Composing the L2-M2 Self: 
A Grounded Theory Study on the Concerns of Adult Irish Sign Language Learners

Thesis submitted to the Centre for Language and Communication Studies School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
University of Dublin, Trinity College

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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Summary

Language learning in a classroom setting raises challenges for learners, regardless of modality. In addition to learning a second or subsequent language (L2), in this study, participants are also learning through a new modality (M2) - using the hands, face and body to express a visual-spatial language, Irish Sign Language (ISL). The L2-M2 adult learners in this doctoral project are based in the Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College Dublin. A Classic (or Glaserian) Grounded Theory methodological framework has been adopted here. The research goal was to discover the main concern that challenges L2-M2 learners in the ISL classroom and how they process or resolve that concern. Classic Grounded Theory seeks to develop a theory which will account for the phenomenon that has been uncovered.

A total of twenty-one participants took part in this study. Empirical data collected via interviewing was the basis for theory generation. As the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF was taking shape, secondary data from the literature was consulted during the sampling stage. This allows analysis from a discursive perspective of any arising points of intersection with the abstracted primary data. The array of literature which was consulted during this process is primarily related to the psychology of the language learner and the performance of language.

The main concern of this substantive population is EXPOSURE INSECURITY. This is associated with the learner’s perception that they are being intently observed when performing ISL and feel exposed due to the physicality of using the body to express this language. In essence, there is NOWHERE TO HIDE in this context. It is a phenomenon which they have not experienced to the same degree when performing spoken language. The theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF captures a two-pronged process; maintaining composure when dealing with the main concern of EXPOSURE INSECURITY and the composing of A PIECE, i.e. the performative aspect associated with producing a signed language. This conceptual account explores how learners develop the resources to be able to tackle their main concern as they progress through the learning journey.
The stages and processes that participants embark on to deal with the concern of exposure insecurity are discussed in great detail in this integrated theory. At the outset it involves a period of acclimatising to this new cultural environment. This is followed by attuning to the language, its perceived performative element and the new sensory, kinaesthetic experience. The final stage of authenticating highlights that a L2-M2 self identity is being formed. With this comes a re-framing of the language where the previously exposing elements are now appreciated, and a re-framing of the community as it impacts the learner in a previously unimagined way.

The theory of composing the L2-M2 self is the main contribution of this study. It adds to the limited pool of empirical studies that exist in the area of L2-M2 learning and contributes to the psychology of the language learner literature where there has been little mention of sign language learning. The implications of this theory are far-reaching, particularly with the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017. Therefore, this study may inform pedagogical practice in operational terms and has the potential to inform strategy, where there is a requirement to establish the necessary safeguards in the field of sign language teaching and interpreter training (as prescribed in the Irish Sign Language Act 2017).

Ultimately, this is a study which documents the concerns of L2-M2 learners. The interdisciplinary application of this theory provides ample scope for further research in many identified areas, as put forward by composing the L2-M2 self.
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Glossary of Terms

§: Section Symbol
BDS: Bachelor in Deaf Studies (B. St. Su.)
BSP: Basic Social Process
BSPP: Basic Social Psychological Process
CDS: Centre for Deaf Studies
CGT: Classic Grounded Theory
DS: Dynamic Systems
FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety
FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FLE: Foreign Language Enjoyment
GT: Grounded Theory
ISL: Irish Sign Language
L1: First Language
L2, L3: Second Language, Third Language, etc.
L2-M2: Second Language and Second Modality
LLA: Language Learning Anxiety
REC: Research Ethics Committee
SDT: Self-Determination Theory
SLSCS: School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
TCD: Trinity College Dublin
Chapter 1  Introduction and Overview

In modern times, individuals have far greater opportunities to travel and engage with other cultural groups across the world. This allows for communication to occur relatively freely, either face to face, or remotely using technological means. However, there are times where we do not share the same language and have to switch to a *lingua franca* which may not be our native tongue. In tandem, we may utilise other means such as gestures to communicate our point. This happens not only when we cross borders but also in our homeland. There are many countries that have more than one official language, including Ireland. Until the latter part of 2017, if Irish citizens were asked, ‘what are the languages of Ireland?’, the replies would refer to Irish and English. This was previously the case, however there is now one more language which has been added to the list, Irish Sign Language (ISL).

The ‘Irish Sign Language Act 2017’ was officially signed into law on December 24th, 2017. With the historic passing of this Act came recognition of the Irish Deaf Community as a linguistic and cultural minority. As a citizen of Ireland, an individual is entitled to access public services through their first/preferred language, which now includes ISL too\(^1\). The campaign for recognition and accompanying safeguards, was the culmination of over thirty years of steadfast campaigning by the Irish Deaf Community and their allies\(^2\).

During the intervening period, the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) was established in Trinity College Dublin. Since 2001, CDS has had both a teaching and research focus and their mission as is follows\(^3\):

- *To increase the number of qualified Irish Sign Language/ English interpreters. Before the Centre for Deaf Studies was established, there were very few qualified interpreters in Ireland. This course*


\(^2\) Chapter 2 will explore the impact of this legislation in the context of this study.

\(^3\) Source: [https://www.tcd.ie/sllscs/cds/index.php](https://www.tcd.ie/sllscs/cds/index.php)
provides professional educational pathways for interpreters ensuring that Deaf people are actively involved in society.

- To set the highest standard of ISL teaching.
- To provide training in the area of Deaf Studies.

CDS offers the only Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme in Ireland. It is a 4-year honours degree programme which has an intake of up to 20 students per year. Entry onto the course is primarily through the Central Applications Office, which processes all undergraduate applications to Higher Education Institutions in Ireland. It is a points-based system, determined by secondary level school results. Equally, there is a small quota, typically five places reserved for students who access the College through alternative routes, e.g. mature students, students with disabilities, etc.

Napier and Leeson (2016) point out that there are a growing number of ‘cultural interlopers’ who wish to learn a signed language for many purposes, e.g. a family member is deaf, or for economic reasons such as a desire to increase their employment prospects. Those who successfully secure a place on the CDS programme enter a learning hub which requires them to take several modules, and ISL modules are given a central position across the programme. This visual-spatial language is generally a second language (L2) and a second modality (M2) for learners. The substantive population of this study are L2-M2 adult learners of ISL who undertake the Bachelor in Deaf Studies at the CDS.

This research specifically attempts to uncover the main concern that L2-M2 learners face as they embark on their ISL learning journey and how they process or resolve this concern. The focus is on the novice learner, with data collected from students who are engaged in the first 18 months of the programme. Rather than examining language proficiency using experimental approaches, this research concentrates on the learner’s perspective of their journey. The methodological approach is guided by a Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) framework (formed by Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Throughout this thesis there will be careful consideration of how CGT principles have

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4 However, this is not always the case. Deaf students also apply or those who have learned sign language in the home from deaf family members.
shaped the research design and how the fundamental tenets of this approach have been adhered to.

One such aspect is the literature review – a traditional research approach would present a comprehensive literature review at the outset of a study, informing hypotheses, which are subsequently tested following the collection and analysis of data. However, this is not the norm in a CGT study as the researcher may impute meaning from the knowledge gleaned from a literature review, even if it is not present in the new data. As such, an extensive literature review has the capacity to influence the researcher rather than the study being led by participant concerns. If bias is a feature, there may be a pre-determined assumption about what will be discovered and therefore this will impact the study design/implementation. In turn, this may consequently skew how the data is coded. Instead, the aim in CGT is to produce a theory which emanates from empirical data, one which is not forced by existing preconceptions. As a result, a CGT study should generate a grounded theory. Therefore, CGT is an exploratory research paradigm, rather than confirmatory. Essentially, it enables discovery rather than validation (Glaser, 2005; Walsh et al., 2015).

Accordingly, the relevant literature is consulted during the theoretical sampling stage after a provisional theory is in situ. The theory developed from this project and presented here forth has been titled, COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. The high order research questions of this study will now be outlined. It is then paramount to establish the contextual backdrop which is the impetus for carrying out this research.

1.1 Research Questions

Developing and operationalising appropriate academic supports for L2-M2 learners, requires direct engagement with learners. Evidence based research is needed to aid appropriate curricula design and implementation

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5 The principles of CGT will be further explored in 1.3 and 3.4.
6 The key theoretical concepts/categories generated from this study are made more prominent by capitalizing the text and by using a different font.
of effective pedagogical strategies. This underpinned the development of research questions for this study:

1. What is L2-M2 learners’ greatest concern when in the early stages of learning a visual-spatial language?

2. How do they process or resolve this concern?

A final question is related to a personal aim - I wish to examine if the theory presented may be applicable for all learners of languages, regardless of modality. As such, I believe there is potential to align more closely with our spoken language counterparts. Based on this premise, a third research question was formulated. It is the following:

3. What are the commonalities between learning a signed language and a spoken language in relation to the main concern?

In addition to the research questions stated above, there are other aspects which will inevitably be considered as part of this study. An example includes how educators can facilitate a smoother transition from secondary to tertiary level for L2-M2 students.

1.2 Research Motivation and the Researcher

As outlined above, the primary motivation for this research is to develop effective pedagogical strategies to respond to L2-M2 learners concerns. However, a worthwhile point to note is that the general field of L2-M2 research is under-explored. As a result, there are sparse findings which could act as a springboard to formulate a hypothesis for testing. This was a prime factor in the selection of CGT methodology, which facilitates generation of theory from the concerns of participants in a given study (Glaser, 1978). No published literature could be sourced which thoroughly explores the L2-M2 language learning journey from the learners’ perspective. This provided a unique starting point for this exploratory study.

This field of study is also of personal interest to me for several reasons. Firstly, I am an L2-M2 learner of Irish Sign Language (ISL). I began attending
weekly ISL classes in my local area in 2001. I vaguely recall it being completely different to what I expected and quite the challenge. However, these early memories have somewhat dissipated. This taster for ISL resulted in my career plans being completely overhauled as I decided to embark on full-time studies at CDS, between 2004 and 2007.

During this time, I was awarded both a Diploma in Deaf Studies and a Diploma in ISL/English Interpreting. These qualifications resulted in me becoming an accredited ISL/English Interpreter and subsequently, securing a lecturing position in the CDS in 2011 (Assistant Professor in Deaf Studies). While I do not teach ISL, I am surrounded by students who are at different stages in their learning and have had various experiences of developing linguistic and cultural competency. The modules which I deliver are generally theoretical in nature or relate to the interpreting pathway on the Bachelor in Deaf Studies, which some students select for their specialism in the Sophister years (3rd and 4th year). More recently, I have completed a Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies (Dublin City University) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning (Trinity College Dublin) and have always been fascinated with how deaf and hearing communities interact with one another in both academic and non-academic settings.

The final factor that inspired me to look at this subject matter is my involvement in the Sign Language Acquisition Corpus (SLAC). The SLAC project began in 2013 as a cross-linguistic venture between the CDS and the Sign Language Department in Stockholm University, Sweden (Leeson et al., in press; Leeson et al., under review). The aim of SLAC is to develop a corpus of data from adult learners of Irish/Swedish Sign Language as a second or subsequent language. It will be the world’s first L2-M2 sign language corpus – once the data is searchable (annotation is ongoing). The primary purpose of SLAC is to identify which milestones apply to adults learning ISL, and whether students of ISL develop competency in the same way as spoken language learners. The first phase of SLAC asked participants to carry out a number of language tasks at different intervals in the first eighteen months of their studies. However, the second phase honed-in on participant attitudes and personal experiences of learning a new
modality (focus group session). This learner journey aspect was of great interest to me and ultimately inspired me to submit a PhD proposal.

At the outset, the entry point to this interdisciplinary study was via applied linguistics and intercultural studies. However, as evident in this thesis, the predominant theoretical focus became the psychology of the language learner and the performance of language. In relation to this performative aspect we see that the disciplinary boundaries blur as it is very much an applied linguistic topic as well as branching into associated areas of performativity in artistic spaces and performance of identity. This shift was realised after concepts and categories surfaced in the data.

1.3 Overview of the Classic Grounded Theory Process

Simmons (2010) explores the six stages of a CGT project. A brief overview of each element is offered below, however a significant discussion of CGT and how the methodology was applied in this context will feature in Chapters 3 and 4.

**Preparation** - in preparing for a CGT study, Simmons (2010) advocates the researcher to become informed on core CGT principles and develop the skills which will enable them to successfully apply the methodology. The manner in which these skills can be accumulated is through participation in CGT workshops and troubleshooting seminars, consulting reputable CGT procedural texts and to identify how other grounded theories have been constructed. Simmons (ibid.) also recommends that the researcher be inquisitive, ask questions and most importantly, practice by doing.

**Data collection** - as stated previously, Glaser and Strauss (1967) are against carrying out a literature review in the substantive area, prior to data collection. Glaser’s (1998) opinion on this remains unchanged. Notwithstanding this fact, Glaser (ibid.) acknowledges that there can still potentially be interference which stems from the researcher’s professional background, life experiences, etc. Glaser suggests that if we abstain from a preliminary literature review, it will minimise the risk of ‘forcing’ the data. Elliott and Higgins (2012) note that this principle is problematic as academic conventions generally require a potential PhD candidate to provide an
overview of pertinent literature as part of their doctoral application. This was also the case in this study, it was a mandatory requirement of the University.

**Constant comparison and open coding** - the method of constant comparison involves simultaneously coding and analysing data. The purpose is to decipher whether the emerging categories are supported by the data and if they remain integral to theory generation moving forward (Holton, 2010; Kolb, 2012). This practice of constant comparison is applicable to each stage of the research process and involves continuously reviewing and abstracting from the data. It is an iterative task as the researcher will reflect on the emerging concepts and will return to the data to ensure bias has not infiltrated at any point.

**Memoing** - as the name suggests, memoing consists of drafting memos. Glaser (2014) insists that a memo can consist of even one word. At a basic level, it allows the researcher the space to reflect on patterns emerging in the data. Memos should be created at each stage of the research process, because the ultimate purpose of memoing in CGT is to “assist the researcher in making conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain research phenomena in the context in which it is examined” (Birks et al., 2008, p.68). Essentially, memoing assists in bringing the final theory with its interrelated components to fruition.

**Sorting and theoretical outline** - this stage may involve disregarding memos which will not contribute to our theory (e.g. procedural memos) and compiling the remainder into different categories. As concepts and properties of concepts start to emerge, the memos are sorted and categorised. The aim is to identify common or interconnected themes which permeate each grouping. Again, we see the constant comparative method feature here.

**Writing** - when the theory with its interconnected concepts has been identified, the researcher proceeds to writing up first and subsequent drafts before delivering the completed document.
1.4 Contributions of this Study

This study set out to explore the research questions as documented, and to offer tangible outputs, in the form of contributions. These objectives were partly inspired by a colleague who had recently completed her doctoral studies, focusing on interpreters working in healthcare settings (Rozanes, 2014). Therefore, I commenced the study with a number of deliverables in mind, these are as follows:

**Contribution #1:** Provide a theory explaining how L2-M2 learners continually try to resolve the concern that is of most importance to them.

**Contribution #2:** Provide a novel perspective in understanding the goal of L2-M2 learners and the processes they embark on to deal with their main concern.

**Contribution #3:** Formulate a set of propositions which are generated by empirical data.

**Contribution #4:** Examine how Classic Grounded Theory methodology can be applied to studies on second language learning and in particular L2-M2 studies.

**Contribution #5:** Suggest ways in which the theory can be used to inform pedagogical practice.

**Contribution #6:** Provide an interdisciplinary application of the theory.

**Contribution #7:** Consider whether the theory generated is applicable to other substantive areas/populations.

**Future research plans:** Propose topics which should be further explored. Suggest areas for my personal post-doctoral research pathway.

1.5 Form of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduced this doctoral study and presented the primary research questions to be investigated. A thorough overview of the context of this project has been shared, including reference to the lack of existing L2-M2
empirical studies and the personal motivations for engaging in this field of enquiry. In addition, the CGT methodological process was outlined and finally the aspired contributions were put forward.

**Chapter 2** offers a contextual overview of the Irish Deaf Community and the direction of previous L2-M2 research. However, as I did not know what would surface in the data, the discussion is of a general nature and its purpose is to provide a backdrop for the substantive population of this study.

**Chapter 3** explores the main ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations which have informed and underpinned this research project. The chosen methodology, CGT, will be introduced from a theoretical perspective, with an overview of some key methodological principles.

**Chapter 4** discusses how CGT was implemented during the course of this study. The research setting will be addressed, as will ethical considerations and institutional protocols. The primary focus of this chapter is to examine how data was collected, analysed and integrated in order to produce the resulting theory.

**Chapter 5** presents the theory of **COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF**. There is a dual nature to the composing process; composing in terms of maintaining composure when dealing with the main concern of **EXPOSURE INSECURITY**\(^7\) and the composing of a **PIECE**, i.e. the performative aspect of producing a signed language. This conceptual account explores how learners develop the resources to be able to tackle their main concern. Within this chapter, there will be thorough examination of the stages and process which form this integrated theory.

**Chapter 6** documents the extensive literature review which was carried out during the theoretical sampling stage of this study. This chapter addresses the key components of the developed theory in relation to previous studies and noteworthy theoretical frameworks. As alluded to previously, L2-M2 research is in its infancy, therefore there was a need to branch out much

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\(^7\) In short, the feeling of being intently watched while using the body to perform a visual-spatial language.
further when sampling from relevant pre-existing research. The chapter is informed by three sub-fields which are found in both psychology and applied linguistics. These are; language learning anxiety, the performance of L2 self, and positive psychology in language learning. The latter part of the discussion concentrates on the opportunities that arise to respond to the issues identified.

Chapter 7 selects pertinent topics for discussion and will set out where the generated theory and literature, converge or diverge. Following this, I will explore Glaser’s (1992) views on whether a grounded theory has successfully delivered what it intended to do. A grounded theory is evaluated with respect to four criteria (ibid.): fit, work, relevance and modifiability. This chapter explores each criterion in reference to COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

Chapter 8, the final chapter of this thesis outlines the implications of this study, which will be considered in terms of both practical operationalisation and strategy. This will be followed by outlining the contributions it offers. A widespread view is that every study has limitations and this study is no different. There will consideration of the limitations and how they may be addressed moving forward. The thesis will conclude with some final remarks.
Chapter 2  Contextual Backdrop

This chapter provides a contextual backdrop to the Irish Deaf Community and work to date on L2-M2. It offers an insight into the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and as a result, the timely nature of this study. Chapter 2 is not intended to offer an exhaustive discussion of Deaf Studies and L2-M2 topics, rather an insight into the literature which was consulted as part of the doctoral proposal and subsequent developments. As the main concern of participants could not have been identified at that outset, a general approach was taken where reading concentrated on broad aspects related to deaf studies and L2-M2 language learning. This chapter focuses on three distinct areas;

• The Irish Deaf Community
• Language Ideology and L2-M2 Learner Expectations
• L2-M2 Language Learning Research

2.1 The Irish Deaf Community

According to Census 2016, 103,676 Irish citizens declared that they have a ‘hearing disability’. This equates to 2.2 per cent of the population. This finding is considered to be age-related because fewer than 1 per cent of those under 42 years of age experienced ‘hearing difficulties’. However, this sharply rose to 1 in 10 persons up until the age of 77 and 1 in every 4 beyond this point. There is further breakdown of what everyday difficulties a person in this category experiences, however one which requires attention from the perspective of this study is a difficulty with working at a job, business or attending school or college – 23.2% of those who disclosed a ‘hearing impairment’ or ‘deafness’ declared that this was a significant issue for them. However, the Census reports do not include a breakdown of how many persons use ISL as their preferred language, consider themselves to be culturally deaf and utilise the services of interpreters regularly. Leigh et al., (2016, p.7) suggest that culturally Deaf people, “tend to view being Deaf as

8 Source: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp9hdc/p8hdc/p9tod/
a positive attribute or as a gain, not as something negative or pathological that needs to be fixed”.

This perspective is adopted here; however, the capital ‘D’ will not be used in this thesis when referring to deaf persons but will be used for the proper noun of the Irish Deaf Community. The World Federation of the Deaf President now advocates use of ‘deaf’. Napier and Leeson (2016) highlight the complexities of this convention due to changing definitions of deaf community membership. In the past ‘Deaf’ people were considered to be involved in the community from a young age and often attended a ‘Deaf’ school, where sign language was the medium of education. However, Napier and Leeson (ibid.) note that there are complex issues involved in sign language transmission, such as; medical interventions (e.g. cochlear implantation) and the changing landscape in educational policy (e.g. emphasis on mainstream school settings). This means that deaf people are often late learners of a signed language.

As a result, to avoid any judgment on status, Napier and Leeson (ibid.) refrain from using the D/deaf convention and the same approach will be utilised here forth. Census 2016 informs us that 4,226 persons use Irish Sign Language at home. This is an ambiguous figure as we do not know how many of these people are deaf (there could be family members who use it also), or there may be deaf people who use ISL outside of the home, but not in it, if their family do not have a knowledge of ISL. Another factor to consider is that the Irish census is conducted on a de facto basis, meaning that only those who are present in the country on Census night will be enumerated on the census form. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the total of 4,226 reflects the entire signing population. Leeson and Saeed (2012) estimate that there are approximately 6,500 deaf ISL users on the island of Ireland (including Northern Ireland) and furthermore, 65,000 hearing signers who use the language for many purposes, e.g. a family member is deaf, or they take an ISL class for different reasons.

As introduced in Chapter 1, the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 was signed into law on December 24th, 2017. The Act not alone recognizes “the right of Irish Sign Language users to use Irish Sign Language as their native
language” (Section 3(1); Irish Sign Language Act 2017⁹), but also provides for related matters, such as its use in legal proceedings, access to public bodies using ISL interpretation and the teaching of ISL. Specific sections refer to topics which are closely aligned to the context of this study and the research setting, i.e. the CDS. Below is a sample of excerpts which warrant attention.

| Recognition of Irish Sign Language | 3. (2) The community of persons using Irish Sign Language shall have the right to use, develop and preserve Irish Sign Language. |
| Educational supports for deaf children | 5. The Minister for Education and Skills shall - (a) establish a scheme for the provision of Irish Sign Language classes to— (i) the parents, siblings and grandparents of a child who is deaf, and (ii) other persons who serve in locoparentis or as a guardian to a child who is deaf. |
| Engagement of verified competent Irish Sign Language interpreters | 7. A court or a public body, in compliance with its obligations under this Act, shall not engage the services of a person providing Irish Sign Language interpretation unless the person’s competence has been verified by having been accredited in accordance with an accreditation scheme funded by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. |
| Report of operation of Act | 10. (1) The Minister shall, not later than 3 years after the date on which this Act is enacted and every 5 years thereafter require a report to be prepared on the operation of this Act. (2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), a report under this section shall include an assessment of— (2.c) (c) the qualifications for the minimum level of Irish Sign Language competency for persons who are teaching a child whose primary language is Irish Sign Language. (3) The Minister shall ensure that persons or organisations that are representative of the interests of the members of the deaf community are consulted on the matters to be considered in a report prepared under this section. |

Table 1: Excerpts from the Irish Sign Language Act 2017

As per the excerpts in Table 1, there are many aspects listed which directly relate to the training of ISL interpreters and teachers. Another point to

consider is the establishment of the Irish Sign Language Council, which has yet to be convened. In the preamble of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, there is mention of this initiative:

To provide for the regulation of Irish Sign Language interpreters, deaf interpreters and Irish Sign Language teachers and for that purpose to establish the Irish Sign Language Council10.

Representatives from the CDS, which offers the only Bachelor in Deaf Studies in Ireland, will, without question, sit on this council along with several other community stakeholders. Therefore, empirical evidence which can support the training of ISL interpreters and teachers is vital at this critical juncture. The status of ISL is now enshrined into law. Therefore, it is important to now consider the ideologies that exist about sign languages, by members of the majority culture. In particular, what views do potential L2-M2 learners hold of learning a signed language.

2.2 Language Ideology and L2-M2 Learner Expectations

Gal (2006, p.13) asserts that scholars interested in language ideologies, aim to “…label cultural ideas, presumptions and presuppositions with which different social groups name, frame and evaluate linguistic practices”. A language does not happen in isolation – therefore individuals will transfer views of a language community onto the language itself, this is referred to as ‘iconization’ (Irvine and Gal, 2000). Rose and Conama (2017) explore the construct of linguistic imperialism, the dominance of one language and the oppression over others within a particular context or more widespread. The case is made with specific reference to ISL where a number of criterions are tested to decipher if it is present in this sphere. The finding is that linguistic imperialism is indeed ‘alive and kicking’ in Ireland (ibid., p.400). There is compelling evidence presented; which;

...could be viewed as discriminatory practices against its users, which is manifested in policy and practice as well as the ideological beliefs that underpin them in society (ibid., p.401).

It must be noted, however, that one stringent argument put forward is the denial of official status to ISL. This affordance has since been granted, although there were a number of setbacks in this process which were deemed to be ‘resource constraints’ by the legislature (ibid.). Rose and Conama (ibid., p.392) suggest that resource issues were governmental concerns that they did not have “the ability to put services in place to offer ISL in government bodies, education systems, and the media”. This proved to be a circular argument as without language recognition it was unlikely that these resources would ever be secured (ibid.).

As the ISL recognition campaign continued to gather momentum so did support from the legislature, the culmination was the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017. As the campaign has been widely publicised over the past 18 months or more, there appears to be growing interest in ISL amongst the general population\(^{11}\). Therefore, one could assume this will lead to greater interest in learning the language and increased opportunities to secure employment in related areas contained within the Act.

With respect to L2-M2 learning contexts and previously held beliefs about deaf people and signed languages, researchers have documented the inaccurate perceptions that prospective students have prior to undertaking their sign language studies. Calton (2013) declares that many decide to enrol in American Sign Language (ASL) classes because they perceive it to be easy to learn. This assumption is rooted in ideological beliefs about the language being a visual form of the spoken language. When this notion is challenged there is often a conceptual degrading of ASL to a less sophisticated form of English.

In combination there is often the mistaken idea that signed languages are universal because they are based on gesture. Calton (ibid., p.63) hypothesizes that this ‘paralinguistic’ element, “…places ASL lower than spoken language in the language hierarchy”. This notion is sometimes exacerbated when the learner is in the early stages of a course and there is no direct equivalent for what they wish to articulate, i.e. their retracted

\(^{11}\) Personal observation.
vocabulary range. Therefore, the learner can often draw the conclusion that ASL is a simpler version of spoken English. The paradoxical claim is that ASL is based on English yet sign languages are thought to be universal.

When a learner engages with the language and then encounters difficulties, this is often associated with “unlearning many hearing habits” (ibid., p.67). These social norms include pointing and the use of facial expressions and non-manual markers (located on the eyebrows, cheeks, mouth, etc.), all of which are an integral part of ASL (and other signed languages). However, in particular, facial expressions are difficult to master and can feel 'strange' to learners and may be perceived as ugly or exaggerated (Krausneker, 2015). The coordination of all of the various elements can be an awkward experience in these instances and not what learners expect. Calton (ibid.) also points out that ASL is selected by learners because of its "coolness", a novelty as such. There can be other varied reasons such as a personal connection with a deaf person, wanting to ‘help’ deaf people, or viewing ASL as a commodity, such as its usefulness for future career prospects (ibid.).

Peterson (2009) similarly points out how ASL is misconstrued by students and argues that learners often have no meaningful contact with the Deaf community prior to enrolling on courses. As a consequence, learners conflate deaf culture with mainstream culture and do not distinguish between the two. Burns et al. (2001) argue that attitudes toward sign languages are partly hampered by the lack of government input in the promotion or development of the language. Therefore, non-native users of the language have ill-informed attitudes on how it is constructed (Krausneker, ibid.). Thus, general society lack the understanding that signed languages are valid languages and these misconceptions often prevail (ibid.). Hill (2012) and Kusters (2014) point out that this is not solely due to their minority language status but also because oral-auditive languages are viewed to be superior. However, in an Irish context, the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 was only recently passed, and one would hope that there will be changing perceptions of ISL moving forward.
2.3 L2-M2 Language Learning Research

Chen Pichler and Kouidobrova (2016) state that the analysis of the L2-M2 population has been relatively limited in comparison to other signed language learners (L1-M1 deaf learners, etc.). Napier and Leeson (ibid.) also point out that the scarcity of L2-M2 research is problematic and that a deeper insight into L2-M2 learning would have positive ramifications for the teaching and learning of signed languages. Ortega-Delgado (2013) notes that in spoken language L2 acquisition there have been a multitude of studies on bilingual learning, language processing, phonological acquisition and pedagogical principles. The emerging field of L2-M2 sign language acquisition is now also starting to slowly feed into these domains, although longitudinal, corpus-based studies are not yet available. Indeed, the CDS/Stockholm University parallel L2-M2 corpus (introduced in Chapter 1) seems to be the first of its kind globally (Napier and Leeson, ibid.).

Thus far, the phonological development of L2-M2 adult learners has received the most attention as evidenced by publications. Rosen (2004) appears to have pioneered work in this area, though, this has been expanded in recent years (Bochner et al., 2011; Hilger et al., 2015; Ortega-Delgado, 2013). There has also been data collected on L2-M2 motor skills and limb movement and, in turn how it compares to L1-M1 users of sign language (Mirus et al., 2001). With regard to comprehension of sign language, Fenlon et al. (2008) and Mesh (2012) have analysed how accurate non-signers are in identifying prosodic boundaries, and report that they are generally successful in discriminating these items. Lastly, in relation to linguistic analysis, eye-gaze fixation patterns have also been reported in L2-M2 signing participants (Emmorey et al., 2009).

In terms of pedagogy, sign language teaching and learning has been formalised to different extents since the 1960s, although only in some parts of the world (McKee et al., 2014). In Ireland this has occurred since the late 1980s (Leeson, 2011). There are also increasing numbers of best practice guidelines available on the teaching of signed languages (Quinto-Pozos, 2011). Despite this, however, there is minimal data on the formal assessment of learner proficiency and very little empirically driven analysis
of all aspects of L2-M2 teaching, learning and assessment (Napier and Leeson, 2016). Further, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)\(^{12}\) (Council of Europe, 2001) has been adopted by many higher education establishments across Europe, and then locally adapted for departments who teach signed languages.

In recent times, the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters has published suggested learning outcomes for a three-year graduate sign language interpreter training programme, as well as recommended assessment guidelines which should be aligned to the curricula (EFSLI, 2013a; EFSLI, 2013b). The CDS has been a longstanding supporter of CEFR, as have our colleagues in the Netherlands, who have written an article outlining the assessment instruments they employ (Broek-Laven et. al., 2014). The European Centre for Modern Languages’ PRO-Sign project developed CEFR-aligned descriptors for the teaching and learning of signed languages (Leeson et al., 2016). A follow-up project, PRO-Sign 2 strives to establish resources to support sign language instructors\(^{13}\).

This research takes an intercultural studies perspective, and in this regard, there has been discussion of deaf culture and how hearing people interact with the community (Ladd, 2003; Matthews, 1996; Mindess, 2014). Also, O’Connell (2017) recently published an autoethnographic account of teaching ISL in ‘Contact Zones’. O’Connell kept an autoethnographic journal over a period of three months and explores the notion that new learners of ISL, have to “confront a unique language that is quite outside the boundaries of their life experiences” and where “the interaction between two paradigms involves shifting selves, cross-cultural encounters and bilingual negotiations”

\(^{12}\) Quote: A transparent, coherent and comprehensive reference instrument. The result of over twenty years of research, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) is exactly what its title says it is: a framework of reference. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe but also in other continents.

The 'contact zone' is the mid-point or the space where these cultures meet, perhaps clash, or negotiate this shared context. Themes arose from the journal writing which were tested against student evaluations of the course. These are as follows; Recognizing deaf and hearing identities in audiological contact zones and Linking teaching and learning in linguistic contact zones.

Recognizing deaf and hearing identities in audiological contact zones is where there is a point of disjuncture in terms of identity. If this is recognised, then there is a valuable opportunity not just to learn ISL, but also learn;

...about others, sharing and overcoming language barriers, dealing with confusion, concerns, fears and conflicts in the classroom and know how they become embedded in our respective cultures (ibid., p.858)

Linking teaching and learning in linguistic contact zones includes the salient feature of ISL storytelling. As such the learner, “becomes accustomed to reading signs in action” (ibid., p.860). When having difficulty with specific aspects of the language, this was resolved by learners by seeking peer support and by accessing materials, such as video clips at home. Interestingly, the researcher (and protagonist) allowed learners to converse in their own language, English, in the classroom. This was for the purpose of seeking support from others. Although O’Connell did consider imposing a ‘no-voice’ rule, this was ultimately decided against due to his own personal schooling experiences where sign language was suppressed, and he did not want its legacy to filter through to his classroom. Therefore, the learners right to use their own language was never denied, they had the space to switch languages and become independent learners, taking ownership of their learning.

Notwithstanding the study just referred to, the general sense is that the bulk of work in the L2-M2 subject area tends to be experimental in nature, i.e. testing language proficiency. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that I was unable to source L2-M2 research which truly captured challenges as narrated by the learner, rather than interpretation of the researcher. Similarly, there was a dearth of qualitative studies found in existing L2-M2
literature. I propose that an inductive approach is also needed where L2-M2 learners are central to a study which documents their experiences. The rationale for this comes from literature on L2 spoken language acquisition methodology. Various researchers suggest that we can only truly improve the teaching and learning of languages by capturing the learner experience through analysing their attitudes, motivations, etc. (Benson and Nunan, 2005; Breen, 2014; Griffiths and Keohane, 2000; Mercer and Williams, 2014; Murray et al., 2011; Nakata, 2006; and Winke, 2007). This is what this study set out to do by coding for actions, behaviours and processes and incorporating direct quotes from participants where necessary. Thus, amply illustrating the rationale for certain claims.

2.4 Chapter Summary

A preliminary literature review was carried out at the outset of this study. This chapter explores the pertinent results of this endeavour. In addition, a recent development in legal protection and recognition of the Irish Deaf Community was also referred to. In essence, the purpose of this chapter is to frame this study for the reader and suggest the potential importance of this piece of research. There is a need to put safeguards in place to protect individuals who are privy to interpreted events – which will benefit both deaf and hearing parties. Likewise, there is also a requirement to uphold the quality of ISL teaching. The discussion in Chapter 3 will move on to the selection of methodology which shaped the approach to this chapter and the entire study.
Chapter 3  Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Considerations

Chapter 3 introduces the main ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations which have informed and underpinned this research project. The chosen methodology, Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) will be explored in detail. The central tenets of CGT will be presented, and we will explore the origins and adaptations that have arisen over time. A brief synopsis of the criticisms that have been levelled against CGT / GT will then be considered. This chapter also outlines the core principles which should govern any notable CGT study. Chapter 4 will then offer practical insights into how the methodology was adhered to at each stage of this doctoral research.

3.1 Choice of Research Method

Identifying an approach which facilitates interdisciplinary analysis of L2-M2 learning experiences was critical. L2-M2 research is in its infancy, and given this, there is a dearth of descriptive and/or theoretical data on this topic. The result is that even if an alternate methodology was selected there is no hypothesis or theory to draw from in relation to L2-M2 learning contexts. Gray (2009) claims that early career researchers tend to make impulsive decisions on how to collect data and instead advocates that the first step should be the identification of an ontological and epistemological stance.

3.1.1 Ontology

Ontology refers to our beliefs about reality. What we think is true – what we think exists. In essence, what we believe about reality can influence what we think we know about reality (Della Porta and Keating, 2008). There are two main opposing ontological views – realism and relativism (Crotty, 1998). The former suggests that there is one truth in existence. In order to unveil this truth, we must employ objective methods to discover it. When this attempt has been successful, we can then generalise our findings to other situations.

In contrast, relativism takes the standpoint that there are numerous versions of reality. Therefore, we do not seek to find an absolute truth which can be
applied to all other situations. The truth is not static; it is context-dependent and can evolve over time. Therefore, we cannot generalize as this version of the truth is only applicable to extremely similar contexts (ibid.).

3.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with what constitutes valid knowledge and the relationship the researcher has with the research, i.e. how we can acquire this valid knowledge (Tracy, 2013). When relating this to our ontological views, epistemology seeks to uncover how we actually discover a truth (ibid.). Hammond and Wellington (2012) identify two predominant approaches in this regard, objectivist and constructivist approaches.

Objectivist (or positivist) approaches are considered to be etic in nature and suggest that the researcher should remain detached from the phenomena he/she is studying. Therefore he/she is an observer or outsider who seeks to utilise objective techniques associated with evidence-based research (experiments, surveys, etc.) - this deductive approach is dictated by realist ontological views (ibid.). In contrast, Crotty (1998) states that the constructivist (interpretivism) approach allows the researcher to become more involved, as there is a need to gain a thorough understanding of the informant’s perspective (ethnographic study, qualitative analytical approaches, etc.). This emic approach acknowledges the researcher’s influence; accepts it or avoids against it - depending on the nature of the study (De Costa, 2015). Essentially, it is underpinned by relativist ontology, whereby we determine what the truth is for this scenario through a process of inductive reasoning (Fleetwood, 2014).

Gray (2009) suggests that a researcher’s clarity with regard to such philosophical issues informs their decision-making process when he/she decides upon a methodological framework. The systematic analysis and synthesis of knowledge should be guided by the methodology, as will the selection of data collection methods (Taylor et al., 2015). Therefore, one can surmise that ontological beliefs filter down to the practical elements, which act as a starting point for any study. This being said, it is not so clear-cut when deliberating epistemological approaches, as there are elements from both positivism and interpretivism, which could be argued for. These include
the rigorous nature of the positivist approach, yet the flexibility that constructivism offers when getting to the root of social processes through inductive reasoning. Following consideration of the above points a conclusion was reached in relation to this study – a methodology which could account for both, seemed to be the most appropriate option.

Friedman (2011) highlights that the most frequently cited research traditions in applied linguistics journals are; case studies, (critical) ethnography and conversation analysis. These frameworks were considered in addition to action research, which appeared to be another viable option at the outset. Conversational analysis was immediately ruled out as the focus for this study is not linguistic analysis. However, the remaining three were contenders. Appendix A offers an insight into each of these frameworks and the rationale for discounting them after careful consideration of the merits and limitations of each. The focus now turns to the adopted methodology, CGT.

3.2 Grounded Theory

3.2.1 What is a theory?

Theory building is essential “...because it provides a framework for analysis, facilitates the efficient development of the field, and is needed for the applicability to practical real-world problems” (Gay and Weaver, 2011, p.24). However, there are conflicting definitions on what constitutes a theory, its purpose and the most appropriate methodology for theory development (ibid.). A plethora of viewpoints exist due to a priori ontological, axiological, epistemological and philosophical beliefs (ibid.). Torraco (2002) attempts to address the diverse views by producing a taxonomy which encompasses five theory typologies:

(1) Dubin’s hypothetico-deductive method

(2) Inductive grounded theory

(3) Meta-analytic theory

(4) Social constructivist theory

(5) Case study theory.
In Tarraco’s discussion, the distinctive property of GT (inductive grounded theory) that differentiates it from its competitors is the “…singular commitment to allowing new theoretical understandings to emerge from the data” (ibid., p.357). Specifically, with reference to language learning theories, Mitchell et al. (2013, p.6) hypothesize that a theory must make “coherent and exact statements in the subject area”, when presenting its overall claims. It must be testable in order to gauge if it is falsifiable/refutable. It should not solely be descriptive but must also endeavour to pinpoint the crux of the issue and suggest mechanisms for change. Finally, the proposers should engage with other theoretical frameworks in the field and try to identify at least some commonalities which occupy discourse in relation to the phenomena (ibid.).

3.2.2 What is Grounded Theory?

The criteria just referred to align with GT dictums. The purpose of GT is to generate a theory rather than contribute to an existing one. Instead of testing a hypothesis via a process of deductive reasoning, it produces a new theory via inductive reasoning. The central tenet of GT is to remain ‘true’ or close to the data by coding actions and behaviours of the participants (Glaser, 1998). The theory is not intended to be a statement of fact; rather, it offers a hypothesis which can be empirically tested by other researchers, in order to discover if it can be applied elsewhere (Martin and Gynnild, 2011). It initiates a body of knowledge which is currently non-existent.

According to Lowe (1998, p.106), GT has “the power to move beyond conjecture and perception to reveal the underlying processes of what is going on in the substantive area of study”. In this vein, a substantive theory which directly relates to the sample will be discovered. This can be further developed into a formal high-level theory, which encompasses distinct situation-specific scenarios. The result is a formal GT which perhaps misses some of the nuances of a tailor-made theory but can be applied to a wide range of individuals in various contexts (Kearney, 1998).

Glaser and Holton (2004) whilst responding to CGT misconceptions, declare that substantive theory always has general implications. The manner in which the theory can be applied to another substantive area is via constant
comparison, a key methodological concept in the CGT approach. For example, incidents from another sample would be compared to the original sample, and these results could shape a modified substantive theory. A formal theory would therefore cast a wider net and be generated by “…many such diverse area comparisons done in a concerted way to generate a formal theory” (ibid., p.55).

Returning to substantive GT, specific aspects have been proposed for consideration when determining the quality of a grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify fit, work and relevance, while Glaser (1978) added a fourth component, modifiability.

*Fit* refers to whether the categories fit the data under analysis. There should be no predetermined categories which have been identified by the researcher or discarded in order to substantiate an extant theory. The rationale is based on the principle that “reality produced in research is more accurate than the theory whose categories do not fit, not the reverse” (ibid., p.4).

*Work* is concerned with three aspects; does the theory explain the phenomena, predict future patterns of behaviour and interpret what is occurring in the substantive area. In order for a theory to work, it must have interrelated categories which “…work the core of what is going on” (ibid., p.5).

*Relevance* is achieved if a core concern or process has been identified and is grounded in data. Therefore, being relevant to the participants and as a result, a relevant theory which has answered the research question.

The final component, *modifiability*, recognizes that as new data emerges so may new categories or properties of a theory. An example given is the basic social process (BSP), the social world from which it derives is changing and although the generality of the BSP may remain, its relevance and intricacies is dependent on the variable context from which it emerges.
After considering these criteria, it is not necessary to adjudicate if a theory is right or wrong if concerted efforts were made to follow GT principles, “…it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability” (Thulesius, 2003, p.27). We will return to this when we evaluate the grounded theory developed as a result of this research work.

3.3 The Evolution of Grounded Theory

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed the GT method as a result of their study on how terminally ill patients engage with medical professionals. They published a GT methodological manual (1967), providing a comprehensive overview of the method and laying out how it can be applied from the inception of a project through to completion.

Glaser and Strauss, although both sociologists, came from differing schools of thought – the combination of both informed and shaped the foundations of GT. Glaser from the Columbia School of Quantitative Research, and Strauss, the Chicago School of Qualitative Research. Glaser also progressed to training in *explication de text* whilst studying in Paris. The premise of this technique is to conduct critical reading of the minutiae in a text, i.e. line by line, in order to identify what the writer is truly referring to rather than imputing meaning via interpretation (Glaser, 1998). The combination of Glaser’s concept-indicator training, logic and theory building background, intersected with Strauss’s symbolic interactionist viewpoint on processes and actions, culminated in the origins of GT.

At its core, CGT is striving for conceptualization, and seeks to transcend any method or fixed perspective from which to collect data. Therefore, no ‘rhetorical wrestle’ should impede scholars from selecting CGT (Glaser, 2016). The theory produced will indicate a core category, with sub-core categories and related properties. The distinguishing feature of GT in comparison to other qualitative methodologies lies in the explicit linkages and the highlighting of germane connections between all of its elements in order to produce a multivariate theory, leading to theoretical completeness rather than descriptive coverage (Holton, 2010).

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Glaser (2010) advises that the only determination required at the outset of a study is that latent patterns of behaviour characterise our experiences and interactions in the social world. As such, these patterns will be evident in data and should not be pre-conceived by the researcher. Instead, we begin with an idea, a question. As data is collected it should be immediately coded before moving on to the next participant/data source. Work is conducted via an iterative process. In this sense, the researcher is guided by what is emerging from the data and may be engaged in different aspects of the process simultaneously (ibid.). The overarching framework guides the researcher as the data unfolds and gathers momentum. Key principles of CGT will now be referred to, although specific matters relating to the deployment of CGT in this study, will be outlined in Chapter 4.

### 3.4 Essential Elements of CGT Methodology

Glaser and Holton (2004) argue that CGT should not be “lumped” in with other qualitative data analysis (QDA) methodologies. There are essential elements of CGT methodology which stand alone and transcend QDA practices. As such, researchers must abide by these principles and techniques if claiming to undertake CGT research. A brief overview of the essential elements of CGT will now be outlined. It is hoped that the essence of CGT will be captured before outlining how CGT has been operationalised in the next chapter.

#### 3.4.1 Theoretical sensitivity

A key component of CGT is theoretical sensitivity. Glaser and Holton (2004, p.43) define this as:

> The ability to generate concepts from data and to relate them according to normal models of theory in general, and theory development in sociology in particular, is the essence of theoretical sensitivity. Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research.
The development of theoretical sensitivity does not necessarily happen automatically. There are two characteristics that the researcher must possess.

The first relates to the temperament of the researcher and their ability to be guided by the data rather than force preconceived ideals. The individual must have the resolve to maintain and uphold analytic distance. The result will inevitably cause confusion because the study is proceeding and there is an unease with the regressive nature of CGT, i.e. remaining open whilst engaging in the cycling of the integrated processes of; data collection, coding of incidents and conceptual analysis. The conceptual development is consistently being recorded in memos. The researcher must place trust in the methodology and the fact that processing will also occur in the pre-consciousness, i.e. even when not actively engaged in coding/analysis. In this instance it may be actioned by writing of a brief memo, reminding the researcher to re-visit a niggling issue (Gynnild, 2006). This journey will ultimately lead to conceptual emergence (Glaser and Holton, ibid.).

The second characteristic is associated with the ability to develop a multivariate theory – this involves the attribute of theoretical insight, conceptualizing ability, determining the abstract connections and visualizing the interconnected theory which is being developed (ibid.). In accordance with CGT, the researcher must commence the study with as few preconceptions based on existing enquiry, or speculations of what they think will now surface. Glaser (1978) is under no illusion that the researcher brings discipline specific knowledge with them, although its interference should be contained by being aware of any existing beliefs and by observing the teachings of CGT. He notes that;

*In this posture, the analyst is able to remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases* (Glaser, ibid., p.3).

Theoretical sensitivity demands command of the central tenets of CGT. This entails awareness of the maxim that ‘all is data’ in a CGT approach (Glaser, 1978). This means that everything that we observe can be analysed for the
purposes of a GT study (ibid.). This may come in the form of reading outside our substantive area, seeing an image which ties in with a concept we have identified, or even overhearing a conversation which triggers a connection to our data. The manner in which we make sense of our formal data collection and exposure to stimuli is through a process of constant comparison. Inevitably, there is a risk that the data will be forced into predetermined assumptions, thus, ‘thwarting’ theoretical sensitivity. The impending result “violates the basic premise of GT - that being, the theory emerges from the data not the extant theory” (Glaser and Holton, 2004, p.12). Glaser acknowledges that our background knowledge has the potential to interfere with the process. However, he suggests that the avoidance of a preliminary literature review will minimise this risk and allow us to stay open.

Elliott and Higgins (2012) state that this principle is problematic, as academic conventions generally require a potential PhD candidate to provide an overview of pertinent literature as part of their doctoral application. There is sometimes no scope to dictate GT literature review concerns in lieu of traditional admission regulations. Elliott and Higgins (ibid.) note that in most cases the literature that is explored during the early stages of the doctorate does not actually turn out to be applicable – therefore theory will not be shaped by it. This assertion is made because, in the early stages, participant concerns are unknown, so relevant resources have generally not been consulted. Likewise, McCallin (2003) states that an indicative literature review can focus a study without informing it.

There is also an uncertainty amongst researchers about the stage at which additional literature can be integrated, and this tension means that we often grapple with this phenomenon (ibid.). In my own case, this was not a troublesome aspect as I was aware that L2-M2 research would insufficiently position me to form a literature review for a doctoral thesis. Therefore, I needed data to guide me to relevant areas which were outside of the substantive area.

When it was deemed that CGT was the most suitable choice, the literature review ceased in the primary area of the study at the PhD proposal stage. The concentrated attention then switched to becoming increasingly familiar with CGT/GT research designs. GT remains the most popular qualitative
method in the social sciences, however, it is uncommon to see it featuring in applied linguistic research or even more so in the field of deaf studies, though there have been some recent work adopting GT approaches (e.g. Rozanes, 2014; Wehrmeyer, 2013).

3.4.2 The coding process

The method of constant comparison involves simultaneously coding and analysing data in a systematic way (Glaser, 1998). The purpose is to decipher whether the emerging categories are supported by the data, and if they remain integral to ongoing theory generation (Holton, 2010; Kolb 2012). This practice of constant comparison is applicable to each stage of the research process and involves the researcher continuously reviewing and abstracting from the data. The means by which the researcher carries out this methodology stems from the coding of the data. This begins immediately after the first data collection event.

As the data collection continues, the data is compared against what was previously accumulated. As it starts to amass, patterns will surface. Simmons (2010, p.26) postulates that, “it is an escapable truth that human behaviour is patterned and that these patterns are often underlying or latent, and persistent”. These patterns, latent or not, can and do change over time and vary according to the setting. The goal in CGT is to identify, recognise and explain these patterns, whilst avoiding constructivist elements and previously known theoretical propositions. We direct our attention to empirical substance in the present data and code/name them conceptually. To do this, we engage in the act of coding.

The starting point is open coding where ‘incidents’ (an action, behaviour or process) in the data are identified and marked up. This process should be carried out quickly, staying ‘close’ to the data. When the researcher is satisfied that an incident has been observed, a label is attached to it, i.e. a code. It is possible that incidents will be apparent on each line of the data; therefore, we need to fracture at this micro level (Glaser and Holton, 2004). As we continue with this process, incidents begin to accumulate. We then compare incident to incident and concepts start to emerge (ibid.). The concept will have properties connected to it, and these properties will contain
indicators, i.e. incidents we have coded. Glaser (1998, p.140) advises us to consider the following questions in order to determine if something amounts to being an incident:

What category does this incident indicate?

What property of what category does this incident indicate?

What is the participant’s main concern?

Thus, the connection between codes is sought. When a potential core variable has been identified, the focus of our coding becomes more selective. This core variable/category is a theoretical code, i.e. the resolution of the main concern (Hernandez, 2009). In other words, there are two levels of coding: substantive and theoretical. The latter is the conceptualisation of how the substantive codes interrelate with each other (Cutcliffe, 2000). Therefore, the theoretical code hypothesises how the substantive categories integrate and is the highest level of categorisation. As such, the substantive codes fracture the data, while the theoretical codes “weave the fractured story back together again” (Glaser, 1978, p.72).

Glaser (1978, 1998, 2005) has identified numerous theoretical coding families, e.g. a typology, a process, conditions, a continuum, etc. These codes have been discussed at length, however there are many more yet to be discovered (Glaser, 2005). The researcher must be careful that they do not force the data to fit in with a ‘pet’ code, i.e. a pre-existing framework where we import aspects from other theories. This is contrary to CGT and prohibits emergence. Due to the complexities of life, multiple theoretical codes may be needed to formulate a grounded theory (ibid.). When a prospective theoretical code has been established, “…subsequent data collection and coding is delimited to that which is relevant to the emerging conceptual framework (the core and those categories that relate to the core)” (Holton, 2010, p.31).

As outlined, CGT is based on a concept-indicator model and is an iterative process. We rule-out concepts that are not central to the core and therefore the theory is constantly modified and refined. This delimiting happens at each stage of the CGT journey, from the initial comparison of indicators
related to properties of a concept, through to contrasting the high-level subcategories related to the core variable. The termination of data collection happens when saturation occurs. This is based on the ‘interchangeability of indicators’, i.e. although the incidents appear to be different, they are actually indicating the same concept (Glaser, 1998).

Glaser (2013) suggests that the end result may not be modelled on a theoretical code, although it will be more plausible and enhanced if explicitly integrated. This coding of data based on conceptualisation is the foundation of CGT and allows the theorist to move beyond merely offering a detailed description of events. Glaser and Strauss (1967) therefore challenged the traditional hypothetico-deductivist method, where the premise is verification of existing theory and alternatively produced a comprehensive methodology to capture an authentic problem and how it is currently being processed by participants.

3.4.3 Theoretical sampling

An emerging theory informs the theoretical sampling stage. Decisions are made about which categories need to be sampled further, and what sources should be sampled from. It is based on the open coding process as detailed above. As such, the only intentional decision by the researcher is the initial data collection source. Subsequent steps cannot be pre-planned (Glaser and Holton, 2004). Breckenridge and Jones (2009) claim that researchers purposely select “information rich” participants based on inclusion/exclusion criteria determined by the research questions and preliminary literature review (if one has been carried out). This deductive strategy highlights that the researcher is not fully separate from the process, particularly at the outset. When data collection is underway there is the inherent risk that we obsess over irrelevant detail. To avoid this and to produce a trustworthy study, we must only sample for theory development.

In order to demystify the process, a detailed account of sampling decisions must be provided to justify the theoretical hypotheses (ibid.). Sampling from extant literature is another form of data collection and is solely directed by emerging theory. The key question is the relevance of the data to theory development. Theoretical realizations do not happen instantly. Glaser (1978)
assures the researcher that generating GT takes time and patience. There is no definitive sample size or prescriptive method which will guide the practitioner. Theoretical sampling criterion does not exist. The interest is not in accounting for representativeness through securing vast sample sizes, it continues until theoretical saturation and completeness has been reached (Glaser, 1998). The intention is not to produce exhaustive coverage but a dynamic theory which potentially has transferability, even with changing circumstances (Breckenridge and Jones, 2009.) As theoretical sampling occurs the evolving theoretical linkages are being disentangled via analytical memos.

3.4.4 Memoing

Glaser (2014) proposes that a memo can consist of even one word. Memoing works in tandem with data analysis and is a skill that is fine-tuned with practice (Holton, 2007). At a basic level, it allows the space to reflect on patterns emerging in the data. However, memos should be created at each stage of the research process, because the real purpose of memoing in GT is to “assist the researcher in making conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain research phenomena in the context in which it is examined” (Birks et al., 2008, p.68). We can then progress to a higher level of coding, theoretical coding.

As mentioned previously, Glaser (1978) stipulates that our ability to recognise concepts and link them is usually a form of “preconscious processing”, suggesting that these connections do not normally happen whilst we are actively engaged in coding, but instead come to us at times we least expect. In CGT, it is necessary to take note of these thoughts, even if there is insufficient time available to fully articulate and expand on them. Hence, only a word, sentence, or brief realisation (Glaser, 2014) may be documented in the first instance. Glaser considers memoing a form of “free-style” writing which provides the opportunity to develop “conceptualization depth” (Holton and Walsh, 2016, p.103).

3.5 Versions of Grounded Theory

A range of differing perspectives have been put forward over time which have moved away from the ‘classical’ framework. Timonen et al. (2018, p.1)
claims that despite the remodelled versions, there are "... a core set of shared procedures that can be put to work by any researcher or team from their chosen ontological and epistemological perspective". The authors crystallize the shared principles of (1) the importance of the word 'grounded', (2) identifying and exploring context-related social processes, (3) engaging with data in the pursuit of generating a theory, and (4) the significance of theoretical sampling in the development of a theory (ibid.). However, for the novice GT researcher, it is vital at the outset to understand the divergences in order to fully commit to the one which is applied.

The first deviation emanated from Anselm Strauss, one of the original founders of GT, following from collaboration with Juliet Corbin in 1988. This approach includes significant amendments on how data should be coded and analysed (Hernandez, 2008). Their prescriptive format puts forward three stages of coding – open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Walker and Myrick, 2006). At each stage of coding, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest eleven principles which govern coding methods and general approach to this form of grounded theory.

| 1. Data collection and analysis are inter-related processes. |
| 2. Concepts are the basic units of analysis. |
| 3. Categories must be developed and related. |
| 4. **Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds.** |
| 5. Analysis makes use of constant comparisons. |
| 6. Patterns and variations must be accounted for. |
| 7. Process must be built into theory. |
| 8. Writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory. |
| 9. **Hypotheses about relationships among categories are developed and verified as much as possible during the research process.** |
| 10. A grounded theorist need not work alone. |
| 11. **Broader structural conditions must be brought into the analysis, however microscopic in focus is the research.** |

*Table 2: Strauss and Corbin principles*
Evans (2013) claims that the majority of these statements appear similar on a general level to that of orthodox GT, however three have been identified as having a definite point of departure. These are the items underlined in Table 2.

_Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds_ is at odds with Glaser’s view that this leads to a pre-conceived bias. Strauss and Corbin believe that a researcher brings knowledge with them, which should not be cast aside, but should guide the study. Glaser argues that a researcher should be directed to applicable literature based on issues arising in the data. Therefore, he supports consulting relevant theories during the sampling stage after the main concern has been proposed (ibid.).

_Hypotheses about relationships among categories are developed and verified as much as possible during the research process._ Evans (ibid.) suggests the separation between GT versions is more pronounced here due to the manner in how data is coded, verified and validated.

The final principle, which is deemed to be overly rigid and forced, is; _broader structural conditions must be brought into the analysis, however microscopic in focus is the research._ The finite level of detail may appeal to some, however on a personal level, after reviewing their method it seemed overly complicated and cumbersome. Partington (2000, p.95) declares that many researchers struggle to fully embrace how prescriptive it is:

It is apparently an attempt to present that original approach in a straightforward, proceduralized form, but without losing any of its comprehensiveness and intellectual complexity. This uncompromised intent has resulted in a step-by-step ‘method’ which many find difficult to follow in practice except in a loose, non-rigid, non-specific fashion which inevitably draws it back towards the original version.

The Strauss and Corbin branch-off proved to be a contentious issue in the GT community, with some, including Glaser, saying that it should not be deemed a GT approach and should instead be considered an alternate methodology (Hernandez, 2008; Stern, 1994). The condemnation extends even further with Glaser denouncing it as a "distortion of the central
objectives of parsimony and theoretical emergence" (Evans, 2013, p.37). Since then, there continues to be other suggested variants, such as grounded theory as feminist research methodology (Wuest, 1995), situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) and other lesser known models, many of which mix methods (Evans, 2013; Martin, 2011).

As previously outlined, when employing a CGT research design, the objective is to identify latent patterns of behaviour by abstracting out of the data rather than describing through one’s own lens what one believes to be true. However, in sharp contrast, Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2009) argues for a constructivist approach and suggests that we should acknowledge the role of the researcher and the influence he/she has on the generation of the data, thus taking a decidedly ethnographic slant, something that Glaser strongly opposes (Glaser, 2001). Thus, such frameworks are somewhat different from the guiding principles of the GT founders, or offer a mixed method approach, e.g. GT is used as a coding method rather than an overarching framework from which to conduct research. Glaser (2009) and Simmons (2010) have put forward staunch arguments against the integration and dilution of GT in mixed methods, qualitative data analysis. They argue that the justification for choosing CGT should be based on the aims of the research and the questions under investigation.

Denscombe (2014) claims that GT’s appeal lies in its flexibility, and the fact that it lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (interviews, surveys, document analysis, fieldwork, etc.). In addition, it offers a systematic way to analyse data which will result in the “development of theoretical propositions” based on explanations “grounded in reality”. Rather than developing a speculative abstract theory, in CGT there is constant reference to indicators contained within the empirical data (ibid., p.118).

In the present study, the primary reason for selecting CGT is because it lends itself to exploratory research, particularly in researching undiscovered topics and new concepts within established disciplines (ibid.). This advantage is closely followed by a robust and systematic manner in which data is collected and coded. The approach gives the researcher autonomy, as they are freed from any overly prescriptive methodology and there is no prerequisite to
impute meaning. Instead, they are simply guided by what is surfacing, which will inform what to do next.

3.6 Criticisms of Grounded Theory

Notwithstanding my decision regarding methodology for this study, it is important to note the criticisms which have been directed towards CGT. Charmaz (2000) disagrees that CGT is a general methodology and controversially claims that CGT is detached from participants, meaning that their voices are not actually heard. This statement derives from her view that CGT is a mechanical method, and, she argues, devoid of any attempt to empathise with participants. Therefore, she states that CGT can be defined as ontologically realist with an objective epistemology because it is a calculated method which lacks reflexivity.

Glaser’s (2002) refutes this as a “misnomer”, asserting that the researcher identifies if bias has occurred via a reflexive process (Higgins, 2007). Therefore, CGT includes constructivist elements (solely in relation to the researcher’s application of methods) in combination with a plethora of other techniques. In this vein, Glaser (2001, 2012a) warns researchers against attempting to epistemologically categorise CGT. In his view, CGT is a general method which can be applied to all data within any epistemology. He believes that if we pigeonhole CGT, we stifle the process and tarnish the results, as we could potentially rule out certain methods if we feel they are not in accordance with a prescribed epistemology (ibid.).

Suddaby (2006) proposes that the perceived disadvantages of CGT are actually misconceptions about the method. He points out that CGT critics claim there is no possibility to test theories and formulate hypotheses. His response is that CGT practitioners aim to generate theories, not for the researcher to test them (ibid.). Another fallacy is that the participant voices are not captured. CGT codes for actions and behaviours, rather than interpreting participants’ thoughts and emotions (ibid.). It is also claimed that CGT ignores existing empirical knowledge by non-consultation of literature in the substantive area. However, the literature in the substantive area is consulted, just not at the outset, in order to avoid influencing the researcher as they code their data (Suddaby, ibid.). In contrast, the manner in which a
researcher gathers and analyses data in other qualitative approaches is by imputing meaning, i.e. the influence of a pre-determined theoretical framework. The issue here is that the participants’ main concerns may not be correctly identified.

After careful consideration of the above factors, CGT is deemed to be most appropriate for this study. Its suitability is attributed to its fit for exploratory research and generating new knowledge. The characteristics of robustness yet flexibility were also deciding factors.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the main ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations which informed and guided this research study. Ultimately, CGT was selected due to its flexibility as a general but rigorous methodology. A constructivist approach was not employed due to researcher influence in interpreting the data. If a shared, co-constructed approach was cultivated, there was the potential that it may detract from conceptualising what is truly concerning those who took part.

As such, CGT, was seen as advantageous for exploratory research which takes an interdisciplinary approach. There was also no burden on the researcher to identify a pre-determined theoretical framework. Essentially, there was a sense of the unknown as to what would surface in the data. Chapter 4 will now discuss how CGT methodology was operationalised in this study of L2-M2 learners.
Chapter 4    Operationalising Grounded Theory Methodology

This chapter discusses how CGT was implemented in completing this study of L2-M2 learners of Irish Sign Language. As a starting point, the aims of this study will be reintroduced. Following this, an overview of the research setting will be detailed. Ethical considerations will be examined generally and within the context of institutional protocols. Discussion will then progress to the recruitment of participants and the profile of the sample. Finally, the manner in how the data was collected and analysed will be presented. As well as providing a detailed account of how CGT was carried out, I will also present some personal reflections arising from my use of CGT methodology. As a novice CGT practitioner, I was learning by doing and with this came challenges, confusion, a certain amount of self-doubt and ultimately the reward of figuring it out (Pergert, 2009).

4.1 Aims of Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper insight into the issues that L2-M2 learners face when studying Irish Sign Language (ISL) as part of the Bachelor in Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin. In line with CGT principles, the research questions were broad so as to avoid conjecture and allow the actual core concern to arise from the participants themselves. The driving aim was to develop a substantive theory which captures the main concern for the participants and how they respond to that issue.

At the outset of the research process, questions were drafted. They remain the following:

1. What is L2-M2 learners’ greatest concern when in the early stages of learning a visual-spatial language?

2. How do they process or resolve this concern?

3. What are the commonalities between learning a signed language and a spoken language in relation to the main concern?
In order to put the appropriate academic supports in place for students learning a sign language, we need to directly engage the learner. Rather than speculating, based on our professional experiences, there should be evidence-based research which will aid appropriate curricula design and implementation of effective pedagogical strategies (Napier and Leeson, 2016). There are sign language educators in numerous countries who lecture on professional courses where students aim to secure a position working in and with the deaf community upon graduation. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can inform educators’ practice and in turn alleviate or reduce some of the concern that the student faces in the ISL classroom.

In addition to the high-level research questions stated above, there were other aspects which inevitably surfaced during this process, such as; what motivates people to choose this course, their previously held views of the Deaf community and how we can make the transition to a new third-level cultural environment smoother for students in general. These responses will not be directly referred to in this study although as they featured (contextual questions at the beginning of interviews) it is the researcher’s aim to return to these valid points in future studies. There is also scope to identify if the findings correlate with L2 spoken languages research, or if these concerns solely relate to visual-spatial languages. Another aim for the researcher is to establish greater ties with L2 spoken language researchers. Regardless of the answers to the research questions stated above, and secondary data already in existence, there is the potential to collaborate with our spoken language counterparts in order to see if the findings hold true for all learners of languages, regardless of modality.

4.2 The Researcher

Simmons (2010, p.19) advocates the use of a variety of techniques in order to "cultivate skill-traits" which are pertinent to each aspect of the CGT process. The manner in which these traits and skills can be accumulated is through participation in GT workshops and troubleshooting seminars, consulting general qualitative literature to identify how other theories have been constructed, ask questions and most importantly, to practice by doing.
In this vein, there have been a number of troubleshooting seminars and training events, which I have attended in Ireland, the UK and the USA since the commencement of this research. These offer a space to discuss the difficulties and challenges one may be experiencing in applying the methodology or how incidents in the data are being coded with CGT Fellows, enthusiasts and peers. The CGT/GT events I attended are presented below in chronological order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>London, U.K.</td>
<td>A 2.5-day troubleshooting seminar organised by Grounded Theory Online. Delivered by Dr. Tom Andrews and Dr. Helen Scott. It proved to be extremely beneficial at this early stage in my research - three months after initiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Two-day workshop delivered by various presenters (School of Education, Trinity College Dublin).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>One-day workshop delivered by Dr. Agnes Higgins and Dr. Naomi Elliott (School of Nursing, Trinity College Dublin).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>California, U.S.A.</td>
<td>Three-day CGT seminar delivered by Dr. Barney Glaser with many CGT fellows present (Mill Valley, California, U.S.A.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Two-day CGT seminar delivered by Grounded Theory Online and hosted by the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences and the Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Attendance at Grounded Theory Events

These gatherings were facilitated by recognised GT experts, including its originator, Dr Barney Glaser. They proved invaluable and offered a prime opportunity to network with other PhD candidates who were at different stages of their doctorate research. In the early stages, it was challenging to
get an in-depth understanding of the complex aspects of the approach just by referring to recommended readings. The opportunity to engage in dialogue regarding my research questions and methods allowed for clarification on the methodology and my approach. There were several practical aspects that were welcomed at these seminars, for instance; organisers provided sample data to code; we had the opportunity to draft memos on either fictitious data or aspects of one’s own data; and there was the opportunity to listen to peers who were at a more advanced stage of their research. In addition, I have had numerous conversations with my supervisor and mentors in my CGT network when experiencing concerns about complying with the methodology. Such opportunities helped me to fine-tune my approach to the data set and make decisions around additional data collection procedures.

In a local context, a CGT hub has been established in the Centre for Deaf Studies. Colleagues and postgraduate researchers are now applying the methodology when exploring issues related to ISL pedagogy and assessment, continuous professional development for ISL/English interpreters, employment issues for the Deaf community and the language choices of families who have a deaf child. This highlights the applicability of CGT in under-researched areas and its suitability to deaf studies topics. It also creates a space which is conducive to problem-solving and refining CGT technique.

4.3 The Research Setting

The rationale for sampling from students on the Bachelor in Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin was twofold – firstly it is the only Irish academic institution to offer a Bachelor in Deaf Studies and this research is concerned with learners in formal contexts. Secondly, as the CDS is my place of employment, there was a desire to explore the concerns of the students we teach, in order to enhance their learning experience. However, carrying out research in my workplace environment could potentially raise a conflict. I was concerned if there would be any interest in participating as students may have been reticent to meet with a member of academic staff. I also wanted to protect the anonymity of participants and was aware that this aspect could
be compromised if other students or colleagues at CDS became aware of interviews taking place. However, the advantage was that there were no issues with gaining access to the research site as interviews took place in my office or a classroom location. This resulted in increased flexibility and I was therefore able to work around the participant's schedule and not restricted by having to source or travel to various locations. This was advantageous to participants too as when I asked which location would suit them, the answer was always the CDS, except for one participant who was out of the country at the time, with whom I engaged remotely, via Skype.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical behaviour is built on the premise of doing no harm to others. Institutions have created codes of conduct to ensure that these principles are documented and actioned in research capacities. There are four precepts which govern ethical research documentation, namely; informed consent, prevention of deception, ensuring confidentiality/anonymity are not breached and accurate reporting (Hadley, 2017). Specifically, in relation to GT, accurate reporting mandates us to be faithful to informants' declarations, provide a fair overview of the multiple perspectives portrayed, and produce a plausible theory of explanation for what is present in the research domain (ibid.). These research principles ensure that participants are not coerced into taking part and that there are no false pretences surrounding the research.

Houghton et al. (2010) argue that informed consent is often a challenge in qualitative research due its unpredictable nature and the relationship between the researcher and participant, particularly when a dual role is involved. In my case as a lecturer-researcher, this could potentially become exploitative due to the power imbalance between both parties and the fiduciary nature of this type of professional relationship (ibid.). This was something I was cognisant of and steadfastly avoided by abiding by the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Science (SLSCS) practices in relation to the ethical framework for this study. I also considered
and sought to embody the principles of the TCD ‘Dignity and Respect Policy’, which protects both staff and students. In tandem, my own moral compass alerted me to any potential issues coming to the fore and guided me to the best possible outcome. For example, on one occasion, a participant became upset while recalling her experiences. I offered to stop the interview, but she wanted to continue and soon afterwards appeared to settle. Further, minor issues also occurred, for example around how I was going to handle a situation where a participant did not turn up at the scheduled time. Fortunately, no major dilemma arose which tested me to a significant degree. In the following sections, the practical manner relating to how ethical approval was obtained is documented. There will also be reflections on the concept of informed consent in relation to a CGT study.

4.4.1 Ethical approval to conduct the study

SLSCS has a standing Research Ethics Committee (REC) for the purpose of ensuring that staff and student research projects are following the ethical standards set out by the School. The rigorous nature of this process acts as a safeguard for researchers who wish to work with human subjects and protects those who take part. The REC committee assess the potential level of risk associated with each submission and applicants are informed of any changes they must apply to their study. This will ensure that participants, particularly from vulnerable groups (e.g. children, medical patients) are not caused any unnecessary harm or stress in “…the process of collecting, analyzing and publishing data”. In December 2015 / January 2016, I prepared the REC application form and supporting documentation with support from my supervisor. As well as the application form, there was a requirement to submit various pieces of supplemental documentation, such as the participant information leaflet, consent form and sample research questions (located in Appendix B). The REC committee granted full approval on February 8th, 2016, with no amendments suggested (see Appendix C). This allowed me to move towards inviting participants to take part.

14 See: https://www.tcd.ie/equality/policy/dignity-respect-policy/
15 Source: https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/assets/documents/research/ethics/old/key-concepts-research-ethics.pdf
As per my REC approved process, the Bachelor in Deaf Studies coordinator and the ISL evening class coordinator acted as gatekeepers to accessing students. They are a buffer to ensure that participants do not feel obligated to take part. A time was organised for me to briefly address students and introduce my research. It was pointed out that their involvement was completely voluntary and would not affect their studies. If they were willing to take part, they were advised to inform me by email within seven days.

Although the uptake was in line with what was expected (50%), it was determined by my supervisor and I that more participants were required. Due to the specialized nature of the course, class sizes are relatively small (approximately 15 - 20 students in each cohort). There was a need to gather more data, in order to strengthen the emerging theory. Certain aspects, such as how participants resolve their main concern were not fully developed. An application was made to REC for an extension with the same aims, terms and conditions as previously stated. This extension was granted on September 5th, 2016 (see Appendix D).

4.4.2 Informed consent

Informed consent ensures that participants who enter into research projects are made fully aware of the purpose of the study, benefits, risks, procedures and proposed outcomes (Nusbaum et al., 2017). It is essential that this consent is obtained prior to any data collection with human subjects. If information is accurately provided, participants can make an informed and voluntary decision around participation based on these details. If participants decided to contribute they were not subsequently bound by that decision. At any stage they could withdraw with no explanation and without their studies being negatively impacted. It was explicitly stated that the research was completely separate from the BDS programme. Likewise, if they did not wish to be involved in the first instance, there would be no repercussions. While there were no predetermined risks associated with this research, it was pointed out to participants that they may feel self-conscious discussing their learning challenges whilst being audio recorded.

As part of the REC process I prepared draft interview questions. However, I was conscious that this is not advised in CGT studies. The rationale is that
you are leading a participant rather than it being guided by what surfaces during the interview (Glaser, 1978). Rather than pre-empt a particular issue, I kept the draft questions quite broad. They featured in interviews and became back-up or prompt questions to keep the discussion flowing. As such, participants did not know the exact questions they would be asked so there could be grounds for considering this a risk of sorts. This is not solely applicable to CGT interviews as semi-structured interviews can also be perilous (Allmark et al., 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005).

CGT principles state that the content and direction is led by the participant. One could therefore assume that the subject is comfortable, or at a minimum, willing to speak about these issues and therefore it should not turn out to be harmful. Therefore, the risk is contained in these circumstances. However, as the study progressed, I knew that the questions would become more specific, based on themes evident in the data analysis. There was a need for me to be consistently observant as to whether participants were unwilling or reticent to discuss these issues. It is important to gauge this in order to be respectful of the individual and check if they are willing to proceed. Therefore, consent is not something that happens on one occasion, it is a continuous process which must be fostered with the participant, this is known as the informed process consent (Byrne, 2001; Miller et al., 2012; Wiles, 2012).

Documentation provided to participants also stressed that confidentiality and anonymity were key aspects of the research. Information was offered on where data would be securely stored and that verbatim transcripts would be anonymized by the use of a unique allocated code. The participants received a copy of the signed consent form prior to the commencement of the interview. Afterwards, I contacted each person to thank them for their time and willingness to take part. At this stage I also sent the learner the transcript for review and pointed out that redactions were possible for up to seven days. Subsequently, only two participants wished to make changes, these were in the form of additions rather than retracting or amending the content.
4.5 Recruitment and Sampling

4.5.1 Recruitment of participants

The natural starting point was to target Junior Freshman (1st year) students who had at that time recently enrolled on the BDS programme. There was no conflict arising from me being a staff member in this case as this cohort was unknown to me. I was not assigned to any of the modules they were undertaking during that year. Tangentially, I engaged with students taking part in CDS extra-mural (evening) ISL classes, contacting them via a gatekeeper (as previously outlined). This seemed a logical decision, as both cohorts were learning ISL in a classroom environment. Shortly after presenting my research to the groups (initial full-time cohort, evening class students and second full-time cohort) I received notifications of interest by email, or in small number of cases in person. A suitable time to meet was agreed by email, these meetings often took place during lecture breaks or early evening. I share my office with a colleague so I scheduled interviews for when I knew I would be alone in the office or I used a classroom if this did not go according to plan.

In total, there were twenty-one participants. There was one more prospective participant who had shown willingness to take part, although subsequently did not respond to my email when arranging a time to meet. I furthermore sent a reminder email in case it had slipped their mind to reply. I stated that if they had a change of mind there was no issue as I was unsure as to whether they forgot the meeting or decided not to take part. Their lack of response was an indication that they were no longer interested in participating. There was no further communication about involvement in this study from this learner, although I did see them around the Centre but did not further raise the matter. In terms of recruitment there were no issues with sample size after the extension had been obtained. In actuality, there were more participants than were needed in order to develop this theory. Further detail will be provided in the theoretical saturation commentary within this chapter. The profile of the participants who participated will also be presented.
4.5.2 *Developing the theoretical sample*

As discussed in chapter 3 (§3.4.3), theoretical sampling is at the core of CGT. As the data unfolds, it guides the researcher as to where they should sample from. In my experience this occurred in reference to people and events, although the CGT maxim, ‘all is data’ does not limit where one can sample from. It could instead be in the form of documentation, the media, etc. At the beginning, purposive sampling was utilised for its non-probability. Nathaniel (2004, p.45) suggests that in this instance participants are selected because they “shed light on the phenomenon under investigation” and that further sampling continues until saturation is met. Theoretical sampling is for the purpose of refining categories or adding more depth to them (ibid.). In my case, it seemed appropriate to contact both full-time and special interest students (extra-mural evening classes) to seek participants.

Due to logistical reasons, the first time I met with a part-time ISL enthusiast was after I had already completed six interviews with the BDS cohort. It quickly became clear that the motivations and concerns of this participant was different. As I had already scheduled a time to meet with another two respondents from the same group, I decided to go ahead as planned. Rather than proceeding with this line of inquiry I decided to put that data aside until I moved on to the theoretical sampling stage. When this was realised I also interviewed an additional three participants who were not in the full-time demographic. One of these learners attended a sign language society in the College and two who had taken ISL classes for no credit during their postgraduate studies.

As a lecturer who predominately teaches modules related to interpreting, there were other conversations I had during contact time with students which were noted by me although this was treated as separate from my formal data collection process. The interpreting students were at a more advanced level of language learning, and often reflected on their early encounters with the language and the community and these insights proved valuable to this project. Another source of observation stemmed from my work as an ISL/English Interpreter. There were occasions where I was meeting people who were at the early stages of learning the language. It was not ethically appropriate for me to ask questions surrounding their learning issues but I
did take note of things I was witness to in those contexts - in terms of actions, behaviours and processes (Glaser, 2005).

The final aspect of the sampling process was the literature review. This was guided by the emerging themes in the data and often brought me to the most unexpected research disciplines. CGT suggests that the researcher should read widely outside the substantive area, when patterns start to emerge. Therefore I was directed by the data to read in a range of theoretical areas from an early stage.

Likewise, I read compilations of CGT papers (known as readers) to gain a deeper understanding of how reputable grounded theories are crafted (Glaser, 1993; Glaser and Holton, 2007). In doing so, I encountered some theories which had parallels with the one presented in this study. While these other studies did not parallel my own in terms of research focus, there was overlap in terms of process described, such as identity shifts, etc. (e.g. Christiansen’s ‘Opportunizing’, Nathaniel’s ‘Moral Reckoning’ and West and Glaser’s ‘New identities and Family Life’). Glaser (2017) highlights the importance of ‘exampling’, particularly for researchers carrying out dissertation research. This is achieved by learning CGT from readers (and elsewhere) as it is an experiential process. Thus, referring to the volumes mentioned above and participation in GT seminars, CGT scholars can become more adept at recognising well formulated theories and thus feel inspired to analyse and write on a conceptual level.

The final stage of the sampling process led me to specific areas of secondary analysis, as prescribed by the emerging theory. These references had not previously been considered applicable, e.g. language anxiety (McIntyre and Gardner, 1994a) demonstrating the fact that I had not been guided by predetermined hypotheses when undertaking data collection and formulating research questions. This was the eureka moment where I realised that my undertaking of CGT had resulted in me staying open to the data and that I had diligently adhered to the methodology to the best of my ability.
4.5.3 Profile of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>BDS Cohort 1</th>
<th>BDS Cohort 2</th>
<th>Extra-Mural</th>
<th>Postgraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Profile of Participants

In total, twenty-one participants opted in to this study. Fifteen split over two full-time cohorts (BDS) and six from the extra-mural classes or postgraduate students taking classes to improve their sign language skill level. This sample was in line with sample size estimations stated in the REC application. There were also six follow up interviews with most (6 out of 7) of the original participants who had progressed to Year 2 of the full-time programme. Therefore, I completed a total of twenty-seven interviews.

From the full-time sample, thirteen participants identified as female and two male. Four participants had previously enrolled in College; two were mature students (over the age of 23) and two others (under 23). The previous course they had enrolled on was unrelated to their current studies. All six participants who were in the theoretical sample category identified as female and were over the age of twenty-three. It may appear gender biased that a small number of male participants took part, however the overwhelming majority of students coming through CDS happen to be female, so it is not a surprise that this sample is heavily weighted in this regard. This is also evidenced by the research showing that L2-M2 learners who become sign language interpreters in the field are predominately female (Artl, 2015). This can also be anecdotally observed in an Irish context.

Within the sample, no participants self-declared as fluent in Irish Sign Language or another sign language. However, approximately one quarter had learned some element of sign language in the past, either formally or informally, e.g. as part of transition year at Secondary school, attending local evening classes, having developed a basic knowledge of another sign language, being taught a small number of vocabulary items from a neighbour
or through brief workplace interactions. All participants commented that no matter how proficient they perceived themselves to be beforehand, they soon realised that this Bachelor programme was pitched at a significantly higher standard than what they had previously been privy to. Although it helped at the beginning to have some knowledge of the lexicon and/or past interactions with deaf people, it soon levelled out due to the increased number of contact hours that were now required (9 hours per week, excluding labs), and the rapid pace of learning.

There were no participants who had an immediate family member who was deaf and therefore did not grow up in a household where a sign language was the language of communication. The biographical information provided indicates that the sample is representative of the varied profile of L2-M2 learners and from my employment background, what we would typically see on the BDS programme (Leeson, 2012).

4.6 Data Collection

4.6.1 Interviewing

Interviewing is the predominant mode of inquiry for this research. Interviews allow a researcher to gain an in-depth insight into an individual’s consciousness and, as a result, the most complex of social issues which stem from the concrete experiences recounted by the interviewee through personal narratives (Seidman, 2015). King and Horrocks (2010, p.17) declare that an epistemological position dictates how one should approach qualitative interviewing. Although interviewing technique may cross paradigms, it is important to consider “…the implications embedded in such beliefs”.

Glaser (1998, 2012a) promotes the interview as a method of data collection but cautions against having pre-scripted interview questions, as this contradicts the no preconception dictum of GT. In his opinion, if a predetermined list of questions is drafted or sampled from the literature, this will “block emergence with pre-framed thought about the way it should be, not the discovery of what is going on” (Glaser, 2012a, p.4). Instead, the interview should be conversational in nature and questions will emerge in line with what is surfacing during the interview. Glaser (1998) does
recommend starting with a ‘grand tour’ question – meaning a broad open-ended question which acts as a springboard into the discussion without being prescriptive in nature (Glaser, 1978). This will prompt the participant to engage in dialogue without being directed to any particular issue.

In my own case, this grand tour question was usually – *Tell me about why you chose the Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme.* Scott (2011, p.87) advocates that we “create the conditions” under which participants will feel at ease opening up. As previously mentioned, the conversation should be dictated by where the participant leads it, so it does not “not impose an issue on the participants” (ibid., p.88). Nathanial (2008) also highlights the importance of the researcher relinquishing control of the interview and, in this sense, he/she must be mindful that these conversations are exploratory in nature and are guided by what data is presented.

As mentioned, there were some preliminary questions drafted, the reason being my relative inexperience with interviewing as well as the REC application process. I was mindful of drafting questions which were not leading, but designed as a means to prompt further conversation, should the need arise. A sample of these questions is as follows (full list can be found in Appendix B).

- What inspired you to learn Irish Sign Language?
- Tell me about your language journey in the CDS so far ...
- Have you interacted with deaf people outside of the CDS? How did it go?
- If you have learned a second language previously, how does it compare to learning a signed language?

The twenty-seven interviews began on the February 29th, 2016 and concluded on June 7th, 2017. There were challenges encountered during this time, particularly considering the demographic. Many participants were recent school leavers, approximately eighteen years of age and taking part in research for the first time. Data was not collected on precise age, however the introductory interview questions (educational background, ISL experience, etc.) identified two mature students (over the age of 23) in the full-time cohorts (15 students in this category). It was clearly evident that
most participants were slightly nervous at the beginning as they did not know what to expect. At the beginning there was a need for me to fill silences or hesitations which caused me to ask too many specific follow-up questions. However, as the interviews progressed, my technique became more refined. There was a direct correlation between how at ease and comfortable I was and how open the participants were with their answers. Therefore, the aim was to have a conversation rather than a rigid interview-type format and try build a rapport between the researcher and participant.

The duration of each interview was 30–70 minutes excluding general conversation, introducing the research, signing of consent form, and wrapping up. This time range may appear vast, although the earlier interviews with recently enrolled students tended to be shorter as although the main concern emerged, they were not at the stage where they could fully articulate how they processed or resolved the issue (they had not reached that stage yet). Therefore, I endeavoured not to force any particular issue, if I gauged that the participant had said everything that was on their mind. The latter interviews (follow-up discussions) tended to be longer in duration and highlighted the process that the participants had gone through in this reflexive dialogue. The average duration was approximately fifty minutes.

In general, participants felt at ease discussing their challenges of being an L2-M2 learner. There were two participants who became slightly emotional during the interview. Nonetheless, they wished to continue with the discussion. For the most part, participants expressed surprise, confusion or even humour at their actions and behaviours regarding the main concern of EXPOSURE INSECURITY and were trying to process it during our discussion. It did become apparent, listening to some comments, that participants perceived me as an expert, considering my lecturing position in the CDS. This was evident by remarks such as, “You know the way ISL is”, or, “Does this problem affect other students like this”? I managed the situation by saying it has been a long time since I was an ISL student and then tried to redirect the conversation back to their current experiences. Or, by saying there was no little research published on the topic so their information is vital for this study. I also sometimes pointed out that I am not a teacher of ISL.
itself, so I could not answer their question. Therefore, steering the conversation back to their narrative.

There were also occasions where I recognised that I needed to step back and not probe certain issues and instead let it naturally unfold. This became even more apparent after categories started to emerge during data analysis. The requirement to balance the progressively focused interviews during the selective coding stage, yet still remain open, was always at the forefront of my mind as I did not want to interrogate if the issue was not surfacing for a particular individual.

I decided not to take notes during the interviews as I knew the audio recordings were there as a back-up if required. However, as recommended I did draft field-notes immediately after the interview ceased and used these for the purposes of coding rather than getting lost in the superfluous detail of lengthy transcripts (Glaser, 2011). Holton (2010, p.25) also advocates coding from fieldnotes because it “…enables the researcher to dispense with the meticulous and time-consuming efforts required to record and transcribe detailed interview data and mitigates being overwhelmed by its descriptive detail”.

In my situation, transcripts were a prerequisite of REC approval, although field-notes allowed me to stay focused and capture the main issues. Overall, I believe I adhered to CGT interviewing techniques. To verify this, I often reported back on my methodological process at different intervals to the CGT workshops I attended. The feedback was positive regarding the techniques applied. As outlined above, the challenges presented learning opportunities which particularly enabled me to become more restrained with my approach and as a result not force the data.

4.6.2 Use of recording equipment and software

The only equipment used for the purpose of audio recording was my laptop or mobile phone. From these audio recordings, an anonymised transcript was prepared in written English. The participants were permitted to request a copy of the audio clip at any stage and transcripts were made available to them. All hard copies of relevant documentation, e.g. consent form, have been kept in a locked cabinet at my home. The audio data will be stored for
a maximum of five years on a password protected computer, owned by the researcher. This was in line with the REC application, approved by SLSCS.

The use of various software packages was considered for analysing the data (e.g. NVivo). However, there are differing opinions on how effective qualitative research software is for GT research designs (Thomas, 2011). Discussion on the matter with contacts in my GT network gave rise to the overwhelming response that these packages actually subvert the analysis because the researcher relies on the automated process and does not have true ownership of the data. Therefore, the theory that is developed is considered to be less robust as when the researcher manually carries out the task. In GT, there is a strong emphasis on the fact that analysing should begin immediately after data has been collected (Birks and Mills, 2011; Gustavsson, 2007; Oktay, 2012). The reason for this is that it guides us regarding where we need to go next. The use of software would interfere with this process and not allow the researcher to be able to identify reoccurring patterns and conceptualise them through memoing.

4.7 Data analysis

The analyse of data was the most crucial aspect of this research. It was aided by frequent attendance at workshops and consulting with my CGT network. The iterative nature of CGT process was definitely realised as I was frequently engaged in many aspects concurrently and had to revisit my field notes and memos numerous times. As a result, there were many amendments made along the way whilst endeavouring to reach the core category. The practical application of the CGT data analysis process will now be outlined in conjunction with my own experiences of getting to grips with the methodology for the first time.

4.7.1 Open coding

As previously mentioned, immediately after each interview I drafted field-notes. These records did not discuss subjective observations such as my impression of the participant, or my thoughts on what they discussed. Instead, they were objective in nature and documented what was articulated during the course of the interview. These field-notes are vital, as I was coding from them. Therefore, they should capture the main issues arising in a
succinct fashion. Glaser (1992) states that actively seeking to identify incidents on every line of a detailed transcript (not a field-note) may lead to over-fracturing the data. I did, however, have the option of referring to transcripts if there was something unclear or unfinished in the notes. This was something I had to avail of from time to time although field-notes were generally sufficient. At the beginning I would attempt to write down everything I could remember as I did not want to miss out on something that could potentially be important, however as time went on I trusted my ability to pinpoint what was integral for the participant and the emerging theory.

As the coding process was underway, I found it to be more difficult than anticipated. Self-doubt started to creep in. The incidents were clear in the data, as I concentrated on identifying actions, behaviours and processes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), however, my difficulty was primarily caused by attaching the correct label, or in CGT, code to them. It is recommended we use ‘gerunds’ or action words to encapsulate its dynamism (Glaser, 1978). These words/phrases can be framed in either in vivo language (of the participant) or in vitro language (of the researcher). However, labelling of data must be at an abstract rather than descriptive level (ibid.). The conceptualising of these patterns ultimately lay the foundation for one’s theory. Therefore, at the outset I continuously re-checked and reviewed the data, to ensure the method was being applied correctly.

As coding continued, I became more efficient and proficient with this analytical aspect of the work. However, the codes were still provisional and were frequently renamed. As previously mentioned, I had decided against using any software programme to manage my data as I coded. Therefore, I began by coding incidents in the margins of my field-notes. When concepts started to emerge, I transferred these codes to A4 sheets. However, as the pages began to multiply, it became an overwhelming task to keep track of everything. I had to think of an alternate way to store and make sense of these patterns. This is when I discovered a web-based application called Trello, which is traditionally used as a project management tool. This application does not identify patterns or carry out statistical analysis of the data, it is purely where comments, notes and attachments can be displayed on a Trello ‘board’.
As I compared incident to incident, code to code and category to category, the main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD became evident after approximately seven interviews. This concern centres around the perceived exposing nature of performing ISL, in front of others. Specifically, being watched, watching others and the body being used as a vehicle to express this visual-spatial language. This occurs in a context (i.e. the classroom) where the communicative element (e.g. dialogue, role-play, etc.) is mandatory as there is no written form of the language. INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD is the desire of all participants to become comfortable with this phenomenon and continue on their bid to become proficient learners of ISL.

I continued collecting data as I knew that the core category had not been identified, i.e. how they ameliorate or resolve their main concern. In tandem, I began to collapse codes as they were essentially indicating the same thing. Originally, I had approximately 150 codes but through the act of constant comparison, I began to omit codes that were not patterning out and were isolated to one or a small number of individuals, i.e. individual concerns rather than the main shared concern. This facilitated a transition from a descriptive to conceptual level. Trello allowed me to have access to the data remotely as it synchronises across devices. Therefore, I did not have to carry copious amounts of paper when at different locations. The data remained anonymised and I did not upload any transcripts to the platform so if there was a security breach, participants would still not be identified. This proved to be rather convenient tool and allowed me to revisit the theory during free-time or when engaged in a completely separate activity when something pertinent came to mind. This preconscious processing (Glaser, 1998) was also documented in memos.

For example, an early emerging concept was coded as ATHMOSPHERING, although I later renamed this ACCLIMATISING. Subsequently, it was elevated a second time after establishing it was in fact the initial stage of the final theory. ATHMOSPHERING did not capture the significance of this stage and therefore the label had to be amended to also encapsulate the physical and emotional toll. It was also a ‘pet code’ which was suggested to me by a participant at a seminar although upon reflection it did not turn out to be the
best fit. Instead, **ACCLIMATISING** captured what was happening conceptually and how multi-faceted this stage was.

At times it felt that these realisations would not be made as I was so wrapped up in the process, but time, patience and perseverance paid off as I kept returning to the methodology for clarification and reassurance. The constant comparative method resulted in me reorganising, relabelling and excluding, by returning to the data. Therefore, I was constantly scrutinising and verifying my coding activities rather than imposing something that was not present in the data.

4.7.2 Identifying the core category

As patterns started to emerge a portion of the categories were coming to the fore and others no longer relevant. It took time for the core category to be determined as it was not something the participants necessarily referred to directly. As concepts start to filter down we “identify categories that are somewhat central to the understanding of the observed phenomenon” (Bergaus, 2015, p.112). The core category is the one that stands out as being central, constantly reoccurs in the data and to which all of the sub-categories relate to (Glaser, 1998). In my study the core category was settled upon during the follow up interviews with participants.

In hindsight, there were probably too many interviews carried out with those at the very early stages of the programme. It would have been more productive to hold off until this cohort was a later stage in their learning where they could reflect on the main concern. Nevertheless, it was realised that **COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF**<sup>16</sup> was the core category during the second batch of interviews. At this stage, a researcher continues to collect data but selectively codes only what is related to the core and corresponding categories. The interview questions became focused on the emergent conceptualisations and were predominately based on the core variable and interrelated components.

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<sup>16</sup> The central process/requirement when tackling their main concern, i.e. **INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD**.
4.7.3 Selective coding

Urquhart (2012) claims it is obvious when a researcher must move on to selective coding\(^\text{17}\). It is characterised by “no new open codes suggesting themselves and definite themes are emerging” (ibid., p.24). As a result, the questions become fine-tuned. However, the interviews still opened with the same general questions as were posed previously. The reason for this was twofold – to get a sense of their background and motivations for choosing the course and to settle the conversation so it did not appear to be an interrogation. It could have potentially felt threatening to the participant if I immediately launched into targeted questions unpacking the core concern. This technique coincided with selective coding of the core and sub core categories. An act of delimiting in order to saturate the identified categories (Glaser, 1978). An integral part of this phase is to deduce where or from whom to collect the next sample (Breckenridge et al., 2012).

As alluded to in the open coding section (§4.7.1), the core category was confirmed during the follow-up interviews with participants who had progressed to the second year of the programme. The cessation of data collection occurs when ‘saturation’ has been achieved, i.e. “no further properties are identified from the data, where incidents coded merely provide more indicators of existing properties” (Scott, 2007, p.12). I intended to schedule additional interviews although at this point (June 2017) I took part in a CGT seminar in Mill Valley, California, led by Dr. Barney Glaser, one of the founders of CGT. When it was my turn to contribute to the seminar he listened attentively, commented, questioned, and then declared the following “you’ve got it, now go write it up”. This verification signalled the end of the formal data collection stage as I also subconsciously knew that I had collected sufficient data but did not have the confidence to acknowledge this until receiving Dr. Glaser’s affirmation.

I continued to memo, revisit field-notes and on occasion the transcripts, as the part that was still missing was the linkages between categories. How they interweave, yet all relate to the core category. The Trello screenshot in Figure 1 (June 2017), highlights that at this stage there were still several

\(^{17}\) Which equates to ‘axial coding’ in Straussian GT and ‘focused coding’ as suggested by Charmaz.
categories which were silos in a fragmented theory (several more codes were present when clicking on the properties of each category, e.g. ‘Performing’). The main priority was to now bring the fractured theory back together, this could occur by detecting “…the relational model through which all substantive codes/categories are related to the core category”, i.e., the theoretical code (Hernandez, 2009, p.51) The use of Trello was now abandoned, it had assisted up until that point but needed to be discarded as it presented the data in a linear fashion and prevented the dynamic aspects from being realised. The screenshot below was taken mid-way through the coding process and was subsequently re-organised and re-conceptualised by collecting more data and by returning to the data (although many codes remain).

![Screenshot of earlier codes](image)

**Figure 1: Screenshot of earlier codes**

### 4.7.4 Theoretical coding

Glaser presents theoretical codes and coding families in several of his publications (1978, 1998, 2005). It has been noted that this aspect of CGT can be confusing for researchers as the difference between substantive and theoretical codes cannot be deciphered by some (Glaser, 1998). The fact
that CGT is an inductive methodology allows us to distinguish between substantive and theoretical codes and identify how they interact and connect. In addition, there may be more than one theoretical code present (ibid.). The importance of distinguishing between substantive and theoretical codes is vital, as it clarifies how they rely on each other;

*Without substantive codes, theoretical codes are empty abstractions. But substantive codes could be related without theoretical codes, but the result is usually confused, unclear theoretically, and/or typically connected by descriptive topics but going nowhere theoretically* (Glaser, 1998, p.164).

As one theoretically codes, memos that will not contribute to the theory may be disregarded while compiling remaining memos into different categories. In my situation, the earlier ones tended to be surface level analysis of preliminary indicators. However, as concepts and properties of concepts started to emerge, the memos were sorted and categorised according to common or interconnected themes which permeated each grouping. This act enables the researcher to still use the constant comparative method. In the developed theory, the learner is settling in to a new cultural/linguistic environment both within the institution and the wider Deaf community, i.e. ACCLIMATISING. Simultaneously, participating in the class and the community even though it's challenging and exposing, therefore ATTUNING to what is required and the expectations they have for themselves. The AUTHENTICATING process allows the student to become increasingly linguistically competent and alleviate/resolve their main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD.

These elements are constantly in the process of being balanced with the goal of minimizing EXPOSURE INSECURITY yet paradoxically, accomplishing their goals. Glaser (1978) states that the temporal aspect of the process, must have at least two stages, however the theory presented here consists of three (as mentioned above; ACCLIMATISING, ATTUNING and AUTHENTICATING). Once this process and applicable stages are ultimately realized (or strived for), it leads an L2-M2 learner to engage in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.
4.8 Writing

4.8.1 Memoing

I was initially unsure as to how I should write memos. At the beginning, they tended to be procedural in nature, such as concentrating on what I needed to do next. I then progressed to being more present with the data, i.e. observing patterns and relationships between concepts. When coding, if something stood out for me, I prepared a memo on it. If there were overlapping properties, I teased them out and sometimes left them in their current format; or came to the realisation (and by revisiting the data) that there could be more than one property which could be collapsed together. As time went on there was increasingly greater emphasis placed on identifying patterns in the data. It is not essential to include memos in final CGT products, but for the goal of illustrating my thoughts at a particular point in the research process, an example can be seen below:

08/07/16 – All participants have discussed at length about being watched when signing and the challenge of “performing” in front of others. The context of the learning environment requires compulsory participation and it is evident that participants are adjusting to this setting. There is no option but to comply. However, what is their concern about “performing” in front of others. Yes, they are being exposed but why is this an issue? Is it related to protecting their image/saving face? Or perhaps the alternative is that they worry about the consequences of getting it wrong? There is a need to delve into this further.

As observed above, there are many questions which remained unanswered at that time. Memoing allows one the space to reflect on the data and to consider next steps. A researcher should not prematurely cast aside earlier memos. They should remain open, ‘active’, until the theory is presented. In terms of my own work progression, memo-taking became more frequent. Memos should be considered interactive documents – we add to them instead of amending them. We continue to document our insights as this has the “advantage of chronicling your changing thought process” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.43). It is important that we develop a system for easy access
to previous memos, and as time progressed, I began to categorise them. These memos were stored into different folders on my laptop – each folder’s name corresponding with the identified categories.

Birks and Mills (ibid., p.43) suggest that memos will inevitably overlap as it will lead you to “merge or eliminate classifications”, when successful theory-construction is occurring. Goulding (2002) suggests that the resorting of memos can instigate further data collection or, at the latter stages of the research, a reduction in applicable concepts. When the preliminary theoretical framework is *in situ*, one then consults literature in the substantive area and further afield. This is data which is used to further elaborate the theory if applicable. Again, memoing assists in bringing the final theory to fruition and guiding the researcher at each step of the process. When the theory with its interconnected concepts has been finalised, the researcher proceeds to writing up first and subsequent drafts before submitting the completed document.

4.8.2 Write-up

Urquhart (2012, p.152) offers useful questions which one must consider when writing up GT studies. However, it is stated that the answers to these questions are not always straightforward. The questions are as follows:
I was cognisant of these questions whilst writing this thesis and at times this was the part of the process I struggled with most. Particularly, *how should the coding procedure be represented to the reader?* I was conscious that not all readers will be familiar with CGT and therefore I ensured the principles of CGT were adequately detailed prior to presenting the theory in Chapter 5. It is hoped that the questions have consequently been addressed within the scope of the final thesis.

### 4.9 Chapter Summary

The application of the CGT methodology has been outlined in this chapter. The challenges were documented and the thought processes for responding to these tasks were also highlighted. To the best of my knowledge the CGT methodology has been undertaken correctly, as the central tenets of CGT were practised throughout. The next chapter will present the emergent
theory, which follows from the operationalisation of the methodology. It proposes the core variable of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF and related categories which participants engage in to INCREASE THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD.
Chapter 5  COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF

This chapter presents the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, which documents the challenges that adult learners of a signed language face when studying a visual-spatial language. The context, as stated is a university setting. At the outset, a summary and overview of the theory will be provided. Following this, there will be an in-depth discussion of its various components. The generation of this theory from empirical data attempts to answer the following research questions –

1. What is L2-M2 learners’ greatest concern when in the early stages of learning a visual-spatial language?
2. How do they process or resolve this concern?
3. What are the commonalities between learning a signed language and a spoken language in relation to the main concern?

As outlined thus far, a grounded theory methodological framework underpinned each stage of this research process, including the collection and analysis of data and the writing up of this theory. Stylistically, to ensure the reader is aware that something is a concept or category these items will be referred to in an uppercase and alternate font. It is also important to note that the nature of writing is that we present concepts in a linear fashion, however it should be stated that participants are concurrently engaging in the three main processes of this theory (EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING). The theory summary below is intended to provide a snapshot of the findings from this study. This will be followed by a more comprehensive overview, where key concepts are teased out. A breakdown of the component stages will follow, before revisiting the whole again. The chapter will conclude by proposing a set of propositions which emanate from COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

5.1  Summary of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF

The goal of participants in this study is to INCREASE THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. The rationale for this is to maintain a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM whilst
endeavouring to become a linguistically competent L2-M2 sign language learner. However, if exposure insecurity is experienced it puts both of these goals in jeopardy. To rectify this a learner attempts to balance their state of equilibrium while managing an event. In addition, the learner must bolster their exposure security threshold through the development of personal resources, in order to work towards their desired goals. Balancing and bolstering are responses to an event which has an inherent risk, or a perceived risk of exposure. The level of risk increases the level of exposure, which in turn heightens exposure insecurity. Although a re-balancing may temporarily occur through engaging a self-regulation strategy, the learner must engage in the processes of exposing, alliancing and authenticating to be able to truly bolster their position. Over time these processes take on broader dimensions as the learner steadfastly acquires additional personal resources as they move through stages of acclimatising, attuning and authenticating.

However, learners do not progress at the same rate because they are ‘fuelled’ to different degrees. The main source of fuel is autonomy. The autonomous learner fully-owns their academic experience. In relation to the piece (i.e. the performance task), the autonomous learner successfully performs by achieving embodied autonomy. The fuel also feeds back to the learner’s capacity to compose. The journey of composing the L2-M2 self ultimately allows the learner to achieve their goal of increasing the exposure security threshold, which in turn allows them to gain more control over their language performance. This journey intersects with the context of the learning hub, where the events are formed and associated risks are sensed.

5.1.1 Theory overview

The data collected during this study indicates that the main concern for participants is to increase the exposure security threshold when learning a signed language. This concern centres around the perceived exposing nature of sign language and the physicality required to express the language. There is a requirement to perform the language in full view of
others with the articulators of a signed language clearly visible - the hands, face and body. The means of accessing the language is by intently looking at the interlocutor. The unease with the performative aspect of the language may IMBALANCE the learner’s STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and may disrupt the development of LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY.

A significant part of the learner’s state of equilibrium is their ability to SELF-REPRESENT. If a learner is engaging with the LEARNING HUB, then depending on the event which they are partaking in, this can cause EXPOSURE INSECURITY. If it is a safe, low risk event, self-representation feels INTACT. However, if the event is perceived as high-risk then there is a concern that self-representation is too risky because it will be EXPOSING - due to insufficient language skill and/or the portrayal of a different image, one which they feel is not a true reflection of who they are as a person (insecure, nervous, awkward, etc.). If self-representation is secure, then the STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM will remain balanced. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the ability to SELF-REPRESENT and the fact that EXPOSURE INSECURITY may rise if self-representation cannot be realised.

Figure 3: Relationship between Exposure Insecurity and Self-Representation

Another aspect of STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM is the ability to control the insecurity caused by this exposure. If psychological and physiological indicators of anxiety are felt by the learner, they consider which SELF-REGULATION strategies are at their disposal to help reduce symptoms. The application of
strategies at either end of the strategy spectrum (Figure 4) will BALANCE or RESTORE the STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM. However, ANTI-STRATEGIES will only offer a temporary fix. The development of POSITIVE STRATEGIES will offer more lasting self-regulation remedies and will also coincide with the BOLSTERING of personal resources. A detailed overview of strategies employed by participants will feature in the theory discussion. Figure 4 indicates what these are.

![Figure 4: Self-Regulation Strategies](image)

In Figure 5 we see that when SELF-REPRESENTATION is INTACT and when the learner engages a SELF-REGULATION STRATEGY, then the STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM remains BALANCED or can be RESTORED.

![Figure 5: Factors Related to State of Equilibrium](image)
Participants reported that their rationale for choosing the Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme was to develop LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE in their L2-M2. While learning, they do not wish to expose linguistic weaknesses. This may not be circumvented as a novice learner, so there is a potential risk that particular events will expose them further. The events which cause the most EXPOSURE INSECURITY are COMPULSORY PARTICIPATION and REGULAR ASSESSMENT. To conquer their goal and to gain control over their INSTRUMENT (the bodily components required to express a signed language), the learner must take action to increase autonomy over their performances and move from ACTING OUT pieces, to RE-ENACTING them (attempting to mirror others), to EMBODYING them.

![Figure 6: Stages of PERFORMING](image)

This ability to develop LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY is via EMBODIED AUTONOMY. However, there are INHERENT and PERCEIVED RISKS which may stifle progress and/or result in a LOSS OF AUTONOMY. A risk of harm IMBALANCES a learner’s STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM, threatens the development of LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY, and potentially causes DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY. These range from DISCOMFORT - DISCOMPOURE - DISTRESS. INHERENT RISKS are caused by the events within the LEARNING HUB (compulsory participation and regular assessment). However, there is also a perceived SENSE OF EXPOSURE. This is determined by the learner and has many contributing factors. These are IN THE SPOTLIGHT (intensity), TRUST (establishment thereof), perceived risk to STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and perceived risk to
DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY (the ensuing impact that this exposure brings). However, for both types of risk the temporal aspect must also be considered. INHERENT RISKS no longer BLINDSIDE the learner as they come to know what to expect from the context and the SENSE OF EXPOSURE also lessens over time, as the learner perseveres and develops a wider threshold to deal with it.

The common denominator between the goals of maintaining a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and developing LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE is AUTONOMY. Securing a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM comes about via FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY, the CAPACITY TO COMPOSE has broadened over the three stages from NON-OWNED to FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY, i.e. control over their learning and their emotions. The ability to develop LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE is by achieving EMBODIED AUTONOMY, i.e. mastering their performances over the three stages from NON-EMBODIED to EMBODIED AUTONOMY. Both forms of autonomy (self and performance) are accomplished by BOLSTERING personal resources. This is realised through the processes of EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING.

However, although these components arise at the same time, the learner does not always give each process equal attention. ALLIANCING is recognised as a key component in this social context (learning a language in the LANGUAGE HUB). Therefore, one must interact and build relationships with others. However, if ALLIANCING mostly occurs with EXPOSING then this will lead to maintaining a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM, i.e. self and emotions. If ALLIANCING is mostly paired with AUTHENTICATING then the focus is on development of LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE, i.e. performance. However, if concentrated effort and resources are placed somewhat evenly while broadening all processes then this will lead to COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. If personal resources have been developed minimally, then there will be limited CAPACITY TO COMPOSE. If personal resources have built and broadened to the best of the learner's ability, then capacity when COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF is perceived to be boundless. The learner will keep evolving in tandem with their language learning journey and future career working with the Deaf Community.
In the next section of this chapter, I present a detailed explanation of the theory. The discussion opens with a deeper insight into why participants feel a SENSE OF EXPOSURE in the ISL classroom. I then demonstrate how an L2-M2 learner processes this issue over time as part of a dynamic process which occurs over three stages - ACCLIMATISING, ATTUNING and AUTHENTICATING.

5.2 Sense of Exposure

SENSE OF EXPOSURE includes factors which add to or lessen EXPOSURE INSECURITY for L2-M2 learners in this study. These relate to a learner’s PERCEIVED RISK to DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY, TRUST, being IN THE SPOTLIGHT and STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM. A learner will weigh up at least one of these factors in any given event which may increase their EXPOSURE INSECURITY. Each of these elements will be briefly outlined and will also reappear at different points during the theory explanation. An important point to mention is that for most, EXPOSURE INSECURITY generally becomes less frequent or has a lesser impact as learners progress through the stages. This is because SELF-REGULATION strategies are developed, and personal resources have been BOLSTERED which will offer them the CAPACITY TO COMPOSE both self and performances.

However, if a particular event has a seriously negative impact (e.g. poor exam performance) then this capacity is reduced and therefore a learner may remain in a stage for a longer period of time or may even spiral backwards to an earlier stage. Therefore, the PERCEIVED RISK of (SENSE OF) EXPOSURE interweaves with the context of the LEARNING HUB, i.e. INHERENT RISK. We will now consider the SENSE OF EXPOSURE and the key role it plays for the participant’s main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD.
5.2.1 Perceived risk to state of equilibrium

Several participants discuss their ongoing issues with lack of confidence, perfectionist tendencies, anxiety, etc. These characteristics can filter through to the ISL classroom and trigger a psychological response, which may disrupt their STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM. This especially occurs when a LOSS OF AUTONOMY is experienced. As deep-rooted thoughts and emotions surface, it prompts a reaction which interferes with the task at hand, even for those who are generally extroverted.

As a perfectionist I want to do everything right, but I know there are times where this isn't possible. Even still, I get so worked up about it and then can't see the wood for the trees.

Those who are quite introverted attempt to blend into the background although extensively comment on the fact that this is not possible in an ISL classroom. If they are called upon unexpectedly it is something they initially struggle with, however, this typically subsides because it becomes the norm and is a routine occurrence. Interestingly, some participants feel more uncomfortable when they are asked to complete a class activity rather than a graded piece of coursework or exam because they do not have the time to
sufficiently prepare THE PIECE (the performance task) and cannot control the
delivery of their performance and how they SELF-REPRESENT to others.
However, as time goes on they become more prepared and no longer feel
BLINDSIDED when called upon. Another aspect which troubles learners is not
being able to produce a solid performance of the language. Despite their
efforts, they are limited by a lack of proficiency:

*I’ve always done well in school and grasped other languages quite
easily but ISL is so different. I feel it doesn’t come naturally to me and
although I put the work in I don’t think it always pays off. I know that
it’s still early days, but it can be so frustrating because there’s certain
things I think I’m doing right or I’m really trying to exaggerate, like
facial expressions, but then I’m told they’re too subtle or coming
across a different way… it just becomes so forced and stressful.*

In this instance the learning strategies which were previously applied should
follow through to the LEARNING HUB. The reality is that in some cases these
techniques are unsuccessful and there is no way of self-evaluating
performance. There is a break between the previous self and the anticipated
L2-M2 SELF in terms of the learning experience. This IMBALANCE to STATE OF
EQUILIBRIUM will be revisited with reference to other examples and the
impact it has on the learner during the different stages of this process.

5.2.2 Trust

If the learner proceeds to make alliances with others, then a level of TRUST
must be established. There did not appear to be mis-trust or suspicion
amongst the learners in the groups sampled from (x2), however interestingly
EXPOSURE INSECURITY is heightened when learners engage with peers rather
than with native signers (in the LEARNING HUB or the Deaf Community).
Learners are aware that their lecturers have encountered many cohorts of
students in the past, this expertise allows them to feel they are in capable
hands. Therefore, from an early stage the learner feels they are in a safe
environment within the LEARNING HUB.

However, amongst peers, TRUST must be earned. In the early stages, there
is a SCOPING-OUT process. This is not only to deal with their main concern
but the recognition that making friends is important because everyone is “in it for the long haul”. Learners want to enjoy their academic experience and meet others who share common interests. Similarly, they want to feel comfortable when performing the language in class. Students report immediate concerns that others will judge them based on their experience with ISL, or lack thereof. Those with no previous knowledge are worried that they will be “left behind”. These concerns are often unfounded because knowledge is shared:

I remember being a bit intimidated by classmates who had a background in ISL. But I shouldn’t have been because they were the people who really helped me out at the beginning, when I needed it. I would ask X for vocab and she was always so nice and patient with me. She didn’t have to share but she really went out of her way to make me feel at ease.

There is also the perception that if a student really goes for it, they may come across as being too dramatic or silly. This is particularly prominent during the bedding in stage of acclimatising where there is a certain amount of holding back because the learner does not want to show all of their cards at the beginning. As time goes on learners pay less attention to what others may be thinking about them and their language ability. Their focused attention gradually shifts to performance rather than allowing interferences, such as other people’s perceptions, to take hold. However, the intimate setting of the small group must also be considered, where the semi-circle formation of people viewing one another’s language articulation means that trust is essential to the dynamic of the whole group. If exposure insecurity is observed amongst peers, there is a perception that this is immediately felt by all involved because of a ripple effect and can potentially create an atmosphere where the sense of exposure is increased for all.

5.2.3 In the spotlight

The perception of all learners is that ISL must be performed to an extent that goes beyond what is typical for any spoken language. Further, there is the added element that participation is compulsory in the ISL classroom. This performance viewpoint is rooted in both features of the language itself and
the need to “use your whole physicality” to express meaning. There is also frequent reference to ACTING OUT because of the disconnect from how one would normally communicate [in a spoken language] compared to what is now required. To bridge this gap, the L2-M2 learner must act out THE PIECE as they do not feel ownership of the language during the early stages.

When something feels at odds with your natural communication style, or false, the sense of being IN THE SPOTLIGHT intensifies. Learners also refer to components of the language which challenge them, such as reference shifting (also referred as constructed dialogue or role-shift). Hoiting and Slobin (2002, p.67) say that “a pervasive aspect of sign language communication is the subtle shifts of gaze and posture that allow the signer to convey the utterances, thoughts or actions of other people”. This taking on of a character increases the sense of feeling IN THE SPOTLIGHT for a number of learners:

"Role-shift is such a foreign thing at the beginning. Taking on their [other signers or speakers] character and becoming them. I don’t want it to look like I’m mocking them and I don’t think I have the acting skill to be able to do that well at the moment. I try to avoid it when I can."

In the above example, the linguistic and cognitive wrestle makes them feel impolite as they produce the language. Some refer to the fact that in spoken language they would not be this animated and that the transition to become more dynamic with their bodily and facial movements is a significant challenge which tests their resolve. Interestingly, some learners discuss their performance background and the belief that this assists with performing ISL in front of others.

As this past experience becomes known within the group, there comes an expectation that they will always be the first to volunteer. This peer pressure is not always appreciated, and tension often arises because they know they will be called upon first or are expected to self-nominate because “nobody else will put themselves forward”. There is also, for these learners, always an assumption that you will PERFORM well which adds to the pressure. In
addition, the learner sometimes worries that if they are too much IN THE SPOTLIGHT it could backfire and they may be perceived as taking over or being over-confident about their abilities.

It is inevitable that when THE PIECE is being graded it may create unease in a learner. In the case of the ISL language modules, all coursework and exam pieces are performed to a live audience or to camera. When recording THE PIECE to camera, a learner may not feel IN THE SPOTLIGHT as much, but there is a self/externally imposed pressure to do well. This is a form of examination pressure which is common to all programmes. However, SENSE OF EXPOSURE in relation to examinations did not appear to be such a significant factor in this data. It must be noted, however, that interviews did not occur around the examination period although ongoing continuous assessment is a feature of the programme. Learners generally concentrated on their current stage of learning and in some cases had not yet sat a formal examination.

For those who were further along in the academic year and concerned about their grades, there was a desire to work through issues because of not wishing to be excluded from the programme. If it becomes known to others that a learner is struggling, the learner feels EXPOSED because “everyone has a fair idea who is doing well and who isn’t. It’s quite obvious really as we see each other signing so much”. Those who previously did not PERFORM well are conscious that they must improve and make progress. This can be a motivating factor for some, whilst for others it can become overwhelming:

I’ve made sacrifices to be here, so I have to make it work. I get so annoyed with myself when I mess up something. I record it over and over again and I think it actually gets worse because I’m over-thinking. I just need to relax a bit more and stop being so hard on myself.

5.2.4 Perceived risk to degrees of exposure insecurity

DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY as previously stated are; DISCOMFORT, DISCOMPOsure and DISTRESS. These are progressively severe reactions to an event which caused harm to the learner’s STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM or the development of LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY. It also applies to learners who
are considering anticipated outcomes should they participate in a potentially EXPOSING event. In the classroom, all learners comment on having an acute sense of having an audience in front of you, watching your every signing move. The insecurity that is experienced as a result of this causes DISCOMFORT, however these feelings can sometimes become exacerbated, becoming feelings of DISTRESS. These feelings kick in in situations where you are aware that peers can spot symptoms of anxiety:

*Sometimes I get up to sign something and I start off fine but then I make a silly mistake and suddenly I become more conscious of what I’m doing. I know I’m going red and my hands start to shake, because people can pick up on that it makes me even worse. There’s nowhere to hide.*

If anxiety symptoms are felt, they range from mild effects like feeling flushed or uncomfortable (DISCOMFORT) to stronger reactions of heart racing, profusely sweating, or hands/legs shaking (DISCOMPOSURE or perhaps DISTRESS). There were also reports of being on the verge of a panic attack by a small number of participants. This can be attributed to the DISTRESS caused by EXPOSURE INSECURITY. In addition, a small percentage decide to opt-out and officially withdraw from the programme. This may happen for various reasons and cannot be solely attributed to main concern of this study. However, a participant in this study withdrew from the programme soon after the interview. At the data collection point, she discussed her intentions to leave the course. Although the main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD applied to her situation, she stated that it was not the primary reason for her decision to exit the course as there were other personal considerations at play too.

However, learners referred to another classmate who withdrew from College because of the performative aspect of the language, which they reported as being too overwhelming for her. This is, of course, speculation because data was not collected from this learner. At the same time, it is worth noting within the scope of this discussion. In all instances, we can say that COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF is never fully realised for those who do not reach the end of the learning process.
5.2.5  Impact of Exposure Insecurity

To conclude this discussion of SENSE OF EXPOSURE, we can say that exposure is experienced differently by each learner and the CLUSTERING OF RISK i.e. a culmination of more than one risk simultaneously, or in quick succession heightens their SENSE OF EXPOSURE. This produces emotional negativity and corresponding behaviours. At the beginning, a learner may not have developed sufficient SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES and therefore ANTI-STRATEGIES are employed. Such strategies offer a temporary remedy, e.g. AVOID. However, if the learner does not expand their repertoire of strategies, then their CAPACITY TO COMPOSE themselves will be restricted. As time progresses, POSITIVE SELF-REGULATION strategies are engaged as are personal resources.

The shift from negative to positive strategies, combined with the acquisition of personal resources allows the learner to progress from stage to stage. However, the process is ultimately governed by moving from NON-OWNED AUTONOMY towards FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY (learning and emotions) and from NON-EMBODIMENT to EMBODIED AUTONOMY (performance). There is a clear indication that the SENSE OF EXPOSURE then becomes less apparent with many learners actually embracing the aspects of the language and environment which were originally somewhat daunting to them.

5.3  Stage of ACCLIMATISING

Learning a sign language in a formal academic context is markedly different to second language acquisition in the home, informal contexts (e.g. an extramural course) or for social reasons (e.g. in the workplace). It involves an active decision to pursue the language at tertiary level and choose the discipline over other available options. This sets the learner on a trajectory where they must adjust to their new surroundings. In this context, students ACCLIMATISE to a new institutional environment, Trinity College Dublin, with a discipline base (LEARNING HUB) at the Centre for Deaf Studies. For the majority, it is the first time they have attended a third level institution, so they must also adapt more generally to life as a university student. This new identity is something which they have strived for, but the practical
implications are not always anticipated. In the context of this study, learners grapple with the added element of being immersed into a new culture with its own values and norms and most importantly, language.

This language is completely new for the majority of participants\(^1\) and the cultural environment is generally not what they expect. In relation to the physical surroundings, they have stepped into the unknown. There is an immediate sensory stimulation and de-stimulation in this cultural microcosm. The primary language is a visual-spatial language, using hands, face and body to express a message. Yet, there is a palpable quietness in this new space: there is little or no spoken language in their physical surroundings. Orientation week provides general information about requirements and expectations and offers a taste of what student life will involve. This is immediately followed by the commencement of the teaching term. More than half of their lecture time will now be situated in the ISL classroom.

The processes of **EXPOSING**, **ALLIANCING** and **AUTHETICATING** do not happen in sequence and are concurrent. However, for clarity and to be able to distinguish the specific elements of each process, they will be discussed separately. In reality, they run parallel to each other.

5.3.1 **EXPOSING (tolerating)**

**RISK** causes a learner to feel exposed. This process of **EXPOSING** can at best, only be tolerated at the **ACCLIMATISING** stage. The properties of **EXPOSING (TOLERATING)** are set out below.

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<tr>
<th>EXPOSING (tolerating)</th>
<th>Nowhere to hide</th>
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<td>Being thrown in at the deep end</td>
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<td>Feeling insecure</td>
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<td>Sensory overload</td>
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<td>Masking</td>
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\(^1\) There are a number of participants within the study who have a basic knowledge of Irish Sign Language prior to registration. Nobody declared that they were at an intermediate or advanced level.
EXPOSING refers to how a learner feels exposed in the sign language classroom and how they manage their emotions and behaviours in the physical environment. Learners have not usually anticipated that the majority of lecturers they encounter will be deaf and the lingua franca for all staff and students is Irish Sign Language. Irish Sign Language/English interpreters are provided for theoretical modules; however, novice learners are expected to immediately apply what they have been taught in the language classroom, whilst engaging in class and socially within the learning hub:

*It’s a bit scary because as you are learning sign you realise, oh I actually have to use this as it’s the first language and how I should be communicating. It’s a very steep learning curve. You’re learning it and then immediately using it. There is no kind of separation – if your teacher is deaf than they will be using ISL to communicate.*

A perceived benefit to this immediate application of the language is the close contact learners have with lecturers and their peers. There is a sense of community because the majority of contact hours are carried out in the CDS so learners quickly get to know people. It is soon realised that all stakeholders will embark on this intimate journey together, i.e. learners and teachers. The dichotomy lies in the fact that there is NOWHERE TO HIDE, whilst one is trying to ACCLIMATIZE. There is a sense of BEING THROWN IN AT THE DEEP END yet acknowledging that this is the optimal way to learn. This unbalancing of a student’s STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM may trigger an emotional sense of insecurity, potentially leading to DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY. These emotions must be TOLERATED and worked through by learners in order to persist with the course.

There is a sense of wonderment which creates nervous energy and trepidation as they adjust. However, for the majority there is SENSORY OVERLOAD which, particularly at the outset, can sometimes feel overwhelming. When this pressure becomes too intense it can lead to a withdrawal from the situation. This may be related to a CLUSTERING OF RISK over a number of occasions. The typical reaction is where a learner CUTS SHORT their contribution by either giving the bare minimum or AVOIDING the encounter and pretending not to know the answer. The SAFE-PLAYER is willing
to engage in group/pair work but does not want to feed back to the larger group. In essence, they are hiding their DISCOMFORT by dealing with the RISK and SENSE OF EXPOSURE as best they can.

In general, there is no option but to comply in the sign language classroom because there is no-written form of the language and the syllabus is entirely taught through ISL. Participation is mandatory. While feeling DISCOMFORT and holding a SENSE OF EXPOSURE, they must still engage with THE PIECE. This reticence is not articulated so there is a MASKING of how the learner truly feels.

There are times where I would like to hide away in a corner but you have no choice, so you just have to get on with it and put on a brave face.

At times, learners may want to solely observe because they do not have anything to contribute at that particular point or simply not motivated to do so. However, there is very much a sense that if you are present then there is an expectation to at least attempt to be active. To do otherwise, “would take a braver soul than me”. As these mandatory interactions become more routinised, tolerance levels increase, and compliance becomes a given. EXPOSING occurs because the learner perceives their body being engaged in a previously unimagined way. There is an intense physicality in expressing this visual language. In addition, one must display emotion on the face (non-manual features), otherwise the language will appear “cold or standoffish”. Herein lies the struggle or fear when adhering to this necessary requirement through the act of EXPOSING.

Learners state that they are required be more expressive than they usually are. This, combined with face and body contact, requires one to “reveal a bit more of yourself” and makes learners feel they are IN THE SPOTLIGHT. The learner’s conceptual ideal of how one ought to communicate and use their body is now being threatened. The “hearing way” is based on audio-verbal norms and is embedded in their culture; however, this new “deaf way” is embedded in their host culture’s way of doing things, which are visuo-gestural, presented in the new modality. In the quote below, this also extends to a gendered issue.
I think normally your hands are quite separate from the rest of your body so when you have to centralise it a bit more it can be a bit uncomfortable. Especially, as a woman, you’re not used to putting your hands anywhere near your chest… so it can be a bit awkward. That’s possibly another thing that stopped me from fully finishing a sign and doing it correctly because it is unusual to go anywhere near your chest area.

The emphasis on the communicative element is becoming the norm, however trepidation is still present because of the HIGH-STAKES environment where there will be regular assessment. If insecurity manifests into anxiety, then the learner becomes acutely aware of their SELF-REPRESENTATION when partaking in an activity or reciprocal conversation. There are instances where EXPOSURE INSECURITY produces serious physiological responses - heart racing, shaking of hands/legs, tensing up and the onset of panic attacks. These unpleasant bodily sensations are thought to be visible to others. However, an issue may also be detected because the cognitive dimension hampers language production. On the opposite end of the spectrum there are milder feelings of embarrassment, fear of making mistakes and slight DISCOMFORT. Interestingly, mishaps can also occur seemingly due to positive emotions such as “getting overly excited and not being able to settle down”.

All participants in this study report that they have previously engaged in second language learning, yet they note that there is a tangible difference between ISL classrooms and any other learning contexts which they have found themselves in before. The seating arrangement is in a semi-circle formation in order for both the lecturer and learners to be able to visually access information articulated on the hands, body and face. It is essential to have sustained eye-contact with an interlocutor – otherwise the message will not be witnessed. Even when not actively engaging in communication, a learner is required to tune in to what other learners are discussing. Therefore, one is constantly observing and being observed.

At the outset this is unsettling, particularly when a learner is called upon un-expectantly and does not feel prepared, i.e. are BLINDSIDE. Consequently, the learner is feeling more exposed and also must be content with receiving
immediate non-verbal feedback from those watching. Being, IN THE SPOTLIGHT allows a learner to gauge if they are unclear or going off point. There is an acknowledgement that even when spectators do not intend for this to be noticeable, it is still evident because they are concentrating heavily on the language that is being produced and if it is incoherent must process it even further:

*The problem is if someone (interlocutor) is confused you can nearly tell straight away. So, if you muck up or make a mistake their face will show you and sometimes that little bit of information back will throw me off and make me feel more anxious.*

As a result, the learner consequently pinpoints these signs in others. The EXPOSING element is testing the individual and tangentially compels them to empathise with peers who are engaging in this same process. This evocative quote highlights this insight:

*When she’s in class her signing shrinks and her body closes and her head tilts down and then suddenly she’s signing with the hands of a 5 year old… really small.*

It is inevitable that when a task will be graded it may exacerbate the SENSE OF EXPOSURE because of the ramifications for academic success. Several learners reported that they found class presentations particularly taxing, as their attempts are effectively being rated by everyone present, officially (teachers) and unofficially (peers). Ironically, some learners feel they have more control because they are thoroughly prepared. Therefore, attention is subsequently focused on impressing their lecturer rather than their peers. As such, their anxiety reduced because they have a sense of GAINING AUTONOMY in that situation. This Indicates that EXPOSURE INSECURITY is not solely attributable to examination settings in the context of this LEARNING HUB. Likewise, if coursework component is recorded in their own time, learners report that they feel more relaxed because their attention is solely on accuracy with no environmental or interpersonal distractions.

A trend which emerged from the data is that a learner feels more exposed when they are conscious that *this* (visual-spatial) communication style is not
the norm for them. Their previously held principles regarding language use are being challenged and they find it difficult to embody the language, because “it doesn’t come automatically”. As learners share a common modality background (spoken language), they do not want to “look stupid” by becoming too animated.

Likewise, it is a challenge to SELF-EVALUATE how animated they appear so they often CUT SHORT a response, or air on the side of caution by paring back on animation of their own ideas. They do this because they wish to save face in front of their peers by not delivering a target language performance which may be interpreted as extreme or over-indulgent, yet simultaneously, they want to satisfy their lecturer, so they become a SAFE-PLAYER. It was reported that EXPOSURE INSECURITY can also surface when engaging with lecturers, although many point out the forgiving nature of L1 interlocutors and their appreciation that an attempt that has been made. In order to move past feeling exposed, the learner tries to SELF-SOOTHE. This is the driving force behind ALLIANCING with others.

5.3.2 ALLIANCING (scoping)

This process of ALLIANCING involves SCOPING-OUT peers in order to establish TRUST. The properties of ALLIANCING (SCOPING) during the ACCLIMATISING stage are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alliancing (scoping)</th>
<th>Who's who</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of flux</td>
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<tr>
<td>All in the same boat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinpointing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retreat</td>
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</table>

There is a settling in stage where participants are still adjusting to College life. This is a period of learners getting to know each other, figuring out WHO’S WHO. There is an understanding that one must establish alliances with
peers, lecturers and the deaf community. This initiates the ALLIANCING process. The class dynamic is constantly in a STATE OF FLUX as learners try to initiate friendships with one another and establish TRUST. A SCOPING-OUT process ensues, where some are immediately drawn to one another because of shared interests, common background, etc.

Simultaneously, there is also a natural tendency to distinguish between those who have entered with pre-existing signing skills and those with no sign language background, i.e. WHO’S WHO. The non-signers sometimes feel threatened in the early stages because of lack of competence but this quickly dissipates due to the fact that they can identify with a significant portion of the class. It is advantageous that the environment is non-threatening. However, there is still a modest level of competitiveness as the learners benchmark their signing skills against those who arrived with some prior knowledge. There are many in the same position as there was no prerequisite to be an adept signer – therefore learners realise that several others are IN THE SAME BOAT:

You have a quiet loathing for people who have already done some sign and then you look around the class and realise that half of the class or more are in the same boat as you.

In order to deal with EXPOSURE INSECURITY, the learner identifies allies within the group. These allies take on many roles, such as assisting the learner to SELF-SOOTH. Peers often confide in one another and realize that they are experiencing similar issues. This has a calming affect which is much appreciated. When actively PERFORMING the language, a learner will sometimes fixate on a particular person who is previously known to help them SELF-SOOTH. This choice is influenced by who they perceive to be supportive and encouraging. The back-channelling received during THE PIECE will allow them to know if they are on track or not. These allies are not always those whom they are closest to outside of class. Sometimes they are chosen because of their “nice resting face” or their caring demeanour. The eye-contact received after PINPOINTING the ally will allow them to pick up on the subtle cues of how coherent their language output is.
Concurrently, learners start to socialize outside of class. This sometimes involves an educational element and examples include; going for coffee together whilst practicing ISL, attending the Sign Language Society in College, or contacting each for vocabulary assistance, etc. All of which are attempts at SEEKING ACADEMIC SUPPORT. There is also a class Facebook page and Whatsapp group where learners discuss academic matters, share information and confirm arrangements. This resource is highly valued by all.

Formal academic supports are also availed of when needed. Learners tentatively approach their lecturer after class to seek clarification or gain additional feedback on work submitted/presented. They also sometimes become involved in the peer support group where they have been allocated a ‘Student 2 Student’ mentor. In the case of CDS, they tend to be more advanced learners of ISL. Visitors also have expertise which they can draw from, e.g. interpreters, graduates, and other respected sources of information.

In parallel, there is a realization that one must become involved in the wider deaf community in order to practice language skills and meet new deaf people. Learners’ initial hesitations around attending community events (either of their own volition or as directed by lecturers) forces them to contemplate how they will cope and/or fit in, especially because they ultimately want to work within the community after graduation. They are stepping out of a protective environment, their base, into the unknown – and they recognize that the existing safeguards will not be there for them. This may spark feelings which IMBALANCE the STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM:

And I remember is the stress of just being there. Are we being rude, should we be here? We were told to be here but we don’t know any sign and we should be trying to communicate anyway… but how

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19 Quote: Student 2 Student mentors make sure you know other people in your course before your classes even begin. They’ll keep in regular touch with you throughout your first year and invite you to events on and off campus. They’ll also give you useful information about your course and what to look out for. All our Mentors are students who have been through first year and know exactly what it feels like, so you never have to worry about asking them a question or talking to them about anything that’s worrying you.

Source: https://student2student.tcd.ie/mentoring/
would we and what are we doing? (in reference to attending a community rally).

Nevertheless, when attempts are made there is normally a positive outcome as “deaf people try to help you along because they want you to learn it [ISL]”. The main stumbling block is the limit to how much they can engage and because at this point there is minimum competence in ISL. Learners do not want to reveal their language inadequacy at this early stage (both in the classroom and in the wider community). The best option for those who perceive a high sense of exposure is to avoid or become a safe-player, in essence they retreat or hold back because they do not yet have the means to effectively articulate themselves using the language. There is still so much mystery around the construction of what constitutes “deaf-friendly” ISL, which is often the intended goal of the ISL classroom. Thus, engagement outside the classroom becomes a quest to identify what natural, authentic ISL is, by recognising it in others.

5.3.3 AUTHENTICATING (identifying)

This process of authenticating is establishing how one can develop competence in ISL. Initially, learners do this is by identifying it in others. The properties of authenticating (identifying) during the acclimatising stage are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHENTICATING (identifying)</th>
<th>Seeing it with your own eyes</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiptoeing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Re-enacting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acting out</td>
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At this stage, learners conclude that one cannot “hide behind words” just as an authentic sign language user “cannot hide behind the signs”. This realisation acknowledges that the learner must commit to the target language, particularly if there is an emotive aspect to their message,
otherwise it will not appear authentic. They have deduced this from observing native signers (SEEING IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES) and those they perceive to have more experience than them. However, trying to replicate this is a challenge, particularly if one is naturally more softly spoken or introverted, this catapults them INTO THE SPOTLIGHT. They know that there is a need to “own it” and embody the message in order to appear credible. The affective intensity is embedded in the host culture without even trying. These aspects have been identified as something which must be worked towards:

It’s like when you say it’s disgusting, or it’s really revolting. In a spoken language, you can just say it without truly believing it but in sign language you have to show it or else it won’t work.

When narrating a story in ISL, there are newly discovered elements which learners have to contend with. A coordinated effort is required when incorporating so-called deaf-friendly elements. This includes the use of signing space, the incorporation of non-manual features and taking on the persona of the characters in question and the physical reproduction of the action/scene (known as constructed action\textsuperscript{20}). There are instances where this is impossible to do if the learner cannot connect real life experiences to the concept or due to a lack of prior knowledge. As such there is a TIPTOEING around the performance because it is not something a learner can identify with or visualize. However, the learner has no choice but to guess how to RE-ENACT this visually:

I found it extremely difficult to get my head around it in ISL (driving a car). I don’t drive and haven’t paid much attention to how someone drives a car. Sometimes when I’m signing I have to pretend to know what it looks like and feels like, but in fact I don’t.

This results in the language feeling forced because the learner does not have the lived experience of the concept/event that they are supposed to depict visually, and/or they have not yet mastered the necessary components of the language. There is lesser strain reported by those who have a

\textsuperscript{20} To represent an animate actor’s/object’s actions. Role-shift (as previously discussed) refers to the conversational aspect between referents. The interplay of both is quite common.
performance background as they feel better equipped to PERFORM and transfer those skills (acting, etc.) into this (articulating ISL), i.e. better prepared when thrusted INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

Another perception is that prior involvement in the arts (music, dance, painting) will result in being more in tune with the body and allow a learner to express ideas physically rather than relying solely on lexical knowledge. At this stage, some who do not come from an arts/performance background may feel somewhat detached from how the language is performed and there is concentrated attention on highlighting the differences between the modalities rather than the transfer of skills. Nevertheless, there is also a general consensus that with a higher degree of fluency, it won't feel like ACTING-OUT as such.

5.3.4 Progressing to the next stage

The transition from ACCLIMATISING to ATTUNING is not always marked by a critical juncture, unless a learner voluntarily withdraws from the programme and therefore does not continue on their language learning journey, or, the non-meeting of structural conditions within the LEARNING HUB. This includes the fulfilment of academic requirements, e.g. passing modules and sufficient attendance. The rate of progression may also be influenced by prior knowledge of ISL or past involvement in the deaf community. There will be a steeper learning curve at the ACCLIMATISING stage for those who have no ISL background, which can sometimes delay a learner moving to the ATTUNING stage.

Glaser (1978, p.100) declares that there can alternatively be a 'transition point' which is evidenced by a “general set of indicators”. The indicators in this theory are the learner becoming more autonomous and starting to engage in SELF-REGULATION strategies such as SELF-SOOTHING and SEEKING ACADEMIC SUPPORT. There are also the beginnings of an establishment of TRUST amongst peers which eases the transition to the ATTUNING stage.

Data indicates that the temporal nature of language proficiency is a factor to consider. ATTUNING (for the most part) appears to begin as learners enter the second semester of the academic year (4 months into their studies).
They now feel equipped to tackle the challenges they have encountered during ACCLIMATISING and are in a position where they have enough experience to make adaptations and ATTUNE to their surroundings/language. By this stage, SELF-REGULATION techniques are underway. Learners have engaged in both POSITIVE STRATEGIES and ANTI-STRATEGIES which have allowed them to process their main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. However, to overcome the issue they must move on to the next stage.

5.4 Stage of ATTUNING

The stage of ATTUNING is where adaptations are made within the learner while acculturating to the university and the deaf community. During the ACCLIMATISING stage, learners first attempt to develop techniques to deal with their concerns, however these attempts now become more refined as they continue to BOLSTER personal resources. The catalyst for this shift is GAINING AUTONOMY. However, EMBODIED AUTONOMY is now something which is strived for. The initial overwhelming impact that EXPOSURE INSECURITY brought has now subsided and it is replaced with attention directed towards INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. There is a broadening and building of the EXPOSING, ATTUNING and AUTHENTICATING processes.

A definition of ‘attune’ in general terms is: “to bring into harmony; to make aware, or responsive”\(^{21}\). This ability to bring a serious issue into accord requires not only a responsive change but also a change within the self. This is precisely what is happening for L2-M2 learners in this instance. As well as seeking an alternate reaction there is also a shift in mindset. A curiosity develops, there is added intrigue for the language and an awareness that progress is being made on a personal level. It is acknowledged by learners that languishing in the ACCLIMATISING stage would be futile and there are conscious attempts to become more proactive in overcoming their main concern. This leads them to the stage of ATTUNING.

\(^{21}\) https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attune
5.4.1 EXPOSING (navigating)

Following an acceptance of the perceived exposing nature of ISL, the learner begins to navigate this SENSE OF EXPOSURE. The properties of EXPOSING (NAVIGATING) during the ATTUNING stage are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPOSING (navigating)</th>
<th>In the mix</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drilling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Push-Pull</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treading carefully</td>
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</table>

At this point, learners have come to terms with the nature of the ISL classroom and mandatory participation. In fact, several participants comment that at this stage, they get involved to a much higher degree than in any previous learning context, language learning or otherwise (simultaneously engaging in the process of ALLIANCING within this LEARNING HUB). This active participation sometimes takes place automatically because the learner is IN THE MIX:

In a spoken language classroom, it’s very much an active decision to speak out and say something, so you tend not to. Whereas you find that when you have a thought of something, or kind of have an answer and move your hand then the teacher will catch it in their peripheral vision and be like, what’s that, and then you will be in it and participating.

Notwithstanding the acceptance of this fact, learners are still sometimes anxious because they are so visible. To NAVIGATE this, the learner self-regulates by engaging in positive self-talk (SELF-SOOTH). This involves being mindful, the mantra is telling yourself that you will try your best and that you have prepared for the task by DRILLING. This act is a visualization of THE PIECE and practicing it as many times as is necessary to put yourself in the best possible position. The learner is very much aware how they are perceived
by others but attempts to overcome this because they are in a non-threatening environment and they now know that it is natural to experience a certain level of angst. This **acceptance** allows them to cope in a more productive way:

> I’m very much a believer in that everyone should try to suspend...just try and get comfortable because this kind of thing is going to be somewhat embarrassing. You just have to try to move beyond being self-conscious.

The willingness to accept the ‘embarrassment’ is often determined by the nature of the task and what is at stake. This allows a learner to step outside of their comfort boundary and move beyond the self-conscious, even if it is **exposing**. Learners negotiate and reconcile external values about ‘what it means to be a good ISL learner’ with internal beliefs about ‘me as a good student’. They are willing to push beyond their pre-CDS notion of what constitutes typical communication in order to progress with their goal of becoming a good ISL student. This is a **push-pull** process which does not happen systematically. It generally occurs if the learner is extremely comfortable with the topic or if there are academic consequences. There is a consensus that when something is being graded it is the time where you push yourself to the limit.

The act of **treading carefully** is a feature of the **safe-player**, although somewhat counterproductive, it alleviates stress/anxiety if a learner concludes that it is not warranted to “put yourself out there” for the task. It is a balancing act “as you are still getting used to the whole concept”. Nevertheless, it is now at the forefront of the mind and learners are reflecting on how far they are willing to go in the pursuit to overcome this exposure issue. This, in essence, becomes a regulation behaviour to momentarily suppress anxiety.

There is a spectrum of how impactful (**degrees of exposure insecurity**) the main concern is on the learner at this stage. For some there is a desire to complete a task quickly and move on with it, rather than procrastinate like some others. However, even those who report milder anxiety about performing in front of others, still do not wish to be **exposed** as the one who
always goes first. Such learners fear that they could be interpreted by others as wanting to dominate proceedings or being overtly confident, so they may continue to avoid self-nomination. The in the spotlight risk still surfaces here, although learners believe that if they seek academic supports they will further navigate this issue. The grappling of exposure insecurity is known by the learner to not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, the relationships which have been previously been scoped-out are now being strengthened via the alliancing process.

5.4.2 ALLIANCING (strengthening)

The properties of alliancing (strengthening) during the attuning stage are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALLIANCING (strengthening)</th>
<th>Building trust</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Safe place</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Even playing field</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boosting personal resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Momento</td>
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</table>

Building trust is essential during this process to alleviate exposure insecurity. Trust that you will not be judged or ridiculed when errors are exposed. There is a desire to move beyond treading carefully and to not be confined by how you may be perceived by others when performing the language. This foundation sets the scene that CDS is a safe place. Learners normally feel at ease discussing their progress with lecturers and ask for advice when needed. Likewise, the group dynamic is a positive one. Those with no prior ISL knowledge feel that they quickly catch up with more experienced signers and are now on an even playing field.

However, it is still noted that certain students naturally excel, some of whom had no ISL background prior to coming to College. Learners, although having some ability to assess each other's language skill, do not feel in competition with one another and are now more willing to expose their
language insecurities in the classroom. At this stage, firm friendships have been established and are **strengthening**:

As a class we are looking at each other’s sign, less in a panicked way of, “oh my God they know so many more signs than me”, or “they’re getting ahead”. It’s more realising that people already have different styles and it’s more of a thing of comparing styles and helping each other out.

There are now increased efforts to **embrace** community events and networks outside of College. Learners will typically attend such events in pairs/groups in order to have back-up and feel less exposed. Lecturers encourage them to be proactive in engaging in naturalistic settings and become known in the community (also part of the **authenticating** process). This was not something the students originally envisaged, and the element of community involvement that would be required was initially underestimated. Learners now realise that community involvement is something to be welcomed. Deaf people want to trust newcomers, so they must try to respond to this deaf community concern. However, learners may have personal commitments which limit this engagement, e.g. part-time employment, family circumstances, etc. Nonetheless, there is a new desire to practice language skills with community members whom learners encounter, and they tentatively seek out occasions where this is appropriate.

In tandem, learners continue to **seek out academic support** in order to **bolster personal resources**. The learner is now familiar with supports offered to students by CDS academics, such as tutorial sessions. On a macro level, there are a multitude of supports that students can avail of in the wider College community. Each registered student is assigned a College tutor (from another department) whom they arrange to meet if there are any issues which are impacting their studies. This service is taken up occasionally and learners deem it to be a valuable resource. There is also a Student Counselling Service where learners can book one to one or group counselling sessions. Some learners acknowledge that they have availed of this when struggling with academic and/or personal matters. There are also workshops on managing anxiety, stress-busting and mindfulness. Academic
supports, such as presenting skills and self-management strategies, provided by this service, have also been deemed beneficial by learners.

The learners who have presented at these services did not solely attribute attendance to their concerns in the ISL classroom, but rather to a culmination of issues related to the student experience and/or personal matters. Notwithstanding this fact, such supports have assisted them in continuing their studies, allowing them to develop coping skills to deal with stresses and anxiety.

At this point, the learner starts to fine-tune their ISL skill and does not want to plateau. There has been accelerated learning up until now because of the language immersion environment, and the learner now feels they have a responsibility to keep the momentum going. Those who cannot get MOMENTO suffer from inertia and find it difficult or slower to move beyond the ATTUNING stage. The security associated with the STRENGTHENING of ALLIANCES is spurred on by important milestones ahead of them in the coming months. Their end of (second) year grades will have an impact on choices for their third year of studies, and their career trajectory as prospective interpreters or teachers of ISL. Therefore, there is an impetus to perform to the best of their ability in order to secure the grades required to access their preferred career pathway. They are STRIVING to develop AUTHENTIC language skills and move beyond the stage of novice learner. Thus, they must proactively engage in the AUTHENTICATING process.

5.4.3 AUTHENTICATING (striving)
The properties of AUTHENTICATING (STRIVING) during the ATTUNING stage are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHENTICATING (striving)</th>
<th>Self reflection</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chart progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pitching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flow and fluidity</td>
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</table>
A deeper appreciation for the language is now apparent. The essential components of ISL are being realised and STRIVED for. These aspects of the language which were previously alien for learners are now contemplated. As well as looking to others for AUTHENTICITY, there is analysis of one’s own production through SELF REFLECTION. Aspects of the language performance have now been SELF-EVALUATED and improved upon. The learner no longer considers themselves a novice and can now CHART PROGRESS. There is an awareness that there may not necessarily be a seamless transition to advanced levels, however RISKS are less frequently felt and can be dealt with more confidently. The process requires input from educators, effort, as well as feeling comfortable with using the body and face when performing a visual-spatial language (also a form of EXPOSING). There is still a concern on the part of the learner that they may actually go too far rather than offering a balanced performance. They continue to test the waters by PITCHING at different levels, in order to ascertain what the optimal level of performance is:

You know, some of the tasks really stretch me. I’ve always been called aloof by my family but in ISL this won’t wash most of the time. I have to be more open when I’m signing…. I’m trying, but I suppose it’s a work in progress so I’ll keep going until I get there.

Although learners are willing to “put themselves out there more”, they believe that it should sometimes be a measured performance in order not to mock or offend. They still hold back slightly in front of their peers if they feel uncertain and they do not want to fully commit. Whilst continuing to strive, there is recognition of when they or their classmates have achieved FLOW AND FLUIDITY in their target language use. This does not equate to fluency, rather, there are clearer expectations of what is expected even though the language has not yet been mastered. After completing a task, they have a greater understanding of whether it went smoothly or if it was littered with errors. Likewise, if they know that a particular aspect is challenging, they play to their strengths and AVOID using this feature. Instead, they incorporate an alternate method to convey the same point. They comment on the
flexibility of signed language in that there are several ways in which they can construct an utterance, even if some are more effective than others.

Learners also begin to analyse ISL used by community members known/unknown to them via social media. This action is not for networking purposes at this point, it is instead a means of testing their receptive skills and exposing themselves to language and content that is not used in a classroom setting. As such they are AUTHENTICATING because they are aware that language used by grassroots community members may not be the same as the variety used within CDS.

Increasing curiosity with regard to the community and language emerges because learners plan to graduate and gain employment in this relatively small community. They EMBRACE this challenge as they must familiarise themselves with the community and make themselves known to a wider circle of deaf people (also ALLIANCING). They have an increasing number of interactions with both native and non-native signers, which solidifies their learning and assists in their conversational skills. Learners are now becoming more confident in their language use and not feeling so self-conscious; therefore, SENSE OF EXPOSURE is decreasing. Their journey and their language ability is now beginning to feel more AUTHENTIC.

5.4.4 Progressing to the next stage

As witnessed in the transition between the stages of ACCLIMATISING and ATTUNING, there are also general indictors which mark progress between the juncture of ATTUNING and AUTHENTICATING. The additional self-regulation technique of EMBRACE is beginning to appear here, and it allow learners to gain a comfort level in the classroom where the impact of EXPOSURE INSECURITY is not so powerful.

Learners are now delivering THE PIECE in a more self-assured manner by attempting to COMPOSE their L2-M2 SELF. The ANTI-STRATEGIES of AVOIDING and CUT-SHORT do not feature widely at this point and alternate positive strategies are appearing more freely. Learners now have the bandwidth to consider and select from a larger range of options available to them. The follow-up interviews highlighted this in significantly more detail and also
solidified learners’ advancement to the next phase of their journey, the stage of AUTHENTICATING.

5.5 Stage of AUTHENTICATING

The final stage of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF coincides with learners confirming their specialty for the Sophister years of the Bachelor in Deaf Studies (mid to end of Year 2). This choice is often influenced by how successful they have been in resolving their main concern - INCREASING THEIR EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. Some did not originally wish to become an interpreter, however for others there has been a change of mind and instead of selecting interpreting as a career path, they opt for either ISL Teaching or Deaf Studies. This decision is sometimes influenced by the main concern of this study because learners believe that insecurity could potentially re-surface when interpreting another person’s language and emotions. The stage of AUTHENTICATING continues, regardless of strand choice. However, this critical juncture, in terms of decision making and obtaining the necessary grades, causes a learner to evaluate their language authenticity and subsequently motivates them to continue on this journey.

Although the processes remain the same, they take on a new dimension which indicate that they have effectively dealt with, or at a minimum, know how to process their main concern. The dimensions within these processes highlight the resolve in tackling the challenges which they have encountered and are now in a position to face head on. It is apparent by the end of this stage that learners are feeling more secure. However the impact of their learning journey has been much more far reaching, as we will evidence with specific examples from the data.

5.5.1 EXPOSING (embracing)

The properties of EXPOSING (EMBRACING) during the AUTHENTICATING stage are set out below.
After reaching this stage, a learner quickly realizes that one has to **LOSE YOUR INHIBITIONS** because if they don’t “there is only so far you can get without getting fully into it”. This results in being at relative ease whilst signing and experiencing a sense of relief that language use no longer has to be forced. It is not effortless; it still requires attention, yet there is a desire to contribute and **COMM IT** to producing it as you **PUSH THE BOUNDARIES** of **EXPOSURE INSECURITY**. The learner is accepting of the **EXPOSING nature** of the language and has **EMBRACED** it to the best of their ability. There is no longer resistance because there is an acknowledgement that it will be detrimental to learning and the ultimate level of language attainment:

*If you are going to use it, then you’re not going to hide a damn thing because either you will not be understood, or you won’t be a proficient signer if you are not willing to accept that vulnerability whilst signing.*

The learners do not want their hang-ups to derail them from reaching their full potential. The language is now seen as beautiful rather than “different” and the richness of a visual-spatial language is now appreciated. The linear nature of spoken language (speaking one word at a time) is now seen to be restrictive. The focus is no longer on what others will think of them as they are attempting to **BE CREATIVE** with their depictions and use of space. Learners are starting to own their learning autonomy, where they now have resources they can draw on in difficult situations.

Perfectionists still find the errors frustrating but these irritations are often not heightened by the fact that others are present. It is inevitable that errors will occur, and learners are now accepting that this will happen in full view of the
audience. Once the decision has been made to **EMBRACE** the **EXPOSING** nature of ISL, then the process of **ALLIANCING** must also be **FORGED**. If there is a pledge to the language and the community, there must also be a commitment to peers, and this is facilitated by mutual **TRUST** and respect.

5.5.2 **ALLIANCING (forging)**

The properties of **ALLIANCING (FORGING)** during the **AUTHENTICATING** stage are set out below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALLIANCING (forging)</th>
<th>Sense of comfort</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Close knit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L2-M2 Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group identity</td>
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There is a **SENSE OF COMFORT** with and amongst peers: as the group has become **CLOSE KNIT**, it no longer feels threatening in any way. Learners comment that some peers have competitive tendencies, but as a whole, the learning environment does not feel competitive where learners are trying to outdo each other. The dynamic is friendly, supportive and learners often recognise the assistance received from others, both inside and outside of the classroom. The desire to perform to the best of one’s own ability is more of an internal aspiration to improve capability rather than trying to outperform others. Learners have found their identity, their **L2-M2 SELF**, and their place within the group. Some have taken on specific roles for the greater good of the group and as a result the class forms its own **GROUP IDENTITY** where there is a class representative, advice giver, technical expert, the 'mammy' of the group, etc.:

_Everyone knows each other well. Whereas last year it was all new and people were trying to make themselves known._

Learners are not yet fully integrated with the wider deaf community but there is a desire to move towards this and learners work to ascertain what must happen in order for this to be realized, or if this is possible at all – “as learners
maybe we’ll never be fully accepted because we are not deaf”. There is now frequent attendance at deaf community events, the joining of deaf sporting clubs, theatrical groups, and volunteering at various community initiatives. The rationale is two-fold, to become proficient in ISL and also to network in a community who will ultimately employ you in some capacity in the future.

This networking requires one to be proactive, whilst pushing the boundaries of their EXPOSURE SECURITY threshold. A learner takes solace and is proud of the fact that community members begin to recognise them - when they go to Deaf Village Ireland they usually bump into someone they know, and a conversation ensues. Alternatively, when a learner unexpectedly meets a deaf person they also initiate communication, even in cases where they are not obliged to:

A deaf person came into my job recently. She was dealing with another girl who happened to be new to the job. I could see they were both struggling to get their point across, so I didn’t think twice, I just went over to help out and kind of ended up interpreting the conversation. I don’t think I would have been able to do that a few months ago so I was quite proud of myself. The customer was delighted and then started to ask me lots of questions about how I knew sign language. She said that when she comes in, in future, she’s going to ask for me.

Within the university, learners continue to link in with lecturers and seek guidance. A rapport has been established and learners view their educators as having a dual role, as educator and community member. Therefore, they can act as gatekeepers to the community. This is not something they have previously encountered in an educational environment and therefore relish the opportunities which are offered to them in order to have AUTHENTIC engagement:

I’m grateful for the lecturers trying to introduce us to the community. We often discuss the big news, what’s going on and what events are coming up. Without them we wouldn’t know half of what’s happening

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22 See: http://www.deafvillageireland.ie/
out there. We also sometimes have guest presenters come in to some of our classes. They talk about their personal experiences or their work for different deaf organisations and things like that. It’s nice to see different signing styles and also what’s happening outside of the University.

The culmination of this theory (i.e. the learner journey) focuses on AUTHENTICITY. Experience, applying SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES, and having FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY allows the learner to PERFORM authentically.

5.5.3 AUTHENTICATING (performing)

The properties of AUTHENTICATING (PERFORMING) during the AUTHENTICATING stage are set out below.

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<tr>
<th>AUTHENTICATING (performing)</th>
<th>Meta-linguistic awareness</th>
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<tr>
<td>The piece</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recital</td>
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<td>Linguistic shapeshifting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owning embodied autonomy</td>
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<td>Re-visionsing</td>
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At this stage, learners are highly reflexive by looking back on their development of ISL proficiency and measuring progress that has been made. This is not just in terms of grades but also from a META-LINGUISTIC AWARENESS standpoint, allowing identification of one's strengths and weaknesses. What stems from this is a deeper understanding of the linguistic components of the language and an embracement of all the structural and bodily components in a meaningful way. They learner is now EMBODYING ‘THE PIECE’ throughout the RECITAL.

As previously mentioned, there is a belief amongst learners that EMBODIMENT could be accelerated by prior performing experience, an inherent language learning capability or by people “who think visually and have excellent spatial awareness”. However, regardless of performance
experience the complexity of the language is being admired – although it possesses rules which govern sentence construction there is also a “free-flowing” aspect to it which allows for some flexibility and an artistic freedom, which one of the learners referred to as LINGUISTIC SHAPESHIFTING:

*The ability to roleshift into anything is almost like shapeshifting. A linguistic shape shifting. I really enjoy it now; it caught my interest from the very first day.*

The respect for the language and community is a feature of the AUTHENTICATING process. The microcosm of this niche learning environment within a larger institution is cherished. The EMBODIMENT of a signed language has been acquired through hard-work, perseverance, management of emotions and the mastering of both tangible and intangible language skills. They have also had lived experiences since studying ISL which they can now incorporate into their ISL production. As such, they now possess EMBODIED AUTONOMY in their L2-M2 SELF as they perform the language and now have control over their instrument, i.e. the body. The motor skills which are required to formulate the language have been fine-tuned through kinaesthetic practice. The PERFORMANCE aspect is now EMBODIED, following many RECITALS. If embodiment of ISL has not been fully attained, then participants are willing to continue on their language journey in order to master it – it is an unaccomplished yet identified goal.

There is a RE-VISIONING of the self in how one performs language, a RE-VISIONING of the deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority (instead of a community they wish to ‘help’) and a RE-VISIONING of the relationship between the L2-M2 SELF and the community. The programme has been enlightening in that it has tested participants in ways they never imagined and has culminated in more than just an educational experience:

*You kind of open yourself to a whole new world, because it is a different world.*

This world allows you to identify with a minority community striving for recognition on many levels. It requires personal investment and adherence to deaf community values. Although some learners may withdraw from the
programme/community, those who see their career trajectory mapped out within the community cannot help but be drawn in:

*What I personally cannot understand in the slightest is how someone can go through two years of this and not have it rub off on them and just kind of be passive and think it's just a course or degree and then you're going to leave.*

Notwithstanding the fact that participants are only mid-way through the formal programme (at the conclusion of this data collection stage), they are still finding their place and space within the community. They are L2-M2 learners and still traverse through the hearing world when not engaging in the programme. However, they wish to be allies and look forward to where this journey will take them. The language, Irish Sign Language and the LEARNING HUB has led to the learner COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

The added dimension of how a learner feels different when producing language through a visual medium and how the L2-M2 has had an impact on their L1 and their persona are also significant issues to consider. Participants at this stage of the learning journey claim that they are more at ease with eye-contact in general and are becoming increasingly expressive (facial expressions, hand gestures, etc.) in everyday situations. Some mentioned how discourse strategies that they employ have altered, including their turn-taking behaviours in conversations. Due to learning ISL, a learner is “...less likely to interrupt [when speaking] because you don't do it in ISL. I definitely hang back more when I’m speaking now”. Learners recognise that the language and community were initially daunting, but that their language learning experience has had a transforming impact on them as learners.

The main concern of increasing the exposure security threshold has been tackled: some have overcome it and others report that it has dissipated to different degrees. This has been achieved through the processes and stages outlined heretofore, which feed into COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

### 5.6 Rebuilding the Theory

The core category is the one that stands out as being central, constantly reoccurs in the data and to which all of the sub-categories (stages and
properties) relate to (Glaser, 1998). The core category in the case of this study is COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. This is deemed to be a basic social psychological process (BSPP). Glaser (1978, p.97) refers to a process as:

...something which occurs over time and involves change over time. These changes over time ordinarily have discernible breaking points – discernible to the extent that stages can be perceived, so they can be treated as theoretical units in themselves, with condition, consequences (which may be another stage), other properties, and so forth which are unique in form to each particular stage. Stages are perceivable, because they sequence with one another within temporal limits. Sets of codes related to these stages may ‘carry forward’ into one or more stages further on in the process.

A BSPP (as outlined above), specifically relates to a “social psychological” process (ibid., p.102). The main concern, which engages the BSPP is INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. This initially appears to be a mammoth task for those who have intense reactions when learning a new language which is expressed through a different modality, i.e. visual-spatial. Therefore, they must BALANCE a number of variables in order to maintain their STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM. Glaser (2005, p.29) refers to balancing as another theoretical code, this is “…handling many variables at once in order to start an action, keep an action going, or achieve a resolution”. In this case, a learner is balancing different facets associated with learning to deal with EXPOSURE INSECURITY, whilst seeking to be successful on their chosen programme and become proficient in ISL.

However, there can be risks which prohibit progress or even cause a learner to regress. Glaser (2005, p.9) states that amplified causal looping involves either “worsening or improving progressions or escalating severity”. In this case the BSPP is allowing for positive change to occur which becomes re-enforced over time, i.e. improving progressions. However there can be setbacks, i.e. feedback, where the learner has a negative experience and

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23 Glaser (ibid.) suggests that there can be several theoretical codes contained within a study.
the evaluation of that RISK or SENSE OF EXPOSURE may hinder progress or cause them to spiral back to earlier behaviours. These points will feature in the discussion below as the theory is re-built with its various interconnecting components.

The ACCLIMATISING stage is overwhelming for many learners because in addition to dealing with their main concern they are also experiencing life changing events alongside admission to College, e.g. moving to a new city, living independently for the first time. As previously mentioned, participants referred to a small number of other classmates who had decided to withdraw (who were not participants in this study) and it was believed that anxiety surrounding the language was a definitive factor in at least one of these cases. These claims require further investigation in order to be substantiated. The threshold level for dealing with EXPOSURE INSECURITY is reported as being low for most learners during the ACCLIMATISING stage, because RISKS are perceived, and SENSE OF EXPOSURE is high. However, most learners are relatively undeterred because the insecurity experienced manifests into either DISCOMFORT or DISCOMPOURE. DISTRESS occurs to a much lesser degree. Therefore, they can move on to the stage of ATTUNING.

During ATTUNING, there is a conscious effort to work on personal demands in parallel with developing language ability. Learners are now proactively seeking out community participation opportunities and meeting a range of deaf people from differing backgrounds. This highlights that they are GAINING AUTONOMY. There is increased pressure not to plateau and with decisions around prospective career pathways now on the horizon, such as selecting their preferred career pathway via academic strand choice for their Sophister (3rd and 4th) years. As there are grade requirements to be met in this regard, poor performance must be rectified.

The ALLIANCES amongst learners, the learner and the College, and the learner and the community have now STRENGTHENED. Supports are now known and availed of when needed. There is an INCREASING EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD and a recognition that even if the insecurity cannot be resolved at this point, it is still an issue which is improving and can keep improving. The level of TRUST is growing so the learner does not have to
mask his/her vulnerabilities and can discuss their concerns with those in their inner circle.

The positive stage of AUTHENTICATING is solidified by the learners’ experiences across the two previous stages. The processes take on profound dimensions and learners report that they have developed a strong sense of identity, which now incorporates their L2-M2 SELF or “signing self”. The relationship they have with the language and their sense of ownership of the language has changed as well as their outlook on how they communicate generally. The effects of becoming proficient in ISL as an L2 or L3 appears to have a positive washback for their L1 and their general confidence levels in terms of performance. Their initial tribulations have mostly passed, and they have experienced a transformative journey which results in a new sense of identity as an AUTHENTIC L2-M2 learner.

Learners are not seeking to be an ‘authentic’ L1 ISL user, but a believable L2 user of ISL. They want to be credible, accurate, effective, understood and confident. They want to perform their L2-M2 identity with peers, deaf sign language users, and in CDS. Their main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD has been accomplished by BOLSTERING PERSONAL RESOURCES which allow for autonomy to be FULLY OWNED and EMBODIED. This has been realised through the journey of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

5.7 Testing the Theory with A Different Sample Population

As outlined in the methodology chapter, the sample population consists of four evening class students and two learners who were building ISL skill for research purposes. During the interviews, elements of this theory were applicable to this sample, however the main concern was not shared. The greatest concern for this population is ACCESS. The majority only have access to ISL for two hours per week in the classroom environment, and in between classes, they find it difficult to practice, maintain and develop skill. When they return for the next class, quite often they have to recap what was covered the week before as many vocabulary items cannot be recalled.
There is often no sign language network which they can tap into between classes in order to use the language in naturalistic settings. In terms of self-study, the lack of conversational opportunities, further decreases the likelihood of retaining content covered in class. As we have noted earlier, there is no universal notation system for capturing a sign language, therefore many of these learners draw sketches, use symbols or describe through English language words how a handshape should be formed, the movement, etc. This often results in difficulties practicing at home and as a result, incorrect vocabulary which has to be corrected when they next have contact with their ISL teacher. The emphasis in class is deemed to be the expansion of vocabulary and this sample suggest that the performative aspect of delivering the language comes secondary.

The motivation for taking this special interest class also differs. Frequently, it relates to their employment setting. There may be a deaf person that they encounter in work from time to time, or they perceive ISL skill to be something that could potentially be beneficial for their career prospects, e.g. “it’s useful because I work within the civil service and you never know who you will meet in different capacities”. The desire to actually work in and with the deaf community did not feature strongly.

Some of these learners reported having a passion for languages and wanted to add ISL to their repertoire. Others did not have a definitive reason for choosing ISL; it was something they saw advertised or heard about through word of mouth, thought it seemed interesting and signed up for the course. There were two participants who had an extended family member who is deaf, and with whom they used spoken language or “home sign”. Both of these participants stated that they do not see this person very often, but out of respect for them, wanted to have a certain level of ISL so they could use it to aid conversation between them.

Interestingly, although participants initially find ISL daunting in terms of the EXPOSING nature in a classroom setting, this generally passes after a short period of time. There is a desire to engage with the ISL teacher as they have a limited window of opportunity and want to make the most of it. They appreciate they are offered the opportunity to re-produce what they are being taught. Some participants mention that others may not be so forthcoming
due to shyness, however insecurity does not appear to be a major issue, and nobody presents as highly uncomfortable. In relation to retention, there is a higher withdrawal rate for evening classes as people lose interest, or due to conflicting commitments, decide to withdraw. However, as there was no engagement with this cohort it is merely speculation as to exactly why they do not complete the short course. Those who do partake discuss minor embarrassment if mistakes are made but none refer to the anxiety symptoms which were discussed in the target sample discussion. As there is no examination or coursework involved this also lessens pressure, which is another factor to consider.

The syllabus also appears to be a contributing factor. The evening class students are focusing on the basic elements of the language, which would be sufficient to engage in everyday conversation. They have not covered linguistic features such as role-shifting or constructed action. These elements exacerbate insecurity for full-time students as they have to portray characters with prominent facial expressions. The general emotions which part-time students have to convey in communicating facts did not appear to be too taxing on them.

When taking this, plus non-examination into account, along with the fact that these extra-mural students only have a short session each week, it is difficult to categorically deduce why INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD is not the same concern shared by these learners. However, ACCESS clearly is the struggle. Learners in this instance have limited or no connections with the Deaf community outside of the CDS. When asked if they will continue their ISL learning after the course has concluded, many claim they will but are unsure as to how that will happen in practice. There is a desire to keep in touch with their peer group and some wish to pursue an intermediate short-course. Others had expressed an interest in the Bachelor in Deaf Studies degree programme if a part-time stream was to be made available.

Thus, we can say that the theory generated from this study has been tested and at present appears to only be applicable to the target sample of full-time registered students on the Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme, Trinity College Dublin. However, there is scope for comparing results against cohorts engaged in other professional programmes in other countries.
5.8 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter presented the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory, a theory of the process which learners on a professional programme go through to deal with their main concern of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD.

Following from this empirical study, I propose the following:

1. The common denominator between the goals of maintaining a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and developing LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE is AUTONOMY:
   (a) The ability to balance the STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM is achieved by reaching FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY.
   (b) The ability to develop LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE is achieved by mastering EMBODIED AUTONOMY.

2. Learners manage what they perceive as ‘immediate risk’ by engaging in SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES:
   (a) If the learner perceives a high SENSE OF EXPOSURE they are more likely to engage an ANTI-STRATEGY.
   (b) If the learner perceives a low/moderate SENSE OF EXPOSURE they are more likely to engage a POSITIVE/NEUTRAL STRATEGY.

3. COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF is achieved by BOLSTERING PERSONAL RESOURCES (as autonomy is gained). These personal resources are developed by engaging in the processes of EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING:
   (a) However, the learner may not give each of these processes equal attention.
   (b) ALLIANCING is recognised as a key component needed in this social context (learning a language in the LANGUAGE HUB). Therefore one must interact and build relationships with others.
   (c) If ALLIANCING is mostly combined with EXPOSING then this will lead to maintaining a STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM.
(d) If ALLIANCING is mostly paired with AUTHENTICATING then the focus is on the development of LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE.

(e) A broadening (over time) occurs if concentrated effort and resources is placed in each process. Ultimately, this leads to COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

4. If personal resources have been minimally developed, then there will be limited CAPACITY TO COMPOSE.

5. If personal resources have been built and broadened to the best of the learner’s ability, then CAPACITY TO COMPOSE is boundless. The perception of the learner is that the language learning journey and relationship with the Deaf Community will continually evolve.

With these propositions established, the theoretical sampling stage involved consulting L2-M2 literature to discover if any of the above issues have been addressed. Where there were gaps, the range of literature examined was broadened out to include second language learning for spoken languages and topics beyond this.
Chapter 6  Literature Review

There have been several forms of literature review carried out during my research process. At the initial application stage, background reading was completed, a requirement of the entry process. At that point the main concern of participants in this study had not been identified, therefore the readings consulted were of a general nature and assisted with the contextualisation of the Irish Deaf Community and the direction of L2-M2 language learning research thus far. The second form of literature reviewed was in relation to Grounded Theory methodology to ensure that CGT principles were being adhered to during the study. CGT was compared to other methodologies and there was also the consideration of ethical implications of conducting research. As previously discussed, the theory generated by the CGT project directs the researcher toward literature in the substantive field (i.e. the core concern of participants) and this occurs at a later stage in the research process in comparison to non-CGT approaches.

Literature was referred to in the area of L2-M2 language learning anxiety and the performance of a signed language. However, it soon became clear that not only is there a scarcity of empirical research in this area, but that the field of L2-M2 research is generally under-researched. The theoretical data set presented in the last chapter led me into previously uncharted territory in terms of discipline knowledge, a potential outcome of CGT approaches.

The guiding research questions for this study have been:

1) What is L2-M2 learners’ greatest concern when in the early stages of learning a visual-spatial language?
2) How do they process or resolve this concern?
3) What are the commonalities between learning a signed language and a spoken language in relation to the main concern?

This chapter addresses the above questions and considers whether the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF is applicable to other L2 or L2-M2 learners. To address this, we begin with a review of literature that relates to the psychology of the language learner.
Historically, second language acquisition theories have incorporated elements relating to the psychological state of the learner (e.g. The Affective Filter, Krashen, 1981). However, a branch of research, known as the ‘Psychology of Language Learning’ (PLL), specifically focuses on the psychological dimension of language learning. This chapter primarily concentrates on three PLL areas, applicable to the theory generated from this study. These are: Language Learning Anxiety (LLA), Performance of L2 Self, and Positive Psychology in Language Learning. Following this extensive overview, there will be discussion of literature that brings my project forward – this will be framed as future opportunities.

We will take up some of the issues arising from the literature again in chapter 7, where we will explore correlations and/or divergences with regard to COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. We begin by considering the concepts of the L2 Self and language embodiment as a backdrop to this extensive literature review.

6.1 L2 Self

Dörnyei & Csizér (2002) argue that language learning is more than merely interacting with users of the target language; it also evokes an evolving self-concept in the learner. Language is at the very core of our identity and should be viewed in these terms when considering L2 language learning (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Ushioda, 2011). Similarly, Kim (2009, p.50) posits that language learning is not simply a new speech medium but a “gradual transformation from an L1 self to an L2 self”. A learner carries all of their life history, cultural background and language learning beliefs to the L2 learning context, which allows them to embark on a transformational process in their identity formation, i.e. a new L2 self (ibid.)

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24 See the International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning for further information. http://www.iapll.com
25 The concept of the ‘L2 Self’ permeates many sections of this chapter, e.g. Eva Hoffman’s autobiographical account in §6.4.5 and Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) discussion of the L2 ‘anxious self’ as a distinct dimension of overall self - §6.4.6. This concept extends to the ‘L2-M2 Self’, which was outlined in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF (Chapter 5) and will again be explored in the discussion chapter (7).
from existing psychological theories of the self and marries them with specific frameworks on second language learning, for example:

The self is “me,” the sum of what I am. A significant part of what we call the self is knowledge. All the ideas, thoughts, and information that we have about ourselves - about who we are, what characteristics we have, what our personal histories have made us, and what we may yet become - make up our self-concept (Bordens and Horowitz, 2008, p.30).

A pioneering language learning motivational model, the L2 Motivational Self System (L2SMSS), (Dörnyei’, 2009) is the dominant model to bridge the disciplinary gap between psychological frameworks and language learning motivation. Within it, the existing psychological theory of ‘possible selves’ (Markus and Nurius, 1986) was drawn upon. MacIntyre et al. (2009) postulate that ‘possible selves’ are mental representations of what an individual expects for themselves at a future point in time. It encompasses three distinctive elements: “…the expected self, the hoped-for self and the feared self” (ibid., p.46). In turn, each of these possible selves has a direct correlation with motivation levels and self-regulation (ibid.). The ‘possible selves’ element is situated in L2SMSS in the form of the ‘ideal L2 self’ (originally coined by Higgins, 1998). This strand suggests that a prime motivator for an L2 learner is to decrease the distance between the actual, current-state self and the ideal self.

The second strand is the ‘ought-to L2 self’, an extrinsic rather than intrinsic aspect of the theory, whereby the learner deciphers what attributes they ‘ought-to’ possess. These motives are drawn from observations of the L2 target language community and are generally instrumental in nature, i.e., what is needed to be successful and avoid negative ramifications. The final strand of this model focuses on the learning experience and inputs such as teaching style and curricula. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) argue that the validity of the L2SMSS has been tested quantitatively: the results of all studies in this area to date have supported Dörnyei’s L2SMM theory.
6.2 Language and embodiment

Leeson and Saeed (2012) outline the general principles of cognitive linguistics, which holds that all languages are embodied. “This is the view that meaning reflected through a language reflects our overall experience as human beings” (ibid., p.6). Another cognitivist assumption is that the semantic structure of a language integrates and transmits conceptual structure. As such our perspective on the world is embodied in linguistic meaning (ibid.). Embodied cognition arises from:

…bodily interactions with the world. From this point of view, cognition depends on the kinds of experiences that come from having a body with particular perceptual and motor capacities that are inseparably linked and that together form the matrix within which memory, emotion, language, and all other aspects of life are meshed. (Thelen et al., 2001, p.1)

In essence, if we are to fully comprehend a description of an action, it must firstly be internally simulated (Fischer and Zwaan, 2008). Lakoff and Johnson (1999) state that this type of processing involves two structures; the physical structure, i.e. a corporal body, and an experiencing structure, i.e. the bodily sensation we experience through the application of the physical structure in our surroundings. However, the coupling of motor and semantic processes is not unidirectional as was previously assumed. Aravena et al. (2010) established the reciprocal relationship between the sensorimotor function of the brain and language comprehension. Their ‘Bi-Directional Hypothesis’ suggests that our mind influences our bodily movements but also in reverse, our movements in the environment can enhance our cognition.

A straightforward example would be the action of catching an object. When we listen to someone who articulates the verb to catch, it triggers the sensorimotor function in our brain responsible for that action. Likewise, when we think about the action of catching, as we speak it may result in us actually gesturing to catch an object, as we verbalise it. However, the bi-directionality hypothesis assumes that our bodily experiences of catching different forms
of objects increases our ability to conceptualise and understand the variables associated with it. Therefore, when we have concrete engagement with that object or that sensation, it has an impact on our bodily state, i.e. emotions and motor activities. These become modality-specific representations which form ‘embodied simulations’ (Landau et al., 2010). A point that will be returned to in Chapter 7 as learners often have difficulties in depicting visual scenes in a signed language if they have never engaged in that action.

Leung et al. (2011) discuss the emotive aspect of embodied theory; if a facial expression depicts fear, it will be accompanied by physical changes in response to that emotion, e.g. increased eye aperture, rapid eye movements and increased nasal stimulation. Interestingly, if these features are observed when watching others it also invokes a sensory reaction in us based on past experiences when dealing with the same emotion. There is neuro-biological evidence to support this claim. Winerman (2005) suggests that the ‘mirror neuron’ brain cell responds equally whether we perform an action, or if we witness someone else performing the same action. The fact that the same reaction is elicited offers an explanation as to why we have the ability to empathise with others.

Similarly, ‘cultural metaphors’ are connected with bodily states through the mapping of concepts. This notion is demonstrated by the example of the conceptual mapping of moral impurity with physical contamination, i.e. describing malicious persons as having ‘their hands dirty’. The primary distinction between embodied simulation and cultural metaphors is whether the bodily states are felt ‘intraconceptually’ (prior experience of the concept which effects current bodily state) or ‘interconceptually’ (mapping the abstract ‘hands are dirty’ with the concrete, i.e. justification for that concept, e.g. telling lies via email) (Leung et al., ibid., following Landau et al., 2010). Thus, embodiment is seen as something that is a universal human experience and which impacts on language use regardless of modality. That is, both signed and spoken languages are ‘embodied languages’.

If we move our attention towards L2 embodiment, the points raised above also apply. When we use or observe the target language, emotions and
actions are also simulated in our mind. In order to get a deeper understanding of the brain activity of bilinguals, Vukovic and Shtyrov (2014) carried out a scientific study to investigate embodied language processing with a sample of L1 users of German who had English as an L2. It had previously been argued that at best, bilinguals’ processing of action items would be based on a translation of the corresponding L1 term. A sophisticated Electroencephalography (EEG) test was administered in order to detect activity in the motor cortex. Interestingly, it was observed that near instant motor cortex activity was apparent when subjects passively read action words in both their L1 and L2. Therefore, embodied cognition is present in both languages, however the brain activity was significantly greater in their L1.

Likewise, there has been research into disembodied emotion in an L2. Keysar et al. (2012) endeavoured to find out if the decision-making process would be the same in an L2 as an L1. They carried out four different experiments (including attitudes to gambling) and discovered that decision biases were reduced in the foreign language. Whereas, when options were presented in the L1, participants were significantly more risk adverse. Keysar et al. (ibid.) argue that ‘framing effect’ disappears in the foreign language. This finding was conclusive across all samples, regardless of what foreign language was in question. The authors propose that there is more cognitive and emotional distance in an L2 and this therefore weakens emotional and affectual elements when assessing risk. Thus, there is not the same aversion to a potential loss in an L2.

Similarly, Costa, et al. (2014) declare that ‘your morals depend on language’. They found that when presented with difficult choices, people tend to go with the utilitarian option in their L2. The explanation for this is that there is increased deliberative thinking in the L2, rather than intuitive decision-making in their L1. Therefore, the decision is based on a lower emotional response when deliberating moral dilemmas.

In a related study, Pavlenko (2012) carried out a scientific literature review of affective processing in bilinguals. An L1 advantage exists in the processing of ‘emotion-laden’ phrases. Pavlenko (2008, p.148) defines these “…as words that do not refer to emotions directly but instead express
or elicit emotions from the interlocutors”. There are various subcategories for these phrases, including; taboo words, expletives, aversive words, insults, terms of endearment, etc. The advantage for L1 users is the automaticity of how these phrases are affectively processed which correspondingly produces higher electrodermal activity. However, L2 users ironically experience a different type of advantage, where there is “…decreased automaticity of affective processing in the L2, which reduces interference effects and lowers electrodermal reactivity to negative emotional stimuli” (ibid., p.148).

One could therefore assume that learners would be more objective than subjective when dealing with emotionally charged discussions through an L2. Pavlenko (2012) concludes that some bilinguals who were late learners, or foreign language users may embody the newer language differently, for example, where the learner’s subsequent language(s) is processed semantically, but not necessarily affectively. However, extensive socialization has the potential to remove the L1 from its emotionally dominant position.

It is now important to consider embodiment when articulating a visual, spatial language, a signed language. In particular, what challenges may exist for L2-M2 learners when performing a language using an alternate modality incorporating the hands, face and body, working simultaneously to depict language in signing space. As observed in Chapter 5, this aspect is particularly challenging for the participants of this study. Emmorey (2001, p.147) defines signing space (also known as gesture space) as “the term used for the three-dimensional space in front of the signer, extended from the waist to the forehead, where signs can be articulated. Signers schematize this space to represent physical space and to represent abstract conceptual structure”.

6.2.1 Embodiment in a signed language

Taub (2001) claims there is no spoken language which can rival a signed language in relation to its visual imagery integrated with linguistic structure. The example of an unfolding American Sign Language conversation illustrates her claim (ibid., p.1-2).
Picture this – a woman describes their kitchen by tracing the outline of the four walls, followed by placing the kitchen appliances and furniture in its relative location, naming each one and punctuating the language with subtle head nods. A virtual map floats in the space which separates you.

The conversation moves on to recalling a chat she had with her young son who is six years old. She tells you his name and points to a spot on her right hand side. Her body is directed towards where he is located and her signing is angled downwards whereby he would be able to see her. She requests him to fetch a towel, this is followed by a shift in focus as he agrees to carry out the errant. The signing is facing upwards towards the left and the eye-gaze shows him looking at his mother. You can clearly see the height differences and locations of both mother and son as you watch on.

The path her son took is laid out in front of you as he searched for the towel in different areas of the house and different floors (visual planes in 3D space). She extends her index fingers and moves it in a rapid manner, tracing out a complex path showing the twists and turns as he moved around the house.

She later tells you it’s difficult to get her son to do what she asks of him. The extended index finger moves from her temple (indicating a thought) to the ‘spot’ that she had previously located him in. She bounces her finger off the palm of her other hand, which could be translated as “I can’t get through to him”. Finally the son understands and there is a breakthrough. This is shown by the finger penetrating between the index and middle finger of the other hand. A metaphorical expression for her thoughts travelling from her mind to her son’s, passing through the barrier that previously existed.

Taub (ibid., p.2) states that this would be a very typical conversation in a signed language and should not be considered “mime or playacting”. The complex grammatical information is combined with signs illustrating a physical resemblance of its real form (iconic forms). Similarly, the final part of the example shows the ability to express metaphorical forms and conceptually map a concrete thing/activity with a visual image. Fischer and
Müller (2014) also consider visual imagery, with particular reference to the question of what makes constructed action\textsuperscript{26} difficult for L2-M2 learners to grasp. In their response they claim that while there are many similarities between spoken and signed languages in terms of constructed dialogue\textsuperscript{27} (reported speech in spoken language), the challenge in a signed language is the actual ‘action’ rather than what is reported or the interactive action. They offer the example of a person ‘leaving with disappointment’. In a spoken language this may be represented through ‘pantomimic’ action, so it is not foreign as such, however it is based on the individual’s communication style and their inclination to gesticulate. Therefore, the main difference between modalities is that it does not ‘systematically’ appear in spoken languages.

A challenge for L2-M2 learners is that while in a spoken language there is a general tendency to use a lexeme to introduce a referent (an actor)\textsuperscript{28}, in a signed language the referent may be deciphered from broader context of linguistic and extralinguistic inferences. For example:

\textbf{APPLY INDEX+SR AND INDEX+SL}

(I applied to Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin)

In the above example both universities had been previously introduced lexically and were allocated a ‘locus’, which is an established location in signing space. Trinity College Dublin on side-right and University College Dublin on side-left. Therefore, if the signer reverts to these previously introduced locations by pointing (INDEX), it can be assumed that the existing referents are still in focus (unless new subjects/entities are introduced, and

\textsuperscript{26} Referred to in Chapter 5 – the use of signing space, non-manual features and taking on the persona of the characters and the physical reproduction of the action/scene.

\textsuperscript{27} Referred to in §5.2.3, also known as reference shifting or role-shift.

\textsuperscript{28} However, ‘pro-drop’ languages both spoken and signed may (partially) drop certain pronouns (and additional grammatical features) if the reference can be inferred through context or if it was previously introduced (grammatically). English is not typically considered a pro-drop language. See: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-variation-and-change/article-variable-subject-presence-in-australian-sign-language-and-new-zealand-sign-language/73A27C556D71FEBFB0382E55D670A4D5
the discussion has turned to a different topic). In addition, the sign APPLY originates from the signer’s body, therefore it is also implied that they are the ‘actor’, i.e. the person making the application.

Another challenge is that an action may be shown on a signer’s upper body and may be accompanied by a classifier\(^{29}\) depiction on the hands. For example, a bicycle handshape showing its route and movement (e.g. a winding road) with the action of riding a bicycle being portrayed on the upper body (head, torso, etc., being positioned as if one were on a bicycle). Fischer and Müller (ibid.) point out how one must “act out” this action (riding a bicycle). In these depictions, it must be noted that, “…the instance of CA (constructed action) coming close to authentic signed discourse is not the one with the highest degree of pantomimic performance, but the one which combines brevity and aptness to show the actor as an actor” (ibid., p.111-112). The emphasis is on the characteristics of the action rather than the entity.

The above elements,

- pronoun dropping
- tracing the movement of an object
- depicting the action on a signer’s upper body

are not required in spoken discourse, thus often pose a challenge for those teaching and learning constructed action (ibid.)\(^{30}\). This is particularly true because the learner is required to “think in pictures” (ibid., p.112) - meaning they must visualise and metaphorically represent the concept in focus in a visual-spatial manner.

\(^{29}\) A specific handshape which shows the physical movement of an entity or traces the movement path (Leeson and Saeed, 2012).

\(^{30}\) It is noted that some of these structures may appear in spoken languages too if a person is expressive with their use of gestures. However, the core argument being made here is the systematic nature of these elements in a signed language. Sign language researchers and gesture researchers are now working together, e.g. at the recent International Society for Gesture Studies conference [http://www.isgs8conference.com](http://www.isgs8conference.com). There will be a growing body of work drawing together these two disciplines in the future – however, it is outside the scope of this study to review the extensive field of gestural research.
Wilcox (2005) likewise reinforces the use of metaphorical conceptualization in signed languages and points out that there are some similarities between how they are used across modalities, although not required to the same extent (via gesture in spoken language). An interesting point to note is that even though all sign languages use the body to create these forms, they are not universal and these constructions are culturally specific. For example, this is evident in signs related to thinking, which in the majority of sign languages are located on the forehead. However, in Japanese culture thought process is considered to centre around the naval and chest area, therefore their indigenous sign language places metaphorical concepts related to thinking in this area.

Vermeerbergen et al. (2007) point out that the visual imagery created in a signed language is further enhanced by enacting simultaneous constructions. Unlike spoken languages, which are linear in nature, i.e. one word produced at a time, signed languages allow for information to be produced on two hands which can work in combination to create one sign, or portray two distinct lexical items which have a syntactic relationship to one another. Dudis (2004) brings forward research around how the body and signing space can be further partitioned out via a process he calls ‘body partitioning’, to highlight a referent in focus (during constructed action). Furthermore a ‘megablend’ may occur. This means that from an articulatory perspective, the body is subdivided, including eyegaze and mouthing, to reflect a number of different referents at the same time (Leeson and Saeed, 2012). This is illustrated in the example below where we see a deer’s antlers being portrayed on the signer’s head and a boy being stuck on the antlers.
Fekete (2017) examines the meaningful use of space through bodily performances in American Sign Language (ASL), the first study to address language embodiment in ASL from geographer’s perspective. Fekete suggests that sign language users create linguistic and communication spaces, which are shared by all parties involved in the conversation. Therefore, being enveloped in an environment which is dynamic and visual, created through the medium of bodily performances. This notion of performativity is originally drawn from dance studies where the body, relational space and the re-creation of social identities are intertwined in our daily activities:

*Performance denotes every embodied action that is shown in front of someone, the notion of performance also alters the notion of space as, from a performative viewpoint, neither identity nor space pre-exist its performance* (Sprunk, 2010, p.29031).

Likewise, identity is expressed through performativity as we navigate the world - in the case of sign languages the use of (signing) space is an extension of the person’s body to create language, communicate with others and express the self. As was highlighted in the example from Taub (ibid.) of a mother having a signed conversation with her son, this linguistic space can take on many forms and can represent people who are not present by taking on their characteristics (i.e. role-shifting into the referent). This is no longer personal space but surrogate space as the signer morphs into the addressee, therefore bodily image is essential as it builds a mental image of the addressee to the interlocutor.

Leeson and Saeed (2012) point out that within such embodied constructions, the signer’s viewpoint is generally privileged but may be momentarily downgraded in some cases. This is depicted in a story of a deer chasing a boy. The perspective of the deer was portrayed by the signer, its movements etc., were encoded on the signer’s body until the boy’s surrogate space was brought back into focus.

![Screenshot of boy portraying a deer from the Irish Sign Language Corpus (Signs of Ireland Corpus, ‘Fiona (36) Frog Story (Waterford)’).](image)

Figure 9: Screenshot of boy portraying a deer from the Irish Sign Language Corpus (Signs of Ireland Corpus, ‘Fiona (36) Frog Story (Waterford)’).

The range of ways in which we articulate a signed language through the medium of bodily performance would not be possible without the body or the linguistic space it constructs. It also highlights the potential challenges facing
L2-M2 learners who are learning the lexicon, grammatical structures and unique linguistic features, yet also have to embody language and create visual imagery to an unrivalled level to which they were previously accustomed to. This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3 Language Learning Anxiety

The central theory in my study revolves around the insecurity and anxiety L2-M2 learners experience in the Irish Sign Language classroom. Therefore, the construct of language learning anxiety must be addressed. Language learning anxiety (LLA) (also known as foreign language anxiety (FLA) or foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA)) has been defined as:

The worry and negative emotional reaction when learning and using a second language and is especially relevant in a classroom where self-expression takes place (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014, p. 3).

The manifestations of anxiety may be categorized as either having psychophysiological or behavioural indicators (Lababidi, 2016). Physical symptoms include; heart pounding, sweating, tremors and blushing. The behavioural dimension may result in the learner skipping class, avoiding eye-contact, sitting at the back of the classroom, masking fear by laughing or looking disinterested or engaging in non-related activities while others are completing a task (ibid.). This affective variable can have a detrimental impact on language learning in several ways, it can inhibit the learning of the target language and prevent academic success; cause students to withdraw from their studies; induce negative feelings towards the language and associate culture(s); impede the willingness to communicate; create unhelpful tension in the language classroom; engender self-doubt in learner’s identity, linguistic competence and confidence; and potentially tarnish the essence of language learning, the motivation and desire to explore a language other than one’s own (Daubney et al., 2017).

Therefore, it not only affects a student’s feelings and behaviours in the classroom, it can also have a detrimental impact to a learner’s perceptions of the target language and its community, which they may have only had
limited contact with in certain cases (ibid.). In extreme circumstances, it can potentially damage people's lives (Şimşek and Dörnyei, 2017).

The impact is known to vary from person to person (Dörnyei, 2005), from cultural group to cultural group (Horwitz, 2017) and also regionally, within a country (Yan and Horwitz, 2008). Anxiety in the learning domain can also change over time, some claim that as proficiency levels increase, anxiety levels decrease (Liu, 2006). Whilst others suggest that anxiety becomes more intensified as the learner progresses due to higher expectations and fear of negative evaluation (Kitano, 2001; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

6.3.1 Developments in researching language learning anxiety

The approach to studying and reporting on language anxiety has developed over time. MacIntyre (2017) provides a comprehensive overview of the trends which have prevailed over the past forty years. These approaches also reflect assumptions made about what aspects of the subject matter should be researched and the most appropriate methods to be applied. This research pathway begins with the Confounded Approach, which then moves on to a Specialised Approach and in more recent times to a Dynamic Approach (ibid.).

![Figure 10: Research trends in language learning anxiety](image)

During the 'Confounded Approach' stage there were influences from a range of sources in terms of how anxiety may affect language learners rather than situating and defining the concept specifically for the language learner cohort. Scovel’s (1978) work is considered to represent an important milestone during the Confounded period (ibid.). Scovel's language anxiety

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32 LLA in relation to L2-M2 learners will be specifically referred to in §6.3.4.
literature review concluded that inconsistent results in the field were a consequence of conflicting measurement tools and differing conceptualisations of anxiety (Zheng, 2008). In order to address the issue of conflicting results, Scovel argued that a distinction should be made between 'facilitating' and 'debilitating' anxiety (concepts originally put forward by Alpert and Haber, 1960) and to differentiate between 'traits' (general anxiety tendencies) and 'states' (experiencing anxiety in a specific context) (following Spielberger, 1966).

It was hypothesised that if this differentiation occurred, language anxiety findings would no longer be conflated as in previous studies (Scovel, 1978). This phase ensured that the confounding of anxiety types and the inconsistent application to language learning was nearing an end and targeted conceptualisations of foreign language anxiety (FLA) were now coming to the fore (MacIntyre, ibid.).

MacIntyre (ibid.) suggests there was then a shift to a 'Specialised Approach' in how we view anxiety in second language acquisition contexts and in turn a recalibration of how it should be measured. Horwitz et al.’s (1986) seminal paper explores the construct of language learning anxiety as a situation specific phenomenon. Horwitz (1986, 2017) claims that the manifestation of state anxiety resembles trait anxiety but only in a limited number of settings. In this case, triggered by participating in, or, in certain instances even thinking about articulating or learning a given language (ibid.). Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which is a self-reporting instrument based on a thirty-three item scale. Respondents rate anxiety inducing experiences, which were drafted from typical language classroom activities. The results indicate that foreign language anxiety (FLA) modestly correlates with trait anxiety; an apprehension to communicate because of an inability to express complex

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33 The terms foreign language anxiety (FLA), foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and language learning anxiety (LLA) are used interchangeably in the literature although they may indicate separate concepts, e.g. LLA may not be related to a ‘foreign’ language and may be linked to learning an official or unofficial language of the region, within a given context. Similarly, FLCA may specifically refer to a classroom situation rather than using a foreign language in public. For the purpose of this thesis I generally use the term LLA unless the author specifically makes a point of utilising FLA.
thoughts and feelings; a worry of the social consequences, i.e. being evaluated and judged by others; and finally, a strong correlation with test anxiety and being academically assessed (ibid.).

The impact of the FLCAS can be seen by the numerous studies which have subsequently incorporated the tool (Horwitz, 2010). However, the test anxiety component was refuted by some who believed it to be a general anxiety issue in testing environments rather than specifically related to language anxiety (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989). At this point, after firmly establishing that language anxiety is situation-specific, there was a shift in focus – the emphasis was placed on the sources and variables linked to FLA, including a lower level of proficiency (e.g. Jin et al., 2015; Liu, 2006; Thompson and Lee, 2013), perfectionism (Dewaele, 2017; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002), self-efficacy issues (Anyadubalu, 2010; Haley et al., 2015), personality type (Dewaele and Al Saraj, 2015; Şimşek and Dörnyei, 2017) and the typological distance between languages (Alrabai, 2015; Dewaele, 2010; Kitano, 2001; Yan and Wang, 2001).

During this stage, the impact on language attainment and the processes which cause the effects to eventually surface were documented (MacIntyre, 2017). This led to the creation of three new scales at the input, processing and output stages of language learning, which had twenty-nine measures (academic, cognitive and social effects) mapped on to them (MacIntyre, 2017, following MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994b). It was proposed that additional time was needed by learners to complete certain tasks if language anxiety was apparent. Another consequence or reaction was to over-study. If additional time could not be afforded, these tasks resulted in poorer performance at the output stage (ibid.).

During this phase, experimental methods were also introduced. MacIntyre (2017, p.23) purports that they are the "gold standard in behavioural research that seek to understand causality". Ironically, if a video camera is introduced it frequently provokes anxiety, however it soon dissipates as participants become comfortable with its presence (ibid.). An interesting point to note is MacIntyre's claim that although anxiety can be the root of some performance problems, there is a dearth of literature on anxiety as-a-consequence of performance. The answer to this and many other
unexplored areas has spurred the emergence of a recent approach, which is based on complexity and Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008).

Dynamic Systems (DS) are multifaceted, in that they are based on a number of interacting factors/processes/variables, which "...mutually affect each other's changes over time" (Van Geert, 1994). This paradigm is gaining momentum as there is a desire to have a more dynamic view of language anxiety, capturing changes and adaptations which result in both positive and negative outcomes (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). This emerging perspective nestles anxiety amongst various other language learning considerations:

Anxiety is continuously interacting with a number of other learner, situational and other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting and so on (MacIntyre, 2017, p.23).

Language anxiety and learner attributes are not static but instead fluctuate over time and are context dependent (Dewaele, 2012). Rather than measuring anxiety and identifying causes and strategies to reduce it, there is an increasing emphasis on looking at how anxiety impacts the lived experience of the learner and its effects on classroom interaction (ibid.). The traditional approach of measuring variables for correlations, or cross-sectional approaches looking at a learner's performance in anxiety generated situations will only offer a snapshot analysis (MacIntyre, 2017).

The DS paradigm is emphasising the fact that a language learner's experience integrates a number of elements and continually evolves (ibid.). Dörnyei (2009, 2010) urges us to investigate individual differences from a DS perspective which will capture the cognitive, affective and motivational factors that culminate to become learner characteristics. As a result, innovative methodologies are now underpinning studies. Recent approaches investigate learners at various intervals and can explore fluctuating individual differences rather than assuming these affective variables are static (Daubney et al., 2017).
Dynamic systems are gaining traction and can capture the complexity of this area of study. They also offer the possibility of discovering connections between anxiety and other affective variables such as motivation, language attitudes, etc. In my own theory presented in the previous chapter, we also see that the CGT methodological approach allows for the identification of many interrelated and dynamic processes/stages which L2-M2 learners embark on to resolve their main concern of increasing the exposure security threshold. Thus, the theory generated in this study may be viewed as a dynamic system (further elaboration will be presented in Chapter 7).

6.3.2 Empirical studies taking a Dynamic Systems (DS) approach

Recent studies in FLA have taken a dynamic perspective. Gregersen et al. (2014) tracked anxiety levels in six trainee teachers using a heart monitor. The FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986, as previously outlined in §6.3.1) a 33-item self-report Likert-type measure of LLA was used to select participants. Based upon the scores, the three most ‘high-anxious’ learners and the three most ‘low-anxious’ learners were invited to take part. An excerpt of the FLCAS can be seen below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Disagree</td>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

Table 5: Excerpt from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The six teacher trainee presentations delivered in their L2 were video recorded. Following this, the subjects viewed the footage and evaluated their performance. The results indicated that anxiety peaked when the participant lost their train of thought or could not recall a vocabulary item. Even those
who were considered low-anxious had bouts of anxiety at certain points, which were caused by the interplay of different factors (e.g. at the beginning due to wearing a heart monitor, being assessed, etc.). The fluctuations for all participants could be viewed in real-time and offered a deeper insight into the shifts that occurred at different stages of their presentations. This mixed-method approach allows for a comprehensive insight into language anxiety in a specific context.

Another example of a DS research design is Pinel and Csizér (2014). They conducted a longitudinal study looking into the dynamic relationship between anxiety, self-efficacy and motivation. The setting was a class taking a BA in English Language and Literature in a Hungarian university. Twenty-one Freshman students were tracked over a 14-week period as they undertook an English for academic purposes module. There were numerous data collection instruments used to generate both quantitative and qualitative data to assess writing anxiety. These included a general disposition questionnaire, alongside a more focused questionnaire looking at the student’s current state of anxiety, self-efficacy and motivation. The targeted questionnaire was administered at six points during the semester.

In addition, the researchers monitored grades and asked participants to prepare a short essay when the module concluded. The essay content was based on their experiences during the semester and any changes the student noticed in their own disposition. Following this, several data analysis techniques were applied. Pinel and Csizér (2015, p.164) explain the rationale for the selecting statistical procedures, firstly they employed “latent growth curve models to detect overall change” and then “longitudinal clustering to define distinct groups of students with various trajectories”.

The most notable finding was that anxiety, self-efficacy and motivation only fluctuated slightly during the period. However, the change that did occur was not uniform in relation to the investigated variables, as the students changed in different ways. The components which focused on motivation highlighted that the ‘ought-to’ L2 self (what attributes the learner feels they ‘ought-to’ possess) and learning experience (teaching style, environment, etc.) were more susceptible to change than motivated learning behaviour and the ideal L2 self (a vision of what they wish to achieve). The findings indicate that
learners "...have a strong internalized vision of themselves as users of English in the future, but this vision did not entirely shield them from outside expectations and negative learning experiences" (ibid., p.185).

This highlights that the ‘internalised self’ is more resistant to change because is something which has been self-generated and visualised rather than imposed upon them. However, over time there was a strengthening of the relationship between the ‘ideal’ and ‘ought-to’ self. Pinel and Csizér (ibid.) state that although less internalised notions may fluctuate more, anxiety reducing techniques and motivational training can be provided. Such training allows the learner to internalise the imposed (external) dispositions. However, this is complex process and requires a thorough, long-term programme (ibid.).

A final noteworthy point in these findings is the specific pairing of motivation and anxiety. Several trajectories outlined individual differences which were then categorised into groupings. In one grouping there was consistently low anxiety and high motivation over time. In another, there was a combination of consistently high anxiety and high motivation over time. However, the former pairing of low anxiety and high motivation was more typical and stable than the latter high motivation and high anxiety path. Such findings lead Daubney et al. (2017) to suggest that dynamic studies will cease to present ‘binary conceptualisations’ of the learner which previously constrained our perceptions of them. In turn, this will lead to increasingly evolving methodological/theoretical frameworks.

6.3.3 Language learning enjoyment and anxiety

Researchers have generally focused on the negative impact that anxiety can have in relation to individual differences, i.e. debilitating anxiety. However, it is notable that the field of psychology accepts that a process of facilitative anxiety also exists (Kleinmann, 1977; Piniel and Csizér, 2015). In the area of sports psychology, Jones and Swain (1995) explore facilitative anxiety and surmise that those who are able to achieve their goals retain control over their situation, cope with anxiety symptoms and are more likely to interpret anxiety as facilitative to their performance. In contrast, those who feel a loss
of control, are unable to realise their goals and have difficulties in managing symptoms, are likely to consider it debilitating.

Horwitz (2017) suggests that in a language learning context, the argument for facilitative anxiety assumes that a certain level of anxiety can focus a learner and allow them to have a more cohesive performance. However, if the optimal level of facilitative anxiety is passed, performance sharply diminishes. Horwitz (ibid.) asserts that the trend of searching for facilitative anxiety is dangerous and represents a step backwards. This is based on the temporary impact that facilitative anxiety may have and the risk that such research could unnecessarily cross the boundary, bringing learners into a zone of debilitating anxiety. Horwitz instead advocates for a positive psychology approach where the emphasis would focus on the enjoyable or pleasurable aspects of the language learning experience. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) likewise assert that healthier language growth involves learners exploring, integrating and establishing new relationships.

Recently, attention has been drawn to positive emotions in second language acquisition, however, there are few studies which are devoted to both positive and negative aspects and we cannot escape the fact that language learning anxiety exists. As a result, there has been recent interest in capturing the interplay between positive and negative emotion in language learning contexts.

A positive emotion could take on the form of pleasure or enjoyment. Boudreau et al. (2018) differentiate between the two concepts. "Pleasure can occur simply by performing an activity or completing an action, enjoyment takes on additional dimensions such as an intellectual focus" (ibid., p.153). Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) disseminated a questionnaire which resulted in an international sample of 1746 learners between the ages of 11 and 75 years. A measure of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) was determined from the responses of 21 items placed on a Likert scale. Similarly, foreign language anxiety (FLA) was measured by extracting 8 items from the FLCAS (as outlined in §6.3.1 & §6.3.2). The results indicated a negative correlation between anxiety and enjoyment. However, the correlation is not as strong as those who experience high anxiety coupled with low levels of enjoyment.
This shows that in certain cases, a learner can be very anxious yet still enjoy the language classroom experience.

Alternatively, some participants had low anxiety and no enjoyment, referring to a learner who is detached and unengaged. Results also indicate that people who are competent in several languages experience more enjoyment and are advanced in their language studies in comparison to their peers. Mature participants, female learners and Western participants (rather than Asian participants) are reported to experience the most classroom driven enjoyment. Finally, in response to an open-ended question, learners commented that the most enjoyable activities they engaged in were autonomous in nature, i.e. where they had control over the task. This study demonstrates the interaction between enjoyment and anxiety and how both emotions can be present within learners simultaneously.

Similarly, Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (2018) investigated growth and changes in FLA and FLE in undergraduate students who were studying a general English course over a full semester. They applied a triangulated approach using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Instruments such as the FLE scale (originally Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014) and an additional eight items extracted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (originally Horwitz et al., 1986) were distributed to 367 students on four occasions across the semester. The qualitative aspect encompassed reviewing learner journals, in-class observations and semi-structured interviews with four participants.

Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (ibid.) note that there was a small, negative correlation between FLE and FLA at the beginning of the semester, however as the semester continues the negative correlation becomes larger as FLE increased and FLA decreased. Similarly, the qualitative data analysed in Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (ibid.) highlighted moments of both high levels of FLE and FLA and other moments of both low FLE and FLA, corroborating Dewaele and MacIntyre's (ibid.) findings that they can be experienced in tandem but not always as one would expect. The same observation can be witnessed in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory which will be further unpacked in Chapter 7 – where findings from the literature review will also be integrated.
The unpredictable, dynamic nature of these results also support Ushioda’s (2009, 2014) ‘person-in-context’ view that the learner and context evolve, respond and adapt to one another. Therefore, the seemingly polarised emotions of enjoyment and anxiety are intertwined and can interact with and influence one another. Nevertheless, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) insist that they should be considered as two different constructs rather than opposite ends of the same experience due to the complex and dynamic nature of each, as outlined above.

Another longitudinal study of foreign language enjoyment and FLA by Saito et al. (2018) reports on 108 Japanese students learning English in high school. The focus was on motivation, emotion, FLA and second language comprehensibility development. The outcome of this research indicates that FLA corresponds with a weaker (internalised vision) ‘ideal L2 self’ and negatively related to performance even though the learners in this study had many years of English language instruction. This indicates that length of study does not necessarily impact the internalized ‘ideal L2 self’. Foreign language enjoyment combined with a greater L2 self (positive emotions and motivation profile) produced a greater level of practice and development within the timeframe of the project - three months. Saito et al. (ibid., p.22) point out that this is:

...arguably because ideal-self driven L2 learners likely have strong, well-defined self-guides, a promotional focus, and can easily orient towards future positive outcomes. As such, their greater motivational configurations elicit not only more enjoyment, but also less anxiety about EFL (English foreign language) learning.

Dewaele et al. (2017) also explored FLE and FLA in two British secondary schools. Their 189 British participants were learning various foreign languages. The study set out to discover if learner internal variables and teacher-classroom specific variables differentially predict FLE/FLA. The findings show that enjoyment was related to the learner’s positive attitude towards the foreign language and the teacher, how much the language was used in the class, how much the students were allowed to speak, how good their last test results had been, how they felt they were better/worse than others in the class, and how advanced they were in their study. Anxiety was
linked to those who had rather negative attitudes to the foreign language, poor test results and relative standing and those who were further behind than others in their progress. Interestingly, the results show that FLA is less related to the teacher and pedagogical practices than language enjoyment.

A noteworthy point is that Jin and Dewaele (2018) found that peer support was more effective at reducing anxiety than teacher support (a feature of ALLIANCING and many of the self-regulation strategies featured in my study). Dewaele et al. (2017) therefore suggest that teachers should instead concentrate on boosting FLE rather than focusing on FLA as this would likely to have a meaningful impact34. As is the case with anxiety, emotions too are never linear. Neither anxiety nor enjoyment are linked to one factor but a range of interacting elements. Some can be learner internal and some can be linked to the context of learning, i.e. the learning or performance situation.

6.3.4 L2-M2 language learning anxiety

Few studies exist in relation to L2-M2 language learning anxiety. Pfanner's (2000) quantitative study includes a sample of 156 American Sign Language (ASL) students spread across two American Universities. The instrument used was based on the Horwitz Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and adapted slightly to include grammatical aspects of ASL (ibid.). The results were compared to spoken language studies and found that ASL students experience less anxiety "... than their counterparts in other language classes" (ibid. p.77). Notwithstanding this finding, 21 of 35 items on the adapted FLCAS scale elicited high anxiety in more than 25% of participants. The most nerve-wracking aspects were categorised as 'Interactions with Deaf people' and using 'Expressive Skills'. The latter includes student uncertainty surrounding use of the language, student beliefs that other learners have a higher level of skill than they do, feeling unprepared when called upon, and self-consciousness in front of peers.

Pfanner also suggests that a negative correlation was established between anxiety scores and final grade. This, however, poses the question of whether heightened anxiety lead to poor grades or if poor performance has an impact.

34 This will be referred to in more detail in 'Opportunities' (§6.6).
on anxiety levels – in this study, causality was undetermined. Interestingly, Allbutt and Ling (2016) carried out a study on perceived confidence levels (using a self-reporting instrument) and its significance (if any) on course grades. Two hundred and thirty-five adult learners of British Sign Language across three further education colleges participated in this study. Interestingly, their findings show an insignificant relationship between learners’ self-perceptions (confidence) and exam success.

In another study, McKee and McKee (1992) discuss student and teacher’s perceptions of the difficulties associated with learning American Sign Language (ASL). Data were collected from 72 ASL students through completion of an open-ended questionnaire. In addition, 12 ASL teachers were surveyed, of whom 4 were invited for interview. The authors regret not interviewing student participants although they note that open-ended questions allowed participants to provide comprehensive answers.

Facial expressions and non-manual features were rated top of the difficulty scale by teachers who were asked to evaluate the most challenging linguistic elements that students had to master. This is attributed in part to cultural conditioning as students discuss their inhibitions by comparing how restrained they typically are in their L1. They also mention that in their L1 excessive body movement can come across as ‘rude’ or ‘crude’. They explain limited use of facial expressions and non-manual features in their L1 is so one can blend in and not attract unnecessary attention.

Teachers also comment on the complexity of these features in how they are coordinated in a signed language. They also refer to how learners mistakenly believe that their function and use mirrors spoken language structures. Sociolinguistic and affective aspects are also explored within this study, with consideration given to features such as prolonged eye contact and how, in interpersonal interactions in the learners’ L1, eye contact is strategically used in a different way (e.g. to exert dominance, exercise control, etc.) from in their L2, in this case, ASL. The performative aspects of ASL learning were also reported as a major challenge for students who felt that they were the ‘center of attention’ and struggled with being closely observed.
Mckee and Mckee (ibid., p.146-147) point out that the learner is required to become comfortable with using their body, because learners have to project “…such a salient visible image of themselves while attempting to express themselves in a new language and modality”. To do so, the learners must “…shed deeply ingrained physical and cultural inhibitions about using the body for communication”. Likewise, we see that the performative/bodily aspect of a signed language is an issue for the participants in my study – a matter which will be revisited in the discussion chapter (7).

Peterson (2009) remarks on LLA when recalling previous research which sampled 96 ASL third level students (following Peterson, 2001). The findings in relation to causality of anxiety were discussed under the four headings of input, processing, instruction factors and personal factors (following Vogely, 1998). Input refers to a lack of understanding and fear of receptive issues when interacting with deaf people (also discussed in Kyle and Woll, 1985). Processing is the need to impart meaning even when there is incomplete comprehension. Instructional factors relate to language testing and teaching methods. Finally, personal factors are related to the psyche and emotions of the student, e.g. how they rate perceptions of their ability. When participants were asked what type of task would assist in reducing anxiety, they frequently suggested situations where they are not being watched so intently, by either not having an audience, working one to one, or practicing in front of a mirror.

Peterson (2009, p.149) suggests that teachers are familiar with these types of comments and it is “an enduring mystery” why such individuals flock to a course where they will be looked at all of the time and as a result will experience discomfort in these situations. Peterson (ibid.) notes that those who are shy or awkward will have great difficulty with this ‘very physical’ language. There are unique features which learners may grapple with. He writes:

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35 Peterson (2001) reference could not be sourced, however it was extensively quoted in Peterson (2009). The following link is no longer valid. Peterson, R. (2001). Scared to deaf: Language anxiety among ASL students. Published online at http://www.flagler.edu/about_f/deafstudies.html
It breaks some of the rules that many of us learned as children, things like don’t point or don’t stare. Pointing is used quite extensively in ASL to show location, person, or movement. Staring (or watching) is equivalent to listening in spoken languages. ASL is a language meant to be watched, meant to be seen. Successful ASL learners tend to be people who are comfortable enough physically and psychologically that they don’t mind taking chances, making mistakes, or looking silly now and again (Peterson 2009, p.6).

A final study which touches on L2-M2 anxiety was carried out by Snoddon (2014), though this focuses on ASL learners with very different motivations, namely the development of ASL skills on the part of parents of deaf children to facilitate engagement with their deaf child. The research focused on teaching participants techniques to read books to their young deaf children. In this situation the parents were tangentially learning American Sign Language (ASL) and were offered up to 48 hours (in total) of ASL tuition and 10 hours of consultation (in the home) that continued until their child turned six years of age.

In the shared reading workshops, although an ASL interpreter was present, the parents often simultaneously spoke and signed their contributions. However, parents discussed their anxiety surrounding their ASL skill-set because of insufficient vocabulary and proficiency. This seemed “…to be linked to lingering concerns about their young children’s English literacy” (Snoddon, ibid., p.186). There was a commitment to improve and parents viewed themselves as being lifelong ASL learners. An important point to note is that parents were receiving approximately 1-2 hours per month of ASL classes and syllabus was centred around the needs of their child and communication in the homeplace, rather than a third level formal language learning environment.

As previously discussed, there is very little empirical research on L2-M2 learning in general, and as such, the subset on language learning anxiety as referenced above is likely to constitute the entire canon of literature in this domain. Quinto-Pozos (2005) urges researchers to engage in further exploration of the social-psychological factors which impact L2-M2 learners. A special category of L2-M2 learners are professional sign language
interpreters. Although this cohort are not novice learners, there may still be findings which have implications for current L2-M2 learners. With regards to language performance, research in relation to interpreting will be referred to in the next section where applicable.

6.4 Performing an L2

COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF documents the mindsets, emotions and behaviours of learners as they encounter a visual-gestural language which requires them to perform in front of others, whilst also being actively watched\(^{36}\). For some participants, performing Irish Sign Language triggered anxiety reactions which had never previously been encountered while speaking in general or in a language learning environment. However, Price (1991) suggests that if public speaking anxiety has been previously felt, it is inevitable that this will transfer to the language classroom.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) was drafted for teachers and learners to explicate what learners could achieve in communicatively functional terms across different levels of language proficiency when using foreign languages. It is a pedagogical tool which should influence teaching methods and assessment procedures. This document has also been adapted for signed languages (EFSLIa, 2015; EFSLIb, 2015; Leeson et al., 2016\(^{37}\)). As sign language has no written form, the ‘Can Do’ proficiency descriptors are focused on receptive skills, language production and interaction\(^{38}\). The communicative aspect of learning a language requires students to engage and perform the language with L1 users and other L2 users in the classroom or in other target culture spaces.

\(^{36}\) It is worth noting that in a spoken language classroom this may equate to active listening, however the perception of participants is that the contexts (spoken versus signed language classroom) are not equivalent. The performance element in front of an ‘audience’ is perceived to be far greater in a sign language classroom.


\(^{37}\) See the PRO-Sign project for further information. https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2012-2015/ProSign/tabid/1752/Default.aspx
In this vein, MacIntyre (2017) raises the important question of whether anxiety is a cause or a consequence of language performance. His conclusion is that it can be both. Numerous experimental approaches show us that “anxiety arousal causes declines in performance” (ibid., p.27). Paradoxically, if we have a negative experience relating to the performance of a language, e.g. stage fright, it may create hesitation around putting oneself forward in the future. The next section specifically focuses on the performative aspect of language production, including issues surrounding willingness to communicate, how learners embody language and particular matters related to performing a signed language.

6.4.1 Willingness to Communicate

MacIntyre et al. (1998) developed the ‘Willingness to Communicate’ (WTC) model to address how anxiety and willingness impact on engagement in communication. This construct impacts on a learner developing intercultural communicative competency\(^\text{39}\). The aim is to engender in the learner, a WTC in the classroom. If successful, the act of performing the language is expected to carry over to non-educational contexts. An earlier study by MacIntyre (1994) proposed that WTC in an L2 was based on a learner’s perceived communicative competence and the level of communication anxiety. If the former was higher and the latter was lower, this led to greater WTC, and in turn, more frequent communication.

Following this, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) added several more variables, such as ‘extroversion’, ‘agreeableness’ and ‘conscientious’. These factors and others were further refined to become the WTC pyramid model (MacIntyre, et al., ibid.), and in Figure 11 below. These elements are thought to predict a learner’s WTC in the classroom.

\(^\text{39}\) The original WTC model was conceptualised by McCroskey & Baer (1985). It was concerned with L1 speakers of English and their WTC, based on a personality-based predisposition.
The layers were grouped into ‘enduring’ and ‘situational’ influences. The bottom three layers are considered to be enduring, trait-like, stable factors. The top three layers are highly dynamic as they are connected to situational factors, e.g. Layer III ‘State Communicative Self-Confidence’, is governed by how self-confident the L2 learner is at that moment, in that context. The combination of direct (e.g. motivation) and indirect influences (e.g. personality) also culminate to impact an individual’s WTC (ibid.).

If we turn our attention to anxiety as an effect of language performance, there is also evidence to support this claim. In their study of the dynamic changes in motivation, MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) found that performance induced anxiety was brought on by difficulties with vocabulary and grammar. These stumbling blocks - whether they were be perceived to be laboured or failing - activated an inhibition system brought on by a current threat, e.g. not being able to articulate what they wish to say. Instead, the focus turns to the interlocutor and how they will evaluate the situation with respect to what the learner ‘ought-to’ be able to say in that situation and how it will potentially be detrimental to the interpersonal relationship, less so if it is a novice learner because the mistakes will more than likely be easily forgiven.
If the mistakes continue and the ‘ought-to-self’ is further threatened, i.e. the feeling that they should be able verbalise their thought, then coping strategies are engaged to exhibit some sort of control in the situation. These could include changing the topic, or not being forthcoming in the conversation any further. However, if the problems persist it induces an anxiety reaction. “At this point the irony of anxiety sets in – the anxiety reaction itself begins to exacerbate communication difficulties in a cascading, sometimes overwhelming surge of emotion” (MacIntyre, 2017, p.25). The linguistic, emotional and cognitive (self-deprecating thoughts) result in face saving techniques, trying to make the most out of an already daunting situation, or at worst fleeing from the conversation in the classroom or the community (ibid.)

6.4.2 Integrativeness

Gardner (1985) postulates that ‘integrativeness’ is the degree to which the L2 learner will integrate or feel like a valued member of the TL community. It may also lead to identifying with that cultural group. Norton (2000) and Pavlenko (2002) criticize this earlier conception of ‘integrativeness’ as not capturing the complex and multifaceted nature of the relationship the learner has with the TL community, which consequently impacts identity construction and its fluidity in certain contexts. The learner’s cultural values may be the polar opposite to the target language culture. Perhaps the learner is studying the language for practical reasons. Maybe he/she does not have the opportunity to integrate and could even be based in a different geographical location. This may stifle the opportunity or desire to develop ‘integrativeness’.

Analysis of the relationship between ‘integrativeness’ and the ideal L2 self by various scholars produced less than conclusive results (.5%+ correlation) (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). These inconclusive results highlight that while integrativeness and the ideal L2 self are interlinked, further exploration is

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40 Such strategies are also employed by learners in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, e.g. AVOID and SAFE-PLAYER. Chapter 7 will further explore learners WTC and self-regulation strategies in matters relating to convergences/divergences between the theory presented from this study and key literature outlined within this Chapter.
required (ibid.). Gardner’s (2010) rebuttal to the critique of ‘integrativeness’ is that researchers often impute meaning which is not accurate. He asserts that the concept is actually concerned with affective reactions a person has when learning a second language, such as enjoyment, interest, anxiety, etc. It could therefore be assumed that one of the factors which would prevent a learner from integrating in the TL community is the fear of ‘speaking’ or performing the language in front of others/peers.

Dörnyei and Usioda (ibid.) claim that identification with the TL community is not essential in the majority of sociocultural contexts in relation to motivational processes. Instead, it should be re-conceptualised as the vision one would like to achieve as a TL speaker within an imagined community (because they may not actually identify with that group). In the case of this doctoral study (Chapter 5), we see this occur as L2-M2 learners are still finding their place within the Irish Deaf community. In doing so, they engage in a process to COMPOSE THE L2-M2 SELF, not necessarily become nativelike users of the language but competent and self-assured ISL communicators.

6.4.3 Speaking anxiety

One of the main aspects of LLA is speaking anxiety, which can be a standalone concern related to performing the language, rather than general LLA connected to competence, etc. (Aida, 1994; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Baran-Lucarz (2011) claims that the construct can sometimes be related to pronunciation rather than the learner’s actual level of proficiency. Kráľová et al. (2017) demonstrate that this anxiety can be reduced through psychosocial training and an intensive pronunciation program. This training is non-therapeutic in nature and instead takes on the form of active social learning. Likewise, communication apprehension has been proven to reduce with exposure and direct encounters with the target language culture (Aida, ibid.; Matsuda & Gobel, ibid.).

King and Smith (2017) note that speaking anxiety is most commonly tied to FLA (in comparison to reading anxiety, listening anxiety, etc.) because the environment allows one to be the most publicly evaluated and it is generally the most frequent form of communication in language learning contexts. In their research on silence and social anxiety amongst Japanese learners of
English, King and Smith (ibid.) wanted to gain a deeper insight at an individual level as to why silence occurs in this context. King (2013a, 2013b) had previously established the prevalence of silence in an earlier multisite investigation of n=924 Japanese learners of English. In 48 hours of recorded data, it was observed that there were only seven incidents of student-initiated talk, merely 0.25% of total footage. However, teacher-initiated talk dominated proceedings with 1297 instances which amounted to 45% of the lesson time. There were also many non-talk related activities, such as reading and writing tasks, listening to audio clips, etc., and this amounted to the over 50% of the remaining footage.

King and Smith (ibid.) interviewed eleven participants on two occasions to discover more. Although results showed a direct link between talk avoidance and other factors such as student apathy and teaching methods, the recurring theme of social anxiety amongst some learners came to the fore. The fear of being negatively evaluated and scrutinised by peers was the primary reason to remain silent. This face-saving strategy was enacted because learners felt there were constant ‘eyes’ on them. King and Smith (ibid., p.100) point out that there is “an encultured notion that there exists an ever-present, ever-watching ‘other’ within Japanese society that constantly monitors and inhibits people’s behaviour with its disapproving eye”. As a result, the focused attention becomes the monitoring of one’s own self-generated image and their perception of how their image is being received by others.

In order to avoid the discomfort associated with this, learners engage in safety behaviours, which are physical avoidance strategies such as; remaining silent, minimising verbalisation by offering one-word or short answers and strategically selecting a seating position which would decrease the chance that they would be called upon in the lesson. There are also mental processes which are undertaken to help limit mistakes. These include; rehearsing mentally before articulating something aloud. However, the authors point out that these safety behaviours are actually counterproductive as they exacerbate self-monitoring and self-consciousness, therefore their concerns may actually become a reality (ibid.; Clark and Wells, 1995).
The parallels between speaking anxiety in the language learning classroom and exposure insecurity within this study will be explored in the discussion located in the next chapter. At this stage it is worthwhile to mention that although on the surface there may be similarities in terms of the performative aspect, the composing process places greater emphasis on the bodily component when producing a signed language.

6.4.4 Detecting language learning anxiety

The Clark and Wells (1995) study raises an important point with regard to whether non-verbal anxiety cues can be detected by others. Gregersen (2005) identified variances in facial expressions in high-anxiety-provoking situations, e.g. an oral exam. The discerning non-verbal behaviours included eye behaviour, postural position and body language. Gregersen et al. (2017, p.113) carried out an idiodynamic (real-time, moment to moment) assessment of teacher and peer reading of nonverbal language anxiety cues in language students, and found that:

Anxious learners showed limited facial activity, including brow behaviour and smiling; maintained less eye contact with the teacher and were more rigid and closed with their posture. Furthermore with respect to gestures, anxious learners used their hands more than the non-anxious did for purposes unrelated to communication, such as self-touching and object manipulation.

Gregersen et al. (ibid.) set out to discover who would be more accurate in sensing FLA, the expert teacher or a peer. Gregersen (2007) previously noted that if practitioners received non-verbal awareness training then they may be highly effective in sensing student anxiety. However, it is also suggested that those who are ‘near’ to us in terms of age, gender, interests, ethnicity and those who we have more frequent interactions with, are best able to motivate and understand each other (Gregersen et al., ibid.). Gregersen et al. (2017) refer to two distinct phases, or sources of data. Phase one utilises data generated by Gregersen et al. (2014) as a basis for collecting new data for phase two.
The 2014 study recorded six participants (trainee teachers) delivering an oral presentation in their L2 while wearing a heart monitor\textsuperscript{41}. Phase two of Gregersen et al. (2017) asked an expert language teacher and a peer language learner to review the recorded data, without access to the self-ratings that participants had provided after watching their own performance. Gregersen et al. (ibid.) indicate that the expert was able to accurately decode anxiety some of the time and had an advantage in doing so over the peer observer. The table below (6) highlights the idiodynamic ratings of anxiety for self (Phase 1)\textsuperscript{42}, and peer observer and expert observer (Phase 2). There is also a breakdown for both high anxious participants (HAP) and low anxious participants (LAP). The scores from administering a FLCAS (introduced in §6.3.1) were used to establish these HAP and LAP categories.

The findings show that the HAPs show higher mean self-ratings and “the most notable result is that for every presenter, the standard deviation of the self-ratings is dramatically larger than the standard deviation of the expert practitioner and peer observer ratings” (ibid., p.119-120). Table 6 illustrates results from both high and low anxious learners and their self-rated anxiety levels in comparison to what was detected by the peer and expert observer. What this finding suggests is that participants experience greater emotional changes than are recognised by the external observers.

\textsuperscript{41} Gregersen et al., (2014) was previously referred to in examples of dynamic systems research techniques (§6.3.2).

\textsuperscript{42} Gregersen et al., (2017, p.118) explain that participants watched the recordings of their presentations and then self-rated moment-to-moment fluctuations in their language anxiety levels. “They signalled rising anxiety by right-clicking the computer mouse (up to ‘+5’) or reductions in anxiety by left clicking the mouse (down to ‘-5’). This procedure generated a bitmap graph and Excel spreadsheet that reflected the vacillations in each participant’s self-rated anxiety.” Observers were required to carry out the same task.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Peer</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAP-1</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAP-2</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.07</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>HAP-2</td>
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<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAP-3</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.09</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Idiodynamic ratings of anxiety for self, peer observer and expert observer (Table 7.1 in, Gregersen et al., 2017, p.122)

The positive news for the learner is that these non-verbal cues are not always spotted easily and show far less variability in comparison to how the learner actually reports feeling. However, there are inconsistencies between observers. Therefore, we must consider which cues are used to detect anxiety. Firstly, Table 7 illustrates the behaviours where we see the strongest convergence amongst observers and the participant, i.e. the most salient anxiety cues.

Table 7: Behaviours where both observers converged mostly strongly with the participant (Gregersen et al., 2017, Table 7.3, p.124).

Table 8, below, highlights the behaviours which were detected by the participant and expert practitioner during increasing anxiety moments. However, these were not witnessed by the peer observer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Gesture</th>
<th>Gaze</th>
<th>Vocalics</th>
<th>Posture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise brows</td>
<td>Palms turn up (6)</td>
<td>Strongly at audience (8)</td>
<td>Frequent &quot;um&quot; (7)</td>
<td>Indirect to audience, at screen (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swallow (4)</td>
<td>One-handed gesture (6)</td>
<td>Strongly at screen (8)</td>
<td>Self-correction (6)</td>
<td>Cross legs (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tilt head</td>
<td>Hands stationary at naval height (4)</td>
<td>Rapid alternation between screen and audience (5)</td>
<td>Long pause (5)</td>
<td>Rock forward into hip (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with inflect</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pucker lips</td>
<td>Hands at side (4)</td>
<td>Mainly at audience, briefly to screen (5)</td>
<td>Pause to find word (4)</td>
<td>Twist at torso (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Furrow brows</td>
<td>Gesture imitate words (3)</td>
<td>Upward to recall vocabulary (5)</td>
<td>Pattern alternating a word and pause (4)</td>
<td>Direct to audience (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smile (2)</td>
<td>Hands pick at fingers (3)</td>
<td>Strongly down (3)</td>
<td>Fluid speech (3)</td>
<td>Shift weight to other foot (3)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frown (2)</td>
<td>Bring hands together (3)</td>
<td>Mainly at screen, briefly to audience (3)</td>
<td>Repeat self (2)</td>
<td>Uncross legs (3)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nod with each</td>
<td>Gesture to screen (3)</td>
<td>Briefly down (2)</td>
<td>Widen stance, separate feet (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long blink</td>
<td>Palms turn down (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lean onto desk (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>Hands on desk (2)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kneads hands (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bounce hands on each word (2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Nonverbal cues present during increasing anxiety for both self-ratings and expert practitioners but not peer ratings (Gregersen et al., 2017, Table 7.4, p.124-125).

Following from this, Table 9 illustrates behaviours where rising anxiety was reported and converged between the peer observer and the presenter, but the expert practitioner observer failed to converge.
Table 9: Nonverbal cues present during increasing anxiety for both self-ratings and peer observer but not expert practitioner (Gregersen et al., 2017, Table 7.6, p.126).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Gesture</th>
<th>Gaze</th>
<th>Vocalics</th>
<th>Posture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise brows (4)</td>
<td>Knead hands (5)</td>
<td>Strongly at screen (4)</td>
<td>Long pause (3)</td>
<td>Indirect to audience, at screen (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smile (2)</td>
<td>Gestures imitate words (2)</td>
<td>Shift to strongly at audience (2)</td>
<td>Stumble on words (2)</td>
<td>Direct to audience (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smack lips (2)</td>
<td>Palms turned up (2)</td>
<td>Briefly to audience (2)</td>
<td>Immediate repetition (2)</td>
<td>Both feet forward (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Briefly down (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Twist body repeatedly at torso (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, there were few anxiety behaviours which were accurately decoded by the peer observer but were missed by the expert. Gregersen et al. (ibid., p.129) also make the following claim:

Previous investigations into nonverbal behaviour suggest that, although the expression of emotion is primarily displayed through facial expression, feelings can also be conveyed through posture, the manner in which a learner walks or limb movements, among other kinesic actions. Gestures that display affect convey learners’ emotional reactions to what is going on too – and the strength of those reactions.

Essentially, the face is a more accurate determiner of what kind of emotion is experienced by the learner, yet bodily cues reveal more about the intensity of the emotion. Particularly posture rather than gesture. The rate at which learners’ bodies move also conveys emotional arousal in general (or lack thereof), rather than indicating a particular kind of emotion (ibid.). It has been noted elsewhere that socially anxious learners have a tendency to overestimate the degree to which anxiety behaviours are visible to others (Purdon et al., 2001). This may be related to a phenomenon in social psychology called the ‘spotlight effect’ (Gilovich et al., 1998; Gilovich, Kruger et al., 1998; Savitsky et al., 2003). This theory suggests that we believe that certain actions or behaviours that we engage in which stand out to us as being memorable, or conversely, detrimental to our character, will be
significantly observed and impactful to others. However in reality, they generally go unnoticed. Gilovich et al. (2000, p.211) expand on this:

Disparities are frequent and predictable and reflect an egocentric bias in people’s assessments of the extent to which their actions and appearance are salient to others. People tend to believe that more people take note of their actions and appearance than is actually the case. We dub this putative phenomenon the spotlight effect: People tend to believe that the social spotlight shines more brightly on them than it really does.

This ego-centric bias in terms of social judgment means we overestimate the saliency of our actions, behaviours and appearances. This is not just when discerning negative aspects but also when we positively contribute something, e.g. a group discussion (ibid.). When this becomes apparent to the individual, there is a realisation that we may judge our actions differently from how others discern them. Therefore, we adjust from the ‘anchor’ of our own experiences (adjustment-anchoring mechanism). This involves a person trying to correct how that incident initially made them feel. However, this adjustment tends to be insufficient because we over-estimate how we are perceived by others based on how we appear to oneself (ibid.).

The authors also suggest an ‘illusion of transparency’ theory (Gilovich et al., 1998). In this case we overestimate how others view our internal state, rather than our actions, utterances or appearance, as is the case with the ‘spotlight effect’. As such, we believe that we are transparent to others because we believe that our emotional shortcomings, or private thoughts, will ‘leak out’. The adjustment-anchoring mechanism is also a feature of the ‘illusion of transparency’ where we try to rectify how an incident originally made us feel. As we saw in ‘spotlight effect’ the process is again under-realised. The same underlying issue of preoccupation is prevalent in both theories.

The result in both cases is that we believe that the gap between or own/others perspectives is actually closer than it really is (ibid.), when in fact we have highly over-estimated how noticeable our actions/emotions are to others. In essence, it may be too subtle for others to determine what learners think is obvious, i.e. we may not be creating the impression that we think we
are conveying. This may be a contributing factor affecting our willingness to communicate. Points which will be revisited in the discussion located within the next chapter.

6.4.5 Authentic self-presentation

Hashemi and Abbasi (2013, p.645) state that performance issues in an L2 can create a threat to learners’ “self-concept, self-identity, and ego, which they have formed in their first language as reasonable and intelligent individuals”. When there is limited capacity to articulate freely what one wishes to say, it can have a significant impact on how one represents ‘self’. Goffman (1959) insists that every individual portrays an image of ‘self’ which they want to be perceived as ideal by others. Pellegrino (2005) asserts that this desire is often threatened when learning a new language. Returning to the question of whether anxiety is a cause or consequence of language performance (MacIntyre, 2017), Pellegrino (ibid.) suggests that this is often the ‘by-product’ of self-presentation. In such cases, learners’ emotional state becomes heightened because they are concerned about how their personality, intellect and humour comes across to others. In addition, they do not want to be perceived as rude or incompetent due to flaws and cultural inappropriateness associated with their linguistic inability. An issue we witnessed in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF (Chapter 5).

Therefore, Pellegrino (ibid.) urges educators to create the conditions where a learner’s sense of self is enhanced or at a minimum, protected. This can happen where a teacher cultivates an environment where the learner will feel validated by others, safe in the learning context, maintain an appropriate status in the group and a sense of control over their language learning (ibid.). Pellegrino also postulates that if any of these elements are compromised, anxiety may surface in the learner. Horwitz (2013) hypothesises that, in order to achieve full competence in a second language, ‘authentic self-presentation’ is required. This does not degrade those who are novice or intermediate learners but rather suggests that anxiety can dissipate when competency is mastered because anxiety will no longer emanate from inadequate self-portrayal. Instead, a learner can then present their true, authentic self (AUTHENTICATING).
In the context of signed language interpreting, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014) present their ‘Role Space’ theory which incorporates aspects related to authentic self-presentation. This comes in the form of the ‘presentation of self’ axis43. Presentation of self relates to how visible the interpreter should be and what strategies are at their disposal in any given interpreted setting, as dictated by the type of interaction. Self-presentation is not static; it is an evolving dimension as the situation unfolds (indeed, they note that it may not be permitted or advisable to become too perceptible). The level of interpreter involvement ranges from ‘low-presentation’, namely no interaction and not offering any additional information, to ‘high presentation’, which is speaking from one’s own perspective and offering additional information where required. When ‘low presentation’ is invoked, participants do not get a sense of who the interpreter is and what they stand for. Ironically this shows that although learners are concerned with ‘authentic self-presentation’ in the classroom, this may need to be under-played or deliberately shrouded when using an L2-M2 in a professional capacity.

Returning to the issue of language anxiety, even when it is not present amongst multilinguals, learners sometimes hold a self-perception of conveying a different self-image in their L2 than in their L1 (Pavlenko, 2006). In such cases it is not related to the age of acquisition, but is, rather, a condition of bilingualism or multilingualism as the individual feels more authentic and has the most emotional resonance to their L1 (Dewaele, 2010). Dewaele and Nakano (2013) highlighted the complexity of feeling different in several additional languages. Their findings suggest that participants were “…feeling gradually less logical, less serious, less emotional and increasingly fake when using the L2, L3 and L4” (ibid., p.107).

Wilson (2013) similarly reports changes in behaviour from those with introverted personalities. They tend to feel different when switching languages because they develop a new sense of freedom and are no longer constrained by their L1 as they now have a mask to hide behind. Shifts in

43 Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (ibid.) present a three dimensional model to explore role-space. Along with ‘presentation of self’ the other two axes relate to the interpreter’s alignment with the interlocutors and the interpreter’s interaction management.
personality expression are particularly striking when the individual has direct contact with the TL community (Grosjean, 2010; Koven, 2007). This can lead to some individuals developing ‘multiple selves’, feeling different when switching between languages (Panicacci and Dewaele, 2017; Wierzbicka, 2004). This was also referred to by participants of this doctoral thesis and will be teased out a later stage in this thesis.

The fact that language is intertwined with identity and authentic self-presentation is evident in Eva Hoffman's (1989) autobiographical account of when her family relocated from Poland to Canada when she was thirteen. The novel is divided into three sections, ‘Paradise’, ‘Exile’ and ‘The New World’. As the section titles suggest, she documents her experience of being uprooted from her beloved hometown of Krakow to a place that is alien to her. This is a cultural shock, a linguistic shock and most distressingly for her, an identity shock. She reports that she is no longer able to express herself because there is no inherent “word and world connection” (ibid., p.190).

Likewise, the culture in her host country is radically different and this results in misunderstandings and communication issues, “because I don’t know the background, I don’t always grasp the foreground” (ibid., p.190). ‘The New World’ depicts her journey to find her true inner voice again in a society which has looser ties to culture than her homeland. Therefore, she must ‘re-invent’ herself and successfully does so through ‘emotional acculturation’ (De Leersnyder et al., 2011). Language is the key mechanism by which this occurs:

\[\text{This goddamn place is home now…. I know all the issues and all the codes here. I'm alert as a bat to all the subliminal signals sent by word, look, gesture. […] I fit and my surroundings fit me (Hoffman, ibid., p.169-170).}\]

6.4.6 Performance and personality type

As was observed in the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) theoretical framework (MacIntyre et al., 1998, referred to in §6.4.1), personality traits appear to play a role a pivotal role in performance, willingness to use an L2 and LLA. Dewaele (2002) carried out a study on 100 Flemish students
learning French as an L2 and English as an L3. The aim was to identify the correlation between personality types, extraversion⁴⁴, neuroticism⁴⁵ and psychoticism⁴⁶ and FLA. Furthermore, there was investigation into whether FLA was a stable personality trait amongst the advanced learners in this study. The testing produced a range of results which highlighted variations, dependant on which language was in use. In their L2 (French) there was no consistent relationship between the three personality variables and FLA. However, in their L3 (English) there was a convergence between those with higher levels of psychoticism and extraversion and lower levels of neuroticism, who endured substantially less FLA in their L3.

Interestingly, the correlation of anxiety with each of the studied languages indicates that differing anxiety profiles are produced for each language and language setting. It is paramount that this claim should be considered in the context of this research project - participants comment on the unique experience of learning a signed language compared to other spoken language learning contexts that they had previously taken part in. Therefore, this will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7.

In later research, Dewaele et al. (2008) included emotional intelligence in their study of 464 multilinguals and were able to determine that those who exhibit low emotional intelligence, have a significantly stronger tendency to experience higher FLA in the L1 – L4. Dewaele (2013) again identified a positive correlation between neuroticism and FLA across different groups of students learning several languages. The result was interpreted as those who are higher on the neuroticism scale would most likely be concerned about how others would judge their performance in a foreign language. Again, Dewaele and Al Suraj (2015) published similar results where those who were emotionally stable and scored higher on the extraversion scale were less likely to encounter this phenomenon. As previously discussed, Allbutt and Ling (2016) carried out research on confidence levels amongst

⁴⁴ “Extraverts tend to be sociable, outgoing, gregarious, talkative, under-aroused individuals” (ibid., p.26).
⁴⁵ Emotional instability – “It could be described as a minor nervous disorder”. (ibid., p.27)
⁴⁶ Persons scoring high on psychoticism “tend to be hostile, cold, aggressive, and have poor interpersonal relations” (Furnham & Heaven, 1998, p.327)
two hundred and thirty-five L2-M2 learners. They found that those with an extrovert personality type are more likely to successfully pass the course. This finding is attributed to the following factors (ibid., p354-355):

*Participants who had higher levels of extraversion, particularly in terms of social interaction and communication, were more likely to pass the course. Higher levels of extraversion may have helped them in several ways. For example, L2 learning requires more interaction with tutors and other students than other subject areas do (Pfanner, 2000). Further, producing sign language is analogous to performance, where the signer becomes the center of attention (McKee and McKee, 1992).*

Having higher levels of extraversion may help with the performance elements of signing in class and in the conversational elements of the exam. Equally, outside of class, being more extraverted may help to create a willingness to communicate with other signers and visit Deaf clubs. Such contact with signers is likely to be to the learners’ benefit.

With specific reference to situating LLA in established theories on personality, Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) proposed the notion of the ‘anxious self’, which was born out of empirical data, using McAdams (2006) “New Big Five Model” as a guiding theoretical paradigm (Şimşek and Dörnyei, 2017). This model proposes the five most basic traits which stay independent of each other, however every person can be placed at some point on each trait dimension (McAdams, 2006; McAdams and Pals, 2006).
McAdam’s framework was chosen by Şimşek and Dörnyei (ibid.) for its relevant three-tiered approach. The tiers are based on dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations an integrative life narratives.

- **Dispositional traits** include personality characteristics (outlined in the above figure) which essentially remain stable and account for human individuality. Over time we respond to different situations based on the traits we possess.

- **Characteristic adaptations** are enacted in social situations and also mould who we are. They are determined by the context and are constructs such as our motives, aims, strategies, self-images, mental depictions of those we are close to, etc. The response we have to stimuli may be formed by a culmination of these characteristic adaptations.

- The third component is, *integrative life narratives*. This involves a ‘narrative identity’, which is self-created and helps define who one is, how one builds relationships with others, how to manage one’s own behaviours and how to make sense of one’s own life. The narrative (e.g. an excuse, interpretation, depiction of an event) created allows

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47 Source: https://medium.com/psyc-406-2016/five-traits-to-rule-them-all-ca524c5d2a60
the learner to rationalise their experiences and ultimately shape their self-concept. This allows for reflection on past events in relation to the self and the sense that there is a transitionary, ongoing progression. In an L2 context there is an integration of reconstructed past L2 experiences with an imagined future. Therefore, providing a purpose to work towards (ibid.).

Şimşek and Dörnyei (ibid.) carried out a predominately qualitative study, however quantitative instruments assisted in the recruitment of 16 participants to interview. The ‘anxious self’ label arose from how several learners talked about the anxiety they were experiencing, “in a somewhat detached manner, referring to an anxious persona that they were not fully in control of” (ibid., p.55). Learners referred to L2 performances where anxiety manifested itself as somewhat distinct dimension of their overall self. Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) present their results in relation to each category, as set out above, however, ‘narrative identity’ data in their corpus yields particularly interesting results, which we shall focus on here.

The narratives indicate three different reaction styles amongst participants:

1. The ‘fighter’ is pushing to rid themselves of FLA and the ‘anxious me’ by engaging in combative behaviour, e.g. by being well prepared.
2. The ‘quitter’ is not forward thinking in resolving their issue and instead resigns themselves to failure. They choose the flight rather than the fight option.
3. The ‘safe player’, is characterised when a student “sometimes employs safety-seeking behaviours, which are measures that an individual takes to circumvent a potentially negative event” (ibid., p.62).

The creation of narratives and ‘imagery-based strategies’ can potentially be a cathartic exercise - if educators encourage the formation of constructive positive trajectories (ibid.). Şimşek and Dörnyei (ibid.) suggest that re-framing anxiety as the ‘anxious self’ draws a closer tie to the important construct of self-concept and may be an alternate angle to pursue when considering FLA. The learner narrative component is likely to vary
considerably across cultures and there may never be a universally accepted strategy for how learners should process anxious self-image (ibid.).

In the case of sign language interpreters, most are L2-M2 users of the language. As a result, there are some studies that shed light on aspects of personality in this cohort of advanced L2-M2 learners who use their L2 for professional purposes. Bontempo et al. (2014) carried out a large-scale study of L2-M2 highly skilled learners who had gone on to practice as sign language interpreters (n=2193) across 38 countries which focused on whether personality matters in signed language interpreting. They conclude that learners who go on to become competent signed language interpreters are emotionally stable, low scorers on the neuroticism scale and have higher self-esteem. These characteristics allow an interpreter to remain calm and have a sense of self in challenging situations, which they will inevitably encounter.

Likewise, Bontempo and Napier (2011) examined the relationship between self-efficacy, goal orientation, negative affectivity, and interpreter self-perceived ratings of professional competence. They report that “the most significant finding revealed the dimension of emotional stability (represented on the negative end of the continuum by traits of anxiety and neuroticism, and measured in this study by the negative affectivity scale) as a predictor of interpreter’s self-perceived competence” (ibid., p.85).

As the instrument used in this study was a self-rating scale it is clear to see that experienced interpreters have strong views on what it takes to perform under pressure. However, it could be argued that those who possess higher self-esteem would be more inclined to take part in such a study. This finding may also indicate that those L2-M2 learners who advance to becoming sign language interpreters feel that they have the necessary attributes as detailed above, to be equipped to perform in interpreted settings. Alternatively, one may speculate that those who leave the profession may, in certain instances, have lower self-esteem and find it difficult to cope. This is speculation although based on the L2-M2 interpreting studies outlined above. In this current study we see that participants perceive those with extroverted personality types to have less issues with performing a signed language.
However there was also a strong emphasis placed on the transferable skills which can be brought from an artistic background to the L2-M2 LEARNING HUB (previously using the body in an expressive way to create art, music, etc.). This will be further explored in the next chapter.

6.4.7 Performance anxiety / stage fright

When an individual ‘performs’, anxiety may play a part in that performance. Performance anxiety or stage fright, relatively common in performing artists, such as musicians, singers, dancers and actors can surface not alone on stage but also during the rehearsal phase or even after a performance (Zhukov, 2009). Interpreters, whether advanced practitioners or students, may also suffer from performance anxiety due to the unpredictable nature of interpreting settings. Causality is attributed to linguistic, environmental and inter/intrapersonal factors which ensues stress and sometimes anxiety (Belenkova, 2017; Chiang, 2009; Ivars and Pinazo, 2001; Kurz, 2002). Wilson and Roland (2002) state that performance anxiety has a number of associated factors which exacerbate performance anxiety. These include fear of negative evaluation, perfectionism – self-imposed or socially prescribed and a person’s need to have excessive self-control and are unable to cope in unpredictable circumstances of something going wrong.

The level of anxiety experienced is amplified by a sense of threat, such as a solo performance, rather than co-performing or whether the performance is in public rather than private (smaller gatherings). However, it has been noted that this varies for some performers. For example, a TV performance may be less intimidating as the audience in not proximal and therefore the interpreter does not receive immediate feedback or see the audience reactions to the performance (the visual feedback which was often off-putting for those in the COMPOSING theory). A critical consideration in these contexts is the status relationship between the performer and audience. A final consideration is the performers personality type - where shy, introverts may be stifled by the level of exposure compared to extroverts who may be spurred on to present their best self when in front of others (ibid.).

Walker and Nordin-Bates (2010) produced similar findings in their research on ballet dancers, who found that the dancers reported feeling out of control.
Interestingly, cognitive anxiety was more dominant than somatic anxiety (physical symptoms). Whereas cognitive anxiety was considered to be debilitative, somatic anxiety was interpreted by dancers as facilitative, with a certain amount of anxiety thought to be beneficial to the performance. We should note that stage fright is not just a psychological state of mind, it can also have behavioural consequences where the performer may sing off-key or dance off-beat (Zhukov, 2009).

Miller (2011, paragraph 7) describes what qualities a good and reliable performer must have – “(a) a technical control of their instrument, (b) good taste in using this technique musically and artistically, and (c) the courage to do this in front of an audience”. If we draw a comparison to these suggestions and the theory presented in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, learners feel they are struggling with one or more of these facets.

Given the prevalence of performance anxiety, one may not expect to see drama leveraged as a medium for L2 education. However, Piazzoli (2018) describes the effectiveness of ‘process drama’ in L2 pedagogy, for which Haseman and O’Toole (2017, p.viii) offer the following definition:

*Process drama is an improvised form of drama in which you construct a coherent dramatic story with yourselves as the character in that story. It is a powerful way to explore, through experience, all of the elements of drama. This approach brings mind, body, emotions, imagination and memories into the classroom to shape and deepen your learning.*

Piazzoli explores this form of embodied learning and explores some of its key features. An interesting characteristic is that there is no pre-determined script and no stage from which to perform. Instead, activities are performed collectively and unfold through action. Even if a student volunteers to perform on their own, the emphasis is not on their acting skill. It is instead an act of engagement where improvisation assists in them creating something meaningful which will aid their language learning journey. There is an ‘integral audience’ because everyone present forms the audience, not a separate group of people gazing at the performers. Therefore, everyone is
partaking by doing, reflecting, witnessing and interpreting. There is a rebalancing of space, where the fluidity of the activity allows for the space to be shared rather than having some participants on stage, thus creating a boundary while performing on a higher plane, which in turn may create a perceived status differential. In an L2 classroom where an embodied approach is taken (via process drama techniques) each person is a performer in this shared space and there is no separation between performer and audience.

Within these process drama educational contexts, teaching is an art form where the aesthetic domain is developed in order to facilitate performative language learning. Dramatic elements are incorporated into the classroom which allow learners to be immersed in the target language and culture. This occurs through the practice of play and the creation of opportunities to enable an embodied ‘felt-experience’ of the language. Piazzoli (2011) documented that the use of affective space via process drama resulted in decreasing FLA amongst advanced language learners, unlocked their expressiveness and allowed them to feel less self-conscious. The spontaneous communication which is developed from techniques such as creating dramatic tension, the medium of role and use of authentic cultural scenarios from which to explore language. These approaches proved fruitful over the course of six workshops which the learners engaged in.

The majority of the points we have discussed here in relation to stage fright/performance anxiety are similar to those explored in LLA (in terms of causes, manifestation, etc.). However, the main distinguishing factor is the deliberate watching/presentation of a performance rather than performing language in the company of others who are also engaged in the conversation/activity (this is also the factor that separates speaking anxiety in the LLA literature to the issues identified in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory). Yet, Piazzoli (2011, 2017) notes that artistic performativity can still be embedded in language learning pedagogy by applying process drama influences. Cho and Roger (2010) also advocate for the application of theatrical techniques in student interpreter classrooms to build confidence, assist delivery and encourage rapid problem-solving strategies. This domain
encourages a form of embodied action which is vital in the L2 learning experience. A point which will be revisited when discussing ‘Opportunities’ (§6.6).

6.5 Positive Psychology in Language Learning

The final section of this literature review is also guided by data emanating from the L2-M2 participants in my study. The insecurity and apprehension reported by all, albeit to greater or lesser extents, is something that participants are attempting to overcome or resolve within themselves and with support from others. They are motivated to succeed and develop strategies to regulate their negative feelings. These are predominately positive techniques which allow them to progress with their learning with the aim of mastering Irish Sign Language.

As outlined previously, recent attention has been drawn to positive emotions in SLA rather than solely focusing on the negative emotions (e.g. Dewaele, 2005; Lake, 2013; MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014; Suldo et al., 2014). Therefore, the next section will take a positive psychology stance and will focus on a motivational model called ‘Self-Determination Theory’. Several L2 studies have incorporated this model as a theoretical framework which will be outlined. Following this, self-regulation theories which discuss how learners cope in challenging L2 situations will be presented. At this stage it is noteworthy to point out that teaching strategies have been proposed to detect and tackle LLA in the classroom, however they will not feature in this section and will instead be detailed in §6.6.

6.5.1 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was originally developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. In 1985, their seminal work was brought to a wider audience through the publication of ‘Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior’. Since then, SDT has been elaborated and cultivated by scholars worldwide and continues to have an active network of professionals who use it in practice. Essentially, SDT is

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48 37,462 citations on Google Scholar as of 31st of October, 2018.
49 See: http://selfdeterminationtheory.org
a theory of personality development and human behaviour, applicable to the
domain of motivation (ibid.). Its focus is on the factors which enable human
flourishing. Ryan and Deci (2017, p.3) further elaborate on SDT as follows:

> Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an empirically based, organismic theory of human behavior and personality development. SDT’s analysis is focused primarily at the psychological level, and it differentiates types of motivation along a continuum from controlled to autonomous. The theory is particularly concerned with how social-contextual factors support or thwart people’s thriving through the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

An organismic perspective comes from the life sciences, where humans have evolved to become intrinsically inquisitive, physically active and profoundly social creatures. At an individual level, human development is epitomized by proactive engagement, absorbing and processing information and the behavioural requirements for seeking membership of social groups. Ultimately, we have an inherent predisposition to learn, explore, gain talents and understand our “inner and outer worlds” (ibid., p.4). These natural tendencies are related to our intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic motivation in SDT. Oxford (2016a) delineates various forms of extrinsic motivation in SDT, which include:

1. **External regulation**, doing something because it is required yet feeling controlled, uninterested, etc. Therefore, carried out with minimal effort.
2. **Introjected regulation** is linked to self-esteem, such as doing something to lessen guilt or prevent failure.
3. **Identified regulation**, is fully cooperating to assist someone with their goal and acknowledging it is personally important too.
4. **Integrated motivation** where substantial effort is placed in an external goal which has now been fully espoused and corresponds with one’s own needs and values.
Ryan and Deci (2017) point out that extrinsic factors can become a powerful motivator if the individual has willingness and acceptance of the benefit and usefulness of the task. It will therefore be “self-endorsed and thus adopted with a sense of volition” (ibid., p.55). If the opposite is true, resentment, defiance, or a lack of interest will feature, as the individual may feel coerced into doing something. This is ineffective and a weak form of motivation. Ryan and Deci (2004) refer to the concept of ‘authenticity’ in this process. Humans are predisposed to want to regulate behavioural reactions which are sensed to be congruent with our ‘authentic’ self. This corresponds with and ongoing process and final stage of the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory, in the form of AUTHENTICATING50.

Therefore, with each new encounter, the self considers potential actions which are underpinned by current beliefs and interests. Resulting in behaviours being regulated by the appraisal and consideration of different actions, which is beneficial to the person as a whole. There is an ownership and responsibility where one can fulfil potential and begin to flourish due to responding in a meaningful way.

Ryan and Deci (2017) differentiate different types of motivation by applying the autonomy-control continuum. At one end of the spectrum sits amotivation, which is deemed to be non-self-determined motivation. Amotivation refers to “…people’s lack of intentionality and motivation — that is, to describe the extent to which they are passive, ineffective, or without purpose with respect to any given set of potential actions” (ibid., p.16). For this reason the individual has no internal or external motivation and will most likely quit the activity at their earliest convenience. The continuum then progresses to controlled motivation which is extrinsically motivated and gradually moves towards self-determined motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the most powerful motivator because the individual has an innate interest or enjoyment in doing something and it does not have to be forced. Figure 13 offers an overview of the autonomy-control continuum.

50 This will be discussed further in §7.3.
SDT also explores the social conditions which support or impede this process. The basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness dictate the type and strength of motivation which arises. These needs are not just required for motivation but also in one’s development and well-being. However, they are not universally felt. At an individual level there will be differences in terms of how each need has been fulfilled or prevented, however if these needs are satisfied it will lead to optimal functioning via intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008). These basic psychological needs will now be explored in more detail.

*Autonomy* is an individual’s inherent desire to have choice and control when carrying out a task (De Charms, 1968). It is volitional, with no opposition. It does not have to be carried out by the individual themselves but can also be someone else they self-nominate and depend on for its completion. It may also be a rule you believe in or the legitimacy of the person enforcing the rule. Autonomy is achieved when there is an absence of pressure to complete a task. The individual feels they have choice in terms of goal or strategy and have willingness to engage in the activity. There is no pressure in relation to prescribed outcomes, punishments or being closely monitored (Ryan and Deci, 2017).
Little (n.d.\textsuperscript{51}) points out that autonomy is both a ‘social-interactive’ and ‘individual-cognitive’ phenomenon. However, there is a common misconception that teachers lead their pupils from dependence to autonomy, this is not actually the case because learners have generally experienced autonomy in their daily lives. This autonomy must now be directed toward their language learning (ibid.). As such, autonomy is the product of the interactive learning environment and therefore the “teacher gradually enlarges the scope of her learners’ autonomy by gradually allowing them more control of the process and content of their learning” (Little, 2007, p.26). Tangentially, we see the development of autonomy as L2-M2 participants of this study BOLSTER PERSONAL RESOURCES.

*Competence* is realised when the individual is able to effectively operate in their environment and believe they are competent to perform the task (Bandura, 1997). This is through the act of exploring, testing and mastering\textsuperscript{52}. There is also an innate desire to engage in tasks which are challenging yet are set an optimal level. Positive feedback is appreciated and incorporated into future attempts (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

*Relatedness* is the need to interact with, feel connected to, and care for others (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In this present study we see this occur through the development of TRUST with stakeholders in the LEARNING HUB. There is a realisation that others can empathise and appreciate your feelings. It connects to the earlier point made that we are fundamentally social beings who wish to be members of various groups (Ryan and Deci, 2017). As previously identified, SDT has been applied to many disciplines, one of which, language learning, will receive targeted focus in the following section.

6.5.2 *Self-Determination Theory in L2 learning*

Noels et al. (2003) investigate the relationship between SDT and L2 motivation through the development of instruments to explore its relevance.

\textsuperscript{51}Available from: http://languagesinitiative.ie/images/Language_Learner_Autonomy_WhatWhyHow.pdf

\textsuperscript{52}We saw similar acts in Chapter 5 within the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory.
They suggest that the subtypes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (IM + EM), as per Deci and Ryan (1985), can be used to validly assess learner motivation. The argument for this is the correlation between the subtypes of IM and EM and the hypothesized antecedents and ramifications. In their conclusions they suggest that this can be an extremely useful paradigm with the L2 discipline.

Although causality was not investigated, they concur that the meeting of psychological needs can be a theoretical predictor. This claim is also based on Noels et al. (1999) who found that learners were demotivated by perceptions of a controlling teacher who did not provide constructive feedback which they could implement. Therefore, there was no fostering of autonomy or the provision of valid feedback which could aid in improving competence.

Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal study on the development of language learning motivation using a SDT theoretical framework. Their research took place over an entire year with 515 Japanese elementary school children who were learning a foreign language. Motivation, views on teacher support, satisfaction of needs and engagement were measured at different stages during the year using a self-reporting questionnaire. In parallel, external raters made classroom observations on student engagement and teachers were consulted on their perceptions of student motivation and quality of learning. The results indicate a positive and dynamic correlation between motivation, engagement and perceptions of the learning environment. This is in line with SDT theory, which argues that IM develops in an individual through interactions with their environment.

The findings also highlight the teacher’s role in facilitating student motivation through the creation of a classroom which is conducive to student engagement. Where lessons are interesting, enjoyable, conducted at an optimum pace and delivered with clarity. “In this environment, students feel connected to their peers, capable of the tasks, and personally invested in their learning, and thus engage in the learning activities. Engagement in turn leads to more positive assessments from teachers” (ibid., p.149).
Likewise, Jones at al. (2009) discuss how they successfully adopted a SDT perspective in the classroom and the positive ramifications it had in terms of motivating students. This was actualized through providing opportunities which met the students' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. They offer proven examples of how this was achieved, including the facilitation of peer interactions, allowing students to discuss their personal possessions (items of sentimental importance to them) and carrying out review sessions afterwards.

Research has also demonstrated that the incorporation of SDT principles in language education leads to the student developing more IM, which spurs them on to interact with the foreign language cultures on their own volition (Vansteenkiste, et al., 2005). According to Carreira et al. (2013) this type of autonomous motivation stems from the learning environment which has been cultivated. While, Jang et al. (2012) posit that autonomous needs satisfaction is also a predictor of achievement. Pae's (2008) findings also suggest that IM is the greatest determinant of self-confidence and motivation to learn another language. The studies presented thus far in this section suggest that the higher degree of self-determination that an individual (learner) experiences, the greater the benefit which will be realised as a direct result from this. Therefore, Noels (2009) advocates for SDT to be considered in L2 motivational research as it emphasises the central role of self and the need for learners to internalise the language activity.

Noels et al. (2000, p.35) also show their support for SDT in the L2 and foreign language disciplines by outlining its applicability to the L2 domain:

*SDT offers a parsimonious, internally consistent framework for systematically describing many different orientations in a comprehensive manner. It also offers considerable explanatory power for understanding why certain orientations are better predictors of relevant language learning variables (e.g., effort, persistence, attitudes) than others. Also, by invoking the psychological mechanisms of perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, it can account for why certain orientations are evident in some learners and not in others.*
6.5.3 **Self-regulation in language learning contexts**

Zimmerman (2008) claims that self-regulation is a set of proactive processes which a learner engages in to acquire an academic skill. These are self-directed and include; goal setting, the weighing up and deployment of strategies and self-monitoring one’s own capability. The monitoring of thoughts and emotions also features in self-regulation (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). The associated processes involve action and initiative and are not reactionary in nature. However, Vygotsky (1962, 1978) asserts that language development takes place in social interactions between individuals, or, with the aid of cultural tools, e.g. dictionaries and books while studying independently. This assistance or ‘mediation’ from L2 resources, such as advanced speakers of the L2 language, allows the learner to develop self-regulation in sociocultural contexts, however this still involves personal choice in order to self-regulate, e.g. whether or not to incorporate the feedback which has been received from others.

Vygotsky’s ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD) model states the learner is capable of performing at a higher level with support from an L2 interlocutor as it helps in bridging knowledge gaps. ZPD is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in cooperation with more capable peers” (1978, p.86). The ‘scaffolding’ or support received, allows learning to occur at two levels, firstly the external or ‘interpsychological’ stage through social interactions and then at a deeper level, where knowledge is then internalised due to ‘intrapsychological’ processing (Cook, 2016).

Oxford (2011, p.12) explores the strategies implemented in order to regulate learning as:

> **Deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn.** These strategies are broad, teachable actions that learners choose from among alternatives and employ for L2 learning purposes, e.g., constructing, internalizing, storing, retrieving, and
using information; completing short-term tasks; and/or developing L2 proficiency and self-efficacy in the long term.

However, strategies should not be confused with ‘skills’ which, when automated, are carried out without awareness. Oxford (2016b) further elaborates on the concept of self-regulation by stating autonomy is a prerequisite for this. She also suggests that both self-regulation and autonomy are born out of agency. Mercer (2011, 2012) claims that the concept of agency in language learning comprises two dimensions which cannot be meaningfully separated. The first is the individual’s personal sense of agency, i.e. a belief that their behaviour will make a difference in a general or specific setting, such as how it will impact on their learning. The other interrelated dimension is the learner’s choice to exercise this agentive behaviour through action or participation, or conversely, by purposely abstaining in these instances. Mercer (2012, p.41) claims that agency is determined by a number of factors at different levels of context and proposes that we should take a holistic approach and situate it “contextually, interpersonally, temporally and intrapersonally”.

Ryan and Deci (2001) point out that there is often conflation surrounding the definition of autonomy because conceptualisations frequently refer to independence or non-reliance on another person. They claim this is incorrect, as autonomy is underpinned by volition or self-endorsement and originates from the individual (i.e. it is agentive in nature) rather than something which is received from another person. Pivac (2014) carried out a study which considers how L2-M2 learners of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) become autonomous outside of the classroom, exploring what social and linguistic resources they avail of. Their findings support the idea that ‘good’ L2-M2 language learners are supporting their language learning with informal learning in the target language community. In addition, five key learning strategies are employed by participants outside the classroom context (ibid., p.213-217). These are:

1. Proactively analyze learning needs and implement strategies. Metacognitive competency is developed, whereby learners analyse their needs and take appropriate action. This is by ‘seeking’ or
‘creating’ opportunities to engage NZSL in deaf social contexts. Learners then evaluate how productive their strategy was and modify future learning plans.

2. Actively engage with L1 users. All six participants applied this strategy in order to gain ‘authentic exposure’. “Nevertheless, some learners sought communication opportunities within Deaf sociocultural contexts more proactively by regularly engaging with L1 users, internalizing authentic NZSL usage, pragmatic behaviors, and Deaf culture, and making appropriate adjustments” (p.211). These encounters were often challenging but the result is that learner wished to develop ‘communicative’, ‘sociocultural’ and ‘pragmatic’ competence.

3. Establish and extend social networks. All learners entered social networks in the deaf community by either making themselves ‘visible’ or by initiating new connections. Essentially, they were “establishing new learner identities as new interpreting students” (p.214). In COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF this new learner identity comes in the form of the L2-M2 SELF whereby the individual must COMPOSE both the self (to manage emotions) and the performance (to build competence). In Pivac’s study the community immersion created both strong and loose ties to these different networks, some of which allowed for enduring friendships to develop. Reciprocity, a core value of the collective deaf community, was also adopted by volunteering at different events. The benefit of which was immersion in the language and access to sign variation amongst sub-groups. These endeavours resulted in a ‘social repositioning’ as prospective interpreters.

4. Engage in mediated language learning. Learners became involved in a ‘community of practice’ whereby informal feedback was offered from L1 users (some of which were tutors) or L2 interpreters (L2 users). The extent of this contact varied from occasional to scheduled tutorial sessions (paid). It was also observed that some ‘apprenticed’ themselves to deaf organisations for a mutual exchange of resources. This highlights that learners are autonomously moving
from the periphery to becoming active learners and ultimately sign language interpreters.

5. **Develop and sustain positive affective states.** Pivac (ibid.) states that motivation and confidence were the two key attributes which allowed for a boosting of positive states. In terms of motivation, learners employed four motivational strategies which also boosted confidence. *These are: interacting with L1 users in preferred comfort zones; becoming familiar with Deaf environments, Deaf people, and their norms; engaging frequently with Deaf people; progressing from known ‘safe’ contacts and settings into unknown faces and risky territories.* Learner enjoyment and relaxation help to boost learner motivation and confidence levels (p.216). In addition, some learners also developed confidence building strategies to improve communicative competence, this was via mediated learning (strategy 4) and improving linguistic self-confidence whilst maintaining a positive attitude. Four of the six learners were particularly ‘invested’ and spent vast time in deaf social contexts where the reward was access to NZSL.

The above learning strategies set out by Pivac (ibid.) can also be identified within the context of this study (Chapter 5) and will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p.149) present various taxonomies and arguments which have been proposed in relation to learner strategies and self-regulation, however they believe that the following four categories are most salient in learning domains:

1. **Cognitive strategies**, involving the manipulation or transformation of the learning materials/input (e.g., repetition, summarizing, using images).

2. **Metacognitive strategies**, involving higher-order strategies aimed at analysing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing one’s own learning process.

3. **Social strategies**, involving interpersonal behaviours aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communication and practice the
learner undertakes (e.g., initiating interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers).

4 Affective strategies, involving taking control of the emotional (affective) conditions and experiences that shape one’s subjective involvement in learning.

We must first consider the concept of emotional self-regulation as it is the most pertinent to the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. In the discussion in Chapter 7, there will be particular reference to the affective strategies applied by L2-M2 learners.

6.5.4 Emotional self-regulation

MacIntyre (2002) asserts that emotion amplifies and furthermore creates the intensity, energy and urgency to drive our behaviour. As previously discussed, emotions can be experienced in both positive and negative ways and can sometimes be simultaneously felt in learning contexts. In the field of positive psychology, an instrumental model called the ‘broaden-and-build’ theory explores the interplay between these seemingly conflicting emotions. Fredrickson (1998, 2001, 2004), the originator of this theory, hypothesises how positive emotions can broaden and open our minds, lead to a widening of awareness, and an increased ability to tune in to the needs of others. In her studies, she selects a subset of these positive emotions, including joy, interest and contentment and concludes from her experiments that they are not just a signal of optimal well-being but also produce optimal functioning. The impact is not solely momentary but also transcends into the long term.

The naming of the broaden-and-build theory stems from the fact that “positive emotions appear to broaden peoples’ momentary thought–action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources” (2004, p.1369). In contrast, negative emotions lead to a narrowing of the thought-action repertoire, i.e. a restriction in the options available. However, Fredrickson and Levenson (1998) propose an ‘undo hypothesis’ whereby positive emotions can undo or correct lingering negative emotions or the effect of these emotions, i.e. affective self-regulation. The broadening of the thought-action repertoire from positive emotions are said to function to dismantle or
loosen the grip that negative emotions have over a person's mind and body and can re-route a previous course of action.

The cultivation of positive emotions when encountering undesirable feelings can actually assist with coping in these instances. This was scientifically tested by asking participants to prepare a speech within a 1-minute timeframe, which they believed would then be recorded and evaluated by their peers. Each participant was then randomly assigned a video to watch - two of which elicited mild positive emotions, another which served as a neutral control condition and a final one which elicited sadness. The researchers then tested the time elapsed from the introduction of the random video to when anxiety induced cardiovascular activity brought on by the speech task returned to baseline levels. Results indicated that the positive emotion videos allowed for the fastest recovery, while participants who experienced the sadness condition exhibited the most protracted recovery. Therefore the resonance of the negative experience was diminished by positive influences (Fredrickson, 2004).

The broaden-and-build theory recognises that psychological resilience will allow for faster recovery even though the same negative emotions may be felt between individuals in the first place. In this vein, those with higher pre-existing ego resilience experience reducing instances of negative encounters. Also, their resiliency allows them to avoid long-term effects of these negative instances. This determination is premised on the notion that positive emotions (supported by ego resilience) will allow an individual to have greater personal resources (ibid.). Fredrickson et al. (2004) examined this by asking a group of learners to engage in a daily task where they had to find long-term benefits and positive meaning in their best, worst and even mundane daily experiences. This activity lasted for a month and, after its conclusion, the group was compared to other students who did not originally take part. The results indicate that those who carried out the task instructions exhibited increases in resilience and thus became more creative and flexible in their thinking. This finding verified the casual condition theorized by Fredrickson et al. (ibid.).
Likewise, the broaden-and-build theory determines that positive emotions trigger an upward spiral which enables greater well-being, the source of human flourishing. Essentially it propels people forward and lifts them to a higher level of optimal well-being (Fredrickson, 2004). MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) concur that the broaden-and-build theory if enacted, will lead to adaptive spirals of feeling, thinking and acting. This is likely to create enduring success in language learning environments rather than self-protective behaviours associated with language anxiety. Gregersen et al. (2016, p.148) suggest that positive emotions allow for “broader attention, greater working memory, enhanced verbal fluency and increased openness to information”. They suggest that on foot of this, educators should design classroom activities in a manner which allows for the promotion of personal growth (ibid.).

Oxford (2016b) points out individuals have a tendency to be either optimistic or pessimistic. Optimists are problem solvers and will generally visualise positive outcomes even in spite of challenging circumstances. If an issue cannot be resolved, optimists will often accept the reality, readjust and move forward. Pessimists will alternatively dwell on issues and have difficulties in overcoming the problem, as negative emotions such as anxiety will surface. Oxford (ibid, p.89) therefore outlines the anti-coping strategies which are availed of by pessimists, such as; “wishful thinking, denial, distractions, escapism, and giving up, all of which embody running away from the problem.” Optimists on the other hand are generally copers who re-frame problems, incorporate humour and accept difficulties without allowing them to become overwhelming. Oxford (ibid., following Gross, 2014) lists five families of emotional self-regulation strategies –

- **Situation selection;** taking actions which will cause desirable or undesirable emotional outcomes. This is not always the best option - in the case of L2 learning it may involve avoiding behaviours such as choosing not to speak the L2 in front of others. This may reduce temporary stress but eliminates the chance to practice.

- **Situational modification;** modifying the external situation to adjust the emotional impact, e.g. re-organising the study environment to feel more positive about oneself whilst revising.
➢ Attentional deployment; focusing attention on something in order to control emotions, such as a distraction technique to alleviate anxiety.
➢ Cognitive change; the reframing or reappraisal of a situation. Instead of thinking about the nervous feelings, one can modify the thought and re-frame it as feeling exhilarated about something.
➢ Response modulation; when emotionally responding, one can directly influence the psychological, behavioural or experiential aspects of this, such as relaxation techniques by engaging in deep breathing.

Oxford (ibid.) also proposes metastrategies for learners to become aware of and help control feelings.

The first is *paying attention to affect*, spotting the physical symptoms of stress and considering how one is feeling prior to commencing a task or how the emotions are impacting the successful completion of the task which is currently being engaged in. In this moment a person can consider the factors which are contributing to these feelings and the emotional load of the actual activity.

*Planning for affect* is the preparation involved to bolster emotions prior to the task and taking stock after the activity. The person can imagine oneself feeling calmer in the future as the prior performance will result in feeling calmer with future similar tasks as there will no longer be the same sense of the unknown. The individual can also take practical steps to enjoy the language and culture, such as researching novel aspects which interest them about the community. A ‘can-do’ chart may also be drafted where the learner documents the highlights and successes of their language journey.

*Organising learning and obtaining resources for affect* is where the learner seeks resources to reduce anxiety or creates the conditions for a positive atmosphere, such as playing relaxing music in the background whilst studying or ensuring that disruptions which normally exacerbate anxiety, are eliminated. Seeking help from family and friends is also a feature of this metastrategy.

Finally, *monitoring and evaluating for affect*, is where the person considers how they were feeling when their mind wanders, e.g. fatigued, bored, etc.
How they are feeling in general, not just in this language learning environment and the need to switch strategies if they current ones are ineffective.

Oxford (ibid.) claims that such strategies and metastrategies are capable of supporting the student in dealing with negative emotions and instead transfers this energy into considering positive outcomes. We see that L2-M2 learners are spontaneously developing many of these emotional self-regulation and metastrategies in the current study. This will be further discussed in the following chapter. Ben-Eliyahu and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2013) similarly explore the range of helpful and unhelpful emotional self-regulation strategies and interestingly point out that ‘suppression’ can at times be helpful. Their findings indicate that self-regulation emotion strategies (reappraisal, rumination and suppression) are differentially applied depending on the level of course preference.

The above studies indicate that supporting positive psychology in language learning settings can facilitate learners with negative emotions, such as language learning anxiety. It in turn allows for developing an alternate mindset. Thus, we will now expand on practical ways where this positive outlook can underpin classroom lessons and allow for autonomous learning, therefore allowing students to ‘flourish’ and further engage in emotional self-regulation strategies.

6.6 Opportunities

Opportunities in this context relate to what assistance can be provided to L2-M2 learners to manage their main concern of EXPOSURE INSECURITY and to ISL teachers delivering the curriculum. The aim is to allow learners the opportunity to learn to COMPOSE THE L2-M2 SELF at the earliest opportunity. Dewaele et al. (2017) suggest that teachers should concentrate on boosting foreign language enjoyment rather than focusing on LLA, as this is likely to have a more meaningful impact. In addition, as educators, our role is to enlarge the scope of learners’ autonomy, which is deemed to be a prime intrinsic motivator (Little, 2007). As we saw, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) similarly state that as self-confidence grows, LLA can be contained and enjoyment will be boosted.
It will not be possible to eliminate LLA, rather the learner will find their balance as anxiety and enjoyment “are brought into equilibrium” (ibid., p.234). Therefore, the predominant focus of this section is to cultivate positive psychology in the ISL classroom, rather than specifically focusing on detecting LLA in L2-M2 learners. There will not be an exhaustive discussion of literature on the topic, however I will instead offer some recommendations, some of which may already be utilised to various degrees in the ISL classroom. 53

6.6.1 Flow Theory

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a renowned psychologist first proposed the concept of ‘Flow’ after several participants used the metaphor of a water current sweeping them along and the feeling of being completely absorbed in an activity. The concept of Flow is defined as "the holistic experience that people feel when they act with total involvement" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p.36). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) further developed the theory to explore how some individuals become fully immersed in a task to a point where they enter into a different level of heightened experience. This ‘in the zone’ capability also allows for improved performance of the task (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). The construct includes nine dimensions which culminate to form a state of flow, otherwise known as optimal experience. Panebianco-Warrens (2014, p.59) summarises these characteristics as follows:

- **Challenge-skill balance**, the activity should be challenging yet within the ability of the individual.
- **Action-awareness mergence**, often linked to an ecstatic state or being completely immersed with the activity.
- **Clear goals and feedback**, clear understanding of what is required for a successful outcome.
- **Unambiguous feedback**, immediate positive feedback.

53 As I am not an ISL teacher, I cannot comment on what currently takes place in the ISL classroom. These are merely suggestions which are supported by the literature.
Concentration on the task at hand, total focus on the task with no extraneous thoughts.

Sense of control, feeling of being in complete control of self.

Loss of self-consciousness, free from inner criticism and self-doubt.

Transformation of time, time seems to pass either very quickly or very slowly, a distortion of time perception.

Autotelic experience, intrinsically rewarding experience achieved from doing an activity for its own sake.

As can be witnessed in the above points, Flow is associated with positive emotional and cognitive experiences which allow for greater motivation (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2005). However, the challenge-skill balance has traditionally been considered the primary antecedent for development of Flow and therefore requires careful attention (Fong et al., 2015). It has also been argued by Bassi and Della Fave (2012) that Flow theory supports Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). In particular, the basic psychological need of competence, where optimal challenge is a feature and therefore a challenge-skill balance must be achieved. If a learner is fully involved in an activity, they are known to be in a ‘flow channel’, i.e. nothing else seems to matter in that moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The illustration below depicts the challenge-skill element involved in achieving this state.
Egbert (2003) proceeded to test flow theory in the language learning classroom and considers it a worthwhile framework for conceptualizing language learning activities and evaluating their effectiveness. Therefore, if a well-designed task is combined with appropriate learner skill, this can increase the likelihood of a language learner entering a state of flow as it has a direct influence on the learner’s psychological state and in turn performance. As skill is developed so is the level of challenge complexity, therefore boosting the individual’s psychological state and level of performance (ibid., p.500).
Egbert (ibid.) reports that task specific flow was reported by learners and following teacher observations. There was a total of seven simulations, i.e. tasks where flow was measured. It must be pointed that such a study could not be replicated directly for L2-M2 learners as there were some flow tasks which are not relevant to the ISL classroom (e.g. reading tasks). Each task was rated using specific criteria originally hypothesised by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). Following this Egbert (ibid.) suggests that when designing any language learning task there are specific considerations which must be made in order to create the conditions for Flow. These are;

**Control:** the sense that the learner has control over the situation and that there are mutual responsibilities between teacher/learner. The formulation of activities may be different depending on the learner as it is their perception of the interaction between them and the environment. The task should offer the learner to exercise self-expression it if they so wish and feel that have a sense of autonomy over the task.

**Focus:** is characterised in the language learning environment by “intense concentration and automaticity” (ibid., p.504). Ironically, it requires ‘unintentional’ attention where the deployment of conscious strategies by the learner actually disrupts flow. Therefore, the learner should approach the task instinctively and be given opportunity to do so. Another requirement of focus is ‘noticing’, also termed ‘consciously attending’, whereby language input is claimed to support learner accuracy. The actioning of implicit feedback aids flow, however if there are too many interruptions this counteracts the process. Focus is a balancing act which needs to be further explored according to Egbert (ibid.).

**Interest:** Authenticity is what learners relish in a task. However, there are many task forms which interest learners, even activities where students are required to drill and practice. The important thing is that there is a level of student involvement and they have the opportunity to offer ideas. If a task is personalised to the learning group, they may also relate more to it. Variety is also key so there is also an element of the unexpected rather than routine techniques.
**Challenge:** As previously mentioned, in Flow theory an overarching component is the challenge-skill balance. This is also referred to in specific reference to a task. Although learners appreciate something to work toward, it should also be within reaching distance and therefore not pitched far beyond what the majority of the group are incapable of achieving. If particularly challenging, learners must feel they have the support to assist them with making progress. If this is not the case, it instead becomes an ‘anti-flow’ experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). As previously discussed, as the learner’s skill improves, the challenge must also be made more complex. Flow, therefore heightens development (Egbert, ibid.).

Flow theory is something we should be mindful of in the ISL classroom. It is not alone a motivator but also a catalyst for improved learner performance. When creating lessons plans and developing practical activities, the four task components suggested by Egbert (ibid.) can help guide our pedagogical practice.

### 6.6.2 Flourishing

Another concept which should be cultivated in a positive psychology classroom is flourishing. This is the core of Deci and Ryan’s (ibid.) Self-Determination Theory, which has been discussed extensively thus far.

Maureen Gaffney, a psychologist who has written extensively about the conditions that support flourishing, also makes reference to the way people present themselves and the consequences of same. Gaffney asserts that body posture/language creates a first impression. She suggests that, if a negative perception is formed, it takes more than nine subsequent positive encounters with the same person to rectify, drawing on the work of Carney et al. (2010). This research team, based at the Harvard Business School, completed a study on social psychology which documents the link between body posture and the effectiveness of a student in the classroom. Carney et al. (ibid.) observe that those who participated less in class had contracted and closed posture and made lesser use of space when talking, indicating

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54 ‘How to be Happy – Positive poses’. Sourced from: http://www.maureengaffney.ie/media/
powerlessness and submissiveness. Those who participated more had expansive body language and made greater use of space, including occupying the middle of the room while contributing – signalling power and confidence in their contribution.

A lab experiment was then carried out where subjects were asked to adopt a series of high and low power poses for a period of two minutes. The results indicate that high-power poses\(^{55}\) measurably improve positive feelings by 10-20%, by decreasing cortisol levels, which are responsible for stress. They also reported a boost in testosterone by 15-25%, a hormone that is commonly associated with competitiveness and drive. These “tiny tweaks can lead to big changes” and you can “fake it ‘til you become it”\(^{56}\), i.e. internalise it. Results also indicate that the positive effect carries through to the next performance and can optimise the brain to perform better in stressful situations.

Gaffney (2011) also explores the optimum level of positive and negative thought. From the moment we awaken, our brain (relatively) subconsciously stores the positive and negative thoughts which surface. These begin to have an accumulative effect, where the balance between the positive and negative constantly changes. Gaffney (ibid., p.25) suggests the ‘magic ratio’ for flourishing is 5:1, positive to negative.

\textit{In other words, for every burst of irritability, every tense exchange, every negative thought and feeling of disappointment, there had to be not double, but five times as many positives – an affection exchange, a conflict solved, a feeling of being appreciated and understood.}

The 5:1 ratio activates an upward spiral. However, if the ratio dips below 3:1 then it sends us on a downward spiral which is difficult to escape. However, a certain amount of negativity is actually beneficial because if the ratio rises to 11:1 we are considered to be in denial or blocking out issues we inevitably face on a daily basis. Furthermore, Gaffney suggests that merely 20% of

\(^{55}\) Such as standing up with the shoulders back, hands on hips and feet apart.
\(^{56}\)https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en
people flourish, while 20% are languishing. The majority fall somewhere in the ‘normal’ mid-point of the spectrum.

Gaffney (ibid.) proposes ten strategies to promote flourishing and are based on evidence from the fields of psychology and neuroscience. The aim is to enable an individual to build enduring positive feelings and limit negative influences. They can be worked on singly, or collectively for more impactful results. These strategies are as follows: build your capacity for happiness, set yourself goals, control your attention, always know your positive purpose, take charge of your mood, master the art of vital engagement, know the meaning of things, build your resilience, stop sabotaging yourself and embrace the future. These may appear to be deeply personal strategies; however, I would argue that as educators we have a role to play in facilitating such processes in the classroom. Likewise, returning to the body posture discussion we could also offer practical tips which make a scientific difference in an individual’s confidence level.

6.6.3 EMPATHICS

Oxford (2016a) discusses the development of the EMPATHICS acronym which is a framework of well-being for language learners. The acronym is outlined below with an accompanying hypothesis:

**E:** Emotion and empathy – language learners with high well-being recognize their emotions, manage them effectively, and show empathy for others.

**M:** Meaning and motivation – language learners with high well-being seek and create meaning which helps them to be motivated.

**P:** Perseverance, including resilience, hope and optimism – language learners with high well-being persevere in their language learning.

**A:** Agency and autonomy – language learners with high well-being embody agency and autonomy.

**T:** Time – language learners with high well-being appraise themselves temporally in a positive way and have perspective that fits their needs for learning.
H: Hardiness and habits of mind – language learners with high well-being develop hardy attitudes and hardy action patterns and have useful habits of mind.

I: Intelligences – language learners with high well-being recognize their own intelligences and take advantage of those intelligences for learning and living.

C: Character strengths – language learners with high well-being have a range of character strengths that help them in their learning and their lives.

S: Self factors – language learners with high well-being possess self-efficacy, positive self-concepts, and high self-esteem, and use self-verification positively.

This framework was drafted after twenty-five years of research in the area of language learning and positive psychology and also reflects the work of many theorists in the field (ibid.). One of these, Seligman (2011), whose previous ‘Wellbeing Theory’ consisted of the following five elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (PERMA). However, Oxford (ibid.) suggests that it did not capture all aspects of what was appearing in data for language learners, leading to the development of the EMPATHICS construct.

Tangentially, Oxford suggests that this gap was deciphered having applied Straussian grounded theory techniques to previous studies (e.g. Oxford, 2014). Oxford (2016a) posits that the dimensions outlined above are part of a dynamic complex system, where the interrelated components are working in tandem to form a whole end result. Likewise, particular attention should be placed on context and culture as interrelationships may change. “These interrelationships are non-linear, organic and holistic, and point to the probability of higher-level aggregations or constellations that deserve theorizing and research” (ibid., p.71).

This model does not present definitive claims, rather an overview of previous research and hypotheses which can be further researched. In particular, focused attention should be placed on how combinations of dimensions interrelate. The findings could then offer a greater depth of explanation,
which explores connections rather than causality. Oxford anticipates that with further theoretical refinement, teacher development sessions can be offered which could assist in providing holistic approaches in the classroom to assist learners in developing and maintaining positive psychology (ibid.). Likewise, sessions may also be offered to learners to discuss practical ways in which hardiness, perseverance and time could be improved. Oxford (ibid.) states that the positive psychology perspective does not disregard difficulties a learner faces, rather focuses on learner strengths rather than weaknesses.

6.6.4 Process drama techniques

Piazzoli (2011) documented that the use of affective space via process drama resulted in decreasing FLA amongst advanced language learners, unlocked their expressiveness and allowed them to feel less self-conscious. The domain of drama-based pedagogy in L2 setting was previously introduced in this literature review (§6.4.7) and is now deemed to be an opportunity, particularly as it also refers to embodied learning and performance (using the body) as a means to express language (although in a spoken language context). This embodiment in action approach is not solely about applying process drama techniques but requires the teacher to have an artistic inclination and/or a desire to use this approach. Piazzoli (2018, p.10) suggests that:

> If a teacher’s sub-identity does not align with that of the teacher as artist, for instance, there may be a block, or resistance, to undertaking the work independently.

Piazzoli (ibid.) outlines several workshops that may be used in the L2 classroom, which are mapped to the CEFR framework. A central aspect of many is the use of the voice, prosody, etc. However, there may be scope to tailor such activities to L2-M2 learners. In addition to the language aims of each workshop, there is also a broader educational aim which focuses on aspects of intercultural sensitivity and the target language community and culture. Each workshop has a specific aim which corresponds with the L2 learning objectives, however some may be particularly useful for learners who are inhibited by LLA, are self-conscious, or “who lack a motivating context to unlock their expressiveness” (ibid., p.192).
An example is a workshop titled *High Tide in Venezia*. The goal here is to encourage language learners to immerse themselves in the L2 culture and to look at it from a different perspective, i.e. a local context. In this case imaging what it is like to live in Venice rather than visiting it as a tourist. Each workshop starts with a pre-text to set the scene and allow for the creative process to emerge by offering “a source or input that defines the nature of the dramatic world” (ibid., p.34). It could be a photograph, a story, or in this case, a passage from an evocative text which explores Venice through the senses\(^{57}\).

> With less than a metre difference in altitude, many areas are already under water; a serious emergency arises beyond one metre ten. On the terrible night of November 4th 1966, my father swam home from work. The sirens that sounded the alarm during the air raids of the Second World War have been kept on top of the campanili. They now announce sea raids, when the acqua alta is about to rise; they wake you at five, six in the morning. The sleepy inhabitants fix steel bulkheads to their front doors.

The duration of the workshop is five hours, which will allow students to develop a state of flow, as was previously discussed. The CEFR level for this one is pitched at B2 to C1 (intermediate to advanced). It allows for the practising of the Italian language in a meaningful way. In addition is also encourages the learner to reflect on the task.

### High Tide in Venezia

#### Drama Strategies

**Initiation phase**

**Step 1. Warm-up.** Inner circle/outer circle.

Participants, in concentric circles, exchange their names and stories about the city of Venice.

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Step 2. Multimodal brainstorming. Compile a visual glossary of key terms related to Venice Watch and comment on videos of high-tide water sirens.

Step 3. Pre-text. Read aloud a passage from Venezia è un Pesce (see pre-text).

Step 4. Total Physical Response (TPR). Imagine living in Venice. What would be your routine, when you hear the high-tide water siren at 5am? Practise the evacuation routine, as the teacher calls out the actions, in two groups: residents and firefighters.

Step 5. Soundscape. A small groups of students work on a choral re-interpretation of the water sirens, creating a travelling chorus that moves from area to area.

Step 6. Dramatic roles. Participants create a new role as residents of Venice. They are provided role cards that state their family name (typical Venetian) and sestiere (area of Venice) and think up their given name and profession as Venetians.

Step 7. Hot seating and map. Participants go in the hot seat to ask each other questions related to their new roles. As they do, they also mark the place of their home and where they work on a large map of Venice hanging on the wall.

Step 8. Improvisation. Participants, in role as residents of Venice, improvise a dialogue, in a cicchetteria (bar).

Step 9. Teacher in Role (TiR). The teacher is in role as a tourist from another part of Italy, who is lost in Venice. The students help the tourist (a young girl who has lost her parents in the crowd) to find her way back to her hotel.
Step 10. Animated Tableaux. As the young girl attempts to follow the direction of the residents, the high tide sirens are heard, triggering the [previously rehearsed] evacuation routine, and creating chaos.

Reflective phase

Step 11. Language reflection. Students write down their reflections on the day and share them with the teacher and each other.

Step 12. Final reflection. What is it like to live in Venice, as opposed to visiting it as a tourist? Discuss.

If this task was tailored to an L2-M2 classroom, an example of how it would be delivered is as follows:

A daily encounter for a deaf person

Drama Strategies

Initiation phase

Step 1. Warm-up. Inner circle/outer circle. Participants, in concentric circles, exchange their names and stories about their knowledge of the deaf community in Ireland.

Step 2. Multimodal brainstorming. Compile a visual glossary of key terms related to daily interactions that a deaf person has, communicating with a bus driver, purchasing an item in a store, etc.

Step 3. Pre-text. View a pre-text of a deaf person (ISL video clip) who discusses the challenges of living in a majority culture who do not share the same language.

Step 4. Total Physical Response (TPR). Imagine living as a deaf person. What would be your routine? What communication tools are available to you?
Practise these communication strategies, note-taking, gestures, etc.

**Step 5. Sound(scene)scape.** A small group of students simulate (without acoustics) the activity happening in the background, announcements via an intercom system, people engaging in group discussion, etc.

**Step 6. Dramatic roles.** Participants create a new role as a deaf person interacting in Dublin city centre. They are provided role cards that state their occupation, their level of interaction with both deaf and non-deaf people, etc.

**Step 7. Hot seating and map.** Participants go in the hot seat to ask each other questions related to their new roles, the challenges, the strategies used in their workplace, communication preferences, etc.

**Experiential phase**

**Step 8. Improvisation.** Participants, in their role as a deaf person improvise a dialogue between colleagues, in a workplace or college setting, etc.

**Step 9. Teacher in Role (TiR).** The teacher is in role as a French deaf tourist from another European country and is lost in Dublin and cannot find the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS), Trinity College Dublin. They are here to attend a conference and do not want to arrive late. The public transport dropped them off at a location that they were not expecting. The person only has minimal written English skills and cannot rely on asking for written English notes for directions.

**Step 10. Animated Tableaux.** The tourist finds the CDS and the conference location. They immediately see colleagues who they have met previously and proceed to register for the conference.
Reflective phase

**Step 11. Language reflection.** Students write down their reflections on the day and share them with the teacher and each other.

**Step 12. Final reflection.** What is it like be a deaf person, as opposed to just learning a signed language? Discuss.

The inclusion of such workshops is not outside the realm of possibility. In fact, roleplay activities are regularly used in the interpreting classroom for simulating real-life events, which prospective interpreting students will be interpreting in at a future point. It is therefore plausible to extend these activities further and introduce them to the ISL classroom.

**Future research topic:** Design a process drama workshop for an ISL learning context. Introduce a pre-text and extend the class duration (where appropriate) which would allow for each phase to be completed without being rushed. Following the completion of the workshop seek participant feedback. Did the learners enter a state of flow? Did it give them more confidence about their performance? Test a number of different workshops for their effectiveness.

**Future research topic:** Introduce a range of positive psychology approaches e.g. Gaffney’s magic ratio of an optimal level of 5:1 (in the form of positive feedback) and test the effectiveness of improved performance. In this case the main concern of this study – to INCREASE THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. If proven successful there is scope to embed these aspects within the syllabus. Therefore, further work is needed in developing a pilot study which would incorporate a range of pedagogical practices and classroom exercises.

Another opportunity is to seek out a College approved/elective module, which students could opt-in should they require assistance with the performative element in general, e.g. an introductory drama studies module. This may be possible with the rollout of the Trinity Education Project (TEP) which sets out to renew Trinity’s undergraduate education. The Centre for Deaf Studies is in Phase 2 of TEP, which commences in September 2019.
The module options for CDS students have yet to be finalised. However, one of the aims of TEP is as follows:

To ensure a balance between depth and breadth by enabling some breadth outside the core academic discipline through approved modules, Trinity Elective modules or additional subject(s)\(^{58}\).

To conclude the opportunity section of this chapter, some practical suggestions are offered below which specifically focus on the performative element of language learning. These recommendations may assist to scaffold the transition to the Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme.

- A process drama introductory workshop to be offered during the orientation week for new incoming cohorts.
- Ice-breaker games in pairs which focuses on the performative element, rather than delving into vocabulary combined with performance.
- Introduce ‘positive posture’ exercises at an early stage.
- Improvisation sessions, which allow learners to select what they wish to ‘perform’, i.e. something that is relevant or interesting to them, i.e. to increase learner (embodied) autonomy.
- Mirrors could be placed on the walls of the classroom so that learners have the kinaesthetic element as they practice/perform. Also, the strength of non-manual features such as facial expressions will be immediately ascertained.
- Discuss the similarities in how we perform language and utilise gesture instinctively. Perhaps show video recordings which highlight this in speakers. Therefore, emphasising the common features that languages share, rather than learners focusing on the divergences\(^{59}\).

\(^{58}\) Source: https://www.tcd.ie/TEP/approved_modules.php

\(^{59}\) Professor Lorraine Leeson incorporates gesture research into the Sign Linguistics module which is available in Year 2 of the programme. A taster workshop could also be introduced during orientation week for new students.
6.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter six presented the literature review which was carried out during the theoretical sampling stage of this doctoral study. The literature selected for inclusion here was prompted by the theory generated from my CGT project. The particular research question addressed through this post CGT sampling stage focused on whether findings from COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF might be applicable to other samples of [L2-M2] learners.

The exploration of research in the domains of psychology of the language learner, positive psychology, performance, performance of an L2, performance anxiety, language embodiment, etc., shows the interdisciplinary nature of this research, which also highlights the complex nature of theory generation. The breath of reference would not have been imagined if the literature review was predetermined at the outset of this study. The final section of this discussion was dedicated to ‘opportunities’, essentially literature that brings this project forward.

Chapter 7 will consider the relationships that hold between the key findings in the literature and the theory arising from my study, COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.
Chapter 7  Discussion and Evaluation

A grounded theory aims to create a set of propositions which predict the future behaviour for the population under investigation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This goal has been achieved in this study. However, at the outset of this research project, a key undertaking was to also engage with spoken language researchers in order to draw parallels where they exist, or capture aspects which are modality specific. Therefore, as well as consulting L2-M2 language learning literature, I have also sought to branch out considerably further, guided by my unfolding theory. This led to the substantive literature review detailed in chapter 6. The discussion now examines where this literature and COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, converges or diverges. The chapter will conclude by evaluating the theory presented.

7.1  Language Learning Anxiety and the L2(M2) Self

The participants in this study are concerned with EXPOSURE INSECURITY and the associated anxiety which ensues to various degrees (DISCOMFORT, DISCOMPOSURE and DISTRESS). Language Learning Anxiety (LLA) (which we considered in chapter 6) is defined as:

\[ \text{The worry and negative emotional reaction when learning and using a second language and is especially relevant in a classroom where self-expression takes place} \] (Gregerson and MacIntyre, 2014, p.3).

We can say that Gregerson and MacIntyre’s definition corresponds with the main concern of this study. However, there are divergences in terms of the associated behaviours. Lababidi (2016) states that behaviours include the learner skipping class, avoiding eye-contact, sitting at the back of the classroom, masking fear by laughing or looking disinterested, or engaging in non-related activities while others are completing a task. However, learners in this study have repeatedly commented on there being NOWHERE TO HIDE in the ISL classroom. It is plausible to assume that some of these behaviours may have been applied in other contexts, however the LEARNING HUB requires compulsory participation and has requirements surrounding attendance levels. When present, the L2-M2 learner is required to be fully
attentive. The seating arrangement allows for no visual obstruction. The entire lecture is based on communicative tasks where students may self-select or be called upon. Therefore, learners have limited or no option to engage in LLA behaviours typically described in the literature.

Cultural context appears to play a role in LLA. King and Smith (2017) point out that there is "an encultured notion that there exists an ever-present, ever-watching 'other' within Japanese society. This constantly monitors and inhibits people’s behaviour with its disapproving eye" (ibid., p.100). As a result, the locus of energy becomes the monitoring of one’s own self-generated image and the perception of how this image is being received by others. In order to avoid the discomfort associated with this, learners engage in safety behaviours, which are physical avoidance strategies such as remaining silent, minimising verbalisation by offering one-word or short answers and strategically selecting a seating position which would decrease the chance that they would be called upon the in lesson. There are also mental processes which are undertaken to help limit mistakes.

In this study, there was no sense of a ‘disapproving eye’. Instead, participants generally comment on the supportive learning environment and the responsibility that they have for their own learning. Further, they note that although they require the support of others, they recognise that they are essentially on an individual journey. Perhaps this is a cultural difference, or something specific to the sampled population.

There are also studies which suggest that anxiety may intensify as the learner progresses, given that expectations for them grow, and, commensurately, students increasingly fear negative evaluation (e.g. Kitano, 2001). This was not the case in my study as LLA (due to exposure insecurity) subsided over time. However, one notable element is the typological distance between their L1 and their L2-M2. Alrabai (2015) (amongst others discussed) suggests that this distance creates greater anxiety. It is not possible to determine if LLA is more severe in this study due to the typological distance of spoken and signed languages, i.e. modality difference. However, what can be ascertained is that exposure insecurity
and the performative concerns parallel more with L2-M2 research rather than L2, LLA studies.

The concept of ‘Self’, according to Bordens and Horowitz (2008, p.30), is “the sum of what I am”. It is every aspect of our character, which is shaped by our experiences and allows us to have a sense of identity of who and what we are. The move to third level study is a stage in person’s life which moulds them as individuals and can be transformative for some. The participants in this study are no different in this regard. However, we know that language is at the very core of our identity and to learn a new language means that our self-concept will also evolve to create a new facet - our L2 Self (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). Therefore, learning a sign language creates an L2-M2 SELF and within deaf social networks the learner is “establishing a new learner identity” (Pivac, 2014, p.214).

The inward and outward facing L2-M2 SELF may not always be congruent because our ‘anxious self’ (Şimşek and Dörnyei, 2017) may be masked or suppressed in front of others. A ‘narrative identity’ is self-created and helps define who one is, how one builds relationships with others, how one manages one’s own behaviours and how to make sense of one’s own life. The narrative created (e.g. an excuse, interpretation, depiction of an event) allows the learner to rationalise their experiences and ultimately shape their self-concept. This allows for reflection on past events in relation to the self and the sense that there is a transitional, ongoing progression. In an L2 context there is an integration of reconstructed past L2 experiences with an imagined future. Therefore, providing a purpose to work toward (ibid.). Throughout the AUTHENTICATING process, L2-M2 learners likewise have a goal to work towards and the narrative takes on the form of reflectivity, where past EXPOSING experiences are analysed, processed and learners develop tools (self-regulation and personal resources) to progress to the next stage.

Dörnyei (2009) proposes an influential model which draws from previous L2 research in addition existing psychological theories of ‘Self’ to form the L2 Motivational Self System (L2SMSS). In this three-part model, two aspects

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60 L2-M2 studies will be referred to in more detail in the proceeding sections.
refer specifically to Self – the ‘Ideal Self’ and the ‘Ought-to Self’. The ‘Ought-to Self’ features in this theory as the notion that learners’ signing production should be ‘deaf friendly’. At the outset this is an elusive concept for learners and is troubling to them as it is often a piece of advice they receive or the intended goal. Yet for the L2-M2 learner during the ACCLIMITISING stage this concept is difficult to grasp. Therefore, they try to see what constitutes ‘good’ ISL by looking to others, although, in the early stages of ISL learning, they still struggle to figure this out. Therefore, the development of a clearly articulated ‘Ought-to Self’ is not straightforward in this new modality, and students resort to a vague ideal of becoming native-like in their L2 usage. Dörnyei (2009) hypothesises that the ‘Ideal Self’ is a prime motivator for learners because they aim to decrease the disparity between their current self and the utopian ‘Ideal Self’. Therefore, the learner must find their own truth, i.e. their AUTHENTIC L2-M2 SELF.

At the outset, authentic self-presentation when learning any language will be a struggle due to lack of communicative competency. However, following Pavlenko (2006), we can say that L2-M2 learners are particularly concerned about portraying a different self-image. In this case, their language ideology comes into play because they are concerned that peers will be aware that how they present in ISL is often very different to their typical communication style. Therefore, L2 production can feel forced and unnatural in the early stages and the L2-M2 learner must commit to the language and (as they see it), be maximally expressive. For introverts or those who usually keep things close to my (sic.) chest, this vulnerability means that you’re not going to hide a damn thing. Therefore, this new L2-M2 persona takes them on a journey of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. The concept of the AUTHENTICITY is a central aspect of their learning journey. An excerpt from the theory demonstrates this -

Learners are not seeking to be an ‘authentic’ L1 ISL user, but a believable L2 user of ISL. They want to be believable, accurate, effective, understood and confident. They want to perform their L2-M2 identity with peers, deaf sign language users, and in CDS. Their

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61 The third element is the learning experience (teacher, group dynamic, etc.). This will not feature in this part of the discussion.
main concern of increasing the exposure security threshold has been accomplished by building personal resources which allow for autonomy to be fully owned and embodied.

The 'Ideal Self' appears to be equivalent to the AUTHENTIC L2-M2 SELF. Learners are not trying to be something which they are not, i.e. an L1 language user, but are instead striving to be the best possible version of their L2-M2 SELF. While developing competency, the ‘anxious self’ (Şimşek and Dörnyei, ibid.) is dissipating and therefore no longer needs to be masked. During the ACCLIMATISING stage, the L2-M2 identity is not yet realised. There were frequent references to the ‘deaf way’ as something which was very separate from their novice L2-M2 identity. However, as the learner progressed through the stages towards AUTHENTICATING, this new identity was embraced, and this very personal course has become a significant part of their lives.

In Self-Determination Theory, Ryan and Deci (2004) refer to the concept of 'authenticity' where individuals are predisposed to regulating behavioural reactions which are considered congruent with our ‘authentic’ self. Therefore, with each new encounter, the self considers potential actions which are underpinned by current beliefs and interests. These result in behaviours being regulated by the appraisal and consideration of different actions, beneficial to the person as a whole. Learners take ownership of and responsibility for learning where they can fulfil their potential and begin to flourish. This is also apparent in my study where L2-M2 learners weigh up the potential for leveraging SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES which will bring them comfort in the moment, while knowing that these will bring only temporary solace. They come to know that in order to maximise their development, they will have to step outside my comfort zone (sic.). In this way, the learner accepts responsibility for their learning and also identify gaps which must be bridged. The bridging occurs as AUTONOMY is gained and ownership is felt. As autonomy becomes FULLY-OWNED and fully EMBODIED, their full L2-M2 potential can be envisioned.
7.2 The Performance of Language

Regardless of modality, all languages are performed. However, there is little reference to stage freight in LLA literature. King and Smith (2017) refer to speaking anxiety as the most common form of LLA because the environment allows for the learner to be the most publicly evaluated in comparison to solitary tasks (e.g. reading and writing skills). However, during the extensive literature review stage there were no spoken language studies sourced which discuss bodily performance as a contributing factor, even though targeted searches were carried out by me.

The sensory and kinaesthetic experience appears to be the factor which distinguishes the ISL classroom from any other language learning environment the L2-M2 learner has been previously part of. A performance is usually seen as an individual performing in front of an audience, where they are attentively observed (e.g. as a musician, an actor, etc.). L2-M2 learners feel that the LEARNING HUB and the inherent nature of the target language creates a SENSE OF EXPOSURE, which is akin to performing a PIECE. The LLA anxiety literature for past L2-M2 studies supports this claim and LLA is generally attributed to performance related elements. Pfanner (2000) found that 21 of the 35 items on the FLCAS scale elicited high anxiety in more than 25% of participants. The most provoking items were categorized as ‘Interactions with Deaf People’ and ‘Expressive Skills’. In §6.3.4, I state that Pfanner’s ‘expressive skills’ include the following:

Uncertainty surrounding use of the language, student beliefs that other students have a higher level of skill than they do, feeling unprepared when called upon, and self-consciousness in front of peers.

In my opinion the above aspects feature in EXPOSURE INSECURITY, however in the COMPOSING theory there is more emphasis on the actual act of performing, i.e. using the body to articulate a language in a previously unimagined way. There is a SENSE OF EXPOSURE associated with this. This

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62 Speaking anxiety is often referred to generally but not in terms of it being a ‘performance’.
63 Horwitz (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).
stimulates anxiety and/or engages a SELF-REGULATION STRATEGY. Interestingly, although some participants mention interactions with deaf people as being nerve-wrecking, their immediate concern is grounded in how they appear to classmates in general and their lecturer in HIGH-STAKES situations, e.g. an examination.

Mckee and Mckee (1992, p.131) further illustrate that cultural conditioning impacts L2-M2 learners. As a result, learning a sign language can be both physically and mentally draining for the learner as they visually attend to linguistic information for which they have no “perceptual schema”. They report that L2-M2 learners are typically more restrained and exhibit paired down facial expressions so as not to attract unnecessary attention. According to the participants of this study, there is also the perception that eye-contact behaviour is different in the spoken modality (as outlined in §6.3.4). Therefore, performance of a signed language creates a salient visible image of the learner and they must “…shed deeply ingrained physical and cultural inhibitions about using the body for communication” (ibid., p.147). Peterson (2009) also refers to the discomfort that some learners face when consciously using the body to perform a visual-gestural language, which by its nature is 'very physical'. This is something that was also referred to by participants in my study. For example;

*I would have quite a lot of difficulty with a sign that would have to touch your body or you would have to tap twice and I would tap once, or three times instead of twice. So actually touching myself was the biggest issue for me…When I got feedback after a portfolio it was like “no, no, it’s not okay to hover an inch away from your chest, you actually have to have the contact”. Also, the strength in your signs can also be a bit challenging.*

It is perhaps relevant to identity that the learner says, “your body” instead of my body and “you would have to”, and not, “I have to”. Therefore, it could be argued that there is a disassociation or detachment with their ‘anxious self’. Şimşek and Dörnyei, (ibid.) postulate that ‘anxious self’ label arose from how several learners talked about the anxiety they were experiencing, “in a somewhat detached manner, referring to an anxious persona that they were
not fully in control of” (ibid., p.55). Parallels can be found here. In addition, previous findings from quantitative L2-M2 studies emphasise that the performative aspects of a sign language induce anxiety symptoms amongst L2-M2 learners (McKee and McKee, 1992; Pfanner, 2000). This qualitative study thus allowed for a deeper insight into the behaviours, stages and processes which learners engage in order to resolve their main concern.

As we have previously seen, the field of cognitive linguistics holds the view that all languages are embodied, regardless of modality (Leeson and Saeed, 2012). Embodiment, according to Aravena et al. (2010) involves a reciprocal relationship between the sensorimotor function of the brain and language comprehension. The ‘bi-directionality’ hypothesis assumes that our bodily experiences of different forms of objects etc., increases our ability to conceptualise and understand the variables associated with it, as such our mind influences our bodily movements but also in reverse, our movements in the environment can enhance our cognition. Therefore, if we consider these statements in light of the theory presented, we see that L2-M2 learners are finding it a significant challenge to embody certain concepts they are attempting to convey. If an L2-M2 learner has not had the lived experience of the concept they are wishing to portray, the visualization required for articulating the concept is not stored in the sensorimotor faculty within the brain. Therefore, the description (and production) of an action through language cannot be comprehended because it has not been internally simulated (Fischer and Zwaan, 2008).

It is possible to assume that an individual would still be able to articulate the idea presuming they have a general knowledge of the topic. In a signed language one could argue this may not be believable, or indeed factual without the kinaesthetic, iconic element. This element ties in with Fischer and Müller’s (2014) claim that L2-M2 learners struggle with demonstrating an action (constructed action) when there is no systematic requirement to perform this element in a spoken language (discussed in §6.2.1). However, as reported in my study, those who stem from a performance/artistic background perceive a lower SENSE OF EXPOSURE and are willing to “put themselves out there more”. In other words, respond to the (perceived)
performative elements of the language such as constructed action, necessary facial expressions, etc.

The use of both hands in simultaneous constructions, requires the coordination of both articulators (hands) and further adds to visual imagery (Vermeerbergen et al., 2007). Likewise, if ‘body partitioning’ and ‘megablends’ (Dudis, 2004, outlined in §6.2.1) are witnessed by the learner when in the LEARNING HUB or when ALLIANCING in the deaf community, this may become a goal to work towards in their pursuit of increased fluency. One could hypothesise that complexity of the utterance, whether attempted (by EXPOSING) or witnessed (via ALLIACING or AUTHENTICATING) may also add to the performative value perceived by the learner. These visual utterances also require meaningful use of space – a dynamic 3D element which is created through the medium of bodily performance (Fekete, 2017). The combination of which appear to be overwhelming for L2-M2 learners at the outset.

In Chapter 5, one of the participants in this study discussed her difficulties when narrating a story where the main protagonist was driving a car. She had never driven a car, nor paid much attention to the driver from her vantage point as a passenger. Therefore, the physical placement of objects in the car from the (imagined) driver’s perspective, and the coordination of the driver with respect to these entities was not something that she could relate to. Likewise, the participants comment that the shape and size of objects and proximity to one another is often encoded within a sign (e.g. a car engine, a battery, etc).

If you are a L2-M2 learner and have never held or seen that object, how do you portray it in a visual language? This representation or ‘embodied simulation’ (Landau et al., 2010) contributes to the learner feeling more at RISK of being EXPOSED, because they fear that their portrayal will not be authentic. This may not lead to serious consequences as the target item may actually be an insignificant part of the dialogue. Nevertheless, the learner feels that they do not have full ownership of the language because their lived experience cannot be drawn on in this instance. The result is that their
instrument (the body) is off-key, and they do not believe that they can deliver a credible performance.

Similarly, Leung et al. (2011) point out that a facial expression, when producing a spoken language, will be accompanied by physical changes in the body, i.e. an embodied aspect. However, one could argue that if a non-manual feature is contrived rather than naturally occurring, there may not be the same instinctive bodily reaction. L2-M2 learners comment on the fact that their facial expressions are sometimes misinterpreted, or seem too subtle, prompting teacher feedback. This occurs when participants believe they are ACTING OUT, rather than EMBODYING the language. At this point they are still figuring out how to capture certain aspects and therefore there is still unease with these grammatical components.

Correspondingly, Pavlenko’s (2012) research on affective processing in bilinguals suggests that some late learners and foreign language learners may process language semantically but not necessarily affectively. Keysar et al. (2012) also points out there is more cognitive and emotional distance in an L2 and similarly, Vukovic and Shtyrov (2014) report that motor cortex activity is significantly greater in an L1. Therefore, I put forward an argument (for testing) that in a signed language the coupling of the expression with the bodily sensation may not be embodied because of ACTING OUT, i.e. they have not reached EMBODIED AUTONOMY. Therefore, interlocutors have difficulties in deciphering the true intention of the L2-M2 learner. For L2-M2 learners in this study, ALLIANCING is the socialization process (“the glue”) which allows a learner access to engage with others and access AUTHENTIC material which will assist in delivering a more natural rendition.

Returning to the issues associated with performing the language, L2-M2 learners are conscious that their peers can pick up on the signs that they are experiencing LLA and, commensurately, that they themselves can detect these signs in others. Bearing this in mind, let us return to Gregersen et al. (2014) who recorded six participants (trainee teachers) as they gave a presentation in their L2 and immediately afterwards self-rated their anxiety levels. Gregersen et al. (2017) extended the focus by inviting an expert and peer reviewer to also view the performances and rate the presenters’ anxiety.
levels. The detailed results can be referred to in Tables 6-9 (§6.4.4). The overall conclusion was that participants believe their anxiety is more transparent than what it actually is, and the severity is more than the raters perceive.

Gilovich et al. (1998) also highlight the fact that we overestimate how salient our actions, behaviours and appearances are to others. In this way, the ‘Spotlight Effect’ theorises that our self-belief about certain actions that we engage in will stand out to others as being memorable, or conversely, as detrimental to our character. Likewise, in the ‘Illusion of Transparency’ theory we misjudge how evident our internal state (emotions, private thoughts) is to those around us (ibid.). In both of Gilovich et al., (ibid.) theories there is an egotistical bias where our own perceptions are amplified and not in accordance with what others recognize.

However, it must be pointed out that many of the behaviours which function as cues for LLA (in Gregersen et al., 2017) would not be possible in an ISL classroom. This is true for all of the five categories listed\(^\text{64}\). For instance, when participating in an ISL classroom, a student would not be able to ‘cross their arms’, ‘knead hands’, or maintain eyegaze that is directed in a ‘strongly down’ direction. The mechanics of the language do not allow for this. Similarly, participants in this study pointed out that additional behaviours like applying a closed posture where the body faces in another direction or toward a desk, using the hands to hide the face, avoiding eye-contact and curling hands up under the sleeve are unavailable to L2-M2 learners in the ISL classroom. These self-comforting or avoidance techniques cannot be chosen in an ISL classroom due to the use of the body, hands and face to articulate the language and the requirement for student participation.

There is no definitive proposition as to what extent others recognize exposure insecurity in their L2-M2 peers. However, there were several remarks from participants that LLA impacts the quality of one’s production. According to participants, if a learner can detect a peer signing in an insular fashion (e.g. stooped posture and insufficient use of space), this stands out as being an LLA cue if it is not the articulator’s typical signing style. Also,

\(^{64}\text{Face, Gesture, Gaze, Vocalics and Posture.}\)
physical symptoms such as shaking hands or flushed appearance will also be immediately spotted by peers. This poses the question as to whether LLA is more detectable in L2-M2 learners than in spoken languages because of the perceived exposing nature of the language. Presently, this question cannot be answered, although it would be a worthwhile issue to explore at a future point.

7.3 Flourishing

Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed the influential Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This model refers to the motivation process which they claim is underpinned by three basic psychological needs - autonomy, competence and relatedness. These needs are not just required for motivation but also for one’s development, well-being and the potential to flourish. The meeting (or not) of these needs dictates the type and strength of motivation which arises which is on a continuum which ranges from non-self-determined, i.e. amotivation, to self-determined intrinsic motivation. The mid-point on this continuum is extrinsic motivation. COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF incorporates all SDT aspects. However, instead of coming in the form of needs, they are deemed processes e.g. relatedness to others equates to the ALLIANCING process, and the desire to develop competence is the thrust for AUTHENTICATING.

It is advisable to note, however, that a CGT study is not a researcher interpreting what psychological needs an individual has. Instead, we code for behaviours, actions and processes (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998). However, in this case these outputs feature as part of the Basic Social Psychological Process, which is the participants attempt to resolve their main concern. Therefore, SDT basic psychological needs and the processes (actions and behaviours) in this theory bear resemblances in terms of how an L2-M2 learner is motivated to resolve their main concern. However, there is one component of SDT, which particular attention should be drawn to, namely that of autonomy.

In this study, AUTONOMY is the driving force for L2-M2 learners which allows them to progress through the stages and build the personal resources of
EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING. Parallels can be observed in SDT, whereby the level of autonomy impacts the level of motivation\(^{65}\). However, in this theory autonomy occurs in two forms:

1. Generally - in terms of learning, from NON-OWNED to FULLY-OWNED
2. And more specifically - autonomy over performances, from NON-EMBODIED to EMBODIED AUTONOMY.

EMBODIED AUTONOMY involves embodied (sign language) cognition – where an individual must ‘think in pictures’ (Pivac, 2014) and then use the body as an INSTRUMENT to perform the language. The concept of EMBODIED AUTONOMY could not be found when theoretically sampling published literature with reference to language learning domains and LLA. Given this, I propose that this concept be considered as particular to L2-M2 contexts, an idea that should be tested in future L2 studies.

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p149) present a taxonomy which incorporates four categories of strategy which assist in L2 self-regulation\(^{66}\). The focus here is on affective strategies:

> Affective strategies, involving taking control of the emotional (affective) conditions and experiences that shape one’s subjective involvement in learning.

However, not all of these strategies effectively tackle the issue of LLA. Oxford (2016b, p.89) suggests that pessimists typically draw on ‘anti-coping’ strategies such as; “wishful thinking, denial, distractions, escapism, and giving up, all of which embody running away from the problem.” The term ANTI-STRATEGIES was utilized in this theory following the sampling of literature. Prior to this, the name given to L2-M2 strategies was ‘counterproductive’ and ‘productive’. However, this was revised to anti-strategy as a better fit. The rationale is that an anti-strategy is actually productive in the moment in alleviating LLA. However, it will not necessarily move the L2-M2 learner closer to their original goal of increasing the

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\(^{65}\) Refer to the SDT, Figure 13 in §6.5.1.

\(^{66}\) Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social and Affective strategies, see §6.5.3.
EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. Therefore ‘anti’ strategy seemed to accurately capture this notion. In addition, all participants, regardless of personality type, employed anti-strategies at some stage during their learning. This also impacted on the temporal nature of the process, that is, those who had difficulty moving through the stages used anti-strategies as a default (e.g. CUT-SHORT) and had to make a conscious effort to choose otherwise. Those who would class themselves as extrovert or performers\textsuperscript{67}, seem to be more likely to utilize a neutral (e.g. SAFE-PLAYER) or a positive strategy (EMBRACE) and therefore have more bandwidth to BOLSTER PERSONAL RESOURCES, i.e. they can broaden and build these resources as they move through the dimensions of EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING.

Fredrickson (1998, 2001, 2004), the originator of the ‘broaden-and-build’ theory in positive psychology, explores the interplay between conflicting emotions. He notes that, “positive emotions appear to broaden peoples’ momentary thought–action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources” (2004, p.1369). In contrast, negative emotions narrow the thought-action repertoire and fewer options are available. This can also be seen during the ACCLIMATISING stage. However, Fredrickson and Levenson (1998) suggest that this is not a permanent outlook. Their ‘undo hypothesis’ claims that positive emotions can undo or correct lingering negative emotions or the effect of these emotions, i.e. affective self-regulation. The broadening of the thought-action repertoire from positive emotions are said to function to dismantle or loosen the grip that negative emotions have over a person’s mind and body and can re-route a previous course of action.

The broaden-and-build theory recognises that psychological resilience will allow for faster recovery as there are differences in a person’s capacity to bounce back. In reference to this project, the same resilience threshold can be witnessed in a learner’s CAPACITY TO COMPOSE. The cultivation of positive emotions when encountering undesirable feelings can actually assist with coping in these instances, i.e., applying positive strategies for affective self-regulation. We can see that in the latter stages of the COMPOSING theory, L2-M2 participants engage in a RE-VISIONING of self in how one performs

\textsuperscript{67} Previous performance/artistic background.
language, a RE-VISIONING of the deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority (instead of a community they wish to ‘help’) and a RE-VISIONING of the relationship between the L2-M2 self and the community. This positive inclination towards the Self, the community and the relationship between both allows for a re-routing, or at a minimum, positive strategy choices in relation to their main concern.

We also see that polarised emotions are intertwined and can interact and influence one another, i.e. foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Interestingly, there has also been a correlation between enjoyment and anxiety although not as strong a connection as high anxiety and low enjoyment (Dewaele and MacIntyre, ibid.). Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (2018) report that as the semester continued in their study, the negative correlation became larger, i.e. lowering anxiety with higher levels of enjoyment. However, the fluctuations amongst individuals in relation to both FLE and FLA implied heterogeneity within the sample. In all of the interviews carried out for this study participants spoke about enjoying their programme and noted that they found it personally rewarding not just in terms of learning a new language but also with respect to how aspects of the language have subsequently boosted their self-esteem and communicative style. The journey the learners report has been difficult at times yet also fulfilling. Therefore, the process of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF may also assist a person to flourish, even outside of the learning domain.

Jin and Dewaele (2018) found that peer support was more effective at reducing LLA than teacher support. Dewaele et al. (2017) therefore suggest that teachers should instead concentrate on boosting foreign language enjoyment rather than focusing on FLA as this would likely to have a meaningful impact. This is echoed by others who take a positive psychology approach (Dewaele, 2005; Lake, 2013; MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014; Suldo, et al., 2014). As is the case with anxiety, emotions are never linear. Neither anxiety nor enjoyment are linked to one factor but a range of interacting elements. Therefore, a dynamic systems approach appears to lend itself well to this domain of research.
7.4 Dynamic Systems

Language anxiety and learner attributes are not static but instead fluctuate over time and are context dependent (Dewaele, 2012). These fluctuations can also be observed on a second by second basis (Gregersen et al., 2014). Daubney et al. (2017) suggest dynamic studies will cease to present ‘binary conceptualisations’ of the learner which previously constrained our perceptions of them. This will lead to increasingly evolving methodological/theoretical frameworks which highlight the interplay of different factors. Likewise, the fluidity in such studies in terms of how they present language learning processes, allows for a ‘person in context’ view. Ushioda (2009, 2014) suggests that from this perspective we acknowledge that the learner and context evolve, respond and adapt to one another. MacIntyre (2017, p.23) further eludes to the complexity of LLA:

> Anxiety is continuously interacting with a number of other learner, situational and other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting and so on.

COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF exhibits all of the above elements. It is a dynamic process because, although L2-M2 learners have a shared concern, the manner in how they COMPOSE THE L2-M2 SELF is not uniform. They respond to the level of EXPOSURE INSECURITY in any given moment by composing their emotions. This is facilitated by selecting a SELF REGULATION STRATEGY based on the SENSE OF EXPOSURE, which in turn is influenced by what stage they are at in the COMPOSING process, i.e. ACCLIMITISING, ATTUNING or AUTHENTICATING. In addition, there is a desire to COMPOSE an AUTHENTIC (L2-M2) performance, primarily via the AUTHENTICATING process - goals will be individually set depending on the level of proficiency which has been attained at different stages in their COMPOSING journey.

Returning to the psychological response, it is clear that some learners have a higher tolerance level for EXPOSURE and experience minimal DISCOMFORT, whilst others are significantly impacted by LLA. A RISK, whether it be
INHERENT (context of the LEARNING HUB) or PERCEIVED (SENSE OF EXPOSURE) will fluctuate in terms of impact. There may also be setbacks where progress stalls or where the learner retreats. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) insist that dynamic paradigms allow for a deeper insight into LLA, because it allows us to capture changes and adaptations. The result is that there may be both positive and negative outcomes for the learner. A dynamic process will continue to evolve and change.

This same process has been witnessed over the course of my research project. In the 2nd round of interviews carried out with L2-M2 ISL learners, it was clearly evident that participants were notably further along in the COMPOSING process than in the initial set of interviews. There was an acceptance of EXPOSURE INSECURITY and what stage they were at in dealing with it. Learner reflexivity was also abundantly evident, with learners leveraging metastrategies (Oxford, 2016b) which in this instance assisted learners to become more aware of and help control emotions. Likewise, these follow-up interviews presented examples of learner AUTONOMY developing over time with self-proclaimed increased levels of enjoyment.

AUTONOMY in my study extends to outside of the LEARNING HUB, i.e. engagement with the deaf community. Indeed, Pivac (2014) outlines what autonomous New Zealand L2-M2 learners do outside of the classroom to supplemental their learning. These actions are:

1. Proactively analyze learning needs and implement strategies
2. Actively engage with L1 users
3. Establish and extend social networks
4. Engage in mediated language learning
5. Develop and sustain positive affective states.

Motivation and confidence were the two key attributes which allowed for a boosting of positive states (5). Pivac also reports that her learners developed motivational strategies which boosted confidence in:

1. Interacting with L1 users in preferred comfort zones
2. Becoming familiar with Deaf environments, Deaf people, and their norms
3. Engaging frequently with Deaf people

4. Progressing from known ‘safe’ contacts and settings into unknown faces and risky territories.

In addition, learner enjoyment and relaxation help to boost learner motivation and confidence levels (ibid., p.216). These autonomous actions and motivational strategies have featured at various intervals in my project and therefore suggest that all L2-M2 learners engage in these actions, regardless of the cultural or language modality context that they operate within.

Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) report that language learning tasks which are more enjoyable are those that are autonomous in nature. This corresponds with SDT in the discussion of extrinsic factors (Ryan and Deci, 2017). However, external elements can become a powerful motivator if the individual has willingness and acceptance of the benefit and usefulness of the task. It will therefore be “self-endorsed and thus adopted with a sense of volition” (ibid., p.55). This illustrates that educators have a role to play in this. Little (2007) purports that the teacher has a responsibility to enlarge the learner’s scope of autonomy. Therefore, we must consider practical ways in which this can be achieved. In response, opportunities were offered in §6.6 to bring this project forward post thesis completion – this topic will once more be referred to in the concluding chapter, as will the implications of this study.

7.5 A formal theory of Composing?

Thus far, the focus of this thesis has been on the development of a substantive theory relevant to the participants of this study. Glaser (1978, p.142) discusses substantive theory in the following terms:

This process generates theory that fits the real world, works in predictions and explanations, is relevant to the people concerned and is readily modifiable.

The possibility of this theory’s applicability to a wider audience has been alluded to, i.e. via the proposing of a formal theory. In essence, a substantive

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68 To be further discussed in the implications section of the final chapter.
theory acts as a springboard to extend into other fields because the emergent theory is not unit-based (i.e. the person), but instead has conceptual generality as we look at actions, behaviours and processes (Glaser, 1998). The progression from substantive to formal theory involves theoretically sampling from others within a similar substantive area or a completely different substantive area (Glaser, 2006). Data can be collected using a variety of techniques, such as “interviewing, observation, media and research reports”, and “comparing the results with relevant theoretical works” in specific areas (Aström, 2006, p.33). There are different approaches set out by Glaser (ibid., p.147), one such approach is to select a BSP (or other core variable) and compare its phenomenon in different substantive classes. “This approach requires a mature, experienced grounded theorist”. The rationale for this caution is derived from the need to be familiar with a broad array of literature and to know the difference between a formal grounded theory compared to one where there is “merely a logical elaboration”.

At this stage, I could speculate that there are possible domains where there could be relevance for the theory generated from this study. For example, in any profession where you have to be ‘on’, there is scope for considering how COMPOSING impacts; such as trainee teachers in classrooms, pilots, surgeons, ballerinas, dance teachers, performers, TV hosts, comedians, interpreters and academics. In this vein, there would certainly be scope for a text-driven follow up to test the substantive theory in the ‘performer’ population re: how do they resolve performance anxiety/ fear of exposure. This may, indeed, feed in to “Imposter Syndrome”, an individual’s concerns regarding their ability and the potential for being exposed as a fraud. Could COMPOSING be a mechanism for managing Imposter Syndrome, for example? In such instances, patterns related to the conceptualisation of COMPOSING could be searched for.

We have noted that CGT is process based, the unit of analysis is an incident rather than the person, the L2-M2 learner in this case. Therefore, the substantive area that emerges is not necessarily confined to the L2-M2 area. It is consistent with the substantive population as defined but further theoretical sampling could serve to better understand the substantive
population or extend the substantive population. How far could I or others go to develop this theory? Drawing disciplines together deserves honouring in my opinion. In this vein, at the outset, it would be interesting to discover if the same concerns arise for those who chose the interpreting strand on the final two years of the programme.

Moving slightly further afield, spoken language learning environments would also be an area of interest. Is this phenomenon solely related to modality or is it a universal construct in language learning? In unrelated disciplines, targeted areas may be ones which rely on bodily performance, such as dance, theatre or musical recitals. And finally, where the body is used as a vehicle or instrument to create an artistic piece, such as painting or sculpture.

In reverse, when consulting other substantive grounded theories, I paid close attention to the conceptual patterns and decided to code my data to see if certain theories ‘fit’ with mine, i.e. could their theory be a formal theory in relation to my substantive area. In particular there were two studies which were deemed to have potential relevance. Chametzky’s (2013) ‘Offsetting the Affective Filter’ stood out, as I was familiar with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis69 (1981). The theory presented in Chametzky’s thesis documented the experiences of online foreign language learners and the anxiety associated with navigating stressful and/or unfamiliar situations, and concerns about successfully completing the course. However, it was soon realised that the main concern in Chametzky’s study was different to that raised in my own. L2-M2 learners in my study were not focused on the long-term goal of completing the course, their concern was dealing with exposure insecurity in the present. There were commonalities in terms of processes, e.g. balancing competing demands, however in general, the process of ‘Offsetting’ is dissimilar to composing.

Scott’s (2007) ‘Temporal Integration’ theory was another contender. Here we see that the main concern is fitting online study into the lives of the participants. Part of the emergent theory identifies four learner typologies;

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69 An invisible barrier in language learning, created by emotional variables which impact the learner.
‘Jugglers’, ‘Strugglers’, ‘Fade-Aways’ and ‘Leavers’. At one stage I thought that a typology of learner may also exist in my study, however after revisiting the data and memoing, I realised this was not the case. The SENSE OF EXPOSURE is personally felt and can vary depending on the EVENT which may have an INHERENT and/or PERCEIVED RISK. Essentially, it can have more of an impact in certain situations depending on how heightened the variables are. L2-M2 learners do not always act and behave in a consistent way, where they can be classified as having uniform features associated with a typology category. The affect is variable and can fluctuate, especially if there is a CLUSTERING OF RISK, either simultaneously or in quick succession. There can also be unexpected setbacks which may alter their response. Therefore, this theory was not a ‘fit’ for the data I collected.

This comparing of theories was not an attempt to force or use predetermined concepts, it was merely an exercise to see if there were correlations in the overall shape of a formal theory. Equally, parallels may be found in other substantive populations in future studies, that align with those presented in this theory, although the applicability must be substantiated – i.e. grounded in data.

7.6 Evaluating the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-L2 SELF

When evaluating the quality of a grounded theory, Glaser (1992) suggests that we consider the criterion of ‘fit’, ‘workability’, ‘relevance’ and ‘modifiability’. Thulesius (2003, p.27) adds that it is not necessary to adjudicate if a theory is right or wrong if concerted efforts were made to follow GT principles.

In this chapter, we will unpack each of these criteria with reference to COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF. However, first, we reflect on how these components come together to form a robust grounded theory. Glaser (1992, p.15) puts it as follows:

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70 Variables are; IN THE SPOTLIGHT (intensity), TRUST (establishment), perceived risk to STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and perceived risk to DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY.
A well-constructed grounded theory will meet its four most central criteria: fit, work, relevance and modifiability. If a grounded theory is carefully induced from the substantive area its categories and their properties will fit the realities under study in the eyes of the subjects, practitioners and researchers in the area. If a grounded theory works it will explain the major variations in behaviour in the area with respect to the processing of the main concerns of the subjects. If it fits and works the grounded theory has achieved relevance. The theory itself should not be written in stone or as a ‘pet’, it should be readily modifiable when new data present variation in emergent properties and categories.

7.6.1 Fit

*Fit* refers to whether the categories fit the data under analysis. The labels which are assigned will possibly be re-worked, or re-organised, in order to find the best fit with the data. There should be no predetermined categories which have been identified by the researcher or discarded in order to substantiate an extant theory. This rationale is based on the idea that “reality produced in research is more accurate than the theory whose categories do not fit, not the reverse” (Glaser, 1978, p.4). The persistent application of the constant comparative method and the sorting of memos allowed for categories and their links to emerge. When applying GT categories, inevitably labels are re-visited as one works recursively through the data, and the end result is a revised category label.

A case in point is the theory title, i.e. the core category of COMPOSING. This was previously referred to as ‘AUTHENTICATING’. Although I knew this was the final stage of the theory, the term ‘Authenticating’ was not capturing the duality of the process (composing oneself and composing THE PIECE) across the different stages experienced. Ultimately, the label, COMPOSING, emerged in a conversation with my research supervisor. It was the perfect fit as there were already codes related to IN THE SPOTLIGHT, SELF-SOOTHING, etc., and therefore COMPOSING conceptualized the process in the most fitting way.

Another example is DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY. The other states identified had previously came under the heading of ‘SYMPTOMS’. However,
during the theoretical sorting stage, I realised that the manifestations of 'symptoms' were affecting people to different degrees and influencing the strategy which the learner adopted. Therefore, there was a need to separate them out further into DEGREES OF EXPOSURE. DISCOMFORT, DISCOMPOSURE and DISTRESS became the properties which then had a range of indicators attached to them. In this way, I can say that my process of engaging with GT methods align to the goal of refining a theory over time, as the researcher re-visits the data or becomes more confident with the methodology.

7.6.2 Work

Work is concerned with three aspects; does the theory explain the phenomena, predict future patterns of behaviour and interpret what is occurring in the substantive area? In the case of this study, I suggest that we can answer yes to all aspects of this question.

The concepts presented in COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory are borne out of the data. There is variance in terms of behaviours (linked to SENSE OF EXPOSURE), but learners all share the same common concern. Therefore, I do not identity or propose a typology of L2-M2 learner, but rather identify that each learner has their own threshold level of EXPOSURE SECURITY.

This CAPACITY TO COMPOSE is dependent on the learner's SENSE OF EXPOSURE and/or the INHERENT or PERCEIVED RISK associated with an EVENT. The contributing factors are; IN THE SPOTLIGHT (intensity), TRUST (establishment), perceived risk to STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM (imbalance) and perceived risk to DEGREES OF EXPOSURE INSECURITY (DISCOMFORT, DISCOMPOSURE or DISTRESS). The proposition is strengthened by the fact that the sample was comprised of two cohorts of Junior Freshman (1st Year) students on a 4-year Bachelor programme, where the main concern was shared by both cohorts. Therefore, the concepts, which relate to the hypothesis COMPOSING are deemed worthy to predict future behavior.

In order for a theory to work, it must have interrelated categories which “…work the core of what is going on” (ibid., p.5). The interrelated categories of EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING fully relate to the core category and the dynamic process reflects what occurs over time as the L2-M2 learner
makes progressions. The literature for L2-M2 learners provides evidence that performance is the primary cause of anxiety in those studies. However, the interconnected theory presented here goes a step further in documenting L2-M2 learner journey - drawing on aspects of LLA, performance and positive psychology where appropriate. This allows me to be confident that this theory can explain, predict and interpret the processes that learners go through in the early stages of learning a signed language.

7.6.3 Relevance

Relevance is achieved if a core concern or process has been identified and is grounded in data. It is relevant to the participants and as a result, a relevant theory.

Glaser (1992, p.15) notes that “if it fits and works, the grounded theory has achieved relevance”. Given earlier discussion of the fit and work of the theory, I add that I am confident that I uncovered the core concern of the participants in this study. Notwithstanding this, we must note that L2-M2 learners also have other concerns. Indeed, each participant raised a number of issues that pertain to their experience as first year university based L2-M2 learners, including struggling to recall what had been covered in class when there was limited opportunity to take notes, navigating a language which has a grammatical structure which differs from their spoken language, and limited time to practice outside of class.

The core concern for this study was established relatively early on in the process, having completed approximately seven interviews. However, I continued to collect data as the manner in which participants resolved this issue had not been ascertained. In hindsight, I realise that no number of interviews conducted at that stage would have revealed the process because learners were still working their way through it. I therefore decided to schedule second interviews with the first cohort I had met with. They had, by then, entered the second year of the degree programme. This is when the final elements were identified, and the theory came to fruition.

The main concern of wanting to increase the exposure security threshold was the one which featured in all interviews and appeared to be the most
significant issue for the substantive population\textsuperscript{71}. Furthermore, learners found ways to cope with this challenge, and had come to appreciate the exposing aspects of the language which they had previously found unsettling.

7.6.4 Modifiability

*Modifiability* recognizes that as new data emerges so may new categories or properties of a theory. An example given is the basic social process (BSP), the social world from which it derives is changing and although the generality of the BSP may remain, its relevance and intricacies is dependent on the variable context from which it emerges. At an earlier stage in the research process, I had hoped to visit another country to target participants who were enrolled in an equivalent programme to that run at the Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College Dublin. Due to lack of funding and work commitments it was not possible to follow through with this plan. However, I understood that theoretical sampling would continue to modify the theory.

Therefore, instead of comparing like for like (in a different cultural context), I instead decided to sample from other cohort of sign language learners attached to Trinity College, who were not studying on a full-time basis. In addition, I sampled from relevant literature. Therefore, the theory and the research process were continuously modified to aid theoretical completeness and conceptual integration. This criterion also acknowledges that a theory may continue to evolve if no time constraints were imposed, i.e. it transcends the lifetime of the project. However, at this point I am satisfied that a coherent grounded theory has been presented.

\textsuperscript{71} ACCESS was the key issue for part-time learners – identified during the theoretical sampling stage.
7.7 Chapter summary

This chapter considered points of intersection between the emergent COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory and the literature from the substantive field on learner anxiety, performance of language and positive psychology. We noted that the emergent theory maps to key themes that have arisen in L2 studies, including; the symptoms of LLA, the complexity of a set of interrelated variables (i.e. dynamic systems) and the central role of autonomy in language learning settings. However, we noted that this theory adds to this canon, most particularly with respect to feeling exposed when producing a visual-spatial language.

In particular, this study focuses on the body to a much greater degree than previous LLA research and the perception that ISL has an additional performative element, which learners have not experienced in previous language learning classrooms. The sensory and kinaesthetic experience is what distinguishes the LEARNING HUB for past contexts. Another factor where the COMPOSING theory stands out is how L2-M2 learners are concerned about how their peers will perceive them (and less so the ISL teacher) in terms of self-representation, cultural norms, etc. This does not appear widely in existing literature.

The latter part of this chapter evaluated the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory with respect to the principles laid down by Glaser (1992). I suggest that the theory presented here meets Glaser's (ibid.) criteria of ‘fit’, ‘workability’, ‘relevance’ and ‘modifiability’.

In Chapter 8, our final chapter, I highlight the implications, contributions and limitations of this study, and consider some possible future research pathways.
Chapter 8  Implications, Contributions, Limitations and Conclusions

The aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of L2-M2 learners of Irish Sign Language in a university setting. The primary goal was to identify their main concern and how they process that issue. The methodology adopted in this study was Classic Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This inductive approach allowed for a theory to be generated, grounded in empirical data. In addition, theoretically sampling from secondary data in the literature assisted when both troubleshooting and fine-tuning the emerging theory. The result is COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, which documents and explains how L2-M2 learners INCREASE THEIR EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD.

Research question 1 addressed the greatest concern for L2-M2 learners when in the early stages of learning a visual-spatial language, in this case Irish Sign Language. In Chapter 5 we found that INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD was the main concern for this substantive population.

Research question 2 was concerned with how they process or resolve their main concern. We found that L2-M2 learners do this by embarking on a journey of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF (Chapter 5 sets out the processes and stages involved in the COMPOSING theory).

Research question 3 sought to explore the points of intersection between this study and published work in various topics related to the psychology of the language learner and the performance of language. We noted that the emergent theory certainly maps to aspects related to dynamic systems, symptoms of LLA, the application of self-regulation strategies, etc. This study places emphasis on modality specific concerns, i.e. the use of the body, face and hands to express language through a new medium. The performance of a signed language has not featured widely in LLA literature. There are a small number of international L2-M2 studies which feature LLA (quantitative in nature, as outlined in §6.3.4), however this qualitative research not alone identifies the cause of LLA in the L2-M2 learning domain but also what the
substantive population do to manage or overcome this issue. Details of these findings expounded in Chapter 7.

With these points in mind, the implications of this research project will now be explored. The discussion will then move on to the contributions that this study offers before some brief points on the limitations.

8.1 Implications

This basic social psychological process of this theory, COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF, is developed as a response to the main concern of EXPOSURE INSECURITY. In this section, we consider the implications of this for the stakeholders involved. Glaser (1998) tells us that grounded theory has conceptual power, and that the generated theory should not solely benefit the researcher but also participants and practitioners. Thus, CGT practitioners endeavour to develop a theory that has a real purpose, one that is “vital, relevant and yields high impact concerns” (ibid., p.4). In this way, there is the possibility to contribute to ‘managed change’ within the substantive area and beyond (Glaser, 1992).

This study is situated within a third level institutional context in Trinity College Dublin, which is governed by the Higher Education Authority. In the broader context, this study comes at a time when policy-making is of particular importance given the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act in 2017. Therefore, I propose that the integration of concepts within this study has potential to inform stakeholders at both operational and strategic levels. I discuss these elements with reference to; teachers and learners, and then the wider community of practice - policy makers and the research field.

8.1.1 Operational implications

The variables within this theory and how they interrelate will be of immediate interest and have relevance for L2-M2 teachers and learners. On a daily basis, the teacher/learner relationship is forming, especially in this ‘intimate’

\footnote{72 The HEA has a statutory responsibility for the effective governance and regulation of the higher education system. See: http://hea.ie/about-us/overview/}
LEARNING HUB (the CDS) where there is NOWHERE TO HIDE. O’Connell (2017) applies the theoretical framework of ‘contact zones’ to explore this dynamic learning space, where each party brings their own worldview, shaped in part by their linguistic narrative. A STATE OF FLUX ensues, which must be navigated by both sides. Learners believe that the EVENT 73 has both an INHERENT RISK and the PERCEIVED RISK of EXPOSURE. While there are opportunities to lessen the impact of EXPOSURE INSECURITY (outlined in §6.6) and increase the capacity for the threshold of tolerance, this section primarily focuses on the potential positive repercussions of this new knowledge, i.e. that learners engage in a journey of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

As can be observed, L2-M2 learners find a solution to the EXPOSURE INSECURITY experienced and continue on their language learning journey. Inherently, there are aspects of this visual-spatial language which will remain consistent and there will always be an EXPOSING element, however our approach as educators should not be static.

**The L2-M2 Learner**

This study shows that learners of ISL in a university programme experience a SENSE OF EXPOSURE in the ISL classroom. The implications of feeling EXPOSED will vary (DEGREE) as many factors conspire to create this SENSE OF EXPOSURE.

L2-M2 learners can resolve this, and this study has identified strategies and behaviours that support that process of resolution. These are:

- Utilising a SELF-REGULATION STRATEGY in the moment where an exposure EVENT occurs which has a PERCEIVED or INHERENT RISK.
- Seeking to BOLSTER PERSONAL RESOURCES in the form of the noted processes of EXPOSING, ALLIANCING, and AUTHENTICATING.
- SEEK[ing]-OUT mechanisms that facilitate feeling more secure; leveraging strategies (SELF-REGULATION STRATEGY) and acknowledging that some are more effective and long-lasting than others (ANTI-NEUTRAL-POSITIVE).

73 Where the risk of exposure is felt.
- Exploring possibilities that allow the learner (themselves) to become de-sensitised to the phenomenon of EXPOSURE INSECURITY.

- Avoiding plateauing: it is important for learners to gain traction by becoming autonomous in relation to their general learning (FULLY-OWNED) and their performance/s (EMBODIED AUTONOMY). Successful learners are reflexive and examine the personal resources they can bring to bear on their language learning. They also actively seek to bridge the performance gap as perceived by them.

Potentially, there are modules outside of the programme, or activities, which will aid development of the performative element. If it is a public signing (equivalent to public speaking) issue rather than a bodily issue, a learner may pursue opportunities which focus on this element (e.g. debating or public speaking clubs\textsuperscript{74}). If the performance of language (in a learning context) is problematic, then process drama techniques may assist here (as outlined in §6.4.7 and §6.6).

TRUST is also key in this journey – therefore the learner should not prevaricate and should be encouraged to become familiar with classmates and engage in ALLIANCING with other stakeholders. This aspect will be further discussed in relation to next steps (§8.1.3).

**The ISL teacher**

The practitioner is ultimately the person who can provide most professional guidance in this area. There is no doubt that ISL teachers have encountered EXPOSURE INSECURITY in students. Therefore, it is inevitable that guidance has been provided in the past. However, some pointers which have arisen from this study may prove useful moving forward. The ISL teacher should consider L2-M2 learners’ actions and behaviours. Are they choosing ANTI-STRATEGIES in response to EXPOSURE INSECURITY? There may be extenuating circumstances, perhaps the learner experiences general anxiety outside of the classroom or perhaps EXPOSURE INSECURITY is linked to body consciousness issues.

\textsuperscript{74} An example is Toastmasters, see: https://www.toastmasters.org
ISL teachers should unlock learners’ inhibitions by engaging in novel practises which allow them to have input over the activity. A creative space which allows learners to be proactive lends itself to a positive psyche (see §6.6). Alternatively, if a student is not making progress or is deteriorating it is important to consider the reason for this – perhaps it relates to the issues raised in this study. Therefore, educators could sample and implement lesson plans which have been created for the purpose of alleviating EXPOSURE INSECURITY. It is then paramount to report on the effectiveness of these methods to course committees and larger audiences. There must be recognition of the fact that not all students come from a performance background and they perceive ISL to be EXPOSING at the outset. As a result, it is advised that educators avoid activities which render the learner more vulnerable (LACK OF AUTONOMY).

There are aspects of the language that inherently create an atmosphere of performance such as being intently watched as you articulate. These of course should be embraced; however, it is vital that we empathise with the learner in the ‘contact zone’ (O’Connell, 2017). In turn, they should be afforded the opportunity to cultivate this feature. Therefore, learners should be made aware of the supports available to them, and we should consider why some learners more readily avail of these while others do not. On a practical level, how can we extract key learning points that could feed into the curriculum delivered to trainee ISL teachers? Are there structures within which L2-M2 learning operates which can be altered to lessen the SENSE OF EXPOSURE? In the midst of these issues, we must also be cognisant that students are also engaging in a life-altering stage of their lives which can impact their studies.

It is hoped that the discussion of implications (at all levels) will feed into a movement towards more careful work in sign language teaching and learning. As this research discipline gains momentum, this study may become a leading point of reference in that regard.
8.1.2 Strategic implications

It is vital that ISL continues to be seen as a thriving language, which attracts a significant number of L2-M2 learners. Although there is an extensive canon dedicated to all aspects of L2 learning, the breadth and depth of L2-M2 research must also be expanded. This requires funding (see next steps §8.1.3)

There is scope for this work to have far reaching implications, as outlined in the operational implications. There are many tangible aspects which could provide immediate benefits. The substantive area of L2-M2 studies is relatively untapped, and this study could serve as a key milestone on which further work could be based. In tandem, in an Irish context, there is a changing political and societal landscape as both the Irish Deaf community and ISL is becoming part of the public consciousness. Public bodies are realising the importance of staff working on the frontline having a basic knowledge of ISL in order to effectively communicate with deaf clients. A recent example is the advertising of ISL classes to members of Dublin City Council. The advertisement reads as follows (excerpt):

*Irish Sign Language Training: In line with the commitment in the Customer Action Plan 2018-2020, the city council is engaging the Irish Sign Language Academy to run a beginners class in Irish Sign Language (ISL). Irish Sign Language is a visual and spatial language with its own distinct grammar. It has achieved official language status under the Irish Sign Language Act 2017*.75

Such initiatives increase the demand for ISL classes and the need to have a larger pool of ISL teachers to cater for this demand. Some of those who have a taster of ISL in an extra mural environment could be inspired to pursue further studies, which could prompt an increase in demand for Bachelor in Deaf Studies places. We also note here that some post-primary initiatives have introduced ISL in the curriculum (e.g. ISL short courses for the Junior Cycle; the Leaving Certificate Applied and opportunities for Transition Year, for students in some schools). However, the gap of National Framework of

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75 For a deeper insight into the functions of Dublin City Council, see: http://www.dublincity.ie
Qualifications Level 6 courses that support matriculation needs to be addressed. This would feed into status planning initiatives.

New knowledge presented in this thesis highlights that the whole area of sign language teaching and learning is under-documented and little empirical research in the area is something that must be addressed.

**Curriculum Design**

In March 2018, delegates at the European Centre for Modern Languages’ PRO-sign project meeting in Graz, all of whom are esteemed researchers and teachers in the field of sign language teaching, learning and assessment, articulated their concern that research on signed language teaching is approximately 30 years behind signed language interpreting research. The reasons for this are complex. Deaf people who have taught sign languages have not, in most countries of Europe, had access to teacher training. Only two countries currently offer sign language teacher training programmes at university level to bachelor standard (Ireland and the Netherlands) (Danielson and Leeson 2017). Access to any form of teacher education is highly restrictive in some European countries. This reflects the low status that has been ascribed to sign languages historically, and much needs to be done to create opportunities for professional education for deaf would be sign language teachers.

Capacity building must also be supported for those seeking to conduct research on sign language teaching, learning and assessment. Anecdotally, it seems that there are fewer than 30 deaf people who hold PhDs in Europe at this time, in the broader area of applied sign linguistics (Personal Communication, Leeson, October 2018), and an estimated 10 PhD holders (or fewer) working on research topics that include sign language teaching, learning and assessment in Europe.

If we turn to focus on the Irish context, we note again that the CDS is the only higher education institution to offer a Bachelor in Deaf Studies in Ireland. On graduation with an honours degree (Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications), those who chose the ISL teaching specialism tend to register with the Teaching Council if they wish to be contracted by State schools for the provision of ISL classes to their pupils, where required.
Likewise, qualified ISL teachers generally register with the ISL Academy which is affiliated to the Irish Deaf Society. In addition to organizing short-term ISL classes they also offer support to qualified ISL teachers.\footnote{See: https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/irish-sign-language/booking-an-irish-sign-language-classes/}

*The ISL Academy endeavours to pass on our rich culture and language heritage to students from our enthusiastic teachers. They have many years of experience teaching ISL, encouraging student-centered learning and as a result, student have benefited from our excellent teachers with a curriculum that is designed to follow the Common European Framework (CEFR) and QQI framework*.\footnote{Quality and Qualifications Ireland, for further information see; https://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Home.aspx}

The COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory must be made accessible to both current and prospective teachers. One route to engage with existing teachers is through collaborating with the ISL Academy to deliver a workshop. With respect to trainee and qualified staff teachers within the CDS, this thesis will be made readily available post defence. A challenge for me is to also engage with peers across Europe, while ensuring our programmes are aligned to CEFR. We must be conscious of the issues impacting L2-M2 learners. In the past, there was scarce opportunity to have these open conversations. Recently, PRO-Signs has facilitated meetings/workshops and will continue to do so over the lifetime of the project, which ends in 2019. It is vital that these conversations and curriculum planning initiatives continue moving forward. The crux of the matter is availability of the information in an accessible format for all who are involved in this sphere. This will be discussed in next steps, §8.1.3.

Theoretical sampling allowed me to determine that EXPOSURE INSECURITY was not a main concern for part-time or evening class L2-M2 learners. In their case, ACCESS to ISL, meaning lack thereof, was the pressing concern. The ramifications of this study should be further confirmed in other settings and not solely third level environments. As witnessed in Chapter 5, ACCESS was problematic for the part-time sample because they only had the opportunity to engage in basic dialogue on a weekly basis. We should not forget that
there are people who stem from all walks of life who become L2-M2 learners, such as; parents of deaf children, public servants who may start to be visible using ISL on the frontline with service users, children who attend sign language classes, etc. How do these concepts hold for people across these groups? The journey may not be identical, but some features may cross over and should incorporated into syllabus planning while it remains undetermined.

The CEFR teaching tool (outlined in §2.3 and §6.4) does not place emphasis on the performance value of sign language production, only the basic communicative element is captured here. Is it possible that we expect too much from L2-M2 learners in how they deliver THE PIECE, and the capturing of the nuances within the language? Although favourable, because the performance will be deemed DEAF-FRIENDLY, it is not embedded within the CEFR descriptors. Are we focusing on the minutiae and creating unnecessary stress for L2-M2 learners? Regardless of the answer, there are opportunities to develop a learner’s performative skills and should be considered when reviewing curricula (see Opportunities §6.6).

In order for this research to be considered by policy-makers and curriculum designers, it must be brought to a wider audience. The manner in how that will be approached will be outlined in §8.1.3. To be impactful, the theory must be presented in a fashion where it is accessible and coherent to all levels of audience. It is my plan to continue to attend and seek out opportunities to participate in relevant seminars, conferences, committee meetings and Boards, where strategic personnel will be in attendance.78

Policy

At a local level, we need to manage the expectations of students coming to learn Irish Sign Language in a university context. There appears to be

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78I have previously sat on the Board of the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS). Quote: SLIS is the national Sign Language Interpreting Service for Ireland. Established in 2007, SLIS is supported and funded through the Citizens Information Board. The mission of SLIS is to ensure Deaf people can live as full and equal citizens. We achieve this by promoting, and advocating for the availability of quality interpretation services to Deaf people and service providers in Ireland. See: http://slis.ie
mismatched expectations when L2-M2 learners enter the ACCLIMATISING stage, which can be overwhelming for some and at worst may impact retention as a result of EXPOSURE INSECURITY (§5.2.4). Learners appear to believe that ISL will be easy to learn, a common misconception (Calton, 2013; Krausneker, 2015). Thus, at a societal level, further work is needed on demonstrating that ISL is a complex language, in the same way spoken languages are. Indeed, working towards inclusion of ISL in the post-primary curriculum would help to resolve this challenge.

For students embarking on the process of learning an L2-M2, further emphasis should be placed on the ‘bodily performance’ aspect and the fact that interlocutors must maintain eye-gaze. Such information could be placed in the programme prospectus and in discussions we have with potential students at open days, career fairs, etc. In practice, for this to be operationalised, one must firstly acknowledge the competing demands from a School and College perspective, i.e. what level of recruitment information can be directly provided by experts in the field, in addition to the regular workload that academic staff undertake? Would funding be available to support these initiatives? Another question could also be raised as to what extent prospective students are (in any case) fully informed when undertaking any third-level programme? Can a prospective student ever (fully) predict compatibility until they commence their studies? These issues and questions require further exploration moving forward.

While here in Ireland we are fortunate enough to have a professional training programme for sign language teachers, there are very few places internationally where this is possible (Personal Communication, Pro-Signs project team, 2018). We must consider why this is the case. Official status was given to ISL after a thirty+ year campaign through the Irish Sign Language Act (2017). However, the Act has not yet been formally commenced at this time. Likewise, Ireland has seen recognition of the rights of people with a disability with recent ratification of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)\textsuperscript{79}. Ireland was the last EU country to ratify this Convention in 2018, which also includes

\textsuperscript{79} Ratified on 07/03/18, see: https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/2018-03-21/21/
explicit reference to the promotion of sign languages in society. These political responses to the position of sign language users and those with disabilities must be understood against a history of multi-generational suppression of ISL, enabled by language ideology and policy (Rose and Conama, 2017). Therefore, the implications of my study must also be nested within the broader societal context, with potential to influence thought and practice around language planning and language status. There is an ideal opportunity on the horizon here in Ireland, given that the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 (section 2.1) seeks:

To provide for the regulation of Irish Sign Language interpreters, deaf interpreters and Irish Sign Language teachers and for that purpose to establish the Irish Sign Language Council.

The future formation of the Irish Sign Language Council will inevitably put structures in place in terms of how we might scaffold the development of sign language teachers. i.e. how can we ensure L2-M2 learners are in a nurturing environment where they can gain FULLY-OWNED AUTONOMY and EMBODIED AUTONOMY? If we continue to work on pieces related to sign language teaching and learning, what kind of washback will there be? This point will be explored as we now consider what the next steps will be, following the completion of this study.

8.1.3 Next steps

In the ‘opportunities’ discussion presented in §6.6, there were several examples offered on how positive psychology techniques may be implemented in the ISL classroom. In addition, where learners are struggling more with EXPOSURE INSECURITY, a ‘buddy’ system with more advanced peers would provide a social space to chat with other students who overcame this phenomenon. A formalised mentoring system would support this. Details of College supports should be made available by both the LEARNING HUB and the College. In addition, classmates should be given scope to discuss their language learning concerns with each other, via reflective exercises or more formally through tutorials with lecturers. L2-M2 learners should also be encouraged to AUTHENTENTICATE their experience by having opportunity to engage with the deaf community through language building activities (e.g.
visits to Deaf Village Ireland). This will in turn allow L2-M2 learners to find allies within the wider community.

It is my intention to continue at postgraduate level and apply to the Irish Research Council and/or other possible funding streams. Visibility is key in promoting the language and showcasing the research which has been carried out – it is my objective to leverage the opportunities afforded by the theory developed in this study. In this vein, this thesis will be publicly available through open access channels within Trinity College Dublin (TCD), such as the TARA repository and TCD library. I also plan on creating a summarised ISL version to be made available to ISL teachers.

Another goal is to disseminate to key stakeholders in the domains of applied linguistics and language learning psychology. I will engage with established networks to share this research. Examples of conferences I plan to contribute to are the annual conference of the Irish Association of Applied Linguistics and the International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning (bi-yearly conference, next one taking place in 2020, in Cape Breton, Canada). I am a current member of both associations and have previously presented at conferences organised by them. It is also my intention to seek to publish a version of this thesis as a volume, with a recognised publishing house (to be determined).

There is an onus on me to become an ambassador for raising awareness of the key issues that research in the domain of sign language teaching and learning brings up. To do this, I need to ensure I am involved, or at a minimum can feed into the yet to be established, Irish Sign Language Council. It is difficult to make concrete suggestions as to how this will occur as the Council is yet to take shape, form a manifesto, seek stakeholder input, etc. This is a space which I will monitor when this stipulation (within the ISL Act 2017) is invoked.

Another important body to consider is the Teaching Council, who regulates and ensures the quality of teaching in the schools within Ireland⁸⁰. The CDS has worked closely with this body, where to date, graduates of the B.St.Su.

⁸⁰ For further information, see: https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/
(ISL Teaching pathway) have secured registration with them. It is vital that this working relationship is maintained.

These broader considerations should hopefully lead to a framework which encompasses how we in turn support sign language teachers and their continuous professional development to deal with matters arising in the ISL classroom. Some of these issues also resonate with the broader European conversation on sign language teaching and learning and may well have significance further afield.

To conclude, the key recommendations I propose are as follows:

- Ensure that all individuals learning ISL, regardless of age or course level are taught by an accredited ISL teacher, who is registered with the Teaching Council.
- Disseminate findings of this study at events where ISL teachers and policy makers will be in attendance.
- Continue to promote research-informed teaching (specific proposals will be outlined in future research plans, §8.2.1)

### 8.2 Contributions

The significant contribution of this study is new knowledge about L2-M2 learners and the issue which causes them the greatest concern during the early stages of their Irish Sign Language studies. There are many stakeholders who may benefit from this study, as outlined in the implications discussion. Scott (2007) categorises the contributions of her study into the following categories; supported, added, challenged, and new. This will be referred to here on occasion. In addition, I draw on Rozanes (2014), whose work also informs the structure of this discussion.

**Contribution #1:** This work has provided a theory explaining how L2-M2 learners continually try to resolve the concern that is of most importance to them. This contribution includes:

Original Theory: The development of the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory documents and conceptualises how adult learners of Irish Sign Language strive to INCREASE THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. This knowledge did
not previously exist and there was no existing L2-M2 theory to challenge. The theory provides a theoretical framework based on a core category (COMPOSING) with its interrelated sub-categories (stages and processes to be discussed in Contribution #2). This conceptually explores the phenomenon of INCREASING THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD, which emerged from the study of the substantive population (L2-M2 learners).

**Contribution #2:** My work has provided a novel perspective for understanding L2-M2 learners’ actions as they embark on their goal to INCREASE THE EXPOSURE SECURITY THRESHOLD. The COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory is of particular relevance to the disciplines of deaf studies, applied linguistics and psychology. Novel aspects include:

Stages: While the performative aspect of L2-M2 learning had been identified as a potential issue for some L2-M2 learners, no longitudinal study had explored how this issue was resolved by participants. This study offers three stages on this temporal journey, namely; ACCLIMATISING, ATTUNING and AUTHENTICATING.

Processes: Across these stages, the following processes are engaged in by the learner, EXPOSING, ALLIANCING and AUTHENTICATING. However, they take on different dimensions over time. As such, they are dynamic in nature and learners do not necessarily progress at the same rate. By engaging in these processes, L2-M2 learners BOLSTER THEIR PERSONAL RESOURCES. These processes had not previously been identified for L2-M2 learners.

Strategies: A range of strategies have been outlined which are employed by the learner, which offer temporary solace if required (in combination with more long-lasting personal resources). They range from being ANTI in nature, i.e. not tackling the issue (e.g. AVOIDING), to NEUTRAL, i.e. dealing with the problem (e.g. SELF-SOOTHING) to POSITIVE, i.e. solving the issue (e.g. EMBRACING). The choice of strategy is determined by the SENSE OF EXPOSURE, which is individually felt and is dictated by: IN THE SPOTLIGHT (intensity), TRUST (establishment), perceived risk to STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM and perceived risk to DEGREES OF EXPOSURE insecurity.
Impact: The impact of EXPOSURE INSECURITY varies and can impinge upon the learner in terms of what strategies they perceive available to them. It has been noted that those with a performance or artistic background, particularly where the body has been used as a medium of expression, appear more at ease with how a visual-spatial language is performed. The physiological and psychological implications were explored in Chapter 5 and these range from milder DISCOMFORT, to moderate DISCOMPOURE, to severe DISTRESS.

Fuel: There has been extensive discussion on the fact that autonomy intrinsically motivates people (e.g. Self Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan, 1985), however a particularly novel contribution is EMBODIED AUTONOMY via bodily performance. This will be further discussed under theoretical/empirical contributions.

Contribution #3: The formulation of a set of five propositions generated by the empirical data (§5.8) and associated variables. Indeed, these propositions are statements which predict future behaviour and can be substantiated in other cultural and learning contexts.

Contribution #4: I examined how Classic Grounded Theory methodology can be applied to studies on second language learning and in particular L2-M2 studies. In particular, this method was deemed to be the best fit in comparison to other potential frameworks.

In relation to this contribution, I have highlighted that the use of pre-existing theories would have potentially forced this study in a different direction. This is evident by the fact that the literature on the psychology of the language learner was previously unknown to me and I was therefore guided by emerging themes. In Chapter 4 I offered a concise overview of how the methodology was operationalised (and the challenges). This discussion may guide prospective L2-M2 and deaf studies researchers on the application of CGT methodology.

Contribution #5: I have suggested ways in which the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory can be used to inform practice. This contribution includes
pedagogical considerations such as both short and long term applications of positive psychology in teaching practice (§6.6).

Further, I proposed some practical solutions to support the teaching and learning process, for example, drawing on process drama techniques in ISL (or indeed, L2-M2) classroom (§6.6). It is vital that we re-assure incoming students that they are not the first to experience EXPOSURE INSECURITY and it may have an impact on them to greater or lesser degrees but is generally worked through by most learners.

There is recent impetus for informing practice in an Irish context. The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 provides for:

*The regulation of Irish Sign Language interpreters, deaf interpreters and Irish Sign Language teachers and for that purpose to establish the Irish Sign Language Council; to provide for the establishment of registers; to provide for continuing education requirements; to provide for offences.*

As this Act was recently signed into law on December 24th, 2017, and Irish Sign Language Council is being currently formed, it is essential to have empirical research to inform teaching practice and provide safeguards for ISL learners.

A dearth of literature exists in the L2-M2 arena - this theory may confirm *a priori* anecdotal observations in the ISL classroom. However, there is now a more detailed picture of how learners overcome this issue and the strategies and resources which support them through this journey.

**Contribution #6:** Provided an interdisciplinary application of the theory. Specifically, contributions were made in the following areas:

*Language learning anxiety (LLA) (see §7.1 for comprehensive discussion)*

COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF purported the definition of LLA provided by Gregerson and MacIntyre (2014). However, I challenged the typical LLA behaviours exhibited, as put forward by Lababidi (2016). Although I

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acknowledge that culture may play a role and should be further considered in other L2(M2) contexts, I challenged King and Smith’s (2017) notion of the ‘disapproving eye’ as a causality for LLA in this context. Similarly, I challenged Kitano’s (2001) hypothesis that LLA can increase over time as there may be higher expectations of the learner. Such issues did not emerge in my data set but there is the possibility that in later years of the BDS programme, these issues may appear.

This study adds to discussions on typological distance as a factor associated with LLA (e.g. Alrabai, 2001). This is provided for through evidence which explores the concerns that L2-M2 learners have in adjusting to a new modality, where they perceive EXPOSURE INSECURITY to be heightened in this context. Likewise, discussions on the ‘L2 Self’ (e.g. Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002) were added to by proposing the L2-M2 SELF. Here we see that AUTHENTICITY is closely aligned with the performative element of the language and receives more focused attention than in the current body of work in the area of LLA.

Performance of language (see §7.2 for full discussion)

This study has added to literature on LLA and language learning in terms of considering bodily performance and not solely speaking anxiety. In relation to this, I propose the concept of the performative, i.e. THE PIECE in the construction of L2-M2 production. In this regard, I furthermore supported L2-M2 studies in the area of LLA, e.g. Pfanner (2000) and ‘expressive skills’ being a cause of LLA, and the cultural conditioning argument that appears to inhibit L2-M2 learners, put forward by McKee and McKee (1992). However, I also add to these aforementioned quantitative studies by providing a conceptual framework which documents how L2-M2 learners are COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF.

This research supports the ‘anxious self’ concept, developed by Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) in terms of detachment or disassociation. This observation has been deduced as L2-M2 learners make statements such as “your body” instead of my body. A follow-up study would shed more light on this (see §8.2.1).
I have added to the work on language embodiment (e.g. Fischer and Zwaan, 2008), where L2-M2 learners have not had the lived experience of some of the concepts of which they are attempting to visually simulate. Thus, having to ACT-OUT and RE-ENACT rather than EMBODY in such circumstances. Tangentially, I support claims by Fischer and Müller (2014) who suggest that L2-M2 learners (at this stage of their learning journey) struggle with demonstrating an action (constructed action) when there is no systematic requirement to perform this element in a spoken language. In tandem, I have added to the work on facial expressions being coupled with physical changes in the body (Leung et al., 2011) and suggested that the acting out of non-manual features may have a role to play in interlocutors mis-interpreting L2-M2 learners’ intentions on occasion.

In relation to the detection of LLA from bodily cues, I have challenged the work of Gregersen et al. (2017) and posed the question of whether LLA is more detectable in L2-M2 learners than in spoken languages because of the perceived EXPOSING nature of the language (future research opportunity §8.2.1).

Positive Psychology (see §7.3 for full discussion)

I have supported the influential Self-Determination Theory model put forward by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT’s basic psychological needs and the processes (actions and behaviours) in this theory bare resemblances in terms of how an L2-M2 learner is motivated to resolve their main concern. However, I have added to the concept of autonomy, in this study AUTONOMY comes in two forms: generally - in terms of learning, from NON-OWNED to FULLY-OWNED. And more specifically for L2-M2 learners - autonomy over performances, from NON-EMBODIED to EMBODIED AUTONOMY.

The findings put forward by Pivac (2014) have been supported by my theory, relating to what autonomous L2-M2 learners do to supplement their learning outside of the classroom (see §7.4). In addition, I supported the argument that LLA is a dynamic system - learner attributes are not static but instead fluctuate over time and are context dependent (Dewaele, 2012). This, then, is true of learning, regardless of the target language modality.
Daubney et al. (2017) claim that dynamic studies will cease to present ‘binary conceptualisations’ of the learner which previously constrained our perceptions of them. I agree with and support this claim as the complexity of LLA is depicted in the COMPOSING THE L2-M2 Self theory. I also supported the argument put forward by Dewaele et al. (2017) that teachers should concentrate on boosting foreign language enjoyment rather than focusing on FLA as this would likely to have a meaningful impact. I have also added to this argument by exploring the aspects related to positive psychology, e.g. Flow Theory and Flourishing and offered practical suggestions about how these aspects could be implemented or further researched (see opportunities in §6.6).

Finally, theories of affective strategies and meta-strategies have been supported as L2-M2 learners also apply these strategies (Oxford, 2016a+b). I have also added to these concepts in relation to what L2-M2 learners do to BOLSTER THEIR PERSONAL RESOURCES (Chapter 5).

**Contribution #7:** This work considered whether COMPOSING THE (L2-M2) SELF is applicable to other substantive areas/populations.

A formal theory of COMPOSING? I have suggested other substantive populations that this theory could be tested against. See §7.6 for thorough discussion of this matter.

### 8.2.1 Future research plans

I have (and will now add to) proposals for future research, which I am personally interested in exploring at post-doctoral level or within collaborative projects. The fact that they have been identified as gaps/opportunities is in essence a contribution to discussion on L2-M2 learning. I acknowledge that there needs to be input from other researchers to explore these research proposals and therefore aim to form a network with those who have similar interests. I propose the application of CGT in such group projects. In this regard, Andrews (2017) published a piece which showcases the first classic grounded theory which emanated from an international collaborative exchange.
The key themes presented below are in my opinion gaps that I see in the field and should therefore be addressed.

- Does EXPOSURE INSECURITY rise again for L2-M2 learners in years 3 and 4 of the Bachelor in Deaf Studies programme? As such, does the threshold for EXPOSURE INSECURITY continue to evolve but not always in a positive manner? If so, what are the contributing factors for intermediate to advanced L2-M2 learners?

- Test the propositions of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF in different learning contexts (including spoken language classrooms) to discover if this is a universal issue or something that is culturally dependent. Do attitudes toward the body play a role in an Irish context? Prudishness surrounding issues of the body, or a psyche influenced by religious teachings, i.e. a ‘Catholic guilt’ legacy?

- Develop a pilot study of positive psychology approaches e.g. Gaffney’s ‘magic 5:1’ (five positive comments for every negative). Test the effectiveness in terms of improved performance and confidence levels (§6.6).

- Design a process drama workshop for an ISL learning context. Introduce a pre-text and extend the class duration (where appropriate) which would allow for each phase to be completed without being rushed (e.g. §6.6). Following the completion of the workshop seek participant feedback. Did the learners enter a state of flow? Did it give them more confidence about their performance? Test a number of different workshops for their effectiveness.

- Is LLA more detectable in L2-M2 learners than in spoken languages because of the perceived EXPOSING nature of the language? This research area warrants further attention.

- In conjunction, annotate the Sign Language Acquisition Corpus (SLAC) (presented in §1.2) to look at key features which offer a natural progression in terms of extending this piece of research. Is there linguistic evidence that L2-M2 learners appear to be insecure as they perform the language? What cues do we observe in a visual-gestural modality compared to oral languages? Are there lexical...
items which are typically body anchored which are not being articulated fully? If so, what patterns can be deciphered?

- Is the concept of gaining EMBODIED AUTONOMY modality bound? What role does the body play for language learners in general?

As demonstrated, this study produces new knowledge in the area of L2-M2 learning and contributes on all levels; theoretical, empirical and practical. However, the area of sign language teaching and learning remains underdocumented and this must be further addressed. I endeavour to disseminate the theory which has emerged from this study and will peruse the topics outlined above at post-doctoral level (next steps §8.1.3 discusses how this will be implemented).

8.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study are associated with three main areas; time, the researcher and lack of secondary data to theoretically sample from.

8.3.1 Time

As with any piece of research, time is a factor to consider. Not alone the time to complete the study but also in terms of the temporal nature of any process involving human subjects. In this theory, learners progress through three stages to resolve their main concern. As previously discussed, the Basic Social Psychological Process that we see here is constantly evolving, changing and interacting with a number of elements, including those which are; intrapersonal (self), interpersonal (others) and extra-personal (the environment).

Interviews were carried out with twenty-one participants (including several more even after the main concern had been identified) and five follow-up interviews at an early/mid-point on their second year on the programme. The latter were scheduled to gain a deeper insight into how L2-M2 learners processed their main concern. However, due to the nature of this dynamic process it is of course possible that not all stages or concepts were captured – either because they had gone beyond that point and it was not at the forefront of the participants’ minds, or because it had not yet been encountered, such as an acute reoccurrence of the main concern at a later
stage, particularly for those who had yet to fully resolve the issue. However, the main concern had been identified and the processes that learners go through to resolve, either partially or fully, had been identified, therefore I entered the next stage of this research process.

The focus then switched to sampling from the literature and interviewing evening class students. There were moments I considered holding a third interview with a small number of participants concurrently, particularly those who recounted having more severe reactions relating to feeling EXPOSED with respect to the performative element of ISL. However, due to time constraints and the natural progression of the project I moved on to the write-up stage. At the same time, I am cognisant that a third interview may not have contributed significantly to this project and also, may not have been welcomed by participants. There is also the acceptance that with any grounded theory, further data will continue to shape the theory.

8.3.2 The researcher

Before commencing this study, Grounded Theory methodology was unknown to me. I had not encountered it in work when I had read in the fields of linguistics, applied linguistics, deaf studies, L2-M2 learning, or with regard to the field of intercultural studies. Following preliminary discussions with my (then) potential supervisor, it was suggested that CGT may be a good fit for the exploratory research I planned to carry out. Following from this, there has been every attempt to become familiar with the tenets and practices of CGT. This included attending troubleshooting seminars in Ireland, the U.K. and the U.S.A; availing of mentoring opportunities within the CGT network which I became part of and consulting with my supervisor and fellow CGT colleagues which now form a CGT group within the School of Linguistics, Speech and Communication Sciences in Trinity College Dublin.

In addition, I have read widely on CGT theoretical, procedural and empirical publications. Nevertheless, the CGT research process has been challenging and dare I say it, nerve-wracking. These methodological struggles have been outlined heretofore. However, I must acknowledge that I may have unknowingly applied the methodology incorrectly or misinterpreted what I have read in the procedural manuals. It has definitely been a process of
experiential learning, one of which I firmly believe was warranted in terms of appropriateness for this study. I continue to learn about CGT and relish possible opportunities, which will allow my CGT skills to become more sophisticated.

8.3.3  *Lack of empirical data to sample from*

There is a lack of robust empirical literature in the field of sign language teaching and learning generally, and even more so in relation to Irish Sign Language contexts. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of studies on L2-M2 bilingual/bimodal development and second language acquisition of a signed language in general (outside of the classroom). This dearth of literature proved challenging when wishing to engage in theoretically sampling from L2-M2 studies, in areas relevant to the emergent concepts. Therefore, there was a need to sample from a wider pool in order to explore the emerging themes.

This is not a negative issue as it allowed me to read extensively on topics related to the psychology of the language learner, although it was somewhat removed from my target population. The upside is that this theory adds to the limited body of research which is currently available. This is an initial step in the direction of L2-M2 qualitative research. It is hoped that this study will feed into a movement towards more considered work in sign language teaching and learning and that this may be a leading point of reference in that regard.

8.4  *Conclusions*

In considering the implications of the **COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF theory**, we noted that these findings are of immediate relevance to teachers of sign languages working with L2-M2 learners and the learners themselves. We found that for teachers there are positive psychology and process drama techniques which could be immediately implemented in the classroom to engender a supportive and safe learning space. And for learners the most important issue to arise is that **EXPOSURE INSECURITY** can be managed and resolved in many cases.
The implications of this study reach beyond the classroom. At departmental and institutional levels (university), there should be further consideration of how the programme is marketed to prospective students to highlight the complexity of ISL and the nature of the LEARNING HUB as a cultural space. This is not solely an issue in this region, as previously noted, Peterson (2009) informs us that this is a common misconception. For policy makers, the Irish Sign Language Act (2017) provides several opportunities to increase public awareness of ISL and put the necessary safeguards in place for sign language teaching. This is a core objective of the soon to be established Irish Sign Language Council, outlined in the contextual backdrop within Chapter 2.

Classic Grounded Theory methodology has permeated all aspects of this study from start to finish (as detailed in Chapters 3 and 4). Glaser (1998, p.17) holds the view that if a researcher has been rigorous in their application of the methodology and generated a theory which demonstrates the criteria of fit, relevance, workability and modifiability, the result can ‘conceptually empower’ individuals and offer a deeper sense of their world.

It is hoped that the theory of COMPOSING THE L2-M2 SELF (as presented in Chapter 5), offers an insight into the world of L2-M2 learners and their journey to master Irish Sign Language whilst trying to overcome a very personal issue. It is also hoped that educators and researchers gain a deeper sense of the behaviours and processes that L2-M2 learners simultaneously engage in. As such, this will lead to research-informed practice which will support the L2-M2 learner (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

Thus, this work, and work like it in the L2-M2 domain is much needed to provide a research-led approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of sign languages.
References


Thomas, M. (2011). The utility and efficacy of qualitative research software in grounded theory research. In V. Martin & A. Gynnild (Eds.),


van den Broek-Laven, A., Boers-Visker, E., & van den Bogaerde, B. (2014). Determining aspects of text difficulty for the sign language of the


Consideration of Alternate Methodologies

Case Studies

Case studies can build a theory which is descriptive, exploratory, or explains a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Duff (2011) notes that the process must be underpinned with a strong conceptual/theoretical framework in order to refine research questions and generate clear constructs. As a consequence, case study research was contemplated as an option due to its flexibility, as it can incorporate differing paradigmatic positions, methods and study designs (Hyett, et al., 2014). Its appeal is also noted by researchers situated in the positivist paradigm (Eisenhardt, 1989; Lee and Baskerville, 2003; Yin, 2012), where the aim is to corroborate or dispute previous research findings on a given issue. Paradoxically, the interpretivist viewpoint sets out to construct knowledge of social phenomena, by means of full descriptive coverage (Merriam, 2009; Macpherson et al., 2000; Walsham, 1993). Yet, the flexibility of case study research can also detract researchers because of inconsistency in how it is applied and differing opinions on what constitutes rigour when adopting this methodology (Hyett, et al., ibid.; Meyer, 2001; Thomas, 2010).

Ethnography

Ethnography has been defined as, “… a methodology focused on exploring how communities are created and held together with human interactions” (Potter, 2013, p.51). It applies observational techniques over extended periods in the pursuit of documenting the ‘cosmology’ of a group (ibid.). The result will be an explanatory theory, based on identified patterns of behaviour. It offers ‘thick descriptive’ coverage (Geertz, 1973) following overt or covert immersion in a particular environment. Methods for data collection include participant observation, formal/informal interviewing or document analysis (Cruz and Higginbottom, 2013). The aim is to describe or critique using a triangulated approach. In this regard, applicable theories and viewpoints form the basis of how current data is analysed (Friedman, 2011). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) identify queries that have been raised with regard to ethnography centred around the validity and generalizability of findings. Potter (ibid.) suggests that data should be open to many interpretations, however dissenters are opposed to how radically subjective this is (Savage, 2000). When taking an ethnographic approach, the researcher spends extensive periods of time with the same population and therefore boundaries become fluid (Cruz and Higginbottom, 2013). Cruz and Higginbottom (ibid.) suggests that the
positivist school of inquiry would question the credibility of such studies due to lack of scientific evidence and researcher bias. Given this, the fluidity associated with ethnographic approaches has resulted in polarized opinions about its vigour.

**Action Research**

Loewen and Philp (2011) state that in action research, the investigator is a participant in this process and endeavours to find out more about a specified issue and/or the process being investigated. Initially, the issue must be framed by what others (if any) have concluded on the topic in addition to knowledge based on own expertise. Following this, an intervention is made in order to address the issue and seek improvement. The results are documented (using a range of methods) to determine if an improvement has been made. The last step in action research approaches involves participant reflection on the challenges, benefits or constraints of this initiative. Finally, the action is revised or implemented (ibid.). However, there are queries regarding the robustness of action research. Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) argue that knowledge is socially constructed and therefore action research cannot be underpinned by positivist views. The theory generated can be confirmation of previously held views on unresolved issues and therefore a particular area can be enriched through this form of research (ibid.). These perceived advantages are not shared by all and the fundamental flaws have been identified as the “…contingency of the research findings, low control of the environment, and personal over-involvement” (Durcikova, et. al., 2018, p.242). Responses have been made in an attempt to overcome these risks by employing statistical methods and sample surveys whilst following action research planning and evaluation processes (ibid.).

**Methodology Selection**

The merits and limitations of each of the above approaches were ascertained, however there was no frontrunner with regards to suitability. In case study designs, a pre-determined conceptual framework is sourced. However, an existing theoretical framework did not exist in this research area, as L2-M2 qualitative studies are limited. Furthermore, ethnography and action research seemed to be more applicable for analysis of L2 instruction or environmental concerns rather than capturing the learner experience. There also appeared to be idiosyncratic research practices within each methodology with the absence of a standardized procedure to adhere to, which was troubling. However, a qualitative approach still appeared to be the best fit for this study – this realisation was based on the proposed research questions and the purpose of qualitative research. Creswell and Creswell (2017, p.4) state that:
Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honours an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexities of a situation.

Similarly, Lapan et al., (2011) insist the focus of qualitative methodologies is from the insider perspective and that findings are bound by time and context and tend not to be generalizable. In the present study, my goal was to gain a deeper understanding of participants' concerns, as articulated by them, rather than attempting to hypothesize what these may be. This approach parallels work undertaken by many second language learning researchers who postulate that we can only truly improve the teaching and learning of languages by capturing the learner experience through analysis of their attitudes, motivations, etc. (Benson and Nunan, 2005; Breen, 2014; Griffiths and Keohane, 2000; Mercer and Williams, 2014; Murray et al., 2011; Nakata, 2006; and Winke, 2007). After careful consideration, a CGT methodological framework was decided upon. The rationale for this decision was based on the CGT systematic approach to analyzing data through the means of inductive reasoning intersected with deductive techniques, primarily the reflexivity of the researcher to eliminate or explore based on the observation of patterns. Further, GT is a theory-building methodology, and my goal is to generate a grounded theory predicated on the concerns of L2-M2 learners of ISL. Further, Bendassolli (2013, p.10) in his critique of qualitative methods, suggests that GT has scientific relevance which most other qualitative traditions are lacking. The method “…proposed an analytic spiral stemming from data and progressing to the explanation, combing two large vectors; one ascending, aimed at developing the theory and the other descending, seeking to ground concepts in the data”. In this regard, GT recommends not collecting data with a preconceived theoretical framework in mind - this was a straightforward undertaking because there was no applicable theory to draw in the substantive area. With the above issues in mind, CGT was chosen to be the methodological framework for this study.
APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

Sign Language Learning – user experiences

Researcher: Ms Sarah Sheridan, PhD Candidate
Assistant Professor in Deaf Studies

Supervisor: Prof. Lorraine Leeson

Introduction
You are invited to participate in research, which will collect data from adults who are learning a sign language as a second (or subsequent) language in Ireland. The aim of this phase is to track the experiences of those who are in their first year of learning ISL at the Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College Dublin.

Aims of Study and Data Collection Procedures
You are invited to participate in an interview, which aims to explore aspects of your experiences of and perspectives on learning a sign language. This research is part of a PhD study carried out by the above named researcher.

The interview will last for no more than 1 hour at a time that is convenient to you. The discussion will be held in English and facilitated by Ms. Sarah Sheridan. If you agree to participate, the conversation will focus on your experience of learning ISL to date. There will be a number of general questions asking about the journey so far in learning Irish Sign Language, e.g. Is the language what you expected? How do you practice ISL? How does learning ISL compare to any past experiences you may have had in learning a spoken language?

The interview will be audio recorded by Ms. Sarah Sheridan. There will not be any other people present. From this audio recording, a transcript will be prepared in written English and no information about participants' names will be transcribed—it will be an anonymized transcript. The transcript will be sent to you within 10 days of the interview taking place and amendments can be made to your comments within 7 days of receipt, if you so wish. If you do not respond within the timeframe specified the researcher assumes you are happy with the transcript as it stands. It is also possible to request a copy of the audio clip at any stage.

The data will not be shared and your identity will not be disclosed at any stage of the research process or in future publications related to the results of this research.

Your participation in this research makes a significant contribution to research in the field of sign language teaching and learning.
Voluntary Nature of the Study
If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to opt-out at any stage. Your participation is completely voluntary.

I want to emphasise that this research project is completely separate from your studies at Trinity College Dublin. There is no negative consequence for deciding not to participate.

Risks and Benefits
There are no risks associated with this research. However, initially, you may be a little self-conscious as the interview will be audio recorded.

From the researcher’s perspective, your participation is extremely valuable: this research may benefit those working in the field of sign language teaching, a field that is currently under-researched. There are potential future benefits for those learning sign language, educators and those who are interested in the field.

The Data
I want to emphasise that any information or data which I obtain from you during this study will be treated extremely carefully. It will be stored on a password protected computer in a password protected file. The audio recordings will be securely disposed of after 5 years.

Contacts and Questions
If you have any questions about this research or want to talk through the process in more detail, you can discuss this by meeting with or emailing, Ms. Sarah Sheridan (sherids1@tcd.ie) or the doctoral supervisor for this project, Prof. Lorraine Leeson.

If you would like to participate, please send an email to:

Ms Sarah Sheridan
Email: sherids1@tcd.ie
CONSENT FORM

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

Sign Language Learning – user experiences

Researcher: Ms Sarah Sheridan, PhD Candidate
Assistant Professor in Deaf Studies

Doctoral Supervisor: Prof. Lorraine Leeson

Introduction
I am invited to participate in an interview, which aims to explore aspects of my experience of
and perspectives on learning a sign language. This research is part of a PhD study carried out
by the above named researcher.

Aims of Study and Data Collection Procedures
The meeting will last for no more than 1 hour. The discussion will be held in English and
facilitated by Ms. Sarah Sheridan. If I agree to participate, I understand that the conversation
will focus on my experience of learning ISL to date. There will be a number of general
questions asking about my journey in learning Irish Sign Language to date, e.g. Is the
language what you expected? How do you practice ISL? How does learning ISL compare to
any past experiences you may have had in learning a spoken language?

Voluntary Nature of the Study
I understand that I am free to opt out of this project at any stage. I appreciate that this research
is completely separate from my programme of study in Trinity College Dublin. There are no
negative consequences for deciding not to participate.

Risks and Benefits

There are no risks associated with participating in this discussion, though I appreciate that I
may initially feel a little self-conscious as the interview will be audio recorded.

I understand that my participation makes a significant contribution to research in the field of
sign language teaching and learning.

What happens to my data?
I understand that my data will be treated extremely carefully.

The interview will be audio recorded by Ms. Sarah Sheridan. There will not be any other
people present. From this audio recording, a transcript will be prepared in written English and
no information about participants’ names will be transcribed— it will be an anonymized
transcript. I may request a copy of the audio clip at any stage. The transcript will be made
available to me within 10 days of the interview taking place and I have 7 days to make
amendments to my comments, if I so wish. If I do not respond within this timeframe then I am happy with the transcript as it stands.

All hard copies of relevant documentation (Consent form) will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home of Ms. Sarah Sheridan. The audio data will be stored for a maximum of 5 years on a password protected computer owed by the researcher.

Contacts and Questions
I understand that I can contact Ms. Sarah Sheridan if I would like further information about this research. I can do this in person or by email (sherids1@tcd.ie). I am also free to contact Prof. Lorraine Leeson (leesonl@tcd.ie), who is supervising this project.

Signature of Participant
Date

Signature of Researcher
Date
Proposed interview questions

Sarah Sheridan

04109104

PhD Candidate

What inspired you to learn Irish Sign Language?

Did you have any knowledge of Irish Sign Language before you started in the Centre for Deaf Studies? (If the answer is yes, ask how CDS input differs from previous experiences)

Tell me about your language learning journey in the CDS so far...

How are ISL lectures generally structured? How do you find that?

Is the language learning environement what you expected?

Is the process of learning ISL what you expected?

Are there certain aspects of ISL that you found easier to grasp than others?

How do you practise ISL when not in class?

How often do you use ISL outside of CDS? – give me some examples.....

Have you interacted with Deaf people outside of CDS? How did it go?

If you have learned a second language previously how does it compare to learning a signed language?

What stage do you feel you are at in your ISL learning?

What supports would assist a person learning sign language (in general or in the CDS)?

Tell me about what you’ve enjoyed about learning a sign language?

Tell me about what you have struggled with in learning a sign language.

Tell me what you think would help you better develop language skills.

Tell me what you think would better help you develop cultural competency.
Application: HT27 Academic Year 2015/16

Applicant: Sarah Sheridan

Title of Research: Sign language learning – user experiences

Dear Sarah,

Your submission for ethics approval for the research project above was considered by the Research Ethics Committee, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, on Monday, 08 February 2016, and has been approved in full. We wish you the very best in your research activities.

Best wishes,

Dr Lorna Carson
Chair, Research Ethics Committee
School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Academic Year: 2016/17  
**Applicant**: HT27 Sarah Sheridan  
**Project title**: Sign language learning – user experiences

Dear Sarah,

Your request for an extension to the ethics approval for the research project above was considered by the Research Ethics Committee, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, on the 5th September 2016, and has been approved. Good luck with the project,

---

Professor John Saeed  
Chair, Research Ethics Committee  
School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Trinity College Dublin