious correlation between motivation for language learning

and choosing degree subjects with clear economic returns in the labour market. These social and economic dimensions, according to Lanvers, are key learning features that should be taken into account when studying motivation and, as in this thesis, the identity of language learners. All the above influences, though they mainly exist within a school or university context, one can easily detect within the adult context too, as such factors have impacted adults since they were children and can be detected within their interview responses. In other words, the intrinsic motivations that seem to be dominant for an adult to choose to learn a foreign language cannot be seen as separable from his/her education background as formed and shaped in his/her childhood. Overall, Lanvers' extensive research in language education policy in the UK, or her academic interest on the impact of global English in SL learning as well as aspects of the psychology of language learning, such as motivation, attitude, affect, all informed this present study about social class issues in past and contemporary Britain and shed light on the identity complexities of British adult foreign language learners.

2.13 Gender

Today, perhaps more than ever before, gender has been at the heart of discussion across academic disciplines. The quest for gender equality has also influenced many people making choices and taking decisions in business, in education, in politics and in the art world, with the aim of abolishing the dichotomy between male and female in society and the unequal opportunities that emerge from such division. The #MeToo movement explored in the media is an indicative example that generated huge discussion on how females are unprivileged compared to males and how this is exploited by the male-dominated discourse in the workplace. This thesis was conducted at a time of huge social and political transformation, with Brexit, women's rights and social inclusion. Concerning gender, there has been a huge demand for better and more diverse representation of genders as depicted in art, education and other areas in humanities. Gender exploration is a healthy part of human development that has led various theorists to reconceptualise what the true nature of gender is and how it affects people's perceptions of life.

In academia, the role of gender has been researched as a variable to split experimental samples into two groups. Gender has been traditionally used to describe the distinction between biological sex and socialised aspects of masculinity and femininity. Pavlenko and Piller (2001) challenged the traditional perception of gender as a static series of personal traits. Instead, they affirm its dynamic nature being a social construct that emerges from social situations instead of being just a means to legitimise the division between the two sexes. Therefore, gender's fluid nature accordingly informs how elusive the connection between language learning and gender remains. This is in line with my overall theoretical approach which considers identity as a socially constructed and dynamic concept of multiple subject positions. In this thesis, data will be discussed with the aim of avoiding reaching conclusions that suggest a dichotomy between male and female. Learners' responses are discussed as individual responses, and they are appreciated as being informed within a particular set of social circumstances. Gender's connection to language learning will be

discussed and appreciated, accordingly, as an act of learning set and shaped in a particular context.

Feery (2008) claims that gender is a neglected area of research in the field of second language acquisition. Yet, according to her, there has been some research done in gender in SLA focusing on performance-related differences between sexes and gender-differentiated use of L2 learning strategies. She believes that there has been enough evidence provided from gender studies in academia to demonstrate that gender is a key aspect of both individual differences and identity issues affecting L2 acquisition, the same way it affects L1 acquisition. Results showing how power, cognitive abilities, motivation and attitudes of learners can be related to a specific gender, proving its superiority over another, have been questioned. This proves the problematic nature of such binary approaches to gender seen in the SLA context. Accordingly, any attempts to confirm uniformity among groups of learners could not provide useful and beneficial outcomes on how learners learn foreign languages; instead, they make their findings nothing more than an epiphenomenon, i.e. not related to each other.

Gender should, therefore, be appreciated as a system of social relations and discursive practices. Pavlenko and Norton (2004) regard gender not just as another stable variable of language (or a dichotomy or individual property, in their terms) but as a social variable that is interconnected with other social variables such as ethnicity, race, education, identity and social class. Such variables inform each other in a dynamic and active way through social practices. Schmenk (2004), commenting on how gender was seen as an individual factor separate from other factors and related to personality variable in SLA, proposes that gender needs to be reconceived and reframed for progress to be made. This is what makes gender complex and fluid in nature. The social turn in SLA (Block, 2003) instigated a series of studies conducted in SLA that considered the L2 learner's social identity as the focus of their research. In such a view, gender emerged as one of the many important facades of social identity, which is in constant contact with the other facets such as race, social class, sexuality, age and ethnicity. Due to the emphasis on the particular nature of the social location of the learner, beliefs and ideas about gender, as well as representations of masculinity, femininity or other genders, vary across cultures over time. For instance, upper-middle class white women have a different level of access to materials and learning compared to the working-class women and yet, this does not necessarily explain successful outcomes. The causal relations of the variables develop with each other and cannot be effectively explained in relation to learning outcomes, unless we view them in close connection to the social identity of the learner.

I aim to explore how gender is affected by social class exclusively as there may be other factors that hinder successful learning and advancement in knowledge of Greek that influence such relationship between two social variables. Through participant students' responses about their lived learning experiences, as located in particular social contexts as well as their interaction with their male instructor, I am looking to provide readers with alternative ways of viewing a student's performance and language progress. Thus, notions of social approval, empowerment, prestige and investment will be discussed in ways that intend to inform the teachers with ways to

adjust their teaching practices to a different and perhaps never-before-thought learning reality. For instance, empowerment or disempowerment of women who find themselves excluded or included from gendered public domains in Greece will be discussed. This reduces or augments respectively their opportunities to fulfil their potential and desire to learn Greek, based on the learners' positive or negative experiences. This suggests that gendered experiences impact learners' SLA trajectories and can lead to needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness being met (or not) in the learning process.

There have been several interesting studies conducted (Pavlenko et al., 2001; Ehrlich,1997) that illustrate how the social category of gender plays a pivotal role in the second language acquisition process. One example is Polanyi's (1995) study, which looked at a group of American female students who were on a study-abroad programme in Russia. Such studies are attempting, according to Feery (2008), to demonstrate the ubiquitous and highly prominent nature of gender or differing gendered social practices, in the SLA process, as well as to reveal how gender affects the social location of the learner and access to social networks in the target culture.

2.14 Imagined Communities

The idea of belonging, feeling included and valued as an equal member of a group or community, has been additionally discussed in sociology. The concept of imagined communities, originally introduced by Benedict Anderson (1991), was brought into the context of language learning by Norton (2001), who claimed that the targeted community within a language classroom is a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships, but is equally a community of the imagination, a desired community that allows the learner to develop identities that he/she desires. Drawing on Wenger's (1998) perception of 'communities of practice' and the social theory of learning as addressed by Lave and Wenger (1991), Norton established her theory of imagined communities drawing on the theory of people actively participating in groups and performing acts of learning on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor sharing interests. Such participation affects the individual at every level and defines a learner's actions and thoughts. Unlike communities of practice, imagined communities are not real-life communities in which learners know and meet each other; they are, instead, communities that emerge from the learner's imagination and from their desire to participate and belong to a certain group of people in the present or future as their language advancement grows.

Moreover, such a process of participating in communities created by one's personal desires can only be a sign of desired and imagined identity, as Wenger suggests (1998). Consequently, the language learner being a member of such communities renegotiates with the other members and (re)constructs his/her identity. Additionally, Huhtala and Lehti-Eklund (2012, p.9) make an interesting suggestion about identity, relating it to the concept of time and claiming that there is continuity and coherence through time while identities are constructed; as the authors state, "we negotiate the present, we incorporate the past as a part of our identity while simultaneously orienting towards the future". This notion of creating an imagined identity through an individual's desire of belonging to a group in which everyone shares the same values, overlaps

with Ryan and Deci's (2013) psychological approach of fulfilling the need to feel related to other individuals and the need to feel connected with others in a meaningful way.

2.15 Narratives and Identities

The perspectives of P. Benson (2005), Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) and Prusak and Sfard (2005) inform the present study in terms of how the identities of learners are reconstructed and reformed through their narratives. The learners' self-expressed and personal experiences of learning could not have been better captured than using the medium of narration, which allows researchers to investigate human emotions and activities. In P. Benson's view (2005, p.20), "it is only through access to learners' stories of their experiences that we are able to see how they become different from each other as their learning progresses". As the learners keep talking and narrating their learning experiences, they produce stories of themselves and reconstruct their identities. Such personal experiences and identities however, as previously seen, are formed and shaped within social interactions and are directly affected by sociological factors. Thus, understanding narratives as capturing personal experiences means one must appreciate these narratives as collective experiences as well as individual ones. Prusak and Sfard (2005) make a very interesting distinction in terms of personal narratives of identities dividing into two categories, the narratives of 'actual' and 'designated' identities based on time. More specifically, the actual identities are shaped based on personal narratives that refer to the past and present state of things, as opposed to the designated identities that are constructed based on narratives that refer to a future state of things. In other words, through narratives, the temporal dimension of identity development is highlighted.

2.16 L1 Heritage Language Learners

Given the increasing research interest in including a wider range of research populations, I decided to focus on British native speakers when learning the Greek language rather than the opposite, which has been the most popular approach so far. In this way I contribute by diversifying the population groups included in the research field. My intention to explore a particular group of learners (whose members were selected based on their nationality, social background, gender, sexuality, education, profession and contact with the Greek language), made me realise the vast canvas of learners' identities an MFL instructor has to deal with and acknowledge when teaching a foreign language.

For example, selecting my participants, I realised that there was one particular participant, Valerie, who is a L1 heritage language learner of Greek language. Valerie is a British citizen who grew up in UK, is a native English speaker but desired to learn her ancestral language, the language of her family members, which is Greek. Valerie is one of the six participants in the sample. I considered such a participant as Valerie as her views mattered and could enrich the data collected as well as the findings. Indeed, each one of the participants' cases illustrates a unique learning instance that intersects the above fields (gender, ethnicity, education, social status etc.) in ways that are entirely exceptional.

In academia, there are several definitions of heritage language learning and learners. Heritage language speakers (HLS) are typically defined as individuals who are more proficient in the dominant language of the host country but also speak the language of their home country at varying levels of proficiency, as part of their cultural heritage (Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky, 2013; Montrul, 2008). According to Polinsky and Kagan (2007, p. 369), heritage language is defined as "a language spoken in immigrants' families, which was first in the order of acquisition but was not completely acquired because of the individual's switch to another dominant language". Polinsky (2018, p. 33) also defines heritage language speakers as often being the children of immigrants born in the host country, or immigrant children who arrived in the host country during childhood. They are simultaneous bilinguals whose weaker language corresponds to the minority language of their society, while their stronger language is the dominant language of that society.

Montrul (2012) argues that heritage language learners differ from foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) learners in several key aspects. For FL/L2 learners, the weaker language is always the L2, while for heritage speakers, the weaker language is often their L1. This shift occurs due to the transition from the heritage to the dominant language of the host country. This concept has relevance for my thesis, as it highlights that, in specific cases such as those involving heritage learners, the process of acquiring a foreign or second language is equivalent to first language (L1) acquisition. In these instances, the roles of the second language (L2) and the first language (L1) are reversed. Consequently, heritage learners must be understood as learning their L1 in the manner typically associated with second language acquisition, rather than as their native language.

A widely accepted definition of a heritage learner is an individual who is "raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). There have been various attempts made to define this concept, but I will follow Valdés's approach by defining heritage language as a minority language spoken by a linguistic minority within a population who have another language as the dominant language. In most cases, according to Valdés, proficiency in the heritage language has been sacrificed to gain proficiency in the dominant language, yet not exclusively. Miller and Kubota (2013) note that distinctions amongst heritage learners can be slippery and contested given the increased interest of such learners to enroll and join adult programs either at universities or at other adult institutions (e.g. the Hellenic Centre). Therefore, through acknowledging the views of Valerie, the heritage learner of Greek whom I interviewed, my research may be able to provide further clarification about her agency and the way she identifies herself as a heritage learner, given that the way one defines oneself or is defined and described by others is subjective, partial and situation dependent.

According to Valdés (2000) and Polinsky and Kagan (2007), heritage languages can be learned in contexts that vary from after school classes to adult cultural or language institutions and universities, whose programmes encourage learners to develop and improve their heritage language proficiency. According to these authors, then, heritage language learners of Greek have acquired their ancestral language learning in formal

(a classroom) or informal (inside home) settings, from the Greek ethnolinguistic group that traditionally speaks the Greek language or from members of the family who historically spoke the language.

However, Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) and Valdés (2001) emphasise that the classification of someone as a heritage language learner depends more on the learner's connection to their ethnic heritage than on their proficiency. As Van Deusen-Scholl (2003, p. 221) notes, "heritage language learners comprise a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-speakers who may be generations removed but who may feel culturally connected to a language". Such is the case of the only participant in the sample of six who were interviewed (Valerie) who is a heritage learner.

As mentioned, this section on heritage language learning focuses on a single participant (Valerie) from a sample of six interviewees. Despite this, it remains relevant to the literature review, as it reflects the experiences of many English-Greek Cypriots living in the UK who seek to study their heritage language as adults after a prolonged interruption in its use during their education. Valerie's case exemplifies this scenario. She spoke Greek from birth until the age of five. However, following her parents' separation, she relocated to the UK, where she had no opportunities to attend schools that offered lessons in Greek. After many years of limited exposure to and use of the language, she decided to relearn Greek as an adult, focusing on improving her grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. This situation is common among second or third-generation Greek Cypriots in the UK, whose previous knowledge of Greek has often been influenced by families with Greek Cypriot backgrounds (Karatsareas, 2021).

Husseinali (2006) found that in his study, both heritage language learners and non-heritage language learners shared motivations related to "Identification Orientations", including interests in literature, their own culture, their heritage, Islam as a world religion, and using Arabic with Arabic-speaking friends. Valerie's motivations align with identification orientation, as she expressed frustration over her inability to reclaim her Greek identity due to her lack of proficiency in the Greek language. This frustration drove her desire to reconnect with Greek culture, particularly through its literature, music and art, which she found particularly appealing, and enhanced her motivation to continue the language learning.

Choice also plays a significant role in learning success. When learners voluntarily choose to engage in language study, they are more likely to succeed. According to SDT, the critical factor is that learners perceive a sense of autonomy in their learning. This perception underscores the crucial role of the teacher in supporting heritage language students' autonomy, fostering positive relationships in the classroom, and helping learners feel competent. Teachers can achieve this by providing appropriate structure and teaching practices that promote self-regulation in the classroom (Douglas, 2008), or engaging students in local community activities, sharing personal stories of migration and settlement, and exposing them to both traditional and popular cultural practices that can foster a stronger sense of relatedness with the community (Kagan, 2005). Noels' research (2016) on motivation, SDT, and heritage language learning highlights the complexity and dynamic nature of motivation. She emphasises how factors such as reasons for learning, engagement, and the satisfaction of

autonomy, competence, and relatedness, mutually influence one another throughout a course of study. Studies within the SDT framework demonstrate how these principles have been successfully applied across various learner groups—young, adolescent, and adult learners; learners of English, foreign, and heritage languages (Noels, 2005).

Acknowledging Valerie's views, being an English L1 heritage language learner of Greek who is British and grew up in the same national environment as the other British native speakers, is an effort to empower such learners and give voice to them being active members of the broader English-speaking community. This is part of a broader discussion regarding heritage learners gaining power within native speaking communities as seen in the works of Boon and Polinsky (2015), Creese and Blackledge (2010) and Duff (2012).

2.17 Third age Learners

Additional empirical studies that informed my research were those of Kacetl and Klimova (2021) who discussed the third age group of adult learners (elderly learners) learning foreign languages (represented by three participants). The authors acknowledged in their research that various aspects must be considered when teaching and creating resources for such a group of learners and they emphasise how much more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated third age adult learners can be to learn a foreign language, as there is no external immediate beneficial factor for them to do such activity. It is important to acknowledge such a group of adult learners as three of the six participants interviewed for this thesis, as well as quite a few other students learning Greek at the Hellenic Centre at an advanced level, fit into this age group. Esra Eguz's work (2019) is informative as it concerns the benefits and challenges of learning a foreign language in late adulthood, such as social inclusiveness, development of cognitive skills and well-being.

Nicole Bosisio's 2019 study of language learning in the third age provides valuable insights into the cognitive, socio-psychological, and motivational factors that influence the language acquisition process among older adults. As Bosisio argues, traditionally, older individuals were regarded primarily as transmitters of knowledge rather than active learners. However, in the modern, fast-paced world, lifelong learning has become increasingly important, even for elderly individuals. Research indicates that while seniors are indeed capable of learning new languages, tasks requiring the use of working memory, such as vocabulary recall and the application of grammatical rules, are particularly challenging due to age-related cognitive decline, which often affects short-term and working memory (De Bot and Makoni, 2006, cited in Bosisio, 2019). Despite these challenges, certain studies (Schroeder and Marian, 2017, cited in Bosisio, 2019) suggest that engaging in cognitively demanding activities, such as language learning, can stimulate cognitive resources and potentially improve mental health and cognitive function.

Physical health issues, such as hearing impairments or mobility challenges, can also hinder the learning process in older adults. Nevertheless, socio-psychological factors, including social identity, motivation, and the dynamics between the elderly learner, teacher, and fellow students, are equally important. Elderly learners often bring their extensive life experiences and expectations into the classroom, which can sometimes

clash with modern pedagogical approaches. For instance, they may hold traditional views regarding the teacher's role, especially if the teacher is younger, expecting a more authoritative figure. Therefore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essential for successful learning. Many older learners are driven by personal goals, such as maintaining communication with relatives abroad, staying engaged with the wider world, or simply challenging themselves intellectually (Ware et al., 2017). However, negative self-perceptions (Grognet, 1997, cited in Bosisio, 2019) and societal beliefs about the pointlessness of foreign language learning in old age can significantly undermine their motivation.

Bosisio (2019) emphasises that given the complexities involved, language teaching for elderly learners must adopt approaches that address both cognitive and socio-psychological factors. For instance, it may be easier for older learners to retrieve and build upon languages they have previously studied rather than beginning a new language entirely. Language instruction should be designed to support working memory, potentially by focusing on activities that promote long-term recall or by associating new vocabulary with familiar concepts. Teachers must also recognise the significance of motivation, helping learners appreciate the relevance of satisfying their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness, and thereby fostering a learning environment that promotes self-determination and proactive learning.

In conclusion, while teaching foreign languages to elderly learners presents certain challenges, it can also be a highly rewarding experience. As Bosisio suggests (2019), with appropriate strategies in place, including recognition of their specific needs and motivations, older adults can successfully overcome the obstacles they face and participate in lifelong learning. The overarching message is that, while older adults are certainly capable of learning new languages, they require a learning environment and instructional methods that are tailored to their unique needs. Addressing cognitive and physical needs, leveraging familiar learning strategies, and fostering an atmosphere that supports competence, autonomy and relatedness are still essential components. Moreover, teachers should actively work to dispel prevalent negative stereotypes regarding older adults' social identities as people who lack ability to learn, both within the learners themselves and in the broader educational system.

2.18 Adult education in community context (adult Centres)

Wlosowicz's (2016) empirical work on adult Centres and SL learning was very informative for my thesis, as it helped me understand the adult learners' expectations concerning foreign language teaching and learning within the context of community. Wlosowicz researched three groups of adult learners: the philologists and philosophy students, the engineers and the polytechnic students, and other adult students who came from different working backgrounds. Even though each group expressed the different language needs and skills they wanted to develop through their foreign language courses depending on their background, it was evident that external rewards and other external factors that led them to choose such courses proved to be less significant in truly motivating them achieve their academic goals in relation to learn the target language. Wlosowicz's study is an important one as it places at the centre the voices of the adult students who are very aware of their expectations, needs and goals. Moreover, Wlosowicz made an additional interesting argument. She suggests that

adult learners who are under time pressure to learn the target language might develop excessive motivation which can be counterproductive; it can hinder learning and lead to situations where the sense of control over their learning is weakened and the process of making decisions becomes slower. Whether this is a controversial argument or not, it is worth taking it into consideration regarding the motivation of adult learners learning in community Centres.

2.19 Summary

The research presented in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis explores the attempts of a particular group of adult learners (British adult learners) to academically progress in their learning of Greek as a foreign language through the lens of their individual motivational journey towards achieving an integrated sense of self. It focuses particularly on motivation and social identity factors that influence motivation.

The key sections addressed in this literature review chapter were Ryan and Deci's notion of self, the examination of motivation through the reading of SDT and its emphasis on intrinsic motivation, the facilitation and satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, the interplay between these three needs and the socioeconomic or sociocultural factors that shape learners' views and motivation to learn Greek. Drawn on Norton's work (2010), I have also discussed aspects that help form social identities such as social class, gender, family and education, aiming to consider how these factors collectively impact learners' motivation and progress. SDT posits that self can only be fully understood within the continuity of life, encompassing past, present and future dimensions. This temporal perspective allows for a dynamic and evolving understanding of self, highlighting how past experiences inform present conditions and future aspirations.

In the succeeding chapters of the thesis, I illuminate whether the participants successfully progressed in their Greek language learning, detailing the struggles and successes they encountered. By integrating both psychological and sociological perspectives, this study provides multi-dimensional understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder academic progress. The theoretical contribution of this thesis lies in its holistic approach to motivation as defined by Ryan and Deci, offering insights into how learners can achieve an integrated sense of self through language learning and the influence of sociological factors. In conclusion, as future chapters in this thesis show, this research underscores the importance of considering both psychological and sociological factors in understanding SL learning. By examining how motivation and social identity influence language learning, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing adult British language learners of Greek.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Methodology is the overarching values framework I used to acquire and construct knowledge. The emphasis in this methodology section is on the interaction between myself, the researcher, and the participants, the collection of qualitative data and the interpretation of the insights gathered. Methods, on the other hand, are the techniques that I decided to apply to carry out the collection of qualitative data needed (e.g. In-depth interviews). They are the tools by which I gathered the majority of my data within my interpretivist framework.

3.1 Using qualitative data

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.3) highlight that “qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world”. This suggests that qualitative researchers examine phenomena within their natural environments, seeking to understand or interpret these phenomena through the meanings that individuals ascribe to them. The objective of this study was to examine the participants' experiences as articulated by them. Collecting qualitative data was deemed suitable for this study's goals. Specifically, the primary objective of this thesis was to explore the complexities involved in the process of advancing knowledge of the Greek language as experienced by an adult British learner. The focus was on individual experiences, as emphasised in interpretivism. This paradigm emphasises individual experience and is concerned with subjective phenomena that cannot be quantitatively measured.

I used a Case Study approach. An interpretivist Case Study approach was appropriate for several reasons. The research design involved conducting research in authentic settings and gathering data directly from participants. Interpretivist researchers engage in research within the subjects' environments, allowing for direct participation and engagement with individuals. Thus, context is crucial in this type of research (Creswell, 2003; Robson, 2011). This study was situated at the Hellenic Centre, an institution for adult foreign language learning, focusing on British adult learners at an advanced stage of Greek language acquisition. As well as focusing on individuals’ experiences of learning Greek, the study considered their experiences of social context, as well as influence of their ethnic, gender, professional, and educational backgrounds on these experiences.

Another reason for collecting qualitative data is its suitability for small-scale studies, typically involving a limited number of participants or situations (Robson, 2011, p. 19). Such data provides richer and more detailed insights than quantitative data. My decision to collect qualitative data was driven by the goal of understanding, rather than predicting, social phenomena as constructed and perceived by the participants (Patton, 2002). The study aimed to understand why and how this particular group of learners was motivated to learn Greek, as well as how they believed their individual sociological factors and experiences influenced their academic progress in the Greek language. I aimed to develop theories relevant to this specific sample of individuals and contexts (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Qualitative data was collected to add insights to existing motivational theories applying to English (L1) learners of Greek, a group of learners that has not been researched much previously. The study sought to

understand what these learners believed motivated them to progress academically and what challenges they believed hindered their progress.

Creswell (2014; 2012), in his *Research Design,* comments on the characteristics a project focused on qualitative data must hold, such as the emphasis on the meaning made and produced by the participants and not researchers initially bringing meaning from the literature review. He also emphasised the fact that the design of the various phases of conducting research might change, and so the research process must be emergent and flexible while constantly adjusting to the needs of the study. He also emphasised the significant role the researcher plays as he/she must continually reflect on his/her background and experiences and how the latter can shape their interpretations.

Studies drawing on quantitative data seek for standardisation of procedures and random choice of participants to ensure the generalisability of results to avoid external influences. In contrast, research involving qualitative data seeks to explore how a social context, or a problem, is perceived by a particular group of individuals. Therefore, the selection process and sampling are of significant importance as qualitative research requires the researcher to identify the most appropriate participants to answer the research question/s being studied (Merriam, 1998). It is the study's research objectives that will determine the selection of the group with their characteristics (gender, profession, religion, cultural / ethnic / educational background). As Creswell (2009) suggests, the participants must be purposefully selected as these will be the informants whose perspectives must be closely related to the situation studied. Sargeant (2012) states that participants could be considered by role, those who share the same or contrasting perspectives, those who experience the same situation at the same level and/or those who tick the same diversity boxes or contrasting ones (gender, ethnicity, or other background). An additional consideration is the number of participants. According to Charmaz (2006, cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 189), "you stop collecting data when the categories (or themes) are saturated: when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties". The idea of *data saturation* derives from grounded theory, and it suggests that the number of participants is sufficient when they do not add any new insights to the study or when there are no new topics or concepts that emerge from data collection with the participants.

I aimed to interpret the qualitative data collected from this research according to the experiences of the individual participants. I sought topics that emerged in order to provide explanation and understanding of the problem that was investigated from the perspective of each individual. Identifying and arranging emerging topics in a way that led to interpretations of the multiple realities that the interviewees individually experienced, lay at the center of this process. This process comprised of segmenting and taking apart the data as well as putting pieces back together. This procedure, unlike the analysis applied to quantitative data, was iterative (Creswell, 2014).

This process of qualitative data analysis follows three stages: deconstruction, interpretation and reconstruction (synthesis). According to Bryman and Burgess (2002), the most used steps to follow in order to analyse qualitative data are: become

familiar with the data, identify key questions for each participant's data to answer through the analysis, categorise the topics and create an exploratory theoretical framework for each individual by identifying connections between topics, and finally, explain the findings for each person. Both Sargeant (2012) and Hammarberg (2016) argue in their articles how important it is to ensure that research has integrity and scientific value, and this can be achieved through certain evaluative criteria, such as sustaining throughout authenticity, trustworthiness and credibility.

3.2 Case Study: Definition and Justification of choosing this methodological approach

The reason I chose the Case Study approach was because I wanted to study and understand in-depth how the six individual participants perceived their learning of Greek, what they believed motivated them, what influenced them in their learning of Greek and what made them struggle in advancing their progress after a period of time. Case Study allowed me to capture the context and the lived reality of each participant as well as made me see the relationship between theoretical aspects of motivation and the particularity of the context through which each subject generated perceptions of their experiences. Furthermore, Case Study research enabled me to be flexible with my choice of methods of collecting and analysing data. As my intention was to gain concrete, contextualised, in-depth knowledge about a specific real-world subject, I felt that I made the right choice of research method.

The qualitative Case Study methodological approach facilitates researchers in conducting an in-depth investigation of complex aspects of specific individuals in specific contexts. According to Yin (2014), a Case Study entails a comprehensive examination of the unit of analysis within its natural environment. The 'unit of analysis' in Case Study research may encompass an individual, a family, a household, a community, an organisation, an event, or even a decision. In the case of my thesis, it was an individual belonging to a particular group of learners within the context of an institutionalised Centre where they learn Greek as foreign language.

Case Study has been extensively used in the educational field as a qualitative research approach when a researcher aims to elicit in-depth explanations of social behaviours or of a phenomenon. According to Tellis (1997), Case Studies help researchers capture a holistic and overall view of the situation by offering an immediate understanding of the behavioural conditions through the participants' perspectives. In this way, Case Studies assist researchers in understanding not only the process but also the outcome of a situation through interactions, reconstruction and analysis of the data collected.

Yin (2002), in his attempt to sum up the reasons that justify the use of a Case Study, singles out the following four conditions: 1. when the aim of the research is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions, 2. when the researcher aims to capture authentic answers from the participant of the problem under investigation they deal with, 3. when the contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon being studied and 4. when the boundaries between the context and the problem studied are not clear.

Three of the most prominent methodologists of Case Studies are Yin (2002), Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995). Their perspectives differ in their epistemological approach, but they are also complementary in understanding the overall concept of Case Studies. Yazan (2015) attempts a comparative analysis of the perspectives of these three methodologists, claiming that Yin's epistemological stance on Case Studies, though not openly admitted, seems to be a positivist one. On the other hand, Stake's and Merriam's viewpoints seem to be more in line as they are both epistemologically inclined towards an interpretivist paradigm when researching a phenomenon. Stake and Merriam perceive reality not being an objective entity and foreground the significance of reality being perceived through multiple perspectives which are important to acknowledge to gain access to knowledge of a problem, as well as of an individual. Yin, Stake and Merriam, however, differ somewhat in the way they view the roles of the researchers and the readers in the construction of meaning making. The Case Study approach is recommended for researchers who have a genuine interest in the Case itself and seek to gain a deeper understanding of it. The Case was not selected because it represents other Cases or because it highlights a particular trait or issue, but rather because the Case, in its uniqueness and ordinariness, is inherently of interest.

The approach in my thesis aligns with an intrinsic Case Study, as defined by Stake (1995). In Stake's case, the researcher is an interpreter, a gatherer of participants' interpretations, and must report her/his interpretations to the reader. According to Yazan (2015, p.137), "in Stakian perspective, qualitative researchers should expect another level of reality or knowledge construction to occur on the side of the readers of their report" in addition to both the participants' and the researcher's interpretation. In Merriam's case (1998), the reader is not expected to get involved in this construction or interpretation.

According to these two methodologists (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) in contrast to Yin's list (above) the essential characteristics of a Case Study must include it being: holistic (as the researcher must take into consideration both the participant and their context), particularistic (as it focuses on a particular person), descriptive (as the researcher must provide a rich description of the person under study), interpretive (as the researcher must be able to interpret and explain in depth the participants' answers), empirical (as the researchers must base their study on the observations from the field) and heuristic (as the researcher must help the readers understand the phenomenon and thus, discover and learn things about themselves in relation to the phenomenon).

Despite the advantages, Case Studies have received criticism in relation to their validity and the credibility of results. Yin (1984, p.21) states that "too many times, the Case Study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the directions of the findings and conclusions". Guba and Lincoln (1981) additionally comment on the Case Study's ethical nature as authors must be aware of biases that can affect the final product referring to them as unusual problems of ethics.

3.2.1 Individual Case Studies

Case Studies can be classified into two types: Individual and Multiple Case Studies. An Individual Case Study involves an in-depth analysis of the experiences of an individual. This approach enables the collection of substantial data on these individuals, providing a rare opportunity to enhance our understanding of their individual experiences.

Stake defines the Individual Case Study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single Individual Case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake, 2006). Stake argues that reality is multiple and subjective, suggesting that human experiences are known through the various perspectives of a given situation, all of which are equally valuable. In his view, Individual Case Studies represent socially constructed realities, which are shaped through one individual's human interactions and lived experiences. Each individual understands his/her own experience of reality differently.

In Individual Case Studies, the primary instrument is the researchers themselves because knowledge and reality are co-constructed through the active engagement of participant and interviewer. Individual Case Studies are inherently subjective because they are largely dependent on the researcher's observations and narrative. Hargreaves (2022) suggests that the relatively recent post-modern turn to focus on subjectivities has helped give credibility to studies of subjective perspectives like Individual Case Studies. In Individual Case Studies, the role of researcher is important as he/she functions as an agent to help bring into the light all the personality elements of the participant in order to help achieve a more illuminative portrayal of the participant's individual, subjective experience. Within this context, Thomson (2007, p. 574), emphasises the need "to provide a compelling account of the individual, of how and why events unfolded as they did and of the transformation of the individual over time". As Thomson (2007) states, focusing on one individual can allow insight into how the individual is involved in creating changes in his/her life in a specific temporal and social context. The aim of Individual Case Studies is not to generalise from an individual's experiences but rather to make them deeply relatable to other individuals, who may then reflect on the issues that emerge; this requires the agentic support and guidance of the researcher (Plummer, 1983).

Such qualitative research studies can be criticised for their inherent subjectivity, which makes researchers who adopt this approach concerned with ensuring the objectivity of their data (Anderson, 2010). However, as Stake (1995) argues, it is up to the researcher to find ways to present their subjective perspective in a way that ensures objectivity and trustworthiness in their findings through making the process of selecting and analysing data as transparent as possible.

Flyvbjerg (2006) contends that Case Studies are often mistakenly perceived as being primarily useful for hypothesis generation rather than hypothesis testing or theory building. Stake (1995) does not approach Case Studies as primarily a means of testing preconceived theories; rather, he views them as opportunities to explore the unique characteristics of Individual Cases to enhance understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In this sense, a comprehensive understanding of a Case Study is achieved when researchers immerse themselves in the context being studied. This immersion enables researchers to fully comprehend the perspectives and behaviours of the one social actor involved. Therefore, an Individual Case Study depends on the

researcher perceiving the individual not as a research 'subject' but as an active participant who can thereby provide unique insights and who has agency over their life-course.

3.3 Designing a Case Study

Designing a Case Study is not an easy task. Stake (1995) argues for a flexible design that allows researchers to make necessary changes as they proceed from design to research. According to Stake, the emphasis should be on the issue itself and the issue questions; these should inform the initial design. The research questions will then help the investigator decide about the structure of the interviews (or, in other research, observations or document reviews). In Stake's (1995, pp.16-17) words, the researchers "use issues as conceptual structure in order to force attention to complexity and contextuality……because issues draw us towards observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concerns". Stake's attitude is very flexible, as he avoids defining an exact starting point to collect data, which avoidance he considers to be a central feature of the qualitative tradition.

As explained earlier, I feel more inclined towards Stake's definition of Case Studies because his approach is flexible. The initial question was not shaped based only on literature review. The research problem is one that that I tried to answer during the years I spent teaching Greek to adult students. Through my observations, my research questions were almost there before I approached the literature. In other words, my study was primarily inductive.

Stake proposes three different types of Case Studies: the intrinsic (when there is a genuine interest in a particular Case to be studied), the instrumental (when the Case plays a more supportive role and the emphasis is on providing insight into a bigger issue or refining a theory) and the collective (Multiple Case Studies). Stake's (1995, p.51) data collection plan includes "definition of case list of research questions, identification of helpers, data sources, allocation of time, expenses, intended reporting". His views on collecting this data contrast with Yin's (2002), as Stake seems to be more flexible legitimising the use of observations, interviews, surveys or document reviews. Yin (2002) totally opposes the idea of using quantitative data collection methods, arguing that a Case Study embodies exclusively qualitative data. As for data analysis, Stake (1995, p.71) defines it as a "matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations". He suggests two strategies to analyse data. The first is categorical aggregation. This means to cluster complex data into categories; this way, the researcher seeks a collection of instances from the data that he/she expects to be relevant to the research question themes, patterns, and topics, which emerge from data reading. In this manner, the researcher creates patterns and seeks correspondence between two or more categories. The second is direct interpretation where the researcher looks at a single instance and tries to make meaning out of it. In general, Stake recognises the flexible character when designing a Case Study and collecting and analysing data and concludes with giving the freedom to the investigator "through experience and reflection, to find the forms of analysis that work for him or her" (1995, p. 77).

In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss the participant selection procedure (first and second phase), the demographics and the data collection process via the semi structured interviews, the audio files and transcriptions, the data analysis process, sections on trustworthiness and credibility, my role as researcher, reflexivity and iterative process, and the limitations of this study.

3.4 Participant Selection Procedure

3.4.1 Stage 1: Pilot

I chose to select exclusively British students to be participants. I wished to address my research to a particular group of learners defined by their ethnic background, that is being British. It was commonly believed among teachers at the Hellenic Centre that this particular group of learners significantly struggled to progress in their learning of Greek. Therefore, my selected group of learners shared two things: their nationality and the fact that they were L1 English speakers. Thus, Greek to all of them was their second or third foreign language, with the exception of one participant, Valerie, who is a heritage language learner and a native English speaker. Valerie decided to learn Greek as her second language (L2), despite having spoken it during the first four years of her life. However, she had since forgotten most of the language and sought to relearn it almost from the beginning. At the time of the study, she had little to no command over Greek grammar, syntax, or vocabulary, remembering only a few random words or everyday expressions. For this reason, I considered her a legitimate member of the group under investigation.

I initially approached 21 British students and I handed them out a questionnaire (APPENDIX 4) that aimed to detect their initial responses regarding their learning progress of Greek. These questions addressed motivations for learning, perceived difficulties, strengths, goals, definitions of advanced level, areas of competence and incompetence, metaphors for their learning journey, motivational imagery, and examples of successful classroom activities that facilitate language learning. At this preliminary stage, my primary research interest centred on understanding the challenges faced by British adult learners of Greek as they strive to advance their language skills. Their answers made me reflect on which participants would be the most suitable to select from for my questionnaire responses, based on the richness of their responses and background.

The rationale for distributing the Stage 1 questionnaires to students was to refine my skills in formulating questions, improve my approach to addressing participants, and gain a deeper understanding of the students' challenges, obstacles, and motivations as learners. Additionally, I aimed to become more acquainted with their backgrounds, as I aimed to select the most suitable participants for the semi-structured interviews. This phase was exploratory and served as a pilot, helping me to begin conceptualising the types of questions necessary to collect rich data. The goal was to explain, in summary, the reasons behind their reported motivation and the factors that hindered their academic progress in learning Greek.

3.4.2 Stage 2: Sample Selection

I chose six British students based on the richness of their answers to the initial questionnaire, as well as their gender, age, profession and educational background. I tried to make the sample as rich and diverse as possible. The students' backgrounds varied as well as their needs and motivations for learning Greek. As the aim of this thesis is to research the motivational obstacles in learning as perceived by adult British students, I decided to focus on students who had been studying Greek for several years at the Hellenic Centre and thus had detailed experiences to share. Thus, the participants chosen were among those attending advanced levels at the time this thesis was conducted; they had all passed the exams of B1 according to CEFR and they were all working towards the levels of B2 and/or C1 and C2. The C1 and C2 levels are the levels that according to CEFR stand for effective operational advanced attainment of the language. Therefore, overall, the choice of the students I interviewed was based on two main criteria: 1. their length of attendance, and 2. their diverse social, family, cultural and professional backgrounds.

The six students selected were all taught by myself at some point during their learning of Greek, but had experienced other teachers too. This was a conscious choice I made as it allowed me to gain their confidence more easily and to share views and personal beliefs without, as much as possible, feeling intimidated or judged. Such a decision can raise issues of researcher bias, yet I wanted to feel connected to the participants in order to gain valuable insight. I was already very familiar with their progress of Greek. Gaining access was straightforward. The Director of the Hellenic Centre and the Director of Studies were aware that I was conducting this research and they gave me full access as well as their approval following the ethics form review instructions (APPENDIX 3). Other teachers' involvement was minimal as I exclusively focused on the students' views. However, the teachers were informed about my research by the senior management team of the Hellenic Centre.

3.4.3 Demographics of the six participants

This group of interviewees / participants covered a range of socioeconomic status (SES) factors such as income, education and employment status. According to Oakes and Rossi (2003, p. 12), "SES is a construct that reflects one's access to collectively desired resources, be they material goods, money, power, friendship networks, healthcare, leisure time, or educational opportunities". I made a conscious decision to include participants who appeared, on the surface, to have different socioeconomic backgrounds, as I wanted to see how and to what extent certain sociological and socioeconomic factors could influence their learning of Greek, regarding their motivation and opportunities they had in accessing material and resources. For two out of six participants (Virginia, Elinor), their socioeconomic status could be described as high, based on income, their professional status, their living conditions and the opportunities they had to use resources. For three out of six participants (Rita, Omar, Alex), I considered their socioeconomic status as medium and for one participant (Valerie), I would consider her socioeconomic status as medium low. It is important to state at this point that it was quite difficult to find students of a low socioeconomic

status attending lessons at the Hellenic Centre. As seen in the findings chapter, it is evident from Valerie's responses that the Centre itself (its architecture, the location situated in central London in the prestigious area of Marylebone, the profile of students attracted to attend lessons there as well as the events and exhibitions hosted) appeared to be non-attractive and non-accessible to people of a lower socioeconomic background.

Other diversities considered in selecting these participants included: one of them being an L1 English speaker and heritage learner of Greek (Valerie), one of them being a member of the LGBTQ+ community (Omar), one of them being a language teacher (Rita) and three of them belonging to the third age group of learners (Omar, Elinor and Alex).

More specifically, regarding the participants' professional and gender identity, I would identify them as follows:

- a female novel writer and journalist
- a male CEO of a global company
- a female communications manager working for the Cabinet Office
- a female lawyer and partner at a big law firm in London
- a retired female fashion photographer
- a female language teacher of Spanish and Italian who had previous working experience in the university sector

Most of them had no family connections with Greece, although one of them was of mixed Greek Cypriot and British / Irish background. The rest were learners whose Greek was the second or another foreign language they attempted to learn, with no, limited or significant previous exposure in SL learning.

The figure below shows the participants' demographic background:

Figure 1: Participants' demographic and background data

Number	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Languages	Level of Greek according to CEFR
1	Virginia	57	F	BA degree	novels' writer and journalist	English French	C1
2	Omar	63	M	MA degree / PhD	CEO of a global company	English Japanese German (GCSE)	C1

3	Elinor	61	F	MA degree	lawyer and partner at a big law firm in London	English French (GCSE) Italian (GCSE)	B2
4	Alex	63	F	BA degree	fashion photographer	English French (GCSE)	B2
5	Valerie	38	F	BA degree	Communications' manager working for the Cabinet Office (Previously worked as a journalist)	English	C2
6	Rita	58	F	MA degree / PhD	Lecturer in foreign languages at the University: French and Spanish	English French Spanish	B2

3.4.4 LGBTQ2+ learners

An additional and small group of learners, represented by one out of the six participants interviewed in my thesis, are from the LGBTQ2+ group (represented by Omar). Despite the fact that I did not have the opportunity to find many participants studying Greek at an advanced or proficient level who were members of the LGBTQ2+ community, there was one in particular and I decided to include him in the list of students being interviewed as I wanted to explore whether he had experienced any acts of inclusion/exclusion by the institution or whether he felt there had been any instances in his learning that were related to this which had affected him negatively and prevented him from achieving his academic goals. The works of Sanders and Mathis (2013) and Gray (2023) have been quite informative by addressing in different ways how education sectors globally have been hesitant to include gender diversity in the SL learning curriculum as well as how stereotypes which can come up in teaching materials can silence the discourse of the LGBTQ2+ community.

3.5 Data Collection: Procedures and Methods

After the selection process of the participants, I developed a series of questions to direct my main data collection, which would emerge from the semi structured interviews.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewing is regarded as one of the main methods the social sciences make use of to collect data, especially when the research focuses on participants' views. Research interviews are categorised in three main types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Due to my choice of the topic and my focus on participants' opinions, I decided that semi-structured interviews were most suited to my research. This was for

two reasons. First, participants' voices are key in this study. Semi-structured interviews were the best way to allow me as a researcher to have access to their thoughts and feelings. Questionnaires seemed not an appropriate method to use to gain the data I needed due to their statistical nature; survey questions do not easily allow the participants to express themselves in a way that would do their answers justice as they can limit their responses to agree/disagree or choosing among multiple answers as chosen by the researcher. Interviews, on the other hand, are more open-ended; they allow respondents to freely express their views in their own terms, they can be changed as per need and preference, though they can be time and money consuming when conducted and transcribed. Moreover, interviews allow the researchers not only to investigate more complex ideas but also provide them with the opportunity to clarify when a question is obscurely perceived by the respondents as well as facilitate their personal engagement with the collection of data (Dowling and Brown, 2010).

Second, my reason for choosing a semi-structured type for the interviews was the fact that contrary to the other two types, this one seemed to be the one that strikes a balance between two things: the issue of the researcher pre-determining what will be discussed as well as collecting rich data within limits and with certain guidance provided to respondents. As Kvale (2006, p.10) points out "a semi-structured life-world interview attempts to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective. This interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena".

As earlier explained, this research adopts an interpretive approach. Interviews are seen in this thesis as 'accounts' of lived experiences, of attitudes and beliefs, and they lead to meaning making which is co-constructed by the interviewees as much as the researcher. This view is in line with what Talmy (2010) and Holstein and Gubrium (2003) suggest are the main strengths of interviews as a social and dynamic practice. As Holstein and Gubrium (2003, p. 71) state, "when the interview is viewed as a dynamic, meaning-making occasion… the focus is on how meaning is constructed, the circumstances of construction, and the meaningful linkages that are assembled for the occasion". The term dynamic contrasts with a structured interview study in which the same questions produce the same answers on repeated occasions. Instead, we are dealing with an interview process that embraces the contradictory accounts of events and does not fear shifting and opposing individual participant perspectives with the goal to illuminate both differences and commonalities in the narratives of the respondents.

To further expand on my choice of semi-structured interviews and the practices and challenges faced during conducting them, I had to become familiar with several guidelines as addressed by Dowling and Brown (2010). As the authors state, the main concern with semi-structured or 'loosely structured interviews' (as they term it) is that the interviewer "might need to explore the world from the perspective of the interviewee and to construct an understanding of how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences" (2010, p.78). There has been much criticism raised regarding the use of interviews, mainly concerning two aspects. The first is the epistemological skepticism on social research methodology and how unreliable the accounts of participants can be at representing the reality as it is, whether it is an 'external' or

'internal' subjective reality. As Creswell (1994) notes, not all participants are perceptive or articulate enough to provide rich data if we seek an account of 'reality'. Patronising as this idea may sound, there is an element of truth in it as regards whether the participants can convey their truths in a lucid manner, due to respondents' tendency to answer what they think is expected of them. This is where the interviewer must act responsibly, and skillfully guide the interview process through questions that will elicit rich data. The second aspect is, as Silverman (2001) points out, the misconception of participants conveying their authentic experiences rather than falling into the trap of journalistic accounts of personal events. However, a researcher has no option but to carefully listen to their narratives and it is up to him/her to select the data he/she needs to answer the research question and limit the challenges faced in interviews.

As Dowling and Brown (2010) suggest, there were certain things I needed to take into consideration before conducting interviews, such as: locations are never neutral and the choice of where an interview might be conducted could affect the trustworthiness of the data. Thus, I had to minimise any unintended effects of the setting by carefully choosing places and classrooms where they felt comfortable enough for the interviews to be held. Furthermore, I focused on developing a relaxed and comfortable climate during interviews by being aware of: the nonverbal communication such as gestures, body posture and eye contact; I addressed open-ended questions; I tried not to lead in my questioning and used probes, such as "can you give me an example of…" for further clarification when interviewees talked in generalities; I tried to clarify the language when it felt obscure; and I opted for silence when questions evoked certain emotions in an attempt to encourage the participant to continue.

3.5.2 Phase 1: Piloting Interview Schedules

Before conducting interviews with the six participants, I decided to pilot the interview schedule by informally interviewing a student outside the selected group. This preliminary step allowed me to test the interview design, serving as an essential part of the research process. It provided an opportunity to identify and address potential issues, ensuring that the main study would generate meaningful and insightful results.

The pilot interview was conducted with a male participant from a middle socio-economic background, educated to the university level, and employed as a chemical engineer. He was attending an intermediate-level Greek class, which aligned him closely with the profiles of the intended study participants in terms of social, family, and educational background. During the interview, I asked him about his initial motivations, struggles with learning, social background, education, specific instances of difficulty with language acquisition, efforts to overcome these challenges, his perspective on progression, and his views on the Hellenic Centre as a learning environment. The pilot interview took place at the Hellenic Centre on 20/01/2018, and the participant selected the pseudonym "Sherlock."

One key issue that emerged during the pilot interview was my use of terminology, including grammar and theoretical concepts like "social identity", which were unclear to the participant. This caused some misunderstandings and led me to reflect on the need to eliminate or simplify such terms to avoid confusion of future participants.

A second issue was time management. The participant expressed concern that there was insufficient time for him to fully articulate his responses, particularly regarding his motivations and social identity, leading to interruptions and repeated references to previous points. This highlighted the importance of allocating adequate time for participants to provide thorough answers and ensuring that the interview sessions proceeded smoothly.

Additionally, I did not strictly follow the predetermined order of questions, allowing the conversation to flow more naturally. As a result, the participant answered some questions earlier than expected and expanded on previous points during later questions. This lack of structure caused him to omit important insights regarding the impact of social class on his language learning. This experience made me realise the need to restructure my interview techniques to encourage participants to delve deeper into key areas of inquiry. After conducting the pilot, I became convinced that organising and structuring the questions in a particular order would allow participants to provide more in-depth and valuable responses.

In conclusion, based on the insights gained from this pilot interview, I recognised the need to improve the interview design to avoid potential flaws. As a result, I decided to take several steps to enhance the process, including clearly defining the interview questions, seeking expert review, and selecting appropriate participants for the semi-structured interviews to follow.

3.5.2. i Pre-interview tasks

I also asked Sherlock, prior to the pilot interview, to complete two tasks to make the interview process more engaging and enjoyable. This was writing a mini autobiographical statement about himself and selecting pictures that best described his learning experience. Sherlock admitted that he found the process highly enjoyable. I found the information gathered from his statements and the pictures particularly illuminating, as they provided valuable insights into his harder-to-reach perceptions of language learning.

Therefore, to enhance the interview process for the final interviews, I requested participants complete these two tasks. First, they were asked to compose a brief personal statement about themselves. Second, they were instructed to select images that would illustrate and enhance their learning experiences with Greek. These tasks were designed to encourage participants to express their thoughts freely and provide responses that genuinely reflect their views. It also gave them additional time and space through which to narrate their perceptions and experiences. This approach also enabled me, as the researcher, to conduct the interviews in a more relaxed and less authoritarian manner by allowing the participants to take control over their own initial presentations.

3.5.2. ii Mini autobiographical statements

Each interviewee introduced themselves through the mini autobiographical written statement authored by the interviewee themselves. They presented these during the interview. These addressed such themes as motivation, desire, drive in achieving this goal of language advancement and their linguistic, as well as their cultural and ethical

background. The mini autobiographical statements added some small insights which contributed to each participant's presentation in the findings chapter. The guidance I gave was that such statements should not exceed the length of a paragraph (not more than 15 lines). Additionally, I asked them to include aspects of their personal background, professional and / or family, the reasons why they chose their pseudonyms, and reasons why they chose to learn the Greek language (what, perhaps, connects them with the language and /or the country).

3.5.2. iii Pictures and Images

Similarly, pre-interview selected pictures were used as a potent tool to compliment participant responses in the interviews. Images were used in the interviews, as chosen by each of the six participants, and generated discussion, evoking emotions, memories and ideas (Glaw et al., 2017). These visual dimensions, accompanying their verbalised perceptions about learning (Albers, 2007), helped me enrich the depth of my understanding.

The concepts participants linked with the pictures triggered additional reflection on learning. For example, Omar decided to communicate his passion for intellectual curiosity by choosing a picture that showed the process of etymology, of the word pyromaniac. In his own words, etymology was a major pleasure and incentive to continue learning the language. Valerie chose pictures which all elaborated her desire to feel connected to a cultural reality that motivates her to learn the Greek language, from food to music and role models. She chose a picture of a Greek traditional dish because it represented her need to become competent in Greek cooking the same way she wanted to feel competent speaking Greek. The pictures she chose about music and poetry all represented aspects from the Greek culture she felt connected with, and these motivated her to learn the language. The choice of the lyra player represented her need to become one like him, a person with a foreign identity who can speak Greek at such a proficient level, like Ross Daly. For Virginia, the choice of the Athenian café represented the perfect place for her to socialise and it emerged as the perfect learning site to practise her speaking competence and feel more empowered.

For Elinor, she split her pictures up into two sections: one in which pictures represented what made her feel comfortable that is closer towards the things she loved most and motivated her, such as locations where British people whom she admired chose to live in Greece and on the other hand, pictures of Giacometti's sculptures that represented how stranded she felt being a woman speaking Greek compared to a man. Alex chose pictures about places and film characters, which were related to art and photography, cultural aspects she values which help her sustain her romantic relationship with the country. Rita, on the other hand, chose a Frida Kahlo painting as a commentary on how the act of learning Greek made her feel liberated, experiencing in this way another identity that she enjoyed having and one that made her feel empowered. The participants' choices of pictures illuminated their verbal perceptions on how they felt about their learning of Greek, as they functioned as pictorial instruments that depicted their ideas and feelings that might have been harder to express in words. Looking at their choice of pseudonyms and the pictures they chose to describe their learning journey offered an alternative way to elicit participants' beliefs

without asking them directly during the interviews. McGrath (2006) suggests that there are clear advantages to enquiring into the learners' views without using verbal means of extracting their responses on language learning. This process helped me collect rich data and uncover genuine responses from the students.

Final selection of participants

Figure 2: Dates of initial approach with questionnaires sent to participants – See below the dates of initial approach of the six participants finally selected

Date	Participant
10/03/2018	Rita
12/03/2018	Omar
17/03/2018	Valerie
22/05/2018	Elinor
01/05/2018	Alex
06/05/2018	Virginia

3.5.3 Phase 2: Carrying out the interviews

During the summer months of my research, I finalised the set of questions for the semi-structured interviews, incorporating feedback and notes from my colleagues, with whom I had discussed the issues. (APPENDIX 5). Subsequently, I scheduled and conducted the semi-structured interviews. Regarding the place and time, the Hellenic Centre's contribution was significant as I was offered by them a small classroom that was available to host the interviews. Logistically it worked well as the interviews took place before or after students' lessons at the Centre and thus, they were not asked to commit to visiting the Centre at times that did not seem convenient for them. The students had all by that time invested a significant amount of time (in fact years) of learning the language and they all felt they would be pioneers in bringing necessary changes to both the syllabus as well as the training of the new teaching staff when recruited, through making the latter aware of their needs and backgrounds.

3.5.3. i Semi-structured interviews

Interviews took place during the students' at the Hellenic Centre and the participants were interviewed individually. Most interviews lasted more than 60 minutes and the responses were audio recorded and transcribed. Information about the full length of each interview along with dates they took place is provided below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Semi - Interviews

Pseudonym	Date	Length (hours; minutes; seconds)
Omar	25/10/2018	01:54:03
Valerie 1	05/02/2019	01:48:39
Valerie 2	18/03/2019	03:02:36
Elinor	28/04/2019	02:07:27

Alex	14/05/2019	02:04:34
Valerie 3	29/06/2019	02:12:31
Virginia	25/08/2019	03:18:29
Rita 1	10/09/2019	02:34:25
Rita 2	17/09/2019	02:45:31

Total hours: 20 hours and 33 minutes

3.5.4 Phase 3: Preparing the data for analysis

The data analysis process in this study commenced concurrently with data collection, as "the analysis of qualitative data is an ongoing process that is best begun early, as soon as the data collection begins" (McQueen and Knussen, 2006, p. 239). Qualitative researchers often engage at the same time in the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the findings.

The first stage before analysing the data was to become familiar with the data. This required frequent listening to audio recordings. After each interview, I listened carefully to the responses and made notes to help guide me to answer the research questions. It was the first step to make myself familiar with the insights I was receiving from the participants as I strongly believe that first impressions are as important as the final assembling.

The second stage was to transcribe the interviews verbatim and immerse myself in the transcribed data. This was a tough and very time-consuming process as I wanted all responses to be presented without making any attempt to reduce or omit anything. I then reviewed the transcripts. I converted each set of the audio-recorded data from the audio recorder I used into audio files on my laptop. Then I transcribed all the verbal responses for each person myself, and added notes about non-verbal signals I noticed during interviews. I typed each of the six transcripts up and stored them separately in password-protected Microsoft Word documents. Interviews were transcribed and audio files were saved with the help of a portable recorder. For the recording of the interviews, I used a Sony ICD – PX470 portable recorder which had very good sound value, a good in-built storage capacity to save the files as well as very friendly audio recording format.

Despite the time-consuming and monotonous nature of this task, necessitated by the extensive amount of data gathered during my study, it significantly enhanced my familiarity with the dataset, thereby providing a rich understanding that informed the initial stages of analysis. Upon completing the transcription, I revisited the audio-recorded interviews multiple times. This process of listening to the verbal data in their original form, coupled with the careful reading and re-reading of the transcriptions, fostered a deep immersion in the data.

Regarding the transcription process, I went for the verbatim option of transcription as I wanted to have a full version of what the participant said without omitting any significant aspect of his/her responses. The steps I followed for the transcription were**:** step 1 – I had to listen to the whole recording before transcribing it to familiarise myself

with what was said; step 2 – I had to transcribe the initial rough draft of each interview without paying that much attention to accuracy; and step 3 – I had to revisit the transcript to make sure that I have the exact words from each participant.

I sent each transcript to the participants to review it as I wanted us both to be in full agreement before I started analysing them. I changed the names of participants to make all transcripts anonymous. I used the pseudonyms the participants chose.

3.5.5 Phase 4: Data Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

3.5.5 i Stage 1: Data analysis – Individual Case Studies

For Stake (1995), subjectivity is an essential aspect of reality. From a Stakian perspective, interpretivism (or non-determinism) should serve as the guiding epistemology for qualitative Case Study research. Stake (1995, p. 99) argues that "most contemporary qualitative researchers hold that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered". Accordingly, qualitative Case Study researchers are primarily viewed as interpreters, responsible for collecting and synthesising various interpretations. Their role involves reporting their own interpretation of the reality or knowledge (others' interpretations) they encounter throughout the research process.

My analysis consisted of two distinct stages. Initially, I sought to present each individual as a unique Case, treating them as individual subjects. Following this, I conducted a Cross-Case analysis to explore potential sociological factors that might be applicable across the sample.

In the first stage, my focus was not on identifying themes but on constructing a holistic understanding of each individual and their learning trajectory in Greek. This stage employed an Individual Case Study approach for each participant, with particular attention given to their motivation for learning the language and the challenges they encountered.

Drawing on the work of Ryan and Deci (2000), I analysed each participant as a complete, Individual Case, maintaining the integrity of the individual rather than fragmenting their experiences. It is important to emphasise the comprehensiveness of this approach, which sought to preserve each participants' narratives as whole entities.

In this first stage, I drew on interpretivist approaches which focus on individuals' own interpretations of experience. Hans Eysenck (1976, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224) recognised the importance of focusing solely on the individual, stating, "sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at Individual Cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!".

In this analysis process, my goal was to examine the individual perceptions and experiences of participants, particularly in relation to how they experienced motivation during their Greek language learning. I aimed to explore what factors they had experienced that impacted their progress in learning Greek.

I adopted Stake's (1995) approach in my analysis and chose an intrinsic approach and thus, I carried out direct interpretation by examining the Individual Cases of the participants, focusing on their unique learning experiences and instances. I carefully analysed and interpreted these instances to derive meaning. My direct interpretation of the data involved the development of categories and the identification of emerging topics for each individual. In this process, I evaluated each person's assumptions associated with these topics, while also incorporating my own judgments into the analysis.

One potential pitfall during the analysis phase, as noted by Stake (1995), is the risk of treating each data source independently and reporting the findings separately. However, since I only had one main data-source, i.e. interviews, I was able to develop an integrated understanding of the overall participant. In a separate analysis process, I then looked across the Multiple Cases (see below).

To maintain a holistic view of each individual's experience, I identified an emerging topic that, in my view, dominated the participant's narrative and was significant in understanding their motivation to learn Greek. I then read each participant's full story with this topic in mind, constructing a coherent narrative. In doing so, I sought a story thread that could bind the various parts of each individual's story, focusing on their efforts to stay motivated, engaged, and make progress in their language learning.

I selected the following threads for each participant:

- For Valerie, the central narrative thread was the influence of social class on her experience of learning Greek. This thread permeated all her responses, from reconnecting with her past and addressing missed opportunities to learn the language, to feeling included by native speakers and the Greek community. This thread encompassed her efforts to overcome the struggles she faced and ultimately transition to claim a different social class status.
- For Omar, the key thread was his desire to empower his life partner.
- For Virginia, the main thread was her search for ways to become an independent learner, mastering the language to effectively communicate with her audience.
- For Rita, the thread centred on her desire for liberation, feeling liberated from social class barriers directing learning opportunities, the ability to change identities, and to connect with foreign cultures.
- For Elinor, the central thread was overcoming her internal social barriers that prevented her from fully integrating into a new culture and linguistic reality.
- For Alex, the key thread was on finding a way to address the emotional gaps and traumas of her past by affirming her love for Greek culture through learning the language.

Stake (1995) asserts that reporting a Case Study presents significant challenges for researchers due to the inherent complexity of the approach. Effectively conveying the findings in a succinct manner is often difficult; however, it remains the researcher's responsibility to translate a multifaceted phenomenon into a format that is easily comprehensible to the reader. The objective is to provide a thorough description of the

study so that the reader feels as though they have actively participated in the research. This, in turn, allows the reader to assess the applicability of the study's findings to their own context. It is essential for the researcher to describe both the phenomenon itself and the context in which it occurs. Importantly, according to Stake (1995), there is no single correct method for reporting a Case Study.

In reporting my Case Study and conveying the participants' experiences, I analysed their responses in relation to the previously mentioned story threads. I then added sub-headings to each participant's separate section to allow readers become familiar with the topics emerged in the responses.

Other specific areas I explored in every Case included:

- Motivational factors: role models, intellectual curiosity, and other sources of inspiration
- Experiences of competence, autonomy and relatedness
- Learning Greek: factors contributing to successful learning and particular struggles encountered
- Connection with the Hellenic Centre: reasons for choosing it as a place to learn Greek, interactions with teachers and classmates, and comments on teaching practices
- Contact with Greek culture and community: interactions and socialisation with native speakers, visits to Greece, and efforts to develop a sense of connection to the country, culture and language
- Biographical aspects: family background, education, profession, and previous exposure to other languages

3.5.5 ii Stage 2: Cross - Case Analysis of Sociological Factors

In exploring each individual's subjective insights, it was essential also to understand how these insights related to broader social structures. In my effort to comprehend and communicate the complexity of these students' motivations, I had to account for the sociological factors that they believed influenced their behaviours. Consequently, to contribute to my account of the overall findings, I conducted a separate analysis to incorporate these Cross-Case factors. I undertook a Cross-Case analysis of particular sociological topics that emerged during the initial stage of data analysis, particularly concerning the relationship between the individual and the sociological factors influencing them.

3.6 Coding and emerging themes in relation to sociological factors

Keeping with traditions of qualitative data analysis, I looked for sociological topics as they had appeared within each individual participant's interview responses in order to consider more widely their influences on the learning of Greek as a foreign language among this cohort.

Qualitative coding is a systematic process of categorising excerpts within qualitative data to identify underlying themes, topics and subsequently, patterns in these. This

method allows researchers to organise semi-structured interview data, such as excerpts from transcripts, into coherent themes and patterns of themes for analysis. Through this process, researchers can uncover insights that accurately reflect the data, and the individual narratives embedded within it, but which make sense of these across multiple Case Studies (Braun and Clarke, 2006), in my case six of them.

The process of coding these sociological topics took a long time. Each reference to sociological aspects for each participant had to be revisited multiple times, always with respect to the full interview. The aim was to approach the data as if I had no preconceptions, that is, drawing on an adapted version of Grounded Theory. While it is impossible to have no preconceptions, I attempted to approach this specific data as openly as possible.

The steps I followed to code these excerpts inductively included:

1. I did a first round of coding the data: I read the data that I had already designated as relating to sociological influences in my Individual Case analysis. I assigned new codes to these excerpts, phrases and words. I then revisited all the selected sections of texts re-applying newly constructed codes. I did this until no new codes emerged.

2. I then re-organised my codes into categories and sub-categories and repeated the process of going through the excerpts of the texts until no new categories appeared within the sociological references and all my codes were subsumed into individual topics under the umbrella of sociological influences. This stage dealt with reconstructing and revisiting the selected data. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that topics and themes emerge within a data set with some level of prevalence. The frequency with which these emerging topics appear is relative and there is no set proportion of this data set that needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a topic or pattern. The key thing about the theme is, according to the authors, to capture something important in relation to the research question (in this case, relating to sociological influences) rather than the number of times it appears within the participants' responses.

3. I then explored all the emerging themes relating to sociological influences across all the participants to identify differences and commonalities and added this analysis as a supplementary section, to follow the individual profiles presented in the findings chapter. This was useful primarily in relation to exploring background sociological influences, which were less specific to each individual than their perception of their own competence, autonomy and relatedness. I re-read several times the emerging themes in relation to sociological factors that influenced individuals' motivations, so that I could compare these across the participants.

4. Once I had completed the coding process, I returned to the literature and spent a considerable time revisiting sociological factors that influence the learners' motivation and perceptions on sense of self and academic progress in L2, such as social class and gender.

Such process helped me discuss sociological factors that were wider influences on the individuals' more subjective motivational perspectives about learning Greek. I was then able to bring all my findings together and consider how the different factors related

to each other and the contribution of each Individual Case in illuminating answers to my research findings.

Table 1 below illustrates my attempt to demonstrate how I assigned codes and provides examples of how I used them. I distinguished between initial codes and emerging themes regarding the sociological factors that affected participants' motivation and overall learning experience of Greek.

In Table 2 (see APPENDIX 7), I assigned ID codes so that I recognised the potential for a single code to apply to multiple others within the participants' responses.

Table 1: Coding Process – Search for codes and categories – Inductive approach of Grounded Theory in relation to Cross-Case codes for sociological factors

DATA SOURCE	TRANSCRIBED PASSAGE	INITIAL CODE	EMERGING THEME	THEORISATION
VALERIE	***I think when you are coming to learn the language with such emotional baggage, it's important to have a 'neutral' environment and teacher. So for example I'm not really a fan of the Centre and its 'values'***	De-politicise the values of the Hellenic Centre	Social Class Struggles – Learning Languages, a matter of privilege	Sociological factors affect motivation, calls for language learning to become more inclusive
ELINOR	***I do find that frustrating to not be able to say something quite complex and that is because I have not got a level in any language apart from my own language, to be able to do that. I am frustrated and not comfortable with starting at the beginning and accepting that I will make***	• Feeling frustrated with others being better than her in learning / speaking other foreign languages • Feeling inferior • She withdraws from attempting to speak a foreign language as she feels defeated by people who	Sociological factors influencing her progress Social class background impacting on motivation	Sociological factors impacting her motivation of learning of Greek

	mistakes. It definitely holds me back.	have the same level of education as she does • Syndrome of the good student			

3.7 Reflexivity and Iterative process

Iteration is a methodological procedure that enhances trustworthiness in research through frequently revisiting the data collected. An iterative process suggests repeated returns to the source of the data to ensure that the findings are evidenced by the data. It is a reflective process on the data that was collected to incorporate what has already been gained and learned with the aim to recognise new ideas. Instead of following a predictable linear approach in terms of data collection and analysis, iteration suggests a more cyclical one, capturing new data and improving methods as one goes along (Patton, 2002) with the purpose of gaining a more complete understanding of each respondent's beliefs and the context under study (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009; Kekeya, 2016).

For example, after interviews with my first two participants, through iteration, new insights emerged, and these were considered in all future data collection processes for all the remaining participants.

Through iteration, I revised some questions about the biographical status and socioeconomic background of participants and demanded more explanation from them when needed. More specifically, the second interviewee, Valerie, was the sole heritage learner in the group. She provided during her interview detailed information regarding her connection to the Greek language, the limited exposure she had to learning Greek, and the minimal opportunities available to her. Valerie was the second participant interviewed, and her responses were particularly insightful, highlighting a crucial aspect of language learning—namely, learners' access to additional resources and opportunities for language study. While the issue of heritage language learning did not emerge in the responses of other participants, the broader theme of access and learning opportunities was addressed in my interview with all remaining participants. To compensate for the first interviewee having missed out on my insights about this topic, this topic was subsequently also explored with Omar.

Similarly, one specific question posed to the last four students only, sought clarification on how they navigated the "authoritative law" of the teacher or the native speaker. The issue of the "authoritative law" of the native speaker significantly impacted three students' motivation to continue learning. Consequently, I subsequently contacted the two remaining participants, Omar and Valerie, to request further information on this issue and to inquire whether they had any additional comments. Neither participant said they had encountered issues in this area. However, Omar emphasised the importance of having both native and non-native Greek-speaking teachers, suggesting

that this approach could make the learning experience more relatable for beginner students. He noted that non-native teachers may help reduce the intimidation often associated with the authoritative presence of a native speaker. Rita also expressed a similar view on this matter. These comments were added to my dataset for analysis with the rest of the data.

The next section considers trustworthiness and credibility as it relates to interpretivism and iteration.

3.8 Credibility and Trustworthiness (known in quantitative data studies as "validity" and "reliability")

Qualitative researchers apply various strategies to ensure rigour and integrity in their studies. In their attempt to guarantee the credibility and trustworthiness of their findings, they must make sound judgments about their research in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods they undertake and the integrity of any final conclusions (Silverman, 2001). According to Guba (1981), Merriam (1998), Shenton (2004) and Robson (2011), to achieve what quantitative data researchers call "validity and reliability" (which for them can often be measured statistically), researchers working with qualitative data must ensure the following, given that statistical accounts do not apply to their data:

1. The data generation methods and analyses must be both systematic and transparent to the readers and other researchers and the researchers' decisions must be clear and transparent.

2. The verbatim words of participants must be heard an adequate number of times to allow contradictions to emerge as well as different ways to interpret the data through the reader him/herself identifying similarities and differences within each person's data.

3. Rich description of background and settings is given for purposes of transferability to other studies and contextualisation.

4. There must be reflection and sufficient commentary on the investigator's involvement to alert the reader to the potential for biased and preconceived assumptions and to the steps the researcher took to avoid these.

Shenton (2004, p. 63) suggests four alternative aspects of "validity" in relation specifically to qualitative data. Shenton defines these four constituents as follows:

a. Credibility, which is a criterion through which "investigators attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented" (see 2. above).
b. Transferability, by which the investigators "provide sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to other settings" (see 4. above).

c. Dependability, which is quite challenging in qualitative research, “[a]lthough researchers should at least strive to enable a future investigator to repeat the study” (see 1. above).
d. Confirmability as “researchers must take steps to demonstrate the findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions” (see 2, 3 and 4 above.).

Drawing on the above guidelines for how to achieve credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research, I followed the steps below:

i. Developing familiarity with the environment where the research took place
ii. Building trust with the participants
iii. Members checking
iv. Being transparent with the participants regarding the implementation of the methods
v. Peer Debriefing
vi. Acknowledging and reflecting on my personal bias as researcher and lack of distance from the interviewees – i.e. my position as an insider researcher

3.8.1 Familiarity with the Environment

Developing an early familiarity with the culture of the participating organisation before commencing data collection is essential and has been an easy task for me. The Hellenic Centre is a place I worked for many years as a teacher of Greek, and I instructed and delivered various sessions as training courses to new teachers who joined the Centre. It is a place I felt very familiar with conducting my research and I had full access to visit classes, to discuss with students I had never taught and I had full access to the demographic data of the Centre as well as all teaching resources available. I additionally managed the demands other teachers had when visiting their classes to avoid any discouragement and to have full access in their lessons. My familiarity with my colleagues at work as well as many students attending lessons there was a given.

3.8.2 Building trust with the participants

After selecting six participants, I contacted them again and explained my intention of interviewing them in length during the next academic year of 2018/2019. As my intention was to be fully transparent with them, I gave them a full account of not only the topic of my thesis but also the methods I would follow to collect data and the process of interviews. Each participant was given the option to refuse participation. This way it was more likely that only those genuinely willing and prepared to offer data freely got involved. From the beginning of each meeting, participants were encouraged to speak frankly. I aimed to establish rapport at the start of this initial conversation, and I clarified that there are no right answers to the questions asked. I also explicitly stated that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to provide an explanation. Moreover, I explained to them that my intention was to host the interviews at the Hellenic Centre, though I offered them the opportunity to host the interviews instead at a location they felt more comfortable with in case they

had issues conducting the interviews at the Centre. None seemed to oppose the idea of having the interviews at the Centre. This way, I made sure that the criteria and procedures were made fully explicit to them so that they could affirm my own trustworthiness. I provided them with a full account of the context within which the study would take place as well as a thorough description of the procedures I would follow to record them and transcribe the data. This way, I managed to increase trust felt by the participants by being very clear about both the nature as well as the procedures of the research. Two participants (Valerie and Elinor) asked me to reassure them that all responses would be in full confidentiality and no comments would be communicated to any other member of the senior management of the Centre. I reassured them of this and explained to all of them that their names would not appear in my analysis as their responses would be introduced through their chosen pseudonyms.

3.8.3 Being transparent with the participants regarding the implementation of the methods.

Being transparent was one aspect of gaining the trust of my participants. I also made it clear to all participants that they would have access to the full verbatim transcription of their interviews and that they would be invited to make any necessary changes if they had any objections to the wording. I also told them that they would have access to the findings section after it was completed and they were encouraged to ask me questions regarding the nature of my thesis as well as the theoretical framework I was using. I explained to them the process of conducting the interviews and the recording and invited them to have access to the audio files to double check whether they wanted to change any of their original statements. I additionally explained to them the significance of conducting lengthy semi-structured interviews.

I invited participants to question me in case they had issues not understanding the purpose or phrasing of certain questions, thereby eliminating any issue with the language coming from me, not being a native speaker of English. I explained to them that I wanted their voices to be heard regarding their views on their learning process as well as on the two cultures. I shared with them in brief the theoretical framework I would base my research on, focusing on issues of motivation, self and social identity.

One of the most important issues that was raised by one participant in particular (Virginia) was whether I had the intention to make any comparisons between the participants in the way they learned successfully or not. I did confirm that there would be parts where I would be making comparisons between the participants with the intention to identify similarities and differences and relate them to my theoretical framework and research questions. I explained to her that my intention would be to discuss issues that emerged from the data and not make comparisons about attainment. In this way, I wanted to be transparent to any participant who had issues with the methodology process and discuss alternative options in case they had objections.

3.8.4 Member checking

The primary goal of member checking is to ensure the trustworthiness of the data in qualitative analysis. As Miles and Huberman (1994) have suggested, researchers must account for potential biases and the subjective nature of data. Member checking is a method used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings by mitigating the influence of the researcher's knowledge and assumptions on the interpretations that emerge during analysis. This process involves verifying specific interpretations and topics that arise from data analysis, ensuring that they accurately reflect the perspectives of the participants (Curtin and Fossey, 2007). Buchbinder (2011) emphasises the significance of member checking, as it aids researchers in reassessing their understanding of a given concept. During interviews, researchers can implement member checking by asking participants for clarification on ambiguous comments, thereby providing respondents with an opportunity to confirm or correct the researcher’s interpretation of their statements. They can also invite them to check all data sources they have contributed to.

As Lupia and Elman (2014) argue, the norm of data transparency, often referred to as data access, requires researchers to make available the evidence underpinning their empirical findings. By providing access to data, they suggest, research is enriched and expanded, allowing participants to check its authenticity. This enables participants to independently evaluate the extent to which the evidence supports specific descriptive and causal interpretations and analyses, as well as the credibility of those conclusions.

I employed strategies of member-checking by sharing interview transcripts and drafts of the final report with each research participant to make sure I had represented both them and their ideas accurately (Creswell, 2014). The process of member checking took place on two occasions.

Occasion 1: I returned the interview transcripts to respondents, asking them to verify facts and confirm their original words. I then discussed the interview transcripts with them and asked them whether they had any objections, whether they wanted to modify anything, change any wording or discuss the option of adding or deleting any unwanted data. The aim was for them to review and confirm the completeness and accuracy of the data collected. This process took place in September 2019.

Omar had no objections to the transcript but one. He wished to omit a negative experience he had narrated to me while visiting Greece with his partner a long time ago, while they were practising the speaking of Greek language socialising in central Athens. The experience was quite negative and discriminatory to them and Omar felt it was unnecessary for me to include it in the final transcript as he considered it would not add much to the data. I agreed and acted accordingly by omitting it from the data.

Valerie decided to change certain words regarding her views on the Hellenic Centre as she felt her criticism was quite harsh and she replaced them with milder ones. I agreed to do this but discussed with her that her negative comments regarding the values the Hellenic Centre represents should appear in the data as it was valuable and enlightening information on how she viewed the Centre as a place of exclusion. We both agreed on that and apart from certain adjectives omitted, we kept intact the rest of the transcript.

Virginia expressed her wish to omit a paragraph which discussed how languages are learned in the UK, making a distinction between the systems in Greece and the UK. This was because she felt she was being very harsh in her criticism of the Greek educational system. Although I agreed to do this, we discussed keeping part of her criticism on how different her experience of learning Greek in Greece was and decided to maintain a large part of her response though omitted three sentences.

Elinor's only objection was the three sentences she wanted to omit when she spoke about her negative experience being a woman and socialising in Greece practising her Greek. The incident took place a long time ago but she was still traumatised by it. This way she asked for any specific reference made about this incident to be omitted. We agreed on omitting these three sentences in which she specifically stated what happened but agreed on keeping the rest of the negative experience there.

Alex had a couple of objections to the wording she used when she had to express her anxiety about learning Greek at the Hellenic Centre, being taught by a female teacher. She asked for two particular descriptive words to be omitted as they were quite derogatory, and I agreed on deleting them, without, however missing any information regarding the negative impact on her motivation of having such learning experience.

Rita was overall very happy with her interview transcript, and she asked for nothing to be changed. She was particularly grateful that all wording she used had been kept as it was without missing anything.

Occasion 2: I invited the participants to have a follow-up validation interview, to check and validate my presentation of the findings of the thesis. I returned the analysed data to them and asked them to identify their experiences as they appeared in the findings section and invited them to discuss with me whether they had any objections with the presentation, synthesis and overall discussion regarding their section. This second stage of member checking took place in January 2022.

In this second stage, there were three participants who had minor objections and/or additions. The first one was Alex who became quite emotional while reading her story, as discussed in the findings section, especially when I associated her motivation to learn Greek with the loss she suffered in her personal life, and she commented that she wished she had added more details on the particular efforts she made to overcome her struggles with the improvement of her speaking competence. I discussed with her the option of revisiting the interview transcript. She did and we both agreed on adding the information she mentioned about the difficulties she finds emulating the Greek sound system.

The second one was Elinor who expressed her desire to have the parts where she describes her attempts to speak Greek while she had social gatherings and communications with the locals shortened and I agreed, though I suggested that such instances were quite illuminative of her inability to feel included within a community and they impacted her motivation to progress in speaking. We both agreed on keeping a shorter version of that in the final discussion.

The third one was Valerie, who wanted to add more information from her interview when commenting on her trips to Greece, her social encounters with the locals as well

as her connections and affiliations with her female friend who inspired and motivated her to continue learning the language. I found this to be a fair suggestion as these passages, although long, were quite illuminative of her experience in both practising the language as well as being motivated. We both agreed on the length of the excerpts I finally used in her section.

The other three participants (Omar, Rita and Virginia) had no objections and didn't wish to make any changes in the way I presented the findings.

Through such a process of checking and discussing the transcripts and findings with participants, I became increasingly aware of how important it is to be transparent with participants when evaluating data. This process helped me represent them in a way that gave justice to their learning experience as they lived it.

3.8.5 Peer Debriefing

An additional measure I followed to ensure credibility in my thesis was having a peer debriefing session with my colleagues at the Hellenic Centre regarding the evaluation and refinement of the research questions I used before embarking on the interviews I conducted.

I conducted a meeting with my colleagues, who are also teachers, as well as the Director of Studies at the Hellenic Centre, during which I received feedback on the pseudonymised data. This feedback highlighted areas I had previously overlooked due to my close involvement in the work environment. As a result, I was able to refine the interview questions for participants. This collaborative process not only brought to light aspects I had initially ignored but also allowed me to expand on certain areas in the list of questions I had originally planned to ask.

I selected colleagues from the Hellenic Centre as peer debriefers due to their insider knowledge of my research area. Their familiarity with the context allowed them to provide insightful feedback on my work. While this approach did not fully eliminate researcher bias, it was helpful, as my colleagues had extensive experience teaching the student groups I was studying, offering valuable perspectives on the students' strengths and weaknesses.

The debriefing meeting, held in June 2018, involved three colleagues. I introduced my research, which I explained focused on adult learners studying Greek at the Hellenic Centre, specifically their motivations, efforts to progress, and challenges. We reviewed the initial interview questions, and I emphasised my intention to prioritise motivation over a purely linguistic focus. I also clarified my decision to study British students exclusively, which my colleagues supported. Their feedback was invaluable in improving my research before the next round of interviews.

The revisions I made involved expanding upon specific questions related to the participants' motivations. For instance, I included inquiries about the figures and role models that inspired them to learn the target language, as well as the particular challenges they encountered when dealing with emotions such as intimidation, fear and anxiety during interactions with native speakers. Additionally, I addressed the

difficulties they faced in relation to the teaching methods employed by their language instructors and examined how learning alongside peers influenced their progress.

3.8.6 My role as insider researcher and my relationship with the interviewees

Bias is an obstacle that researchers must learn how to overcome as it can occur at each stage of the research process (J. Smith and Noble, 2015). It can lead to misinterpretations of the data and can therefore have important consequences and negative impacts on the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. My personal involvement and commitment to the Centre could have worked against my role as a researcher. Achieving objectivity can be particularly challenging for insider researchers due to their high level of subjective involvement (Chavez, 2008). The insider's privileged access, or closeness, may compromise his/her ability to engage critically with the data. Although objectivity is not the main concern of researchers collecting qualitative data, it remains important that each respondent's reality is reflected as faithfully as possible in the researcher's interpretations. This dual role of the insider researcher has been negotiated by various theorists and included discussion about whether this element adds to or reduces the credibility and trustworthiness of findings (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Yanow, 2006).

In my research, I had to take into serious consideration two important factors that could have resulted in biased outcomes. The first was my role as researcher and how actively involved I was in both their teaching as well as being the person who was conducting the interviews. The second factor and thus, obstacle I had to overcome, was the fact that, in the participants' eyes, I represented the organisation (the Hellenic Centre), which could easily intimidate them from revealing the truth of their learning reality as they felt and perceived it.

A researcher is deemed an insider when they share specific attributes with the participants, while an outsider lacks such connections (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In other words, as Gair (2012) expresses it, the insider/outsider status reflects the degree to which a researcher is integrated within or external to the group being studied. An insider researcher conducts his/her work within a social group, organisation, or culture of which he/she is a member, whereas an outsider researcher approaches the group as an observer or visitor. In my case, I was an insider.

There were advantages of being an insider researcher. My familiarity with the industry allowed me to facilitate the data collection process, making it more efficient and less time-consuming (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002). Greene (2014) observes that insider researchers tend to have intimate knowledge of community members, in contrast to outsider researchers, who may have limited understanding and experience with the study participants. Thus, the insider's acceptance and familiarity within the study location can encourage participants to be more open, enabling the researcher to gather rich data. Greene (2014) further emphasises that a personal connection with informants or participants can influence how a researcher relates to them professionally. However, this can be circumvented by an intimate insider developing the skill of knowing when to maintain professional boundaries and avoid overstepping

the line between being a friend, a teacher and a researcher. According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), other advantages include having a greater understanding of the culture being studied, not altering the flow or social interaction unnaturally and having a greater deal of knowledge, which would take an outsider a long time to acquire.

In my role as insider researcher, I carefully considered the issues above to address the challenges of being an insider researcher, particularly the lack of distance between myself and the interviewees. The following steps were taken to manage these challenges effectively and ensure credibility and trustworthiness in my research:

- ***Confirm with the participants that sharing information would not affect how they were perceived as students***

As an insider researcher, one of the primary challenges I encountered was the need to reassure participants that any information shared during the interviews would not affect how they were perceived as students outside the research context. Prior to conducting the interviews, I explained to them that what would be discussed would be strictly kept separate from any institutional records or other staff, and they should feel comfortable sharing detailed and personal information. This openness was encouraged so that they could discuss issues with someone who understands and is knowledgeable about their learning environment. I emphasised that there should be no fear about the impact of their disclosures on their relationship with either myself or the Hellenic Centre or indeed their future records there. These assurances were necessary to avoid their fear leading them not to say what they really believed.

- ***I drew a line between being teacher and researcher***

To establish a relationship of trust with participants while maintaining my distance from them, it was essential to preserve a neutral stance as much as possible as their teacher. This approach helped me maintain an appropriate level of social and emotional distance, which DeLyser (2001) identifies as a crucial aspect of the reflexive process. At the beginning of each interview, I made it clear to all participants that, despite any sense of familiarity or previous discussions in class in relation to my role as teacher, they should assume I had no prior knowledge of the topics or issues being discussed. This was to encourage them to share as full a story as possible about their language learning. I emphasised that they should approach the conversation as if they were discussing these matters with me for the first time.

In insider research, where the researcher and participants continue to be members of the same group—in this case, being students at the Hellenic Centre—participants may have shared information about other group members, such as teachers, which could potentially affect future activities or relationships. I was mindful that the research might have longer-term implications beyond the study itself in this sense. To address this, I assured the participants that they would be able to continue their studies without any issues. Specifically, I emphasised that any names of teachers mentioned during the interviews would be pseudonymised, and no identifying information would be disclosed.

- ***I drew a line between being friend and researcher***

None of the participants I selected for interviews were friends of mine, and I ensured that all students perceived me in my professional capacity as a teacher. I made that clear prior their interviews. Although having a friendship with a participant could facilitate easier access to information, establish rapport, and build a high level of trust more effortlessly, I was concerned about compromising the credibility of the data and findings. To avoid these risks, I made a deliberate decision from the outset to separate the roles of teacher and friend, maintaining in this way my distance as a researcher from those I researched.

- ***I attempted to avoid any struggle of power***

To mitigate the power differential between the participants and myself as their teacher and as researcher, I held the power differential in mind and tried not to act in an authoritarian way, stating that I would collaborate with them in order to foster mutual respect. Given my prior involvement in the participants' learning and having previously taught them, it was essential to carefully consider these power relationships.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research can often be ethically challenging (Yanow, 2006). I had to target the following issues: identification of subjects, deception of participants regarding the aims of the thesis, the misuse of personal information and / or expectations for compensation for participating to the study. Thus, ethical safeguards were used to ensure this research's ethical character. The present study followed the British Educational Research Association Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018) [2] to ensure that the participants' ethical rights would be safeguarded and that the research would be ethically sound and cause no harm. At first, a consent form was handed to participants ensuring them that their role was voluntary. Then, I explained to them in the meetings I conducted prior to their interviews what the purpose of this research was. (APPENDICES 1 AND 2)

All six seemed happy with the explanations given and accepted my invitation to participate. I outlined what their involvement would entail and how the data would be stored and used. I reassured them that there would be anonymity and confidentiality. The voluntary element of their participation was highlighted in our meetings as well as their right to withdraw from the interviews at any stage, as I was quite transparent that the interviews could be time-consuming. As with any research methodology, it is essential to protect the identities of participants. I assured the participants that pseudonyms would be used throughout the study. Furthermore, I informed them that I would alter minor details or characteristics to further safeguard their identities. Additionally, I guaranteed as far as was possible that the demographic information and descriptions of the Hellenic Centre would be carefully managed to ensure that I did not accidentally reveal the identities of the participants.

[2] https://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/bera_ethical_guidelines_2018_4th_ed.pdf

Approval and consent were also requested from both the Director of the Hellenic Centre as well as the Director of Studies. (APPENDIX 3). The procedure I followed was like the one described above with the participants. In this case, however, I had to further explain and be transparent to both directors about the outcome of this research and how this would help the teaching methods as well as the learning of its clients. I had to, therefore, be explicit about the ways the Hellenic Centre would directly benefit from such research.

Ethical issues in research arise not only in the collection of data but equally in the handling of it as well as in the reporting and interpretation of findings. At all points, care was taken, and maximum transparency attempted.

Furthermore, I tried hard to ensure that participants did not feel they were being put in a vulnerable position. In the consent form distributed prior to the interviews, I explicitly stated that participants had the right to withdraw from the interview or the entire process at any point if they felt uncomfortable or vulnerable. I assured them that they could be open with me during the interview process and encouraged them to express their emotions directly. Additionally, I was mindful of the way I framed questions, being particularly self-reflective to avoid triggering any distressing memories or unpleasant feelings associated with previous traumatic events.

Despite these precautions, an unfortunate incident occurred where a participant was reminded of a traumatic experience (Elinor). Acknowledging the inherent psychological interplay between the interviewer and the interviewee in qualitative research, I accepted the participant's request to omit the lines describing this event from the interview transcript. I also offered her the option to withdraw from the interview if she felt uncomfortable, but she chose to continue with the process. It was challenging to find a balance between my role as a researcher and the situation my student described. However, I remained composed and assured her that nothing would be addressed without her full consent.

Moreover, I had to address several additional ethical issues, including the following. First, I made efforts to maintain transparency and avoid misleading participants regarding the methods used in my research and the procedures employed to ensure that all responses remained fully anonymous.

One participant, Valerie, raised concerns about whether I would remove any titles or identifying details during data analysis that could allow readers to discern the participants' identities. I assured her that full anonymity would be preserved to the greatest extent possible. I explained that any biographical information presented would be done in a manner that did not make it easy or obvious for readers to identify the speaker. Any specific titles or identifying characteristics would be omitted. Furthermore, I informed her that she would have the opportunity to review and discuss with me any concerns she might have regarding how her section was presented.

At the beginning of the interviews, I reassured all six participants that their personal information would not be misused, and that all data would be securely stored. I informed them that electronic interview files would be stored on a password-protected computer, while paper files would be kept in a locked cabinet.

Regarding the compensation of the participants, one of the ways I decided to acknowledge the participants' investment of time and interest in my thesis is the principle of 'reciprocity', as suggested by Trainor (2013). Trainor argues that the relationship between the researcher and the participant has the potential to be reciprocal on the condition that each side contributes something the other needs or desires. In my attempt to reward all participants for their generosity in agreeing to participate in my research, I decided to deliver free classes of Modern Greek for 3 weeks and exclusively look at their needs as stated in the interviews. This took place with the permission of the Hellenic Centre, which very kindly offered me a small room to conduct my lessons. In addition, I sent them copies of all the interview sound files and transcripts.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

This section explores the limitations of this PhD study, focusing on issues related to participant selection, data availability, prior research and participant engagement.

- ***Sample Size and Population Study***

One of the primary limitations of this study revolves around the small sample size. With only six participants, the generalisability of findings to a broader population is inherently restricted. However, generalisation was never my aim. Rather, in-depth understanding was the goal. Qualitative research emphasises relatability over generalisability, and while the insights gained from these six individuals are valuable for the insights they provide about individuals' thoughts and feelings, they cannot be extrapolated to represent any entire population of adult learners studying Greek as a foreign language.

- ***Participant Selection Issues***

Selecting participants posed significant challenges due to the specific criteria required for inclusion in the study. Identifying adult learners with the right profile involved visiting multiple classes and engaging in extensive conversations. Many prospective participants cited professional commitments as reasons for their initial hesitation or inability to invest time in interviews. This selection process may have introduced a tendency towards individuals more inclined or able to commit to the participation in the thesis, potentially excluding those with different perspectives or experiences. Finding the right participants was a difficult process as I had to consider various factors, such as: their willingness to be open and discuss aspects of their personal life without feeling intimidated and their commitment to undergo lengthy interviews. Such a process made me reflect on who was available and whose story, background and motives felt similar with others. It was therefore a complex process that may have hindered data collection. However, it was the most productive sample I could manage in the circumstances.

- ***Lack of Available Data on Adult Learners Learning Greek***

Another limitation encountered was the scarcity of existing data and prior research studies specifically focusing on adult learners studying Greek as a foreign language.

This lack of foundational research made it challenging to contextualise findings within a broader theoretical framework or to compare results with existing literature. This study therefore operates within a relatively underexplored area, necessitating cautious interpretation of findings without extensive prior empirical support. On the other hand, this reveals the importance of these new data which help substantiate a relatively underpopulated field.

- ***Time Constraints for Interviewing Participants***

Time constraints emerged as a practical limitation throughout the study. Scheduling interviews with participants who had varied professional and personal commitments proved challenging. Delays in arranging interviews sometimes affected the continuity and depth of data collection.

- ***Participant Reluctance in Focus Group Discussions***

Although I initially wanted to conduct individual interviews followed by a focus group, this approach was unsuccessful, so I decided to abandon the idea. The main reason was that despite efforts to engage participants in focus group discussions to contrast and validate individual responses obtained in one-on-one interviews, there was a notable reluctance among participants to participate in group settings. Reasons cited included discomfort discussing personal experiences in a group and concerns about confidentiality. This reluctance restricted the study's ability to explore divergent viewpoints and the dynamic interaction of perspectives that typically emerge in group settings. Three of them appeared to be quite hesitant in sharing their views with others due to the sensitive nature of their personal beliefs (Valerie, Virginia and Elinor). These three participants felt that they could not share their views with others as they felt that their opinions could intimidate others. Therefore, the methodological choices of this thesis were constrained by such decision.

In conclusion, this study is not without its limitations. The challenges as mentioned all influenced the study's scope and potential implications. Yet, acknowledging these limitations is essential for understanding the context-specific nature of findings and for informing future research directions in this underexplored area.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis and Discussion

Prior introducing the participants, I introduced myself to them as:

A Teacher of Greek Language, who decided to leave his country in pursuit of his dream to live and work in a foreign city that is full of opportunities in education, art, culture, and music.

4.1 Participant 1 (Omar)

The first participant I interviewed was Omar. As I did with all participants, I asked them to take a sense of authorship and introduce themselves to me in their own way. I have additionally asked them to use a pseudonym from a character that inspired them chosen from a British film.

In his own words, Omar introduced himself as follows:

Male, UK national, gay and proud, early retiree from career in tourism PR and marketing with clients in Japan, UAE, Singapore and Australia. MA degree in Japanese language and literature, also proficient in French, Italian and German. Love of Greece, its landscape and culture, and of languages in general was my incentive to begin learning Greek.

The reasons stated behind his choice of the character of Omar, one of the main characters in Steven Frears's 1985 film *My Beautiful Laundrette* were in his words:

Omar reminds me of my husband and long-time companion who is of Greek / Cypriot descent. As soon as I met him, I felt instantly attracted to foreign cultures and foreign communities that existed in London; I also feel very critical about Thatcher; Omar is a character that I wished it was me. I wanted to see how London felt back then through the eyes of an immigrant back and the struggles he faced. This could have been me or my partner, instead. But I chose to be my partner. [Written notes by Omar, Autumn 2018]

Motivation: intercultural and interlingual love relationship with his partner

Even from the very beginning, Omar placed one of the main reasons and motivations behind choosing to learn Greek within an affective context. His intercultural and interlingual love relationship with his partner has been a major drive for him to reach the decision of learning Greek. Moreover, Omar's political views as well as his attraction to foreign cultures and foreign communities or the struggles and experiences the immigrants felt when moved to the UK are of equal significance too.

There is a three-fold pattern that I detected that would justify his reasons behind what motivated him learn Greek. More specifically, the major topics emerged regarding his motivations, were the affective factor (his love interest, his male Greek Cypriot partner), the strong internal knowledge of grammar he has and the ability to explicitly talk about this and be able to project in when learning other languages in an Chomsky-

esque way, which derived from his background and education on learning other foreign languages in the past, and third his need to feel included within an environment of other foreigners and his appreciation of foreign cultures.

Learning was influenced by sense of belonging to the foreign – Family: He always wanted to feel included and have a contact with the Foreign

To start with, Omar confessed that his first attraction to foreign cultures could be dated back to the 60s and 70s when he experienced his schooling years during which England was becoming a multicultural society. Although the school he went did not have many students, mainly due to the fact that he was brought up in a relatively affluent part of the UK as well as his school being a grammar school, which was very difficult to receive an offer from being an immigrant, there were students from Bangladesh, India, Jamaica and even the former Yugoslavia. Omar also attended what it used to be called “Oriental Institute” where in his words “everybody was everything and anything”. That sense of being free to choose who he wanted to be and with whom he wanted to be with was significant for a boy of that age who was discovering his sexuality. From such early stage in his life, Omar made choices to study French, German, Italian and Latin. Such was his passion to get to know the foreign, the other, that he pursued his linguistic ventures at the university, where he originally applied to study French and German but then after his eldest brother’s choice of moving to Japan for work, he immediately became interested in Japan, and he managed to get onto a Japanese degree course which was very new then. There were only a handful of universities in England that offered such choice, and he went for it without having any prior knowledge to the language. That was such an interesting experience which he thoroughly enjoyed it and that resulted in finding work in London at a Japanese company where he worked for many years. Describing his work experience in such an environment, Omar says:

I was speaking Japanese all day long in a work environment in London. All my colleagues were Japanese and all the correspondence was in Japanese in London. I was really living in Japanophone environmental the day time in London.

When he was offered the opportunity to promote Japan as a destination for international scientific conferences, Omar travelled abroad a lot and he had the opportunity to use his knowledge of other languages, such as French, Italian and German. In his own words while describing his work experience, he stated:

I have always been working in other languages.

Such was his exposure to using foreign languages and communicating with people of foreign cultures that he found it difficult to work with English people.

About ten years ago I set up a business with two friends and it was the first time that I had ever worked with English people in a 35-year career and I found it quite stressful working in an English working environment. It was quite a different dynamic.

That places Omar within a very specific context of a learner who is quite unique within the British (or any other) society, as he had an experience of not only learning but equally practicing communication with many foreign clients while living in London and

/ or travelling abroad. Omar's profile stood out for me as he has such a rich exposure to other foreign languages and cultures that instantly attracted my attention to choose him as one of the people I would be very keen to interview and study.

Motivation was inspired by desire to support the partner and overcome obstacles

When I asked Omar about his original motivation and what drove him learn Greek in particular, he confessed that there were mainly two reasons. At first, his decision had to do with his long-time partner and husband who is from a Greek Cypriot background but British born, who does not speak 'proper Greek' in Omar's words, and who has always felt intimidated for not being able to speak Greek as many British Cypriots felt of second and third generation. This is a large immigrant community whose members relocated to the UK and London in the 60s in part due to the colonial links between these two countries and the internal conflict that followed Cyprus' independence from the British Empire. As it happened with many other immigrants, such was the need for the young members of this community to speak English and adjust themselves to the British society that many avoided for years to speak Greek or found no reason of speaking it as an act of feeling included and belonging into a new society.

Motivation was driven by perception of need for empowerment: missing opportunity to reconnect with the past

Omar's decision of embracing the past of his partner who was afraid to approach it as he felt that was a missing opportunity for him to reconnect with his past and the language of his country of origin, can only be described as an act of empowerment. Omar took advantage of his strong linguistic abilities and decided to learn the language his partner avoided to learn to prove his respect to his other half as well as make him feel more comfortable. Omar picked up easily and fast what was wrong, in his view, with his partner's ability to speak accurately the Greek language. In his explicit answer, he mentioned:

My partner is British born but of Cypriot origin but does not speak 'proper Greek'. He doesn't really understand a lot. His grammatical basis is good but knows virtually none of the words because he was largely brought up in this country and lived in Cyprus as a young child but was living with grandparents in a village, so the Greek that was spoken there was Cypriot, it wasn't modern Greek. As I become more familiar with Greek I can actually see where his and his parent dialects have retained aspects of ancient and classical Greek that have been deleted in modern Greek. It is also surprising how much you can understand as it is basically the same language. They have a much larger lexicon borrowed from other languages than mainland Greek. There are many more Turkish and Italian words.

It takes a learner whose internal knowledge and grammar is in balance with his explicit knowledge (the external grammar) to be able to eavesdrop the nuances, the difficulties and the struggles one faces when attempts to re-learn the language family members spoke that was either originally learned wrong or a lot has been forgotten and what is left is pieces of a broken memory with words or basic sentences and phrases. Reflecting back on Omar's choice of choosing this particular character from Frears's

film, I can now see the effort that has been made from my interviewee to approach his partner's foreign world and understand him through such act of learning the language of his love interest in the same almost way Omar and Johnny got together and connected in the film, despite the fact that these two seem to be worlds apart, due to their political views.

Learning was affected by need to feel included and be embraced by the other, the foreign

Omar when commenting on what attracted him on his partner, made an explicit reference to his original attraction to foreign cultures and he stated:

That was probably why there was an attraction. There was no prejudice against foreign cultures. I had always been surrounded by them. The more you work with people of different nationalities, the more you see the commonalities and you don't really see the differences at all because everybody behaves the same.

It is evident from such response that Omar's need to find similarities with the other, the foreign originates from his need and desire to feel included within a broader multicultural society where no prejudices or no differences are recognised. When commenting on how he views the other, the foreign and whether he fears it or feels intimidated by it, he states:

You observe it. Everywhere you go there is a system and you learn the system and then everything works for you. You don't necessarily become absorbed by it or adopt it but you recognise it and recognise how to work with it.

Omar emphasises on the harmonious co-existence of different cultures and how to appreciate the different values each foreign community brings within it as perhaps an answer to how foreign languages should be learned, as an act of recognising the different structures a foreign language offers as well as learning ways to successfully work with them, observe them and then recognise, use and work with them. This aspect of observing, recognising and becoming aware of what is different, reminded me of Uta Hagen's Stanislavsky method exercises she introduced to her actor students when she invited them to take a distance from the act that is happening, observe all different dimensions of that act and the space in which it took place and then identify the thoughts, sensations and experiences when they genuinely do not know the outcome. Appreciating the other and learning a foreign language, according to Omar, is an act of constant observation and reflection on self. He specifically mentions:

To see where the bits fitted together. That is one of the interesting things about Greek. It is interesting to see how different languages work and what their particular obsessions are. They all have the same basic components but they all stress one aspect of thought or expression over the others depending on their cultural background. I just enjoyed learning languages and getting to the point where I could communicate in the language if I went to the country concerned.

Motivation was triggered by the need for feeling included within a non-judgemental community

The second aspect of the three-fold motivational drive that inspired Omar to learn yet another foreign language is the notion of feeling included, a sense of belonging and being a member of a society that is non – judgemental and stripped of any racial biases. This aspect can be read along the lines on various instances when Omar is commenting for instance on his trips and visit to Greece. He says:

I find Greek urban life fascinating because it so different to here. Even in smaller towns. As soon as the weather warms life is just lived on the streets. People don't stay indoors. The way people relate to each other. The astonishing homogeneity. Everyone behaves as if they are part of one family which has never really been quite the same in Great Britain. I remember sitting in the square in Patra one evening and all these teenage girls pouring by and it was as if they had all come out of one egg. It is a strange thing to say but they all looked and behaved the same. I thought that was fascinating because it was an alien experience to me. I had never really known that before.

In the description above, Omar makes an explicit reference to how attracted he is from a community that functions on a certain level of homogeneity in which all its participants operate in the same manner and feel members of the same family. The vibrant atmosphere of the city of Patras along with that sense of all being united in outdoorsy activities made Omar experienced a feeling that was unknown to him, alien but equally very appealing to him. It is apparent from his response that such feeling of being a member of one family that serves in such sense of uniformity is a key aspect of bringing this foreign culture very close to Omar's ideal about a society that could live in and whose language appears now even more tempting to learn. Additionally, Omar's desire of belonging into a homogeneous society could be supported by statements, as seen earlier, regarding how attracted he is from societies that function based on all sharing and behaving the same.

It is important for one to be able to see what connects and brings people together rather than what differentiates them. The way he perceives that sense of belonging explains the way he has always viewed the foreign, the other, the immigrant trying to assimilate in the British society. It is their urge of survival and their need to integrate into the new society that makes them prioritise things differently and that leads to make them accept differences and abandon their prejudices. He specifically mentions:

People have different expectations of what people should do as immigrants. As an immigrant in Greece it must be quite difficult as you are expected to conform to the last thing. It is much easier in Britain or France or America as you are not expected to conform. You are expected to abide by the law and largely you are expected to learn the language to a degree of proficiency. Beyond that people don't care how you live your life provided you don't encroach on them. It is survival.

It is fascinating how Omar brings together the idea of belonging with the notion of survival as he believes that the former is a prerequisite for the latter. There is an interesting situation he describes in which a couple of his Japanese Tokyo bosses when they had to relocate to London made no effort in learning English. Omar therefore questioned how it is possible that people who relocate to a new and foreign place make no effort in learning the language of the country or any attempt to

assimilate themselves into the new reality. Such attempt to adjust oneself to a foreign culture through language is associated, according to Omar, with survival. No attempt to absorb anything new, to feel included or that they belong into a new community, no effort to learn the language can lead to an unpleasant, in Omar's view, survival situation. His words:

I think there are some people who can deliberately shut it out because they don't see the point. I can't understand that. The more you understand surely the better your survival chances are, from purely an evolutionary point of view. Surely, the more systems you understand the more you are able to survive.

Motivation was inspired by decoding within learning languages and communication with others

Omar views the learning of languages as a process of decoding as well as a process of exploring the differences, appreciate them and find similarities. Through such process of unification and on that basis, he enjoys learning languages and getting to the point where he could communicate in the language if he went to the country concerned. It is important for Omar that sense of communication in the language of the country he is visiting as that makes him feel more welcomed and more that he belongs into a new society / family, the same way he welcomed foreign students when he went to school.

Motivation was affected by sense of Competence and Autonomy: links to English

Omar was asked to state his initial feelings about Greece, the challenges he faces, to reflect on his strengths and weaknesses and to term his goals for learning the language. This has been a first attempt made by me to detect their initial thoughts on learning Greek. He, therefore, stated:

I felt excited when I started learning Greek because I knew I was embarking on a great learning odyssey with the potential to open up all sorts of new worlds – not only in terms of being able to communicate with people in Greece in their own language, but also because new languages contain new ways of expressing meaning in the world, and it is always fun to find these, and discover links to English, which I believe has about 10% of its words based on Greek.

Discovering new worlds, getting in touch with new ideas and foreign cultures was at the heart of his intentions and achievements when decided to learn the target language.

When Omar asked to state his definition on motivation, he said:

It is whatever has put you on the course to achieving the goal. There is motivation what pushes you and motivation which drives you. There is the one that makes you start and the one which makes you carry on. Learning a foreign language – it is very easy to give up.

Autonomy was influenced by feeling of being in control

He interestingly makes the distinction between what pushes you and what drives you, the motives that are there to convince a learner start learning a language and the different motives that can drive him/her and make a learner carry on. And he is a very determined learner himself as he claims, as well as one that needs to have everything in control:

With languages, yes. If I started something I would want to pursue something to the end.

Perhaps the affective factor with the Greek Cypriot partner might have been the original motive to inspire him learn the language but there are more intrinsic elements that function as strong motives to inspire him continue with his learning journey. More specifically, he made several statements that have been quite enlightening and are worth mentioning here:

I guess I like to feel in control in that respect.

And further,

But I have never liked going anywhere where I couldn't understand or decipher what people say.

This last statement comes in support of his previous remark on how in control he wants to feel when dealing with foreign languages.

Omar stated that he finds it frustrating when everything is unrecognisable, such was the case of Hungary when he travelled there and attempted to communicate with people. It seems as if his intention of unifying languages to decode and understand them falls under that particular idea of having things 'in control' as he said. Such realisation of becoming familiar with the other, the foreign and alien to him appears to be quite an intrinsic motive that sustained his learning of Greek and made him carry on. In particular, he said:

It has been interesting learning Greek but beneficial from the point of view that it makes you do things and forces you to think in a way that you wouldn't otherwise do everyday. I would like to push it as far as I could.

Motivation was influenced by having deep knowledge of external / internal grammar: learning formulae

Omar's strong ability in being explicit on what his strengths and weaknesses are regarding the linguistic aspects of the learning of Greek prove that he holds an admirable balance between his internal knowledge of grammar and how explicitly he can comment on it. That proves he has a strong background in learning foreign languages. What is interesting therefore is to see how such learner perceives the challenges he faces, the place where he is taught the target language and what inspires and motivates him regarding the linguistic features of the learning of Greek.

To start with, Omar provides his own definition of what being proficient in a foreign language means:

For me it is being able to have an overview of the language, so if I don't recognise a word - I can recognise what parts of the speech it is so that I can analyse it. To be able to read a newspaper article without any difficulty, to be able to switch on the news and the radio and understand what is being said. That is proficiency for me.

What defines proficiency is not just how effective the communicative aspect of interacting in Greek can be, but equally the ability to have an 'in control' overview of the language itself so that the learner can construct sentences by piecing together grammatical and lexical features that he/she can recognise their function and making use of them. Reading, comprehending, listening and speaking (the four major competencies) need to be in sync with a good knowledge of the language structures. In his approach on grammar, Omar is the only participant I interviewed who had a different opinion compared to the others on whether it is difficult learning it or not. As a result of how balanced his knowledge of internal and external grammar is, he claims that grammar is rarely difficult as it is a matter of learning formulae, learning how to apply them as well as learning how to extrapolate that information. He said:

If you come across something you don't know then at least you know what part of speech it might be and you can work back.

Competence and Autonomy were both enhanced through dealing with unknown words, accept the fact that he is not in control of knowing everything (British identity)

Then he makes an interesting comparison with how such approach works when reading a book with the aim to improve one's vocabulary knowledge. He stated:

Similarly if I read a Greek novel I don't bother to look up every word because you can follow the story and if it is a word that looks interesting, I will look it up and if I think I know what it means, I just leave it otherwise it destroys the enjoyment of reading the story or reading a newspaper article. If you are constantly looking words up it breaks it up so that I don't really assimilate the information.

Reflecting on my own experience of learning English, French or Italian in the past, I was given that piece of advice and instruction once by my language teacher who suggested that I should abandon this frustrating and time-consuming process of looking up every single word in the dictionary looking for its meaning. I had to find / guess the meaning out of the context of the sentence. Dealing with British adult students, one of the things that I noticed is how much 'in control' they want to be when learning a language and how much frustrated they can feel when there are aspects or features or words that either make no sense to them or they are missing their meaning. Anything illogical or unknown can be quite challenging or annoying for a learner, especially an adult one. But the question here is whether such problem is related to their British identity or is it an adult identity issue? When I asked Omar to comment on being British, he stated:

I can think of people who work in an academic environment for whom it would be an obstacle. They would constantly question because they have been taught to question in a Socratic fashion or whatever. The problem with language is there is a point where

there is no why, and it purely is and you have to accept that and you have to go with it. They would get stuck at the apparent illogicality of the language.

This is such an almost organic approach to accept the foreign language as it develops and appreciate it for what it is, rather than constantly attempt to relate it to one's own mother tongue, which in some cases can function as an obstacle and hinders the progress and learning of the target language.

Regarding Omar's views about the Hellenic Centre, as this has been the main 'topos' and learning site of Greek for him. He made the decision attending the courses offered at the Hellenic Centre simply out of lack of educational institutes dealing with adult learning. He was looking for a place that would attract more mature students as opposed to the north London community Centres where many members of the British Cypriot community reside as well as a place that would teach mainly Greek and not other languages. In his words,

It deals with one language. The fact that this is a specialist institute – that it is dealing with one language and one culture, means that it… I have a feeling that subject is taught more exhaustively.

Contact with the HC was important for motivation

The Hellenic Centre proved to be a place that was also good value for money regarding the tuition fees and there was access online for total beginners to familiarise themselves with the syllabus, the levels and the textbooks the teachers used. In terms of whether the Hellenic Centre represents Greek reality fairly, Omar commented that it does to some extent as it represents one aspect of Greek culture:

It represents one aspect of Greek culture. It represents educated cosmopolitan Greek culture. It does not represent much of Greece. If you see the staff who are teaching here, they are all people who have experience. You did your masters here. Haido had lived in Chicago. Everybody has been anywhere and everywhere. They haven't just come from Greece to do it. Everybody has multicultural background and that inevitably colours the atmosphere.

Views on teachers and teaching: being taught by native and non-native speakers was motivational

What is interesting here is the distinction Omar made between language instructors who had the experience of teaching the Greek language to foreigners having also lived abroad to those ones who teach Greek in Greece with limited exposure to living abroad. For those teachers who have had the opportunity to live and work abroad, they had the opportunity to enrich their own learning with the experience of learning how to teach a foreign language in an-other language (not their native one). For a teacher, living abroad and socialising with foreign students, experiencing the struggles of having to deal with a foreign environment enriches anyone's experience of using foreign languages and that is an element that dynamically surpasses in one's teaching attempts. This way a teacher who had such experience can better understand and grasp the nuances that Greek language holds, the peculiarities and difficulties in syntax and grammar and teach them in a more relatable way to the students.

As for critiques and areas for further improvement for the Hellenic Centre, Omar suggested that the following ideas if implemented could work on the benefit of both the Centre and its learners. More specifically he recommends that more hours should be offered to beginners and intermediate students who wish to learn the language for tourist or family purposes and that could be a marketable product. Also, the idea that students being taught Greek in the first couple of years by a non-native Greek speaker (a second-generation Greek Cypriot one perhaps) would not be a bad one, and that was drawn from Omar's experience of being taught Japanese by a Czech or French by an English-Cypriot. The reason behind such statement would be that non-native speakers could better understand where the problems for the learners lie, in a way a mother tongue speaker does not recognise. This last statement of Omar may seem to some that it comes in contrast with what he earlier supported about how important it is to have teachers with the experience of living abroad but I believe that it is not that contradictory at all. What Omar suggests is that it is important for a language instructor to take a distance for his/her own learning experiences and approach and get to know his/her students better as well as the problems they face, their backgrounds, their struggles and address the right questions to deal with their struggles. In Omar's words,

However immersed that person is and however expert they are, that colours slightly the way they teach and impart information.

Imparting information on a foreign language is quite a challenging task as the teacher needs to have a good understanding of who his/her student is so that he/she can make that new information passed on the learner more relatable, accessible, and effective. In other words, knowing a student's identity well is crucial for any attempt to teach a foreign language to be considered efficient.

Views on British learners: not giving up one's established ideas is counterproductive in learning foreign languages

Another aspect that Omar discusses in his responses is the idea of linguistic discrimination that he associates with the fact that certain British people cannot easily give up the sense of superiority that English as a global language brings within. He states:

I suspect there are many people who think English is the world language and they might have problems. They are unreasonably confident that everyone should speak English and that English has superiority. It is just a case of demography rather than any intrinsic quality of the language.

English as global language is associated here with a sense of colonialism that carries within it. Such aspect of subconscious imperialism that certain British students might feel does not allow them to easily give up any new linguistic feature that seems at start illogical and appreciate it for what it is. That sense of not giving up one's established ideas about how languages function (I should say should function according to them) holds such learners back from appreciating anything new and progressing with their learning. Omar commenting on the challenges he initially faced when for instance learning the double use of the definite article placed in front of an adjective and a noun for pure emphatic reasons, made him anxious at first but then he learned how to accept

such difference. It is illuminating how explicitly he comments on they way he overcame such obstacle, which was through researching on what the common history is between Greek and other European languages. In his own words:

You come from your own language and you compare you own language and a way in which a language expresses itself doesn't seem to be logical…There are times that that seemed strange as it limited how you could express yourself. As I became familiar with the language I was rather more surprised to learn what the common history is between Greek and the other European languages is. It looks different at first because of the alphabet used and the more you look and read it, you realise how related it is, and how many words in English we have - not just the synthetised scientific words. You can see how many words have a common root and I find that really fascinating. I think the origin of languages is a really fascinating topic.

It is interesting at this point to look at one of the pictures he chose that presents one of the most fascinating aspects about his learning journey of Greek:

Pic 2

Motivation was enhanced by Etymology – connection with other languages

When asked to comment on this picture as part of his activity before conducting the interview, he commented:

Analysing the structure of the modern language and identifying its links with ancient and classical Greek as well as with other Indo-European languages is a major pleasure and incentive to continue learning the language.

Etymology can be a very intriguing element of the learning of Greek language and especially one that is appealing to students who hold a strong educational background. Omar though on his critique on the Hellenic Centre, commented that the Centre needs to make changes in its syllabus and the way Greek is taught to make it more accessible and open to many types of learners and not exclusively to the educated ones,

especially when it comes to teach new syntactical and grammatical features of the language.

For a mono speaker it would be very difficult. There is too much that needs to be explained. If you haven't learnt a foreign language you are not accustomed to deconstructing a language and you don't really understate the grammatical terminology.

It might though be a dual effort made on both the Centre's side as well as the teachers' side to appreciate, understand and grasp the true problems and struggles the students face through knowing them better.

To conclude with Omar's views and perceptions on learning Greek, I will make use of his learning metaphor to describe that journey. When asked to provide a metaphor he said:

Learning another language is like …

getting to know a city … because first you become familiar with the main areas, then you get to know other areas and eventually all the bits link up and you understand all of it.

For Omar, learning Greek is a journey that takes time, patience, and commitment and the more familiar one becomes with the other and foreign, the more confident the learner becomes in using the language and suddenly all things that seemed illogical at the beginning will eventually make sense at the end. For Omar, familiarity with the foreign is what can make a learner feel that he/she belongs into a new community, and this can be a way to lead to the successful learning of Greek. In Omar's concluding words of his interview:

Not consciously. I have found that when I have been speaking Greek for two or three hours that I find that the rhythm of my speech changes and I am changing it to theirs. What I am saying sounds more Greek.

4.2 Participant 2 (Valerie)

The second participant I interviewed was Valerie, a

Female communications manager working for the Cabinet office,

as she decided to describe herself in a brief statement without giving any additional information. When I asked her to select a pseudonym, the name of a character from a British film that best represents her, to introduce herself in the thesis, she chose Valerie from Gary Oldman's 1997 film *Nil by Mouth*. When I asked Valerie, what made her choose that character, she mentioned:

I just love her working-class accent and background, the family situation she is in, she struggles but never gives up. Watch the film and you will understand. I see myself in her. South-East London? I studied, lived and worked there as a journalist. South east

was different then. Valerie is a character who constantly makes efforts to overcome what she does not want to have. [Written notes by Valerie, January 2019]

Social Class – sociological factors influenced her views on learning

The first two aspects that attracted me when I read my interviewee's response were the working-class background of the character and the location she refers to. And it has been apparent in her lengthy statements and responses she delivered in her interviews, that Valerie's preoccupation with her own social status was quite a determining factor of how she viewed her learning of Greek.

Reading through Valerie's responses there were a few central topics that emerged and will be discussed below. These were Valerie's attempts to reconnect with her cultural, linguistic, national past that defines her identity, her attempts to feel included as an equal member within a society of native speakers, her attempts to re-learn what she originally knew and reached as much as she can the status of bilingual and a major theme which is her anxiety on her social class background and how that determined her choices and impacted on her decisions while learning Greek.

Family Notes – being a L1 heritage learner forced her to relearn what she already knew and made her realise the mistakes she used to make

Valerie is a Greek-Cypriot student who was born in Cyprus and spent her first few years as a child in Cyprus until her parents divorced and then she moved to the north part of Britain, to Rotherham, and followed her Irish mother along with her other two male siblings. She did speak Cypriot Greek, which it is a divergent dialect as it differs from the Standard Modern Greek, in terms of syntax, lexicon and grammar, yet it is considered as a variety of Modern Greek. When her parents divorced, she moved to the UK and during her schooling years as well as the rest of her life she spoke English with attempts to remember her Cypriot Greek words when she visited Cyprus to see her father. Her interview(s) were quite lengthy, significantly lengthier from the other participants, as she seemed quite eager to speak out her truth, provide a lot of information and details about her background and confess as much as she could in order to be heard and understood. In her original opening statement about what originally motivated her to learn Greek, she stated:

I don't think I have a specific goal. It's like it's quite emotional. I've always wanted to do it. I think when I first started it was quite emotional for me and I find it quite nice in a class with other people with a similar situation to me that it was personal for them as well, and then I enjoyed the process of learning as well so actually got quite addicted to learning new things and making progress and the things I kind of found quite boring before I now find kind of interesting. I hated reading written Greek, because I really hate the way they construct sentences; I hate the fact they use too many words to describe things, and I hate the journalism in Greece and in Cyprus.

But now, I think a lot of that was that because I didn't understand it, like reading a newspaper in Greek and saying, It's not for me, and then going to English-language ones. I think a lot of that was probably defence mechanism, so basically didn't understand it, and there's a whole thing with me of official Greek and how it's actually spoken, and obviously I'm from Cyprus and the way we speak it is not how it's written,

which I don't agree with, and so I never really liked how they spoke in Greece. But I think that's because I didn't understand it. And now it's nice, it's kind of unlocking all of that. I really fell in love with the language in all its different forms.

Learning Greek: Refusing learning structured aspects of grammar - defence Mechanism acted as a barrier

Her defence mechanism as she mentions was the real reason behind preventing her from liking the different aspects of Greek language, such as its formality, the structuring of sentences, the official side of it and the way it was actually spoken. This has been an emotional process for Valerie to learn how to appreciate the aspects of the Greek language that would initially resist in learning as she either found boring, uninteresting or could not relate to with what she already knew as well as with her Cypriot background. More specifically, she comments on that:

I don't really like academic texts, I don't like exercises. I don't find them very helpful to me … I didn't learn Greek like that, being in a Greek nursery, so I just…. it really confuses me when I see it as … how do you call it? ... when you do all these different exercises and everything's like ordered in a certain way. With me, I kind of do what feels right.

Reconnecting and Reconciling with the past made her realise the missed opportunities she experienced in learning the language

Feeling what is right for Valerie is an attempt to re-connect with her background and re-live the past as she experienced it through remembering the words she has forgotten. Her rejection of the academic texts or any other source that can inform or teach her how the language (written or spoken) is disciplined and the rules that it follows, was initially very confusing to her. In her own words, she considered herself being a proficient speaker (or used to be) and the aspect that can bring back such level of proficiency would be to find herself immersed into real-life speaking situations and avoid any exercises or academic texts. She said:

I think I would say I was proficient…for example, I can watch debates in the Greek Parliament and understand what they're saying when it's about economics, and I'm starting to read more Greek literature and articles.

And further, she comments:

Personally I find exercises really off-putting and they make me feel like I don't know a lot, because I'm not used to ordering my knowledge in that way.

Motivational goal of becoming proficient and reaching the level of native speaker was encouraging

To start with being proficient, Valerie makes an interesting claim by later changing the wording when stating her intention and she replaces the term 'proficient' with the term 'fluent'. She claims that she is more attracted to the latter and her intention is to reach a certain level of fluency in the learning of Greek which she associates that with how

creatively she can ‘play with words’ in Greek and how efficiently she can understand the ‘emotive meanings’ in a sentence. More specifically, she says:

I’m kind of obsessed with the idea of fluent…. That’s a personal thing I have - I want to get it to how it was and I want to be able to speak and not make loads of mistakes , and for my accent not to sound like a foreigner speaking the language…. I don’t mean perfect like in never make mistakes. I mean like to play with the words. And It’s not even understanding all the sayings but just to really understand emotive meaning in the sentence or like reading poetry and understanding the meaning of it - it’s like you can get all the words but you really get what they’re doing with the words, like you should be able to do that and also so you should be able to be really playful with the language and put your own stamp on it and you know to be able to use it in a different way to what you’ve just read in a text book.

Valerie’s goals are not the same as anyone else’s I have interviewed. It is quite rare to find a student who shares such aspirations and ambitions when learning a foreign language. The only different thing in Valerie’s case, is that Greek is not quite a foreign language to her. As it happens with many British-born Greek Cypriot students in the UK, a lot of them have joined lessons at the Hellenic Centre to learn how to speak Greek and re-connect with their families and backgrounds as they missed the opportunity to do that at an earlier stage in their lives. Valerie wants to become fluent and the way she describes a fluent speaker is the same way one would describe a native speaker. In this way, Valerie reveals her desire of becoming bilingual, an opportunity that she missed having when her parents separated and she was forced to learn how to speak English so that she could better adjust herself to the new society.

Lack of connection with rules and grammar was a barrier: privilege, marginalisation, social class influence on learning and accepting grammar rules

Valerie’s earlier comment on not used to ordering her knowledge in such manner, that is focusing on texts and grammatical rules and then apply them in speaking, it appears to be in line with how she was educated in the past. She recalls:

But I also think if you’ve learned in an academic sense you’ve sometimes got an unfair advantage because you’ve basically learned the language with all the rules and then you learn it how it’s taught. So say with me I can’t teach myself Greek, if I’ve got a grammatical problem I’ve tried to do it before and gotten really upset — I read a textbook and got really upset because I didn’t know what I didn’t understand — but then again that seems really stupid.

Even from the very beginning of her lengthy answers, Valerie reveals her struggle on understanding texts and rules due to the lack of having been educated in an academic way that advantages those ones who attended perhaps schools, colleges or other learning sites that provided their students with such opportunities. Valerie calls this an ‘unfair advantage’ that the privileged students who attended such institutions have over those ones who did not. To appreciate her own status which lacks academic support, she mentions how significant it is to be able to interact with the locals or understand when natives speak. This is her ability and strength over the other students

who attend classes at the Hellenic Centre and it comes from an attempt to defend herself and status over the others. It is fascinating how she comments on her connection with her classmates and how her language abilities are deteriorated when conversing with them as she feels intimidated to share her views with the others. She states:

that's because conversation in the classroom is really stilted. There's no flow. A lot of the time I don't like, because I know the views of my classmates I can't really be bothered to talk about my own views. I kind of disagree with them so much sometimes I don't want to be really open about what my views are. Just because you're in a classroom as an adult doesn't mean you have to share your views about everything just because you're trying to learn a language. Some things you don't want to share with other people or, if you know they disagree with you, and you don't want to offend them by saying something that's completely contradictory to what they're saying.

It is captivating how Valerie associates her failure to achieve the desirable level of proficiency in Greek with a. her inability to follow orders and rules dictated by academic textbooks and b. how intimidated she feels sharing her views with others. From such statements, one can easily appreciate that her belief on failing in learning Greek is associated with a reason that connects a and b, the reasons stated by her behind her unsuccessful attempts she made to learn the target language.

Prior commenting on the above, Valerie made an interesting brief statement:

As far as the Centre goes, I don't think it's really important because… I mean, I go there for practical reasons and the relationship with the teacher is more important and what progress you're making. I wouldn't go to the Centre because I believe in their values.

Contact with the HC – politics and values – and not feeling related to them was a barrier

This is a very important statement as the very last words she mentioned being the 'values' of the Hellenic Centre and the fact she does not believe in them made me reflect on how the Hellenic Centre represents something that Valerie clearly cannot relate to it. The word values made me instantly think that she is probably referring to the political values perhaps or social class values that the Hellenic Centre represents for her. If that is associated with her refusal of sharing her views with the views of her classmates, then one can easily detect that her attempt to differentiate herself from the others is an act of defence, as she termed it earlier, to oppose herself with the political and social views the others (whether this is the Centre or her classmates) hold and believe in. Further commenting on the word 'defence' as this has been used on more than one occasions by Valerie, she stated the following:

I've just maybe subconsciously thought I'm just never going to get to a stage where I can read newspapers, so I won't bother and they write really badly anyway, so I don't really care. But I think that was just a defence mechanism because I completely didn't understand the syntaxes and like, and the words they used, and I still don't get it, how you'll read like an 1000-word opinion piece and they haven't said their opinion. That

is really frustrating as a learner, and then you need someone to say, it's how they write.

Being in Control of her learning was essential for progress

Valerie worked as a journalist for several years before joining the department of communications at the Cabinet office and she is quite passionate about that profession as well as reading articles in the newspapers and the internet on current affairs. Yet, such enjoyment was initially met with hesitation and severe criticism on how the Greek reporters and journalists expressed their views and the language they used. Her inability to penetrate through the complicated language used in such form of writing and her lack of having full control over the knowledge she always desired to have, it made her develop her a defence mechanism and originally rejected it. Her frustration and anxiety on how native she wish to sound herself to others is additionally commented later when she said:

It is something I saw a few weeks ago, which had a big impact on me. I am generally really hard on myself about my Greek, for personal reasons, and I am a bit obsessed with this idea of being perfect (fluent/native standard) without knowing what I actually mean by this. The more the language is opening up to me, the less I am concerned about wanting to sound like a native and I want to be able to be authentic and do what I want with the language. Possibly, something unique or at least have the ability to do that, should I choose.

Being perfect and having the control over the language is an unavoidable feeling she has the more the language opens up to her. It functions like a drive, an intrinsic motive to carry on with learning the language. Valerie demonstrates her strong desire of feeling like a native speaker and sound as authentic as she can be to the point that she can use and play with the language the way she wants to. Her ability to reach that stage of fluency is further commented on by her when she addressed the issue of memory. She said:

Well, initially I was obsessed with this kind of idea of memory, because I was like, Oh, If you're fluent you can just remember because you can go for a month to Cyprus and you'll remember it . It doesn't work like that. You have to relearn it and I get annoyed when they say that because it's kind of true . you can always have hypnotherapy and it'll all come back to you. But I really notice that because I look at the same word 5 times and I say, shit, I should remember that, I've looked it up so many times . But I think for me it's using it. I did quite a lot of written exercises and I think that's a good way for me to remember it, because when you're doing a written piece quite a lot of effort got into it and you kind of rereads it a lot for mistakes and you put quite a lot of yourself into it and I think that's a good way to memorise it. But I am aware you have to use the words quite a few times to remember it.

She made attempts to become more competent

What is fascinating in her response is the fact that she acknowledges the significance of re-learning and re-reading the same (or almost the same) words, phrases, syntax in order to remember it. Such process of learning is a big awakening call for students

like Valerie, as they have to decode and reconstruct, in other words, re-learn the dialectic forms of the Cypriot Greek in order to reach a level of efficiency when speaking and writing in Standard Greek. Such process required from her playing a lot of games with memory and there were times when she doubted about what she was able to remember and recall from the past and debate with her language instructors on whether what she knew was correct or wrong. Memory in her case was an important factor as Valerie had to relive her past through re-learning the language in its formality. It is very interesting also to 'read' between the lines, Valerie's attempt to find ways to balance between her internal knowledge and grammar with the explicit knowledge. Through reflecting on her process of learning the language, she makes efforts on finding ways to term and explain what is missing and what she needs to further improve in order to achieve her goal.

The learning metaphor she chose to describe her learning journey of Greek is also fascinating and illustrative of the above feelings she has.

She said when completing Activity 2:

Learning another language is like …

- **being stranded on an island … because you have to learn everything from scratch**

Feeling included in a particular group of learners was important for motivation

Such attempt to re-connect with her past made her reflect on how significant it is the sense of belonging into a particular group of learners. The idea of feeling included is portrayed in her words and statements in different ways. The first demonstration of such need is conveyed through her statement on the fact that she was looking for similar cases of students who were at the Hellenic Centre with the intention to learn the language the same way as she did and sharing the same desires and motives. She specifically mentions:

there were students in the class who were similar to me because I'd never met anybody who had learned a language and forgotten it and I was always ashamed and felt I couldn't speak to anybody about it and I also felt there would never be an educational setting that would be suitable for me. I had no idea what level I was at. I never knew how to start classes, I mean my situation was totally different and I didn't know who to speak to about it actually, and it was really important to me to have that environment where there were other people like that with me and I'd think, Oh my situation is really emotional and there are other people in the class who had much more traumatic reasons for forgetting the language than me and that was important.

Sharing the same values with other members of a community – imagined learning community – was motivational

Valerie's intention to find a community of learners who share the same sense of shame-ness regarding the missing opportunities they experienced in life that prevented them from learning successfully Greek is further heightened by her relationship with the language instructor / teacher. It is a dual situation of feeling that

a language learner belongs and that is conveyed not only through the relations developed amongst other learners who share the same anxieties and motives but equally through the relationship the learner develops with the language teacher. It is quite illuminating when Valerie commented on that and said:

So that if you're asking, I mean I remember I once had to write an exercise about work and I had a really embarrassing week at work and tried to negotiate a pay rise and it was just awful and I was really embarrassed and I wrote about that and I thought, God, he's going to think I'm insane. It's that the teacher learns quite a lot of personal stuff about you and I wasn't really sure how that relationship works and I was like, He's not going to know if this is true or not, and for me it's really important to be truthful, so I write quite a lot of personal stuff that like, you know, other people might not see, but it's that idea that I want to talk about every aspect of my life honestly.

Valerie felt included because there were opportunities offered to her to open and speak about 'personal stuff'. Learning, in her view, is such a personal and emotional process that made her invest and become more committed to the learning of Greek due to her relationship with her teacher and the fact that through written exercises in class and specific tasks suggested she was allowed to speak about herself in an almost confessional way.

Struggles and anxiety of not being perceived as native, and high expectations affected sense of relatedness: She needed to belong into a group of native speakers

A third way through which that sense of belonging was demonstrated in her responses was the notion of anxiety that she brought into discussion. She commented:

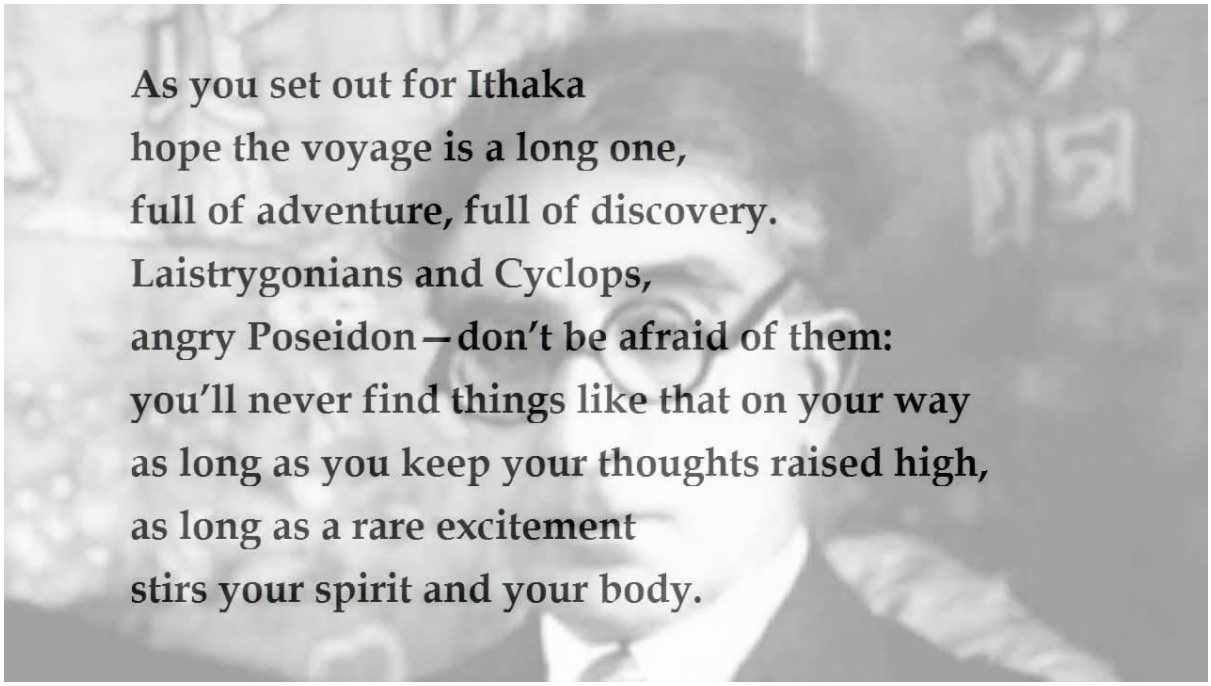
I think Anxiety, I always build up situations in my head and I'm like, Oh, because I travel around Greece on my own quite a lot … For instance I go to Greek dancing and that's made me think, You've got to do something about your Greek. it's juts a room full of Greeks and they're all speaking Greek and they presume your Greek is fluent and it makes you understand how much you don't understand and it's the idea of having to speak. And the teacher we had last year was amazing and he told us loads of interesting stuff and it's the idea of him asking me to say something in front of anyone else in broken Greek was just a nightmare. My self -consciousness is not as strong as it was about it.

For Valerie, the need to belong into a group of people who are there to share their love and passion about Greek dancing is very important. She feels anxious as she does not want to let anyone down regarding the expectations that the other native speakers have from her communicating with them in Greek at a fluent level and the need she has to feel equal amongst the others.

Valerie made a very interesting selection of pictures when asked to select from the internet photos that represent in the best way her learning journey of Greek. She chose the following ones, and she accompanied them with a brief explanation:

Pic 3

Pic 4



Pic 5

Pic 6

The reasons behind choosing these 4 pictures are different.

Pic 1 - Knowing how to cook Greek dolmades is perhaps one of the most demanding dishes – I want to feel like I am a Greek who knows how to cook like a Greek

Pic 2 - My passion about folk music and dancing is what at times kept me going on with my lessons

Pic 3 -The choice of Cavafy – I want to be able to read Greek literature from the authentic text – this will make me feel confident like nothing else

Pic 4 - Ross Daly – the lyra player – a role model who gives me motivation – I wish I were like him – there is so much I love and I can relate to him and that picture

Inspiration and encouragement from public figures (role models) – Affinity – were important for motivation

What one can detect from the responses provided above is Valerie's enormous need to feel like a Greek as she claims and to be a member of a group who share the same passion and love about cooking, dancing and literature. It is fascinating how she chose pictures that refer to activities that one does either socially (dancing) or sharing with others (cooking / eating and music). The social aspect is once again quite dominant in how central its role is in Valerie's learning of Greek. Commenting on Ross Daly's choice, whom she views as a role model to motivate her learn Greek, she says:

His command of Greek is astonishing, unique and really, really beautiful. He has even managed to develop a uniquely beautiful accent, which shows that he has been living in Crete but that he is foreign. Even though you can tell from his accent that he is foreign (something I hate when it happens with me) I kind of really like it and it has made me less uptight about the whole sounding like a native goal. I think I have to accept that it is unachievable.

Ross Daly, the lyra player, who is a foreigner but lived in Crete and speaks Greek fluently, represents for Valerie that ideal and balanced situation in which one can maintain his/her identity while speaking the foreign language fluently with his own unique accent. Valerie is wondering whether the goals she set are unachievable and whether she should re-consider what she has originally claimed as her ultimate intention being regarding the learning of Greek. It is quite endearing to have a student like Valerie delve into the Greek culture and receive inspiration and encouragement from artistic figures that she can relate to. Valerie intriguingly comments on the existence of role models as follows:

My point about the lyra player, is that I think - from my experience - is that there are not many role models for me in terms of learning the language… I find it very powerful to hear someone who has learnt Greek as a second language speak it in a public arena in that country. And it helps me not think that I have to be perfect.

For Valerie, having role models who represent that what can be viewed as unachievable can be achieved somehow, is an act of empowerment as she suggests. Having public figures whose work is admired and who have embraced the learning of a second or foreign language in such a creative and efficient way, it can help, motivate and encourage students like Valerie to appreciate the imperfections hiding behind the beauty of learning an-other language rather than seeking to be always perfect and in control; and that is a strong motivation for her.

She wanted to become fluent speaker and she questioned whether it was achievable goal or not? She tried to teach herself being autonomous

While further commenting on her original desire of achieving fluency in the way and at the level she wished for, she came across with disheartening statements found online while doing a search on 'L2 acquisition'. Valerie was totally dismayed when she read that reaching bilingualism is unachievable beyond a certain age and that made her

question the purpose of attending lessons. The other interesting aspect regarding her reaction to what she read on ‘L2’ was her immediate rejection of what has always annoyed her in her learning of Greek and that is either textbooks trying to teach her grammar rules or stand-in teachers who are trying to explain a phenomenon in Greek language while making use of the grammar rules she does not feel familiar and comfortable with using.

One thing that really upset me was when I searched 'L2' online after you sent us the form - as I hadn't heard the term before - and I read on, I think the Wikipedia page, that you cannot become bilingual after the age of seven. I got really upset and thought 'well what's the point then? I should just stop now'. A complete fit of irrationality. I am really not that rational about the language and something trivial can upset me suddenly. Like for example, reading a textbook and not been able to understand the way they are presenting a rule. Or a stand-in teacher trying to explain something to me using grammatical rules which I am not familiar with. It all serves to remind me that I didn't learn it like that and that I was once bilingual.

I believe that Valerie was confused here making a statement that does not do justice to the group of learners she belongs into. There is an apparent confusion between the first language or native language learners and those ones called heritage learners. Valerie clearly belongs into the second group of learners as such learners had to, for various reasons, sacrifice their proficiency of speaking Greek in order to gain proficiency in the dominant language of the community they live in (Valdes: 2000). Valerie’s heritage language is Greek as this is her home and ancestral language, and she experienced its learning in her childhood. Since moving to the UK, Valerie grew up in an environment with a different dominant language and as it happened with the heritage learners she became more competent and felt more comfortable using that dominant language when interacting and communicating. It is frustrating the moment when Valerie realises that she has missed the opportunity she had as a child to learn how to speak Greek fluently and this is what she laments for based on her statement above.

She felt she is not doing justice to the double identity she inherited by failing in progressing in learning Greek

It is additionally evident even from her earlier responses that Valerie has an immediate reaction of rejection to the things that she cannot understand, feel familiar or feel comfortable with. This, however, requires further analysis as I had to search on the true reasons behind such negative response. Valerie after completing the first interview, she felt that there was more she wanted to share, and we agreed on conducting two more interviews as she felt she wanted to communicate additional information to me. Her immediate reaction to the first interview prior conducting the other two, was to share some points via email with me. In her email responses, Valerie made a reference to how important it is for me (the interviewer) to appreciate her own identity, that was a word she used and provided me with instances from her childhood that elaborated how torn she has been her whole life between claiming two identities, the British and the Cypriot. She specifically mentions:

I'm not sure if we mentioned identity. This is something, which is a big driver for me learning Greek. Cyprus will always feel like home as I spent most of my childhood there. I have such a visceral connection with the place and such vivid memories of my family there. However I never feel I have the right to say that it feels like home as I can't speak the language fluently … My preoccupation with the idea of fluency came I think as a way of trying to make amends with the past or even change it. I just quite can't forgive myself for forgetting it. And I also feel like I disappointed a lot of my family and I kind of had an abrupt break with Cyprus … So when I went back with my broken Greek I was just so embarrassed and ashamed that I didn't want to try and re-establish contact with them. Also, some wouldn't have known English, so how could you communicate?! I could see the disappointment in my family's face, even if they never said it explicitly. It was almost like I turned my back on them and my Cypriot identity consciously… It feels a lot more positive now and it is really important to have that outsider's perspective on the country whilst still being able to be proud to have Cypriot heritage, even if you are not 'fully Cypriot'. And language is an important factor as a lot of my friends speak in Greek even though they are not fluent, which is really encouraging for me to see … So obviously, that makes me feel like I can't participate fully socially and I feel like a complete outsider, but still, I try as much as I can to socialise with them, as it is a great way for me to practise Greek in a 'real situation'. And often memorising new vocabulary you have picked up from a 'real situation' is more memorable … The point about identity is something I have to confront often now, as a result of speaking Greek.

Her approach on speaking about her Identity: She felt being an outsider and thus, marginalised from her Greek Cypriot community

I decided to select very specific excerpts from her lengthy response in which she made use of some very interesting terms, such as: identity, fluent, feeling ashamed and disappointed, connection with the past and outsider. Valerie is in the process of making amends with a traumatic experience that happened in her life, the breakup of her parents that brought her in a particular situation of having to balance between two countries, cultures and languages. She has felt being an outsider since her childhood when the family moved to the UK and her attempts of claiming back her Cypriot part collapsed as she could not speak the language properly, for which she felt great shame and disappointment. It took her a long time to come to terms with her being an outsider and consider this a positive attitude towards viewing her identity as a whole, rather than in fragments. Her preoccupation, therefore, with how fluent she wanted to become in Greek emerged from her need to be accepted socially by either members of her family, or when she socialises with native speakers when she visits Greece or to feel more included in the dancing group she participates and that she enjoys a lot. Valerie considers her attempt to feel more included and appreciated as an equal member from such group as a great opportunity to practice her Greek in ‘real situation’, one of the few opportunities she has so that she can practice the language at such level and context.

A last interesting remark Valerie made on the Hellenic Centre and the term ‘values’ she used earlier is the following one:

I think when you are coming to learn the language with such emotional baggage, it's important to have a 'neutral' environment and teacher. So for example I'm not really a fan of the Centre and its 'values' but I really don't care about that. And with you as a teacher it is really good for me to see how enthusiastic you are about teaching and the language, how interested you are in the learners' perspective and etymology…. It all helps to 'de-politicise' learning the language for me and get used to being a learner.

She expressed the need for the HC to depoliticise its values and become more inclusive: Marginalisation and Privilege

Such response delivered by Valerie, was an eye-opening statement for me as it made me instantly reflect on another important aspect that affected her progress of learning Greek. Valerie spoke about not appreciating the 'values' that the Hellenic Centre represents and that she is seeking for a 'neutral' environment and teacher to conduct her learning of Greek. Although she made a choice of picking the Hellenic Centre to be the learning site in which she studies Greek, she calls for 'de-politicisation' of the learning. It is evident that such statement was made having in mind the political side of learning a language that was fascinating for me to further explore through her responses.

Learning Greek associated with social class: She called her learning of Greek a vanity project as she does not see the point a woman of her class to learn foreign languages

Valerie's concerns about the political aspect hiding behind the learning of a language, such as Greek, was revealed to me in a slow and gradual way. To be able to speak about the major theme of how significant Valerie's political views and struggles with her social class status were in the decisions she made as well as her progress in learning Greek, it is important to follow her responses in the order they were communicated to me through the two interviews we conducted after the original communication we had via interview and email.

To start with, in Interview 2, Valerie revealed from the beginning that her learning of Greek has now become a vanity project. She said:

Because we have such a good rapport you bring that out of me more. I feel like I have got to the stage now where it is has become a vanity project. How useful is it going to be for me to learn Greek fluently? Realistically I am never going to live in Greece. If I think about my family it is too late. A lot of them are dead with whom it would have been useful to communicate with.

And further she comments:

When you start you think my Greek is good and then you realise when you start it is quite bad. Last year I got to the level I could read literature. I didn't even think about that. All these worlds opened up to me. I can read academic texts. I am at the stage where I can stop but I don't want to. There is something spurring me on but I don't know what it is. It is quite odd that I am driven and I think it is quite odd 'why are you trying to be perfect at this as it is not going to be useful to you?'.

Learning a foreign language: she calls it a vanity Project and an exercise of privilege by the ones who have the resources and capital to do it

The first reading behind such statements would be that Valerie considers learning Greek as a vanity project because there is no obvious use or application of such language that she will hardly use it in her work for instance. Yet, she makes a clear reference to what now drives and motivates her to continue with such learning, despite it looks a vain act, which is the pleasure she receives from the learning itself. Being able to read academic texts and literature at such level in Greek is an achievement itself and as it frequently happens with adult students, the original motives can change and what makes the journey of learning carry on is the enjoyment of learning itself. Her good rapport with her teacher is another aspect that contributed in how much she enjoys learning Greek and motivates her to continue and progress. It was, however, quite striking the choice of word vanity, as it feels like an almost pointless and futile act.

When I asked Valerie to further comment on the word vanity, she narrated to me in detail the entire journey she made with the breakup of her parents until she moved to the UK. The fascinating thing about such long narration is that she opened up about her experience of growing up in Rotherham and she described it with vivid colours. As it can be read in her Interview 2, Valerie grew up within an environment in which she was deprived of money, car, other basic facilities, an environment that was hostile in her view to other cultures and foreigners. In her own words:

I had to hide all relationship with Cyprus. I had to hide my otherness. In working class communities they see that as a threat. One of my best friends told me to stop talking about Cyprus and I had lived half of my life there.

This was the first time, Valerie brought up in the discussion the term *working class* and that instantly made me reflect on the significance of the role of social class and how that can affect one's decisions and learning. When commenting on her failed attempts to learn French at school, Valerie narrated a story about an English teacher she had who was employed at her school to teach French. She said:

We had an English teacher who had been to Cambridge university and she tried to hide it as she knew the kids would make fun of her as it was such a working class area. She was quite awkward. She was from the south, it was her first teaching job. She was quite intimidated by these noisy, dirty, working-class kids and then we found out that she went to Cambridge and the reason she hid it was because she thought we would think she was up herself.

Personal social class status is a hindrance for her to learn Greek

Such an attempt from hiding one's social status because she would not be accepted within an environment that was already unwelcoming to foreign cultures and languages, made an impact on Valerie. As she continues in her narration, this was the main reason why she felt that such education on grammar and languages could not find a fertile ground to flourish. There was no background or help to support the traditional teaching of languages up in the north. As Valerie comments:

I am really into analysing things. You have to tell them why language is important. It is really boring to go to kids and say learn French. You have to show them in English how you construct a sentence. It is interesting once you learn it properly. It is not effective for teachers to throw out the terms like imperative. You have to show the meaning. They didn't show you the structure of it … That is what it is like in a state school.

Valerie's experience of attending her state school was marked with unsuccessful attempts to learn grammar that could later help her in her learning of Greek. As she comments, when she joined classes at the Hellenic Centre she encountered students who joined lessons as beginners and they already had the opportunity and time to familiarise themselves with such terms. This has been another missed opportunity for Valerie to learn grammar as it should be learned. That of course brings into discussion another problem that such adult Centres face, which is students with similar background as Valerie's who join lessons at different stages and levels and should be appreciated differently compared to other students. She confessed making attempts to teach herself grammar through books but she could not understand them and she gave up:

I was speaking to somebody who was learning German – she was English and she gave me some books on English grammar. I felt like I had to learn about English grammar. I tried to teach myself but I didn't understand it so gave up. I remember I tried to learn cases and I still don't understand them.

She additionally comments her lack of confidence on asking help from her teacher while in the setting of a class and instead she found the opportunity to address that in her interview as the context is more intimate without feeling intimidated by other students who might criticise her:

Because I was in a class I couldn't ask for your help all the time. There were simple things that would really confuse me … There is always an alternative way to teach something. What is quite interesting as a teacher I can learn without them and I have and it is something that you need to explore. I think it is good for me to remind you.

Social class struggle and marginalisation: she feels being marginalised by others in her classroom for being working class

Since I held a dual role, being Valerie's language teacher as well as her interviewer, reading her responses and taking into consideration how she addresses me, it felt as if she wanted to make me feel aware of what it meant for a working-class student in the UK choosing to learn a foreign language, such as Greek. Her guidance on how such students might feel within a context of a learning site located in the affluent area of Marylebone, in central London, was illuminating. I decided, therefore, to select specific statements she made which describe the way she perceived the impact her social class status had on her learning. She said:

There is an element of performance when you are speaking a foreign language which working people are less comfortable with. For example, your northern accent is a massive part of your identity and you are taught to be proud of it, so that is why northern kids go to France and feel uncomfortable speaking French. Working class

kids people aren't taught to perform. It is why working-class people are bad in interviews. You have to go in there and perform. That is why I am really bad in interviews. If I go into an interview and perform well I feel really bad about myself afterwards, I feel like I have lost some dignity... My background is stereotypically working-class but it is different. In Rotherham for example people don't visit London, they think you are a complete snob if you go there, they think you are rich if you go there... They don't feel it is for them…They don't have access to it. It is a mental thing. …Even though we had no money, it was a massive privilege having a foreign dad, living abroad. People didn't have that…I was the only person at my college in my class who went to university…You have to be really ambitious for yourself….It is really not cool to be ambitious or clever. You have to hide it. It is seen as negative to be ambitious or clever. You have to hide it. So I was always a bit of a chameleon….People don't talk about art or books. It is all about being hedonistic – a working class trait is living life to the full now as you can die tomorrow. There is no deferred gratification of study hard now as it will pay off later... That was a massive privilege – having a parent behind you saying that – 'you are going to work now as you are going to be something'. I would always say that I am a working-class kid with middle class values.

It felt right to me offering such a long extract from Valerie's lengthy response as she touched upon so many interesting aspects that she views being associated with her working-class background, such as to name a few: the element of performance in learning foreign languages and speaking in a foreign accent that working-class people feel uncomfortable with, the fact that there is no desire for culture or anything foreign rather than appreciating what brings wealth, which Valerie terms it as 'hedonistic', or the element of hiding any educational and cultural references with the fear of looking different and not authentic. Valerie concludes by describing her social status as a working-class kid with middle-class values, due to the fact that she was brought up by a foreign father who inspired her having ambitions in life. From statements made such as the above, Valerie attempted to describe how her social class background prevented her from progressing with languages for years until the moment she found an opportunity while living and working in London to explore her desire of learning her heritage language. In Valerie's views, social class status can determine attitudes in learning foreign languages and lead a student feel excluded from a group of learners.

There are a few more interesting aspects mentioned by Valerie in her interviews that are worth discussing them as they helped me answering my research questions. More specifically, Valerie appears to be in her responses as a student whose learning of Greek is hetero-positioned through the views and perceptions others have about her. It is exciting to see in her responses the great emphasis other people's opinions play in shaping her own perceptions of Greek language or her forming of her Greek Cypriot identity.

The figure of her father (de)motivated her from learning Greek – she followed his beliefs on politics and learning

In particular, there is the figure of the father, the figure of her teacher and the figures of the people she chooses to socialise with who seemed to have played a focal part on how she positions herself as a learner. To start with, Valerie encounters instances

on how people from her social milieu commented on how her Greek sounds, based on assumptions they made on her identity and background. At times that made her feel upset and other times that made her feel happy, depending on the comments she received. She said:

Somebody said to me – a Cypriot linguist who is very open minded - recently 'you speak Greek really well, I mean you don't speak Cypriot, but it is good'. That was really loaded.

Another instance she recalls was:

For example, we were in café in Cyprus and we were speaking Greek and I was told by someone – who I find really annoying – 'oh I really like the way you London Cypriots speak English', which is an insult. I am not a London Cypriot. The Cypriot I learnt is from Cyprus not from the parikia here. That is her saying to me 'you are not fully Cypriot'. That is her saying you are not speaking Cypriot the way everybody else here is. And it really annoyed me.

Comments such as the above made Valerie reconsidered the way people viewed her as Greek Cypriot or London Cypriot and her immediate reaction was to become judgemental on them. There have been other happy moments during which Valerie came to terms with her Cypriot side of her idea and that happened through her encounters with a Cypriot friend of her, whom she admires and respects a lot. She said:

It really helped meeting Eftychia. She is very enthusiastic about my learning. She is not judgemental. She is very proud of her Cypriot background…. She really appreciates the effort I put in. We went to a feminist poetry festival in Athens about two years ago…With Eftychia as she is Cypriot and gone to Greece she has had to assimilate a bit – to play down her Cypriot-ness. She has had to consciously decide to do that in Greece. I think she didn't necessarily want to do that but she realised she had to if she wanted to get anywhere. With her as well her Greek won't change in front of Greek people but when she it is just me and her, she reverts to her Cypriot which is really nice for me to hear as that is what I do too. But we can also use phrases which I would perceive as 'Greek'. I feel she is the most neutral in terms of language and I feel the most comfortable with her language-wise. Which is strange as she is a published poet, so I should feel intimidated.

Gender and Politics: Feeling related and affiliated to female figures, such as her poet friend, was highly motivational

Valerie refers to her female friend, a published poet and feminist, a woman she admires and has a lot of respect for her, one with whom she shares common interests, culture and national background, as another role model with whom she can relate to and one who can help her balance in terms of accepting her identity and attitudes in learning. The encouragement she feels from her female friend is liberating to her and arms her with confidence and a sense of comfort.

Another figure as earlier commented is her father who has been quite influential on how Valerie initially perceived Greek culture, mentality and that impacted on her

learning of Greek as her act of learning the language at the Hellenic Centre was met with political charge. When commented on her father, she said:

I realise how much I relied on my dad for learning about Greece. I presumed I wouldn't like Greece. I presumed it would be more conservative than Cyprus. I just ruled it out… In Cyprus there is a big political and cultural dimension to how you speak Greek. It is very sensitive in Cyprus. It is a political statement for you to speak Cypriot in a public arena like television. It is very right wing to speak 'proper Greek' in Cyprus….

And further,

With my dad, he is very left-wing for nationalistic issues. His generation he feels let down by Greece. With me I am having to find my own identity within that.

Her father's political views have been quite influential and impacted on the way she viewed Greece so far. But this last statement is a bald statement with Valerie trying to escape from such politically charged environment and form her own opinions on Greece based on her own experience. This is a revolutionary act of redefining her own identity as she claims which makes her feel more empowered. She commented:

I am confident about my opinions. I feel my experience of Greece is quite wide and I have made an effort with that to make sure my experiences are diverse.

The political dimension of learning the formal use of the Greek language was further overshadowed by the preconceived ideas her Cypriot friends had on Greece and its language:

My friends in Cyprus who are really left-wing talk about Greece with slightly negative connotations. They don't know the alternative side to Greece. They sometimes go to one of the tacky islands and would have the same experience that a Brit would have. They would never go to northern Greece, even Thessaloniki they haven't been to.

Relationship with teacher: her teacher's social class and what she felt he represented was a struggle for her to accept that their in-between relationship was on equal terms socially

A third figure who helped Valerie in developing positive attitudes in her learning of Greek was her instructor and teacher. Their close relationship was almost confessional as it allowed Valerie to open up and speak about the hindrances and obstacles she faced when learning Greek. She commented:

I disagree. I think it is more important for an adult as it is more difficult to be vulnerable as an adult. Children are used to be being vulnerable. Their identity isn't established yet. Adults are taught to hide their weaknesses. Especially with somebody with my background, for me to progress, I have to be vulnerable. What I mean is being open about my complexes. Saying to you I don't use those terms, is first of all me admitting I don't know them and not pretending that I do, which I used to do in the class. And not judging myself for not knowing them. I tried to learn them and couldn't ... You allow me to explore the language in my own way. I do get intimidated by formal education structures and grammar. If I just learn the language through really conventional materials, I wouldn't push myself as much ... I know that you enjoy it too which helps.

I remember that comment that you said about me reminding you of the Greek – it was something I had written – it is your language that you don't hear as much as you have moved away. That is really important for me. I feel like I am not a burden to you. I feel that you are enjoying it. Because I have been really obsessed with it and I don't think it is that healthy. In some ways I think it is nice as it shows that you are really passionate about it. I think your passion equals mine.

It is difficult for me to comment on the above statement without making personal references while reflecting on my experience teaching Valerie, but I will try to become as objective as possible. It takes as she claims an equal sense of enjoyment from both sides to have creative lessons which can lead to successful results as it happened with the case of Valerie. The enjoyment we both shared derived from very different places. Yet, it takes a language instructor who is willing to hear the weaknesses and the complexes of his / her student to be able to understand and help the learner progress. To do such thing, it takes also a long time of self-reflection as my initial attempts to teach her the language through grammar were not met with success originally. It took me time to realise that Valerie felt intimidated by me as well as I represented for her the established middle-class educated Greek teacher who happens to also teach at the Hellenic Centre as well as at a private boys' school in central London, sites which were met with a certain sense of disapproval for the 'values' they represented. When such realisation came to my attention, the connection we had as teacher and student became more abundant and the learning of Greek more productive as I searched for alternative ways of teaching the grammar in ways that would not remind Valerie of the missed opportunities she had in education due to her social class background. What is important, according to Valerie, is the opportunities she finally had in lesson and later in the interview to talk about what she felt uncomfortable with the Greek language and that impacted on her developing positive attitudes towards its learning.

It is additionally very interesting, in the light of research questions, how Valerie concludes her second interview by commenting on the choice of the word 'vanity' again. She said:

I think it is maybe affecting my personality as I have always had these dual sides but my Greek side has always been quite supressed as I could only ever communicate to a third of what I could in English. There were all those missed opportunities to connect, to contribute in discussions. It feels really personal. That is what I mean about vain. It is very insular.

Valerie suggests that the way she used the terms 'vain' and 'vanity' was to make explicit and emphasise on how personal and insular matter is for her to learn Greek. The fact that such personal and insular act of learning is simultaneously described by her as a vain and pointless one is fascinating as Valerie attempts to equalise these two terms, which is not very far from the way she earlier described a working-class student might think.

Valerie found a way to position herself within such a context, which was already coloured by other people's opinions; and achieved in balancing in her attitudes of learning Greek, through her love of literature and travels to Greece. The key element

was to find something unique that in her view, not many students would choose to do that and thus, claim her unique and individual position in such context that was already given to her charged with other views. She said:

That is why literature is so important to me. Through the literature I have been able to discover a Greece that foreigners don't have access to. I really appreciate it.

Having access and feeling included in less accessible areas was motivational

Valerie was looking to find her own unique voice of motivating her learning Greek though discovering areas that others could not have easy access to, as they are not either novels or places that would be easily advertised or communicated to the public unless one searched for them. Valerie mentioned specific places that she visited and included the city of Thessaloniki, Kozani, she described experiences in which she found herself within real situations with native speakers interacting, such as the court where she attended a case there. Moreover, her passion about literature and her social encounters with either her friend Eytichia or her language instructor led her discover key literary figures of Greece, such as the cases of Iorgos Ioannou or Ioannis Tachtsis as she mentions in her interview. Such literary figures are not particularly well-known abroad. Such attempts made Valerie feel more discharged from the limits of the canon and she appreciated her way of finding access to a place that not many others (foreign students) have access to, a place of belonging for her being an outsider of the canon. She commented:

It is also the canon in Greece – you have gay authors in the canon, transvestites who were murdered by one of their clients possibly. There are a lot of things about Greek culture you wouldn't know if you didn't have the language. The fact that films in the 1950s had prostitutes in them, lesbian characters, ambiguous women who you didn't know if they are prostitutes or not and they don't even bother to explain it. Women who weren't married, films all about female desire. People have no idea about this. That side of Greece isn't known abroad.

It is her attraction to marginal (out of the canon) or less well-known forms of art and artists that attracted Valerie. In this way, she felt that her way of approaching the Greek culture and her motivation for learning the language as well as learning the language itself were unique and that they differed from other students' motivation and learning attitudes. In the past, Valerie attempted to find aspects of the Greek language that would make her motivation looked unique and different from the other students' attitude, but she soon realised that was a middle – class approach in language learning.

The process of making links among languages and finding roots was motivational

Valerie made an interesting reference to how much fascinated she was on finding the etymology and roots of the words but she soon realised that this was a learning habit of the middle – class ones, a world she did not have access to. She said:

From an etymological point of view, I have always found it interesting. It has always pissed me off that only posh English people know this, so I think there is a whole bit

of knowledge that I don't have because of my upbringing. I like the thought of teaching myself it without any pressure. And you are opening up things – like art history. That is a middle-class arena. I don't have any knowledge about art history or etymology.

Renegotiation of social class status: having access to lesser-known and lesser-appreciated areas was motivational. She discovered aspects she could relate to.

Valerie interestingly associated such access to lesser-known and lesser-appreciated areas (areas that she discovered through her love of literature and travels) as an opportunity for social mobility. If the learning habit of a middle – class student is to find a unique aspect of the language to motivate him / her continue in his / her learning of Greek, then Valerie clearly found that unique element of culture that can motivate and help her progress and advance the learning of Greek. Such element was the triggering event that helped her access the middle – class arena. Through affirming how unique her motivation is, she managed to change her social status. She said:

I suppose at my age everything you learn, you learn it for your career. Like when I was learning Greek it was very, very personal. It was useful for me on an emotional level but not that much on a professional level. It is kind of personal goals. It is something you get a lot of enjoyment out of.

To conclude, for Valerie, it is important to spend her time in lessons wisely by making the most of her interactions with her language instructor, as she is fully aware that her financial circumstances cannot allow her to invest a lot of money on the learning of Greek, because she cannot afford it. Valerie makes an interesting critique on the lessons conducted and delivered at the Hellenic Centre. She implied that the quality of these lessons needs to improve as the people who are in charge of them need to become aware of the social class restrictions and financial circumstances of the Centre's students in order to allow them invest more money and time in the learning of Greek. She said:

The lessons at the Hellenic Centre are cheap which is good but then it is bad when they are at a higher level so you have to pay for private tuition. Rich people have got quite a lazy attitude as they can afford to have endless lessons whereas I don't. I think that was big factor for me. I used to push myself a lot. I used to get frustrated if I was struggling with something. I think I had quite good awareness of what I was struggling with and I would get frustrated in the lessons if I knew I wasn't overcoming that if the lesson was drawing to a close. I would do so much work at home and I would get frustrated if there was still a barrier for me learning something. I think that is my attitude to a lot of things.

Valerie is the case of a student whose awareness of her social class and other restrictions imposed on her by her life circumstances have drastically affected her learning of Greek.

4.3 Participant 3 (Virginia)

Participant 3 when asked to introduce herself, she commented:

A female novels' writer and journalist with a huge love and respect for Greece. British at heart but with a hint of being Greek; sharing my life between Crete, Athens and London.

As for the pseudonym she chose to be addressed as in the thesis, she went for Virginia, from the character of Virginia Wolf, in 2002 Stephen Daldry's film *The Hours.*

The reasons behind choosing such character as stated by her were:

She is the writer I admire the most, and as she is portrayed in Cunningham's novel as well as in the film, she is desperate to leave the boring life she leads in the countryside and she wants to return to the chaos and madness of the big city. This is what I did when I had to choose and decide about the life I want to lead. As soon as my children joined University, I left Kent and returned back to London and ever since I have not stopped travelling to Greece, writing my novels there and living a life amongst the desperate immigrants trying to survive and earn their living. I rent a small flat in the busy and rundown Patissia (area in Athens) far from the extravagant lifestyle of Chelsea. I can breathe there. But I know I will be returning one day to my London home. [Written notes by Virginia, Spring 2019)

Connection with language and writing: Her writings about Greece made her feel related to Greece, culture and language

What we learn from Virginia, even from the very beginning of her introducing herself, is that her connection with languages and writing is quite strong as she is herself a novelist. She is also a woman who comes from an affluent background as she owns properties in Kent and Chelsea. During her journey of learning Greek, she made a choice of spending more time in Greece writing her novels there while sharing her life between living in London and Athens, in a predominantly working-class area where a lot of immigrants found home the last few years in Athens. Virginia is a writer who became well known in the public when she published her first novel, which was about a particular small island in Greece. Her book was published in many languages and it was met with acclaim and success. In her career, she published several books that all take place in Greece and they deal with the country's traumatic past, all with the exception of one, her second novel that took place in Spain. Virginia's connection with the Greek language began after wanting to learn how to speak the language in order to bring her more in touch with the country's mentality and culture. On her initial motivation, she said:

I'd been going to Greece by that time for 25 years and I'd never learned a word of it, which is sort of an anomaly, given that if I'd been in Italy I would have given a go at speaking Italian, or Spanish, or French, and it would have been peculiar to me to go to those countries, but Greek - because of the alphabet - creates this distance. You think, I can't read it, therefore I can't speak it. But the specific catalyst for coming to the Hellenic Ctr. was that I had a book that had come out … it had been very successful very quickly, and within a few months I was there doing PR and I decided that I couldn't ...there was one particular event there where I was being translated, because all the audience were Greek-speaking and didn't speak English -- it was in Crete -- and I sat there listening for hours to this woman translating me from English to Greek, and then questions from Greek to English -- I was not only bored, but she seemed to talk for far

too long, and I could see the audience was frustrated because they were listening to her rather than me, and I thought if I'm going to communicate with people I can't do it through somebody else. That was a particular moment where I thought, I'm not doing this forever. So I came back and I remember saying to you, I know this sounds mad, but by -- I think it was only 3 or 4 months away -- in 3 months' time I'm doing an interview on the television and I want to do it in Greek. It was something that sounded ridiculous, but it was a goal and it was a target and it was a motivation, and to certain extent we achieved it. As far as I remember, I did go back later that year and did my first things in Greek. So I had a very clear objective.

Communication with readers made her feel confident learning foreign languages

Her need to speak the language with the aim to communicate in a more efficient and direct way with her readers and the audience led her make a choice of learning the language setting simultaneously a highly ambitious objective which was to be able within a few months' time to be able to have interviews on television in Greek. This is the first theme addressed by her in the interview, which is the power, in Virginia's views, that learning a foreign language holds to help her achieve a certain access to the public discourse while being able to open, speak and communicate in an immediate way with the people who read her novels. Her desire to feel, therefore, more included within the Greek community of her readers was supported by Virginia when she commented on how her initial motivation to communicate with the audience was further addressed as a need to learn the language at a more fluent level. She commented:

Principally communication, as that was the first set of things, and obviously it's now listening: it's not me talking to people, it's understanding people.

That obviously then goes hand in hand, and learning about the Greek mentality, because you can only really understand about mentality through language, and through things that are untranslatable, either Greek ideas that you can't? translate because they don't exist with the Northern European mentality, or the other way round -- all of that is interesting.

And now the next bit for me is reading completely fluently, because all my books that I have for research are in English but there are a hundred times as many in Greek but I can't read them, so I'm not yet fast enough to read them.

What is fascinating in Virginia's response is how explicitly she sets the objectives in her learning of the Greek language according to the needs of her profession. She is a writer who aims to write books about Greece, and she wants to explore the mentality of the people in this country, to be able to understand them, understand their history, their past, the way they think as well as to be able to read all the books that will help her in researching all the above while writing her novels. Virginia sees such long-time process, which is the learning of Greek, as a process that entails a certain sense of ambition, motivation, and determination. It is an investment for her, and she is willing to take that chance on spending time in succeeding in her goal. She interestingly

comments on how important it is to be ambitious and determined on learning a foreign language:

you have to be very determined but you also need to get a sense of your own progress at the same time, you have to feel you are making progress.

Competence and Autonomy: She feels very self-aware of how to achieve academic progress in learning foreign languages

Such confidence of being able to achieve such highly ambitious goal is captivatingly linked in her view with a sense of self-awareness of one's own academic progress in Greek. These views as mentioned above address the second theme emerged from her interview which is that any motivation a learner holds to learn a foreign language needs to come hand in hand with a self-awareness regarding the progress he/she makes in the language so that she/he can maintain the initial drive. In Virginia's responses, one can detect elements of how self-aware she is as a learner not only regarding the progress she makes but equally regarding the limits any learner has in learning the language at a proficient or fluent level. She said:

We all have a ceiling. So I don't think that everybody, even if they were totally immersed 7 days a week, let's say an English person with Greeks, where some people might start speaking and they'd say, 'Gosh, I'd never have known you were English,' and there will be other people, where their brain doesn't have the right switches… Probably, dare I say it, natural intelligence. A lot of Greek is an intelligence exercise and that might be influenced by whether you've learned other languages as a child, I'm sure that helps. Motivation, a desire to speak it. So what else would hinder it? The amount of time you spent on it, listening, speaking and reading it. Not one thing. I personally don't believe it's possible for every individual to reach the same level of fluency, even if they're given exactly the same circumstances.

Virginia interestingly associates that notion of self-awareness with frequency in practicing the language, 'natural intelligence' and a strong educational background in learning foreign languages. She considers these three elements as almost a pre-requisite for successful learning of a language and simultaneously, she addresses the idea that it is quite impossible for all learners of foreign languages to become fluent in the target language if they do not have the support of the above-mentioned tools. In Virginia's view, a learner who is able to practice the language frequently, who was given opportunities at school or university or had practiced the language in his/her trips and travels, such learner has been fortunate enough to hold a capital that can help him / her achieve such goal. Thus, inevitability, in Virginia's views is associated, to some extent even if indirectly, with social class mobility and capital. It is interesting however, the fact that she appreciates that it is the strong motivation and the drive that can help a learner learn a foreign language successfully even if he / she is not given the 'same circumstances' as other learners. Yet, she acknowledges how important it is at the same time the existence of such circumstances which is a clear reference to the capital that certain learners hold and that can help make their learning of a foreign language more accessible and less intangible.

She was highly educated and learned other foreign languages – support from her family environment

Virginia is a learner who had in the past received a great amount of learning other foreign languages and had the experience of speaking to them while travelling abroad or within her family environment. As she mentioned in her interview, she did French and German in her school years and she continued with her French education while at Oxford university as well as during her travels in Paris as she used to work in PR with French clients, conversing with them in fluent French. Therefore, learning and practising foreign languages was supported by her school, university and college

I also did a bilingual secretarial course straight after university, so I learned how to do French shorthand and business French, so French was very much my second language,

as well as within her family environment as her stepfather was French. Her commitment and investment on foreign language learning was further supported financially when she started her private lessons at the Hellenic Centre after she became internationally successful with the publishing of her first novel. To use her own words, she was fortunate enough to have the 'circumstances' that helped her progress in her learning of the language in such way that made her confident practicing and speaking them with confidence either while working and travelling in France or holding interviews on the television in Greek.

She feels confident and determined in learning Greek

An important aspect that is associated with Virginia's identity as a learner is the idea of self-determination and confidence she has when speaking about her current level of attainment in Greek language as well as the way she views where she is and where she wants to get to. Virginia considers herself being a proficient speaker, that is a level in her view in which a learner can manage with everyday communication. However, advanced is the level that she desires to achieve as this the level in which she can communicate without having significant gaps in her knowledge and a level that will allow her to operate in Greek being autonomous, without the help of a teacher. She said:

I would say proficient. I don't regard myself as advanced, because I think I'm fairly advanced in comprehension, but not in writing or reading because I haven't been disciplined enough…Proficient is -- as we say in English-- when you can 'get by', you can manage… Whereas Proficient is you can manage, you can survive. Survival rather than taking charge. And proficient is where you are in the position where you say I'm sorry I don't understand that, whereas advanced you're fluent in every way. You don't have gaps. I think you've met him, the British Ambassador is advanced.

And further on the exams:

I have absolutely no desire to sit an exam because I'm afraid all my weaknesses would be exposed, rather than my strengths shown off. I don't need to prove...I only need to prove to myself I can achieve my own goals, so definitely not for me. The goal is not an exam. Weirdly enough, I know it sounds odd, if it was a GCSE in Modern Greek I

can imagine wanting to do that, because it's measurable against other things I've done in a kind of national thing. But I don't understand the Proficiency. It doesn't mean anything to me. It's what all our girls who came from Turkey and Sweden, all the au pairs we had, they came here and did the Proficiency in English. I'd love to do GCSE or A level if it still exists, but not this language thing.

British connections: She was highly influenced by her social British connections which was highly motivational. She related her learning with either people she felt being socially closer to or examination boards appreciated by British Government

Virginia's views on levels of attainment and exams are worth taking into consideration because they are indirectly associated with social class and national identity. Her comment on proficient level associated with the immigrants and the au pairs who must achieve to be able to work and survive in the UK is a clear commentary on how proficiency as a level is connected with a certain class of people. Moreover, advanced as a level is connected with figures such as the British Ambassador, which is clearly a reference to a different social class group of learners. Virginia associates herself with the latter as this is the level she aims to reach at. Additionally, what strengthens her views on how strongly she appreciates her national identity is her opinions on the exams. Commenting on the exams, she dismisses the value of CEFR exams (the European measurement of assessing a learner's competence in foreign languages) and she states her clear preference on the GCSE exams which hold a national status and thus it is measurable in her view.

Even though such powerful statements reveal a certain sense of determination Virginia has as a learner, there is an interesting claim made by her on the moments she felt less empowered and instead more frustrated and vulnerable. She comments that the original motivation has changed as the audience expectations have increased and they expect from her to deliver a certain fluency when being interviewed in Greek. The public's reception of her being an acclaimed author in Greece raised not only the expectations they have but equally the level of anxiety Virginia feels in order to meet such high expectations. She said:

Yes, there's an expectation, so I find that frustrating if I disappoint people if I'm not understanding what they're saying to me and if it's a really important situation... funnily what now frustrates me is if there's someone who's Greek they'll constantly interrupt and try and translate for me, which I find very annoying, because I would rather get the person who's talking to me and maybe can't speak English to explain themselves in a different way what they mean, so that I can get it from them. So I'm kind of in that middle zone where it's not quite good enough for what I'm needing it for.

She admits the lack of knowledge, she embraced traditional ways of learning languages and repeating through listening. She made attempts to become advanced and made her feel competent and autonomous.

As a result, Virginia expresses her desire of reaching a certain level of fluency that equals with how autonomous she wants to be as a learner and a speaker of that language. She needs no support from go-betweens or translators. That leads to the third major theme that emerged from her interview which regards the attempts such

confident and self-aware learner made to achieve that sense of autonomy in her learning of Greek. She said:

So the hard work has got to come from me, I shouldn't have to rely on someone else to give me the information.

Virginia reveals that for the successful progress and advancement of Greek it takes commitment, having frequent lessons without being interrupted by long periods. For an adult learner it is important that memory is regularly exercised. Additionally, it is equally important that a learner makes use of the tools she / he has through reflecting on what he / she learned in the past in order to become more independent instead of relying on the instructors.

Furthermore, Virginia made an interesting recollection of an embarrassing moment she had, in her opinion, while being interviewed by a journalist for the Greek television, in which she forgot what the word 'prostatevi' meant – protects – and that made her struggle understanding the questions addressed. To overcome such embarrassing moments, Virginia suggests that learners should admit their lack of knowledge and reveal their inability of understanding rather than feeling frustrated for loosing the control of communicating with the native speakers. She said:

so it's usually some kind of a joke if you don't know something, it's not a big deal . So it's usually part of the learning process if you admit you don't now a word and then they find another way of saying it.

And further, when she commented on her struggles with the grammar and the pronunciation, she claimed:

There are rules and yet there are a lot of exceptions to the rules, so you are constantly learning a rule and then learning that there is something that isn't part of it. With English I don't know what our rules are, I mean it's so different with your own language… I make mistakes but it's not traumatic

Therefore, in her view, confronting one's inability or lack of knowledge makes the experience of making mistakes less traumatic for the learner.

Another aspect that helped her become more confident in her speaking was the 'old-fashioned', as she termed it, attempts she made to repeat herself texts and allow herself listen to the same passage being said many times while familiarising herself with the different voices being heard in a dialogue for instance. She specifically mentioned:

It's a text read out by lots of different voices, each time a different speed, different pronunciation, male/female. Very different kind of content and you listen and write it down… So those I find really invaluable. And what I sometimes do is when I find a text where I've been useless I will do the same one again until I remember how I spell the words that the first three times I got wrong. It's something you can do on your own, it's sort of auto-study… So old-fashioned repetition and recitation and doing them in the same order all the time.

She embraced the social aspect of communication preference in communicating in real-life environments

Such exposure to listening the different voices of speakers if transferred within a real life situation, that would be the setting of a cafe perhaps in Athens. It is, therefore, the attempt to be able for a learner to have the experience of listening to the language within an artificial environment (such as the context of a classroom at the Hellenic in London through an exercise recoded on a CD) as well as find oneself with the context of a real-life situation where different voices are heard (such as the café in Athens). In Virginia's views, it is important for the learners to encourage themselves participate in social gatherings and cultural events so that they can feel that they belong, a part of a foreign community that invites them to communicate through the language. She said:

Obviously parties and 'Panigyria' where you meet strangers, book signings a lot of people who read my books in Greek are of a certain age, they're slightly older people, they're often women in their 60's and 70's and they're less likely to speak English than let's say if it was a 20 year old. So my group of readers are going to speak Greek to me so I always learn then, from those situations.

Embracing the social aspect of communicating with the locals allowed Virginia to get in touch with the language in a more confident way. As she commented on the picture she chose, such places of social gathering can function as the perfect learning sites as they can make the learner comfortable and relaxed:

Pic 7

'Athenian State' café? Obviously in the centre of Athens. It would be my ideal choice for a café! Probably central hub for meetings, conversation and gossip… Outdoor life in Greece is a very comfortable and friendly lifestyle and it is easy to find people to speak to in tavernas (when in Greece!).

Her connection with the teacher was motivational

An additional that emerged from Virginia's interview was the attention an adult learner desires to receive from his / her language instructor and the focus on the individual needs of a learner. This will be explored through Virginia's experience of having the opportunity to be taught Greek in London at the Hellenic Centre as well as in Athens Language Centre in Greece. Virginia makes an explicit reference to how important it is for her to be motivated by the instructor. It is her relationship with him/ her that can motivate her and give her the confidence she is looking for to progress with her learning. However, Virginia claims that such relationship can be fruitful only on the basis that is conducted within a private setting in which she will have the full attention of her instructor. Virginia speaks with such confidence that reaches the level of selfishness as she admits. She said:

The instructor gives the motivation…personally I find group language lessons... well, they don't suit me. Having a group of 10 where everyone is at a completely different level -- that's what some people fit into, but I don't think I could have learned like that. I think I would have been much slower to learn. Although having somebody else there can make it more competitive. In the Athens Centre there were 2 people -- the teacher and me and one other -- and I've much rather been on my own. I'm used to that so I felt a bit selfish. As soon as I'm not answering the question, doing the exercise, I'm bored. It's odd, but that's how I am. When it was the other girl's turn to read, I was thinking, I don't want to listen to you reading because I'm not learning from your Greek, because I was slightly better than her.

She states her preference in learning alone (private lessons) and not in class context

The key words that emerged from her response above are competitive and selfish. Virginia rejects the idea of learning from her peers and classmates, which is quite common in adult education, because she believes that she does not receive much help or support from her peers and instead she prefers when the instructor addresses her directly and exclusively in lessons. Such outspoken and confident student as Virginia is led her to make statements regarding what she has the intention of reading in order to improve her Greek while rejecting other forms of literature. More specifically, she said:

I've already decided I need never read Kathimerini (Greek newspaper) because I don't need to get to grips with that. Many Greeks find it difficult and over-academic. I mean, I don't think I ever need to read academic textbooks. I'm not planning to read the kind of works of literature where the sentences are a whole paragraph. I don't plan to read things in Greek that I probably wouldn't read in English. I accept that. Say that's everything I say I can stop here. I'm not getting it to the Kathimerini and Kazantzakis in Greek.

It is very interesting how confidently she made choices on what is essential for her to read or learn and reject other parts and forms of the language. Virginia appears to be such an established learner who leaves little room for others to make suggestions or improvements in her language learning. Her statements are so absolute to the point that they sound perhaps to some very arrogant. Yet, she is a learner who has a certain capital and authority that allows her to make such decisions.

She states her preference in socially interacting when in country of the TL, as she can feel more included which is motivational

What is contradictory however, is that although she rejects the social aspect of learning within the setting of a classroom, she appears much more receptive and accepting when she finds herself within real life social gatherings, such as in shops where she buys electrical goods, or the taxis or even at the hairdressers. As she comments:

Because you're putting it in a context it's not just in a classroom. It's the real application of the language.

To conclude, one can read behind the instances described above as well as the statements she made that she always forefronts what is useful or what can be proved useful in her opinion in order to help her practice with the language more. Such attempts reveal that Virginia is not just a confident and deeply self – aware learner of Greek but equally one who views the learning language from a utilitarian perspective.

Virginia had the opportunity, due to her frequent travels to Greece, to attend lessons at an adult education Centre in Athens, the Athens Language Centre, which was recommended to her by the British Ambassador, whom she clearly admires of what he has achieved in his learning of Greek, calling him a proper 'advanced' student earlier.

When I asked her to describe her experience of having lessons there and compare Athens Centre with the Hellenic Centre, she made some very interesting claims, such as:

It's delightful. It's an oasis. It's the most beautiful oasis in Athens. A beautiful, beautiful place, physically beautiful. It's built around this courtyard. It's an old school, so they've got a few of these big-ceilinged, old-fashioned kind of teaching spaces and this cluster of buildings and rooms around the sides of the square…most evenings they have a showing of a film, or a poet comes, or there are workshops on Greek literature -- this is in the summer. But they have a strong connection with some American academic institutions who send over groups of American students. It's not like they're only dealing with individual who've in some way come randomly off the street, you know what I mean? It's like they have this core, so I think the foundation of it is very different than the Hellenic Ctr. because they get a lump of funding from somewhere or other. And they do this course which is a goal of mine, which is a discussion on politics and the media. They do the language courses and once you're advanced, they do these courses where you sit around and talk about the newspapers, which to me would be fantastic. I'd love to do something like that, when you stop doing your exercises and grammar and do that. It's meant to be very good. It's got a very nice atmosphere.

She compared her learning experience of Greece in Athens vs London

Virginia is very complimentary in her description of how idyllic the atmosphere is at Athens centre and how much more immersed the lessons are into the Greek culture as well as how many opportunities are offered to the students in order to speak the language and get in touch with the culture and Greek mentality. However, when Virginia commented on her actual lessons of Greek, she was not as complementary as she was at the beginning when describing the actual learning site. Her instructor, in her own words was a Greek woman who had

been working there 25 yrs, very Greek, didn't speak English, her 2nd language was French, which was very good -- I was very glad of that. Very energetic, full of enthusiasm, big character. Quite tough, you know she didn't give much praise. She made me feel, God, I've really got to work hard here, so she was a strong personality. I didn't feel we did enough speaking, but I think that's because she had a certain number of chapters she was obliged to take us through on this course, and rather than, say Let's forget this chapter, do that when you go back to London, they obviously have to tick the boxes. In a sense I don't know why, since it was very informal, there were just the two of us learning and I felt she could have been a little more, Let's adapt this to you. But that's obviously not the style of things. I mean when we have our one-to-one lessons I feel you gear it to me. You don't have to report to anybody else that we've got to the end of Chapter 10 because it's December… I mean, I learned a lot, but I feel I would have made more progress if it was slightly more structured to me, but that wasn't how they did it.

Her intensive Greek lessons were proven quite daunting to her as she hardly had the opportunity to absorb all the new information as she said:

It was sort of like a cloth that was trying to mop up too much and it was kind of saturated so it didn't absorb enough…So this intensive teaching is not intensive learning.

Feeling included makes her feel being in control and empowered which is motivational

It is interesting how Virginia addresses the idea of belonging which is from a selfish point of view. She seeks for the full attention of her instructor in a way that he / she belongs to her. Yet, what she is actually looking for is an instructor who has the ability to adapt his / her teaching to Virginia's learning needs. It is fascinating how she chooses to term this process through making use of phrases such as 'adapt this to you', 'I feel you gear it to me' or 'if it was more structured to me'. Virginia through such statements reveals the expectation an adult learner has from the language instructor to know his / her student well so that he / she can adjust and customise his / her teaching according to the learner's needs. In Virginia's view, her instructor's attempts to teach her Greek were more dictated by the book, as she claims in her interview, rather than inspired by her as a learner and this is why she considered the learning outcome as a not successful one at the end.

To conclude, Virginia is a learner who heavily commented on how important it is for a learner of foreign languages to have a sense of empowerment over his / her own

learning which is a pre-requisite for the successful learning of the Greek language. As she commented on the learning metaphor she made on learning Greek,

Learning another language is like exercising my brain, solving a puzzle, gaining satisfaction in proportion to the rate of improvement.

In her interview, we see a woman (Virginia) and the constant efforts she made to learn a language (Greek) and improve and progress her learning to a certain level of fluency so that she could help herself access a different culture and mentality of a country in which she decided to spend half of her time throughout the year, a country that keeps inspiring her writing her novels through which she can satisfy her artistic instincts and needs. That is an act of belonging into a different and foreign culture as expressed through the eyes and voice of a female writer who holds a strong sense of her national British identity.

4.4 Participant 4 (Elinor)

Participant 4 introduced herself as a British female lawyer in her late 50s who works as a partner at a big law firm in London. She chose to be addressed in this chapter as Elinor, one of the two main characters in Ang Lee's adaptation of Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility.* The reasons why she made such choice as mentioned by her are:

I am moved by her character and how reserved, practical, and thoughtful she is. She is sensible, strong, opinionated but very vulnerable and fragile at the same time. This is not who I would like to be but rather how I view myself through a typical Austen character. Austen makes me comfortable reading her novels and Elinor's character is the one I admire the most. [Written notes made by Elinor, Spring 2019]

What she finds motivational is feeling comfortable and confident. She adjusts learning to what makes her feel comfortable in terms of social class and education

While reading carefully through Elinor's interview, I came across with one particular word which informed me about the major theme addressed in her interview. That word is 'comfortable' and there have been fifteen mentions throughout Elinor's responses starting with the first mention she made while describing the choice of her pseudonym. Thus, I will start my reading of the data I collected from that word which will be elaborated through Elinor's responses when talking about her background, family and British identity.

I will begin my reading by addressing that part in her interview that made me reflect on how important such feeling of comfort is for Elinor, which in a way runs through her entire interview. She stated:

The sense of being secure in England. It is quite boring. It is quite frustrating at times. London isn't boring but it can be the same. Taunton is incredibly familiar. The world is much more exciting than being in Britain but you need to have somewhere to run back to.

Social Class status is directed by her family background and its members' connection with the British colonial Empire

From the very beginning of her interview, Elinor introduces herself to us and we learn that she comes from a wealthy background, with family having links with the British Empire as her parents and grandparents worked at higher civil positions abroad, in India and Indonesia, while her grandfather as she mentions:

My grandfather who was the ultimate British colonialist in many ways, but at the same time you sat down with the village elders and you didn't try and change anything, you just listened. Presumably they paid taxes and if they didn't kill each other, you were doing your job. But it was a much more listening role than we are going to impose democracy… my parents… they are very much products of the Raj… I suppose a historical blip. Their parents had this sense of duty that we went out and my grandfather on my father's side built railways and my grandfather on my mother's side was a political agent on the north west frontier. This was up to WW2. My mother's father was in the Persian gulf after WW2 -- the sort of ambassador in the Persian gulf.

Her educational background in rich as she was privately education, she had the boarding experience, and she had the opportunities to learn and practice foreign languages in foreign speaking professional contexts

Elinor was born in India and spent her first seven years of her life there before moving permanently to England. Speaking other foreign languages was at the heart of the family's everyday life, work practice and education for the children. Elinor in her attempt to make a mini auto-biographical introduction she stated that her parents sometimes spoke Bahasa Indonesian, she had to learn French at the primary school, she continued with Classics (Latin and Greek) in her senior school years while her brothers did German and all children had opportunities to do language exchanges with Elinor doing French and Italian while working as an au pair in Italy when she was 15. Elinor's education could therefore be easily characterised as formal and classical given the opportunities she had in life to be educated in such manner due to her affluent family life circumstances. She spent a lot of her time moving in between places and schools to the point that made her feel uneasy and insecure. She said:

I did move around a lot as a small child. I thought of England as security. I was quite insecure. I came home from India when I was seven. I was about five and we were in a country house in a rented house in England and there was the smell of Dahlias or something and I remember feeling really safe. I think moving around India and the Middle East was really quite a lot for me as a small child. I didn't really feel secure until I came back to England. This experience was quite common in colonial times. Both my parents were born in India. They probably didn't think about it as much but probably still thought of England as home. I was seven when I came back permanently. For me there was a strong attachment to it. There is a holding onto England and Britain.

Being in control is motivational for her. She feels when she is not in control of things, including speaking languages, it gives her a sense of autonomy and competence

Feeling safe, secure and comfortable made me reflect on other instances when Elinor mentioned that feeling of making choices in her learning or work that would make her feel this way, that is similar to the way she felt when she permanently moved to England and got settled. More specifically, Elinor comments on how frustrated she feels when she does not have the full control over the language, which is an uncomfortable feeling of having to accept that she will make mistakes at the beginning of her learning, she said that such feeling holds her back and prevents her from progressing. She said:

I do find that frustrating to not be able to say something quite complex and that is because I have not got a level in any language apart from my own language, to be able to do that. I am frustrated and not comfortable with starting at the beginning and accepting that I will make mistakes. It definitely holds me back.

Gender and Learning are two aspects highly linked as she has two male figures in her family who were very good speakers of other languages

It is quite evident in Elinor's narration that there have been instances when she compared herself to others who, in her view, had a better 'ear' for languages. The three examples she used demonstrate, in her view, what it means to be an able speaker of a foreign language. The first one is her brother. She said:

My brother works in translating Japanese. He has a first-class degree in Chinese… My brother said when he visited me that 'I bet I will be speaking better Greek than you in two weeks' than you have done in two years, which is probably true, but didn't need saying… My brother – the Japanese/Chinese scholar – is very competent on grammar too.

The second example she used was also chosen from her family environment and that was her grandfather who, in her words:

My grandfather spoke eight languages, Bahasa, Pa'a, Dari, Pashtu and Arabic and Turkish. He did all those very difficult eastern languages, having studied classics actually. He worked in those areas. Whether that is an ear thing or a state of mind…

It is almost as if her grandfather's ability was inherited by her brother but she never managed to reach the level of efficiency these two held in learning foreign languages. The third example she used was her friend Catherine who is from France. She said about her:

Catherine didn't go to university and yet she always wanted to speak English. And yet I thought well it would be nice to speak French but I wonder whether I was as prepared or as hungry to learn the language. In some ways I ought to have been much better at French than she at English – if you just looked at our marks at school – but Catherine has always been completely comfortable in speaking English and I have been much less comfortable in speaking French. I could do well enough at school without being able to speak it. I could do the grammar tests. I think I am personally not very assertive. I would not like to push my way in. I don't feel comfortable speaking the language I want to speak. With Catherine's husband, I should speak in French as his English is

limited. He speaks to me in French and I speak to him in English. It is probably because my French is rubbish. Am I lazy?

When feeling defeated she in search of confidence in the areas she feels more powerful and in charge. She feels marginalised and she needs to feel more related and included

It is quite fascinating how much she withdraws herself from attempting to speak a foreign language as she feels defeated by people who either have the same level of education as she does or simply a better 'ear' for the languages. While trying to determine the reasons behind such withdrawal, she mentions her lack of being self-confident and assertive enough to speak or she does not have the 'ear' and the capacity to reproduce the sounds of the target language as the others do. In Elinor's view, it is not a matter of who is the best learner, who has studied the language more but who is the best speaker of a language, the one who has the confidence to do that. It is quite interesting how in Catherine's case she makes a reference to her marks at the school as a proof that she has been a very good student so that would not explain why she keeps failing learning a language. It is as if Elinor suffers from the syndrome of the good student who keeps seeking for praise for her achievement and her efforts. And that is the reason why she opts for working and learning the forms of a foreign language that she feels most comfortable with and which are related to her education and her own achievements. She searches for confidence in the areas she feels more powerful to learn and practise and this is what gives her that sense of comfort. Being comfortable means being powerful in Elinor's views. As she comments:

I think it is to do with both my classical education and because of my career. Both of those things call for precision and I am quite put off or frustrated or feel stupid if I can't get to quite a high level of things, so I default to things that I can do rather than embracing stuff that I find difficult.

When she has lack of control, she feels frustrated. This contradicts to the power she has inherited through social class and education

Her inability to have the full control over the act of speaking a foreign language as well as the lack of being as precise as she wants to be causes her that feeling of frustration. That is the moment when she loses power and she makes the conscious decision to embrace what brings her comfort.

The word 'ear' was used six times in her responses and it is one of the key words that attracted my attention immediately. Such choice of words made by Elinor is interesting as it is her way of explaining her own inability to learn a foreign language successfully. I don't have an ear for languages means I do not have the ability to learn and reproduce the structures of the language or a piece of music as I am unable to hear and reproduce accurately the sounds of that language. It is evident from Elinor's narration that her classical and formal education provided her with essential tools to understand the grammar and syntax of a foreign language and that is something she can both relate to and feel comfortable with. She comments:

All these years in England where they don't learn English grammar. I feel comfortable with rules and things but that is the way I have learnt. I have always wondered whether

it is necessary… I could do well enough at school without being able to speak it. I could do the grammar tests… I tend to default to exercises I find straight forward which tend to be the grammar related exercises because I did very traditional Latin and very traditional Greek at school and when I went to Oxford I was the only person in my year that had got experience of English into Latin and English into Greek – what we call prose compilation. I had to do a special paper in that.

Due to her formal education, she is constantly looking to feel comfortable with that form of education and adjust it to her learning of Greek

Elinor's traditional and formal education equipped her with the ability to understand the grammatical and syntactical structures of a foreign language but this is unequal and not in balance with her ability to speak the language as effortlessly as she can work out the grammar.

Another aspect that Elinor relates to being comfortable with is her identity of being British. She comments:

This is going to sound horrible but perhaps I probably innately would prefer to be English and I am more comfortable in being English. Deep down is that there is an arrogance? I am uncomfortable with saying it is a sense of superiority. I don't want to be French. I am interested in it from the distance. It is quite a cultural life they have in Paris. They are very proud of being French. I don't really relate to their environment.

It is interesting how feeling comfortable has now become a matter of feeling comfortable with one's identity and Elinor projects that to language as she feels comfortable communicating in English, although her education, social class and family background would suggest that she should do the opposite. She questions her attitude of communicating in English as an act of arrogance, but she rejects this idea as she does not feel she holds any sense of superiority over people who come from other nationalities or backgrounds. On the matter of arrogance, she further comments:

It is a generalisation and so many British people aren't able to do so. Is it a lack of motivation? I am not comfortable with arrogance. Obviously, I don't think it should be stupidity. It is something that really affects the British schools.

Elinor in her attempt to seek for an answer behind that stance of arrogance that British have feeling demotivated to learn other foreign languages, associates that lack of motivation with the British schooling system. Yet, she appreciates that her attachment to England and the country's culture and mentality could hide an element of arrogance that was inherited by her family's colonial past. In her own words:

I was seven when I came back permanently. For me there was a strong attachment to it. There is a holding onto England and Britain. But I think there is a sense of arrogance and I can blame my parents for this one but they are very much products of the Raj.

She feels comfortable socialising with people when knowing enough about the country's contemporary reality

From a social perspective, it is fascinating to see what makes Elinor feel comfortable with and helps her practice the speaking of Greek. She comments:

Because I find it quite strange and different – Greek society – to have someone who I can feel comfortable about asking questions about Greece. I feel I have a little chance of understanding a bit more in a way that I can't understand by a conversation in Koroni even in English. Because there are too many barriers. Not knowing enough about the context or background of Greek politics or even where their politics are.

She feels comfortable when she is in control. The lack of it impacts her competence to speak and socialise with others in the TL

Elinor finds that there are certain barriers that do not help her socialise with the Greeks when she is in Greece and thus practise her speaking of the language. The barriers she acknowledges that exist are interestingly related to her perceptions and views being British of class, power, authority and gender equality. Such barriers make her feel that she cannot easily belong into a community of people who do not share the same values with her. In this way, Elinor associates the idea of feeling comfortable with the concept of belonging and fitting into a foreign society.

At first, she makes an interesting comment on how traumatic her experiences have been when visited Athens when she was very young from a gender perspective. She said:

When I was in Athens at 18, I was certainly molested. And in Italy I was to some extent molested. Nothing very serious but enough …

She had previous traumatic experiences when visiting the country and practicing her speaking, which are related to gender

Her traumatic experience being a young woman travelling in the 70s in Greece was for sure a reason to prevent her from visiting the country more often in the past. It is interesting that when it comes to matters of gender inequality and sexism that she still finds exist in Greece, she made a conscious decision to opt for a stance that makes her feel comfortable and not address them, being polite instead, observe them and not discuss them. She said:

I think there is a degree of sexism there which I do find annoying. I am conscious of that. I think the UK has changed a lot. It does annoy me but I suppose I am too polite to say. The division between the sexes is more pronounced in Greece, especially the older generation.

Reflecting on what Elinor commented on her grandfather's attitude when he used to live as a foreigner during the colonial era in India, it is quite illuminating that she almost opted for using the same stance when it comes to a foreign and other country. She said:

My grandfather who was the ultimate British colonialist in many ways, but at the same time you sat down with the village elders and you didn't try and change anything, you just listened. Presumably they paid taxes and if they didn't kill each other, you were doing your job. But it was a much more listening role than we are going to impose democracy.

She feels comfortable socialising with people of the same social and professional background

Such attitude of being polite, listen and observe the other is fascinating and Elinor makes an interesting connection of that with the British class system. The act of listening to the other and starting a conversation is a complex matter for Elinor that includes elements of how comfortable she feels with her interlocutors and how attached she is with the hierarchies imposed by the British class system to the people. She said:

With Costas I am very comfortable. That is probably a very British thing to say. And I can probably relate to you.

It is probably more difficult in Koroni (a town in the area of Peloponnese, south Greece). To start up a conversation on an easy basis. I am probably talking about the British class system. You know in an office environment, you have different hierarchies. You can talk in a very friendly way but there is a hierarchy. It is wrong to say that we are all equal. My secretary doesn't make coffee for me but I would take my secretary out to lunch.

In Greece – you probably do have a class system – perhaps there is less of that in Koroni. In Koroni I wouldn't know who are the intellectuals… I suppose my main circle is professional. In Greece I don't know how people fit together so I could only have very preliminary conversations with people. I don't know whether it matters…The unwritten rules in England are quite strong and you can't really think like a Greek.

The class system as experienced by Elinor in England and its 'unwritten rules' hinders her from feeling comfortable, opening up to others and thus starting a conversation. It is another element of how powerless she feels, due to the lack of knowledge of how the Greek mentality functions and that enhances the feeling of how limited her ability is to communicate in Greek. She said:

I would also feel inhibited about saying anything too deep or complex. Not only inability to speak but lack of comfort. I could be saying something wrong or out of order. That is rather a British sensibility.

It is as if her own identity being British, her professional background, the education she received, the unwritten rules of her class status and her sensitivity on gender inequality and sexism are all barriers that prevent her from feeling confident speaking with the locals in an effortless way when she socialises with them and she chooses instead to fit in with the other foreigners when social occasions occur as an another act of comfort. It is very exciting how Elinor described her attempts when she attended social gatherings either at the Hellenic Centre or in Koroni. She commented:

I went to Tsiknobempti (Greek Carnival Festival, beginning of Lent). It was actually really fun. We were sat on a table with Greek Canadians. I was with about four friends which was nice. But I would be a little bit nervous about going there without a sort of a reasonable size party of my own friends because it is not my culture. I would like to be part of it but you are never quite sure if people want you but that is me being a bit shy. You have to be quite brave to do that sort of thing.

And further:

One evening in Koroni, they had Greek dancing in the street and a Greek cultural evening. That is always really nice. I end up sitting with the Germans. In Koroni, we often have concerts… There were about four of us and about six Germans and we were on a big long table together. This was the foreigners' table. It is mainly because I can't speak the language. I can't go up and ask if I can sit here… I am a foreigner in a foreign land and they probably don't want to have to make the effort to include me. You have to put yourself in their shoes. It is a bit tiring. It is probably a barrier of politeness.

These two instances are quite revelatory of how Elinor immediately places herself amongst the others, the ones not included, even if she had been learning the Greek language and owned a property in Greece, because she feels that there is that barrier of politeness that as we witnessed in her previous narration is imposed on her from her class background. As a result, she chose to be amongst the ones she felt more comfortable with as she can relate to them being a foreigner amongst the Greeks.

She feels excluded and stranded – learning metaphors – she relates gender with ability to speak

Elinor's learning metaphor is equally fascinating as it vividly depicts how she appreciates such occasions when she feels excluded from the community of people whose language she tries to learn and speak it. In one of her trips to Denmark, she sent me an email with the following pictures and a comment to follow:

Standing Woman

Pic 8

Walking Man

Pic 9

Hi Thomas,

I am sending you these 2 photos of Giacometti's human figures I saw on my trip to Denmark this September. This is exactly how I feel when learning Greek. Especially when I speak it while I am in Greece. I feel like I am stranded and cannot easily move or be included in a circle of men, of the locals. I feel disempowered and excluded. It partially has to do with gender but also with I suppose power and class. I feel like I have no power at all and it is so frustrating especially thinking of what I have achieved all these years working as a lawyer. Thought you might find this useful for your study.

Speak soon,

C

Dated: 20.02.2018

It is intriguing how these two contradictory pictures of Giacometti reflect on her learning experience of Greek as well as the way she feels about her not feeling included within the Greek society. The words she used 'power, class' as well as the references on gender she made, with her not feeling accepted or included in a circle of men, all reveal the complex nature and the barriers imposed on her by her identity which prevented her on many occasions from speaking the language. Therefore, it has been an easy but equally sensible choice for Elinor (to reflect on Austen's choice), in her view, to appreciate the written form of the Greek language, with emphasis on the grammar and syntax, and instead avoid the speaking competence, which ended in preventing her

from progressing with her learning of Greek. It is quite illuminating on how she describes what she finds difficult about Greek language. She said:

There are a lot of abstract nouns in Greek. The other thing I do find difficult is trying to learn expressions and particles. I find the stresses quite difficult. I often don't get it right. I don't have a musical ear and I don't remember the stresses automatically. Sometimes there are very obvious. It seems for me an artificial process to remember the stress. I feel I ought to be able to do this by ear and I can't. I have to really concentrate to get it. I feel like that is quite a basic thing. And the non-similar sounds. I feel like a bit of a bystander. I don't go for the whole thing. I am interested in it perhaps more from an intellectual, rather than seizing it. It is the difficulty to embrace the whole thing. Perhaps if I spent more time in Greece I would be a bit better but whether I would be really very good, I wonder.

Expressions, stresses, sounds and particles or abstract nouns is what Elinor finds very difficult in her learning and she acknowledges that this is due to her lack of close contact with the country of the target language. She acknowledges and appreciates her learning being quite artificial and that makes her feel almost like a witness rather than an active communicator. Her statement on how interesting she finds the intellectual features of the language instead of using them when speaking derives from her attachment to aspects she learned to appreciate and valued when she was young. It is difficult for her to overcome such obstacle of taking a distance from what she idealises and instead let herself go and follow a new reality that can cause discomfort and defamiliarization. As she comments though, she claims that there is the factor of age too that does not help her overcome the distance she takes from things, people, situations and thus the learning of the language. She said:

There is an element of that but it is something, the older you get and the less you move, the more embedded you can be. It isn't necessarily a permanent thing. Unless you really try and change then it becomes more hard-coded. I think in order to learn a language, you have to think about those kind of situations.

The older she gets the less easier it becomes for Elinor to adopt a less resisting attitude towards anything new or anything that can cause her feel uneasy.

She feels connected and related with what she already values, which determined her choices to buy property in Greece where she felt comfortable, which was motivational.

Elinor's choices and original motivation on learning Greek was the purchase of her property in Greece. She said:

I wanted to learn modern Greek because of buying the house there so I signed up to lessons at the Hellenic Centre, so I did group classes first and then about four or five years did private lessons with you.

The choices of the locations where she bought her summer house as well as the place where she decided to study modern Greek are equally interesting to view here in relation to how comfortable she felt choosing both. Elinor chose two pictures about

Greece that are interesting to be discussed here in connection to how she commented on choosing them:

Pic 10

I just love the Pylos Town and its fortress, Niokastro – it means new fortress – it is part of the underwater Archaeological sites

Pic 11

This is Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor's house in Kardamyli – he was an English writer, scholar and polyglot. I have a huge admiration for his work as he inspired many British travel writers through his travelling accounts. I read all of them.

I chose these two pictures as they represent the reasons why I chose to buy the house in that area of Peloponnese. My choices were made based on what I can relate to and feel comfortable with.

Both pictures are illuminative of what Elinor admires most and can relate to. In the first one we see the picture of Pylos's fortress that easily brings into mind Elinor's attachment to classical studies, history and archaeology. The second one is the picture of the house owned by Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor, a British writer whose Elinor's admiration is so justifiable as she can relate to on so many levels, his education, his family background and connection to India and the British Raj, himself was an officer of the British Empire, his view and admiration of ancient Greece as well as his exquisite use of the English language when accounting his travels. It feels as if the choice of buying the house in an area close to Kardamyli was made based on elements that Elinor could easily relate to and feel comfortable with. Additionally, when I asked her to comment on the choice of the Hellenic Centre being the learning site of her studies of the language, she said:

They have all the events and the artwork and things. I think it is great. I don't compare it to anything else in London, like a Spanish cultural Centre or a French cultural Centre. There is an element of the Anglo Hellenic society. There are a few Brits around there.

Elinor made conscious choices on both occasions to place her new venture of approaching an-other and foreign reality in a way that would make her feel comfortable and less of an outcast. The south part of the Peloponnese is a well-known area for British expats who bought properties there and the Hellenic Centre, with its Anglo-Hellenic connection seems to be a less threatening place for her to conduct her learning. Therefore, Elinor viewed such locations as good investments to explore a new world. She said:

I know there is a really interesting world out there. I don't think I am a little Englander. I always want to go anywhere else. I always want to go to Italy. I love going to Greece most of all, to the house.

The concept of house is fascinating as Elinor used it before to describe a place of safety and comfort when she, as a young girl, moved to England from India. She commented:

I came home from India when I was seven. I was about five and we were in a country house in a rented house in England and there was the smell of Dahlias or something and I remember feeling really safe.

For a learner like Elinor, who has little connection with the modern reality of the country of target language but admires its ancient past, who holds a powerful professional position, has a strong sense of her British identity and is very well educated, learning a foreign language has to be an act of finding the right balance between what is comfortable, relatable and not threatening to what she is and has achieved in her life.

4.5 Participant 5 (Alex)

Participant 5 is a British female photographer in her early 60s and when asked to introduce herself, she wrote the following autobiographical note:

I am a retired features photographer. I live in South London with my dog. I was widowed at a relatively young age and have a son who is 24. I first went to Greece when I was 18, I travelled there on the Magic Bus, and stayed in Crete for 4 months picking grapes and working on farms. I have been going back to the Greek Islands ever since. I have a passionate relationship with the country, its people, and culture . I am obsessed with the unique beauty of the light in Greece. I have always tried to communicate in Greek with basic words, and following the death of my husband I realised that I needed to learn the language – that it was something I could finally find time for. As I slowly progress I love being able to talk with the Islanders, it is such an adventure, and I find myself having a different relationship with them now. They always make me feel proud that I am making the effort to communicate with them – Bravo! They exclaim! I love learning with my teacher in London, he has opened my eyes to not just the language but to the heart and soul of the Greek way of life– our lessons always inspire me.

She feels related to female character who deals with loss, making a link between gender, relatedness and learning

And when I asked her to choose a pseudonym for her to be addressed in the interview, she chose the character of Alex Greville from John Schlesinger's 1971 film *Sunday, Bloody Sunday.* The reasons behind choosing such an interesting character were in her words:

I fell in love with her character since the first time I watched this film – there is so much to appreciate – there is so much close to me and who I am – It is though mainly how gracefully she accepts the loss of the love she had shared with the other lead character, the great Peter Finch. She is a character that constantly deals with the absence of love, or at least she learns how to do that. And I have been struggling with this, my entire life. I wanted to feel included and loved and accepted - perhaps this why I started learning Greek. It was an attempt to combine the emotional vacuum I felt with something aesthetically pleasing to me – I am a photographer after all. [Written notes by Alex, August 2019]

Motivation: Her need to feel related and included in expressed through her need to overcome her traumas and struggles and fill in the emotional void

If we combine both answers, it is evident from her responses that Alex is a British female adult learner whose original motivation to learn the Greek language is addressed as a need for her to communicate, a need to belong and feel included as well as a need to fill in the emotional void she felt after the death of her husband to achieve something that would be related aesthetically to what she has been doing professionally for years. Alex is a photographer and the undeniable beauty of Greece and its islands during the months of light (the summer months) seemed to be very appealing to her and a strong drive to start her studies of the language.

The main two topics addressed in Alex's interviews that will be further explored are the theme of belonging and the significant role that connection between the teacher and his/her students plays at the successful progress and advancement of the learning of Greek. Both these two topics are explored in her interview in relation to how they shaped and defined her motivation of learning foreign languages and how they helped her appreciate and love the other, the foreign.

Family Bio Notes: She experienced loss and trauma (husband), being rejected / accepted by her fathers (paternal figure), having a turbulent relationship with mother renegotiating the idea of 'home', which impacted her education and overall learning

We find out at the very beginning that Alex's life was torn between two complicated family situations as her mother was a bigamist as she was married to two different men simultaneously. Alex led two lives splitting her childhood between living and going to school in London where one of her father lived, while she visited her other father occasionally in the countryside. Her schooling years were quite dominated by the presence mainly of her mother with whom she had a very problematic relationship. Alex spend her childhood life residing in the wealthy areas of west London, in Holland Park, while attending private schools and following quite a traditional form of education under the supervision and demands of her London conservative and old fashioned in manners father. On the other hand, Alex used to spend weekends and holiday with her countryside father who was left wing and worked as a photographer. Alex's love for photography, carpentry, literature, the water and countryside derived mainly from him. She was inspired and differently educated from her other father as she learned to appreciate and love the things he used to love:

My mother was a bigamist so she had two husbands. So the husband she lived with in London was considerably older than her. He was very old fashioned in his outlook and believed that private education was the only thing for a girl because he believed that for girls, you only needed a basic education as you would be marrying. So what was important to him was I knew how to sew and maybe speak one language and do all the things that make you eligible to marry someone who has lots of money and a good position. We lived in Holland Park in west London and at the time that I could have moved from prep school to the next school, Holland Park comprehensive had started which was one of the first comprehensives in London and I really wanted to go to a comprehensive desperately. But my father wouldn't let me because I would be hanging about with the riff raff. I didn't like my private schools. Having said that I was head girl but I was also nearly expelled. There was a love hate relationship going on… It was split. My mother was right-wing, but my other father was not, he was more left wing. I consider everything that I value I learnt from my other family. He was a great photographer. He taught me to fish, he taught me carpentry. He took me to the library every weekend. He got me into loving books, loving poetry. He was always buying me books.

For Alex, the element of being loved and included as opposed to being rejected dominates her answers stated from the very beginning while trying to explain her connection with Greece and the choice she made to learn the language. Two extracts,

in particular, captured my attention in which she elaborated how important it has been for her the need she had to be loved and included. The first one concerns her family situation in London, in which she makes explicit use of the 'love and hate' relationship she had with her home situation. In her own words, she stated:

The father in London I hated him but the father outside of London, I loved him. But my mother wouldn't tell me which one was my father. I had to keep each. I wasn't allowed to tell my London friends about my other father. I had to keep the whole thing a secret. My mother said if I told anyone what was going on our lives would be ruined. It was an awful lot of pressure for me as a child. It was very difficult. My mother had me under her thumb. I had to be part of her secret life and I had to keep an awful lot of secrets for her. She was a very strong character. I kept all her secrets all her life. When I was having bereavement counselling after Sid died my mother came up and my counsellor told me that I had been subjected to emotional abuse and if it had come back in those days, it would have been classed as child abuse. I didn't admire my mother at all. She made me very angry.

Her traumatic childhood past and the difficult situation she had with her mother, made her feel that the 'home' idea was not ideal for her as it was dictated by lies that she had to tell and emotional abuse she felt of the things she was expected to hide from her social milieu. In other words, she had to hide her own identity from others which made her childhood and school years not enjoyable and instead full of pressure. On the other hand, her trips to Greece since she was 18 years old were full of excitement and carefree and that made her feel like 'home'.

Because I have been going to Greece since I was 18. I went to Crete when I was 18 and absolutely loved it. I stayed there for about eight months. I was working on farms, looking after goats. Doing general farm work. I felt entirely free of stress or any pressure. I have been going ever since… I felt so at home there from the word go. I didn't feel I am a stranger in a strange land or that these people are so different to English people. I found a lot of similarities with Crete and the south west of England. I just felt so at home there. The people seemed to treat me as if I was a Greek person. I felt completely included. It felt like one of those things like I must have been here in another life. Everything made sense to me. Funnily enough I hung out much more with old people when I was young than young people. The young people seemed too cocky.

Visiting Greece means that she needed to feel included by foreigners and this is her attempt to find a place to feel connected to, which is motivational

Her need to belong and being included was fulfilled while visiting Greece and staying in particular, on the island of Crete. Although the life she led while she was in London was very distant from the life she experienced in Crete, she managed to feel accepted by the foreigners and she felt less foreign there compared to London. Her social encounters with the older people made her feel more stable and 'at home' as they substituted the challenging relationship she had with her parents. She managed to turn the different feel similar, the same and thus more relatable to her. Yet, her 'love and hate' relationship with London and her country was then projected to Greece. She very interestingly comments:

I have some connection. If I had a DNA test, I must have some Greek in my as I have some connection. I hate loads of things about Greece. I don't know where it came from but it has always been there. It is a beautiful country. I love the islands. I tend to avoid the cities as I generally do that. I think it has the best seaside in the world and I have been to lots of places.

What is highly motivational is connecting with Greece in a romantic way. She projects her past romantic relationships to Greece and learning Greek and that enhances motivation

It is fascinating how romantic her relationship with Greece can be characterised to some extent as she uses the two contradictory terms 'love and hate' within a few sentences to describe her feelings about the country. Love has always been in Alex's world, a strong drive and motive to encourage her learn the language and the culture of a foreign country. Even from the very beginning of her interview, Alex stated that the reason behind learning French or Italian was love and the romantic relationships she was involved into when she was young with a French and an Italian boy. She stated:

The only language I learnt at school was French and I did French up to A Level. Then I had a French boyfriend so I got fairly fluent in French. I am a bit rusty now but I think if I went to France now it would come back quite quickly. He lived in Paris so I used to go and spend time with him in Paris and I also worked a little bit in Paris then. I was quite good at French and I like French as a language very much. It is a romantic language. When I was about 12 I was in love with an Italian boy so I did maybe one year of Italian but then I wasn't in love with him anymore so I stopped. I found Italian more challenging than French. But again I thought it was a beautiful language. I can remember very little Italian.

It is quite an old argument that being romantically involved into a relationship, such individual experience can be powerful enough to lead into actions of language learning. Such romantic dispositions placed Alex at the heart of the language learning highlighting the personal value of the intercultural encounters she had and that was very similar to what happened with Greece and Crete. Alex's attempt to find intercultural similarities between the two countries is an element that could characterise her attempt to view the other as a romantic one. Such effort resulted her looking for what was missing in her life at a love or home level, especially when she lost her husband who died quite young, a man she was very fond of and could relate to a lot as he was an artist himself:

I found a lot of similarities with Crete and the south west of England. I just felt so at home there… It was six months after my husband died. I am on my own now. What do I want to do with the rest of my life? The first thing that popped into my head was that I want to learn Greek. I went straight to the computer and looked up courses.

It is fascinating to view at this stage how romantic Alex's description is for Greece and that can be viewed through her statements, the learning metaphor she attempted and the pictures she chose and commented on. In her own words:

Researcher: What are the first images that you think of when you think of Greece?

A hill covered with vines, goats rambling around. Dry ground, olive trees, heat.

Her contact with the Greek culture is expressed through her desire to feel comfortable and related with and values, artistically

The vivid description she chose to make can be equally seen in the pictures she selected that best represent her learning journey. The first one is from Alex's favourite part of Crete that is located in the south with imagery that is aesthetically pleasing to her eyes as a photographer and artist. The second one is from the film *Zorba*, in which Alex makes an interesting comment on how masculinity is combined with the white and black colours that the film's director of cinematography, Walter Lassally, chose to depict though his lens both the Cretan landscape as well as the characters.

Pic 12

This is a picture from Loutro, possibly my favourite place in Crete. This is the place where I feel I belong. The ochre colour palette combined ithe dark blue of the sea in the sunset – priceless.

Pic 13

It might be the ultimate cliché, but I do not care. This type of man represents the male figure I fell in love with and the reason behind choosing to study Greek. Call it a dream, my personal Wenders – like Paris Texas. Wenders early photographic work on desolate landscapes, nostalgia, movement and loss can all be seen through the dance of Zorba. I get huge inspiration from the white and black sun shades on the actor's stubborn face as he dances.

That romantic essence that such pictures conveyed, in Alex's eyes, was further heightened from her attempt to make connections with another benchmark film from the 80s by Wim Wenders, *Paris Texas,* which itself was photographed by Robby Muller who was well-known for how distinctivly sleek was the use of natural light and imagery in the films he collaborated with. To further comment on that, Alex made an interesting learning metaphor about learning Greek and phrased it as such:

Learning another language is like …

- **finding an oasis in the middle of the desert … because it allows us for a moment to quench our thirst for knowledge and to cast away loneliness**

Such a café – Bagdad moment, don't you agree? [3]

Blending colours with feelings of nostalgia and loneliness as well as cinematic references from the films of Cacoyannis, Wim Wenders and Percy Adlon, is important

[3] Note: Café Bagdad was a film from the 80s, directed by Percy Adlon and Alex knows how much I love the music score of this film.

for Alex and she felt comfortable to address all that in her interview as she was very confident that I would highly appreciate them, as we both relate and respond to art in very similar ways. Therefore, romanticising her experience of Greece is at the heart of her motivation of learning Greek as this itself is a place where she feels that she can relate to, she feels comfortable talking about it and a place where she feels that she belongs.

Her connection with the teacher is highly motivational

The second theme addressed is the significant role the connection between the teacher and the student plays in successfully learning Greek, a theme that emerged from Alex's responses to what she finds difficult that makes her struggle in her study of Greek. This theme also addressed issues of gender in relation to the teacher's identity as well as the student's perception of belonging. More specifically, Alex in her comment on what she felt hindered her progress of Greek, she stated four different situations when her learning was affected by the teacher's beliefs and principles as well as her / his identity and gender.

She criticises the Hellenic Centre due to the absence of male teachers, and makes a comment on gender and learning

Alex made a reference to four different cases of teachers, all female ones, by whom she was taught. It is interesting how Alex makes a poignant remark on the lack and absence of male teachers at the Hellenic Centre and in education in general:

In education there is always a lack of men. I probably would not have continued at the Hellenic Centre if it wasn't for you.

Gender plays a significant role in this second section of her interview in which Alex associates the lack of male gender with her being demotivated in lessons at the Hellenic Centre. Additionally, she makes an interesting link between what makes her feel that she struggles with in her learning of Greek as well as what she finds annoying and frustrating that can make her loose her motivation. More specifically, at the beginning Alex claimed that what she finds difficult is the speaking as well as the sound system of the Greek language and the accents that are features of the language that are related to verbal communication. She stated:

Speaking. The most frustrating thing for me is my appalling accent. I find it deeply upsetting that it doesn't seem to improve. It probably has improved a bit but not enough. I know that I know but if I am trying to converse in a normal way, things go out of my head. I panic, I forget things and things come out wrong. Then when I leave I remember the right way to say it.

She feels frustrated when she is not included

It is quite a frustrating feeling the fact that Alex is trying to converse with the locals but instead she finds it very difficult due to her 'appalling accent' as she claims. She is quite harsh on the way she defines her accent and then she comments on how difficult she finds emulating the Greek sound system. She claimed:

A lot of the sounds are really challenging for an English person I think. I almost feel like it depends on what shape your mouth is and your teeth are, to get your tongue round the sounds. The g sound I found difficult – agaliazo. There are so many sounds that I find difficult. But I am finding it less difficult than I did. My mouth can't shape itself around these sounds. I must have got the wrong shape mouth

She experiences lack of competence: She claims that she lacks the ability hearing clearly and emulating the sounds of the Greek language. This is a very interesting comment on listening ability and language learning.

Alex identifies as possible reasons behind her inability to clearly speak Greek the incapacity English speakers have that does not allow them to easily emulate the sound system of a native speaker and that is due to the peculiar settings of their mother tongue and other vocal organs of speech ingrained by their own mother tongue which has a different sound system or the formation of the pallet. Yet, Alex associates such inability, to be able to clearly listen to the sounds of the Greek words, with another aspect which makes a fascinating suggestion. She said:

I love the sound of the Greek language although there are certain ways that some Greek women speak that I find unattractive. They are quite sharp and staccato and shrill. I much prefer to hear a male voice which is often rounder and softer than a female's. On CDs that come with the books there will be those women on them. They talk very fast and high pitched, very flat. It is not attractive. That would be the same with any language.

Gender: Her connection with female teachers is as important as her connection with male teachers

Alex feels that female voices and accents are so unattractive to her to the point that it makes the sound of the overall language unappealing which can be a reason to discourage her to learn the target language. It is a fascinating link what Alex made associating what makes her struggle with the female gender and the lack of including more men in education. The way Alex deals and thinks about her struggles in learning Greek is romanticised through making a metaphor with the concept of marriage. She said:

I have a love hate relationship with Greece and Greek people. It is almost like a marriage. You put up with the bad things because you love the good things. Ultimately the good things outweigh the bad.

Alex is not trying to make any negative claim about the female gender overall by associating it with her negative learning experience and struggles. She, instead, is trying to reflect on her negative experiences she had with her teachers who happened to be female exclusively and she suggests that her learning of Greek would have become more effective if there had been a plurality of voices from other genders included, such as male, as she can relate to them in a more successful way. Alex recalls four experiences and it is worth stating them all here along with the reasons she felt they have been negative and unproductive or on the contrary positive regarding her learning. The names of these teachers have changed for obvious

reasons. The first one she recalls is an experience she had with a female teacher who lacked inspiration and enjoyment. She stated:

I like Antigone but I think Antigone is a really boring teacher. Probably her niche is teaching to refugees – where they need a practical skill. They are not so bothered about they joy of learning. They need it to survive. She would be more suited to that area rather than English people who want to learn it not because they need to but because they want to. She doesn't inspire. She lacks humour. She doesn't make the class come alive.

The second one was a positive learning experience and she recalls the warmth and affection she felt having Anna in her teaching:

The first teacher Anna, I had a fantastic relationship with her. She was very open, warm. I respected her as a teacher and I liked her as a teacher.

The satisfaction of her needs of competence and autonomy heavily depend on the teacher. She expresses her inability becoming independent and she wants to be encouraged by positive feedback

The third and fourth ones were negative experiences as well. Alex associated the third one with lack of experience and having the right skills to teach Greek, despite the fact that Zoe was an intelligent woman and the fourth one, Eleftheria, lacked any positive affirmation in her lessons to the point she turned them all into a negative experience. More specifically, Alex said:

Zoe I found incredibly frustrating. I didn't think that she was a good teacher at first but I could see that she was highly educated and an intelligent woman but I didn't think she was being able to teach in England – I didn't think she had that knack. But in the end I grew quite fond of her. I realised that she was an intelligent woman and that she meant well. I ended up learning more from her than I thought I would. Because she didn't have a good way of delivering, she wasn't that good at it. She didn't have enough skills to teach Greek as a foreign language. She didn't have the English language skills to be able to explain things clearly. We weren't at an advanced enough level to have it explained in Greek.

Then we had Eleftheria. It was the whole class. She was absolutely negative. She gave no positive affirmation. You only ever heard what you did wrong. If we were learning a new piece of grammar and we weren't getting it, she would day I have taught these to my beginners and they got this straight away. We would be compared to other people and we would be worse. No positive feedback whatsoever. It used to wear us down. We would walk out of the class like men going to an execution. There was no joy at all.

On the positive side of her being taught Greek by a female teacher, she recalled Marina and her experience of having story telling being included in her learning of the language. Marina brought short stories to class and Alex found such act in learning as quite revelatory. As she claimed:

Year 3 or 4, I went to Eleftheroudakis bookshop when it was open. I went upstairs and discovered some books, children's books by Jacqueline Wilson. I had such fun on the

train going into work and coming out, reading Jacqueline Wilson. It was a stroke of luck. It was so wonderful…It was a proper story. People were saying real things to each other. It was poignant…If you read the book in English, it is hilarious. It is quite touching. It is quite poignant at times. There were all these shades which of course in English you pick up. Then you realise you can get all these shades of meaning and understand it in Greek, it is oh my God.

Use of short stories is motivational for her to learn the language. She feels related to people's individual stories helps her learn better

Alex suggests that short stories can be very powerful in the learning of a foreign language as they can offer opportunities to the readers to delve into the Greek language and appreciate the vastness of its vocabulary and colloquial expressions. It is and can be a fun and creative experience for a learner.

There has been a story that Alex recalls about a kid and her difficult relationship he had with his mother and how that was mirrored through the use of the language, expressions and colloquialisms:

People's inner lives. One was about this kid who had this mother who didn't really care about her. She was always in the latest gym outfits and all the rest of it and this kid is fat. She goes into the kitchen to make a sandwich and the mother says that is not a sandwich, that is a whole loaf.

Thus, Alex managed to relate through short stories in Greek to her own personal traumatic experience she had with her mother and to associate the problematic relationship she had with her with something positive, which is the learning of Greek language and the nuances and 'shades of meaning' as Alex mentions that can make the learning experience itself much more alive. She stated:

When you are getting these little comments - all the same shades of meaning are there in Greek. It is just so great. It makes it so alive.

Therefore, Alex's learning experience despite the fact that it has been mainly associated and linked with the female gender, it has not been a negative overall experience. Yet, in her criticism on the Hellenic Centre, she brings into discussion three elements that should be addressed to the senior management team when making decisions on conducting Greek lessons for adult learners and she suggests the following ones:

The teacher issue has to be addressed.

She expresses the need from the institution to acknowledge the attempts students make to learn and support them instrumentally

It is mainly an attempt from the Hellenic Centre's side to acknowledge the fact that there are learners who are motivated by the male voice of the teachers or speakers, and those who do that have mainly associated the learning of a foreign language with a romantic dimension. She said:

I do prefer a male voice in Greek. That is an added bonus. It is really down to who you are and who you are as a teacher as we share similar tastes which makes it more interesting and stimulating for me.

It is not even the need Alex has to have all genders included. It is instead her need her voice to be heard and appreciated by the Centre and its people as well as her need to feel more included. She stated:

Although it would have been nice to have another male teacher purely for variety's sake. I don't think that is a problem… A lot of the things are very old school, just not very inspiring. I would love it to be more inclusive, to put more events on for us students. It feels like we are always overlooked. We must help keep that place going. I always feel like an outsider. Very rarely do these people talk to me. I always come away thinking 'why did I bother going?'

It is therefore her need as a student to have her opinion heard and appreciated when the senior management team is making decisions about the students and this is why she suggests that there should be a certain acknowledgement from the Centre when problems are raised and there should be social and cultural events organised that would give the opportunity to adults to converse in Greek.

Alex is an adult student who addressed the importance of the affect factors that can play a key role in the advancement and progress of the learning of Greek. Love can be a big drive for an adult student to learn Greek. For a British female learner, such as Alex, maintaining a romantic view of the country and the language is an act on inclusion and belonging as this can help the learner find aspects of the foreign language and culture to relate to what she values the most and treasures as part of her own identity. It is important for a teacher therefore, as much as it has been for Alex's neighbours, to know her well, what she enjoys, loves and what she appreciates as that helps her shape her identity through the learning of that language. Learning Greek is part of her identity, as she stated:

It is quite important to my identity now to be learning Greek because my neighbours somehow know I am learning Greek. This Greek is part of my life somehow.

In other words, Alex is claiming that learning a language becomes a part of one's life, a part of one's identity. In her view, a teacher must appreciate the life instances an adult student has experienced in order to welcome such learning in the most rewarding and productive way possible.

4.6 Participant 6 (Rita)

Participant 6 is introduced with the name Rita from the central character of Will Russell's play and Lewis Gilbert 80s film *Educating Rita.* Rita is a language teacher for adults who has taught extensively at universities, adult Centres, colleges and other sites Spanish and French as foreign language and this is the reason why she chose a character such as the one performed by Julie Walters as she can identify with it on many levels. She said:

Rita is the educator, she teaches him a good lesson, what it is to appreciate what is different from you, the less shiny one, to look at the truth in the eyes and see what you can do with this.

Her connection with education and professional background is significant in her motivation. She made many attempts to learn, teach foreign languages and feeling included in foreign cultures

Rita considers herself an educator of foreign languages and she identified with the main character not only on that level but equally on the level of the working-class and humble background where the latter comes from.

I was born in Edinburgh. My parents were Irish. I don't come from a very well-off background. My parents both left school when they were 15 and my mother came to England during the war and my father was in the British army against his will. There was no language experience from my parents. [Written notes by Rita, September 2019]

Rita introduced herself as British of mixed Scottish and Irish background who had been educated at Roman Catholic schools and studied foreign languages, starting with French, German, Spanish and Italian at both school and the university. Due to her accent and background she managed to learn the target languages and equally to be accepted and integrated in target language countries and cultures. What she found liberating and satisfying was the element of being able to act as a chameleon and have as many personalities as the languages she speaks without revealing her British identity. She stated in her introductory note:

An ability to successfully reproduce French, Spanish and Italian accents is hugely helped by my Scottish accent (- also useful for German and Greek). People regularly say " but you don't sound English"! Sounding authentic helps to be accepted and integrated in target language countries. My Roman Catholic background was key to understanding the culture, society, language and literature in Spain, France and Italy.

Charles Berlitz is reputed to have said that you have as many different personalities as the number of foreign languages you speak. I like this idea of being like a chameleon, fitting in, not being taken for British, not being able to be "catalogued".

She is being critical of British students learning foreign languages

The reason for choosing Rita as a participant to interview was the fact that she is a language teacher not just a student and her views on the British adult learners being herself British too would be invaluable. Her views on how the British adult students

learn and think mattered as they could be contrasted to my findings from the other interviews I conducted. Thus, the main theme of her interview would be how a British participant who holds the dual role of being a teacher and a student, she views her learning of Greek and what does she perceive are the British attitudes adult students have towards the learning of foreign languages.

To start with, Rita gives an overall account of the languages she studied in the past as a student. Due to her success of achieving good results and scores in the exams, she was motivated to learn various foreign languages, such as French, German and Italian. She stated that she found the learning process of foreign languages easy and fun and that made her study even Latin and concluded with Greek as an adult and an already established language teacher professionally. She claimed that she learned how to develop skills, which enabled her learn various languages as she was able to see the links between the languages and make associations with the Latin origins of the words. She said:

It seemed to be to incorporate elements of German with the cases that didn't exist in French but there were things with French I could relate to Latin, so I saw how it all worked together and I really loved doing Latin and I did the O-level in one year.

She feels being competent and autonomous through finding links among languages. She feels confident knowing the way to learn them.

Rita's strong ability to appreciate the links that connect the languages as well as her capacity to pronounce different sounds, made her carry-on learning languages and professionally evolve as a language teacher herself. She said:

I carried on doing languages, not at a high level, but to keep them going. Which was good because my first job was at Napier University in Edinburgh…I ended up teaching business French to students who were doing business studies or secretarial studies. I worked there for five years teaching business French and Spanish, working on a very good programme they had which was for students who had a degree in languages but wanted to go into business… then got a full-time job again teaching business French and Spanish to students doing International Business Studies, international marketing degrees…then I got the responsibility of running the Erasmus programmes. That was at Buckinghamshire College of Commerce. I also worked part time at Ealing College. This was pre-1992, before colleges became polytechnics. When I had all this experience in language teaching, I was taken on by different universities as their external examiner.

She criticises educational policies and decline of foreign language studies. She also stated that learning foreign language being an exercise of social class privileges

Rita found herself unemployed in 2007 as she was made redundant from the university she was working. Rita heavily criticised the decision the Labour government made to turn the status of the foreign language from compulsory to not compulsory past the age of 14. That led to a decrease in the number of students choosing to take foreign languages in higher education. On her account of what caused the decline of foreign language studies which resulted a big dropout rate in numbers of students attending

such lessons, Rita commented that the teaching programmes in primary schools were neither sufficient nor effective. She said:

Then in 2007, I was made redundant from the university I was working in because languages were proving less popular…We had German and Italian students, and fewer and fewer Brits. One of the reasons for that was that the Labour government in the early 2000s took the decision that languages shouldn't be compulsory after the age of 14. Their rationale was students don't want to do it, they find it difficult, they don't see the value in it. Of course hundreds of voices were raised against it – short-sightedness, lack of ability in foreign languages will impact British exporting. They said however they would roll out a programme of foreign language learning in primary schools. Those of us in the business just didn't believe it. There was no language teaching programme in primary schools in England. We investigated it at the time. It was something like 0.02 primary schools had anything resembling the opportunity to learn French. Primary school teachers were not equipped to teach French. Most of them didn't even have an O-level in French or any other foreign language. A lot of students voted with their feet and stopped doing foreign languages which led to a decrease in the number of students going to take on foreign languages in higher education. One of the effects was that independent schools and grammar schools continued to make this a compulsory element. I said in a report if we weren't careful, the learning of foreign languages would become the preserve of the upper and middle-classes. It really broke my heart because I had not come from a well-off background. I had no connection with a foreign language. I had not set foot in France until I was 18... There was nothing and if I hadn't had the opportunity to continue with it at school and get to a point where suddenly I thought I could do this, my career would have been completely different. Before the polytechnics became universities, many polytechnics gave students the chance to take up a foreign language ab initio. We had students who had never done a foreign language before, who tended to be not from middle-class backgrounds and we gave them a chance to do a bit of Spanish, French or Italian and many of those students found they had a talent for languages they had no idea about.

She criticises social class and education and the privileges given to students of certain background and education which motivated them to learn languages

Rita's complaint and fear was that foreign language learning could become an exclusive privilege of the wealthy ones and those who had access to middle class private schools. She had the opportunity to study foreign languages without herself belonging into a well-off environment and that made her appreciate that education was delivered in the past on equal terms and each student had equal opportunities to study what he / she desired without feeling that certain subjects are not accessible to students who did not come from a particular social class. For Rita, education and universities used to promote the learning of foreign languages in the past but that changed dramatically post 2000. In Rita's views, it is very important to acknowledge that in the past the education system in England offered the right opportunities for the students to study and learn foreign languages while there was limited exposure to foreign cultures as people did not use to travel as much as they do nowadays. Motivation emerged from the schooling system itself as previously seen in her

statement. Additionally, universities offered opportunities to students to learn foreign languages ab initio – from the beginning, regardless of their background and access to capital.

There are three threads that are very interesting to explore in Rita's responses. The first one has to do with her views on how British adult students learn. The second one is related to the feeling of how liberating the learning of foreign languages is and how is that associated with aspects of the British identity of the students. The third one is related to the suggestions and recommendations that Rita makes when criticised the Hellenic Centre and the improvements that are essential to be done in order for the latter to deliver for efficient Greek lessons.

To start with, Rita on commenting on British attitudes adults have towards the learning of foreign languages, she said:

In Spanish, if you want to say I can't you would say, no puedo. And English people find that hard to say and say no pue-do. Either they can't hear it or they can't reproduce it… I think there is an element of people thinking they sound silly if they say it the way it should be said. English people particularly, because those are the people I have the most experience of teaching.

She states her views on learning foreign languages being an adult: feeling frustrated, feeling this is impossible, feeling it is pointless

The first important element that Rita brings into discussion is how silly British adult leaners think they may sound if they attempt to speak in a foreign accent. There is clearly an element of shame and intimidation attached here. There is also an element of mockery and ridicule, and the fact that they might be mocked perhaps of fear that they want to show off their achievements to the others. That is something that clearly holds British adult learners back from attempting to speak a foreign language even if they study it. She said:

For example, when I try to get my students, I would tell them to listen to the way a Spaniard says it... I would repeat how they said it and then say listen to the way a Spaniard said it and they have said we can hear the difference. Some of them do do it, because I force them to do it. I don't mock them but I show them how they are sounding. Some can't or won't…There are some people who simply cannot hear the sounds you are making. It is either something to do with their ears, their musicality. And however hard they try and however willing they are to try, they can't. Other people I think can hear it but won't say it. And I think there is an element that they are sounding as if they are showing off if they have a good accent or they are sounding silly if they are having a good accent or a combination of all of those… I think it is a sense of feeling ridiculous if they contort their mouths in the way they have to get the correct sounds.

Rita recalls a social encounter she had once with an English person and she reveals how inappropriate she found her interlocutor being amused by the different accents. In Rita's view, this was an act of complete ignorance and ineptness. Such incidents as described by Rita are quite common and reflect how a part of the English society might be thinking. She said:

I was absolutely furious at an English person with an English accent who didn't speak any foreign languages amused at the idea of a Scot speaking foreign languages. That reveals depths and breadths of ignorance that I couldn't imagine.

Accent, in Rita's views, is a hugely important aspect of the British identity as it is inextricably interwoven with the social class background one comes from. The obsession British people have with the social classes reflects on the way they view other people's accents and they either reject them or embrace them or even view them in a humorous way. Rita in her vivid description on why many British people avoid speaking foreign languages, she drew a parallel with her own background (she is half Irish, half Scottish) and how her accent was perceived by the British so that she can make explicit to me (the interviewer) that a foreign accent can be either mocked or ignored and in both ways that is not the right attitude to have in order to encourage others to learn a foreign language. She said:

A Scottish accent is a difficult thing for English people to manage because as we have already established England is a very class-based place…Your accent counts hugely and there are accents in certain surroundings, you are instantly deemed to be inferior in spite of anything you may or may not have done…the problem they have with the Scottish accent like mine is they don't know what to do with it. They don't know what to do with me. They don't know how to react towards me. They don't know whether my father is a land-owner in Scotland or collects the dustbins in Scotland - because it is neutral.

And further:

Your background doesn't matter if you are a foreigner. It matters if it is a Brit and another Brit or an English person. It is the English thing. It doesn't matter whether you are a waiter in Athens or whether you are a classics professor. It doesn't matter. You are a foreigner. You are a whole different breed. For English people, it matters.

Rita also comments on the demographics of students who would choose to study foreign languages at schools post 2000 and after the attempts the government made to change the status and thus the significance of a subject as such at schools. Rita could not easily identify with the majority of students learning foreign languages as they were mainly children of immigrants who would be continuing with their studies of the language being themselves heritage learners of their family tongues. Not being able to relate oneself to the type of student who would study that subject might have changed the perceptions of British students considering the study of such subject as something immigrants mainly would do. Rita said:

There was an absolute outcry at the decision but it went ahead. Every so often particularly when A-Level results come out and GCSE results come out and you see that the uptake of doing a language has fallen even further. Those students who do take a foreign language are sons and daughters of immigrants. In the last Spanish class I taught at Kingston four out of the six students were from Latin American backgrounds, so they spoke Spanish at home. They weren't like me. Students like me that come to it from zero are very few and far between.

The lack of having role models, or people to feel affiliated with and who inspire her is demotivational. She cannot easily find other people who achieved in their learning of Greek and associate herself with them

Another aspect that explains the lazy attitude British students might have towards foreign languages, according to Rita, is the fact that they cannot easily find 'role-models' who are British and speak a foreign language to a successful and advanced level and that makes them feel that they cannot easily relate to others who have achieved such goal. Such situation seems quite prohibitive for them to feel included and it does not help them gain positive perspective or develop a sense of purpose. Rita commented on that:

I had a student at Kingston. She was a very difficult girl. I knew she could do it. She was lazy and didn't do the work. At one point I said 'why don't you just learn it?' it would be so much easier if you would just learn it so we didn't have to go over it, she said 'it's alright for you'. And I asked why and she said 'well you didn't have to do this', and I said 'sorry'. 'You're a Spaniard, you didn't have to do that.' and I said let's get one thing clear, I am not a Spaniard, I have no relationship with Spain whatsoever, no Spanish family, no Spanish relatives.

Such encounter she had with her student informed Rita that there are many British students who might feel the same way as she did. This might have been caused due to the social restrictions students have due to their belonging in a certain social class or background. It is quite common to have students of different social background who do not feel the same way as the students described above. Restrictions imposed by social class boundaries should be overcome and this is what Rita calls as a 'liberating' feeling, which brings us to the second thread that appears in her interview. She said:

But that is one of the reasons why learning a foreign language is so liberating. Because when you have reached the level where you can converse with people then all of those hang ups…. It is much more interesting, you can find out more and understand more about the foreign culture. You can understand their jokes. It is more fun.

One of the main motivations for her is feeling liberated through speaking foreign languages, almost adopting another identity

It is quite interesting how such need of feeling liberated is associated with aspects of the British identity as suggested by Rita. Rita uses the term liberated on two occasions. The first one has to do with her own need of feeling liberated from any preconceptions others have about the British people, for which she comments:

It is totally liberating. In France, Spain and Italy people have thought I was a native and I think that is bloody brilliant. I like it when they take me for one of them because I feel that I've not done all of the preconceptions about them and Brits.

When I asked Rita to choose a picture that represents best her learning journey, she selected Frida Kahlo's 1939 painting, *The Two Fridas*, making a link between learning and the strength it gives her to feel liberated, associating this way the act of learning with the feeling of empowerment and freedom.

She commented:

Pic 14

Looking at Kahlo's painting, I see two different versions of myself, connected by a blood vessel. Despite their differences, both figures form a single Frida. This is how I feel when learning another language. It gives me the freedom and power to become someone else while still remaining myself.

Being in control is motivational or it can function counterproductively

The second one is related to being in control of things, in which she said:

At the very beginning -- they are pleased to be able to speak in another language and be understood and I think that is already an achievement. The more competent you become the more you worry about not having the same control.

Additionally, Rita makes a connection between national identity and feeling liberated by stating the following:

They [foreigners] don't need to be liberated. We do. I know quite a lot of English people who would want to speak other languages - as it is considered quite an accomplishment - because they [English people] can't be bothered to do it.

Rita implies through her 'we do' (have the need to be liberated) statement that there is a certain fear that holds British students back from achieving their accomplishment. Such fear is associated, as previously seen, with the preconceptions other people have about British which have been projected onto the latter for years and they made them feel they suffocate into a system that does neither help or allow them to develop their linguistic skills, a system that does not offer the opportunities to its students to invest in their language education and this is why they view such attempts as futile.

And he said British people are useless with foreign languages, it is no point taking this person on. By the time I trained them up they would be off. Language would be a problem.

Demotivation. She criticises the lack of investment in learning foreign languages and no sufficient support received from the British educational system

Rita suggests that such preconceptions have turned the British into students who cannot or will not invest time and effort in their language learning as they do not see the purpose, the outcomes or how appealing such learning can be. She said:

There is something very appealing to people about speaking a foreign language. They want the accomplishment but they don't want to do the work. It bugs me when people try and suggest that it is something you can do easily…It is not easy. If you have done one of course it is a good grounding for others for sure. But to get to the level where that one language is going to be of use to you, you have to invest time and effort in that…Unless you have had the great good fortune to come from a bilingual background, you learn them both at the same time. That is different. I am talking about people like me who have come to it from nothing, it is hard work and you need a very heavy investment of your time and energy.

What motivates her learn foreign languages is that feeling of being free and liberated. It is an opportunity to escape from one's identity and social class barriers

One last and very interesting claim Rita makes in relation to the notion of feeling liberated through the learning of foreign languages is the idea of performing and the liberating feeling one can have adopting different characters through acting out his / her ability to speak foreign languages. Rita mentioned the example of the American polyglot language teacher, Charles Berlitz whose views on SL learning inspired her and she said:

According to Charles Berlitz - he grew up with different languages. And when he was a child he thought each person had their own language because people all around him spoke a different language - his mother, his nanny, his teacher. And then he realised that wasn't the case…He did say that you could have a different character according to the different language you spoke… I like the idea of being able to be a different person according to the language I am speaking. There is a bit of play acting involved. It allows you to act in a way in a foreign language you wouldn't in another language…So, I like the fact you can vary your personality, your way of talking to people, your way of being according to the language you speak.

Rita is intrigued be the idea of how liberating the feeling of being someone else might be and how therapeutic and enjoyable the performance of acting out different identities and personalities is. She finds that the profits one gains from such process are quite precious and she describes that as follows:

You might be more forward, you might be more curious in a way you wouldn't in your own language or your own culture.

And further:

The more languages you've studied, the more that becomes less of a concern because you want to express yourself.

She feels frustrated, being a teacher and having no control over the grammatical correctness

Rita being herself a teacher, she confesses that while learning Greek, she felt on several occasions frustrated of not being able to have the full control over the grammatical correctness of her sentences and accuracy of her vocabulary. That was, in her view, due to her professional attitude on learning which kept her entrapped in that misconception and expectation that as a teacher she must always be in control of the mistakes she makes, which is a 'language teacher thing' as she suggests. That made her as she claimed her own worst enemy of speaking Greek and advancing her studies on the Greek language. She said:

I am always trying to be accurate when I speak and that really holds me back. I think this is more of a professional problem, I have noticed that in Greek language recently that I won't say something until I have got something correct and others launch themselves and I envy them of their ability. I want to make sure all the grammar is correct and that is a failing on my part…I think it is a language teacher thing. I take my hat off to some of the younger people in the conversation class - they did have access to Greece and Greeks, they had Greek partners and things and were maybe more used to saying stuff but they would launch forth, not always correctly but they would just speak and I envied them doing that because I am more hung up on getting the sentence grammatically correct…I think it is partly because of my hidebound need for accuracy which comes from years of correcting people making mistakes and wanting to be correct. In that regard I am my own worst enemy for speaking Greek.

She states her views on the Hellenic Centre and teachers, teaching at the Centre and how important it is that the institution acknowledges the needs of this particular group of learners, the British

The third thread to be discussed in Rita's interview is her views on the Hellenic Centre, her criticism on what is conducted in a wrong manner and what could be done in order to improve the progress of students in the Greek courses. I believe that a British teacher's views who taught foreign languages in the past to British adult students are of significance as they can be revelatory and enlightening of how other British adult students may perceive the teaching conducted there. Rita started her critique on how fast the syllabus went that left very limited time for reflection and consolidation on what was covered in grammar and vocabulary as well as very little space for practicing the speaking skills in class. She additionally commented that there is no effective process of assessing the students' progress and as a result the students find it difficult to choose the class with the right level of language for them.

I came and did a couple of years…and did about up to intermediate and then stopped because I thought we were going too fast without consolidating the stuff we had done and I didn't want to do anymore advanced grammar because I didn't feel like I had proper control over what we had done so I stopped for a couple of years…And my

conclusions now are, what I would really like - because in the conversation classes we didn't do any grammar and in the grammar classes we didn't do any conversation - and what I would like is a combination of the both… but all the time consolidating what we have done, revising, using it a bit then the new construction and using both in a conversation. Repeating, repeating. That is what I find I don't get enough of… I said it isn't a very good syllabus because we don't know where we are, we don't know what level we are at, what we are supposed to know, what we are reaching towards.

Traumatic Experience during her learning Greek at the Hellenic Centre

Rita had also quite a traumatic experience of learning as she describes a particular instance during which an external person from the University of Thessaloniki was invited at the Hellenic Centre to train its staff. Rita's class was selected to be the group in which the external teacher and trainer would teach. The purpose of the lesson was to teach Greek at an intermediate level group with the intention to use Greek exclusively throughout with instructions being given in Greek, questions being addressed in Greek and answers being provided in Greek entirely. Such attempt of full immersion into the Greek language was not met with success from the students and in particular from Rita who was highly critical of such approach. She said:

A while back…someone came from Thessaloniki to do a masterclass. This was a professor and our class was picked and there were quite a lot of us and our teacher might have been... Other tutors from the Hellenic came…It was an older lady. The tutors were there to see how a class should be done. And I have to say that for me and a couple of others I spoke to, it was probably one of the worst language learning experiences I have ever had…Because she came in, bustled in, didn't introduce herself for a start, she didn't get us to go round the class to introduce ourselves saying a couple of words to make us feel like we could say stuff in Greek. None of that…She came in and set up this whiteboard thing and set up a picture of something like the wind blowing and none of us knew... And then she extracted some stuttering from some people. And then she got some people to do a role play and there were long, painful excruciating periods of silence, she didn't help them, they didn't know what they were doing, eventually they stuttered some words and a few more words were stuttered around. It was pitiful. In the end I think she did get us talking a little bit because it was March. It was something to do with some legend and in the end she got some words out of a few people. …From the point of view she didn't introduce herself, she didn't give us a chance to introduce ourselves to show that we knew a little bit. We were thrown into this thing and it was just awful.

She states her views on language instructors: she calls for teachers who are both native and nonnative speakers to teach the TL as they can appreciate better the needs of this particular group of learners, which is motivational

On language instructors being native speakers of the target language, Rita had some interesting thoughts. She said:

I think that this rigid adherence... This rigid adherence to only speaking Greek or the target language, I think is counter-productive because I have found in Spanish classes - depending on the level - in the lower levels I speak a mixture of Spanish and English

and if the students are clearly not understanding the Spanish, I tell them it in English…When it comes to the point when you have tried to explain it in the target language, and people are not getting it, you give it in English and move on. Otherwise it is a complete waste of time, it is demoralising for the people who are not getting it, it wastes time and it really makes you feel inadequate if you don't get it, especially if other people have got it. I think that this rigid adherence to the target language in all situations is just silly.

Rita suggests that there should be a balance addressed in both the lessons with the amount of target language used especially in beginners and intermediate classes as well as in teachers selected to teach. In her view, the ideal situation would be to have lessons taught by two teachers: a native speaker of the language and a non-native one if possible. Full immersion in the target language with Greek being used solely and taught by a native speaker can be a daunting and demoralising experience for a British adult student who studies the language at a beginners or intermediate level.

According to Rita, there should be a combination of native and non-native speakers teaching the language as that can work in favour of British students who can view a teacher who is not a native speaker of the language speaking it and that can make them feel that the goal they have set is and can be achieved. She said:

The combination of a native and non-native speaker is absolutely perfect. In higher levels of students where we would be getting into the nuances of the language…The students can see there is somebody who is not a native who can speak like a native, so they think if they can do it, I can do it. It makes them see that it is achievable. That is not immediately obvious if you are dealing with just a native…And that really is an impetus for a lot of people but if they only have contact with native speakers, then they know they are never going to be a native speaker, so they think I am never going to be a native speaker, so sometimes they think it is hardly worth bothering as I am never going to be like that, so I won't bother trying.

Rita is a British adult student, whose dual role being a student and a teacher provided me with invaluable information on how particular British students view the learning of Greek as foreign language. She is a learner who has very limited connection with the contemporary Greek reality and culture as she has no partner or owns a property in the country, no business connection and the only reason for visiting the country would mainly be the holidays. However, she is a student who has been and still is motivated by her learning environment as she finds the drive and main encouragement to continue learning mainly within the context of educating herself and teaching / learning an-other foreign language. It is the mental effort and intellectual difficulty of learning the language as well as the satisfaction one feels from having achieved learning it and the rewards one receives from such a tremendous attempt and investment. On what motivates her, she specifically said:

I do like the mental effort of grappling with the language, particularly when it comes to writing. When we have to do writing for homework, I think oh God, I can't be bothered and then I sit down and do it and then I enjoy it…It is the intellectual difficulty in a way that motivates me. One of the things that you put in the questionnaire which hit the nail

on the head for me, was when you put the question in about etymology. That absolutely fascinates me.

CHAPTER 5

Interpretation of Findings

The following research questions provide the framework for structuring my findings, their interpretations and conclusions.

- What roles do the adult British students perceive sense of self, autonomy, competence and relatedness to play in their successful learning of Greek?
- How do sociological factors influence these perceptions?
- How important are the views of such learners to be taken into consideration and implemented in the successful teaching and learning of Greek?

5.1 Motivation, SDT (competence, autonomy and relatedness)

It is important to discuss how the satisfaction of the three needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as suggested by Ryan and Deci (2010, 2017), occurred in participants' testimonies in this small-scale piece of research and whether participants believed that these needs were met with success or not during the learning process of Greek. I explore this issue in relation to each of my six participants below.

Omar

Omar's initial motivation to learn Greek stemmed from his desire to fulfil a need that his partner, Johnny, had missed out on — the opportunity to learn Greek. Omar quickly mastered Greek, driven by a strong desire to support Johnny, connect with his culture, communicate in his language, and help him overcome the challenges he faced. Johnny had always felt uncomfortable communicating with the Greek community due to his limited proficiency in the language he inherited from his family, as he was never given the opportunity to properly study or practise speaking it. However, Omar's learning of Greek enabled Johnny to start re-learning the language, which helped him feel more confident in interacting with members of the Greek community.

In the past, Omar had successfully met his needs for autonomy and competence by learning other foreign languages, such as French, Italian and Japanese, which he practised while working in a Japanese-speaking environment. However, with Greek, it was Omar's need for relatedness that consciously drove him to utilise his linguistic skills and abilities, motivating him to make significant progress in the language. Omar's intention to empower Johnny by learning his native language resulted in dual personal satisfaction: the fulfilment of his need for competence and his need for relatedness. On one hand, Omar satisfied his original attraction to foreign cultures and languages by becoming a valued member of a new learning community at the Hellenic Centre. On the other hand, he satisfied his need for relatedness by being accepted, appreciated and cared for by Johnny's family and social circle.

Through learning Greek, Omar also reflected on the linguistic skills he had developed over the years, recognising the similarities, differences, structures, and links between languages. This not only enhanced his competence but also gave him a greater sense of control over learning foreign languages, which met his need for autonomy. These

three needs — competence, relatedness and autonomy — proved to be interdependent, with the satisfaction of one reinforcing the satisfaction of the others.

Additionally, Omar's success in learning Greek was aided by the absence of sociological barriers. He grew up and was educated in a schooling and university environment low in prejudice towards foreign cultures, and he found a similar atmosphere in both his work and at the Hellenic Centre, where he felt valued and supported. However, Omar noted that the identity of a language instructor plays an essential role in fulfilling the learner's need for relatedness. He argued that learners must be able to relate to their instructor, especially when the instructor understands and appreciates the struggles of a beginner learning a new language. This is why he emphasised the importance of having both native and non-native speakers as teachers of the target language (TL). For beginner learners, in particular, non-native teachers can serve as relatable role models, as these teachers have personally experienced the challenges of learning the TL. This shared experience can help students feel more connected and motivated in their own language learning journey. This connection allows adult learners to feel understood and motivated to continue their language studies.

Omar suggested that the introduction of etymology could help satisfy a student's need to feel connected, accepted, and included in the new linguistic system. When learners can see the connections between their mother tongue and the foreign language, they feel more related to the new language. Omar believed that this need for relatedness can be fulfilled by recognising similarities while also appreciating and accepting differences between languages. He emphasised that this mutual acceptance requires effort from both the instructor and the learner. By embracing this approach, Omar effortlessly achieved an integrated sense of self, which significantly contributed to his success in learning Greek.

Virginia

Virginia is a student whose background—identity, schooling, university experience and social class—has equipped her with the necessary skills to learn foreign languages. She expressed, on multiple occasions, a strong understanding of her goals, the methods to achieve them, and the level of progress she wanted in learning Greek. Here was an adult learner whose motivation to continue to learn the Greek language, as well as her views on learning more broadly, have been heavily influenced by the sociological factors that inform her social identity. Her initial motivation was extrinsic; as a novelist who writes about Greece, she wanted to communicate her work to the public and gain access to authentic resources in order to continue her successful research for her writing on Greece.

Virginia set her learning objectives based on her professional needs. With a clear goal in mind, she dedicated significant time to learning Greek. Benefiting from the opportunities provided by her background and circumstances, she chose private lessons, feeling more comfortable in an environment where she could receive the full attention of her language instructor. Her desire to satisfy her need for autonomy—being in full control of the language, both in learning and using it—and her need for

competence—mastering the skills required to write and speak Greek at an advanced level—aligned with her need for relatedness, which involved feeling accepted, valued, and appreciated by her instructor and the Greek community.

It is noteworthy that Virginia made two specific comments, one valuing the English system of language assessment over the European one, and another associating success in Greek proficiency with individuals like the British Ambassador. Both references are allusions to the sociological factors that reflected her social identity background as well as to the things she appreciates and values.

However, these two comments also heightened her anxiety about achieving a high level of Greek proficiency herself and led her to reflect on the idea that a lack of grammar knowledge can result in mistakes, and that rather than fearing these mistakes, she should embrace them and learn from them. This process can be quite challenging for new language learners, but Virginia was keen to accept it, remaining committed and fully engaged in her learning. She claimed that this acceptance was evidenced by her attempts to participate in social gatherings with locals and others, overcoming her fears in order to communicate and understand their lives. This empowered her. Moreover, her desire to feel included, valued, and appreciated by a social group outside her own social environment, led to a shift in her views on learning Greek; as she felt relatedness, she began to feel more autonomous and competent.

Despite recognising that autonomy and competence in Greek could be enhanced by feeling included by native speakers, Virginia consciously chose private lessons over group classes. Some adult students believe that they benefit more from interaction with their language teacher than from interaction with peers. This perspective is interesting in light of Hiromori's (2006) study, discussed previously, which found a negative correlation between relatedness and intrinsic motivation among highly motivated learners. In Virginia's case, a collaborative learning approach did not benefit her and she opted for a more autonomous path. Initially, I believed that this choice was mainly linked to her background and privileged status. However, as Valerie's case (discussed next) shows, Virginia's decision aligns better with Hiromori's argument that highly motivated students, regardless of their financial status, often prefer more autonomous learning approaches.

Virginia stated that her relationship with her instructor—and feeling accepted and valued by him—became the key motivation for continuing her Greek studies beyond the beginner and intermediate levels of communication. She believed that tailor-made lessons, designed to meet her needs by an instructor who values her as both a student and a person, make her feel empowered and more committed. Thus, her engagement and commitment to learning Greek stemmed from fulfilling her need for relatedness, which ultimately surpassed and integrated with her needs for autonomy and competence. This process allowed Virginia to achieve an integrated sense of self, leading to her success in advancing her Greek language skills.

Valerie

Valerie's case is unique because her initial motivation stemmed from a desire to fulfil her need for relatedness. She sought to reconnect with her Greek-Cypriot heritage, from which she felt she had been traumatically separated. Valerie wanted to feel

included, accepted, and valued by the Greek and Greek-Cypriot communities, re-establishing her status as a bilingual speaker and heritage learner. Her need for connection, however, extended beyond just her family or the Greek-speaking community. Valerie believed that by learning Greek, she could regain the social class status she lost after her parents' separation and her move to England. Reflecting on her original motivation, Valerie expressed how strongly she desired to feel connected, included, and appreciated by both ethnic and social class groups.

Her case is particularly interesting due to the sociological factors that influenced her views on language learning, specifically Greek. Valerie's perspective was largely negative: she rejected academic textbooks, refused to conform to grammatical rules, was critical of the exercises suggested by teachers, and resisted instructions on improvement. Her needs for autonomy and competence were deeply impacted by her social class status, which had not afforded her the skills to teach herself Greek and become an independent, autonomous learner. Valerie believed that her family's social class restrictions and the lack of support she received within her school environment caused her to miss opportunities to learn her father's language. These sociological factors left her feeling guilty and ashamed for not being able to connect, communicate, and feel appreciated by the communities she wished to belong to.

Valerie's perspective on autonomy and competence is intriguing. She expressed a desire to "really understand the emotive meaning of a sentence" and to be playful with the language, putting her "own stamp" on it—aiming for a high level of proficiency. She also had strong opinions about the best context for learning Greek, rejecting group or classroom learning and opting instead for individual instruction. In this, Valerie's case draws parallels with that of Virginia, who, despite coming from a different social class background, also preferred private lessons to meet her specific needs. Both students felt that private instruction allowed them to feel valued, appreciated and connected to their instructors.

Valerie's case supports Hiromori's (2006) earlier suggestion that highly motivated adult learners often reject collaborative learning environments in favour of a more independent approach. However, Valerie's decision was not entirely based on her confidence in achieving autonomy and competence. Rather, it stemmed from her inability to relate to the other students at the Hellenic Centre. Valerie's need for relatedness operated on multiple levels—she wanted to feel connected and appreciated by her social environment, her ethnic family group, her instructor, and ideally, her classmates. Her rejection of group lessons was a defensive act, driven by a fear of being judged or undervalued by others. For Valerie, it was important to share common ideas and principles with others, which she believed would foster mutual appreciation and support, ultimately motivating and engaging her in the learning process.

Interestingly, Valerie's rigid views shifted after she began travelling to Greece, visiting less touristy areas, and socialising with Greek friends whose political and artistic choices she admired. She also discovered the story of a foreign musician (the lyra player) who learned to speak Greek fluently without compromising his accent, which inspired her. Valerie's desire for autonomy and competence grew stronger as she and her instructor created exercises that allowed her to open up and express herself freely, discussing personal topics without fear of judgment. She saw the connection with role

models like the musician and her instructor as empowering, helping her revisit and accept the aspects of learning she had initially rejected.

Valerie's struggles, shaped by various sociological factors informed her social identity, gradually diminished as she found relevance and appreciation in a once-hostile environment. For Valerie, learning Greek was an emotional journey, tied to her attempts to reconcile her dual identity—British and Greek—and to overcome her guilt for not learning her father's language. Her father's disapproval of standard Greek (as opposed to the Cypriot dialect) and his political views, further complicated her relationship with the language and the Hellenic Centre, which she saw as politically exclusive. She urged the Centre to depoliticise its identity so as to make it more inclusive for other British students of social class backgrounds similar to hers who would not share the same political views as those currently attending the lessons at the institute. Her decision to attend lessons there was contradictory to her beliefs, which she acknowledged as an act of vanity.

Despite the contradictions and challenges, Valerie's commitment to learning Greek was ultimately supported by her efforts to fulfil her need for relatedness. Sociological identity related factors and social class status heavily influenced her views and made her feel excluded. However, Valerie succeeded in internalising her motivation, moving beyond political and social constraints, and finding enjoyment and satisfaction in the learning process. Although her learning was initially driven by extrinsic motivations—such as the desire to enter a middle-class arena, overcome shame and guilt, and prove her dual identity—Valerie ultimately redefined her motivation. She integrated herself into spaces and communities that were marginal, non-conformist and unique. In doing so, she satisfied her need for relatedness, which strengthened her motivation to become a more autonomous and competent learner. This led her to achieve an integrated sense of self, leaving her feeling satisfied, motivated, and fully engaged with the process of learning Greek.

Elinor

In contrast to the previous three cases, Elinor's responses reveal a consistent underlying feeling throughout her interview: a strong desire and need to feel comfortable with her goals in learning Greek. She made very few attempts to step outside the comfort zone of her identity. Certain aspects of her social background played a role in this—her family's historical ties to the British Empire, her formal classical education, and her personal and professional achievements. These factors contributed to her sense of comfort and control over her life choices, including her decision to learn Greek. As a result, she became someone who resisted making choices that would leave her vulnerable to mistakes or a loss of control. These sociological influences shaped not only how she saw herself as a learner but also affected her need to feel autonomous and competent.

It is striking how candidly Elinor admits that her need to feel connected and accepted by her family, and to be valued as an equal member who has excelled academically, particularly in mastering foreign languages, ended in failure. From the outset, she compared herself to her older brother and father, both of whom she believed had a stronger aptitude for languages. She described her inability to relate to their achievements and the subsequent lack of appreciation from them. This unmet need

for connection stemmed from her lack of confidence. Here, gender becomes relevant, as Elinor relates her feelings of inferiority to these male relatives. This, in turn, affects her need to feel autonomous and competent. Consequently, she made deliberate decisions to retreat from her goal, opting instead for what brought her comfort.

This dynamic is evident in her interactions with locals and native Greek speakers during her visits to Greece. Elinor struggled with a sense of inferiority when interacting with male locals. Though she attributes her choice to withdraw from speaking Greek and switch to English as a sign of arrogance inherited from her father's colonial past, it is also her way of regaining a sense of control and power over her male interlocutors. However, this response interrupts her need to feel connected and included in the local community. Sociological identity factors, such as her social class, educational background, and gender, play a role in this interruption, as does her need to reassert her authority in the presence of a foreign male gaze that does not share her education or status. This imbalance prevents her from enjoying her progress in learning Greek and leads her to adopt a more observational role in conversations rather than becoming an active participant who could find satisfaction in communication and learning.

Interestingly, this interruption in her sense of connection, belonging and appreciation also reflects her father's communication style with locals in India, where he preferred to be a passive listener rather than an active communicator. This inherited attitude is linked to class, education, and gender. Elinor's entrapment within her own identity and family dynamics hindered her from being as willing a communicator as her interlocutors, preventing her from fulfilling her need to feel related, valued, and appreciated by others.

Reflecting on her struggles with progressing in Greek, Elinor shared images of two Giacometti sculptures, a male figure in motion and a female figure standing still. This contrast symbolises how she perceives herself, not just as a learner but also as a woman in relation to male native speakers. Her need to feel connected is interrupted by issues of power, gender, and class inequality, which undermine her ability to become as competent in the language as she desires. Elinor's educational background provided her with ample opportunities to excel in areas such as grammar, syntax and etymology, but she never attained the same level of proficiency in speaking. This struggle appeared to stem from her inability to satisfy her need for connection.

Elinor represents a learner who had the potential to advance in her Greek studies, but her failure to fulfil all three psychological needs, relatedness, competence, and autonomy, ultimately affected her progress. It is telling that her choices regarding where to learn the language or live in Greece reinforced her desire to remain close to aspects of her identity that provided comfort, such as the Hellenic Centre (which, as Valerie noted, does not seem inclusive to learners from all class backgrounds) or the affluent region of the southern Peloponnese, where she purchased a home next to a British aristocrat's property.

For learners like Elinor, who have limited connection to the contemporary reality of the country where the target language is spoken, it is important to seek opportunities to feel more connected and included in the culture rather than making choices based

solely on comfort, which only distance them further from others. By actively engaging with new experiences, Elinor could perhaps have fostered a greater sense of inclusion, acceptance, and appreciation from others, which would have allowed her to develop a more integrated sense of self. This, in turn, could have motivated her more intrinsically, providing her with the opportunity to become a more autonomous and competent learner and speaker of Greek.

Rita

From the very beginning of her interview, Rita explained that her primary reason for choosing to learn Greek, aside from her positive experiences visiting the country as a tourist, was her background as a foreign language educator. She felt equipped with the necessary skills to learn another language. Her initial motivation stemmed from her confidence in her competence and autonomy, which made her believe she could successfully take on the challenge of learning a new language. The choice to learn another language was tied up with her desire for validation and appreciation, both as a learner and as a teacher.

Rita's situation was intriguing because she held a dual role: as someone who had "been there, done that", meaning that she had experience teaching foreign languages to adults, and as someone who believed herself to be a capable, autonomous learner. She felt confident that she could easily take full control of learning a foreign language. Her reflections on her schooling and university years reveal a clear extrinsic motivation behind her choice to learn Greek. She had always excelled in foreign languages, achieved high scores, and developed the skills necessary to succeed. She had also managed to overcome the struggles many British adult students face when learning foreign languages, such as difficulties in pronunciation and replicating new sounds.

It appeared as though her need for competence and autonomy had already been fulfilled due to her professional background. What she lacked, however, was a sense of relatedness, an emotional connection to the new language, culture, and community. This need for relatedness remained unsatisfied. Rita commented extensively on the division between social classes in the UK, associating language learning with privilege, often reserved for the wealthy. Thus, her choice to learn another foreign language was partly driven by a desire to overcome prejudices related to this perception. There are clear similarities, here, to Valerie's case, who also saw language learning as a privilege of the upper class. However, Valerie managed to find meaningful connections within the Greek culture and language, allowing her to feel valued and appreciated.

In contrast, Rita did not achieve this sense of connection due to her lack of opportunities to engage with contemporary Greek culture. This is a common experience among adult students who admire a country's past, or certain aspects of its culture, but fail to establish a more organic connection with the language and the people who speak it. Rita's desire to break free from the constraints imposed by her British identity through learning a foreign language, although initially promising, never fully materialised. While she had successfully connected with Spanish culture and language in the past, this same connection eluded her in Greek. Her bond with Spanish was more organic, stronger, and more fulfilling compared to her experience with Greek.

Rita's attempts to escape the limitations of her British identity (which she described as restrictive, shaped by outdated British views and values, and marked by a sense of shame due to her accent revealing her social class origins) motivated her to embrace new languages and cultures, including French and Spanish. She had been rewarded for her language skills in school, where her academic achievements were recognised and appreciated. However, although this positive motivation initially led her to learn Greek, it never became fully internalised. Her expectations that the same sense of appreciation would arise from learning Greek were not met. Instead, she encountered situations where her efforts to speak the language were not valued by Greek speakers. This sense of rejection was compounded when she attended the Hellenic Centre, where she felt underappreciated by certain teachers and visiting instructors.

Her inability to find communities with shared values and connections further distanced her from the language. As a result, she lost her sense of connection to Greek and struggled to maintain control over her learning. This lack of connection impacted her ability to feel competent and autonomous, leading to increasing frustration, particularly when she found herself unable to master the grammatical correctness or accuracy of her sentences.

For Rita, as a foreign language educator, this lack of progress in Greek had a profound impact on her professional identity. She felt trapped by the expectation that, as a language teacher, she should always be in control of her mistakes. The sense of freedom that comes from overcoming social identity barriers while learning a foreign language is important, but it is only the beginning. Rita emphasised that this feeling must be supplemented by a deeper connection to the subject matter. She noted the importance of students being able to relate to their teacher, someone who has successfully navigated the same path as they are on. She felt this was particularly beneficial if that teacher shares a similar background, such as being British and achieving fluency in a foreign language. Omar echoed this sentiment, and both he and Rita concluded that it might be beneficial for British adult students to be taught by a British native speaker during their beginner stages. This could help them relate to someone who has achieved the goal they are working toward.

In Rita's case, although her Greek learning journey began successfully, it did not offer the same level of fulfilment as her experiences with Spanish or French. She never found a way to feel fully connected to the Greek language and culture. As a result, her effort remained an intellectual exercise, never fully internalised or integrated into her sense of self.

Alex

I would consider Alex's attempt to learn Greek as the least successful among all the participants. The main reason for this, as revealed in her interview, is that Alex's motivation to learn Greek stemmed from a deep desire to feel included, connected, appreciated, and valued, needs that were ultimately unmet. Her efforts were not supported by a desire to become a competent and autonomous learner. Her initial motivation to learn the language was tied to her past travels to Greece, where she once felt connected, and was driven by an attempt to cope with the loss of her beloved husband.

Alex's responses suggest that she was driven by a need to communicate with members of the Greek community, wanting to feel a sense of belonging, to re-experience the feeling of being part of a family, and perhaps to fall in love again. For her, learning a foreign language appeared to be part of a healing process, a way to reconnect with her past, to revisit the culture of a country where she had once felt welcome, and to reestablish communication with the locals there. This motivation included feelings of escapism, romanticism, the need for healing from past traumas and a revaluation of her life involving the search for love and care.

Alex's responses suggest that she never prioritised becoming a competent or autonomous speaker of Greek. Rather, her focus was on feeling included, cared for, and loved by the Greek community. She was driven by the idea of finding a "home", a place where she could belong, escape the abuse and trauma of her past, hide her former identity and develop a new one. I would argue that for Alex, her desire to feel connected translated into a need to belong and feel protected. This contrasts with the efforts of other participants, who aimed to develop competence, independence, and autonomy while communicating and socialising with others in the country.

Linguistically, Alex seemed to focus on the difficulty English speakers have in emulating the sound system of native Greek speakers, without delving into the success or failure of her own attempts to improve her linguistic or grammatical abilities. She also expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of male teachers, noting that she would have appreciated hearing the Greek language spoken by men. Interestingly, she linked male gender to positive affirmation, implying that her negative experiences with women influenced her language learning. Although this was not an explicit observation, it highlighted the way she associated the success of language learning and academic progress with exposure to different genders and the ability to hear the language spoken by a variety of voices.

One notable comment she made, which could serve as a suggestion for resource creators, was the importance of studying and reading short stories that allow readers to explore the inner lives of others. For Alex, this was an attempt to find characters in literature with whom she could relate and feel connected. As an artist and photographer, her need to connect with the everyday lives of people was evident in her choices of film characters and local places, all of which were viewed through the lens of photographers and image-makers. Her desire to connect with others in real life was paralleled by what she appreciated in art and pictures.

Although Alex did not explicitly state how she sought to become autonomous and competent in her language learning, her priority was to feel related, included, and valued within a community, whether it was the learners' community at the Hellenic Centre or the local community in Crete. Achieving this sense of belonging and appreciation from both her teachers and the local community may have helped her overcome the struggles she experienced in learning Greek. Alex emphasised the significance of emotional and affective factors related to a learner's personal identity, calling on educators and lesson providers to create resources and environments that are sensitive to the unique life experiences of adult learners like herself.

5.2 Sociological factors

My second research question relates to the sociological factors that influenced the participants' perceptions of self and the satisfaction of the three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. I now go on to explore this by contrasting participants' views, rather than addressing them separately, so as to highlight how sociological factors impact all individuals and yet the processes are different. By examining my participants' varied experiences of common factors, we can gain a deeper appreciation of how these influences might affect this group of adult learners.

5.2.1 Social Class

The data revealed that social class was a major topic of discussion among many participants, particularly in relation to how they perceive themselves as learners and their study of Greek. Social class was viewed as a dynamic force that either facilitated or hindered their motivation for learning Greek and was experienced in various ways. Just as social class impacted the participants' satisfaction of their need for relatedness, it also led to experiences of exclusion. The way the participants articulated their views on social class was illuminating, especially in relation to how these views affected their sense of belonging within a learning group. Some participants felt excluded from the group because they did not share the same values and attitudes towards learning.

The findings suggest that social class was sometimes perceived as an obstacle, tied to education, schooling, and educational policies, which worked to prevent people from accessing resources and opportunities. For some students, their privileged social class status allowed them to approach classes at the Hellenic Centre with confidence, having already studied other foreign languages. This intimidated others. This dynamic created a sense of inequality within the classroom, affecting perceptions of certain participants. Despite their desire to belong, some participants who positioned themselves as less privileged than their peers felt excluded from the learning community, underscoring and exacerbating their unmet need for relatedness. Two participants specifically commented on their lack of opportunities to learn foreign languages during their school years (Valerie, Alex). The findings suggest that participants were critical of the perceived unequal distribution of resources, which hindered their access to learning foreign languages as students, resulting in missed educational opportunities based on social class differences.

For example, one participant, Valerie, recognised how her social class had disadvantaged her. This was evident in her initial hesitation to join the Hellenic Centre, where she felt intimidated by the institution and its values. Valerie's experience aligns with Vandrick's (2014) theory on social class privilege, which can lead to a loss of confidence and a diminished sense of competence among students from less privileged backgrounds. Vandrick argues that in a society characterised by significant class segregation, social class profoundly influences access to communities of practice, which are often inaccessible to less advantaged students. Valerie suggested that the Hellenic Centre should "de-politicise" the learning of Greek and make it more accessible to all learners, regardless of their social class background and prior language-learning opportunities.

Rita was highly critical of the government's changes to foreign language education policy, which she believed had negatively impacted students' desire to learn these subjects. Rita argued that society needs to become less preoccupied with credentials and resources should be more equally distributed. Her views echo Norton's (2010) argument that in a credentialist society, where social mobility is difficult to achieve, hierarchical stratification worsens the disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

Findings showed that Valerie and Rita believed social class had shaped many British citizens' attitudes towards learning foreign languages. Valerie, for instance, noted that her social class background had given her preconceived notions about language learning as a privilege mainly afforded to the middle class, not the working class. Valerie, Rita, Virginia and Elinor all addressed this issue, with Valerie and Rita being particularly critical. Valerie, Virginia and Elinor discussed how their family social class background influenced their views on learning foreign languages and shaped their personal attempts to progress in Greek. In contrast, Rita discussed the issue from a broader perspective, commenting on how social class and politics influenced the British public's attitudes towards foreign language learning. Although Rita did not reflect on her personal experience with overcoming social class barriers in language learning, her comments did suggest that social class affected her perception of these issues.

Valerie and Rita provided more personal reflections on their efforts (successful or not) to achieve a stronger sense of self, autonomy, and competence while striving to feel related and included within their social class context. Valerie shared her personal struggles as a student who was unable to learn French and felt neither encouraged nor supported in her studies. Instead, she experienced intimidation and exclusion. Rita, on the other hand, while not experiencing these struggles herself as a student, confirmed that not all students in the UK have equal opportunities to study foreign languages. She approached the issue from the perspective of an educator and language instructor.

These findings are consistent with Lanvers's (2024) theory that social class functions as a barrier to foreign language learning, leading to lower exam scores among *working class* British students. Rita heavily criticised changes in educational policy, echoing Lanvers's views on the high dropout rate of students attending foreign language lessons in schools. Both Valerie and Rita affirmed Lanvers's notion of a deterministic attitude among British students, who struggle to see the value in investing time and money in foreign language learning without a clear financial return. Valerie even described her own effort to learn Greek as "vain" and "pointless" since it would not directly benefit her financially. Rita added that this mindset, where students avoid studying subjects without immediate financial benefits, shape British attitudes, leading to mockery and ignorance towards foreign cultures and accents.

Moreover, the data revealed that participants who commented on social class suggested that this social division and exclusion from foreign language learning stemmed from the inability of students from non-privileged backgrounds to appreciate the "other" due to societal restrictions and dominant ideologies. Rita offered an interesting perspective on the liberating feeling of becoming "someone else" through learning a foreign language, as it allows the student to imagine themselves part of a more open-minded and less judgmental community. This finding aligns with Heller's

(2006) views, which associate the acquisition of cultural capital with privilege. Valerie's experience also supports this notion, as she described the privilege of cultural capital as "unfair", recalling her upbringing in an environment that was hostile to anything foreign, without the academic support to appreciate her cultural differences. She noted that this would not have been the case in a different social environment that offered access to cultural capital.

Another finding related to social class that emerged was the concept of privilege that certain individuals gained through their income, access to financial capital, and resources, which fostered social division and elitism. The data from the interviews suggest that the notion of privilege was acknowledged not only by students who identified as non-middle-class but also by those whose social background afforded them more opportunities and access to social capital. Elinor discussed how social class hindered her from engaging socially with locals in Greece. The authority and power she held in the UK did not translate when she attempted to communicate in Greek, leaving her uncomfortable, as she realised she could not interact with her interlocutors on an equal level. This echoes Vandrick's (2009, 2011, 2014) conclusions about the connection between social class privilege and students' identity, finding this affected their confidence in learning foreign languages. However, the data in this thesis suggests that loss of confidence in speaking and communicating in a foreign language can occur irrespective of social class. For example, Valerie demonstrated greater confidence and determination in practising the language with locals during her travels in Greece than Elinor, whose powerful social status and education did not provide the same confidence in socialising with locals.

I argue, therefore, that confidence in speaking a foreign language is more complex than being associated with a single sociological identity factor like social class. Though many participants mentioned the importance of having autonomy and competence when learning foreign languages, their confidence in speaking varied. Omar, for instance, whose social status differed from that of Virginia and Valerie, encountered little difficulty in speaking Greek during his travels. Virginia, whose social background closely resembled Elinor's, exhibited confidence from the outset, communicating comfortably during both her interviews on national television and socialising with locals. Contrary to Vandrick's views (2011), the barriers to accessing communities of practice did not appear merely due to a lack of opportunities. This study therefore sheds new light on how sociological and motivational factors interact and influence confidence.

Ryan and Deci (2020) found that intrinsic motivation and well-internalised extrinsic motivation predict positive educational outcomes across different levels and cultural contexts. These outcomes are amplified when students' basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are met. They argue that the school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' identities, which can impact their confidence, self-esteem, and mental health. In the case of British adult students, the lack of support in the British education system for fostering confident, autonomous SL learners has perhaps led to low confidence that persists into adulthood and negatively impacts their learning experiences. Ursula Lanvers (2024) addresses this lack of support for second language acquisition in British schools, calling for urgent reform to provide equal opportunities for all students. She emphasises the need to improve education policies to ensure equal access to language learning, which would foster

personal growth, cognitive development and intercultural communication. These reforms would also give students justification for investing in language learning by ensuring professional and societal benefits, as the British education system has this impact particularly on less privileged students. Thus, it is essential to better understand British learners' experience and how they differ from other cultural or ethnic groups in their desire to fulfil their psychological needs to foster motivation and positive educational outcomes.

Nonetheless, as Norton (2010) argues, social class must be acknowledged as a significant factor influencing L2 acquisition and as a marker of social identity, a fact reinforced by my findings. Participants like Valerie (working class), Rita (middle class), Elinor and Virginia (upper class) all discussed how their social status impacted their Greek language learning. While previous studies by Darvin and Norton (2017) and Skeggs (2013) suggest that social class and privilege are negotiated differently in each country, this thesis argues that these factors can also be negotiated differently within a community of learners in the same country. Another critical factor influencing the students' language learning progress was their perception of power and how it was negotiated. My findings suggest that having power conferred by social class does not always motivate students to exercise it, as seen in Elinor's case. In contrast, Virginia demonstrated autonomy in how she determined what guidance or assistance she needed to overcome her struggles in learning Greek. She also specified the level of attention she expected from her instructor to become more autonomous and proficient. Virginia's approach differed from Valerie, Rita and Alex, who emphasised the importance of teacher motivation. Virginia was explicit in requesting support and made suggestions for how she should be helped in her learning process.

This aligns with Vandrick's (2011, 2014) research on middle- and upper-class students. Vandrick contends that this "new global elite" leverages their credentials, resources and privileges to achieve academic success. She also argues that social class privilege, or its absence, significantly shapes learners' perceptions, affecting their academic progress and emotional factors like confidence. Students from privileged backgrounds often demand more time and attention from their teachers to benefit from learning opportunities, a confident exercise of power that reflects the influence of class and the constructed systems of dominant ideologies.

Social class, as a sociological factor, was also explored in this thesis through the participants' responses from the perspectives of marginalisation and exclusion. The data indicated that participants addressed the unmet need for relatedness—feeling marginalised or excluded—in various ways. For Elinor, this manifested as a sense of exclusion and marginalisation from social interactions due to self-imposed restrictions based on her acute awareness of her inescapable social class background. Valerie's and Rita's responses offer a different perspective. Both participants sought to position themselves within British society by attempting to liberate themselves from the constraints of their predetermined identities, striving for a sense of mobility within the social strata of British society. Initially, both expressed feeling outcast from British society, despite being British, due to their diverse family backgrounds. As a result, they both sought opportunities to escape their environments and gain the privilege of learning foreign languages.

Valerie, aware of the missed opportunities to attain proficiency or fluency in her heritage language, adopted a critical stance towards the Hellenic Centre and its values. She felt excluded from the group of learners attending classes there due to her differing social class status. After her parents' separation, she relocated to the UK and sought opportunities for social mobility and escape from her 'doomed' social status. However, these opportunities were not readily available to her as a British individual raised in a society that imposed dominant ideologies about social class and access. Her decision to re-learn and re-teach herself Greek offered her the chance to reclaim her Greek Cypriot identity, an additional identity she sought alongside her British one. Valerie not only wanted to learn the language, but also desired to feel included within a group that shared the same cultural and traditional values, thereby accessing the same resources available to the Greek community.

This finding about transnational immigrants strategically positioning themselves to access resources or achieve social mobility, is reminiscent of Vandrick's (2009) argument on how individuals subjectively position themselves to access privilege. Vandrick suggests that in specific interactional contexts, transnational immigrants may position themselves favourably or unfavourably in relation to privilege, exercising agency or expressing opposition depending on how they are positioned. Valerie seeks access to the Greek community without emigrating to Greece, believing that this could offer her social mobility in a different society. This is why she feels strongly about the non-inclusivity of the Hellenic Centre, viewing it as a reflection of Greek society. Interestingly, she distinguishes between Greece itself, which she describes positively, and the Hellenic Centre, which she views less favourably. This aligns with Kumashiro's (2000) perspective on marginalisation, where one group's privilege is exercised at the exclusion of another. Valerie's political awareness and social status contributed to her feeling marginalised by the group of Greeks with whom she had hoped to align herself. It is also notable how Valerie describes herself as a "working-class kid with middle-class values", reflecting her internal conflict between her British identity and the Greek Cypriot identity she feels she missed the opportunity to fully develop. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1991) views on how learners may arrive at deterministic conclusions in recognition of their lack of access to capital. Similarly, Phillipson (1992) argues that labelling occurs when individuals address their perceived superiority or inferiority, as is the case with Valerie.

Rita's experience involves marginalising herself from dominant British attitudes towards foreign language learning. She seeks to liberate herself from British social class preconceptions and perform a new identity through learning a foreign language. This finding aligns with Norton's (2000, 2001) views on how power and social class constrain a learner's social identity and shape how they negotiate their place within the community. These constraints can lead to conflict and resistance, which is evident in Rita's struggle to feel included within a society that has already formed opinions about her as a learner based on her social status. This suffocating feeling drives her desire to liberate herself by performing a different identity when speaking Greek.

In this research study I found that the perceptions of social class, privilege, social mobility, marginalisation, and power are highly subjective, shaped by individual life experiences, institutional frameworks, family dynamics, and social interactions. And yet these factors heavily influence all learners' motivational approaches. I concur with Tupas's (2019) argument that social class, as a key construct, shapes learners'

perceptions and creates unequal relationships within learning communities, contingent on the learners' access to capital and opportunities for investing in foreign language learning.

5.2.2 Gender

Regarding the perceptions of British adult learners on how sociological factors influenced their sense of self, competence, autonomy, and relatedness in their successful learning of Greek, one noteworthy area that participants commented on was gender.

Elinor's and Alex's views on gender were particularly informative as they addressed two important areas. Elinor spoke about gender inequality between the UK and Greece, arguing that in Greece her social status, education and powerful professional position held in the UK, did not help her claim equality of status with men. She therefore felt excluded in her social interactions with the locals in Greece by a circle of men who did not hold the same access to capital as she did in the UK; this caused her to feel anxious and uncomfortable in communicating with them in the Greek language. This experience chimes with the theories of Pavlenko and Norton (2004), who suggest that gender is a sociable variable highly influenced by the social class, power and privilege of a learner. Moreover, Elinor felt disempowered as a woman and excluded from gendered public domains. This mirrors Feery's (2008) suggestion that gender affects the social location of a learner and helps or prevents him / her from accessing social networks in the target language. Additionally, Alex associated gender with the teacher's identity and she heavily criticised the Hellenic Centre for not recruiting male teachers. There is a disproportionate number of female teachers employed by the Centre, which Alex found discouraging, associating herself more with male than female teachers. Alex's comments, however, mainly targeted the lack of a plurality of different gendered voices heard rather than attacking the female gender.

Alex expressed that her desire for belonging and inclusion stemmed from her need to be accepted by a male, father-like figure—a presence she lacked in her childhood. Such a finding, similar to Pavlenko's and Piller's (2001) argument, although it does not challenge the traditional perceptions of gender, it supports the significance of having many voices heard and appreciated. In a Bakhtin-esque sense, Alex advocated for a more polyphonic approach to teaching. She suggested that for students to feel more included in their Greek learning, the Hellenic Centre should consider hiring teachers of different genders. This, she believed, would allow students to feel more connected and included.

Gender was discussed in terms of the participants' desire to be part of a community that accepts all genders and operates with a certain level of inclusivity. It was also considered in relation to power and how both factors, social class and gender, should be equally valued by both native speakers and learners. Furthermore, the importance of recruiting teachers who represent all genders was highlighted as a significant factor in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

5.3 Etymology: Linguistic Motivation (intellectual curiosity)

It is illuminating how motivation relates to the process of etymology in the participants' responses. Omar confirmed that working on the etymology of English words and their derivatives, while searching for links with the ancient Greek language and other Indo-European languages, has been an important aspect of motivation for him to learn Greek. Omar, as evident in his responses, he took a great pleasure as he admitted that from such linguistic exercise, he became motivated to continue with the learning of the target language. This way Omar could see his learning of Greek as an act of communication with ancient, imagined communities through finding the derivatives and meanings of words.

Valerie stated that for her the process of looking for the origins and meanings of the words in English language and their connection to the Greek one helped her 'de-politicise' learning the language itself and get used to being a learner. In this way, Valerie discovered a newfound motivation to continue with her learning of Greek without associating the learning aspects of the language with social class or other factors that carry within them political connotations. Although at the beginning she associated etymology with a middle-class education, she later learned how to appreciate it differently when she started teaching herself, becoming more independent in her learning. Elinor also felt quite comfortable with such an etymological process, as it helped her remember the meaning of words in modern Greek when she associated them with the root words from ancient Greek, which she was familiar with due to her studies at the University. This can be seen in the comments she made about the activities and pictures she chose to describe her connection to Greece and the Greek language. This made her feel comfortable, which is an aspect she discussed a lot in her responses and one that motivated her learning of Greek. Rita also commented on etymology as being an aspect that fascinated her. She associated it with intellectual difficulty and curiosity which made her feel liberated because it helped her adoption of other identities.

This aspect of the study's findings suggests that positive perceptions of students regarding their advancement of Greek were associated with a particular aspect of motivation that derived from the learning of the language itself, which included the process of etymology and more specifically the process of finding predicates (roots or stems) from which a later (contemporary) word or morpheme derives. My findings suggest that etymology is a linguistic process that is associated with certain areas such as intellectual curiosity, motivation, de-politicising the learning of a language from its pre-conceived social class status, encouraging a student to become independent, providing pleasure for learning and making the learner feel related as he/she can associate such a process with his/her past education and thus, can identify with his/her past achievements in learning. To my knowledge, there have not yet been any specific research attempts which associate the process of etymology with motivation, apart from mentions in academic studies mainly conducted in Greece (Γεωργογιαννης, 2007). This is a valuable area and one which warrants further exploration, regarding access and feeling included in imagined learning communities such as the one experienced by Omar.

Ryan and Deci (2000), in their seminal work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, underscore the importance of intrinsic motivation in fostering high-quality motivation. High-quality motivation arises when individuals are deeply engaged in an activity, resulting in optimal experiences and superior performance. In the context of my research, etymology, the study of the origin of words, was explored primarily through the identification of derivatives; that is, English words derived from Greek roots. This approach was met with significant success among participants, including Omar, Elinor, Valerie and Rita, who found joy in connecting their linguistic realities with a foreign linguistic context. This process of finding derivatives and relating words to their Greek roots was appreciated as it facilitated:

1. Communication with imagined communities and the opportunity to become part of a foreign community, making learners feel included and connected.
2. The de-politicisation of Greek language learning by allowing learners to appreciate the language in a neutral context, fostering a sense of competence and autonomy.
3. Comfort and relatability by aligning with learners' past studies and appreciation of Greek culture.
4. Intellectual challenge through the complexity of identifying word derivatives and roots, enhancing learners' sense of competence.
5. A sense of feeling liberated from barriers imposed on the learner by his/her social class as etymology can help the learner adopt an-other identity through finding similarities and links with other languages.

Thus, the study of etymology serves as a catalyst for intrinsic motivation, aligning with Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) principles. Participants reported feeling competent, related and autonomous while engaging in this etymological activity. Intrinsic motivation, defined as engaging in an activity for its inherent enjoyment or interest, is crucial for high-quality learning and creativity. Therefore, it is essential to understand the factors that foster intrinsic motivation. Etymology, as demonstrated in this study, can be included among such activities and factors that motivate learners and bring them optimal satisfaction.

5.4 Heritage Language Learners and motivation

An additional aspect I wish to highlight and incorporate as part of my findings is the importance of focusing on a specific group of adult learners—heritage language learners—who have not been researched as extensively as deserved. This group requires greater attention from educators, as their unique learning needs and experiences have significant implications for educational practice and research.

Research on adult heritage language learners, particularly British heritage language learners, remains limited. This group has been influenced by the sociopolitical and economic factors in the UK, as well as by educational language policies across countries, which dictate how heritage language learning is incorporated into national education systems and what opportunities are provided for learners to improve their proficiency.

In Valerie's case, the one heritage language learner in my research sample, there was a significant disruption in her ability to speak and practise Greek. Additionally, she did

not have the opportunity to attend formal community Greek classes. When she sought a placement at the Hellenic Centre, she was not given a proper assessment, leading her to enrol in foreign language (FL) classes. Her struggle and frustration largely stemmed from this inappropriate placement. A thorough understanding of the motivations of both learners and their parents can assist teachers and administrators in effectively encouraging students and involving parents in the educational process. In educational programs that serve learners from diverse language backgrounds, it is essential for educators to understand the patterns of self-identification, proficiency and motivation that are typical among heritage learners of a particular target language (Valdés, 2001). Motivation in heritage language learners is often linked to the desire heritage learners have to maintain relationships with family members who speak the heritage language and to forge connections with others in the language community (Valdés, 2001).

Such learners as heritage learners represent a unique group of students that require greater attention from families, communities, educational systems, and national policymakers in order to help them become more involved and motivated in their learning of the target language. Supporting a self-determined, intrinsic orientation, this study's findings suggest that relatedness was the most consistent predictor of a self-determined orientation across all groups, with autonomy predicting self-determination primarily for the heritage language learner. In Valerie's case, the satisfaction of her psychological need for autonomy had been internalised, leading to self-regulated motivation.

Regardless of the learning context, Noels (2016) argues that learners who adopt a self-determined orientation are more likely to engage deeply and positively with the learning process and achieve better outcomes. Compared to less self-determined learners, they exhibit greater motivational intensity and a stronger intention to continue studying the language, even after the course has ended. Valerie's efforts reflect this dynamic. She is striving to reconcile with her past and integrate more fully into her Greek Cypriot community by becoming autonomous and competent, while also seeking ways to relate her learning to this community. In other words, she is trying to integrate by teaching herself the language and becoming more autonomous, finding reasons to engage with and relate to the community. She is a student who invested in learning because it holds personal meaning to her and this gave her a self-determined orientation, which made her a competent and active agent of learning.

Given its minority status, Greek heritage language learning in the UK occurs under the influence of the dominant societal language, English. This learning process typically involves reduced exposure to Greek compared to English, limited opportunities to practise the language and a restricted range of settings in which the language can be used, including community schools, immediate family, and local communities (Karatsareas, 2021). These conditions contribute to the considerable variation in heritage speakers' experiences and proficiency in Greek, as illustrated by Valerie's experience at the Hellenic Centre. Therefore, as a cultural representative of Greece in the UK, the Hellenic Centre has a responsibility to develop resources, materials and educator training programs that actively include heritage language learners, such as Valerie, in order to enhance their motivation to continue in their learning of Greek.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion, conclusions and implications

6.1 My Theoretical Contribution

This study aims to deepen our understanding of the role that an adult learner's perceptions of self, autonomy, competence, and relatedness play in their successful acquisition of Greek, as well as how sociological factors influence these perceptions and influence the academic progress in learning the target language. It seeks to describe the motivational and sociological factors affecting the second language (SL) learning process of a group of British adult learners. This study also contributes to the limited research conducted on adult education in the context of SL learning, especially among British learners, (Palmieri, 2019) and reiterates the ongoing call for more person-centred studies in the context of adult language learning (C. Benson, 2017).

Among the six participants interviewed, three successfully advanced in their learning of Greek. A fourth participant made partial progress and continued to improve, although she still struggled to balance the fulfilment of the three psychological needs. The key challenge in her case was her inability to feel fully related, included and appreciated by the community and the 'topos' (learning environment) where she chose to study. She believes that she lacked sufficient support from the institute, which hindered her sense of relatedness.

The remaining two participants encountered significant difficulties in balancing their skills and extrinsic motivations with the satisfaction and enjoyment derived from fulfilling the three psychological needs to achieve intrinsic motivation. As a result, they were unable to internalise their original motivation and did not integrate themselves into the learning process. They believed that their attempts to fulfil the needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy were obstructed by either sociological struggles or a lack of support from the Hellenic Centre.

For example, the distinction between Rita and Alex, lies in their respective abilities to internalise motivation. Rita, being a language teacher, possessed the skills to find drive and satisfaction in the language learning process itself. In contrast, Alex struggled to satisfy her needs for autonomy and competence, which were closely tied to her need for relatedness. Rita partially met her need for relatedness by finding enjoyment in using her linguistic abilities, which in turn helped her become more competent and autonomous. Alex, however, demonstrated that she needed more support to perceive herself as autonomous and competent enough to continue her learning journey.

In this thesis I argue that in adult learning, the satisfaction and fulfilment of the three psychological needs largely determine whether the outcome and attainment of foreign language learning will be successful. This success is also influenced by three other factors:

1. Learners ability to protect themselves sufficiently against struggles related to socioeconomic and sociological factors, including family/educational background.

2. Learners ability to find a particular reason to feel connected and related during their learning process. This includes feeling related to other community members, developing authentic and real relationships, both sides acting in a volitional way for optimal changes, feeling included and valued, and developing relationships based on affinities, mutual respect, and shared political or artistic beliefs, ideas, and values. This need seemed equally important to, if not more important than, the needs for competence and autonomy.

3. Language instructors effectively listening to their students' needs, providing them with creative, authentic, and relevant material and resources, and creating opportunities for students to fulfil their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

When all these conditions are met, intrinsic motivation is likely to emerge, allowing students to develop an integrated sense of self.

In adult education, particularly within the context of SL learning, my research suggests that the satisfaction and fulfilment of the need for relatedness is crucial. This need can significantly influence learners' desires to fulfil and enhance their needs for autonomy and competence, ultimately leading to an integrated sense of self and progress in learning the target language. I do not argue that relatedness is more important than the other two needs, but rather that it can be a determining and contributing factor in their satisfaction, just as the fulfilment of the other two needs can, in turn, enhance a sense of relatedness.

In summary, I claim that, in keeping with SDT, motivation for SL language learning among British adults learning Greek is strongest when all three needs are met, satisfied, and interact with each other. However, motivation is also influenced by sociological factors, specifically class and gender. Yet, when motivation is effectively nurtured, it can help learners overcome the challenges and barriers imposed by such sociological factors, leading to optimal language learning outcomes.

6.2 Future Directions and Recommendations

This research points to several areas that need further study. One important one is how a sense of competence and autonomy circulate in the language learning event among learners and teachers, or how teachers and learners are motivated by language learning within the context of the community in which the target language is spoken. Also, findings from my study point to the importance of sociological factors; there are areas that emerge and impact on each other that can lead to unexpected results worth investigating. Such areas include, for instance, other motivational factors (certain inhibitions or attitudes towards a sense of competence and autonomy) that can influence the students' perceptions of their learning.

My research suggests that British adult SL learners are an under-researched population that needs further investigation. Without making any claim that such a population is a vulnerable group, my research has indicated that it has not been sufficiently represented in empirical research. Pfeffer (2015), in her work on the importance of including vulnerable and understudied populations in research, states that there are several reasons why certain groups are underrepresented in empirical

research. She argues that “though the targeted groups for study differ, each contribution has in common the goal of improving the quality of services for specific populations…such exploratory studies not only shed light on under-researched populations; they also provide insight into enhanced service provision opportunities and potential prevention policies” (p.3). In other words, we all learn from each other’s learning experiences. It is not about how big in number a certain population of participants / learners needs to be to deserve attention from scholars; it is instead the fact that certain people have undergone a learning process (that succeeded or not) that deserves scholarly attention. This is both to further scholarly theorisation and to enhance policy and practice. Such a notion adds to Ryan and Deci’s (2010, 2022) claim that Self-Determination Theory is universal.

One of my key findings is that the particularity of the context is very important as the learning act is heavily situated in local specific contexts. Acknowledging this could help researchers become more informed as to how, and to what extent, the context plays a part in shaping a student’s views, and how these influence the student’s L2 learning process. Equally individual and personal motivational factors are key elements since this is rarely emphasised in SL learning context.

Overall, given the fact that sociological factors are and can be interconnected in unexpected ways as new groups of learners arise, my research suggests a need for future studies to be conducted that would connect the act and process of language learning with a new re-conceptualisation of constructs such as class, gender, race and ethnicity. Moreover, a new relevant area to be researched is the emergent “new global elite” of transnational learners, who engage in identity negotiation as they move and navigate cultural and physical boarders. Additionally, it would be highly beneficial for more comparative approaches to be pursued, exploring how the identities of different groups of learners influence one another. This would allow the plurality of marginalised and / or understudied voices to be heard and respectfully accommodated.

7.0 Conclusion

The goal of this thesis is to shed light on how academic researchers, language instructors and practitioners can make the right decisions for enhanced L2 / SL adult language learning and which theories to be guided by when designing and implementing study programs for adult language students. My research suggests that decisions on designing the appropriate material and successfully teaching adult language populations are most likely to happen through good knowledge of the students' backgrounds, social identities, motivations and needs. My theorisation, based on key texts as well as my data, is that only through well-designed programmes and well-informed instructors will students feel included and that they belong within a community of learners as well as empowered when learning Greek regardless of the opportunities available (or not) in the past. My conclusion is that individual needs and motivations matter a lot in developing effective programs as well as in choosing the right program for the students, which enable them to enjoy the learning process and acquire knowledge. In this way, I attempt to overturn entrenched ideas regarding British adult learners not being good at learning languages by theorising that it is only by knowing what unmet needs or sociological factors stop them from doing that successfully, that obstacles might shift. Additionally, I intend to contribute to the under-subscribed debate about language progression among certain populations of learners, in this case, British adult learners, to promote future research.

There has been great attention paid, across multiple disciplines, to the individual and the socio-political context that affects individuals' actions and choices in life. However, as Rosenmann, Reese and Cameron (2016) suggest, there is a need to develop even more sophisticated means by which to understand the complexity of the world around us. Learning a foreign language is another way to understand the other, the foreign, and to appreciate their world. Exploiting subjectivity and diversity rather than looking for homogeneity as well as embracing the different lives at the heart of our society has impacted all areas and disciplines of humanities. Thus, learning a language with lower economic value in the context of the linguistic marketplace from the perspective of a learner who speaks a more economically powerful language (i.e. English), allows the latter to become culturally sensitive, helping them appreciate and understand the problems the world faces. This is one of the obvious benefits our multilingual world offers to its members. In this way, such learners can confront their own monolingual biases and understand the many humanitarian benefits of language learning, becoming more inclusive and challenging the power and control they hold over speakers of other foreign languages. This helps develop notions of egalitarianism and democratic distribution of opportunities in education as well as helping develop an appreciation that all people have essential needs when learning a language.

While conducting interviews or discussing the topic of my thesis with other colleagues and friends at work, I have been asked on several occasions the question: why Greek and not French or Spanish? I decided, therefore, to address this question here, at the end of my thesis. As seen in the data discussion chapter in students' responses, learning French, Spanish or Mandarin, three languages less dominant than English but still quite dominant in market values, is an affirmative act of acknowledging or assuming power and social habitus. These languages have been associated with the

acquisition of cultural capital, easy access to markets and professional development in positions that have an international status. Learning a language such as Greek that offers no obvious and direct benefits in societal or professional terms, is a more powerful act of appreciating the other for what it is. As Kramsch and Zhang (2018) suggest, it is important for language instructors in the UK to help students become more acquainted with other national cultures in which a language other than English is used. This will lead to helping, therefore, the students advance their knowledge of Greek through appreciating their responses and views on what is holding them back from doing so.

My findings were communicated to the senior management team of the Hellenic Centre and we organised a series of sessions on training new teaching staff as well as sharing each other's opinions on teaching Greek as a foreign language. What we discovered during these sessions was the fact that the Hellenic Centre was not inclusive enough regarding the population of adult students who attend the Greek lessons and thus, certain action plans should take place in order to 1. invite in more diverse learners, 2. appear more accessible to all types of learners and 3. deliver more effective lessons, taking into consideration the learners rather than the execution and completion of the syllabus.

The primary expectation of this thesis is that readers will gain insight into how the British adult learners who participated in the study perceived their experiences of learning Greek, as well as the efforts they made to overcome the challenges they faced. Additionally, it is hoped that readers will find inspiration in the participants' attempts to learn the language. This way, future foreign language learners will be guided to meet their essential needs and thereby become more able to defeat their weaknesses by speaking their minds freely, changing their attitudes towards learning and turning this process into a positive one. Through listening to my participants' voices, they will be better able to inform and influence the decisions made by adult Centres and teachers.

This thesis aims to empower students who are learners of foreign languages. Learning is a co-constructive and highly interactive process that takes place between teachers, learners and the social contexts that surround them. It is through the dialogic nature of all these factors that a positive attitude towards learning foreign languages will result.

Based on the data collected, I contend that the successful academic development of target language learning for this group of learners is largely dependent on the fulfilment of the three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In particular, I suggest that relatedness plays a critical role in achieving overall academic success. Finally, I argue that it is crucial to consider the specific sociological factors that influence learners' perceptions, as these factors significantly shape their academic progress and language acquisition.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH ETHICS: CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: *Investigating British adult learners' perceptions of how they can advance their learning of modern Greek: What role do they perceive 'sense of belonging' and 'identity' to play in the successful learning of Greek? Six case studies of British adult learners at an adult language centre in London.*

Letter to students inviting them to participate in the research project

Dear participant,

As you may know, I am currently doing my PhD in Education through the Institute of Education (UCL), University of London, researching the various practices that occur within the teaching and learning interaction in a foreign language classroom of adults who aim to become proficient speakers of a foreign language, as well as exploring the relevance of students' backgrounds, thoughts and concerns about the L2 Proficiency.

As part of this research, I am undertaking a project investigating the thoughts and perceptions of students within our own Institute about the ways L2 proficiency is achieved within a particular institutional learning environment where students are taught the Greek language. Furthermore, I plan to investigate its effectiveness qualitatively in order to answer the main question, which is: In what ways does the socio-cultural context of a foreign language institution affect and inform the linguistic progress of a learner who wishes to achieve L2 Proficiency?

I would greatly value your own insights, and I would like to invite you to participate in this research. I am hoping to involve a total of 18 students. Your involvement would be to be interviewed for 45 to 60 minutes. Interviews will not take place during your Greek lessons and they can be determined regarding exact dates and times later in the process during the term. Feel free to contact me via email: tvogiatzis@gmail.com.

I would be more than grateful for your participation, and hope that you will find it interesting and useful too, particularly as an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas with other colleagues and students.

Please be assured of the following:

- This research process will be fully confidential. This means that I will not discuss the content of interviews and workshops either formally or informally with any other colleagues, with any members of the faculty or university management, or in the context of any faculty or university meetings.
- Any audio recordings will only be made with your permission and will not be made available to any other person. Where interviews and workshop proceedings are referred to in the written research report or in seminar/conference presentation, individual responses will be anonymised to ensure that particular staff cannot be identified.

Whilst of course I would hope that all collective and diverse insights gained can be ultimately applied positively within the Hellenic Institute, it is crucial to me that you feel confident that individual contributions will remain anonymous and confidential.

This research will be written up as a formal part of my doctoral study.

I am very happy to answer any questions you may have before consenting to participate. Or, if you are happy to take part, please can I ask you to reply to this e-mail and let me know.

Thank you very much in advance as I greatly appreciate the time taken to assist me with my research.

Your participation in my project is entirely optional and you have the right and the choice to withdraw from it at any stage.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Vogiatzis

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:
Thomas Vogiatzis
MPhil/PhD candidate at the Institute of Education, UCL (Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment)

		Tick Initial Box
1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	☐
3.	I agree to take part in the above study.	☐
	Note for researchers: *Include the following statements if appropriate, or delete from your consent form:*	
4.	I agree to the interview being audio recorded	☐
5.	I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications	☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
THOMAS VOGIATZIS		
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

APPENDIX 2

Ethics Application Form: Student Research

Institute of Education

UCL

All research activity conducted under the auspices of the Institute by staff, students or visitors, where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants are required to gain ethical approval before starting. *This includes preliminary and pilot studies.* Please answer all relevant questions responses in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentethics/ or contact your supervisor or researchethics@ioe.ac.uk.

Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).

Please attach all supporting documents and letters.

For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Section 1 Project details

a.	Project title	Investigating British adult learners' perceptions of how they can advance their learning of modern Greek and how they form their identity as learners: Six Case studies of British adult learners at an adult language centre in London.
b.	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)	
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor	
d.	Department	Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD/MPhil ☒	EdD ☐
		MRes ☐	DEdPsy ☐
		MTeach ☐	MA/MSc ☐
		ITE ☐	
		Diploma (state which) ☐	
		Other (state which) ☐	

f.	Course/module title	MPhil / PhD in adult foreign language learning (no specific title)
g.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.	N/A
h.	Intended research start date	April 2015 (start date of research) October 2013 (start of MPhil / PhD)
i.	Intended research end date	July 2015 (end date of research) December 2018 (end of MPhil / PhD)
j.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel insurance form to Serena Ezra (s.ezra@ucl.ac.uk) in UCL Finance (see guidelines). This form can be found here (you will need your UCL login details available): https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm*	United Kingdom, London

k.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:
	No ☒ ⇨ *go to Section 2*	Date of Approval:

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments**.**

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 Project summary

Research methods (tick all that apply)

Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).

- ☒ Interviews
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Questionnaires
- ☐ Action research
- ☒ Observation
- ☒ Literature review
- ☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study
- ☒ Use of personal records
- ☐ Systematic review ⇨ ***if only method used go to Section 5.***
- ☐ Secondary data analysis ⇨ ***if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.***
- ☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups
- ☐ Other, give details:

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

The aim of this study is to discuss the complexities surrounding the process of advancing the knowledge of a minor foreign language being an adult British learner and thus, a native speaker of English, a dominant language in global terms. Despite the extensive research conducted on adult foreign language learning, the main focus of previous studies appeared to be on English being a foreign language. Very limited attempts have been made to approach that particular group of adult learners learning a minor, an-other foreign language such as Greek. I locate the inquiry at the Hellenic Centre, an adult foreign language institution, and I focus on British adult learners' perspectives at their advanced stage of Greek in relation to their social context, their ethnic, gender, professional and educational background. The methodology that seems more appropriate to serve the purposes of the investigation of my research question is the Case study. Additionally, this choice allows me to view the problem holistically as well as providing me with descriptive accounts of the participants' attitudes toward learning, which is essential to reach in-depth explanations of the problem. I aim to research how such learners perceived the development of their selves during the process of their language learning progress of Greek, their motivation, the challenges they face and their overall perceptions, as the latter revealed how such particular realities inform and influence the learners' language learning process of Greek.

Research Design:

Participants – Sampling strategy:

The 6 students currently attending the C1 level will be interviewed and observed in lessons. Gaining access is straightforward as I teach one of the two classes and in addition I am one of the oldest serving members of teaching staff at the centre. The Director of the Hellenic Centre, the Director of Studies and the second teacher are all aware that I am conducting this thesis and I anticipate their approval regarding the ethics review form. I am familiar with all students as I have taught the ones attending the Mastery class in the past. Moreover, they are more or less the same students who contributed when I was conducting my Master's Dissertation a few years ago at the Institute of Education. They are familiar with my present academic situation and they have proved to be more than happy to assist in my previous research efforts.

Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data as I consider it be the most relevant to my methodology and the questions that I am trying to research. As the emphasis is clearly on the participants' responses, semi-structured interviews appear as an ideal model which will enable them to freely express their views in their own terms and will allow the researcher to collect reliable and comparable qualitative data. Since a semi-structured interview is relatively open, it will allow new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says.

Framework of themes to be explored in relation to L2 Proficiency will include:

- The notions of success and failure
- Motives and motivation
- The notions of need, desire and urgency to communicate
- Struggle and fear
- Relationship of the individual with its social environment
- Relationship between native and non-native speakers
- Relationship between the centre and the learners
- Perceptions of L2 Proficiency
- Cultural and linguistic differences between native and non-native speakers
- Learning as an adult
- Reflect on and contrast past and present learning experiences of Greek

The above coding of themes will be further discussed in my literature review and analysis chapters in relation to specific themes that will emerge from the data collection.

Section 3 Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

a.	Will your research involve human participants?	Yes ☒	No ☐ ⇨ *go to Section 4*
b.	Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.		

	☐ Early years/pre-school ☐ Ages 5-11 ☐ Ages 12-16 ☐ Young people aged 17-18	☐ Unknown – specify below ☒ Adults *please specify below* ☐ Other – specify below *This research project will take place at the Hellenic Centre which is an adult foreign language institution in Marylebone, London. All students who will be interviewed are adults (20-60 y.o.) and they are all professionals. The adults who will be interviewed are currently*

		attending the proficiency classes at the Hellenic Centre.
	NB: Ensure that you check the **guidelines** (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).	
c.	If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study? **(Please attach approach letters or details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.)** N/A though consent form has been attached at the end	
d.	How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)? Due to the nature of my research participants involved will be the ones attending the proficient and advanced conversation groups currently offered at the Hellenic Centre	
e.	Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing. I will inform the students via email and through personal contact as I am teaching these classes and therefore I am personally involved within my own research project. I will provide them with consent forms and I will be able in person to answer any of their questions.	
f.	How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time? *See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures. Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.* *I state in my consent form that their participation is entirely voluntary and they can withdraw from the project at any stage.*	
g.	**Studies involving questionnaires:** Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A	
	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.	
h.	**Studies involving observation:** Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes ☒ No ☐	

	If **NO** read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
i.	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes ☐ No ☒
	If **yes** what steps will you take to explain and minimise this? If **not**, explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise? What I am researching is not a sensitive matter at all and the students are adults and will be informed prior to any participation.
j.	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes ☐ No ☒
	If **YES** please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
k.	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
l.	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same as an individual debriefing.) Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **no**, why not?

Section 4 Security-sensitive material

Only complete if applicable

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or

extreme groups.			
a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

N/A

Section 5 Systematic review of research

Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) ***and*** *if you have answered* ***No*** *to both questions, please go to* ***Section 10 Attachments.***

N/A

Section 6 Secondary data analysis Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s		
b.	Owner of dataset/s		
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes ☐	No ☐
		If no, *do you have the owner's permission/license?* Yes ☐ No* ☐	
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes ☐	No ☐
		Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes ☐	No* ☐
		Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☐	No ☐
		Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* ☐	No ☐
e.	Are the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)?	Yes* ☐	No ☐
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

g.	**If no,** was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
h.	**If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If secondary analysis is only method used ***and*** *no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to* ***Section 9 Attachments.***

N/A

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). *(See the Guidelines and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.)*		Yes ☒
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒

*** If yes,** please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state wh these arrangements are below.

c. Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and during transcription?

ONLY MYSELF

During the research

d. Where will the data be stored? I will store my data at my personal computer and I will keep backup on cloud base storage space

e. Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes ☒ * No ☐

*** If yes,** state what mobile devices: my IPhone 6

*** If yes,** will they be encrypted?: both the device and the application are password protected

After the research

f. Where will the data be stored? I will store my data at my personal computer and I will keep backup on cloud based storage space

g.	How long will the data and records by kept for and in what format? Until the completion of my research and the will be kept in document formats
h.	Will data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes ☐ * No ☒ *** If yes,** please provide details.

Section 8 Ethical issues

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

– Methods – Sampling – Recruitment – Gatekeepers – Informed consent – Potentially vulnerable participants – Safeguarding/child protection – Sensitive topics	– International research – Risks to participants and/or researchers – Confidentiality/Anonymity – Disclosures/limits to confidentiality – Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) – Reporting – Dissemination and use of findings

Ethical Concerns and Issues:

Most of the ethical issues mentioned in column 1 do not apply in my case as my research project involves exclusively adults and no sensitive topic will be addressed or touched. Therefore, I would like to address the ethical issues that apply in my case as enlisted in columns 2 and 3.

There are, however, certain ethical considerations of the narrative inquiry that should be addressed, such as:

a. Subjectivity in the interaction between the researcher and the participant;
b. 'Truth' and the legitimacy of the research, as participants may lie, distort or fabricate, or provide a story that is 'incomplete';
c. Representation, and whether the researcher can ever directly capture and present 'lived experience'.

Along with these considerations, the linguistic challenges of the narrative research should be equally addressed. According to Polkinghorne (2007), these linguistic challenges could be summarised in the following three points:

- The perspective of the interviewee is best revealed in stories where the informant is using his or her own spontaneous language in the narration of events;
- Direct quotations from research participants to enable them to 'speak for themselves', facilitate voice;
- There may be a disjunction between each student's actual experienced meaning and the storied descriptions, because of "the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning…the limits of reflection to bring notice to the layers of meaning that are present outside of awareness…the resistance of people because of social desirability to reveal fully the entire complexities of the felt meanings of which they are aware, and….the complexity caused by the fact that texts are often a co-creation of the interviewer and participant" (p. 481).

Insider Research Issues

A main issue regarding the methodology process is the fact that the researcher is actively involved into the actual research project. It is crucial at this stage of the study to clarify my role as a researcher in order to ensure the credibility of my research. As my intention is to have complete membership of the group being studied (being their instructor and teacher), I need to briefly identify the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider-researcher. According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), the key advantages of conducting an insider research project are:

- Having a greater understanding of the culture being studied;
- Not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally;
- Having an established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth;
- Knowing in-depth the politics of the researched institution;
- In general they have a great deal of knowledge, which would take an outsider longer to acquire.

Regarding the disadvantages of being an insider researcher, DeLyser (2001) identifies the following:

- Greater familiarity may lead at times to a loss of objectivity;
- Prior knowledge about the research project could at times be considered as a bias;
- There is often a struggle to balance the insider-role and the role as a researcher;
- To conduct credible insider research, insider researchers must respect the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the institution and the participants as they gain access to sensitive information.

It is, therefore, important to address these issues further when discussing my methodology process and in what ways I have managed to overcome the above-mentioned disadvantages in order to ensure credible inside research. In this respect, I will to demonstrate the specific advantages and disadvantages of being an insider-researcher by considering the following themes:

- My role as a researcher
- The aim and research questions of the study
- Issues of the research design

- The collection and analysis of data
- Ethical issues
- Reporting the data

Regarding the anonymity and confidentiality ethical concerns of this research:

The nature of the research will be clearly explained to participants, including its aims and my own role as a researcher and doctoral student. This will be given to participants in writing and explained at the preliminary focus group meeting. Participants will also be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I am happy to answer fully. I am planning on asking participants to sign a formal consent form. Full confidentiality will be assured both in writing and verbally in each session. I will make it clear to participants that this means that I will not discuss the content of interviews and individual workshop contributions either formally or informally with any other staff, or in the context of any faculty or university meetings. Where interviews and workshop proceedings are referred to in the written research report or in seminar/conference presentation, individual responses will be anonymised to ensure that particular staff cannot be identified.

Furthermore, there may be a concern among participants about what is done with photographs and video material recorded, and in what form results of the research will be disseminated. I will ensure that audio and video recordings and interview transcripts are not be made available to any other person, and will be kept in a locked cupboard to which only I have a key. I will also make it clear that where interviews and workshop proceedings are referred to in the written research report or in seminar/conference presentation, individual responses will be anonymised to ensure that particular staff cannot be directly or indirectly identified. If any photographs or video extract are used as part of the presentation and dissemination of the research, I will ensure that such images are anonymised so that again individuals cannot be identified. I will investigate various options for anonymising such images before using them for reporting.

Throughout this process I will work hard to engender an atmosphere of trust which includes non-judgemental facilitation, assurances of confidentiality, and direct discussion of my dual role as faculty member and researcher.

Section 9 Further information

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

Nothing else to be further considered

Section 10 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

	Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes ☒	No ☐
	Consent form	Yes ☒	No ☐
	If applicable:		
	The proposal for the project	Yes ☒	No ☐
	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee N/A	Yes ☐	No ☐

	Full risk assessment N/A	Yes ☐	No ☐

Section 11 Declaration

	Yes	No
I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines.	☒	☐

BPS ☐	BERA ☐	BSA ☒ Other (please state) ☐

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.	☒	☐
I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.	☒	☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name	Thomas Vogiatzis
Date	19/03/2015

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*

or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*

or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE. Further information can be found at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/DBS_Guidance_1415.pdf

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook.* London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

APPENDIX 3

THE HELLENIC CENTRE

Mr Thomas Vogiatzis

07 December 2017

Ref: 5

Dear Mr. Vogiatzis,

I am writing to formally grant you permission to conduct interviews with the adult students at the Hellenic Centre. Additionally, you are authorized to have full access to the demographic data of the Hellenic Centre.

Your role as an employee and teacher at the Centre positions you well to undertake this task, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of the information gathered. It is expected that the data will be used responsibly and solely for the intended purposes of improving educational programs and understanding the needs of our students.

Please ensure that all interviews are conducted in a professional manner, respecting the privacy and comfort of the students. All demographic data accessed should be handled with the utmost care and confidentiality, in compliance with the Centre's privacy policies and any applicable data protection regulations.

If you require any further information or assistance, do not hesitate to contact me at

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 4

Questionnaire – Stage 1 – Learning Greek

The Hellenic Centre, September 2018

Gender: F

Professional Background: lecturer in Foreign Languages

Years of learning Greek and level (now): 4; Intermediate

My feelings towards Greek

Answer the following questions about your past and present feelings towards Greek.

I usually feel ~ so and so when I speak Greek because…I don't feel like I have the ear for it

I felt ~a bit adamant when I started learning Greek because…I founded difficult

I hope to feel ~ more and more at ease about Greek because…I try hard

Present challenges

Please write about any challenges that you may have with Greek.

These could be about your abilities, your feelings or anything you feel that is holding you back.

What do you want or need to improve?

I presently have challenges with…remembering the vocabulary

Present strengths

Please write about what you believe are your strengths in Greek. These could be about your abilities, your attitudes or anything you feel that helps you learn Greek.

My present strengths include good understanding and relating it to my mother tongue or other Latin tongues. I understand the grammar and also have some help remembering when I learned German and French (declensions, etc).

Also helps that my attitude is "I never give up" and "this is how you say this in Greek and there is no point in making any comparison with English"

Specific goals and deadlines

Please write down three goals you hope to achieve with your Greek and a deadline for each one of them. It would be helpful to make these goals specific and achievable.

Improving my conversation, in one year time

Feel comfortable speaking and listening, in one-year time

Expanding my vocabulary, in two years' time

Definitions

Write your own definitions to these words or expressions. Try to write what the words mean to you. Do not use a dictionary to define them.

Fluent Level Greek: normal speaking and understanding just like a native

Proficient Level Greek: almost as a native

Advanced Level Greek: still unsure in some fields

Intermediate Level Greek: half way through

S.L.R.W. Importance Scale

Write down how important each category is to you and your Greek on a scale from 0-100 but make sure that all the numbers add up to 100. Then below, write down why you wrote down those numbers.

(S) Speaking ___50%
(L) Listening _____35%
(R) Reading ____15%
(W) Writing _____0%

I would say that speaking, listening and reading should be 100% each and writing maybe 20% as I would rarely need to communicate in writing. For me the oral understanding is crucial.

Examples:

(S) Speaking *50%*
(L) Listening *30%*
(R) Reading *15%*
(W) Writing *5%*

I want to learn Greek for traveling and meeting people in different places so it's important for me to practice speaking and listening. Reading may be important for understanding signs and notices. I don't imagine I would use writing very often.

I will be content when… because…

Fill in the blanks and write what it will take to make you content and why that will make you content. You can write anything you would like.

I will be content when I don't get nervous when somebody speaks to me in Greek because I will be more able to relax and understand everything

Activity 1

TASK: Choose OR Create your own Learning Metaphor – Complete the sentence below

Examples:

Learning another language is like …an oyster…..

painting a picture … because it starts off as something simple and pure but by the end it's complex and beautiful

having teeth implanted … because it hurts for ages but you are more attractive for it

an oyster … because it might take a while for it to open, but when it does you find a pearl inside

getting to know a city … because first you become familiar with the main areas, then you get to know other areas and eventually all the bits link up and you understand all of it

playing the violin because the more you practise the easier it will become

being stranded on an island … because you have to learn everything from scratch

riding a rollercoaster … because it's easier after some beer or wine

slowly painfully but, oh amazingly, growing a pair of wings because you can start to see right over your native tongue

learning to ride a bike … because you'll never forget (if you practise)

climbing a mountain … because it's hard work but the enhanced view of reality is worth it

getting a tattoo … because at first it's painful and you want to give up, but then the process becomes strangely satisfying and you have something beautiful with you for life

riding a rollercoaster … because it'll turn your life upside down

learning to ride a bike … because it takes you places

finding an oasis in the middle of the desert … because it allows us for a moment to quench our thirst for knowledge and to cast away loneliness

Activity 2

Choose a picture that makes you feel motivated in learning Greek?

Pic

In addition to a desire to communicate whilst on holiday in Greece, this “hits the nail on the head “ as far as my interest in learning Greek is concerned: the fascination that etymology holds for me as a languages teacher.

Activity 3

TASK: Provide a couple of examples of successful activities you performed in class when learning Greek; Activities that helped you learn any of the following: (Reading, Listening, Speaking, Grammar, Syntax, Vocabulary learning)

Reading Comprehension: we were given texts in Greek which we had to read out loud - a sentence or two each. This helps with pronunciation, accent and understanding. Questions on the text help to consolidate syntax, grammar and vocabulary just covered.

Role plays on a related topic help with all of the above, as long as they are well managed and not too long. When role- play pairs are allowed to speak for too long, the whole exercise becomes counter -productive as other students in the class are exposed to too much incorrect language. If the group is a large one and the teacher gives every pair the opportunity to “perform”, it can also become extremely boring!

Good practice is for the teacher to illustrate how the role play might be done by taking one of the roles him/herself.

Thank you for participating,

Thomas Vogiatzis

The Hellenic Centre, September 2018

APPENDIX 5

Questionnaire – Stage 2 – Semi Structured Interviews

Main Questions:	**Follow –up Questions:**	**Additional Questions:**
Tell me a few things about yourself and your background.	• What does it mean for you being British? • Describe me your family / professional / educational / class background / languages you speak? • What are the things that make you feel proud of your identity / background / culture?	• Do you feel intimidated at all by anything foreign? • What are you looking for in the other / the foreign?
Other Languages and Greek: Do you speak other languages? How and when did you learn them? Why did you decide to learn Greek? What was your original motivation?	▪ Did you try to learn foreign languages prior you decided to learn Greek? ▪ Why did you choose to learn Greek? ▪ What is it that you are trying to achieve through learning Greek? ▪ Are there any other members in your family or close friends who speak Greek? ▪ Whom do you practice the speaking with? ▪ Where did you first learn how to speak this language? ▪ Do you speak other foreign languages?	If you had to choose amongst the following motives, which one(s) would you choose? gender related / in love – romantic reasons / linguistic motives, interest in learning languages / making new friends / return back home / exotic approach / inclusion, becoming a member of a broader community / urge and survival instinct (immigration)

	▪ What was the original motivation you had to learn how to speak Greek? ▪ Have the external motives / motivation you originally had changed since you started learning Greek? ▪ Do you find internal motivation now in the language learning?	
How do you practise your speaking, cultural and learning skills outside the lessons?	▪ What social events in your life helped you heighten your awareness of Greek language and culture? (eg. holidays, parties, social / family gatherings etc.) ▪ What is your connection (if any?) with the Greek speaking community of London?	
Why did you choose the Hellenic Centre to learn Greek? What is your relationship with the Centre?	✚ Do you think the Centre is a place to sufficiently teach you Greek? ✚ What is it that is missing from the Centre? ✚ Describe me the Centre? (location / building etc.) – Do you feel intimidated by it? OR comfortable? ✚ Why did you choose to have lessons in	✚ Did you try other places to learn Greek? ✚ Did you try to learn Greek in Greece? ✚ Where do you live? ✚ How far do you have to travel / commute to get to the Centre?

	classroom and not learn privately? - What is your relationship with the other members of the classroom? Do you feel intimidated by them or do they support / help your learning? - How, in your opinion, could real-life be re-enacted or recreated in a foreign learning classroom? Can authenticity ever be achieved in lessons? What do you do about this? How do you deal with it?	
Describe me your relationship with your teacher? Is he a man / woman? How many language instructors / teachers you had in the past?	❖ How do you deal with his / her authoritative law? The law of the native speaker? ❖ Is there anything that you think is missing from your teacher? Something perhaps that he or she is not aware of (perhaps about you)? ❖ Do you feel included / empowered when you communicate with your teacher?	
How would you describe your level of Greek? Describe me in your own words your learning trip?	Do you consider yourself an intermediate, an advanced or a proficient speaker of Greek? How would you describe yourself as a learner in general?	How frequently you practise the speaking of Greek? Do exams matter for you? Can this be a motive itself?

	What keeps you motivated in this whole process of learning?	What is the distinction, in your opinion, amongst these levels (intermediate / advanced / proficient)? What, in your opinion, hinders an adult learner from learning the target foreign language? What, in your opinion, are the linguistic features / skills one needs to develop while learning a Foreign Language? Could a foreign speaker ever reach the level of a native speaker?
What are the obstacles or struggles you face when learning Greek?	➢ What do you find difficult about learning Greek? What aspects / features of the Greek language do you find difficult to learn? ➢ Think of successful or not successful examples of exercises that helped you or not learn Greek? ➢ What helps you learn Vocabulary? How do you deal with Grammar? What confuses you most with the syntax in sentences? ➢ How much you focus on practicing the reading and listening? ➢ Do the interactions in class with the other learners help	Is there a critical period, in your opinion, to overcome the obstacles when learning a MFL?

	you learn the language? (role plays?) Explain ➢ What emotions have you experienced over the years of learning Greek? (eg. jealousy, anger, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, need, urge) – When did you feel that emotion? What were the circumstances? Can you recall of any embarrassing moment of you learning Greek? ➢ Have you ever tried to imitate a native speaker of Greek? (mannerisms, intonation?)	
How do you generally deal with the gaps in communication when speaking to a Greek native?	How do you deal with the lack of knowledge when communicating / speaking with a native? Do you ever (subconsciously) compare the British people to Greek? Do you feel you need to defend one or the other? In what circumstances?	
What do you admire / like / dislike / hate about Greece and the Greeks? (from Ancient to Contemporary)		
What, in your opinion, were the things your teacher ignored about you	What did you wish your teacher knew about you?	

during your learning of Greek?		
Name me specific instances in your life when practicing Greek in which you felt: not included, intimidated, disempowered, and ashamed?		
What, in your opinion, do you think is missing from your learning at the Hellenic Centre?	How could the Hellenic Centre contribute in your learning? What could they do?	
Is there anything else you would like to add and you think this is important for this study?		

Additional Questions after 2nd round of peer-review at the Hellenic Centre

What inspires you the most when learning Greek?	Tell me more about the pictures you selected? What do they represent for you? Why did you choose them?
What motivates you?	Tell me more about the learning metaphors you chose? Why did you choose them?
Is there a particular figure who inspires you the most?	What are your views on the British educational system regarding the learning of Foreign Languages?
What would you have done in order to overcome the obstacles you felt?	What support did you receive from school or family regarding your learning of foreign languages?
When do you feel anxious, stressed?	How has your motivation changed since you started learning Greek?
When do you feel most confident when you learn Greek?	What keeps you interested in? What drives you?
What do you do in order to take control over your learning?	Tell me more about etymology?

APPENDIX 6

‘Topos’: The Hellenic Centre

The Hellenic Centre is a cultural centre, which aims to provide a focus on the Greek community and to promote an awareness of the Greek culture in the United Kingdom. It is situated in central London, and it was founded as a charity in 1994. Additionally, the Centre, as it advertises in its official website (www.helleniccentre.org), works as a conference venue and offers a wide range of exhibitions, lectures, concerts, performances and various other events related to Greece and its historical, cultural, linguistic, political and social reality from the classical times to the very contemporary. It has been since 1997 that the Hellenic Centre started offering Greek language courses to adults. During the last ten years, the number of students who joined these courses has been significantly increased and now the Centre celebrates the number of approximately 500 students, being myself one of the tutors who joined the team of teachers in 2005. The Centre offers the chance to the ones who want to join the classes, to attend either day or evening language courses, in groups or in individual tuitions. Classes run once a week and last an hour and a half. The Hellenic Centre has undoubtedly succeeded in promoting the Greek language during the last decade and the attempts that have been made regarding the upgrading of the status of classes and the teaching are of no question.

Foreign Language courses have traditionally been offered by local authorities as part of their AE provision, carried out by foreign language institutions and colleges open to public. However, the Hellenic Centre does not belong to any local authority and is self-funded and therefore it is not affected by any government policies related to adult education. In this way, it is an institution that functions in a different manner than other colleges which offer Greek courses, which depend on the funding of government. In this way, it is important to make a distinction between the Hellenic Centre as an adult education centre and contrast it to other adult Centres and colleges that offer leisure, or educational activities related to lifelong learning (DfES: 2002). The centre’s significance and key role in the Greek community of London places immediately the former within a different political, cultural and financial context.

It is in fact a cultural foreign language institution for adults. Although it is not a school or college where governmental agencies implement policies that immediately and directly affect the students’ learning experience, it is, however, a site of learning that is governed by an executive board that positions its employees (the teachers and the rest of the administrative staff) within an institutional context where organisational learning inevitably takes place. The teaching staff, more precisely, must consistently attend development and training days that aim to organise the learning of students in ways to make it as consistent as possible; all students are taught from the same syllabus, following the same activities and covering the same topics and grammatical and structural forms of the Greek language.

APPENDIX 7

Table 2: Interview Qualitative Codebook for Cross-Case analysis

Code	*Definition*	*Code ID*
Struggles / Obstacles related to sociological factors	- Feeling excluded from the community - Feeling intimidated - Feeling incompetent - Struggles with communicating with native speakers, socialising - Not having control over the learning process - Lack of investment in learning foreign languages and no sufficient support received from the British educational system.	**CDI**
Social Class	-Refusing learning structured aspects - defence mechanism acted as a barrier; grammar was rejected due to links with social class and education -Lack of connection with rules: privilege, marginalisation, social class influence on learning and accepting grammar rules -No access to resources, no opportunities to learn as HLL due to social class barriers - One feels marginalised, due to social class barriers and needs to feel more related and included. When there is lack of control, one feels frustrated. This contradicts to the power one has inherited through social class and education	**CDII**
The Hellenic Centre	- Depoliticising the centre	**CDIII**

	- Feeling excluded from the social class of the centre - Connection with other classmates in lessons	
Relationship between teacher and learner	-Being taught by native and non-native speaker teachers: they can appreciate better the needs of this particular group of learners -Teacher's social class and identity is incongruent with a learner's social class and identity - Learning aspects that teachers ignored	**CDIV**
Views on politics and British Identity	- British attitudes learning foreign languages - Not giving up one's established ideas is counterproductive in learning foreign languages - British connections: Being highly influenced by social British connections - highly motivational. Relate one's learning with either people who are being socially closer to or the examination boards appreciated by British Government - Social, educational and professional background determine the opportunities one has to learn and practice foreign languages in foreign speaking professional contexts - When feeling defeated one is in search of confidence in the areas one feels	**CDV**

	more powerful and in charge. - Formal education - constantly looking to feel comfortable with that form of education and adjust it to her learning of Greek - Critiques on educational policies and decline of foreign language studies. Learning foreign language being an exercise of social class privileges	