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Positive emotions in English language learning in the Vietnamese tertiary contexts

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Abstract

This thesis explores the emotions students experienced during their English language learning trajectories in the Vietnamese tertiary context. It specifically focuses on the students' positive emotions and on the role of hope as a mediating factor in triggering shifts in students' emotions from negative to positive. Drawing on a sociocultural approach, this study explores the contribution of positive emotions in their English language learning. This qualitative study aims to contribute to our understanding of the complexity, diversity, and dynamics of emotions in English language learning as well as the role of Vietnamese culture in the emotions students experienced. The study is based on written narratives and interviews with students taking English language courses within three affiliated universities in Vietnam. The data were obtained from a total of 185 written narrative responses and 10 student interviews. Narrative analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2013) was used to analyse small stories in the written narratives and thematic analysis (Talmy, 2010) was used for analysing the interview data.

The findings indicate that both positive and negative emotions co-existed in the students' English language learning experiences. The range of activity-related, success-linked, and failure-linked emotions highlighted by the findings illustrate that activity-related emotions such as enjoyment and excitement positively triggered students' engagement, while negative emotions such as boredom negatively impacted it. Success-linked emotions originated from students' self-assessed successes in meeting personal study or learning goals, their parents' or teachers' expectations, or the standards imposed by the community or society as a whole, with positive achievement emotions strongly associated with positive outcomes. In contrast, failure-linked emotions were associated with the students' failure in achieving personal targets and in meeting the expectations

others had of them, their recognition of their own shortcomings in relation to accepted social standards, or from negative evaluations from other people. Importantly, the findings showed that emotions are socially and culturally constructed, and in particular associated with the features of the local Confucian cultural heritage. Overall, the thesis illustrates the role of people living around students or in interactions with them in the emergence and development of emotions associated with English language learning. Finally, hope, as an emotion, emerged as playing a significant role in the transition between negative and positive emotions.

The insights of the study contribute to the theory of emotions in language learning by delineating in detail the close and reciprocal relationship between emotions, self-efficacy and motivation, and by providing evidence of the role of hope in motivating students. It also contributes to our understanding of the role cultural factors play in shaping students' emotions. The findings have implications for policymakers, educational trainers, school managers, teachers, parents, and language learners.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 A personal outlook	1
1.2 The current situation of English teaching in Vietnam	3
1.2.1 The status of English teaching in the Vietnamese system of general education.....	3
1.2.2 English teaching in Vietnamese tertiary settings.....	5
1.2.3 The philosophy of teaching English in Vietnam.....	6
1.3 The research problem	8
1.4 Purpose of the study and research questions	10
1.5 Significance of the study	11
1.6 Thesis structure	12
Chapter 2 Literature review	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Cognitive approaches to emotion	14
2.3 Sociocultural approaches to emotions in English language learning and teaching ..	20
2.4 Trends in positive emotion research in English language learning	24
2.5 The role of positive emotions in the Broaden-and-Build Theory	27
2.6 Self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions	31
2.6.1 Self-conscious emotions.....	31
2.6.2 Achievement emotions.....	32
2.7 Emotions and the concept of face	34
2.8 Emotion and other aspects of English language learning	36
2.8.1 Emotion and The L2 Motivational Self System Theory.....	37
2.8.2 Emotion and self-efficacy.....	40
2.9 The contributions of the current study to the literature	41
2.10 Chapter summary	43
Chapter 3 Methodology	45
3.1 Introduction	45
3.2 Research paradigm	45
3.3 A qualitative narrative approach	47
3.4 Research design	49
3.4.1 Research site and participants.....	50
3.4.2 Participant recruitment for written narratives.....	52

3.4.3 Participant recruitment for student interviews	53
3.5 Preparing for data collection instruments	55
3.5.1 Facebook search as a way to explore the context	55
3.5.2 Initial design of the written narrative frames	58
3.5.3 Piloting the narrative frames	59
3.6 Data collection instruments	61
3.6.1 Revising the written narrative frames	61
3.6.2 Individual student interviews	67
3.6.3 Teacher interviews	74
3.7 Implementation of the study	74
3.7.1 On-site written narrative collection.....	75
3.7.2 Individual student interview.....	75
3.8 Data handling	78
3.8.1 Data transcription and translation	78
3.8.2 Data analysis	79
3.8.3 Presenting the data	81
3.9 Ethical considerations	84
3.9.1 Ethical consent	84
3.9.2 Risk and benefits.....	84
3.9.3 Privacy protection	85
3.10 Trustworthiness and dependability	85
3.11 Chapter summary	88
Chapter 4 Student interviews	89
4.1 Introduction	89
4.2 Activity-related emotions	92
4.2.1 Enjoyment.....	92
4.2.2 Excitement	98
4.2.3 Boredom.....	102
4.2.4 Activity-related emotions: Summary	107
4.3 Outcome-related success-linked emotions	107
4.3.1 Happiness	107
4.3.2 Pride	114
4.3.3 Self-confidence	120
4.3.4 Gratitude	122

4.3.5	Admiration	126
4.3.6	Hope.....	129
4.3.7	Success-linked emotions: Summary	130
4.4	Failure-linked outcome-related emotions	131
4.4.1	Upset	131
4.4.2	Disappointment	133
4.4.3	Anxiety.....	139
4.4.4	Shame.....	145
4.4.5	Failure-linked outcome-related emotions: Summary	147
4.5	Chapter summary	148
Chapter 5	Written narratives	150
5.1	Introduction.....	150
5.2	Peers as mediators.....	152
5.3	Teachers as mediators	156
5.3.1	Teacher’s encouragement	156
5.3.2	Teacher’s gift and advice	159
5.3.3	Teacher’s life stories	162
5.3.4	Teacher’s teaching approaches	165
5.3.5	Teachers as mediators: Summary	168
5.4	Parents as mediators.....	169
5.5	Role models as mediators	172
5.6	Interschool competitions	175
5.7	Communication with foreigners	179
5.8	Social media sites as mediating factors	182
5.9	Emotions and the Self System	183
5.9.1	Emotional impact of students’ Ideal L2 self	183
5.9.2	Emotional impact of the Ought-to L2 self	185
5.10	Chapter summary	187
Chapter 6	Discussion	189
6.1	Introduction.....	189
6.2	The range, complexity, and fluctuation of emotions in students’ narrative accounts	190
6.2.1	The range of reported emotions	190
6.2.2	The complexity of reported emotions	191

6.2.3 The dynamics of reported emotions	192
6.3 Hope and its relationships with other factors in the reported narrative accounts .	193
6.3.1 The emergence and significance of hope in English language learning in the reported narratives	194
6.3.2 Mediating factors and self-efficacy	196
6.3.3 Hope, self-efficacy, and motivation in English language learning	199
6.4 The contributions of positive emotions	202
6.5 The influences of cultural factors in constructing some particular emotions in the Vietnamese context	205
6.5.1 The manifestation of some emotions related to the notion of saving and losing face	205
6.5.2 The impact of power distance in the classrooms	210
6.5.3 The effect of culture on constructing disappointment.....	212
6.5.4 Showing gratitude as influenced by cultural features	213
6.5.5 The influence of cultural factors in constructing particular emotions in the Vietnamese context: Summary	215
6.6 The constructions of the Ought-to L2 self and Ideal L2 self in the Vietnamese cultural context.....	215
6.6.1 The constructions of the Ideal L2 self.....	216
6.6.2 The constructions of the Ought-to L2 self	220
6.6.3 Summary of the Ought-to L2 self and Ideal self as mediators.....	221
6.7 Chapter conclusion	223
Chapter 7 Conclusion	225
7.1 Introduction.....	225
7.2 The research questions revisited.....	225
7.2.1 Research question one.....	225
7.2.2 Research question two.....	226
7.2.3 Research question three	227
7.3 Contributions of the study.....	228
7.3.1 Implications for theory.....	228
7.3.2 Methodological implications.....	231
7.4 Implications of the study	232
7.4.1 Implications for policymakers	232
7.4.2 Implications for teacher trainers	233
7.4.3 Implications for teachers.....	233
7.4.4 Implications for parents	236

7.4.5 Implications for students	237
7.5 The limitations of the study	237
7.6 Further research suggestions	238
7.7 Closing words	239
Reference list	242
Appendices	253
Appendix A	253
Appendix B	254
Appendix C	255
Appendix D	256
Appendix E	257
Appendix F	258
Appendix G	259
Appendix H	261
Appendix I	262
Appendix J	265

List of figures

Figure 2.1 <i>Interactions of different theories</i>	42
Figure 3.1 <i>Facebook post-1</i>	56
Figure 3.2 <i>Facebook post-2</i>	57
Figure 3.3 <i>Facebook post-3</i>	57
Figure 3.4 <i>The initial model of written narrative frames</i>	59
Figure 3.5 <i>The "Teddy bear" story model</i>	63
Figure 3.6 <i>The design of story 1</i>	65
Figure 3.7 <i>The design of story 2</i>	66
Figure 3.8 <i>Questions with emoji face icons for individual student interview</i>	69
Figure 3.9 <i>Scenarios designed in question interview</i>	71
Figure 3.10 <i>Images of scenario cards</i>	72
Figure 3.11 <i>Individual student interview timeline</i>	76
Figure 3.12 <i>An interaction with a participant on Facebook Messenger message</i>	87
Figure 5.1 <i>Mediating factors</i>	187
Figure 6.1 <i>Range of reported emotions</i>	191
Figure 6.2 <i>The relationships of self-efficacy with perceived support and emotions</i>	198
Figure 6.3 <i>Hope in English language learning adapted from Snyder et al. (2002)</i>	201
Figure 6.4 <i>The role of mediating factors in shaping and changing students' emotions</i>	202
Figure 6.5 <i>The role of the Ideal L2 self in shaping students' emotions</i>	219
Figure 6.6 <i>The role of Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to self in constructing students' emotions</i>	222

List of tables

Table 3.1 <i>Timing of data collection processes</i>	50
Table 3.2 <i>Personal information of participants in the student interviews</i>	54
Table 3.3 <i>Number of participants</i>	75
Table 3.4 <i>The settings and lengths of individual student interviews</i>	77
Table 3.5 <i>An example of written narrative analysis</i>	80
Table 3.6 <i>Preliminary interview data analysis</i>	82
Table 4.1 <i>Self-conscious achievement emotions</i>	91

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 A personal outlook

Before I started my PhD student life in New Zealand, I had worked as an English teacher for 17 years. When I taught English, I usually tried to create exciting and comfortable learning environments to stimulate students' interest in my lessons by using and designing some English games and activities. My colleagues and I often organized field trips for students with fun activities such as "Chasing words", "Guessing words with pictures", "Guessing words with actions", "Be an interpreter", and "Short movie dubbing". I found that students would be more involved in those class activities when they felt happy and had more fun. I felt that through creative and varied activities, students were stimulated, and as a result, they could learn more. In my opinion, interesting tasks and humour are important in designing and planning lessons. I still remember students' eager faces and the excitement that they experienced when they actively took part in games or activities outside the classroom. Most teachers would agree that students feel more active and more motivated in their studies when they feel good.

In contrast, when I worked as an examiner in oral examinations, I saw students who felt nervous and even trembled with fear. Some of them were so anxious that they forgot everything. They could not remember all the knowledge they had learned, revised, and prepared for the exams. As a result, they could not receive high scores. Even in my normal classroom, certain activities, such as being summoned to answer a question in front of the class, could trigger visible anxiety. This negative emotion impacted students' communicative skills, and their attempts to respond were often not successful.

Furthermore, when they could not answer my questions or gave the wrong answers, I saw they felt embarrassed and shy.

As social media sites became popular in Vietnam, I was invited to join some public Facebook groups where Vietnamese learners and teachers of English shared their learning experiences. I found that learners often used Facebook and other social media as a means of exploring different learning approaches. Sometimes they posted on those groups asking for suggestions for improving their speaking skills, expanding their vocabulary, and even how to say an English sentence correctly. They also posted about their learning difficulties, their problems when learning English, and their concerns about their English competence and the limitations of their English language learning. Following those Facebook groups helped me obtain an initial understanding of Vietnamese people in writing about their thoughts, concerns, and feelings in their English language learning and teaching. A Facebook search was used as an initial research tool to explore emotions in English language learning in this study (in Section 3.5.1 the Facebook search is discussed as a way to explore the context).

When I talked with my colleagues about our teaching experience, some of the teachers were happy to talk about what they did to improve their class environments. Others were not aware of the role of emotions in their teaching. For them, the most important thing for a successful lesson was the content of the lesson. They tried to convey all the target knowledge to the students regardless of their students' feelings in those classes, whether they were happy, interested, and enjoyed learning or felt bored, frustrated, and disengaged from the lessons. However, some teachers went beyond a concern for the knowledge and skills in focus, and considered other factors which influenced the teaching process, such as the learning atmosphere, the students' learning

attitudes, the students' engagement, etc. These teachers often made new changes in their lessons. For example, they created exciting and interesting learning environments to encourage students to be engaged. They cared a lot about the students' emotions which emerged in the learning process.

These discussions interested me deeply and began to trigger questions in my mind such as "How do positive emotions affect students' perspectives, actions and well-being?", "How do positive emotions stimulate learners' interest in English?", "Do students feel negative most of the time during their English learning?", "How do negative emotions impact students' learning process?" and "Who has the most significant effect on students' emotions in their English language learning?". These prompted me to undertake research on this topic.

1.2 The current situation of English teaching in Vietnam

To give a picture of English teaching in the Vietnamese settings included in this study, this section consists of two brief parts: the first part discusses the status of English teaching in the general education system throughout its history and development, while the second part discusses the status of English teaching in tertiary contexts.

1.2.1 The status of English teaching in the Vietnamese system of general education

In Vietnam, general education consists of three levels with 12 Years: primary level from Years 1 to 5, with children starting primary school at the age of six; intermediate level from Years 6 to 9 and high school level from Years 10 to 12 (Hoang, 2010).

In 1986 the Vietnamese Government introduced an adapted economic policy called *Doi Moi* ('Economic Renovation') and English replaced Russian as a foreign language to be taught at school. Since *Doi Moi* came into existence, English has become the first choice of foreign language to learn for most Vietnamese people. *Doi Moi* has resulted in huge economic achievements in terms of national income and foreign investment sectors in Vietnam. With the development of international collaboration, there has been an increase in the needs to learn English. These have had "a profound impact on the development of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam" (N. T. Nguyen, 2016, p. 33).

From 1986 to 2002, English was a compulsory subject at high school and an optional subject at intermediate level. There were only two sets of English textbooks in Vietnamese schools. The first set was for high school students who started their learning of English from Year 10, continuing to Year 12. The second set was for Intermediate school students who started learning English from Year 6 until they finished Year 12 (Hoang, 2010). In 2008, a new set of textbooks was issued for intermediate and high schools. During this time, English was an optional subject in Year 6, and sometimes even earlier in large cities in Vietnam (Vu & Pham, 2014). For primary students, English was optional, so English was generally not taught in the rural and mountainous areas at this level.

The National Foreign Language 2020 Project (NFLP 2020) was launched during 2010-2011 and was planned to end in 2020. The aim of this project was to improve the foreign language teaching system throughout Vietnam. Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan also stipulated that English be "enforced as compulsory for grade school starting at grade 3" in a Government document on the subject issued in 2008 (Nguyen, 2008, p. 3).

By 2000, 98% of students studying foreign languages in school chose English to study, and therefore English became the first foreign language learned by Vietnamese school students (Nguyen, 2003, p. 458). Therefore, from 2008, English has been taught to primary students from Year 3 for two periods a week for 35 weeks of the school year. Despite the fact that English is taught from Year 3, parents and students do not feel the English hours at school are sufficient, so Vietnamese students usually take after-school classes at English language centres or attend private classes. Thus, English has become a key foreign language in Vietnam, and it is taught at both government and private educational institutes at primary, intermediate, and high school levels.

1.2.2 English teaching in Vietnamese tertiary settings

At the tertiary level, English is one of the foreign languages available for study, along with Chinese, Russian, French and German. For non-English major undergraduate students, English is taught throughout the country, with students required to study 14 out of 140 credits of English accounting for 10% of the total credit hours of an undergraduate programme (Hoang, 2010). The goal of teaching English at tertiary level is to equip students with the English competence and skills to “study and work in a multilingual and multicultural environment of integration” (Nguyen, 2008, p. 1). In most universities, English courses for undergraduate programmes are communicative, which differs “significantly from the English classes at their primary, secondary, and high schools because classroom activities [at university] were primarily designed to develop their communicative skills” (Dao & Sato, 2021, p. 979). Currently, an equivalent international certificate such as IELTS can be credited towards undergraduate programs, and students holding a sufficient score will be exempt from having to take English undergraduate courses (Trinh & Mai, 2018).

Since the 2000s, with an increasing number of English learners in Vietnam, a number of English-medium schools, colleges, and universities in Vietnam have gone even further, moving to provide courses taught through the medium of English. The increase in the number of English learners in Vietnam is in line with the situation in other South-East Asian and East Asian countries. Today South-East Asian and East Asian countries are leading Asia's economy, culture, and education (Cheng, 2012). The demand within the country for modernization and industrialization to meet the requirements of regional integration and globalization has been a key factor behind the increasing uptake in the numbers studying English. In 2005 the Government of Vietnam initiated a new project named 'the Strategic Planning project' (Hoang et al., 2018), which directed top universities in Vietnam to align their curricula with the those used by the top 500 world-class universities (Duong & Chua, 2016). This encouraged universities to offer English-medium courses.

In summary, English has been taught in Vietnam for nearly 30 years in the public education system and has had an important influence on the use of English in society and on the effects of changes in economic policies. English still plays a central role in educational systems and employment in Vietnam (Nunan, 2003). Individually, millions of Vietnamese people have studied English in their pursuit of a well-paid job, expanding overseas study options and increasing opportunities for job promotions.

1.2.3 The philosophy of teaching English in Vietnam

Due to the influence of English as a global language and the uptake of the Communicative Language Teaching approach, teaching English in Vietnam has shifted towards placing learners at the centre of learning and to viewing the teacher as a facilitator who brings creative contexts for language teaching (Hoang, 2010). However, it has been suggested

that even though Vietnamese teachers of English have explored the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching approach, their practices often still reflect some traditional aspects of language teaching (Lewis & McCook, 2002). The most widespread teaching technique used by Vietnamese teachers is lecturing and students are dependent on lecturers (Le, 2011). Teachers tend to focus on teaching linguistic elements, so they “rarely provide students with opportunities to practice their English skills through student-centred activities” (Trinh & Mai, 2018, p. 44). Classroom interaction is often described as one-way, “either between a teacher and individual student or between a teacher and the whole class” (Le, 2001, p. 36). Even when teaching English is for communicative purposes, it has been found that techniques such as memorizing, and students reciting individually or in chorus are still commonly used by teachers (Lewis & McCook, 2002). This literature suggests that the philosophy of the English teaching in Vietnam seems to have maintained since the beginning of this century.

Teaching English in Vietnam is influenced by the cultural aspects that affect the applications of principles of the Communicative Language Teaching approach. There is a high power-distance between students and teachers in Vietnam with teachers held in high regard and teacher-led approaches still dominant in classrooms (Le, 2001). In addition, Vietnamese children are taught not to argue with their seniors or express their own feelings in personal ways. Students rarely have the opportunity to debate or have a discussion with the teachers because it is considered to be rude to challenge teachers with questions in the classroom. Students are encouraged to obey the teachers’ instructions (Vo, 2014). Therefore, due to the gap between teacher and students, students do not always feel comfortable asking questions even when the opportunity arises.

Overall, such studies shed interesting light on the nature of teaching English in Vietnam and how it has evolved over recent years. However, none of these studies focused specifically on the role of emotion in English teaching and learning leaving this aspect of the language process under investigated in the Vietnamese context.

1.3 The research problem

While emotion in language learning has not received much attention in Vietnam, it has attracted significant attention from researchers in other contexts. Early research was predominantly focused on anxiety and the influence of anxiety on students' language learning (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Horwitz et al., 1986; Iizuka, 2009; MacIntyre & Gardner, 2006; Oxford, 1999).

However, when only anxiety is examined as the most dominant emotion in second language learning, it reflects an incomplete picture of what goes on in language learning. More recent developments in the study of affective factors have given a more balanced view, which requires a wider perspective including not only negative but also positive emotions such as enjoyment of learning, hope, pride, satisfaction, and relief (Bown & White, 2010). Imai (2010), for example, explores the emotional constructions of a group of English learners in collaborative learning and sees how their emotions triggered by interactions affected their group work. His study points out that negative emotions did not impede the participants from reaching their targets.

Other studies have attempted to investigate a wider range of emotions. For example, there have been several studies on both anxiety and enjoyment in the language classroom, e.g., Garrett and Young (2009), Imai (2010), MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). A study carried out by Dewaele and MacIntyre

(2016) focused on both foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety among a large number of learner participants from around the world. The results of this study revealed that foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety are separate, non-mutually exclusive affective dimensions, and that “the absence of FLCA [foreign language classroom anxiety] does not automatically mean that FLE [foreign language enjoyment] is present” (p. 233). These findings are similar to those of Dewaele et al. (2017). With recent developments in positive psychology, Mercer and MacIntyre (2014) emphasize that positive emotions should not be ignored when forming a picture of the role of emotion in second language learning.

With specific regard to the Vietnamese context, there is a paucity of studies on emotions, and the few that exist have focused mostly on negative emotions. Tran et al. (2013) studied the most dominant of negative emotions, foreign language anxiety, during the English language learning process. The study took place in a university in Vietnam with 419 non-English major students and eight teachers of English as participants. The findings of this research revealed that the student participants had a high level of anxiety about English language learning, but most of the teachers “did not consider FLA [foreign language anxiety] as a serious problem; they therefore had not seriously taken it into account in their teaching” (Tran et al., 2013, p. 237). In a recent study, Pham (2017) identifies the role of emotion in English language learning and teaching in the Vietnamese context and examines how negative emotions affected students’ oral communication in class performance. That study indicates that negative emotions such as anxiety, nervousity and shyness often appeared and impeded students’ oral class performance.

Other research on emotions in the Vietnamese context has looked at the affective factors in English language learning in Vietnamese high schools, such as Pham (2016).

In this research the author focused on learners' motivation, which was viewed as a component of agency showing that emotion and motivation have a close positive relationship. A related study (White & Pham, 2017) explored English learners' experience of motivation and emotion based on a chronotopic approach, which means 'time space' referring to the connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships (White & Pham, 2017). The findings of their study show that the narrated events and processes in English language learning are shaped from small moments within the narrative accounts. The interactions between students and the people around them contribute to their motivation to study English, and emotions are intertwined in those processes of English language learning.

Overall, there has been limited research on the field of emotion in second language learning in Vietnamese contexts and, in particular, there remains a gap in relation to the role of positive emotions. Considerations in positive emotions help us better understand the second language learning process from an emotional standpoint. Even though the existence of negative emotions in English language learning is now evident, it is only part of the story.

1.4 Purpose of the study and research questions

The focus of the study is to explore the emotions experienced in English language learning in Vietnam evident in students' narrative accounts of small events and in retrospective reports of their learning trajectories, with a particular focus on positive emotions and the significance of hope. The study addresses the three following questions:

- 1. What is the range of reported emotions in university students' narrative accounts of English language learning in Vietnam?*

2. *What role do the reported positive emotions play in the language learning trajectory of the students?*
3. *How does hope contribute to the shaping of the students' vision of their language learning journey?*

Finally, hope, as an emotion emerged as playing a significant role in the transition between negative and positive emotions. The research questions were designed to shape the direction of the research, guide the data collection and inform the choice of theoretical and analytical frameworks. These research questions will be answered in detail in the discussion chapter.

1.5 Significance of the study

The underlying impetus for this study is the need to contribute to an understanding of the role of emotions in English language learning among tertiary students in the Vietnamese context. While I initially intended to gather information about the role of positive emotions only, inevitably students talked about negative emotions as well, and the two were found to be linked throughout their responses. Overall, this thesis provides new micro-level insights into the role of positive emotions and hope in the second language learning process, the functions of mediating factors in triggering and shifting emotions, and the relationship between different types of emotions that the study identifies as relevant to the learning process.

The study draws from narratives of moments and events happening in real life contexts and adopts a sociocultural approach to investigate the role of emotions in language learning. Within a sociocultural approach, it particularly focuses on social and cultural factors that play a role in constructing emotions in Vietnamese contexts.

The author of this research hopes that the results of this study will provide researchers and English teachers in Vietnam with fresh insights into the range of emotions associated with English language learning, the significance of positive emotions and the positive effects of hope on changing English learners' motivation, behaviours, and learning attitudes. For English teachers, in particular, the findings of this study will be useful in raising awareness of the need to promote students' positive emotions as an integral part of English teaching philosophies and practices.

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters, and it is constructed as follows:

Chapter 1 has provided the background to the study, including a personal perspective and information about English education in Vietnam, particularly in Vietnamese tertiary contexts. It has also presented the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on approaches to emotions in language learning. It examines sociocultural perspectives for investigating positive emotions in English language learning. The chapter provides a historical overview of research into emotion in second language learning and perspectives on categories for classifying emotions. It also includes theoretical concepts of face and presents discussions of the interconnections of emotions and other aspects of English language learning. The chapter concludes with discussion of the contribution of positive emotions to the development of English learning experiences.

Chapter 3 describes the research paradigm, research approach and research methods, ethical considerations, and procedures of data collection including pilot research

and on-site research, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of member checking steps to enhance the reliability of the study.

Chapter 4 reports findings from the interviews regarding the students' emotions that emerged from their English language learning. This chapter presents the range of emotions found to be relevant to the students' learning trajectories and a definition of each emotion is outlined. In addition, different types of emotions are represented in categories according to the categories discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 presents findings from the written narratives and highlights the significance of mediating factors that were found to influence the shaping and shifting of students' emotions.

Chapter 6 considers the main findings in light of the relevant literature presented in Chapter 2. Key insights into the role of hope, the reciprocal relationships between emotion and self-efficacy, and emotions and motivation are discussed in this chapter, in an effort toward demonstrating how the findings contribute to answering the research questions. The chapter also highlights the social and cultural elements that shape students' construction of emotions. It concludes with discussions of the influences of the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self in the Vietnamese culture on constructing students' emotions.

Finally, Chapter 7 reviews the key findings, responding to the research questions posed, and discusses the study's implications and limitations. The chapter also suggests recommendations for further research. Finally, it closes with concluding remarks.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to review research literature that relates to emotions in English language learning. In doing so, the conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives that inform this study are presented and gaps in the literature that are addressed by the current research are also highlighted. To start with, this chapter details the cognitive approach to emotions, which views emotions as originating in an individual's brain and manifesting outwards. Then the sociocultural approach which is used as theoretical framework for this study is discussed. This chapter also presents the unfolding of emotion research in second language learning from the early predominance of studies on language anxiety in the classroom to an expansion to other emotions in language learning. This is then followed with an overview of the theoretical perspectives on the contributions of positive emotions. The next section outlines the established concepts and constructs of emotions associated with language learning and other factors that impact these. Following this, further aspects that have a relationship with emotions in English language learning are explored. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the significance of research on emotion in the Vietnamese context.

2.2 Cognitive approaches to emotion

Cognitive approaches to emotions in the English language teaching literature focus on the relationships between emotions and cognition and explore the role of *affect* in language learning. Under Cognitive approaches *affect* is conceptualised as encompassing such

diverse constructs as attitudes, motivation, self-esteem, beliefs, and emotion (Arnold & Brown, 1999).

Swain (2013), a prominent cognitive scholar, asserts the importance of understanding emotions in language learning because “emotions are an integral part of cognition” (p. 195); “emotions cannot be ignored in understanding language learning processes” (p. 196); and “it is the integration of cognition and emotion that will help us understand their [learners’] language learning trajectories” (p. 203).

Early on in the cognitive literature, Scovel (1978) explored the term *affect*, which is described as a “cover term under which is swept a wide range of disparate constructs and behaviors” (p. 129). Arnold and Brown (1999) assert that the term *affect* is associated with aspects of individuals’ emotional being; they see *affect* as encompassing “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior” (p. 1), and that these affect-related factors impact language learning. The *affect* and *emotion* terms are theorised as “individual learners’ internal states that are either negatively or positively correlated with language learning” (Benesch, 2012, p. 21). Some scholars assert that emotions originate in the mind (Arnold, 1999), while others consider emotions to be located in the brain (Schumann, 1999). The concept of mind is different from brain in that mind can be understood as an abstract concept and it has a rapport with cognition processes, while brain physically exists, and it is related to one’s nervous system.

One of the studies that has identified emotions as originating in the mind is that of Arnold (1999). Jane Arnold (1999) uses the well-known fable of five blind men describing an elephant to refer to emotion research in English language learning. One man feels the leg, another touches the trunk, and the others an ear, the torso, and the tail. Each man then interprets the whole elephant as *a column, a rope, a carpet, a fan, and a*

spear. None was wrong in his perception, but none is able to convey exactly what the whole elephant looks like. The author tells the readers the metaphor to remind them that affect in language learning can be approached from different perspectives, but that these might fail to describe emotions in their entirety. Everyone is aware of emotions in English language learning, but emotions are poorly studied. Swain, drawing on another metaphor, calls emotion research “the elephant in the room” (Swain, 2013, p. 195)– “poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought” (Prior, 2019, p. 516).

Another study which views emotion and affect as originating from the mind and highlights the close rapport between emotion and cognition processes was undertaken by Arnold and Brown (1999). Arnold and Brown (1999) assert that cognition and affect cannot be separated from each other. The authors see “emotion and cognition as partners in the mind, affect is originated from the mind” (p. 1). From this perspective, “the affective side of learning is not in opposition to the cognitive side. When both are used together, the learning process can be constructed on a firmer foundation” (p. 1).

Arnold and Brown look at two ways in which affect is related to second language acquisition. The first is concerned with the language learner as an individual. Individual factors include anxiety, inhibition, extroversion-introversion, self-esteem, motivation, and learner styles. These factors, according to the authors, play an important role in second language learning. They positively or negatively impact second language learning processes. Alongside the individual factors, the authors mention “relational factors” (p. 18), which include empathy, classroom transactions, and cross-cultural processes. These relational factors are claimed to contribute to a “social focus” (p. 18) though the authors’ concern is on individual factors and individuals’ interactions with others. This second concern is called an “expanded mandate” (p. 3). According to Arnold and Brown (1999),

learning and using a new language are seen as a transactional process that is “the act of reaching out beyond the self to others... it is intimately connected with the learner’s emotional being” (p. 18). They claim that when learning a second language, learners might have to cope with difficulties such as language shock, culture shock, and cultural stress in adapting to the new culture and language, and emotional responses to those difficulties may trigger negative emotions. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to help learners understand the source of negative emotional triggers. However, Benesch (2012) notes that the social in Arnold and Brown’s cognitive approach is “restricted to one-to-one interactions between individual learners and their interlocutors” (Benesch, 2012, p. 22).

Schumann (1999) presents a neurobiological model in which the brain is considered as a site of language acquisition. According to Schumann’s model, “the brain evaluates the stimuli it receives via the senses from the language learning situation, either in the target language environment or in the classroom and this appraisal leads to an emotional response” (p. 28). The neurobiological perspective is concerned with the nervous system and “how it interacts with the environment” (Schumann, 1999, p. 28). It focuses on some areas of interest such as affect, memory and learning. Schumann differentiates negative and positive appraisals leading to negative and positive emotions from five perspectives: novelty and familiarity, pleasantness, goal significance, coping potential, and self and social image. Schumann states that “appraisals can be positive or negative on any of the five dimensions” (p. 37) because of the uniqueness of each brain.

In discussing the implications of this neuropsychological perspective regarding appraisals and emotional responses to language learning, Schumann suggests that teachers should not do things that diminish their students’ motivation, self and social

image; they should avoid things which would be appraised as unpleasant; and avoid “things that interfere with the students’ goals in language learning...[and] things that are beyond or below the students’ coping ability” (Schumann, 1999, p. 38).

Another influential study about anxiety in language learning is Oxford (1999). In this study, while she does not clearly define emotions, she sees emotions as internal states of individuals’ brain (Benesch, 2012). Anxiety is defined as “fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language” and “anxiety is linked directly to performing in the target language” (Oxford, 1999, p. 59). Oxford does not mention or use the term *affect* or feelings in her research, she only explores anxiety in language learning as the factor that has the highest possibility to impact on language learning. She notes that anxiety sometimes emerges in response to a particular situation or event.

According to Oxford (1999), anxiety can be classified into two types: harmful anxiety and helpful anxiety. Harmful anxiety “shows a negative relationship between anxiety and performance”, “it harms learners’ performance in many ways” (Oxford, 1999, p. 60). Harmful anxiety is associated with reducing motivation, having negative effects on attitudes and beliefs, and experiencing difficulties in language performance. Helpful anxiety functions as a facilitator, for example, by “keeping students alert” (p. 61). This shows a connection between anxiety and appropriate responses to it which would be likely to lead to positive emotions. Oxford starts her study by introducing two real-life stories, one of which is about how anxiety functions as alertness. In the story of Maurice, when he felt anxious about an upcoming language test, he recognised his anxiety and he “did something positive about it” – he hired two tutors to assist him (Oxford, 1999, p. 58). Subsequently, he passed that important exam. In this case, he recognised his anxiety and

reacted accordingly. As a result, in this case his possible negative outcome, failing the exam, did not happen.

More recently, studies which have emphasised the role of cognition in conjunction with emotion are Bown and White (2010) and Swain (2013). Bown and White's (2010) study provides insights into the relationship between emotion, motivation, and cognition in particular learning contexts. The findings of their study show that negative emotions "consumed their [students'] cognitive resources: powerful negative emotions were experienced as all-consuming, cancelling out any ability to focus on the language, to remember target language forms or to process the language in productive way" (p. 441). Their findings also indicate that students' experience of negative emotions led to a loss of zest, and to delaying, or even quitting language study. Swain (2013) asserts that language learning is a cognitive and emotional struggle and emotion cannot be separated from the cognitive processes in language learning. In this study, Swain highlights the role of emotion in language learning, which she argues has been side-lined. Continuing to pay little attention to emotion potentially prevents a more complete understanding of the second language learning process.

In summary, early research using cognitive approaches to emotions in English language teaching sees affect as a factor that influences language learning. In the cognitive approach, emotion is viewed as "inside-out" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 8) because it is understood as starting in the brain, being inherently linked to cognition.

Cognitive researchers assert that emotion can be triggered and starts in one's brain, but overall this approach does not consider other social and cultural factors in a person's surroundings that have an influence on emotion. In my study, I am interested in exploring the impact of the social and cultural aspects on shaping, constructing, and

developing emotion. I am also interested in exploring the construction of emotion shaped by social interactions and external sources and looking into the diversity, complexity, and dynamics of emotion.

2.3 Sociocultural approaches to emotions in English language learning and teaching

Sociocultural theories have been used as a lens to investigate language learning as “a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities” (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). In contrast to the cognitive approaches to emotion, sociocultural approaches view emotion as “outside-in” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 8), which means “emotions are assumed to come from without and move inward” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 9). However, learning is not a straightforward transfer of skills and knowledge from the outside in. It is seen as the process by which the individual’s internal control is transformed through the mediating influence of external, socially mediated activities.

The sociocultural approach is grounded in Vygotsky’s developmental theories. Rieber and Carton took Vygotsky’s idea and asserts that emotions “cannot be understood outside the dynamics of human life. It is within this context that the emotional processes acquire their meaning and sense” (Rieber & Carton, 1987, p. 333). Dipardo and Potter (2003) further explain this point by noting that, “The external-to-internal trajectory of thought was also true of Vygotsky’s view of the trajectory of emotion; that is, emotions appear first on the social plane and only then on the psychological plane” (p. 326).

Similarly, Swain (2013) looks at the integration of cognition and emotion and the internalization of emotion from social sources. She asserts that “emotions are derived

from social and interpersonal events”, “the source of emotional meaning is social and cultural in the same way cognition is” (Swain, 2013, p. 204). According to Parrott (2001), emotions are captured by the system of belief and values of the culture. He asserts “human cultures influence the emotions by influencing the beliefs, values, and social environment that members of the culture possess” (Parrott, 2001, p. 380). Emotions seem to be influenced by an entire system of belief and values, so they might not exist apart from the culture of which they are a part. Emotions can be understood as “the products of culture” (Parrott, 2001, p. 380). In Swain’s (2013) study, she highlights the internalization of emotion in mediating one’s behaviour in locally situated contexts.

Within sociocultural theories, emotions are viewed as one component of a complex system of factors relevant to language learning encompassing “a wide range of phenomena that have little in common” (Parrott, 2001, p. 376). Emotions are “dynamic and constantly shifting, physiological and experiential, individual and social” (Prior, 2019, p. 519). Agreeing with this view, Benesch (2012) states emotions “are not only private, individual, psychological states, but social and embodied” (p. 133).

From a sociocultural perspective, emotions are shaped by social interactions and social interrelationships. Imai (2010) views emotions as “socially constructed through people’s intersubjective encounters” (p. 283). In line with the idea that emotions are socially constructed, Swain et al. (2011) assert the connection between the embodied self and social situations: “Emotions are socially constructed acts of communication that can mediate one’s thinking, behaviour, and goals” (p. 81). Highlighting the significance of life events which are sources of emotions, Reeve (2018) gives a definition of emotions as “short-lived, feeling–purposive–expressive–bodily responses that help us adapt to the opportunities and challenges we face during important life events” (p. 288). Reeve also

explains that emotions are short-lived psychological and physiological phenomena that react to life events. Swain et al. (2011) further assert the connection between bodily involvement and the social situations where emotional reactions emerge: “Emotions are attributes of the lived body in its social situatedness” (Swain et al., 2011, p. 81).

Studies rooted in sociocultural theories tend to favour narrative inquiry as a tool to study emotions that are triggered during the second language learning process. ‘Storying’ and ‘restorying’ the experience of teaching and learning have become fundamental methods of research (Swain et al., 2011). ‘Storying’ and ‘restorying’ are narratives of a person’s life. ‘Storying’ can be understood as telling a person’s experiences and ‘restorying’ can be seen as a process in which one’s past events are retrospectively interpreted and reinterpreted (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Swain (2013) highlights the importance of narrative inquiry in exploring emotions: “It is in narratives – anecdotes and stories of learners’ experiences – that the centrality of emotion and its connections to cognition becomes evident” (p. 196). Narrative inquiry is also helpful in examining teachers’ emotions in their English language teaching (Golombek & Johnson, 2004).

The sociocultural approach to emotions can be considered as the theoretical framework for my study because it views emotions as socially and culturally constructed. Emotions are feeling responses to social life events. The sociocultural approach looks at the connections of emotion in learning contexts and between people. Emotions are products of society and culture as well as individual’s lived experience. In this study, I see values, beliefs, and culture as potentially impacting on the shaping of students’ emotions. Thus, I want to study and examine emotions in the context where they are triggered.

The sociocultural approach to emotions investigates the complexity and dynamics of emotions in social events and other factors that either negatively or positively impact on emotions. This approach also looks at the relationships between emotions and other aspects of English language learning such as motivation and self-efficacy. This supports my study because my research is interested in how emotions might be linked to other aspects of language learning and how those aspects influence emotions. Additionally, my study focuses on the interplay of positive and negative emotions triggered during English language learning, and how emotions are shaped or mediated through learners' interactions with others.

The sociocultural approach indicates that emotions are initiated from social situations. Sociocultural researchers assert that emotions are a psychological and physiological phenomenon in reaction to events pointing out the connection between bodily involvement and social situatedness. This point supports the current enquiry because my study aims to explore emotions reflected in students' written narratives that emerged from their real-life events. The point that there is a connection between bodily involvement and social situatedness is important for my study because emotions may originate from external sources, reflected by the embodied self, or they might be from internally motivated sources.

The sociocultural approach looks at the complexity and fluctuations of emotions. This approach is relevant to my study because it also looks at the shifts and the changes in emotions and the factors that mediate this change. This leads to my first research question, which aims to explore the range of emotions that students reported experiencing in their English language learning. Thus, the sociocultural approach to emotions is an

appropriate theoretical framework to guide this research because the view of emotion as socially and culturally mediated aligns with the aims and focus of my study.

2.4 Trends in positive emotion research in English language learning

Research on emotion in English language learning has developed from a focus on negative emotions, most commonly anxiety, to a focus on both negative and positive emotions with enjoyment seen as representative of positive emotion (Shao et al., 2019).

An early study on negative emotions was Scovel's (1978) work, which concluded that in the literature, language anxiety was "neither a simple nor well-understood psychological construct and that it is perhaps premature to attempt to relate it to the global and comprehensive task of language acquisition" (p. 132).

The most impactful study in this field, together with the studies above, was carried out by Horwitz et al. (1986). In that study, the authors focused on identifying different modes of anxiety in the foreign language classroom such as test anxiety, fear of making mistakes, fear of failure, and losing confidence. Another study that follows Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theory for anxiety and uses their scales to determine the dimensionality that underlines classroom anxiety was that of MacIntyre and Gardner (2006). A later study reviews the timeline of research on foreign language anxiety research undertaken by Horwitz (2010), and views anxiety as multi-faceted and being shaped from a wide variety of anxiety types. Gregersen et al. (2014) investigated participants' anxiety levels and the moment-by-moment changes in anxiety using the idiodynamic method, by which "participants self-rated their moment-by-moment anxiety 42 times over three and a half minutes and later explained their reactions in an interview" (p.574), interviews, and a

self-report survey. Anxiety was then studied under a contextualised and dynamic approach to anxiety in MacIntyre (2017). This new perspective emphasises “the complex interactions of multiple factors that influence the anxiety reaction” (p.26). MacIntyre asserts that anxiety is a “complex experience and has a number of sources and effects” (p. 27), and it is influenced by both internal and social sources.

Imai (2010) brings new insights into research on emotion by highlighting the social aspects of emotions in the context of language learning. He views emotions as dichotomous (either positive or negative) and posits that the role of both negative and positive emotions should be examined in second language acquisition: they either facilitate or impede language learning. This aligns with Oxford’s (1999) (discussed in Section 2.2) stance on two aspects of anxiety: anxiety is characterized as either harmful or helpful.

With more recent developments in the study of emotions in second language learning, there has been a move towards studying positive emotions. These studies have looked at emotions in two dimensions: positive emotions and negative emotions. The two main concepts, which represent positive and negative emotions in second language learning classrooms, are foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety. For example, Dewaele and MacIntyre’s (2014) work is an early study into foreign language enjoyment and classroom anxiety, and the study concludes that foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety “are different dimensions and not two sides of the same coin” (p. 264). That means negative and positive emotions can coexist because they have different functions. The data from their study illustrate that contextual factors influence emotion, i.e., there are a wide range of factors that contributed to participants’ enjoyment, such as the skill of teachers and having supportive peer groups.

Another study which focused on both anxiety and enjoyment is that of Dewaele et al. (2016). The study examines gender differences in items reflecting two emotional dimensions, foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety, with a large number of participants. The findings of their study indicate female participants experienced more fun than male participants, were more interested in their language learning and felt prouder of their performance during class. However, female participants also felt more anxious and experienced increased anxiety despite being prepared. Other negative emotions that female participants experienced were panic and embarrassment. Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety are also explored in other studies by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), and Dewaele et al. (2017). Reinforcing earlier findings, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) revealed that foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety have separate dimensions; they function somewhat independently and do not look like a seesaw relationship where “one goes up and the other goes down” (p. 230). Dewaele et al.’s (2017) study follows on from Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016). It examined the relationship between foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety, and variables internal to learners such as their learning attitudes, age, gender, and foreign language proficiency levels. The study shows that foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety were independent emotion dimensions and learner-internal variables were more linked with foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom than teacher-focused variables such as attitudes towards teachers, and teachers’ foreign language use.

Thus, the focus of these studies on positive emotion, particularly focused on enjoyment as a representative of positive emotion, is considered an “emotional turn” (White, 2018, p. 19) in second language learning research. It revealed that foreign language anxiety was not the only emotion worthy of investigation. The development in

emotion research encouraged the exploration of a much broader range of emotions that emerged in language learning such as happiness, excitement, envy, admiration, hope, surprise, pride, gratitude, jealousy, love, hate, guilt, disgust, shame, and boredom, which have not been much focused on in literature (Imai, 2010). These other types of emotions emerging during English language learning need to be investigated and to receive more research attention than the more heavily researched emotions of enjoyment and anxiety.

Sociocultural perspectives on emotions (discussed in Section 2.3) illustrate that emotions are socially and culturally constructed, and from the sociocultural perspective, those emotions are viewed as diverse and complex. As the studies mentioned above demonstrate, in recent years, there has been an increased interest in studying positive emotions in the second language classroom with enjoyment seen as a representing positive emotion. However, further research is still needed on the wider range of emotions emerging from English language learning, which to date has primarily been concerned with studying emotions through the broad categories of enjoyment and anxiety.

2.5 The role of positive emotions in the Broaden-and-Build Theory

The Broaden-and-Build theory examines the contributions of positive emotions to the development of students' attention, and cognition, and its positive effects on triggering actions. The functions of positive emotions illustrated in this theory have informed the second research question of this study, i.e., the focus on the role of positive emotions in students' language learning journey or trajectory.

The Broaden-and-Build theory is a perspective on positive emotions originating from the field of positive psychology developed by Barbara L. Fredrickson in 1998. It

was then developed through her experiments over the years as reported in Fredrickson (2001, 2003) and Fredrickson and Branigan (2005). Fredrickson posits that positive emotions function to expand learners' interest and thinking so that they extend the capacity of learners to absorb information, because when a person feels good, their mind-sets are open to information; whereas negative emotions narrow the capacity to absorb new information.

Fredrickson (1998) started to build the theory by describing the circumstances under which four positive emotions, joy, interest, contentment, and love, arose. In this study, Fredrickson also states that these positive emotions serve to "broaden the momentary thought-action repertoire rather than narrowing it" (Fredrickson, 1998, p. 304), such as opening the scope of attention, cognition, and action. Apparent changes in individuals' experiences have effects on building their physical, intellectual, and specific strengths. Moreover, Fredrickson (1998) has highlighted the two functions of the Broaden-and-Build theory were recovering from the after-effects of negative emotions and the "health protection" (Fredrickson, 1998) of the positive emotions. The building aspect of positive emotions in the Broaden-and-Build theory was first examined in Fredrickson's (2001) study. She posits:

"certain discrete positive emotions including joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love although phenomenologically distinct, all share the ability to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources." (p. 219)

It can be understood from this theory that "when people feel good their thinking becomes more creative, integrative, flexible and open to information" (Fredrickson, 2003,

p. 333) and then their momentary mindset is extended leading to building permanent personal resources which include “intellectual, physical, social and psychological resources” (Fredrickson, 2003, p. 333).

Fredrickson (2004) also clearly states that interest broadens by “creating the urge to explore, take in new information and experiences, and expand the self in the process” (pp. 147-148). In addition, pride and gratitude are added to the model as other positive emotions. Pride has the function of broadening by “creating the urge to share news of achievement with others and to envision even greater achievements in the future” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 148) because people who feel proud of themselves tend to share their achievements with others. In addition, sharing the news of their achievements may make those people feel happy. Gratitude appears to “broaden people’s modes of thinking as they creatively consider a wide array of actions that might benefit others” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 151) and it “appears to build friendships and other social bonds” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 152). Gratitude requires good actions to repay people who have done a favour for individuals (recipients). Thus, while thinking widely about how to repay the kindness to the benefactor, the recipient may build up general skills for loving.

Research has also studied the benefits of this expanding group of positive emotions for learners. For example, the findings of Conway et al.’s (2013) study demonstrate the powerful effects of positive emotions on adults’ well-being and resilience. They indicate that young adults “who experienced more positive emotions throughout the month [of the study] showed increases in resilience and life satisfaction” (p. 8).

The Broaden-and-Build theory further posits that “positive emotion facilitates exploration and play, which is associated with an expanded perceptual field and creativity

in problem-solving” (Khajavy et al., 2017, p. 3). The authors conclude that play builds not only an individual’s physical resources but also their social ones. Social play, with its shared positive emotions like enjoyment, interest, and pleasure, builds enduring social connections and affections. Social play can also expand individuals’ intellectual capability by increasing levels of creativity and enhancing brain development (Fredrickson, 2004).

Thus, from the perspective of the Broaden-and-Build theory, positive emotions expand people’s thinking and mindsets and stimulate people to explore and experience new things. Positive emotions are transforming factors for individual growth and social connections. Positive emotions can build long-lasting personal and social values. From the perspective of the functions of positive emotions in the Broaden-and-Build theory, further studies on the role and significance of positive emotions in English language learning have been carried out. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) assert that positive emotions function as enhancing learners’ ability to absorb the language and broaden learners’ powers of imagination. However, negative emotions narrow learners’ interest and focus and thereby limiting learners’ engagement in their language learning. Dewaele et al. (2016) reinforce the point that positive emotions serve to urge learners to learn from experience of play. Their study indicates that female learners who experienced fun in the foreign language class might “unlock their potential faster” (p. 55) and made more progress than their male counterparts.

The Broaden-and-Build theory provides theoretical aspects of the contributions of positive emotions that align with the interest of my study in the contributions of positive emotions in motivating students in English language learning. The next section will explain how these categories of emotions contribute to my study.

2.6 Self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions

The theoretical concepts of self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions help us to understand the causes of emotions and the connections of emotions to the outcomes experienced.

Self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions are two categories of emotions which focus on achievement. There are sometimes overlaps between these two categories. Research on self-conscious emotions originated from the field of psychology, while research on achievement emotions derives from and has been further developed by the field of education with a focus on academic outcomes. Self-conscious emotions relate to the outcomes of an individual's behaviour or actions, which are evaluated and judged by other people based on social standards or values. The focus of the so-called achievement emotions is on the achievement of activities and outcomes in the learning process that a learner is required to attain.

2.6.1 Self-conscious emotions

The term *self-conscious emotions* is used as distinct from basic emotions such as love, hate, and anger. Self-conscious emotions and their features were thoroughly discussed in Tracy et al.'s (2007) study. They noted that the features of self-conscious emotions that distinguish them from non-self-conscious emotions (or basic emotions) are self-awareness and self-representations. Self-awareness and self-representations reflect the cognition of one's personal self and the capacity of social self-representations which show one's identity in society.

Teimouri (2018) refers to self-conscious emotions as social emotions or other-oriented emotions. From a functional perspective, Teimouri (2018) notes that self-

conscious emotions evolved to “facilitate the attainment of complex social goals (identity goals), such as maintenance or enhancement of one’s social status, gaining social acceptance or avoiding group rejection” (p. 634). Discussing the role of social interactions in self-conscious emotions, Leary (2007) asserts “self-conscious emotions evolved not to respond to people’s private evaluations of themselves but rather to regulate their interactions and relationships with other people” (p. 46).

Michael Lewis (2008) views pride, shame, embarrassment, and guilt as core self-conscious emotions which centre on the self and are socially constructed. Shame, as a core member of these self-conscious emotions, has been investigated in some studies such as Turner et al. (2002), Bedford (2004), Li et al. (2004), and McGregor and Elliot (2005), etc. Li et al. (2004) assert that shame is triggered in social interactions and as a result of attempts at social validation when people evaluate themselves and each other. Michael Lewis (2008, 2019) mentions the success and failure towards the social standards, rules, and goals (SRGs) that individuals are required to acquire as contributors to the development of self-conscious emotions. For example, pride is triggered when an individual makes a comparison with others or evaluates their behaviour in relation to one or more SRGs and finds that they have been successful. On the other hand, shame or guilt occurs when such an evaluation indicates that one has failed.

Thus, success and failure as reflected in the resulting self-conscious emotions provide social validation, or judgment on one’s actions and behaviours about SRGs.

2.6.2 Achievement emotions

In education literature, the focus of research on emotion has tended to be on achievement emotions triggered when students succeed or fail, or when they are expected by others to

succeed or fail, on academic tasks. Achievement emotions are defined as “emotions tied directly to achievement activities or achievement outcomes” (Pekrun, 2006, p. 317). Examples of achievement emotions related to academic accomplishments are hope and pride, and emotions related to failure include anxiety and shame (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). According to Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2014), activities or outcomes are “judged according to competence-related standards of quality” (p. 4). Academic activities that are the source of triggering achievement emotions are studying, task performance, taking exams or teaching activities, etc. and academic outcomes are success or failure in these activities. Accordingly, achievement emotions can be divided into two groups: activity-related emotions, such as enjoyment or boredom, and outcome-related emotions. Outcome-related emotions are categorised into two smaller groups: success-linked emotions such as hope and pride and failure-linked emotions such as shame, anxiety, and hopelessness (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014).

Lewis (2008) and Weiner (2014) provide additional examples of success-linked and failure-linked emotions. For example, happiness, admiration, gratitude, and confidence are added to the category of success-linked emotions, and unhappiness, guilt, anger, and hopelessness to the category of failure-linked emotions.

Hope is considered as a failure-linked emotion in Weiner’s (2014) study, while it is classified as a success-linked outcome emotion in Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia’s (2014) study. Weiner (2014) explains that hope for future success is likely to occur when failure is claimed for an unrepeated cause that is anticipated not to continue into the future, such as lack of sufficient effort, bad luck, or unexpected weather.

The categories of emotions as self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions help us to understand the connections between emotions and the events triggering them,

together with the notions of self-assessment or social evaluation. Thus, this study will draw on these categories in the data analysis and presentation of findings.

The categories of achievement emotions support the data of this study because emotions are assumed to be associated with students' achievement of actions or outcomes or their failure in attaining their targets or goals. My study aims to investigate the connection between emotional reflections and the success or failure of outcomes, and how they are socially constructed. Emotions can be classified into different types of categories such as self-conscious emotions and achievement emotions. Two emotions which are negatively assessed by other people and associated with failure are embarrassment and shame. The emergence of these two emotions often leads to the feeling of losing face. The next section will present the theoretical concept of face and its features in the Vietnamese culture.

2.7 Emotions and the concept of face

The concept of face has been examined over a long period in the field of sociology. Goffman (1967) uses the metaphor of a *line* to indicate a person's own verbal and nonverbal pattern of acts that are acted out in social contacts. Thus, face is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes [sic]" (p. 7). Face is viewed as "the public self image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

The concepts of face have been investigated in the Chinese, Japanese and Korean cultures, as well as in Vietnamese culture. The notion of face in these cultures is towards social recognition, which means an ideal identity is socially oriented rather than

individually oriented (Pham, 2014), but its manifestation is different across these cultures (Nguyen, 2015a). For example, the Chinese concept of face is displayed by two words *mianzi* and *lian*. *Mianzi* stands for reputation or prestige and is considered as the social self with achievement in life, *lian* stands for individuals' moral basis (Gao, 2009; Mao, 1994; Qi, 2011). In Korean culture, the concept of face is displayed with the notion of *chemyon*, which indicates individuals' fulfilment needs, related to one's desire to gain moral maturity, in combination with social position or status (Choi & Lee, 2002; Kim & Yang, 2011). Thus, the Korean concept of face is composed of morality and ability. The Japanese concept of face is characterised by the notion of *kao*, which has the sense of honour or prestige rooted in social interactions, as a result of interactional achievement (Haugh & Watanabe, 2009). Interactional achievement in the Japanese culture results from politeness in social interactions (Pham, 2014).

The Vietnamese concept of face is examined through the collocations of *mặt* and *thể diện* (Pham, 2014). *Mặt* can be used literally to refer to the upper front part of the body, such as in saying *tôi tã mặt mũi* (meaning feeling dizzy), *ba mặt một lời* (meaning discussing a problem face-to-face), or *mặt đỏ tía tai* (meaning both one's face and ears are red when feeling shy, embarrassed or ashamed). According to Nguyen (2015b), *thể diện* is a contextual dependent value that is consistently changed in person-to-person interactions and represents "a person's perceptions of their own important moral and social values and living principles as expected by society, which is quite stable and pervasive across interactions" (p. 204). According to Nguyen (2017), the Vietnamese concept of face possesses two components: "(a) individual positive qualities and competence and (b) the person's social roles and their accompanying requirements for behaviour and attitudes" (p. 80). In other words, the Vietnamese concept of face consists of "social roles and role-driven characteristics, positive qualities and achievements"

(Pham, 2014, p. 225). One's social role and position in society are the two core components of face in the Vietnamese culture.

Face is important in Vietnam because Vietnam, like other Confucian-heritage cultures is labelled a 'face culture', where people view themselves through the eyes of others (Kim & Cohen, 2010). Kim and Cohen (2010) also noted that "*success or failure* must be seen through other people's eyes in order to count" (p. 537) and they further explained that: "In a Face culture, my worth is *social* worth, and my estimate of myself must align with the worth that others would recognise in me" (pp. 537-537). In Vietnamese culture, feeling a loss of face occurs as a result of a violation of one's moral values (Nguyen, 2015b). In English language teaching and learning, teachers' losing face is found in Pham (2017), in which participant teachers' negative emotions were closely linked to their feeling of loss of face, but there seems to be a lack of studies on students' loss of face.

The concept of face is important for my study because I am interested in looking at the emotional responses as a result of a student's behaviour or actions in social interactions and in examining the effects of culture on the development and fluctuation of emotions.

2.8 Emotion and other aspects of English language learning

This section aims to provide an overview of the theoretical concepts of the self in the L2 Motivational system and of self-efficacy. In doing so, this section focuses on the interconnections between emotions and other aspects of English language learning, and this demonstrates the complexity of studying emotions.

2.8.1 Emotion and The L2 Motivational Self System Theory

In the literature on second language acquisition and applied linguistics, the link between emotion and motivation has been examined by focusing on the integration of these two elements. Through the L2 Motivational Self System, Dörnyei (2005) gives definitions of the L2 selves and presents the motivational functions of the Ideal L2 self. Through these theoretical concepts, the relationship between emotion and motivation is highlighted.

The L2 Motivational Self System carries an emotional dimension of motivating factors, which play a role in shaping and shifting emotions. The concept of *L2 self*, how students envision themselves as L2 users, has been clearly defined in Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System. According to Dörnyei (2009), the L2 Motivational Self System consists of three components as follows:

Ideal L2 self, which is the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self': if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the '*ideal L2 self*' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.

Ought-to L2 self, which concerns the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess to meet expectations and to *avoid* possible negative outcomes.

L2 learning experience, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). (p. 29)

The *Ideal L2 self* and the *Ought-to L2 self* are built on the *possible selves*. According to Kay (2011), the L2 motivation model is partially drawn on two theoretical concepts: *integrativeness* and *possible selves*. Integrative motivation, which has been a

focal point in L2 motivational research, is when a language learner studies a language to identify themselves with the speakers or the culture of the language. Markus and Nurius (1986) define possible selves as “individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation” (p. 954). They indicate that “possible selves are the cognitive components of hope, fear, goals, and threat” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

The two types of self-images are related to learning and the use of a second language. The *Ideal L2 self* refers to the attributes that a learner wishes to possess. Regarding the motivational function of the Ideal L2 self in language learning, it is essential for learners to believe that the gap between the actual self and the ideal self is not too wide and learners can minimise this gap by making a great effort in learning (Kim & Kim, 2014). The *Ought-to L2 self* represents the attributes that one is supposed to possess, namely duties, obligations, and moral responsibilities (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). That means the Ought-to L2 self has less learning motivation attached to it because it is linked to other people’s desires rather than an individual’s own desires or wishes. The Ought-to L2 self has the feature of prevention from actions as it “controls negative outcomes associated with the duties and obligations individuals perceive they have towards others” (Taguchi et al., 2009, pp. 67-68). According to Lockwood et al. (2005), the Ought-to L2 self plays a vital role in Asian learning environments because family members in Asian cultures significantly impact learners.

Based on Dörnyei’s (2009) concept of the Ideal L2 self, Miyahara (2014) examines the relationship between emotions and future selves. That research investigates how learners construct their identity through visions of their future selves participating in

the community of English users and how emotions are engaged in this process. The study shows that both positive and negative emotions impact students' responses and ability to discuss their social environment: "The Ideal L2 self is generated by the past, present and future where emotions and the experiential are intertwined in the process" (Miyahara, 2014, p. 229).

The relationship between emotions and motivation has been investigated by Pavelescu (2019). Her study investigates the language learning motivation of two teenage English learners in Romania and shows that students' vision of their Ideal L2 self enhanced their positive emotions, particularly students' love of English. These strong positive emotions shaped and supported motivation in English language learning in the long term. The students with high motivation had a more internalized and vivid vision of their future L2 selves than those with less motivation (Pavelescu, 2019).

There is a close relationship between motivation and emotion. Students with clear visions of their future selves are motivated to study. Positive emotions are triggered and are engaged in the process of getting close to their Ideal L2 selves. In contrast, negative emotions have a negative influence, demotivating students in their language learning; this was explicitly illustrated in López and Cárdenas (2014). In this study, López and Cárdenas also look at emotions and the influence of mediating factors, such as the family members, the teachers' expectations on tasks, and the family's financial hardship, on the construction of the Ought-to L2 self. The findings of their study have shown that the cultural context can play an important role in students' language learning motivation.

The theoretical concepts of the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self support the understanding of the construction of emotions in English language learning and the relationship between these aspects of English language learning and emotions. This aligns

with the focus of my study which considers emotions as one component in a complex system.

2.8.2 Emotion and self-efficacy

Alongside motivation, self-efficacy is another aspect of English language learning that is interconnected with emotions. The theory of self-efficacy helps to look into deeply complex aspects of emotions in sociocultural approach. Self-efficacy has been defined as an individual's belief in their abilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, perceived self-efficacy plays a role in the process of changing learners' behaviours. In a similar vein, Bandura (2006a) asserts that individuals' efficacy beliefs are considered as "a key personal resource in self-development, successful adaptation, and change. It operates through its impact on cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes" (p. 4). He also points out that efficacy beliefs have an effect on individuals' goals and aspirations as a sequence of optimistic or pessimistic thinking. They influence people's motivation and "the quality of emotional life and vulnerability to stress and depression" (Bandura, 2006a, p. 4). Efficacy beliefs also construct people's expectations of outcomes, and the choice people make at important decision points or when they are facing difficulties.

In the last ten years, in foreign language learning contexts, there have been studies about the correlational relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and other variables such as learning strategies, performance, and language anxiety (Raofi et al., 2012). These studies indicate that self-efficacy impacts students' motivation and learning. As Raofi et al. (2012) state: "Self-efficacy, as a central element of human agency, mediates between learners' aptitude, past achievements and subsequent performances" (p. 62).

Bandura (1997) indicates that anxiety embodies fear and avoidant behaviour that often impedes students' performance on tasks in everyday life as well as in academic situations. According to Bandura (1986, 1997), when learners have a weakened sense of efficacy beliefs in a particular academic subject, they experience anxiety about the requirements of tasks. Anxiety functions as both a source and effect of self-efficacy beliefs. Findings of other studies support those of Bandura's (1986, 1997) revealing that "efficacy beliefs play a central role in regulating anxiety arousal and anxiety also serves as a primary source of self-efficacy beliefs" (Mills, 2006, p. 286). Anxiety serves as one of the three sources (learning strategies, performance and causal attributions), and effects of self-efficacy belief identified by Bandura (1986, 1997) because anxiety about academic demands results from a student's perceptions of a low level of efficacy in educational contexts.

The theory and literature on self-efficacy in learning contexts support one of the aims of this study to explore the mediating factors of students' emotions.

2.9 The contributions of the current study to the literature

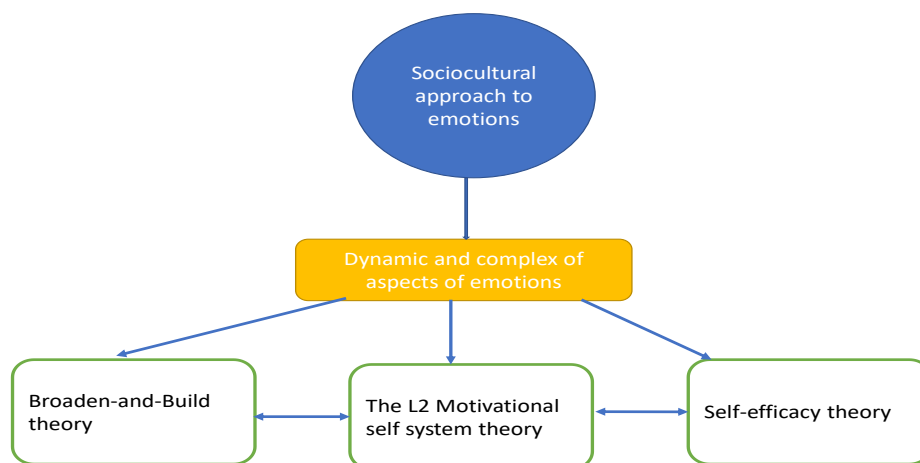
This study aims to explore the positive and negative emotions that emerge in English language learning. The focus on positive emotions, and a wide range of emotions, is a benefit of this study because previous studies (discussed in Section 2.4) focused predominantly on examining enjoyment as a representative of positive emotion and anxiety as a representative of negative emotion. In the early literature, only anxiety in the classroom has been investigated in isolation. Gradually, enjoyment in the English classroom has been examined as an opposite emotion to anxiety without looking at the emergence of other emotions.

The current study largely focuses on positive emotions and their significance in Vietnamese tertiary learning contexts drawing on a sociocultural approach, an area that has not received much research attention to date. The few previous studies that have been undertaken on emotions in the Vietnamese learning context were focused largely on anxiety, such as Tran et al. (2013) and the relationship between learners' positive emotional engagement and their interactional behaviours such as Dao and Sato (2021). This study therefore contributes to the theory of emotion research in Vietnamese education settings.

The sociocultural approach is the main theory of my research; however, additional theories have also supported the design of the study and the interpretation of the findings. An attempt at illustrating the connections between these different theories and how they complemented each other in the study, is given in Figure 2.1. Here the sociocultural approach is seen as encompassing cultural, dynamic and complex aspects of how emotions might be associated with L2 learning in a particular context. In attempting to describe such associations, the study makes use of other well-known conceptual frameworks, including the theory of hope, the L2 Motivational theory, the theory of self-efficacy, and the Broaden-and-Build theory.

Figure 2.1

Interactions of different theories



2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on the relationships between emotions and cognition in English language learning over time. Different approaches to the study of emotion present different beliefs about the origin of emotions. Emotions can be viewed as an individual's internal state that then moves outwards, or as rooted in external sources and then characterised as individualistic. This chapter has presented the concept of emotions from different perspectives and categories of emotions that emerged within those traditions. The sociocultural approach to emotions is the theoretical framework for the current research as it helps to understand emotions as being socially and culturally constructed and characterized as complex, and in fluctuation. The framework includes categories of achievement emotions including activity-related, success-linked and failure-linked emotions, and this helps to identify the outcomes of the emotions. The Broaden-and-Build theory supports the idea that positive emotions are significantly important, and they serve to extend individuals' thinking and cognition and build their resources. The Ideal L2 Motivational theory, which was examined in this chapter, indicates the interplay of emotions with other factors such as motivation and self-efficacy.

The sociocultural approach to emotion views emotion as one of the multiple factors that coexist in the complex system of language learning and as having close relationships with those factors. It indicates that emotion is socially and culturally constructed and is influenced and mediated by other factors. The sociocultural approach in this study looks at reported emotion in particular events and investigates emotion through participants' narratives.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative, constructivist approach informs this study as it aligns with the aims of exploring students' emotions reported in relation to their English language learning experience. Following a discussion on the appropriateness of the research paradigm and qualitative research, this chapter discusses the research design and research methodology used to explore the complex, diverse, and dynamic emotions emerging from students' English language learning experiences, the role of positive emotions to trigger positive outcomes in their English language learning, and the social and cultural features of emotions. The data collection instruments, including piloting and on-site data collection, are also discussed together with the ethical considerations that underpin the study. The processes for handling the data, including data transcription and translation, data analysis procedures, and data presentation, are then presented. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the trustworthiness and dependability of the data.

3.2 Research paradigm

The research paradigm guides the way data is collected; in other words, it shapes the research design and methods, so before conducting the research it is necessary for researchers to clarify their general ideas, purposes, and intended methods of the study. As Phakiti and Paltridge (2015, p. 34) note:

A research paradigm is the underlying philosophical view of what constitutes knowledge or reality as the research seeks to gain an understanding of a particular

topic. The paradigm directs researchers to collect data and/or evidence that can be viewed as valid, legitimate or trustworthy. (p. 15)

According to Croker (2009), researchers should make sense of and answer two fundamental questions about the view of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) of their research. He asserts that the researcher's view of the world forms the answer to these two questions "What is reality?" and "What is knowledge?". When discussing research paradigms, he mentions two opposite perspectives positivism and constructivism. According to Phakiti and Paltridge (2015), constructivism "is a research philosophy that views social realities (e.g. cultures, cultural objects, institutions, values) as multiple and dependent on who is involved, what is being studied and the context in which a study takes place. Reality is typically seen as being socially co-constructed" (p. 16). In other words, reality is held to be subjective. Additionally, Croker (2009) points out that the social interactions of individuals co-construct reality and that:

Each individual creates his or her own unique understanding of the world, so there are multiple constructions and multiple interpretations of reality. And these constructions and interpretations change, depending upon time and circumstances, so reality is not universal but person-, context-, and time-bound. (p. 6)

Taking these ideas as the foundation of my research, I chose to implement constructivism as the paradigm to investigate my research questions. Constructivism is an appropriate research paradigm because this thesis aims to explore students' positive emotions triggered by their personal experiences and from real contexts where students interact with other people. It also explores how reported emotions were constructed and shaped by particular social and cultural features.

3.3 A qualitative narrative approach

The nature of this investigation lends itself to qualitative research from the outset as the purpose is to explore individuals' reported emotions. No attempt is made to generalise the phenomena found in the data. Phakiti and Paltridge (2015) state that "Qualitative researchers take the position that human behaviours such as language learning and use or actions are bound to the context in which they occur" (p. 13). He also asserts that "qualitative researchers stress the importance of *meaning* and *holistic concerns* rather than discrete variables, statistics and standardization" (p. 13). Croker (2009) has a similar viewpoint: "qualitative research mostly focuses on understanding the particular and the distinctive, and does not necessarily seek or claim to generalize findings to other contexts" (p. 9).

In order to explore students' emotions during their experience of English language learning, the study focused on learners' personal viewpoints and lived experiences as illustrated through their narrative accounts using both dialogical narration, i.e., interview, and written narration. Each narrative was given in a 'natural setting,' such as social or classroom settings with which the participants were familiar. The 'natural setting' can therefore be understood here as the physical settings where the narratives were recounted. The reason why narrative research is an appropriate approach in this study is that "narrative research in language teaching and learning (LTL) is concerned with the stories teachers and learners tell about their lived and imagined experiences" (Barkhuizen, 2014a, p. 450). A narrative recalls an event, and is defined as "something that has happened to a person or thing, at a particular time or in a particular situation" (Bold, 2012, p. 15).

The study aims to explore the emotions reported in the events, the contexts and the interactions that the participants reported. In discussing the appropriateness of applying narratives in emotion research, Rees et al. (2013) asserted that “Emotions are intertwined with narratives: narrative evokes emotion and emotion shapes narratives. Narratives allow us to access human experience as simultaneously meaningful and emotional” (p. 81).

Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), considering educational settings, point out that a narrative “provides a voice for teachers and students” and that it “brings researchers and educators together collaboratively to construct school experience” (p. 329). They frame a three-dimensional space approach that highlights the experiences and the interactions between individuals. These three dimensions (time, place and personal/social relationships) are three elements within which the “narratives construct stories of lived experience” (Miyahara, 2015, p. 42). Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) also assert that the lived experiences teachers displayed while sharing their stories with the researchers brought an opportunity for them “to make meaning of the participating teachers’ lives” (p. 374). In line with this point, Barkhuizen et al. (2013) state that narrative inquiry is relevant to research in language teaching and learning “because it helps us to understand the inner mental worlds of language teachers and learners and the nature of language teaching and learning as social and educational activity” (p. 2).

My research on emotions is based on understanding narratives as “stories of experiences” (Miyahara, 2015, p. 39) and of emotions as both “individually experienced and, at the same time, socially or culturally shaped” (Miyahara, 2015, p. 46). Using written narrative was an effective choice of data gathering approach for this study because “stories are a rich source of data and can yield new insights each time they are revisited”

(Swain et al., 2011, p. 2). Within this approach, interviews are seen as a way to collect narratives as small stories, in line with what Barkhuizen and his colleagues state: “An interview that refers to a specific event is a short story” (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, p. 16).

In conclusion, a qualitative narrative approach is appropriate for collecting data for this research because emotions emerged in particular events in students’ lived experiences and were reflected in the form of storytelling. A narrative approach is a way of storytelling in which narrators have opportunities to tell their stories in their own words in a private way. In narrative approach, narrators take accounts of the events in which the stories incur and the sequences of the stories. Narrative gives opportunities for students to reflect their experience that is embedded in the stories. Students’ narrative accounts help us understand the elements that constructed stories, such as the events of the settings, the actions of the people in those stories, and the features of emotions that emerged in those events.

3.4 Research design

The final research instruments of the current research are the outcome of a process which included an initial plan and a piloting stage aimed at ascertaining the suitability and effectiveness of some of the instruments, and the selection of the research site and participants. There were two key data collection tools used: written narrative frames and interviews. Before these tools were developed, a Facebook search was used as a way of exploring the emotions that were expressed by Vietnamese learners of English. This informed the design of the two data collection tools. The instruments were developed and piloted (details about the piloting will be given in 3.5.3), then were revised and improved to optimise them for the study. The steps in the design process are discussed in the next

sections beginning with a detailed account of the research site and participant section. The procedures are presented as in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Timing of data collection processes

Timeline \ Activities	Pilot research November 2017 → August 2018	On-site data collection September 2018 → January 2019
Facebook search	05/11/2017 → 25/03/2018	
Written narrative frames	20/03/2018 → 09/04/2018	
Pilot interview	07/08/2018 → 15/8/2018	
Written narratives		23/9/2018 → 19/10/2018
Focus Group		22/10/2018 → 26/10/2018
Student interview		8/11/2018 → 24/12/2018

3.4.1 Research site and participants

As I began to plan my study, it became necessary to identify the research site and participants. I invited second year students from three affiliated Vietnamese universities to participate in this study. The students were from different provinces and were studying for different future careers. That meant they had varying backgrounds and learning experiences. At university, English is a compulsory subject in their courses. The reason why second-year students were chosen is that they already had one year of university, as well as English learning experiences at primary, middle, and high school, and they were not as busy as students at high school or those in their third and fourth year at university, thus potentially making it more possible for them to participate.

I chose the three affiliated universities because their students represent a wide spectrum of tertiary English language learning in Vietnam since the institutions had different academic training purposes. Another reason was that collecting data from participants with varied learning experiences would reflect the diversity and complexity of learners' lived emotions. However, I did not intend to study each university separately or make a comparison of the groups. An additional reason for the choice was that I have known the heads of the English schools and some English teachers at those universities for many years, since we shared some career networks through the activities of the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project. We were trained to be examiners together, and then a few years ago worked together as examiners for some English examinations, such as those at levels A2, B1, and B2 of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) designed for university undergraduates who were not majoring in English. Because I was quite familiar with these teachers, I thought they would support me in inviting their students to participate in the study and it would be easier for me to consult with them should I need further information about their courses.

The first university in which the data collection was conducted is the University of Polytechnics (pseudonyms are used for the universities in this study). Students graduating from this university usually have opportunities to work for foreign companies, enterprises, and industrial firms located all over the country such as Samsung, Glonics, and Toyota. Therefore, English is a necessary subject at this university. Before students finish their training programs, they must meet the requirement of the A2 level of CFER for English, either by taking the TOEFL-ITP or TOEIC exams. English is divided into four semesters with three credits per semester. The students who joined in my research were in their first semester of the second year of study and taking their third English course. Their majors were Automobile Engineering, Hydraulic Engineering, Mechanical

Engineering and Electrical Engineering, but they were placed in a single English class in which there was a range of ability levels. As is typical in engineering classes in Vietnam, each class had few female students.

The second university where data was gathered was the University of Finance. The participants invited to be involved in my research were in their third semester of English. They were students of the Faculty of Accounting and were studying to become either general accountants, audit assistants, chief accountants, or specialists in the state accounting and auditing management agencies.

The University of Social Science was the last university where I collected data. Participants in this study were training to become English teachers. Their programme of study focused largely on English Integrated Skills, English teaching theory, pedagogical skill training, pedagogical practice, and English teaching practice. At the time I met my participants, they were in the first semester of their second year and starting to gain some knowledge about English teaching theories. That class consisted of 44 students with only one male student. This contrasts with the classes at the University of Polytechnics.

As well as the two key data collection tools used in this study, student focus groups were used as part of the selection procedure for the individual student interviews, as indicated below. One hundred and eighty-five students participated in written narratives, 28 students participated in focus group discussions and ten in interviews. The recruitment process for each data collection technique is described in further detail below.

3.4.2 Participant recruitment for written narratives

Participant recruitment for the written narratives was carried out on the research site at the start of data collection (see Section 3.7.1). With the English lecturers' permission, I

was given access to the identified classes to meet the students for the first time. On my first session with the students, I gave a brief presentation about New Zealand and gave them a quiz and game, and after this I spoke to them briefly about my research. The presentation, the quizzes, and the games helped stimulate the students' interest and curiosity about me and my research by charging the class atmosphere and developing a sense of fun.

The presentation about New Zealand, the fun quiz, and games were used alternatively in different classes. Information sheets about my research were then distributed. I gave the students some time to read them, and I made myself available to answer any questions they had to make sure that they understood the information. Then those students who wished to participate were invited to fill in the Consent form (Appendix A, Vietnamese version) to show that they had a meaningful choice about participating in the research. I left them a week to think about their decision, to recall their experiences and to be ready to write their stories.

3.4.3 Participant recruitment for student interviews

Participants joining the student interviews were recruited when the previous step, the written narratives, was completed. On the day I collected students' narratives, I gave them a cover letter and invited them to participate in an individual interview (Appendix B). I also reminded them of the necessary information in the Information sheet. To my surprise, the number of participants voluntarily signing up to the interview stage was more than I had expected. I did not want to refuse any of them to avoid upsetting the participants. Thus, at my supervisor's suggestion, I conducted four focus group discussions to choose the participants who were open and willing to take part in the individual interviews that were to be held a couple of weeks later.

The focus group discussion helped students to get a sense of how an interview would be conducted and to become familiar with being questioned and communicating with the interviewer. I did not collect any actual data from the focus groups. The topic for all four focus group discussions was students' English learning experiences. The topic worked well, and the students found it easy to share their own experiences. Through the focus group, the social gap between the interviewer and interviewees was minimized, in the hope this would lead to further successful individual interviews. Following the focus groups, 10 participants were invited to participate in individual interviews. After each focus group discussion, I sent the chosen participants, who felt free to share their ideas and positively got involved into the discussion, a private text to arrange the next meeting time for the interview. The interview participants' personal information is summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Personal information of participants in the student interviews

Participant's name	Age	Gender	University from...
Hien	19	Male	University of Polytechnics
Cong	19	Male	University of Polytechnics
Kha	20	Male	University of Polytechnics
Thu	19	Female	University of Social Sciences
Huong	19	Female	University of Social Sciences
Hoan	20	Male	University of Polytechnics
Nga	19	Female	University of Social Sciences
Bao	19	Female	University of Social Sciences
Chang	19	Female	University of Finance
Manh	20	Male	University of Social Sciences
Total: 10 participants			

My original plan was to include teacher emotions in the study and in accordance with this plan, I also interviewed eight teacher participants and organised a teacher focus group discussion from the three universities mentioned above. However, due to the extent and richness of the student data I ultimately decided not to include teacher data in my thesis.

3.5 Preparing for data collection instruments

The two research instruments used in this study were the written narrative frames and the interviews. They aimed to explore students' narrative accounts of emotional experiences related to English language learning. In the sections below, the Facebook search that informed the design of the data collection instruments is described, before the initial design of the two instruments used for the pilot phase is presented. Following this, piloting of the instruments is discussed in Section 3.6 together with changes made from this phase.

3.5.1 Facebook search as a way to explore the context

As mentioned in the introduction (in the introductory Section 1.1), part of my interest in English learners' emotions emerged from reading about these in Facebook posts and comments, and in fact, a Facebook search was the first research tool used at the start of this study. Facebook can be seen as a 'bridge' to accessing emotions in Vietnamese contexts because many Vietnamese people, including English language learners, teachers, and parents use Facebook as a way of expressing their thoughts and beliefs, and recounting emotional moments in their lived experience by posting and commenting publicly. Thus, exploring Facebook helped me obtain an initial understanding of Vietnamese participants and potential research settings. Using a Facebook search as a

tool to uncover moments of emotions within users' narratives relating to English language learning enabled me to capture some preliminary data to prepare for this study. Facebook posts and comments where learners talk about their experiences and reveal their emotions (both negative and positive) about English language learning in the form of short narratives are illustrated from Figure 3.1 to Figure 3.3.

Example 1

Figure 3.1

Facebook post-1



Example 2

Figure 3.2

Facebook post-2

October 19 at 7:30pm

Help me! I'm patient to study English but I only hear the short sentences and If the foreigner talk the long sentences or the paragraph, I can't hear to understand all mean. Can you advice me ? I want to give up.

Like Comment Share

91

1 Share

I think you need confident more. Because we learn English in the long time from class 6 until now. You have to digest your knowledge of English. Let's think about it as Vietnamese. So it's language. If we always use, we will speak & listen fluently. The first is difficult, but i hope that you never give up.

Practice makes perfect. Try to practice, practice and practice. Listen carefully such keywords, and predict the whole meaning of each.

Like · Reply · 1 · October 19 at 7:39pm

Example 3

Figure 3.3

Facebook post-3

October 9 at 3:09pm

Hi everyone!
I wrote a sentence by myself. Can you help me to check it? As it will be written below:
"i often embarrass myself by speaking English with someone."
Thank you very much!

Like Comment Share

48

Remember that English is just the second language, so if you do something wrong, that's fine.
Like · Reply · 1 · October 9 at 5:16pm

That's a profitable advice, thank you very much! 😊
Like · Reply · October 9 at 5:40pm

I am also embarrassed to speak English to people, but trying to learn and communicate should be successful. Wish success
Like · Reply · 1 · October 10 at 2:35am

Nobody laughing u .Dont be shy
Like · Reply · 2 · October 9 at 5:49pm

In these posts, Facebook users wrote about the struggles and psychological difficulties they faced in their English learning. Comments were offered in response by people expressing what they had experienced in similar situations. Some users encouraged other learners to practise more, to be more confident, and to try not to be shy when talking to foreigners. At times, positive emotions were triggered by those comments. Through the posts and comments, we can see how Vietnamese language learners talked about their lived experiences and how they felt in certain moments: these moments and feelings were often contained in short narrative accounts. Thus, these short narratives on Facebook helped me find a way to collect data related to emotions and contributed to the development of the written narrative frames I employed as a data collection instrument.

3.5.2 Initial design of the written narrative frames

The written narrative frames were designed to gather accounts of students' emotions in particular moments and situations of their English language learning. In the literature, written narrative frames are described as "a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying length" (Barkhuizen, 2014b, p. 13). For this study, they were designed as prompts that provided opportunities for participants to write about the positive emotions that they experienced in learning English. The incomplete sentences included in the frames could evoke specific settings related to time, place, events and the people in the narratives, thus aligning with the aims of the study. The experiences were to be recounted in the form of stories. In the piloting stage, the written narrative frames were designed with instructions and the learners were invited to respond in English, as illustrated in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

The initial model of written narrative frames

Instructions
<p>Please complete the following statement using your own words. Do not worry about spelling, grammar mistakes or style. Just feel free to do this as I do not wish to spy into your individual life, and I will not show your name and your writing to your teacher.</p>
My most memorable English class happened when.....
and I remember I felt.....
What impressed me the most from that English class is
In the first English class the activities/ tasks that I enjoy the most are..... because.....
In the class when the teacher gives me feedback, I usually feel.....
I feel confident/ comfortable when the teacher.....
My perfect English class would be.....
My parents feel proud of me when I.....

3.5.3 Piloting the narrative frames

The pilot research enabled me to explore some of the practicalities of the research and helped me to further refine and develop the data collection instruments. The original written narrative frames were sent to four high school English teachers in Vietnam. I knew these teachers because we had studied undergraduate programmes at the same university. These teachers helped me to deliver the written narrative frames to their Year

11 high school students at an Intermediate level of English proficiency. I sent them to high school students because I wanted to do it in early September in 2018, before universities began their academic year. Only nine students completed the narrative frames, although they were sent to more than 20 students. This low response prompted me to make changes in recruiting participants in the next stage, including the way to approach participants. The teachers collected the writing and sent me photographs of the written frames via email. The role of the teachers at this stage was to ask their students to write, encouraging them to complete their writing and to send the texts back to me.

The participants' responses highlighted that they experienced both positive and negative emotions. Words conveying positive emotions such as "so happy", "too confident", "very exciting" or "interesting", and words expressing students' negative emotions such as "nervous" and feeling "ashamed" were reported. One of the participants reported that their most memorable English classes were at an English language centre and another participant reported that it was the time when he took an English listening test, and he could not do it well. The participants' responses relating to negative emotions helped me recognise that a focus on positive emotions only would be too limiting and this prompted me to allow the participants to include negative emotions in their narratives.

In response to other questions about the activities and tasks, the participants reported that they particularly enjoyed language games such as puzzles and bomb games, but also listening, reading, and speaking tasks. However, the responses to other questions tended to be short sentences that did not yield much in-depth information about the events. Some parts of the narratives were even left blank. Not all participants managed to complete the narrative frames.

Through the piloting of written narrative frames, some critical issues were identified. Firstly, the frames were constructed and designed in English, so many students declined to participate and to fill in the written narrative frames because of their English limitations, and some of the participants misunderstood the English prompts leading to unrelated responses. Secondly, within the format of the frames, the participants used short phrases to finish the sentences. Thus, there were no details or examples added to those narratives. Moreover, the responses to each prompt potentially came from different events. Thus, there was a lack of cohesion between the responses. As a result of these weaknesses, the pilot written narrative frames were adapted to maximize their potential to obtain more in-depth data. The next section recounts the development of the final data collection instruments as a result of this process.

3.6 Data collection instruments

3.6.1 Revising the written narrative frames

The piloting process led me to realise that the written narrative frames in this context had some potential limitations: the limited space resulted in limited data produced, and the incompatibilities between the structure of the frame and “the cultural writing conventions of the respondents” (Barkhuizen, 2014b, p. 14) were evident. This means the way a particular writer, who could be understood as a respondent, would be able to write their own stories may not be compatible with the way the frame was structured.

Moreover, the respondents left some blanks. They could not complete the frames because of their limited English competence, although in agreeing to participate in the pilot research they had been confident of their ability. Overall, the piloting stage showed that using written narratives was an appropriate means of gathering data because it had

the potential of painting a full picture of the stories that students told. Based on the events that occurred in their stories and how the narrators expressed their emotions in the data, the instrument could contribute data aligned with the aims of the study. In addition, the written narratives would have an advantage over interviews if the participants felt shy and reluctant to talk. They would also give students more time to reflect on their experiences before sharing them, thus potentially resulting in richer data.

For the main study, I decided to develop the first two sentence prompts of the written narrative frames used in the pilot study, “My most memorable English class happened when...and I remember I felt...” and “What impressed me the most from that English class is...”, into a more concise story and named it “An unforgettable memory in my English learning”. In addition, I developed the sentence prompt “In the first English class the activities/ tasks that I enjoyed the most are...because...” of the written narrative frames into another story and named it “My earliest inspiration in study English”. Other sentence prompts related to emotions of the written narrative frames such as “I felt confident/ comfortable when the teacher...,” or “In the class when the teacher gives me feedback, I usually feel...” were changed to prompt questions. Participant students were asked to write about an English class that they remembered and report what happened and how they felt in those moments. The participants were asked to write their own stories instead of completing the suggested sentences.

To support the learners in the task, I decided I should provide a model. From my own learning experience, I reflected on what made me feel like learning English and who inspired me in studying English for the very first time. Then I wrote my own story about my initial inspiration in learning English. In my story, there was a physical setting (my 6th birthday) in which an event happened (my cousin gave me a teddy bear), how I felt

when I received the gift, and the emotional response I had to the teddy bear later. I used my own story as an example to help students get to know what a story should be like. It was a story format that consisted of settings and events related to people, the time, the place, and the actions that happened in the story. It also included the emotions that people in the events displayed. In the model, I coloured the words relating to the setting, and the event with different colours and used questions such as “Where did this take place?”, “What happened?”, “Why was this gift special at that time?”, “How did I like the gift?”, and “Why was this important to me?” to help the students recognise the main elements. I hoped that this would result in the students’ writing more elaborated accounts to provide rich data for the study. The questions were put inside the bubbles as recommended by Barkhuizen (2014b, p. 23). Figure 3.5 is my own “Teddy Bear” story used as model for written narratives.

Figure 3.5

The "Teddy bear" story model

My earliest inspiration in studying English

My story happened a long time ago, more than thirty years ago. It was on my 6th birthday, my uncle gave me an amazing gift. It was a teddy bear. That was the most beautiful teddy bear I had ever seen. It had brownish fluffy fur and a big red bow just over its ears. The teddy bear and I were best friends. I called her - it was her- Bao Bao which means "Priceless" in Vietnamese. We were always together, slept together and hang out together. I considered her my bestie. Every day after school I came home and ran straight into my bedroom where my teddy bear was sitting. I carried her all the time in the evening, just did not want her to have the feelings of loneliness. I found this gift priceless because teddy bears were really rare in my country at that time. Most of the toys we had were home-made or hand-made ones. Only people who came back home from Russia had Russian dolls and toys. My uncle said that "if you want to have more lovely teddy bears, you should learn a foreign language and go study overseas". Thanks to my uncle's gift and his saying, I felt more motivated in studying a foreign language since that time.

When did this take place?

What happened?

How did I like the gift?

Why was this gift special at that time?

Why was this important for me?

After reading my story, students were encouraged to write their own stories, entitled “My earliest inspiration in studying English” and “An unforgettable memory in my English learning”. The two written narratives focused on memorable events in life that would have remained in one’s mind for a long time, even forever; thus, it would be easy for participants to recall them. The instructions were that the participants could choose the one with which they were more familiar and found easier to write, or they could choose both topics if they wanted to. The topics were laid out on A3-paper sheets with clear instructions and prompt questions, such as “When did this happen?”, “What happened?”, “What did you do?”, “Who was there?”, and other questions dealing with emotion, such as “How did you feel at first in this class?”, “How did you feel about this experience?”, “How do you feel telling us now?” (see Figure 3.6), and “Have you shared this story with someone else?”, “Do you think this story important for you? Why?” (see Figure 3.7). These questions prompted the respondents to recall their experience and give answers related to particular emotions triggered in the experience. The narratives were also designed with instructions and prompts in Vietnamese (see Appendix C and Appendix D), so they were free to write in Vietnamese if they wanted.


Figure 3.6

The design of story 1

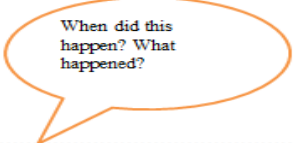
STORY 1: My earliest inspiration in studying English

Step 1: Before you write your own story about early inspiration in studying English, read the questions below and think about them. You can use the questions to help you write your story.


Step 2: Now try to write your own story with the beginning like this



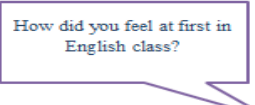
My story happened.....



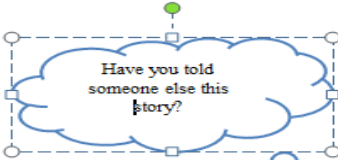
When did this happen? What happened?



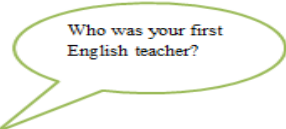
What did you do?



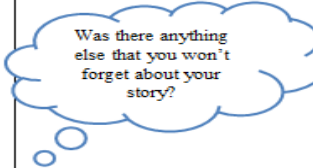
How did you feel at first in English class?



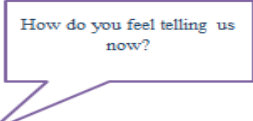
Have you told someone else this story?




Who was your first English teacher?



Was there anything else that you won't forget about your story?



How do you feel telling us now?



..... This is the end of my story.


Figure 3.7

The design of story 2

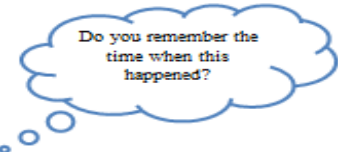
STORY 2: An unforgettable memory in my English learning

Step 1:
Before you write your unforgettable memory in your English class, read the questions below and read the questions below and think about them. You can use the questions to help you write your story.

Step 2: Now try to write your own story with the beginning like this



My story happened.....



Where were you?


What happened? And what did you do?

Have you shared this story with someone else?

Who was there?

How did you feel about this experience?

Do you think this story important for you? Why?



This is the end of my story.

3.6.2 Individual student interviews

As part of my research design, I decided to collect data from interviews. The intention was to get richer and deeper information about emotions than emerged from the written accounts. In other words, the interview aimed to further explore the positive or negative emotions triggered in students' lived experiences in the particular situations they talked about in the narrative frames. Interviews were conducted after the written narrative collection.

In designing the questions for the interviews, I took the stance of considering interviewing as a “social practice” rather than as a “research instrument” (Talmy, 2010, 2011). According to Talmy's (2010) viewpoint, the data of interviews as social practice are “accounts of truths, facts, attitudes, beliefs, interior, mental states, etc., co-constructed between interviewer and interviewee” (p. 132). The interaction creates the co-constructed meaning of the interview and I took a ‘discursive perspective’ in the interview leading to what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) called an ‘active interview’.

According to Talmy and Richards (2011), the concept of an active interview is “a theory of interview that foregrounds not only the ‘content’ drawn from interviews – that is, the *whats* –but also the linguistic and interactional resources used to (co)construct it– or, the *hows*” (p. 2). The *hows* of interviewing “refer to the interactional, narrative procedures of knowledge production, not merely to interview techniques” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 68). Thus, both the *whats* and the *hows* are equally important in interviewing as a social practice. This approach was chosen because I hoped it would offer some advantages in terms of uncovering emotions in real-life contexts and understanding the contextual elements associated with their arousal and development.

In line with the stance towards interviews as social practice and with the literature on emotions outlined in Chapter 2, I prepared questions focusing on students' positive emotions with questions about their English learning experience, their first English class and impressions from that class; they also inquired into the attitudes, mood, and behaviours of teachers, parents and friends which had a positive impact on their English language learning, and questions about what their ideal English class would be. These questions were prepared in Vietnamese:

-When did you start learning English?

-How did you enjoy your English learning so, at first?

-Can you tell me about your experience of learning English?

-What attitudes, mood, and behaviour from your teachers, parents and friends had a positive impact on your English language learning? If, so, can you explain?


-What do you think the perfect English class would be?

I tried to design the questions creatively to make the interviews more interesting, so I included some slips of paper with emoji face icons printed on them to make it visually engaging. Each slip of paper included the emoji face icon for the particular emotion in combination with English words describing the emotions and their equivalents in Vietnamese. The participants could choose one of the paper slips relevant to the emotions that they had experienced. Figure 3.8 gives an example of a question using the emoji symbols.


Figure 3.8




Questions with emoji face icons for individual student interview

Question: *Have you ever had any of these feelings in your English learning? Just put a tick (✓) next to the box appropriate to your feelings (you can choose more than one icon). Then can you tell me a little more about that experience (When did that happen? Where were you? Were there other people involved? What were you doing at that time? Did it change anything? How did it influence you?)*

 Happy (Vui vẻ)	Tick (✓)
--	------------------

 Excited (Hào hứng)	Tick (✓)
--	------------------

 Proud (Tự hào)	Tick (✓)
--	------------------

 Bored (Buồn chán)	Tick (✓)
 Nervous (Lo lắng)	Tick (✓)
 Disappointed (Thất vọng)	Tick (✓)

Some questions consisted of brief scenarios presented on cards, and participants were asked to pick up the card with the scenario that suited them best. Scenarios helped reduce the repetitiveness of Wh-question. For example, instead of asking the participants “What is your learning strategy to improve English?” Or “What would you do if you wanted to improve your English?”, I offered a choice between different scenarios associated with different strategies (see Figure 3.9). This helped to prompt the students to talk about themselves, their experiences and the emotions that were triggered in their experiences. The idea of using scenarios emerged from roleplay activities for teaching speaking skills in English classes in Vietnam.

Figure 3.9

Scenarios designed in question interview

Question: *Here are five students and the ways they improve their English. Who do you think has a similar approach to yours?*

Le wants to improve her listening skills. Every day after school, she listens to the tape recordings several times. First, she also looks up the new words in the transcription. Then she studies the meanings and pronunciation of the new words. Finally, she listens to the recording without reading the transcription.

Ha wants to enrich her vocabulary, so she often watches movies with English subtitles. She tries to guess the meaning of the new words first and then use them in real contexts.

Nga tries to learn approximately 20 new words a day. She writes them on small pieces of paper and sticks them everywhere in her house: on the fridge, on the walls, on the door, on her desk...Therefore, she can see them all the time and everywhere.

Minh likes music. He learns new words by listening to English songs whenever he can: on the way to school, on the bus, at lunchtime, or before bed...First, he listens to the rhyme of the songs, and then he finds the words and checks their meanings.

Hung wants to improve his speaking skills because he often feels shy when speaking in front of other people. He has decided to join his university's English club which helps him speak more confidently with his friends. The club members gather in the school field in the mornings or in the afternoons.




Additionally, there was a question that focused on the participants' favourite topic among the common topics they had learned to discuss during their English classes. These

topics were illustrated by coloured pictures, and they were printed on cards so that the participants could pick the one they liked the most. Figure 3.10 shows the design.

Figure 3.10

Images of scenario cards

Question: *Here are some common topics early on at university. Can you choose one that you like most and the one you like least? Can you tell me more about your choices?*

Yourself	
Your family	
Your house/ home	

Daily routines



Hobbies



Sports



Food



Traditional festivals



Travelling to places



Using scenarios, cards, and icons instead of just traditional questions made the interviewees feel more comfortable, and less stressed because it balanced out the

dominant role the interviewer tends to embody (Rodriguez et al., 2011). This possibly contributed to participants' willingness to engage during data-gathering processes.

3.6.3 Teacher interviews

As indicated in Section 3.4, in the original research design I planned to conduct teacher interviews, so I piloted interviews with the teachers. Although I decided not to present them in this study, the pilot interviews made me realise that I would need to make adaptations for the student interviews and develop my interview skills.

In particular, the pilot interview helped me to become familiar with questioning and to learn some techniques in interviewing, such as lead-in questions and follow-up questions. A lot of follow-up questions were used in the pilot interview, and they helped to explore more information around the main questions and to get in-depth data. After conducting the pilot interviews, I transcribed two interview recordings to see how much I could expand the questions and use follow-up questions. Transcribing provided me with an opportunity to develop my skills.

3.7 Implementation of the study

The following sections discuss the steps taken in the data gathering for the main study, including the steps of collecting written narratives and conducting interviews in actual research. The details of participants participating in written narratives, focus group discussion and interviews are illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3*Number of participants*

Type of research instruments	Number of participants
Written narrative- Story 1	94
Written narrative- Story 2	91
Student focus group discussion: group 1	8
Student focus group discussion: group 2	4
Student focus group discussion: group 3	8
Student focus group discussion: group 4	8
Student interview	10

3.7.1 On-site written narrative collection

After an initial meeting to describe the project and obtain participation (see Section 3.4.2) I had a second meeting where I visited each institute (eight different classes in total) and gave participants instructions for written narratives and delivered the sheets to them. I let participants make their own decision to write on one or both of the topics. Then I gave them a week to complete their narratives. One week later, I met participants in the English classes and collected all the written narratives. For the first topic 94 narratives, and for the second one 91 narratives, were collected. Most of the stories were written in Vietnamese, only one was written in English.

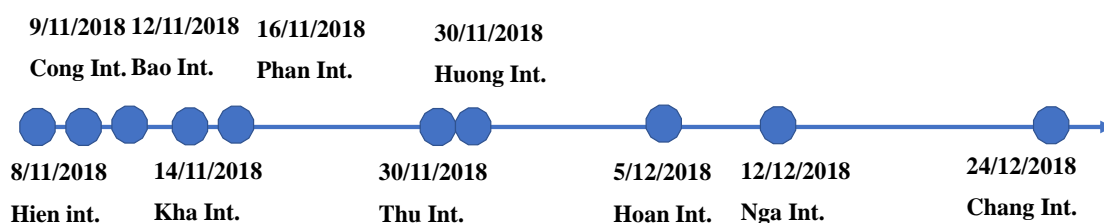
3.7.2 Individual student interview

Interviews were carried out with ten students and each student was interviewed once. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and took place in a café, in a cosy, comfortable, and quiet room with food and drinks provided. I took great care to make

sure that all the participants would feel comfortable and free to talk because most of them had never taken part in one-to-one interviews. Ten interviews are presented in chronological order as in Figure 3.11 and pseudonyms were used in the interviews.

Figure 3.11

Individual student interview timeline



Note: Int.= Interview

Each interview was approximately one hour long. Beside the two main interviews, there were two extra interviews with Thu and Chang. Thu recalled further experiences and wanted to talk again after I finished the interview and stopped the recording, so I had another conversation with her. Chang’s interview was interrupted because she had a personal meeting with a friend. The settings and length of interview varied for each participant as shown in the Table 3.4.

In alignment with the principles of interviewing as social practice, in each interview, I started with lead-in questions about the students’ class, their study, or their daily activities, such as “How is your studying going?”, “Did you have English class today?”, “How many English classes have you had this week so far?” to indicate that they were joining a chat, not an interrogation.

Table 3.4*The settings and lengths of individual student interviews*

Participants' names	Setting of interviews	Length of interview (in seconds)
Hien	An's Café	00:56:50
Cong	An's Café	00:56:59
Kha	The Journey Coffee	01:15:28
Thu	The Journey Coffee	01:25:45 (extra 00:27)
Huong	The Journey Coffee	01:16:19
Hoan	The Journey Coffee	01:04:28
Nga	An's Café	01:03:53
Chang	An's Café	00:53:31 & 00:39:52 (2 rounds)
Manh	The Journey coffee	01:18:06
Bao	An's Café	01:10:05

Then I gradually moved into specific questions, focusing on a higher level of interest (Richards, 2003) in the topic that I intended to interview them about. I also had some questions related to the events that the participants had retold in their written narratives or mentioned in the focus group discussion. For example, in the interview with Hien, these questions were added: "I know (through your written narrative) that one of your close friends had a positive impact on your desire to study English. Can you tell me more details about this?". In an interview with Cong, the following question related to his written narrative was asked: "In your story, you wrote that your best experience in English studying was the time when you took part in a debate competition. Can you tell me more about that event?"

During the interview, I gave the interviewees as much of the floor as possible to express themselves freely. I tried to encourage them to share their ideas and retell their stories by using prompts, examples, and even my own stories and experience. I attempted

to maintain control of the interaction “while allowing the interview to develop as naturally as possible” (Richards, 2009, p. 189). Although a set of prepared questions were formulated, they were not used in a fixed way or in the same order each time. During the interview, I tried to be responsive to what the interviewees said and to understand it fully and then go into as much detail as possible because the aim of the qualitative interview “is not merely to accumulate information but to deepen understanding” (Richards, 2003, p. 64). I prepared questions carefully, developed them to get in-depth information, and kept the conversation flowing.

3.8 Data handling

This section discusses how the data collected were transcribed and translated into English, how the data for written narratives and interviews were analysed, and finally, how they were presented in the findings chapter in this study.

3.8.1 Data transcription and translation

Transcribing the interviews has been referred to as the “least enjoyable aspect of this form of data collection” (Richards, 2009, p. 192) and it is time-consuming as well. To transcribe the recording faithfully and represent the sounds naturally, I used the *Inqscribe* software. The advantages of this software are that it is free to download and easy to use. Before the transcription, I just edited the name of the interviewer and the interviewee; then typed it manually. As a result, a display format as in this example was produced: *00.01.13 Cong*. When finishing each interview, I double-checked the draft transcript by listening to the recording multiple times, editing it to make sure that the words of the transcript reflected the meaning of the discourse faithfully.

Almost all data from the written narratives and interviews were in Vietnamese, so I later translated them into English. For the written narratives, I had first intended to translate just the most relevant parts. However, I realised that this might not convey the totality of the situation and/or the emotional nuances that the narrator intended to express. Therefore, I translated the complete stories. For the student interviews, I selected the excerpts reporting events where emotions were triggered and translated these into English. Sometimes I had problems with word choice and finding equivalences, but in the task of translation I was supported by my own previous experience of Vietnamese/English translation, and I consulted and was helped by several friends who had backgrounds in TESOL and were highly proficient in both English and Vietnamese.

3.8.2 Data analysis

The current study aligns with the analytical framework of narrative analysis in English teaching that focuses on the content of stories that participants tell (Barkhuizen, 2009; Bell, 2002). Stories collected in this research were considered small stories, which are defined as “the ephemeral narratives emerging in such everyday, mundane contexts, which it is argued constitute the performance of identities and the construction of self” (Barkhuizen, 2009, p. 283) and which are small in size and short as well. Small stories are unlike “grand” stories in that they “capture the fleeting and less structural moments in a person’s language life, documenting activities of the real and hypothetical past, present, and future” (Sharma, 2020, p. 84). According to Georgakopoulou (2015), the framework for analysing small stories focuses on three interrelated levels: the *ways of telling*, the *sites*, and the *tellers*. “*Ways of telling* refers to how the stories are told” (Sharma, 2020, p. 84), and this helped me understand how the events, characters and activities were interrelated in the stories. *Sites* refer to “the social spaces in which

narrative activities take place” (Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 258). This concept helped me to explore the significance of the social space of the activities invoked in the narrators’ stories. The last but most important factor of a story is a focus on *tellers*, which allowed me to explore the roles of participants, as individuals in social and cultural groups and as characters in their stories, and their identities including specific biographies such as habits, hope, emotions, and beliefs (Sharma, 2020). The narrative analysis framework helps readers better understand the situational and contextual features of the research. Bell (2002) highlights the benefits of narratives in that they “allow researchers to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness” (p. 209).

Based on Barkhuizen’s (2015) idea of the content of narratives, analysis of participants’ small stories in the current study utilised categories such as the events (settings inside or outside the classroom), the activities, the people in interrelated relationships with the narrators, and the emotions triggered by those events. An example of narrative analysis is illustrated in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

An example of written narrative analysis

Name	Background/ settings	Events (person, what was happening, where? When?)			Actions		Emotions		Positive outcomes
		(O): Outside classroom	(I): Inside classroom	People in the story	Long- term (L)	Short- term (S)	Type(s) of emotions	Emotional shift (ES):	
Thanh	“My story happened when I was 9 years old.” “My dad took me to an English language Centre to enroll in an English course”.	“...One day my teacher organized a game for the whole class...” “...“In the first round, my team lost because I was reluctant to talk.”				“...I played with my best effort.”		(N): <i>Nervousness, awkwardness, regret, shame</i> =>(P): <i>Happiness, confidence, +Gratitude</i> (ES): <i>Negative => Positive emotions</i>	-Gaining more confidence and motivation to study English Experiencing interest and enjoyment

The construction of the interview in this study also takes the stance of interview as social practice where data takes “account” of contextual, attitudinal, factual, experiential, and mental aspects (Talmy, 2010, 2011; Talmy & Richards, 2011). Thematic analysis (Talmy, 2010) was utilised to analyse data from student interviews in this research. I read through all the transcripts and found excerpts about particular emotions and put them into categories in a table. Those excerpts were then translated into English. They were then analysed into subclasses such as causes that triggered emotions and internal or external sources that motivated emotions and then were classified into categories. An example of preliminary data analysis of interviews is illustrated in Table 3.6.

3.8.3 Presenting the data

In this thesis, two Findings chapters are presented. Findings from the student interviews are presented before those from the students’ written narratives because it was felt that the interview data offered better opportunities to identify and discuss single emotions to provide a clear conceptualisation or definition of each emotion for readers. In the findings from written narratives, each narrative includes a range of different emotions triggered within each event. Presenting the individual emotions first, therefore, provides a strong basis to then illustrate the complex and dynamic interaction between emotions that emerged from the written narratives. Data from written narratives and interviews are discussed in combination in the Discussion chapter, where I illustrate the impact of cultural features on constructing students’ emotions and the fluctuating, complex and dynamic interrelationship between emotions and motivation.

Table 3.6*Preliminary interview data analysis*

Participants's name	Types of emotions	Name of emotion	Causes	From Internal/external sources	Excerpt translated
Kha	Positive emotion	Enjoyment	Enjoyment was rooted in classroom learning environment	External source	<i>Most of the English teachers were funny...They told jokes and sometimes didn't force students to learn much... It is more appealing to students.</i>
Thu	Positive emotion	Happiness	Happiness was triggered when understanding the lessons	Internally motivated	<i>I felt happy when I could answer my teacher's questions, when I received good scores, or when I learned something interesting from the teachers. More importantly when I could understand the lessons. When I understood the lesson, I was so happy. Oh yes, I got it!...</i>

					<i>Nothing is happier than that. The feeling of being unable to understand the lessons is so frustrating.</i>
Kha	Positive emotion	Pride	Pride originated from high scores	Social comparison-based because it was associate with being able to do better than others.	<i>When I got high scores, I felt proud... When I got a prize, or in the classroom I could give the answers that nobody could.</i>
Hoan	Negative emotion	Disappointment	Disappointment was linked to failure in an exam	Internal source	<i>When I moved to High school, and I failed the entrance exam to the Gifted High School. I was so upset at that time. I was sitting alone in my room for three or four days. I had set up the goals, but they were out of reach... I did prepare it thoroughly, but the results were not as high as I had expected. Thus, I felt upset and disappointed.</i>

3.9 Ethical considerations

3.9.1 Ethical consent

My application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committees for consideration as a low-risk project was accepted (Appendix E). Before data gathering started, I sent emails to the participating Universities' Rectors enclosing the Cover letter (Appendix F) and the Information sheet (Appendix G) to introduce my research briefly and obtain their consent (Appendix H). I also prepared a Vietnamese version of the Information sheet for Students (Appendix I); and of the Student Consent Form (Appendix J). These documents were part of the human ethics requirements to inform the participants of their rights and responsibilities in joining the research. Then I liaised with the Heads of the School of English Studies at the three universities, and they made it possible for me to contact other staff members. Most of the teachers I got in touch with were interested in my study and were willing to allow access to their classes and join my research.

3.9.2 Risk and benefits

Alongside their rights and responsibilities, it was also necessary to explain to the participants the potential risks when participating in this project (Dörnyei, 2007). When recruiting participants I delivered the Information sheets to them and explained that all the data would be used for the purpose of the current research only and their names would be replaced by pseudonyms. Before carrying out the interview, I provided student participants with Information sheets (Appendix I) to read and I explained to them that should they experience any psychological or emotional discomfort due to discussing feelings such as embarrassment, anxiety or shyness during the interview, they would have

the right to refuse to continue the interview, or they were free to decline to answer any particular questions that they wished not to. In fact, this situation did not happen.

As an acknowledgement of their time and participation, and as is culturally appropriate, I gave small gifts to participants in the study as well as to winners in the warm-up activities at the recruitment meetings. All the gifts were given after the participants finished their tasks. The reason I gave the gifts after they had finished their narratives or interviews is that I did not want to make them feel coerced and obligated while doing the tasks.

3.9.3 Privacy protection

In gathering data, I explained to my participants that their identities would be protected as anonymity and confidentiality are essential in carrying out research (Costa, 2015). In fact, when I explained the privacy protection to the students, some of them said they would not mind if I used their real names. However, I still maintained the practice. For the written narratives, I used a code number and a pseudonym for each story. For interviews the participants' pseudonyms were also used. The interview data were stored in recording files and protected on my private laptop and computer. I am the only person who has the right of access to the recordings.

3.10 Trustworthiness and dependability

In qualitative research the term *trustworthiness* is adopted as an alternative for the term *validity* in quantitative research (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). According to these scholars, “validity and trustworthiness are related to the extent to which we can trust the research findings; that is, what the researchers claim as knowledge and understanding of a research problem” (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015, p. 20).

In qualitative research, the term *dependability* is used instead of *reliability*, a term driven by quantitative research, and dependability allows readers to understand features of the research context and the relationships among the participants (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). The purpose of this study is to obtain in-depth understandings of the Vietnamese learners' different nuances of emotions in their English learning experience disclosed in narratives. These data derived from the diverse data sources which existed in both written and oral accounts. Different types of data from different resources could depict and weave a more complete picture of different nuances of emotions existing in English language learning and teaching.

The research setting is another criterion for assessing trustworthiness in qualitative research. The dependability of data can be seen as the result of the harmony between the research purposes and the settings. The on-site field research where each participant met the researcher at least twice before the interviews were conducted built up a strong relationship between them. The intimate and friendly environment for each meeting enhanced the validity of data.

To enhance dependability, “researchers may ask the participants themselves to review patterns in the data”; to do this “recordings can also help research participants [...] to assess whether dependable inferences have been drawn from the data” (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 232). In this study, after I completed the data gathering steps and finished the transcript, I sent each of the interview participants the transcript via email to make sure that what they said was accurately recorded. Three students among the eight quickly checked and edited some small parts and sent them back to me. Once I left the research site I kept in touch with the participants via email or information exchange by the use of social media (Facebook and Zalo) as social connection. Facebook and Zalo are two means

of connection which are very popular in Vietnam. Whenever I met unclear or ambiguous sentences while transcribing, I asked the participants to check the transcript for me to ensure that my understandings and interpretation of the data responded accurately to the participants' intent in the interview. I sent them a messenger message via Facebook and Zalo in an informal way, such as "Can you check your email? I've sent you an email" (See Figure 3.12).

Five did not reply after the first email, so I re-sent them the files and encouraged them to double-check the transcripts. After several weeks they replied to me and sent the checked files back with comments such "the transcripts are accurate, but they just have some spelling mistakes".

Figure 3.12

An interaction with a participant on Facebook Messenger message



This process, contributes to the trustworthiness of the data, called member checking, aimed at "acknowledging learners as agentive, responsible theorists of their own experience, and of representing their experience and voices in a way that balances

their recognition and ownership of their experience with the rigorous academic criteria of doctoral research” (Harvey, 2015, p. 34).

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter began with an explanation of the suitability of a qualitative approach for the research in this study. The purpose of the research is to explore the different nuances of students’ reported emotions triggered by different events in various contexts, in diverse relationships, and in various interactions. Two research instruments, written narratives and interviews, were used to collect rich data from students at three affiliated universities in Vietnam. Piloting the data collection instruments provided very useful feedback and allowed me to refine and revise the instruments for the main data collection. The data collection processes and ways in which the data were processed and analysed have been reported in this chapter. Ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout, and to protect the participants’ privacy, pseudonyms were used and the names of the three universities are not given in this thesis. Member checking and the harmony of the theoretical and practical aspects of data collection processes to enhance the validity and reliability of the study have also been discussed.

The following two chapters present the findings from this study. Data from interviews will be presented before the data from written narratives. Data from interviews describe the diversity of emotions triggered by students’ English learning experiences, while data from written narratives describe the complexity and dynamics of students’ emotions.

Chapter 4 Student interviews

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted as part of this study. It aims to identify the reported emotions students experienced in English language learning and to describe the features of those reported emotions, particularly when considered through the lens of Vietnamese cultural principles and norms. This chapter also aims to highlight some of the psychological and social elements that differentiate emotions as reported from one another. Accordingly, it presents findings that closely relate to the first two research questions:

- 1. What is the range of reported emotions in university students' narrative accounts of English language learning in Vietnam?*
- 2. What role do the reported positive emotions play in the language learning trajectory of the students?*

While chronologically the interviews were conducted after the written narratives, the findings from the interviews are reported first. This is because each type of emotion was mentioned individually by participants in the interviews. Reporting on the interview data first therefore provides readers with a sense of the range of emotions found in the data and how these were experienced by the participants before combinations and shifts of emotions are explored in the following chapter, where the written narrative data are presented.

This chapter illustrates the role that positive emotions played in the students' learning trajectories, such as motivating them towards further language learning,

stimulating other positive emotions, and ultimately triggering positive learning outcomes. This chapter also shows that negative emotions tend to result from negative learning or performance outcomes, and they can at times either demotivate students or spur on positive actions that then lead to positive outcomes. The emergence of negative emotions in this study demonstrates that negative and positive emotions were intertwined in students' English language learning. Negative and positive emotions are therefore seen as naturally co-existing as part of a dynamic interplay. Ultimately, investigating negative emotions helps us understand positive emotions better, even though they tend to have different roles to play in the learning process, like "the right and the left feet of the language learner" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 1).

Students' behaviour, actions or outcomes that triggered positive and negative emotional responses in this study were recognised and evaluated by other people such as teachers, parents, and peers, who provided a form of social evaluation; therefore, they can be considered 'self-conscious emotions'. The definition and features of self-conscious emotions adapted from Lewis (2008) and Tracy et al. (2007) were discussed in Section 2.6.1. Overall, the findings of this study show that all negative emotions, except boredom, were triggered as a result of negative outcomes and closely linked to the learners' self-perceived failure in meeting the expectations they had of themselves or that other people had of them. On the other hand, positive emotions, except enjoyment and excitement, originated from students' success or achievements. It is important to note, however that excitement and enjoyment did not occur as a result of success or achievements, and boredom was not associated with failure, but these emotions emerged from engaging in aspects of learning and/or activities that the students found pleasurable or interesting, or otherwise.

Each emotion that emerged in the data is presented below based on a framework I have adapted from Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia’s (2014) categories of self-conscious emotions, which divide self-conscious achievement emotions into two broad types: *activity-related* and *outcome-related emotions*. *Outcome-related emotions* are categorised into two types: *success-linked emotions* (e.g. hope and pride), and *failure-linked emotions* (e.g. anxiety and shame) (discussed in Section 2.6.2).

As the data of the interviews in this study illustrate, hope was not triggered in relation to failure, so it is grouped as a success-linked outcome emotion. Disappointment and upset have not been categorised in the literature, but in this study, they occurred as a result of failure. Lastly, excitement was found to be linked to engagement in particular activities. Therefore, self-conscious achievement emotions in this study are illustrated as in Table 4.1. This table is considered as a preliminary framework used to analyse my findings.

Table 4.1

Self-conscious achievement emotions

Achievement emotions		
Activity-related emotions	Outcome-related emotions	
	<i>Failure-linked emotions</i>	<i>Success-linked emotions</i>
Enjoyment	Upset	Happiness
Excitement	Disappointment	Pride
Boredom	Anxiety	Self-confidence
	Shame	Gratitude
		Admiration
		Hope

4.2 Activity-related emotions

Activity-related emotions, defined as “activity emotions pertaining to ongoing achievement-related activities” (Pekrun, 2006, p. 317), in this study include both positive emotions such as enjoyment and excitement, and negative emotion such as boredom. In line with Pekrun’s definition, activity-related emotions can be understood as emotions that are related to on-going activities that students do to learn English. Activity-related emotions are different from success-linked or failure-linked emotions in terms of outcomes of the actions or achievements; they are outcome-independent. In each category, definition(s) of the emotions will be given in English and Vietnamese to ensure that the readers can interpret the translations within the Vietnamese context. The features of these emotions are also discussed before student data is presented to illustrate each emotion.

4.2.1 Enjoyment

Foreign language enjoyment in English language learning has been investigated in relation to foreign language classroom anxiety in some studies such as Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016). Enjoyment on its own has also been studied by others, such as Nakamura (2018), Talebzadeh et al. (2020), and Todaka (2020).

Enjoyment can be defined as “a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks” (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 216). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) indicate that enjoyment needs personal investment in task performance. Tasks that

possibly bring an opportunity for enjoyment may bring either risk or anxiety, so the value of the outcome of the tasks can be high.

Enjoyment refers to pleasure in doing something, in this case particularly a pleasure in learning English. The Vietnamese equivalents of enjoyment are *thích*, *sự thích thú*, *sự vui thích*. In this study, I use the word enjoyment to express the meaning of the Vietnamese word *thích*, as used by the participating students. All of these words are close synonyms, but *sự thích thú*, and *sự vui thích* are wordy and rarely used in Vietnamese spoken language, and they are usually used in literary works, while in spoken language *thích* is usually used.

Enjoyment in the current study was triggered in a range of different situations, but most of these related to the way in which English teachers managed the classroom, and to the feedback given by teachers on assessments and classroom tasks. These examples are reflective of student enjoyment being triggered by an external source. In addition to being triggered by external sources, student enjoyment also emerged from internal sources such as the emotion felt from knowing new English words.

Enjoyment in the case of Nga below was rooted in getting better at what she was being asked to do. In the past, Nga had experienced difficulties in listening skills as she had issues hearing her teacher speaking English. Gradually, she practised listening more, and she could understand more of what her teacher said in class. This led to her feeling enjoyment:

If my teacher said a lot of words, a series of sentences...I couldn't hear them properly, but I just heard some words... I felt enjoyment when I knew some new words. I really wanted to learn more, and really felt like learning, like "indeed".

Then I practised listening more and more. The more I practise the more I like doing it. The more I know English, the more I like learning it. (Nga– excerpt 1)

Experiencing enjoyment in this way had a positive effect on Nga. Although Nga experienced negative emotions in her English-language trajectory (see Section 4.4.3), especially in the early stage at university, as she began to get better at what she was asked to do, she felt confident, engaged more in class activities and she began to experience enjoyment. This emotion then spurred her on and motivated her to work harder and further her learning. Thus, as Nga describes below, one impact of enjoyment for her was increasing the willingness to make an investment of time and effort in her learning:

I wanted to learn more and more. I prepared the tasks beforehand at home or did the homework as soon as I got home. At the beginning of the first semester, I had been so nervous. (Nga– excerpt 2)

One further student, Thu, stated that enjoyment was present for her during the pronunciation sessions. She enjoyed practising English words by imitating English native speakers' accents and then she found the learning fun. Thu explained her enjoyment as follows:

I like learning pronunciation the most... Because it stimulates the listeners' ears, and it encourages me to pronounce the sounds to reach to the standards. When I say the words, I notice that "Ah, my pronunciation is fairly good". When I imitate the native speakers' accents, I find that my pronunciation sounds "western like" and close to the target. So fun. (Thu– excerpt 1)

While the excerpts from Nga and Thu above illustrate how their enjoyment was triggered by internal sources, another excerpt from Nga and the excerpts from Kha,

Huong and Thu below are examples of how their enjoyment was derived from external sources.

The way Kha's English teachers at middle school and high school managed classes led to him and his classmates enjoying the lessons and getting involved in them. The teachers told them jokes and funny stories during class and did not force students to learn in a serious way as other teachers in Vietnam often do. They did not always put heavy expectations on the students' shoulders. They created a comfortable learning environment and made the learning enjoyable for students. This made Kha and his classmates feel relaxed and as a result, they engaged in the learning and enjoyed the lessons:

Most of the English teachers were funny...They told jokes and sometimes didn't force students to learn much... It is more appealing to students. (Kha– excerpt 1)

When Kha felt enjoyment in the lessons, his enjoyment led to him feeling motivated to study and as a result, this led to positive outcomes. He contrasted this with the situations where he experienced the feeling of boredom:

Inspiration in studying aroused when I felt enjoyment. In contrast, I could not learn much when I felt bored. I was excited because I would know more new words and know how to use them in real contexts. (Kha– excerpt 2)

The benefit of a good friendly learning environment in providing enjoyment was also discussed by Nga. Nga stated that when there was a comfortable learning environment, she felt encouraged and free to learn, and had her face protected during the teacher's feedback because she was not distracted by other factors such as anxiety:

There's no need to care about my feelings anymore, just about the content of the lesson. I feel so comfortable when learning some subjects with the teachers who made me free and comfortable. If I couldn't give the right answer, it's alright; he or she would explain it for me. Thus, I felt happy and didn't have to worry much about it... (Nga– excerpt 3)

Nga contrasted this with learning environments where the teacher mocked students' English ability. In this kind of environment, she felt nervous and found it hard to learn. In contrast, she felt she could learn more when she felt happy.

When the teacher said: "You can't answer such an easy question!" I started to feel nervous and thought "Oh, no. If I can't give the answer, she might think I am stupid or dumb". It felt harder... (Nga– excerpt 4)

Feedback was such an unpleasant experience for Nga that she avoided it (see more in Section 4.4.3), but under different circumstances it proved positive for Huong. She enjoyed the way her English teacher checked her homework by taking a screenshot of student's writing and then showing it on the screen. Huong was eager to receive scores for her homework every day and she enjoyed the moments of receiving feedback from the teacher:

The teacher often gave me homework to complete before the class. I had prepared it well at home. On the following day when he was walking around the class, then he was walking close towards me, I wanted to show him my work and I said "Teacher, please check my homework." Then he took a shot of my script, he uploaded it onto the screen, and he gave me scores and assessment. Just that. I just liked being given grades. I would be sad if the teacher didn't check my work and didn't give scores. (laughed) (Huong– excerpt 1)

Huong further explained that she enjoyed having her homework checked by her English teacher. According to Huong, her teacher did not put the same pressure on students to obtain high grades that other teachers did. In Vietnam, many English teachers are considered strict and demanding with high expectations of their students' academic achievements. Receiving high scores is typically seen as confirmation of students' understanding and competence. In contrast, Huong's teacher did not highlight the importance of high scores and did not put pressure or expectations on students to achieve high scores. Huong asserted her and her classmates' enjoyment in the way her teacher evaluated students' work:

He was so generous in grades. I think he encouraged students by giving generous scores. All the students like him, because he doesn't consider high scores to be important and he is not strict on scores [...]. (Huong– excerpt 2)

Thu mentioned that her English teacher at high school had a similar viewpoint to Huong's teacher as described above. She was generous in giving students high scores. Thus, Thu's enjoyment was triggered. She stated:

She [the English teacher at high school] said: "I don't think high scores [in examinations] are important to you. They are more important if you want high scores and try to get them." When students were invited to go to the blackboard and gave the answers to homework, she gave high scores. Thus, [...] I enjoyed her lessons at that time...I voluntarily gave the answers and presented the topics. I was the only person to raise my hand in the class. I was willing to answer the teacher's questions at the black board, in front of the class. (Thu– excerpt 2)

In the excerpt above, the teacher's generosity in scores was an element in encouraging Thu to engage in lessons. Thu's teacher made her feel like she was succeeding, and that

she was meeting expectations. According to Thu, this approach helped to make her enjoy the learning and minimised the occurrence of negative emotions. Feeling enjoyment for these students when answering the teacher's questions was not as in most other classes, because most students in Vietnam do not feel happy when being called on by name to go to the backboard or stand in front of the class.

In conclusion, enjoyment was present for students in this context and elicited by both external and internal factors. For example, external factors such as the learning atmosphere, receiving the teacher's feedback and the teacher's classroom management and internal factors such as understanding the lessons and understanding the teacher speaking English elicited enjoyment for participants in this study.

4.2.2 Excitement

According to Fredrickson (1998), excitement and interest can sometimes be used interchangeably because they share a “conceptual space with challenge and intrinsic motivation” (p. 305). Excitement is an affective experience that serves “as signals to motivate individuals' to act upon their environment” (Ahn & Shin, 2015, p. 285).

There are several equivalents in Vietnamese with close meanings such as (*sự*) *háo hức*, (*sự*) *phấn khởi*, (*sự*) *hưng phấn*, (*sự*) *kích thích* [the word *sự* in brackets functions as a noun in sentences]. *Háo hức* is more commonly used in Vietnamese meaning being eager with something new, *phấn khởi* refers to feeling happy and pleased when being encouraged and praised to do something, *hưng phấn* refers to a mental state that is stimulated to do something out of curiosity, and *kích thích* also refers to a mental state that enhances one's actions with stimulating factors. In the conversations, the participants used the words *háo hức* to express excitement.

For Cong, excitement was present the first time he learned English. He felt excited because it was new to him, and he felt inspired to further explore this new learning. Cong describes how he felt both nervous and excited when he started to learn English:

I felt excited when I first... It was the first time I learned English. In fact, I felt either excited or nervous... because knowing a new language made me feel excited. I felt nervous, too. I felt excited because I wanted to explore and know more about it. (Cong– excerpt 1)

In this case Cong was eager to know about English, an unknown thing for him, so he felt a mixture of nervous anticipation and excitement. Excitement originated from his eagerness to learn a new language. However, he was nervous because it was new to him, and he wondered what it required. This is common as according to Ahn and Shin (2015), “novelty could be both an opportunity and a threat... interest attenuates the fear of possible threats from uncertainty” (p. 285).

Excitement in English language learning was also triggered when students performed in challenging competitions. Hoan felt excited each time he took part in competitions at school, such as those for “talented students”, and English Festivals. While Hoan was experienced in joining such competitions, he still felt excited before each one. His excitement was closely linked to high energy and eagerness to do something:

I often felt excited before the competitions held at my school... English Festival, competitions for “Gifted students”. They were interesting. I took part in all those competitions. (Hoan– excerpt 1)

Before upcoming competitions, Hoan prepared carefully and diligently practised his speaking and was excited to participate. Hoan enjoyed the competitions, saying he

studied in a “good mood”, and he felt motivated to learn English. He commented on the positive effects of preparing for the competitions on his English learning below:

Yes, I could hardly wait for them to come. I felt excited, as a result, I could learn everything better... When I felt excited, I could learn everything better, I was in a good mood and was in a great psychological state. (Hoan– excerpt 2)

Competitive game-like activity within English classes at his high school added to Hoan’s excitement for learning English. A common vocabulary activity involved the class being divided into two teams with each encouraged to compete against the other to write as many new words they had learned as possible on the blackboard. Working as a team meant that all group members tried their best to contribute to their team’s success. Hoan described the class atmosphere and the benefit of winning the game as follows:

One more score was added to each test for the winners; or winners could get stars, five stars would be transferred to an additional mark in the following 45 minute-test. It was quite fun, although the class became noisy, then we felt more excited to learn English. (Hoan– excerpt 3)

Hoan felt excited to join the class activity because it was new to him and his classmates. They were full of energy and eager to win, and the activity made them feel more motivated and excited to continue their English learning.

As illustrated above, Cong describes the excitement he experienced the first time he learned English at his primary school, Hoan’s excitement was experienced at his middle and high schools, while Nga, Kha and Hien below describe the excitement they experienced at university.

Nga stated that she experienced excitement when her teacher checked her homework. Her teacher often set students reading tasks for homework. Nga worked carefully on her homework and was eager to see how she had done. As illustrated, her excitement was rooted in eagerness and curiosity to get feedback on her work:

When the teacher gave me homework, I prepared it thoroughly at home. I was ready to be checked. Thus, I was so excited and longed to see what could happen. [...] (Nga– excerpt 5)

Excitement arose quite often for Kha in his English learning at university. He felt excited in class when he learned something new, such as new English words and their collocations, and also outside the classroom when he talked with foreigners, watched English movies, or joined an English competition named “Ring the bell”. Excitement was derived from the newness of learning and also by an interest and curiosity in the learning and experiences. He reported on excitement arising in different situations and at different times, as follows:

At university I feel happy, also excited... I feel more motivated when I am happy. If I feel bored, I can't learn easily. I felt excited because I learned more new words and their collocations... I feel excited when I watched English movies, when I know something new or when I talk with foreigners [...]. Before English competitions, such as “Ring the bell”, organised by my school, I also felt excited.
(Kha– excerpt 3)

As illustrated in the excerpt above, Kha experienced the feeling of excitement together with enjoyment and happiness. He also stated that these emotions had a positive effect on his learning: he could learn better and was motivated to learn more, while boredom or an absence of excitement or interest impeded his interest in learning English.

To sum up, excitement, as reported in this study, led to a desire to continue learning. Excitement, like other positive emotions, appeared to play an important role in motivating future learning and spurring on future positive outcomes. Excitement in this study originated from the emotional responses to students undertaking new and challenging things. It was closely linked to eagerness, enthusiasm, competitiveness, curiosity and high energy. For some students, excitement was also related to nervous anticipation, apprehension about doing something unknown, although their underlying emotion was one of excitement and desire to undertake the learning or activity.

4.2.3 Boredom

Boredom is defined as “the aversive experience of having an unfulfilled desire to be engaged in satisfying activity. [...]” (Fahlman et al., 2013, p. 69). According to Fahlman et al. (2013) boredom includes:

(a) lack of engagement, (b) low arousal negative affect, (c) high arousal negative affect, (d) the experience of slow passage of time, and (e) difficulty focusing attention. (p. 70)

Reflecting these definitions, boredom represents a mix of “disengagement, dissatisfaction, poor attentional control, impaired vitality and distorted time perception” (Pawlak et al., 2019, p. 499).

During the interviews, the emotion icon conveying the meaning of boredom was attached to its Vietnamese words *buồn chán* below it. In the conversations with the interviewer, the students used the single word *chán* to express boredom. The short term was used by students because it is more colloquial and usually used in spoken Vietnamese

language. These words are close synonyms in Vietnamese with no differences in meaning.

The first student who reported boredom in their English class was Thu. During a lesson, when her English teacher encouraged students to give answers, Thu could not give the answers to her teacher as quickly as her classmates, although she attempted to do so. When she could not achieve what she wanted, she assessed her performance negatively. She felt that she could not do as well as others and the feeling of lagging behind her classmates led her to lose interest in the lessons. As a result, boredom was triggered. Thu's boredom in this case was related to a perceived inability to perform or achieve at the level of her classmates. After missing the opportunity to provide answers to the earlier questions which were relatively easy, Thu was required to respond to later questions which were more challenging, and she did not know the answers. Thu reported how boredom appeared as follows:

Boredom came up when... for example, my classmates and I learn with the same teacher, but my classmates are quite smart...uhm... when I intended to answer the questions, but my classmates raised their hands faster than me. Then in my turn I had tougher questions, I didn't know how to answer them, so I felt upset. I also felt bored...and that boredom made me feel sleepy. (Thu– excerpt 3)

According to Pekrun et al. (2002), boredom can occur when there is a mismatch between the demands of the task and the ability of students, i.e. when the demands are too low for high-ability students or, as in Thu's case, when self-evaluations of ability are lower than the perceived demands of the task. As shown above, Thu reported that her boredom was connected to her perceptions that the task was too challenging for her. Thu

explained that when she could not follow the lesson, she felt excluded from engaging, and as a result, she became bored and began to daydream.

In the case of Nga, boredom was reportedly caused by the teacher's approach to teaching reading rather than her own level of language proficiency. In Nga's English reading classes, the students were frequently asked to read silently as a class and to individually look up any unknown words in the reading passage provided. This was a common and repeated task within reading lessons. As a result, boredom was triggered by the repetitiveness of dictionary searching. Students were left to work individually and check the meanings of any new words encountered without any interaction with other students or the teacher. The silent learning atmosphere was disengaging for Nga and made her feel bored.

I often feel bored in reading lessons, too. When the teacher gave me a new reading passage in the class and told me to do it within 30 minutes and she was going to check the work done after that. I felt bored when reading it... I needed to look up the words that I didn't know the meaning of so that I could understand the main ideas of the reading passage. I kept looking up the words...so boring... [After a while] I rarely looked up the new words or read the passage because there were a lot of new words. I just left it. (Nga– excerpt 6)

Thus, boredom led to less compliance with the task set by the teacher and, given that Nga gave up trying to find the meaning of all the unknown words, left her feeling excluded and with little sense of accomplishment.

Another factor that triggered Nga's boredom was that even when trying to complete this tedious task, it was not always possible for her to match the dictionary meanings with the meanings in the text, so that the outcome was unsatisfactory as the

effort she put in did not lead to a greater understanding of the texts. As a result, Nga lost interest and became disengaged in class. Thus, the nature and demands of the repetitive class activity, an inability to comprehend the reading texts even after following the instructions of the task, together with the classroom atmosphere, contributed to Nga's boredom.

The nature of the writing lessons was another source of boredom for Nga. Students were provided with a topic by the teacher and given a set time allowance to write their response independently and silently during classes. Nga felt that the writing tasks lacked challenge and did not stimulate her creativity or imagination. Nga reported:

The teacher gave the topic and then we sat and wrote... It was so boring. (Nga–excerpt 7)

As experienced in her reading lessons, Nga admitted that she often felt bored in writing lessons because “there were few interactions between the teacher and students”. She commented that students “rarely” did as they had been told and that she was not motivated to complete the writing because she preferred lessons in which the teacher interacted with students.

Nga's boredom, as illustrated above, stemmed from the pedagogical approaches used by her regular English writing and reading teachers. However, in another case, Thu reported that her boredom was as a result of not being able to adjust to a new substitute teacher's teaching style. Thu explained that she was used to her regular teacher's teaching style, but when there was a substitute teacher, she could not readily engage. She found the substitute teacher's lesson boring because the way she presented the lesson was different from her usual teacher's. Therefore, it was challenging for her to step out of her comfort zone forcing her to do things in a different way which meant she withdrew her

interest. Thu described her class with her substitute teacher when boredom was triggered as follows:

I got used to my teacher's teaching style, but one day there was a sub teacher. Her teaching style made me feel sleepy. I just yawned and nodded during the whole period... When I learned with another teacher [the substitute teacher] ...her knowledge was good...but the way she presented her lesson was a bit boring. This made me feel tired in class. (Thu– excerpt 4)

As seen with Thu, Huong's boredom seemed to arise from a lack of focus on developing communication skills within class. Instead, the teacher was focused on preparing students to do well in examinations. At that time, most of her classmates were focused on studying Mathematics and Sciences, and they found it difficult to learn English. Thus, the English teacher helped them learn English by guiding them with some strategies and tips to prepare for the examinations rather than supporting them to develop and improve their ability to use the language for a real communicative purpose. As a result, Huong felt bored in those lessons because her teacher's approach suited her classmates' needs for passing English examinations, but it was not appropriate for her needs. She was focused on English and invested in learning the language for communication. She said:

My classmates focused on Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry, so English was a tricky subject for all of them. My teacher just taught us some approaches and tactics for learning English... for the purpose of taking the exam, not for getting understanding or knowledge... It was a bit boring. (Huong– excerpt 3)

As the data above exemplified, students reported that boredom in English lessons was triggered by a range of different factors, including perception of low competence

relative to the task demand, task repetitiveness and unchallenging activities, the teacher's teaching style and the content of the teaching.

4.2.4 Activity-related emotions: Summary

In line with the definition above, activity-related emotions are related to activities that students do in their English language learning. Activity-related emotions were not dependent on the outcomes or achievement of the activities, but they were associated with the on-going activities themselves. Activity-related emotions were not triggered from the achievement or failure of the activities like success-linked or failure-linked emotions. On-going outcomes of the activities were the origins of boredom or positive emotions including excitement and enjoyment. Boredom in this study, was likely to lead to negative outcomes such as demotivating, discouraging, and disengaging students from their language learning, whereas enjoyment and excitement spurred on positive outcomes such as engaging students and motivating them to further study.

4.3 Outcome-related success-linked emotions

This section aims to explore the range of success-linked emotions in English language learning in the Vietnamese context. The success-linked emotions of happiness, pride, self-confidence, gratitude, admiration and hope will be presented in this section. For each kind of positive emotion, the definition(s) in English and its equivalent in Vietnamese are provided and their features are also discussed.

4.3.1 Happiness

The term *happiness* in the field of study of psychology can be used interchangeably with *joy* and “shares conceptual space with other relatively high-arousal positive emotions

such as amusement” (Fredrickson, 1998, p. 304). However, joy is generally stronger than happiness. According to Weiner’s (2014) attribution approach to emotion and motivation, happiness is said to be “a relatively ‘thoughtless’ emotion, cognitively tied to goals and aspiration level” (p. 357) and “labelled an outcome-dependent, attribution-independent emotion” (p. 357). According to Weiner’s (2014) assumption of an attribution view of emotion, “feelings are determined by thoughts, and specifically by beliefs about causality” (p. 354), but feelings of happiness are not determined by these. He explains that happiness originated from success and causes of success are from different sources, but the possible attributions of happy feelings are the same. For example, causes of success at basketball are different, and different from those of success at a math quiz, but emotions after those successes are the same.

Therefore, happiness has been categorized as one of the success-linked emotions because “it functions as a reward (pleasure) and increases achievement motivation” (Nakamura, 2018, p. 557).

In Vietnamese, there are two translations for the word *happiness*: *vui* (or *vui vẻ*) and *hạnh phúc*. The former words express the feeling of happiness or joy in general, but the latter expresses the happy feelings between couples. In this study, *happiness* is used with the former meaning.

Happiness in this study was found to be derived from internal and external sources and from experiences inside and outside the classroom. In the examples below, happiness resulted from experiences of student success such as completing a challenging task, solving a problem, understanding the lessons, and communicating in English.

For example, Hien described how he was happy in successfully completing what he considered to be a challenging task when he was taking an English course at an English

Language Centre. As will be seen in Section 4.4.1, Hien's first response to what seemed like an overwhelming challenge was negative and he felt upset. This was the second time he did that type of task, so he learned from his first failure by adjusting his understanding of how he could achieve it and by changing his approach to recruiting his participants for the interviews. This resulted in completing the task and the task fulfilment changed his emotion from upset to happiness. He reported:

After the first week studying at the English Language Centre, I was asked to make a video about how to teach two different sounds. I felt happy with this when I finished this task. (Hien– excerpt 4)

Hien also explained that the positive emotion of happiness spurred on further positive experiences as he found it easier to learn and he felt like learning more:

When I am happy, I feel like learning because it's easier to learn and I feel at ease to learn. (Hien– excerpt 5)

A student who experienced both internally and externally driven happiness in learning English was Thu. For example, she was happy when she was successful in resolving her learning problem by searching for more information on YouTube. Thus, the emergence of happiness was the result of Thu's satisfaction at having succeeded in solving a problem independently without needing to rely on others for support:

The teacher explained [the concept of] conditional sentences with lots of...lots of words. Then I sat and thought "what is the unreal conditional sentence?" Then I asked her "Teacher! What is the unreal conditional sentence?" "She explained: "The unreal conditional sentence is called the type 2, while the real conditional sentence is called type 1...?" "Oh. Is that so?" Then I just sat...and repeated the

words “the unreal sentence is called type 2; the real conditional sentence is type 1...”. Sometimes there’s something stuck in my mind and it’s hard for me to absorb knowledge ...I felt frustrated. After that period, I wrote down the forms of two types of conditional sentences on an A4 paper sheet. Then I looked at them again and again. Then I searched the guidelines on YouTube [...]. Then I shouted “Ah, I got it. Now I understand. Got it.” At that moment I was so happy. (laughed) (Thu– excerpt 8)

In addition, Thu stated that she felt happy when she answered her teacher’s questions, when she received high scores, and when she learned something interesting from her teachers. In particular, she felt very happy when she understood the lessons. The first two of these causes were externally motivated, but the last two were from internal sources. From her quote below, it was the internal source – understanding the lessons, which was most powerful. She emphasised that experience as follows:

I felt happy when I could answer my teacher’s questions, when I received good scores, or when I learned something interesting from the teachers. More importantly when I could understand the lessons. When I understood the lesson, I was so happy. Oh yes, I got it!... Nothing is happier than that. The feeling of being unable to understand the lessons is so frustrating. (Thu– excerpt 9)

This feeling of happiness motivated Thu in her learning. As a result, she felt that she was able to do more tasks because her mind was open to new and challenging things. In this case, therefore the initial experience of happiness expanded her ability to learn and to be able to solve the problems that she encountered in her learning by herself which led to a feeling of pride in herself.

[I felt] so proud. I could understand it. I've figured it out. I could do more tasks about that topic then. Happy. (Thu– excerpt 10)

As the two excerpts above show, Thu appeared to be a driven and motivated student with a high desire to improve her English proficiency. She tried to find ways to overcome difficulties in her study on her own and persevered when she encountered challenges. Her happiness in studying English was a result of being able to solve problems herself and achieve success. Her happiness was closely linked to pride, which emerged from her own successful achievements. The close connection between happiness and pride is further illustrated and analysed in the cases of Nga, Huong and Hoan in Section 4.3.2.

Happiness could be externally motivated as illustrated by Huong and Nga. For example, Huong's happiness was triggered when she made a presentation in English successfully in front of the class. She felt happy as her classmates and teacher noticed the substantial progress she had made in English study.

I spoke so fluently on that day because I had practised a lot at home. Whenever I stood in front of the mirror to make up, I practised speaking English. The teacher was so surprised at me on that day because I had made huge progress within one week. I spoke English with standard and nice pronunciation. My classmates also praised me for my progress. I was happy... so happy (Huong– excerpt 5).

Huong's happiness was based on her striving to improve her pronunciation and speaking. When this was noticed by her English teacher and classmates who were surprised by the progress she had made, she felt happy that she was able to reach her goal and that this was recognised and validated by others. Therefore, while her happiness was in part

internally derived due to her progress, it was also externally motivated because it was enhanced by others' praise.

When she succeeded in presenting in English with “standard and nice pronunciation” (Huong) in class, she could not hide her emotion, sharing the experience with her roommate as soon as she arrived home. She felt much happiness because she knew that speaking in English was a weakness for her, especially in front of other people. The happiness was increased by sharing it with her roommate:

I came home that day and showed off to my roommate “Hey, I received compliments from my teacher and classmates for my good English speaking today”. I was glad, so happy. That day was an unforgettable memory of mine. I had the feeling of my effort being acknowledged. I was so happy because I had thought that I couldn't make it since I had my own limitations (Huong– excerpt 6).

The compliments from the teacher and classmates made Huong feel happy because she succeeded in reaching her goals and her success was socially acknowledged as well. Thus, happiness emerged not only from the development of skills or achievements of learning outcomes but also from social aspects such as social validation. The happiness was all the more intense because it swept away her earlier negative concerns that she would not succeed.

The happiness made her feel motivated to learn and helped her to realise her English learning ability, making her feel more confident in learning. She affirmed the power of praise and encouragement as follows:

In fact, on that day...I spoke English and received positive feedback from the teacher and classmates. And I realised that “Oh, I could do it well” ... Sometimes praise and encouragement given at the right time could make something different... They are so powerful... (Huong– excerpt 7)

Happiness in the final two examples below occurred as a result of experiences outside the classroom. Nga talked about her happiness which was triggered when she could communicate with her flatmates in English. The feeling of possessing another language beside her native language in her case gave rise to a happy state. It seemed to be “cool” when Nga could use another language and she had the feeling of reaching a higher level when she could communicate in English.

Yes, I felt happy... Sometimes my flatmates and I talked to each other using some English sentences. (laughed) So happy. I seem to be a genius because I could use another language together with my native language. I thought I was noble when speaking English. (Nga– excerpt 13)

Here Nga’s flatmates were not native English speakers, they were fellow learners like her, but they set themselves their own strategy of practising English outside the classroom, beyond the sight of the teacher. That was a big investment, and it was reflected in the fancy words she used about herself– “genius” and “noble”.

Huong’s happiness, illustrated below, was also externally motivated and triggered by an experience that occurred outside the classroom. Huong stated that happiness emerged when she joined a volunteer club where she helped foreign students to learn Vietnamese. While the purpose was not to speak English, this role provided her with plenty of opportunities to practise English and was an excellent peer-learning experience. She was happy with that work because she “could help other people” (Huong). She

confirmed that “They [the foreign students] felt so grateful for what I have done for them” (Huong). Huong explained a lot about that meaningful job she did at university and what she gained from that:

Additionally, I could learn many new things. I had more opportunities to practise English and learn about other countries’ cultures such as Mozambique, and Mongolian cultures... They were so friendly and open-hearted. They spoke so freely and openly. They even corrected my English pronunciation when I misused some words or pronounced them wrong. (Huong– excerpt 8)

In addition to the happiness at having an opportunity to practise and improve her spoken English Huong’s happiness emerged from the success of doing good things for other people, which brought her a chance to challenge herself and opened up possibilities to do something new.

Thus, in this study happiness was triggered from external and internal sources, within and outside the classroom, but mostly it was related to success. Happiness largely emerged from individuals’ achievements and social elements of English language learning. There is a difference between enjoyment and happiness in this study: happiness was rooted in both internal and external sources, but enjoyment was usually externally constructed. Unlike enjoyment which is based on pleasure, happiness is tied to the achievement of a goal.

4.3.2 Pride

Pride is a positive emotion that is seen to emerge as a result of an individual’s achievements or success, which is perceived positively by themselves or evaluated positively by other people. According to Beuchner et al. (2019), pride has been

categorised into a self-based and a social comparison-based facet. “Self-based pride is an emotional response to intrapersonal improvement in performance over time, whereas social comparison-based pride is an emotional response to successfully outperforming others” (Beuchner et al., 2019, p. 1).

The Vietnamese translation of pride is *tự hào*, or *hãnh diện*. These two terms have little differences in meaning except that the term *tự hào* is more common than *hãnh diện*. In the conversations with the students, the word *tự hào* was used more frequently. This study presents pride in two facets: self-based and social comparison-based pride.

Self-based pride, defined as “an emotional response to success in terms of doing well relative to how one has done previously” (Beuchner et al., 2019, p. 2), has been shown to be positively related to individual achievement values (Buechner et al., 2018).

Pride in Bao’s excerpt below can be classified as self-based because it was related to her achievement in classroom performance over time. She simply felt proud of her improvement in her English ability which met her own expectations. She told me:

I felt proud when I achieved what I felt like doing; for example, when I could understand someone speaking English. At that time, I felt so proud of myself.
(Bao– excerpt 1)

Social comparison-based pride, “an emotional response to success in terms of doing well relative to others” Beuchner et al. (2019, p. 2), has been indicated to relate to performance-approach goals and social achievement values (Buechner et al., 2018). Social comparison-based pride was reported by Kha, Cong, and Hoan in the interviews, with Cong and Hoan reporting pride that was initiated from successful participation in English competitions.

Kha's social comparison-based pride occurred when he could answer the questions posed by his teacher when his classmates were unable to. Kha felt proud of himself when he did something well and also when he was able to perform better than his peers.

When I got high scores, I felt proud... When I got a prize, or in the classroom I could give the answers that nobody could. (Kha– excerpt 7)

When Kha made some progress and attained academic achievements, he shared his success with his sister. His sister complimented him which made him happy, acting as a form of social validation. Thus, pride originated from successful achievement above what had been expected, and having that action evaluated positively by others in his personal social circle. The praise he received motivated Kha even more with his learning.

She praised me like “You are making more and more progress”... I felt happy and I consider it as motivation. (Kha– excerpt 8)

When students experienced positive emotions, such as happiness and pride, they wanted to share them with people close to them. Kha and Huong (discussed in Section 4.3.1) are examples of this. Kha shared his academic achievements with his sister, while Huong shared her happiness with her flatmate. Their positive emotions could be enhanced by sharing their success with others.

Cong experienced pride that was linked to success in an English competition, which, in contrast, was also a source of disappointment when he failed to perform well (discussed in Section 4.4.2). Cong reported that pride emerged when he had put significant effort into preparing for an English competition and he was successful in the competition. Cong asserted: “I am proud of myself for trying my best”. Pride was also

present at other times when Cong was selected to take part in some English tests for good students. Thus, Cong's pride was elicited by something that was within his control and effort, and was related to his academic achievements.

As a result of this success, Cong did not want to "rest on his laurels" and he felt more motivated to further his learning. Pride had an impact on his motivation. He set out more goals for himself to help him achieve more in the future:

I felt so proud. However, I often consider my achievements as motivation so that I think that I need to work more, to try more and never feel satisfied with my current achievements. Thus, I will reach my goal for the next competitions.
(Cong– excerpt 3)

Hoan's pride was related to academic achievements and success in an English competition. He worked hard and was able to obtain a prize in the competition. He felt proud of himself for devoting time and effort to participate in challenging tests and felt that he "deserved" the success which he saw as recognition of his hard work. He stated:

In general, I took pride in myself, but I didn't feel overconfident... I mean that I made great effort and I gained achievements which rewarded my effort. (Hoan– excerpt 5)

Pride and happiness often occurred together in this study. In the following excerpts, the students reported that happiness and pride occurred together when they were successful at accomplishing something challenging. Happiness occurred with Nga's self-based pride, while it appeared together with Huong's and Hoan's social comparison-based pride.

Nga felt both happy and proud of herself when she could complete tasks in class without preparation, such as answering the teacher or speaking in front of the class fluently. Her pride originated from her improvement. She did well relative to what she had done previously. She felt happy indeed in those situations. She showed her positive emotions:

I felt proud of myself when I could find the answers or complete tasks which had not been prepared beforehand. As you know I like the tasks which are given to prepare at home before the class. However, when I could do something which had not been prepared... I like that moment. In addition, when I presented something in front of the class fluently, without hesitation or faltering. Really happy. My god! How good on me! I could do it even though it was unprepared. I was so proud.
(Nga– excerpt 14)

Nga admitted that when she could do the tasks well and her teacher gave her compliments, she felt even more proud. The feelings of pride and happiness had a positive effect on her. She talked to me with a cheerful voice:

Then the teacher said “good”, “good job” and complimented me such as “good speaking”, “good pronunciation”. This made me feel prouder than when I performed the tasks well with preparation. As a result, I like learning English more. (Nga– excerpt 15)

Pride and happiness were also present in the following event: Huong felt happy and proud of herself when she could answer the teacher’s question, but her classmates could not. Receiving a score of 10 for a correct answer made her feel proud of herself because she could do better than others and her achievement was evaluated positively by her teacher and classmates. Here is how happiness and pride arose:

About my pride... at that time... like... on that day the teacher asked me to read the reading task aloud, something like that... she asked me to read and write the answer on the board. In fact, she asked my classmate sitting next to me to do it first, but she couldn't complete the task. Then my teacher asked if anyone else could do it... I knew the answers [...] The English teacher was surprised, so were my classmates... I naturally "shone" on that day. I was so proud of myself. I did it right, and it happened on a special occasion, so she gave me a score of 10. So happy, so proud of myself. (Huong– excerpt 9)

As illustrated in the excerpt above, Huong felt proud because she could do better than her classmates. She proudly stated that she “shone” on that day because she “could learn English so well that not everyone could” (Huong). Her achievement was positively acknowledged by her classmates and teacher, so it reflected the social comparison aspect of pride.

For Hoan, pride and happiness emerged together when he attained academic achievements. He took part in an English competition and was successful. That prize made him feel proud of himself and he felt even prouder because he had competed with students in higher classes than him. He talked with me about pride and happiness in the interview:

I felt proud when I came second in the English festival in my Year 6. So happy... Because there were a lot of senior students taking part in the competition. I was a junior student, and I was in the second place. This was my first attempt to learn English... Quite happy and proud. (Hoan– excerpt 6)

As exemplified in the excerpt above, Hoan's pride emerged from his success and achievements because he was able to do things more outstandingly than his classmates.

It was an English festival held in his school, and his teachers and peers were the audience, and they acted as a form of social validation.

In conclusion, pride arose when the students were successful at something they considered challenging, when they were able to improve on their previous work or perform at a higher level than their peers. Students felt proud of themselves for improvements in their ability, accomplishment of goals and exceeding their own expectations when they had invested significant effort into their learning. Pride was the result of individuals' success or achievements and social validation of this. The two emotions of pride and happiness frequently occurred together as a result of learner success, achievement or actions and positive acknowledgement or appreciation from others. One important distinction between happiness and pride is that pride involves comparison.

4.3.3 Self-confidence

Self-confidence in this study is examined in terms of communication in English language learning. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), self-confidence in English language learning refers to learners' beliefs about their ability to communicate effectively in the target language. In other words, "self-confident language learners trust their abilities and skills to be able to use the L2 language in a meaningful communication [sic]. They do not exhibit a sense of fear (e.g. language anxiety) that may hinder them to accomplish their L2 learning goals" (Fatima et al., 2020, p. 913).

Self-confidence is translated into Vietnamese as *tự tin* or *lòng tự tin*. It is about someone's belief in his or her ability to do something, so it has a broader meaning than the definition above but in language learning contexts, it is used with the meaning above.

In this study, self-confidence tended to be derived from successful outcomes in students' English language learning. In the first two excerpts below, the students revealed that they were confident in speaking English which is not common for learners of English in the Vietnamese context. As Tran et al. (2021) highlight, most Vietnamese students are afraid of speaking in public, especially speaking in English. In this study, Hoan's success at achieving second place in an English festival led to him feeling more confident. In this way, a successful outcome acted as validation of his ability that gave him the confidence that he could repeat this success in the future. He proudly talked about that event:

I felt more confident because my vocabulary improved a lot... [I felt] more confident in speaking English... I felt a bit shy and trembled because it was the first time I had spoken in public. Additionally, speaking in English in public was more difficult. (Hoan– excerpt 7)

As illustrated in this excerpt, Hoan initially experienced more negative emotions, feeling a bit shy and anxious, because it was the first time he had joined such a challenging activity. According to him, speaking in a public place was challenging; and it was more difficult when speaking in English as it required both speaking competence and high English proficiency. However, over time as he experienced success, these negative emotions lessened in intensity and self-confidence emerged. With lower levels of communication anxiety and validation of his ability, he developed more confidence and as a result, he was more likely to communicate with other people. The connection between success and confidence is further illustrated by Cong. He believed that he could succeed in performing challenging tasks when he had a high level of belief in his own competence. He emphasized that by mustering determination and effort, he felt confident of future

success and in being able to achieve positive outcomes. When he did not have a sense of fear, he felt more assured about his ability to do the job well. He spoke with me as follows:

I will succeed in doing something if I try my best to do it. I can't even imagine or predict the outcomes and results, but I do feel confident that I will succeed in doing it. (Cong– excerpt 4)

In summary, self-confidence appeared to emerge when there was a lower level of anxiety. When more self-confident students in this study reported that they believed in their ability to perform a task, to communicate with other people in their English or to do something well, they experienced less fear and succeeded in doing that work. Self-confidence can therefore be seen as a positive orientation to success. Positive emotions spur on positive actions and further positive emotions.

4.3.4 Gratitude

Gratitude is defined as an emotion which arises “when an individual (beneficiary) perceives that another person (benefactor) or source (e.g., God, luck, fate) has intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary’s well-being” Fredrickson (2004, p. 6). An individual (recipient) is grateful towards others when the other has done a favour to the recipient. Gratitude builds up personal skills and social resources through the process of thinking and doing good things to repay kindness (Fredrickson, 2004). Therefore, gratitude is considered to be “a moral emotion that is strongly associated with positive affect” (Witvliet et al., 2019, p. 272).

Gratitude in Vietnamese translation is *lòng biết ơn* or *sự biết ơn*. In Vietnam, gratitude is considered to be one of the most important social standards. Appreciating, acknowledging help, and showing gratitude towards the person who gave a favour is one

of the first lessons a child must learn when they start school. In Vietnam, there are some proverbs and poetry about gratitude printed in elementary school textbooks, such as “Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây”. This proverb is translated as “When you eat fruit, acknowledge the person who grew and has taken care of that tree”. A very popular poem about children’s gratitude towards parents who gave them a life and have raised them is also taught at school during the very first lessons, as follows:

“Công cha như núi Thái Sơn

Nghĩa mẹ như nước trong nguồn chảy ra

Một lòng thờ mẹ kính cha

Cho tròn chữ hiếu mới là đạo con”

This poem is translated as: “The father’s efforts in bringing us up are uncountable or immeasurable and they can be compared to the height of a very high mountain in China. Mother’s love towards us is endless like water from natural sources”. Thus, strongly acknowledging a mother’s fostering and showing respect to a father are a child’s responsibility.

Besides acknowledging parents’ work in their upbringing, children in Vietnam are taught and encouraged to acknowledge their gratitude towards their teachers who are considered to have influence on them. In Vietnam, teachers are considered the third most important person, after parents, in nurturing and educating a child, as the Vietnamese saying, “Công cha, nghĩa mẹ, ơn thầy” meaning “father’s nurturing, mother’s fostering and teacher’ educating are three most important things a child must acknowledge”. Another saying that reminds a person of showing gratitude towards teachers on special occasions is “Mừng một tết cha, mừng ba tết thầy”, meaning a person should visit parents

on the first day of a lunar new year [*Tet* in Vietnamese] and visit teachers on the third day of that occasion. Therefore, in Vietnam gratitude and respect to those who support others in their development are considered an extremely important attribute. Showing gratitude towards parents, teachers, or anyone who did a favour to you by working hard and doing well is an important aspect of Vietnamese culture. This is the behavioural reciprocity feature of gratitude that decrees that beneficiaries should do something to repay what benefactors have done for them (McCullough et al., 2001).

In the current study, students reported that they felt gratitude for good things that their parents, teachers, and friends had done for them in relation to English language learning. When they were experiencing gratitude, like other positive emotions, it was often associated with positive outcomes. In the excerpt below, Cong felt gratitude for his parents' nurturing and stated that his family was the most important part of his life:

Nothing is more important than your family. To me, my family is always the most important thing, the thing I need to care about the most. Because having been born was a wonderful thing and the people who have taken care of me and raised me are my parents. My parents are the most important to me. (Cong– excerpt 5)

When discussing his parents, he stated that his parents positively impacted every aspect of his life. They motivated him to “overcome all difficulties in life, not only in study, but every field of life”. He highly appreciated the effort they devoted to his life. Cong showed his gratitude to the upbringing his parents gave him by working hard and doing well.

Thu discussed how she felt grateful to her English teacher at high school. She was someone who Thu trusted, and she supported and encouraged her whenever she had difficulties:

Before I knew the results of university entrance exams, I told my English teacher “I am likely to fail the exams”. She said, “Try to wait for the upcoming results for your last choice”. When I passed the exams, I informed her and she said, “God does not betray us”. What she said moved me [...]. It helped me to think about the ways to overcome difficulties. Her words “God does not betray us. Try your best” motivated me to study. (Thu– excerpt 13)

To express her gratitude towards her English teacher, Thu often sent her best wishes on special occasions such as on Vietnamese teachers’ day, on lunar new year or on the teacher’s birthday “in a special way” (Thu). Thu did not explain what that special way was. It was possible that she not only sent cards and flowers to her English teacher on Vietnamese teachers’ days, as most Vietnamese students do in a traditional way, but also on other special days. Furthermore, she highlighted that her English teacher was the first person she sent wishes to on those occasions because she “had the closest relationship” with her (Thu) and “no other teachers could understand me as well as she did” (Thu).

Huong also reported her feeling of gratitude towards her English teacher, who was teaching a soft-skills training programme in an English Language Centre. This was a course that covered skills that were not focused on in general classes, such as debating skills and teamworking skills. His advice and orientation greatly contributed to Huong’s career orientation and perspectives. Her teacher in the soft-skills class guided her in choosing a career and helped her to change her way of thinking and change her living style as well. Thus, Huong acknowledged her teacher and what he had done for her which promoted her well-being and developed her. She said:

The teacher [in the soft-skills class] encouraged me a lot. He made me change my ways. I changed my thinking, too. Before that time, I was so shy that I could not

talk with new people. Everyone who met me for the first time assumed that I was not talkative. [...]. Then I became bolder and thoughtful about my future and knew who I would like to become. That's it. I felt grateful for my friend who invited me to join that course, too. (Huong– excerpt 11)

In the excerpt above, Huong expresses gratitude to her friend who invited her to join the class where she had the opportunity to meet and talk with the teacher who subsequently became an important influence on her. She was thankful to her friend who gave her the chance to broaden her mind and make her life more meaningful.

To sum up, the students reported their feelings of gratitude towards their teachers, parents, and friends for what they did for them. The students expressed their gratitude by doing something good for those people such as learning more, studying hard, and doing well. These are ways of expressing gratitude.

4.3.5 Admiration

Admiration is classified as a success-linked emotion. Schindler (2014) stated that “admiration and adoration are positive emotions in response to an outstanding person or object” (p. 2). She further explains that “admiration is elicited by outstanding role models who represent specific ideals or values” (p. 2). In an educational environment, role models are often teachers and school peers or classmates. However, as Murphey notes, role models can be anyone who is “close to our social, professional and/ or age level who for some reason we may respect and admire” (Murphey, 1998, p. 201). Thus, role models are often admired and respected by less experienced and proficient students (Lingley, 2017; Murphey & Arao, 2001). Admiration helps individuals to develop, “to change and grow”

(Schindler et al., 2013, p. 85) because the function of admiration is to “enhance the individual’s agency in striving for ideals” (Schindler, 2014, p. 2).

Admiration is translated into Vietnamese as *sự khâm phục*, *sự hâm mộ*, or *ngưỡng mộ*. These words are synonyms with no differences in meanings and their meanings are close to the definition above.

In this study, Huong and Nga showed their admiration towards their English teachers, classmates, and, in Nga’s case, her sister. These were people who had achieved goals that these students desired to achieve or who had particular values that were seen as desirable to obtain. Those people served as role models to them.

Huong admired the teacher who taught her soft skills (see Section 4.3.4). This teacher taught two subjects: English at school and the soft-skills training programme at an English Language centre and he used English all the time when teaching that soft-skills subject. Huong admired her teacher for this, and she also expressed admiration for her classmates as they used English all the time in the classroom:

My teacher there always used English in class. He was also an English teacher, so he often talked about English learning. He sometimes advised us: “You guys should learn English more. Learning English is fun, it is also helpful”. [...] My friends there spoke English so well. Oh, I really admired them. (Huong– excerpt 12)

Huong admired her teacher and classmates for their ability to speak English and also for the values that her teacher possessed: taking care, helping students to be aware of the importance of English learning and encouraging them to learn it. Huong discusses how

her admiration for her teacher and classmates motivated her to focus more on learning English:

I felt admiration and felt like learning English. I wanted to speak English as well as them. And then I started to think deeply about learning English and took it seriously. My inspiration in learning English was generated unintentionally. (Huong– excerpt 13)

Nga's role model below was her older sister. Nga admired her because she was very good at English. Her sister went to the same high school as Nga and learned English with the same teacher, but her sister was her English teacher's dearest student because of her excellent learning proficiency. Nga expressed her admiration towards her sister as follows:

Everyone praised her, so I consider her my idol. I wanted to become as good an English-speaking person as her. The first reason why I have chosen English as a major subject was because of her. She was so good at English. I admired her a lot. I adored her. (Nga– excerpt 16)

As seen with Huong above, for Nga, having a role model had a positive motivational effect on her learning of English and also on her career decisions. Nga desired to become a person who was as good at speaking English as her sister.

In conclusion, admiration in this study was evoked by English teachers, classmates and a family member who served as outstanding role models. These people had achieved their goals, embodied specific values that the students wanted to achieve and planted those goals as possibilities. Admiration is an emotional response to these outstanding people, and it helps the students to develop themselves to achieve the goals.

4.3.6 Hope

As explained in the introduction of this chapter, hope in this study is classed as a success-linked emotion. According to Snyder et al. (2002), hope is considered a positive emotion and is defined as a cognitive set that is based on agency thinking (goal-directed thought) and pathways thinking (planning to meet the goals) (Snyder, 2000). Safri (2016) also asserted that hope “is a desire with an expectation for something, especially something good to happen” (p. 138).

The Vietnamese translation for hope is (*niềm*) *hy vọng*, or *ước vọng*. These terms have the same meaning as the English, but the Vietnamese version (*niềm*) *hy vọng* is more colloquial than the term *ước vọng*.

In this study, one student, Bao, expressed hope when she discussed her dream of learning English well enough so that she could speak confidently in English in public. As well as clearly stating this goal, Bao had established clear plans to help her to achieve it. Here, hope, expressed as her desire to further develop herself, is associated with many positive outcomes such as better academic achievements and greater happiness:

I have a dream of being able to speak English fluently and confidently in front of other people. For my dream, I have tried to learn more. Although my results have not been good, I try to learn more. (Bao– excerpt 2)

Bao’s hope was driven by personal interest rather than by anything that happened inside the classroom. Bao had a Korean idol, a singer from a Korean band. She followed her Korean idol’s pages on Facebook where she learned English words. Fans of those pages wrote status updates or comments about her Korean idol in English, so if she wanted to read information about her idol, she needed to know more English. This motivated her to

learn English, because Bao also hoped that she would go to visit her idol in Korea one day.

To summarise, hope reported in students' interview accounts was initiated from an internal source inside the classroom and external sources outside the classroom. Hope featured more prominently in the written narratives and will be explored and analysed further in the next chapter.

4.3.7 Success-linked emotions: Summary

Success-linked emotions appeared to motivate students with their English language learning and positively impact their further study. Success-linked emotions spurred on positive actions which also served to enhance the positive emotions originally felt and stimulate new ones as well.

Reported positive emotions in this study were triggered from internal and external sources, from inside and outside the classroom. Teachers, parents, sisters, flatmates, role models, peers and friends impacted the students' emotions. Teachers' actions had the most important role in shaping the students' positive emotions and influenced the students' happiness and gratitude. Parents were an important influence on students' emotions such as pride and gratitude. Sisters and flatmates were people close to the students with whom they shared their happiness and pride. Role models, including near-peer role models, affected students' positive emotions such as admiration and hope. Friends who had given help to the students earned their gratitude. A girlfriend could be a source from which the student's excitement was shaped.

Positive emotions emerged from different contexts, but English competitions and English festival events influenced the students' positive emotions, such as happiness, and

pride, the most. Happiness, pride and self-confidence were related to the students' achievements or success. Happiness and pride appeared to occur together in this study.

4.4 Failure-linked outcome-related emotions

This section presents the failure-linked emotions that emerged in English language learning in the Vietnamese context. The failure-linked emotions of upset, disappointment, anxiety, and shame will be presented in this section. Similar to the section of success-linked emotions, in this section each kind of negative emotion, the definition(s) in English and its equivalent in Vietnamese are provided and their features are also discussed.

4.4.1 Upset

Upset was not included in the set of prompt questions, but was raised by students during the interviews. When describing their emotions, participants used the Vietnamese word *buồn* meaning sadness to express their upset. However, while in English sadness can be similar in meaning to upset, it also suggests a comparatively more intense and more established negative emotion. As the data illustrates, upset tended to be mentioned by the participants as a temporary emotion, as the students who experienced upset tended to self-regulate their emotions to move forwards. Thus, upset in this study can be defined as a psychological reaction of temporary feelings of sadness to an outcome that is assessed as failure.

The English word *upset* has the Vietnamese equivalent as *buồn* or *buồn rầu*. Instances of the emotion *upset* in this study were related to teacher feedback and a student's inability to fulfil a task.

For example, Nga felt upset when she received negative feedback from her teacher about the mistakes that she had made in her work. She had made a lot of grammatical mistakes in her writing, which she felt she should not have made. In the interview, Nga highlighted her emotions by repeating the word for “upset” several times:

I often felt upset in the classroom when the teacher gave feedback to my writing tasks. Oh, my god! How could I make such silly mistakes? It was simple and basic knowledge, but I still made mistakes. I even made so many silly mistakes, not a few... So upset. Yes, so upset. Why could I make such silly mistakes? I was upset at those moments, and I was upset after receiving the feedback for a short time. I was upset after the teacher's comments. (Nga– excerpt 8)

While Nga admitted that she was upset when looking at her grammar mistakes, this did not last for a long time because she was determined to move forwards. She said: “I did not want to be in that mood for long because I would not be able to learn more”.

As discussed in Section 4.3.1, Hien’s success and what led to Hien’s happiness was associated with completing a challenging task, namely making a video. Although the content of the two videos was different, they required similar techniques and skills. This account was Hien’s first attempt to do this type of task and he was inexperienced in recruiting participants, so he was unable to do it and as consequence felt upset:

I felt upset when I couldn't do the task. Like...I wanted to do it and to complete it, but I was unable to do it... The task required me to make a video introducing the reasons why students like learning English. The video needed to be recorded at another university. I went there several times, but I failed to complete the task. (Hien– excerpt 1)

The type of upset Hien felt was different from Nga's. Nga was upset because she did not do well in a task that was not challenging and should have been achievable for her, whereas Hien was upset because he was unable to complete a difficult new task. The task required him to video record while interviewing other students from different universities in his local area and ask why they studied English. However, his participants refused to be video recorded because they did not want their images to be seen publicly, so they refused to cooperate with him. Thus, his upset was rooted in the circumstance, not only his inability. His upset was induced by his inability to attain achievements from the challenging task and his inability to meet his expectations.

In summary, upset was triggered when the students realised they were unable to learn English and to fulfil challenging tasks in English language learning. Upset in this study originated from the inability to do something.

4.4.2 Disappointment

Disappointment can be defined as the feeling of displeasure caused by the non-fulfilment of one's hope or expectation. In line with this, Dijk and Zeelenberg (2010) define disappointment as "a psychological reaction to an outcome that does not match up against expectations" or "nonachievement of an expected outcome" (p. 788).

The Vietnamese term for *disappointment* is *thất vọng* and it is rooted in the dissatisfaction of hope or expectation. For example, students might hope that they would gain entry into their desired university but then find that they could not because they did not meet the requirements of that university. That would lead to them feeling disappointed.

There is a difference between upset and disappointment in terms of the level of hope with which they are associated. They are both emotional responses to the inability to meet an individual's own expectations or expectations from others. However, disappointment appears to be more related to high levels of hope than upset.

Disappointment, in this study, was triggered by failure to meet specific goals such as passing a test, taking a chance to communicate with foreigners and winning an English competition at school. As the data below shows, disappointment was related to a failure to meet expectations that individual students had of themselves or that others had of them.

Disappointment triggered by failure to meet the expectations they had of themselves tended to be related to not being able to perform at the level they wanted to or felt they should be able to. For example, Cong's disappointment was triggered by test results he received. He explained that he struggled because "they [the tests] tested the knowledge that I was not clear about or did not deeply understand". He goes on to explain that "After the test, I felt disappointed with myself and blamed myself for not trying more and doing more practice". Cong felt disappointed in himself for not working harder so that he was better prepared for the exam and as a consequence, he felt disappointed because he was not able to achieve the result he wanted and expected of himself.

Like Cong, Kha's disappointment was a result of not passing a test. He was disappointed by his test results which were lower than he had expected. He typically expected to perform well in class but in this instance, he received low scores in the tests because he made mistakes.

Another time of disappointment related to inability to do English tasks in the classroom... I was disappointed because I did them incorrectly, then the results

were not as I had expected. After being disappointed, I recognised some mistakes that I had made. (Kha– excerpt 4)

For Kha, it appears that there was a cumulative effect of experiencing disappointment at his results, and that reflection on these experiences led to him reflecting at a deeper level on his learning. He took personal responsibility for repeated poor performance stating that these were due to his personal habits such as being careless and solving problems too quickly, being inexperienced in taking tests, and not being disciplined with his study.

It happened several times after that. I felt disappointed with myself since I often completed the tasks quickly and carelessly. In addition, I didn't check and review the tests before submitting them. I made silly mistakes that I shouldn't have made. That's it. I was disappointed in myself. In cases where I had low scores, I berated myself [...] (Kha– excerpt 5)

In Kha's case, these experiences of disappointment at performing below the level he expected prompted him to focus more on his areas of weakness to help him avoid facing a similar situation in the future. This illustrates how the negative emotion experience prompted action by Kha which then had a positive impact on his learning. This demonstrates the complex interconnectivity between negative and positive emotions.

In some cases, disappointment was triggered by a failure to achieve important goals such as opportunities for future education. The case of Hoan is an example. Disappointment was triggered when Hoan was unable to accomplish the goal he had set for himself of gaining entry into a Gifted High School. Although he studied hard and prepared carefully for the exam, the results he obtained were insufficient to allow him

entry. Hoan describes the extreme disappointment he felt about not being able to achieve the goal and expectations he set for himself:

When I moved to high school, and I failed the entrance exam to the Gifted High School. I was so upset at that time. I was sitting alone in my room for three or four days. I had set up the goals, but they were out of reach... I did prepare it thoroughly, but the results were not as high as I had expected. Thus, I felt upset and disappointed. (Hoan– excerpt 4)

As Hoan notes, he experienced disappointment and upset as a result of this failure. The disappointment that Hoan experienced differs from that experienced by Kha as Hoan notes that he tried his best but was still unable to achieve his goal. Therefore, while both of these examples illustrate disappointment experienced due to a failure to meet the expectations that these students had of themselves, Hoan did not attribute blame to himself for the situation in the same way that Kha did.

Another student, Huong, provides an interesting contrast and illustrates that not all sources of disappointment are related to schoolwork. She saw the value in taking opportunities to use English as a means of communication outside the classroom. A foreign student was working as an intern in her high school and for her he represented an opportunity to practise using English communicatively for a real-world purpose. However, right to the end of his stay she was shy and did not feel ready to talk to that internship student. As a result, she felt deeply disappointed in herself that she did not have the courage to make the move to a higher level of English: she could not “upgrade” herself (Huong). She reported her experience as follows:

At that time, I was shy and nervous, so I couldn't talk to him much... I was not ready to talk. When I came back home after school, I felt disappointed about

myself and regretted not communicating with him more. [...] I was a bit upset, regretful, and disappointed. (Huong– excerpt 4)

The quote above illustrates how different emotions interact and can occur together. While Huong has expressed her disappointment for “not having made sufficient effort” and not being able to act in the way she had wished, she attributes this to feeling shy and nervous and lacking confidence in her ability to use English communicatively. In this case, she had a clear notion of her ‘ideal self’, but a range of different emotions interacted which seem to have prevented her from taking actions towards achieving this, resulting in a sense of disappointment in herself.

Cong’s case demonstrates both internal and external sources of disappointment. For example, in addition to expressing disappointment in himself, he felt disappointed in not meeting the expectations that others had of him. Cong felt that he had let his parents and teacher down by receiving poorer results than expected in the English and mathematics competitions that he participated in. High-proficiency students were invited to participate in these competitions which were over and above the general study and test requirements which were the source of Kha’s and Hoan’s disappointment. The competitions were challenging and highly competitive with students who performed well at the school-level competitions receiving the opportunity to then participate in city-wide and then nation-wide competitions. The competitions were prestigious, and it was considered a mark of honour for the school for a student to succeed and progress to the city and nation level competitions.

Before participating in the competitions, Cong expected that he would receive good results because he had put in considerable effort to prepare for them. However, the competitions were difficult, and they tested content which he had not mastered well. Thus,

the results that he obtained were not as high as he had desired or expected. He was therefore disappointed with himself and started to doubt his English learning ability. Cong's disappointment revealed the high hope he had for winning the competitions because the results would provide recognition of his English ability, but also express his gratitude to his parents and English teacher. His parents and his teacher cared a lot for him and were hopeful that he would be successful. Not being able to obtain the results that his parents and teacher had expected led him to feeling a loss of face to the extent that he feared facing them. This again illustrates the interconnectivity of different emotions. Here his disappointment was intertwined with another emotion, anxiety. Cong felt worried and fearful that his parents and teacher would be upset with his failure, and therefore felt disappointed in himself for letting them down:

Yes, I had high expectation of that competition because my father taught me a lot before the competition. I tried my best to learn what he had taught me. [...] I felt afraid when my parents asked about the competition results. When I could not do something as my parents expected, I felt afraid of facing my parents at home, and my teachers at school, because they had believed in my ability to win in the competition. And this made me feel disappointed about myself. (Cong– excerpt 2)

The disappointment Cong felt and discussed shows how emotions are mediated by culture. As is common for Vietnamese students, Cong feels that doing well is an important way to show gratitude to his parents and teachers who have had a substantial role in supporting him and developing his skills.

In summary, the disappointment that students in this study reported experiencing was predominantly as a consequence of not achieving the learning outcomes and results that they had expected and hoped for. When they had high levels of hope but were unable

to achieve results in line with them, they expressed disappointment with themselves. This experience reflects the Vietnamese saying, “*hy vọng lắm, thất vọng nhiều*”, meaning “the more you hope the more disappointed you feel”. While disappointment can be considered as a negative emotion, there were also positive aspects highlighted. For example, disappointment experienced due to not meeting the expectations set for oneself demonstrated the concern that students had for their English language learning and their desire to achieve well. Also, as illustrated here, it could spur on positive actions and emotions while stimulating broader reflections on learning. In this study, disappointment was also triggered by expectations that students had of themselves or that others had of them (parents and teachers), illustrating the role that culture plays in mediating the emotional response triggered.

4.4.3 Anxiety

Foreign language classroom anxiety is the emotion that has been most widely investigated in studies in second language acquisition (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). It has been one of the most common kinds of negative emotions found to exist in English language learning. Foreign language anxiety is “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125). In their study, a description of anxiety was proposed with three factors: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

In this study, feeling nervous or anxious was investigated under the concept of synonyms describing nervous, stressful, or anxious feelings and fear with the equivalents *lo lắng, căng thẳng* and *lo sợ* in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese equivalent *lo lắng* was written below the emotion icon on the card to help the participants to understand the concept clearly. Anxiety, which was recognised and reported by only three participants,

related to test anxiety, work pressure, low foreign language proficiency, and communication apprehension.

First, anxiety was triggered before taking exams because the participants feared failure. Thu reflected on the test anxiety she experienced before the preparation for exams: she was afraid that the knowledge she revised would not be included in the test, which would lead to a low score or failure in the exam. Thu talked about her fear of not passing the exam:

Because I couldn't guess what the test would focus on. I just kept reviewing based on the exam review outlines. Some subjects specified the scope of revision, but others didn't. There were still too many things to prepare for the exams. When I revised knowledge that I had learned, there was no indication of what should be focused on for the upcoming exam. I was afraid of not passing the exams. (Thu— excerpt 5)

In Hien's account below, test anxiety is also evident. In his case, anxiety was triggered on occasions when he had not prepared thoroughly for upcoming tests. Hien therefore felt nervous about exams where he felt unprepared and had not mastered knowledge that would be tested, and this was particularly the case for the oral examinations:

I feel worried about the subjects I am not good at. Especially, I felt more anxious in oral exams with some questions I did not prepare well. (Hien— excerpt 2)

Second, the data reveal that work pressure was a trigger for anxiety. For example, Thu's anxiety occurred because she felt overloaded with work and deadlines and became concerned about the impact of this on the quality of her work: "Anxiety and stress

appeared when I had too many deadlines within a week, day after day” which “I did not know how to solve”. In the excerpt below, Thu describes a particular occasion when she had too much work to do, leading her to feel stressed and anxious. She stated:

For instance, I had to edit the sounds and images of the video recordings for presentations [...]. I had to record the voices and edit the subtitles for videos like a real filmmaker. Thus, this made me stressed. I was worried about the quality of the videos. (Thu– excerpt 6)

Thu also became anxious about difficulties that she might face and which impacted her ability to successfully complete the tasks required. This illustrates the concern that Thu placed on her work and the responsibility she felt to complete her work on time. She retold her worries as follows:

The thing I was most worried about was uploading the files to send via email to submit. Because the files were too large, so I had to upload them via Google Drive. It took quite a long time. By the time of submission, I was afraid of the internet disconnection, or that I might do something wrong unintentionally, and have to upload the files again...it would take an hour...it was a waste of time. (Thu– excerpt 7)

In general, Thu’s anxiety was triggered not by the language demands of a task or her own level of English language proficiency, but by learning the technical demands of the tasks required of her. Her anxiety is associated with her own expectations about her study performance. She put pressure on herself to achieve a particular goal in terms of the quality of the work. It is the goal itself and her uncertainty as to whether she could achieve it or not that gave her anxiety.

Third, anxiety was triggered by students' levels of English proficiency. For example, Nga's anxiety was triggered as she felt nervous in listening lessons because she could not understand the passage or what was required of her when she was asked to respond to questions in class. Anxiety in this case was triggered by her fear of failure to perform when she was singled out to respond in front of the class.

Whenever the teacher said, "I am going to ask you some questions", I started to feel nervous. I whispered, "please don't pick me". That's a nervous feeling. (Nga— excerpt 9)

Nga admitted that she felt this level of anxiety in every listening lesson, and that this was overwhelming for her as in the moment of fear, she "did not know how to overcome it" and "just wanted to go home immediately" to hide away from that negative emotional state.

As the above data shows, Nga's anxiety was present not only when she was called on by the teacher, but when she was waiting for the teacher to call on a student, desperately hoping that it was not going to be her. Nga spoke about how her anxiety was exacerbated because the teacher spoke to students in what she considered a mocking way, leading to a general feeling of fear of not being able to answer a question if called upon. Nga stated that the teacher had little tolerance for incorrect responses, increasing the level of anxiety felt even more. In Nga's case, a fear of failure in front of the teacher and her classmates, which she saw as a loss of face, was a prominent concern:

The teacher talked in a way like... "why can't you answer such an easy question?" ... Then I thought "If I can't answer it, the others'll think I suck or I'm a loser." The fear of being unable to answer the question emerged. And I had the feelings of having difficulty in learning. (Nga— excerpt 10)

Nga felt a similar level of anxiety when receiving feedback on her writing and became afraid of asking her teacher to give feedback on it. She was ashamed of the mistakes she made because she felt they revealed her failure to the class. She stated:

When I learned grammar... oh no... The more I made mistakes, the more I felt afraid to write. Consequently, I made more mistakes. At first, I often asked my teacher to check my writing. Then I did not dare to ask her to do this because there were too many mistakes in my writing. (Nga– excerpt 11)

Thus, Nga's anxiety is associated with a fear of making mistakes or responding incorrectly to something in class. For Nga, this resulted in a reluctance to complete writing tasks and engage fully in class, but this also had a negative impact on her learning. As she believed that her English language errors might potentially lead to negative evaluations from the teacher and negative perceptions from classmates, she chose to stay within her comfort zone. The above data illustrate that for Nga "mistakes were viewed with dread" (King, 2014, p. 238).

The fourth trigger of anxiety was communicating with the teacher in English in the classroom. In the excerpt below, Nga discusses the anxiety she felt when her teacher called on her in class. In this incident, Nga experienced a high level of anxiety when she was picked to talk with the teacher and was so distressed that she was unable to hear the teacher clearly. Her anxiety was more related to being called on to speak with the teacher rather than whether her responses were correct or not:

When I couldn't hear properly, and the teacher picked me, this made me panicky, and more panicky...I couldn't understand what she was talking about. In fact, I couldn't hear what she was saying. (Nga– excerpt 12)

In addition to being apprehensive about communicating with teachers, communicating with English native speakers in an English Language Centre was also an anxiety trigger for learners. A lack of confidence in some English skills caused the students to feel more reluctant to talk. Fear of making mistakes, hesitation and lack of confidence affect students' English speaking performance (Haidara, 2016); it commonly hinders students from speaking (Oflaz, 2019). In this study, Hien retold his experience of anxiety together with shyness as a result of fear of making mistakes in an English Language Centre where there were native speakers and English was used most of the time, even during breaktime:

At that time, other learners could speak in English and communicate with foreigners, but I couldn't speak much. I felt a bit shy and reluctant to talk. (Hien– excerpt 3)

Communicating with foreigners outside of the classroom is also challenging for Vietnamese students as there are limited opportunities for them to do so, especially for students who live in mountainous or rural areas. Although there have been changes in English teaching and learning approaches, teaching is still typically teacher-led, and grammar is still the dominant focus rather than the development of communication skills. Therefore, students lack confidence in communicating with foreigners because they have not had the chance to develop their interactive competence and do not have sufficient oral language and communication skills, as illustrated in this excerpt from Hien:

I felt so nervous and shaky. I couldn't talk much with them because I didn't know how to start a conversation, how to ask them questions and what to ask them. (Hien– excerpt 5)

In conclusion, anxiety in this study was triggered by three factors: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluations and apprehension about communicating in English. While the anxiety experienced by participants had different triggers, all were related to a fear of failure and of losing face. Test anxiety was triggered by students' fear of failure in passing the exams. Anxiety also originated from failure in completing a challenging task. Fear of negative evaluations resulted from a fear of failure to perform well in class, a fear of making mistakes, a fear of exposing a student's low level of English proficiency, and a fear of how the student would look to the teacher and classmates. Apprehension about communicating with the classroom teacher was associated with a fear of failure in communicating due to limited communication skills.

4.4.4 Shame

Shame is one of the self-conscious emotions and it is linked to a failure. According to Li et al. (2004), shame involves an individual's perception of their actions or characteristics negatively evaluated by others. They note that shame:

is also generated in the social relationships, in which people interact with one another, evaluate, and judge themselves and each other. People feel ashamed when they perceive that someone is making a negative judgement about some activity or characteristic of theirs. Shame often occurs when a person becomes aware of him/herself as having violated a moral standard, goal or social convention, and it leads typically to expressive behaviours of hiding the face, turning away, and escaping. (p. 768)

In line with the perception of an individual about their own actions which seem to have violated social standards or perceptions that their characteristics or actions are

negatively evaluated by others, Lewis (2008) asserts that shame “is the product of a complex set of cognition activities: individuals’ evaluation of their actions in regard to their SRGs [social standards, rules and goals] and their global evaluation of the self” (Lewis, 2008, p. 748). Shame causes disruption of thoughts and language because it is a highly negative and painful state (Lewis, 2008). Shame is one of the most common emotions in education and it “involves emotional states such as embarrassment, humiliation and uncertainty” (Varlander, 2008, p. 147).

Shame in Vietnamese is translated as *xấu hổ* or *nhục nhã*. These two terms are synonyms, but *nhục nhã* has a more intense meaning than *xấu hổ*. In the interview, one of the participant students used the Vietnamese word *xấu hổ* to express the feeling of shame he experienced in his language learning.

Discussing L2 learners’ feelings of shame, Teimouri (2018) asserts that L2 learners may criticize themselves for not being able to be as good as others and perceive themselves as incompetent learners when they are experiencing the feeling of shame. Shame in the current research was triggered when a student received a low score, which could be considered to be below the requirements that a learner needed to meet.

In this study, both shame and disappointment originated from failure. However, shame was different from disappointment in that failure that caused the feeling of shame was negatively evaluated and perceived by others, such as classmates and teachers.

Kha was the only one that mentioned shame in the interviews. He received a score of 0 for an English grammar test. Kha retold how shame was triggered:

I noticed that I made mistakes on adding –s/-es to the verbs of third person singular pronouns. I simply added s to all verbs. Finally, I got a score of 0. [I felt]

like, disappointed and then ashamed. Then I wanted to try my best to avoid the low score [in the future]. (Kha– excerpt 6)

A key reason for the shame that Kha experienced is because in most Vietnamese schools, scores and assessment results are usually made public: teachers do not give feedback to each student privately. That means that when a student receives a low score, most of the class know about it and they will discuss those low scores. The students who have low scores will feel a loss of face which can also impact their self-esteem. Working hard, and having good academic results, good behaviour, and attitudes are dominant social norms or standards that a Vietnamese student is required to have. Kha, in this case, had the feeling of being judged by others and suffered from a moral feeling that he had failed in his duties as a student.

Shame and pride were both linked to other people's assessments or evaluations. However, shame seemed to be the opposite emotion of pride because pride was associated with achievement or success while shame was related to failure in achieving goals or targets. Shame was reported more in students' written narratives and will be analysed further in the next chapter.

4.4.5 Failure-linked outcome-related emotions: Summary

To sum up, failure-linked emotions including upset, disappointment, anxiety, and shame and their features have been presented in this section. These negative emotions reported in the students' accounts originated from the fact that the students did not meet their own expectations or the expectations from others such as their parents, and teachers. Shame and anxiety were associated with social anxiety when the students spoke in public, and they were related to fear of failure. Disappointment and shame appeared to be culturally

influenced: the students were disappointed about letting their parents and teachers down. One of the participant students felt ashamed because in his view he had failed in his duties as a student. Failure-linked emotions experienced by students in this study led either to demotivation in their study or as a spur to actions to improve because they did not want to experience these negative emotions again. Negative emotions in this study could therefore be triggers for positive behaviours and actions.

4.5 Chapter summary

The findings from the interviews revealed that the students experienced a variety of emotions in their English learning process. In the data, positive and negative emotions coexisted and interplayed in the students' narrative accounts. All the negative emotions relative to an individual's failure, including upset, disappointment, anxiety and shame, appeared when the students were not able to meet their own expectations or expectations from others. On the other hand, some success-linked emotions such as happiness, self-confidence, and pride, emerged when the students did something well or better than others, and this met or was above their expectations. Positive emotions, such as enjoyment, happiness, excitement, self-confidence, and hope, were triggered when negative triggers such as anxiety, upset and boredom lessened in intensity.

Overall, the findings presented in this chapter highlight the complexity of learners' emotions. In some cases, positive and negative emotions occurred together, such as excitement and anxiety. In other cases, positive emotions were commonly intertwined with other positive emotions, such as pride and happiness. Negative emotion could also coexist with further kinds of negative emotions, such as shyness and anxiety associated with fear of making mistakes, or disappointment and anxiety associated with fear of facing parents and teachers after failure.

The findings also indicated that each emotion could originate in different contexts and was linked to particular events. It was found that emotions are not only individually constructed, but they were strongly influenced from the outside as well, because in a collective society, individuals seek the acceptance and validation of others, influencing the emergence of social emotions such as anxiety, disappointment, shame, happiness, enjoyment, and pride. It is also evident that people had different emotional responses to similar experiences. In this research some contexts and activities could have either negative or positive effects, such as English competitions or teacher feedback. The nature and displays of some emotions such as shame, disappointment, and gratitude in this study appeared to be influenced by the Vietnamese culture.

Positive emotions appeared to positively influence the students' behaviours and trigger positive outcomes involving other positive emotions such as enjoyment, happiness and self-confidence. Positive emotions played an important role stimulating and motivating students with their English language learning and spurring on new positive emotions as well. On the other hand, failure-linked negative emotions, such as upset, disappointment, and shame may function as demotivating factors which impede students in their language learning. In some cases, failure-linked emotions, such as disappointment, helped the students realise that their own behaviour was limiting their achievements.

Chapter 5 Written narratives

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the study's findings from the participants' written narrative accounts. Written narrative is a type of story-telling inquiry. In this study, I provided the participants with a specific context-topic and allowed them to write about events and emotions they experienced in relation to each specific context-topic. In line with the study's aim to investigate the emotions emerging from particular lived events and experiences, the current chapter reports on findings that particularly highlight the links between the emotions and the specific contexts which contributed to their emergence.

Reported emotions in the written narratives included a wide range of both positive and negative emotions, quite often linked together in a complex interplay. Therefore, the primary aim of the current chapter is to describe and illustrate aspects of this complex interplay vis-à-vis specific contextual elements that are seen as contributing to it.

Overall, the findings in this chapter are seen as relevant to the first research question about the range of reported emotions in students' narrative accounts:

What is the range of reported emotions in university students' narrative accounts of English language learning in Vietnam?

Findings from the written narratives also highlight emotional shifts and changes over time, as well as the role that emotions played in shaping the students' language learning journey and developing individuals' well-being, cognition, and perspectives.

Therefore, findings from the written narratives are also relevant to the second research question:

What role do the reported positive emotions play in the language learning trajectory of the students?

Finally, the findings in this chapter illustrate the role of mediating factors in the arousal of hope. The functions of hope in shaping, shifting, and enhancing students' positive emotions, in spurring positive outcomes, and its positive effect on the students' learning trajectories are hereby presented as relevant to the last research question:

How does hope contribute to the shaping of the students' vision of their language learning journey?

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the written narratives in this study included two topics: 1) the first inspiration in studying English, and 2) an unforgettable memory in English learning. The written narratives were designed to cover two aspects because this gave the participants more opportunities to choose either one topic or both topics to write about.

Overall, findings from the written narratives show that students' emotions were triggered by mediating factors such as people or artefacts, which were found to play specific roles in shaping and changing the students' emotions. The people most often mentioned in the students' narratives are their peers, teachers, family members, role models, and foreigners, highlighting some interesting connections between emotions and the Ought-to L2 self and the Ideal L2 self constructs. The artefacts mentioned include social media sites and, in one case, a book. In the following sections, findings from narratives 1 and 2 are organised and presented according to the mediating factors they

illustrate including peers, teachers, parents, role models, people in community, and social media.

5.2 Peers as mediators

Among the mediating factors that created shifts in students' emotional responses, the impact of peers proved to be significant. Their impact could be either negative or positive, as the stories below indicate. Peers' negative evaluation of the students' English proficiency and, alternatively, their encouragement had effects on shaping and changing the learners' emotions. In the first two stories, Sang's and Thuy's negative emotions were elicited by negative evaluations from their peers, while in Ly's story, her peer's encouragement helped reduce her negative emotions.

In the first story, Sang's negative emotions were triggered by his classmates' laughter when he pronounced English words poorly while his classmates pronounced them correctly. He pronounced the words with a Vietnamese accent, so the whole class burst into laughter. This had a negative effect on his emotions as he reported: "At that time I felt embarrassed and ashamed. I blamed myself for not learning as well as my friends".

Due to the negative emotions triggered by this experience, Sang realised his weaknesses in learning, and this triggered marked changes in his mind, leading to increased determination towards his studies. He noted, "from that day, I was determined to study English hard and as well as my classmates so that nobody would mock me". He wanted to improve his English in order to avoid experiencing a repeat of those negative emotions. As a result, he worked hard and practised more. Gradually, he realised that English was not too difficult to learn, and he developed a broader viewpoint of the

importance of learning English for his future. He wrote, “then I studied English more. The more I learned, the easier I found it. It is also helpful for my future career”.

Like Sang, Thuy had a negative experience when she failed to communicate with her classmates and teacher in an English lesson. However, Thuy’s negative emotions were not directly linked to her peers’ negative evaluation but arose from her self-criticism when she compared her low proficiency to the proficiency of her peers.

Thuy’s story happened after she had passed a very difficult exam to enter an English class for gifted students at high school. She had worked hard for a long time to gain this achievement. She felt jubilant after passing that exam. She wanted to learn in this class where she expected that the learning environment would be “exciting and creative” because she had thought that she would have more opportunities “to learn, to communicate with foreign friends and to become an interpreter”. Becoming an interpreter was her dream, although she knew that “the way to reach the dream is really challenging and facing a lot of difficulties”. However, she noted: “I promised myself to try my best and to be resilient to face difficulties”. She can be called a high hope student (Furlong et al., 2014) with clear desired goals: she was hopeful, energised, and proud of her personal achievement.

However, these positive emotions did not last long. Her negative emotions were triggered during the very first English period in the new class, where she was shocked at her classmates’ English competence when they spoke in English to introduce themselves to the class:

Here every class member started with a fluent and flowing introduction about themselves in English, whereas I was faltering, my words were stuck in my throat.

(Thuy— narrative 2)

Being unable to speak in English in class, Thuy described herself at that time as feeling “upset” and “frustrated” and experiencing a loss of face. She experienced those emotions because in the Vietnamese learning context, learning well is a learner’s responsibility. Classmates and teachers would look down on you if you could not perform well at school. You never could say “I can’t do this” to your teacher. She explained:

I was sure that I was quite confident in my writing and grammar, but not in listening and speaking. (Thuy— narrative 2)

This event provided the first part of Thuy’s narrative 2, but it continues with a further event which will be discussed in Section 5.9.

In the last story of peer mediation, Ly admitted that she had thought English was not an important subject before starting university. She did not care much about learning it. When she studied at university, she enrolled in the same English class as her flatmate with whom she shared a house with and had a close relationship.

One day when Ly was suddenly asked to present a topic in front of the class, she could not do the presentation. As a result of disregarding the subject of English, her English proficiency was very low, and this made her lose confidence. Panic caused her to forget everything. Other negative emotions were also triggered at that moment. Here is what she reported:

I was nervous, shaky, and embarrassed... everything was beating loudly in my chest, I just saw black in front of me. (Ly— narrative 1)

She was “faltering” and “couldn’t say any complete sentences”. Thus, the teacher told her to go back to her seat and had her flatmate finish her work. Ly’s flatmate completed the task perfectly. She “spoke fluently, clearly and cohesively”. Her flatmate’s

perfect task fulfilment received good praise and handclapping from her teacher and classmates. This seemed to ridicule Ly. She admitted that she felt “jealous” of her flatmate’s English proficiency. She felt “ashamed” because she could not perform the task as she had expected. She wrote:

At that moment, I didn't know how to hide my shame away. The compliment and a round of applause for my flatmate made me feel jealous. (Ly– narrative 1)

At the end of the lesson, she ran out of the classroom so quickly that she left her books behind. Finally, she stopped at a park. She sat there and thought about what had happened. She felt unconfident about herself and doubted her English abilities. She reported that “everything was terrible in her eyes” and she started to cry. Suddenly, a hand slapped on her shoulder. It was Hai, her flatmate. She comforted her and said, “Grit and will can conquer everything”. Her flatmate’s appearance and encouragement awoke Ly’s learning potential. Ly called her flatmate’s appearance at the very right time as “a God inspiring me in studying English”.

Ly’s flatmate seemed to be her role model because she could do that work successfully while Ly could not. She inspired Ly in overcoming the challenge and gave her hope that she could do better. With her flatmate’s comfort and encouragement, Ly focused more on studying English because she wanted to avoid the feeling of disappointment in herself which originated from the fact that she was not as good as her friend. Eventually, they became close friends and studied together every day.

Overall, in this study, the peers’ reactions, behaviours, and actions could either negatively or positively influence the participating students’ emotions. In the case of Sang, comparisons which showed up the subject students’ weakness alongside the strength of his peers provided strong impetus to action. Interestingly, whether the initial

response was a negative or positive emotion, all of these resulted in a resolution to do better, which further led to positive emotions based on their improvement, and in Ly's case, a closer relationship to the person who had been her role model. In each case, the influence was long term, which probably explains why the incidents were vividly recalled and described.

5.3 Teachers as mediators

The excerpts from these stories indicate that English teachers had an important role in changing the students' emotions in this study by encouraging and advising the students, by sharing their own English learning success stories and by using English songs as teaching activities.

5.3.1 Teacher's encouragement

When the students experienced negative emotions, the teachers encouraged them to overcome their bad situations. Their encouragement helped reduce the students' negative emotions and trigger positive emotions.

For example, Kha came from a poor family in a rural area, so he had not been taught English when he was at primary school. On the other hand, his classmates had learned English before they started intermediate school, so by the time they all entered intermediate school, they were very good at English. On the first day of intermediate school, his English teacher wanted to get to know every class member and revise basic knowledge by asking the students to answer questions. Most of his classmates had learned this basic knowledge during primary, but it was new to Kha. When the teacher checked words and grammatical structures with his classmates, they replied quickly. However, when it was Kha's turn to answer, he just stood up and said, "I have never met those

words before”. He described his teacher’s and classmates’ reactions to his announcement like this:

My teacher and my classmates... the whole class turned around and looked at me... Suddenly, I became the focus of the class. Then they burst into laughter.
(Kha— narrative 1)

Being laughed at by his classmates made him feel embarrassed and ashamed. He reported his reactions at that time: “I couldn’t look at anyone... I just looked down”. This is another instance of peer mediation expressed through ridicule, but the difference in Kha’s account is that his teacher took specific action to help overcome his embarrassment. With the teacher’s questions after the lesson, “Have you just moved here?” and “Are you a beginner of English?”, he realized that his English level was at the starting point, and it was much lower than that of his classmates. Despite being laughed at in the classroom, being understood by the teacher reduced his discomfort and shame. His teacher also encouraged him by saying: “Try your best! I’ll help you with this subject”. With the teacher’s positive encouragement, his negative emotions were transformed into positive ones. Those positive emotions urged him to persist in his English, and he felt hopeful and determined to study English from that point on.

Han’s story was about her English teacher at an English club of her university, which was a place where students practised speaking English. Han joined the university’s English club as soon as she enrolled in her university. In general, she had positive emotions and feelings about the learning atmosphere and the club members. The club members were friendly and enthusiastic to help her to study English.

One evening, an activity was organized for all learners of the club. Members were divided into teams and Han was the team leader of her group. Each team was given one

task. Han's team was assigned to learn by heart a text titled "*Always believe in you*" within 30 minutes. Then a representative of the group would be asked to recite the text in front of the other teams. Han was selected to be the representative of her team and the teaching assistant said to her, "Can you recite this text in a special way that no one has ever done? I believe you can do that, girl". The teaching assistant's words encouraged Han and empowered her. They gave her the confidence and the hope that she could do something challenging and special in her own way. With the teaching assistant's encouragement, Han performed the task without hesitation – standing on a chair in the middle of the class and recited the text aloud. At first, she was quite nervous and shaky when she looked down and noticed that everyone was looking up and focusing on her. She believed in herself, that she could do it, as the meaning of the text itself inspired her. She asserted "I must believe in myself". This encouraged her to do the presentation in English better and reach closer to the image of her Ideal L2 self – being able to speak English confidently and fluently in public. Her peers' encouragement and her self-efficacy stimulated her to obtain the short-term goal of presenting the text in a special way successfully, and in turn, her success triggered positive emotions:

When I started to recite the very first sentences, everyone clapped their hands. This made me feel motivated. [...] I had the feeling of being relaxed and unstressed. I made a great effort to do it. (Han– narrative 2)

When she finished reciting, everyone surrounded her and hugged her. She felt "extremely happy and burst into tears". She felt happy because she had never stood so prominently in front of the public and presented a text successfully, so it was a challenge for her. It was the first time she had tried to conquer a challenge in learning English like that. She asserted that the experience and the positive emotions they brought to her were

important, as they played an important role in her English learning. It marked “a milestone in her growth and development”. She insisted that this experience would never fade away from her memory.

Not unlike Han in the last story, the authors of the following stories wrote about how their teachers, who showed care and enthusiasm towards them, positively influenced their emotions, attitudes, actions and outcomes in terms of learning. Their teachers not only verbally encouraged them but invested their time and effort in promoting their motivation to study as well.

5.3.2 Teacher’s gift and advice

Loan and Tham wrote about positive emotions that originated from a gift and advice given by their teachers, explaining how those emotions had an impact on their thoughts and actions.

Loan’s story took place eight years earlier when she was in Year 5. In her case it was not her classroom teacher who inspired her in studying English, but a visiting teacher, one of a group of urban teachers that came to her hometown volunteering to help children in mountainous areas with hard living conditions. One of them gave Loan an English picture book as a gift. Loan was happy and really enjoyed the book. She reminisced how she spent time with the book:

I read the book whenever I was free. The pictures in that book were so beautiful and colourful and the language was easy to understand. Even though on some nights my family went to bed and turned off the lights, I still read the book in bed with a torch. Sometimes I was so interested in reading that I fell deeply asleep over it. (Loan– narrative 1)

Loan considered the book a “priceless” gift and receiving it a lucky chance compared to her friends in the area. She regarded the picture book as a bridge that connected her to urban, modern life and English as a way to help her to open a new world. Here is what she thought about this fortunate opportunity:

More luckily, I was given an English book. [...] It was a priceless gift for me. [...] I had a chance to know a language which is spoken all over the world.
(Loan— narrative 1)

Loan was born in a mountainous area where life was hard, and during her childhood, she just “hung around with buffalo herders in the neighbourhood, surrounded by bamboo bushes, cassava and sweet potatoes”. However, she felt fortunate:

[...] I had a better chance than other children as I could go to school. This was a privilege for me. (Loan— narrative 1)

The teacher who gave her the book recognised her situation and encouraged Loan to try her best to learn English not only for her future but also for her community by contributing her effort to develop better lives in her area. The teacher also emphasized the importance of education in improving the economic circumstances in the local area:

Try your best to study well, practise more, self-train to get a better life, and contribute to the development and properties of your hometown. Especially, you should learn English well because it will be helpful for your future.
(Loan— narrative 1)

Loan admitted that the book and teacher’s encouragement made her feel enthusiastic and eager to learn. Like Thu (discussed in Section 4.3.4), Loan felt grateful to her teacher for her encouragement and care. She learned English to pursue her dream of bringing a better

life to her community and as a way to express her gratitude to her teacher. As Fredrickson (2004, p. 8) explains, “people may build up their more general skills for loving through the process of thinking broadly about how to repay kindness.”

This focus on English as a possible contribution to a brighter future is echoed in Tham’s account of a teacher who provided inspiring advice. Tham’s story happened when she was at high school. Before high school, she found English hard to learn. She was anxious about doing tasks and speaking English in class because that was difficult for her. She was reluctant to engage with the tasks because she was afraid that she would do them wrong; hence, her anxiety originated from the fear of failure. However, when she began to attend her teacher’s English classes at high school, she found it was not as difficult as she had thought. Her English teacher, who was also her form teacher, inspired Tham and her fellow students by raising their awareness of the importance of learning English in their lives as well as in their future careers. Her advice to the students was:

You won’t be able to find a good job in the future unless you are good at English even though you are good at other subjects. (Tham— narrative 1)

Taking the teacher’s advice, Tham focused on studying English more, and consequently she realised that working hard made English easier to learn, which in turn contributed to her motivation. Gradually, she became more inspired, and interested in learning English. She began to enjoy English. These positive emotions replaced the initial negative emotion, anxiety, which had been present before. She wrote:

I thought deeply about her advice and found that it was completely right. Her advice helped me to overcome the fear of learning English and I had more motivation to study it. (Tham— narrative 1)

As a result, these positive emotions had a positive effect on her learning process and motivated her to study more.

To conclude, the two students received advice from the teachers in their stories, and in Loan's case a gift which proved to be an inspiring artefact in her pursuance of English. The teachers' gift and advice were interpreted as indicators of the teachers' care. Receiving care made the students feel inspired in studying and triggered positive emotions. The teachers' advice also played a role in shifting their students' emotions from negative into positive, as in the case of Tham.

5.3.3 Teacher's life stories

In the stories of Linh and Thuong below, their teachers shared their own stories about how they had learned English, to help their students with English. They illustrate how teachers' own life stories can influence students' emotions.

Linh's story originated outside the classroom and happened when she encountered an opportunity to use English in the community. Linh's desire to learn English began when she and her friends saw a tourist guide introduce some foreign visitors to the history of the local cathedral. Watching the guide talking to foreigners in English aroused her interest in learning. She said to her mother, "I want to learn English" as soon as she arrived home after that day, and although her mother was surprised at her demand and quick decision, she agreed and enrolled her in a private-home English class. On the first day of the English class, the content of the lesson felt unfamiliar, and several days later, she wanted to quit studying. She explained, "I felt frustrated and did not want to study". She wanted to give up because she found it hard to learn. As a result, she did not spend time doing homework after class.

One day, after all of her classmates had already left the study room, the private tutor, who was also her classroom teacher, told Linh to stay in the room and chatted with her. The teacher wanted to know the reason why Linh's English was not good. The student recounted her talk with the English teacher as follows:

The teacher told me that she used to spend most of the time playing when she was a child. Then she thought about her parents' poor living conditions, so she tried her best to study day and night. Finally, she succeeded in becoming a teacher.
(Linh— narrative 1)

The teacher's story enhanced the student's awareness of the importance of education in life. She did not request or force the student to do anything. She just simply told her own life story and let the student think about it. The teacher helped the student to understand that hard work, resilience, and effort are keys to success in life and working hard is also the way to express our gratitude for the difficulties our parents face while rearing us. The teacher's story triggered the student's emotions. She wrote:

After listening to my teacher's story, I was deeply touched and more motivated to study. Now I feel grateful because she was the person who inspired me in studying.
(Linh— narrative 1)

The second story, about how a teacher's life story impacted students' emotions happened one year after Thuong started university, when she enrolled in an English course for communicative purposes in an English Language Centre. She found the information about the English course accidentally while she was on Facebook. At that time, she reported that she was "not confident and often felt reluctant to talk with other people". She noticed her weakness was her reluctance to engage in communicating not only with her classmates but also with people in the community. Thus, she decided to take an

English course for communicative purposes. She described herself in the first lesson at the English Language Centre as “quite nervous and too reluctant to talk with classmates”. Her English teacher noticed hers and her classmates’ negative feelings and she reduced stress by telling the students stories about different countries in the world and showing them some beautiful places that she had visited. Then she asked all students in the class to think about a place that they wished to visit one day and tell the class about their dreams of travelling. Thuong told the teacher and her classmates that she dreamed of “going to England to study and work”.

Sharing her dream with the class kindled the learner’s dream of travelling to beautiful places, ignited the hope for a better future, and opened the door to a new world. The teacher gave hope to the student and helped her set the goal for her future life. The student realized the importance of learning English in actualizing her dream. She noted, “Thus, English was the motivation to make my dream come true”. Having to express her dream in class was “killing two birds with one stone”. It not only motivated her to learn English to achieve her dream, but helped create a more personal, friendly learning environment which made her more interested in the lessons. The student reported her positive emotions triggered in those English lessons after that:

Then the lessons became more and more interesting. The more I learned the more I felt comfortable, relaxed and active. (Thuong— narrative 1)

The classroom atmosphere helped to develop Thuong’s well-being and contributed to changing her behaviours. She likened the experience to becoming a new person, saying, “I broke the ‘shell’ that had covered me for a long time”. Additionally, Thuong’s admiration for the teacher greatly impacted her. Her English teacher became her role model. She admired the young teacher’s English proficiency and wished she could speak

English as well as her. She wrote: “It was my English teacher in that English language centre that inspired me in studying English”.

Thus, in these cases, the teachers went beyond the role of instructing the class. They recognised the students’ emotional needs and enhanced their awareness of the importance of learning English by sharing their own life stories. The teachers’ life story in the second account helped to create a more relaxing and interesting learning environment. This made students more eager to engage during the lessons, in a more relaxed environment negative emotions were reduced. When there was a reduction in negative emotions, there was often an emergence of positive emotions. In turn, those positive emotions had positive effects on students’ thoughts and behaviours.

5.3.4 Teacher’s teaching approaches

Besides teachers’ encouragement, advice, their life stories shared with the students, and the book that Loan's teacher gave her, elements of the teachers’ teaching approaches were another source that influenced the students’ emotions. The teachers in the stories of Hoai and Kieu Anh below used English songs as a teaching approach. This stimulated students to explore English more, and it triggered the students’ positive emotions.

Hoai was inspired by English songs even before she had begun study of English. Her joy in English songs was later noticed by her English teachers. Hoai had heard a classmate of hers sing a song named “*Proud of you*” during the ceremony for the New School Year 10 years before the study. She was deeply impressed by the melody of the song and loved the song right from the first time she heard it. On the way home that day, she was humming the melody of the song. As soon as she got home, she asked her mother to search for the words. She listened to it on her MP3 player many times. Then she tried

to sing some simple lines from that song. A week later, she had learned all the words of the song by heart. Then she realised that she had just learned the words by heart without pronouncing them correctly or understanding the meaning underlying the words. As she wanted to explore the meaning the artist wanted to convey in the songs, she made up her mind to focus on learning English. She explained that “I decided to study English so that I could understand the song more and this would help me to sing any English songs I liked”. Thus, she had her own purpose in taking the English course.

Although she was excited about the song and wanted a deeper understanding of it, she did not assume she would transfer that enthusiasm into her English lessons, which at that point she had not yet begun. At the beginning of the first lesson, she experienced mixed emotions:

When I first arrived at the English class, I trembled with excitement and was nervous. I was afraid that I would not be able to learn. (Hoai— narrative 1)

Nervousness emerged from the feeling of eager engagement in doing something unfamiliar and from her anticipation of the future. She was worried she would not be able to follow the English lessons because English would be challenging for her.

Luckily, her English teacher also recognised the value of engaging her young students through the use English songs and other media, using English songs as learning materials. The teacher made the lessons enjoyable by using images, songs and videos to illustrate the new words while teaching vocabulary. Hoai wrote: “In every lesson she motivated and attracted students’ interest by utilising images, songs or videos for explaining the meaning of new words”. This teaching approach minimized Hoai’s negative emotions and aroused her interest, thus, as Fredrickson (2001) explains,

triggering the potential for positivity “broadens student’s momentary thought-action by creating the urge to explore” and “expands the self in the process” (p. 220).

Her teacher’s singing triggered Kieu Anh’s first inspiration for studying English. This story occurred nine years earlier when Kieu Anh started middle school. She had not learned English during primary school, so English was new to students like her from rural regions. She was curious about the English language, and she was excited before the first English lesson. The first English lesson became her best learning experience with the appearance of her “nice young” English teacher. The teacher started her lesson with a beautiful smile and said, “Hello everyone!”. Kieu Anh described the physical setting of the class and the good effects that her English teacher’s appearance brought into the room:

She came into the class bringing a new and exciting learning environment to my lovely small class in a peaceful village. She aroused my intense passion and interest. (Kieu Anh— narrative 1)

After greetings, the teacher sang an English song named “*I lay my love on you*” to the class. Although the teacher sang a piece of the song and Kieu Anh could not fully understand the meaning, she felt it was familiar to her. She loved singing as well, so the song sung by the teacher resonated with her. She wrote:

I liked singing songs, so the idea that I should try my best to study English so I could sing English songs to my friends and close relatives came into my mind after listening to my teacher’s singing. It was the first thought that ignited in my mind: a thought full of dreams. (Kieu Anh— narrative 1)

The teacher’s singing inspired the student and ignited her hope of singing English songs to her relatives. Kieu Anh became hopeful of pursuing her dream of mastering English

through the inspiration in English songs. It was an effective way to learn, and in the end, she said “my hope and my dreams have become true [...]”. It was also the pathway to her success in learning and mental well-being as she noted: “this helps me to feel relaxed and have better memory”.

In conclusion, these teachers were able to show their students that English is more than a series of grammatical rules and new words. They drew on young people’s enjoyment of music to help them see English as more than an academic subject. The songs that the teachers used in the classroom created a friendly learning environment. They minimised negative emotions such as anxiety and aroused the students’ interest and hope. In turn, these positive emotions had a positive effect on the students’ actions.

5.3.5 Teachers as mediators: Summary

Teachers played a key role in shaping students’ emotions and eliciting positive emotions in this study. Teachers encouraged the students, took care of them, gave them advice, shared their own stories and utilised engaging and enjoyable approaches in teaching for their students. The teachers’ actions helped to enhance the students’ self-efficacy and self-confidence in task performance, which was more likely to lead to success. This minimised the students’ negative emotions and triggered their positive emotions. In most of the stories, the students at first reported negative emotions, which included upset, frustration, embarrassment, shyness, anxiety, and shame. Then their teachers’ words and actions helped shift those negative emotions into positive ones such as happiness, interest, enjoyment, admiration, hope, and gratitude. When negative emotions were lessened, positive emotions were likely to emerge. These positive emotions had a positive influence on the participant students’ behaviours, perspectives, and well-being as reported in the students’ narratives.

5.4 Parents as mediators

Although parents are present in other stories (in Section 5.6), they are presented in this section because here they are considered the focal mediators. In the stories below, the students reported that positive emotions originated from their parents' encouragement and support. Parents could also be considered an outside-classroom mediating factor that triggered students' positive emotions. Positive emotions which emerged due to this mediating factor affected the students' thinking and behaviours.

Lan's story took place at the airport when she was in Year 4. On that day, she and her family went to the airport to pick up her uncle who was coming home from abroad. It was the first time she had been to the airport, so for her it was a new and exciting place. As soon as she arrived, she and her cousins ran around the arrival hall to explore new things there. As she was running, she bumped into a foreign man who was really tall with white hair and pinkish skin. At that time, she did not know much English. She could just say some simple English phrases such as "Hello", "Nice to meet you", and "Sorry". She said "Sorry" to that man, and he responded by saying something she could not understand, so she just smiled. Her dad asked her "Did you understand what they said to you?". She shook her head. He rubbed her head gently and said, "If you want to understand what he has said, you should be good at English". Her father drew on a real-life moment to encourage her to learn English. He gave her hope and set a goal where she would be able to understand and communicate with foreigners.

With her father's encouragement, she then felt excited and motivated to learn English. She also felt interested in English and she explored it the same way she discovered the new things at the airport. Her positive emotions had a long-term effect on her will to study English. She noted: "since then I have tried my best to learn English

well.” Additionally, she felt grateful for the trip to the airport that brought her joy in learning English. She wrote: “Thanks to this journey I found my enjoyment in studying English.”

Thus, Lan’s father’s orientation to English opened up new opportunities in Lan’s mind and stimulated her to learn new things. Her father's encouragement helped arouse her interest, enjoyment in learning English and her hope for success.

Kim’s story occurred on the first days of Year 3 when she saw a completely new subject in her schedule: it was English. She asked her mother: “What is English subject?”. And her mother explained in a simple way to help her to understand easily. She said “Do you know those foreign people? They cannot speak Vietnamese, so if you want to talk with them, you should learn this subject.” Then she added “I have enrolled you in an English private-home class.”

On the following day, her mother took her to the private-home class. In the first English class she found English spelling hard to write, but it was even more challenging to pronounce English words. Her teacher called on all students in class to read some words and the students took turns at pronouncing them. Kim was so nervous that she trembled with fear and pronounced the words incorrectly. Her classmates laughed at her, but her teacher was patient and helped her to say the words again and again. After being laughed at by her friends, she felt embarrassed and ashamed, and she wanted to quit learning English. Like Kha (discussed in Section 5.3.1), Kim experienced the shame of ridicule from her peers, which was then mitigated by the encouragement of her teacher. In Kim’s case, the teacher’s encouragement was enhanced by her father’s understanding. When she came back home, she told her difficulties to her father. He encouraged her:

You are quite good at other subjects, but for a new subject you should get used to it. You can't be frustrated. (Kim— narrative 1)

Kim's father knew that she dreamed of becoming a teacher like her uncle's wife. He also knew that Kim always appreciated the great effort her aunt made and admired her determination to pursue the goal of becoming an English teacher. Thus, her father encouraged her to follow her aunt's good example. He said:

A teacher should be good at all subjects. You should study well and learn good things from your uncle's wife. She is a teacher now, although her life has been hard. (Kim— narrative 1)

Her mother's orientation and her father's comfort were meaningful to her in reducing negative emotions triggered by the learning experience. The idea of following her aunt's example as a role model made her feel energized and inspired in studying English. Admiration and inspiration helped her to overcome challenges and she acknowledged her parents' meaningful support and encouragement. She stated:

With my parents' support and encouragement, I kept learning English. [...]. Due to my shame and my parents' encouragement, I had more motivation to study English. (Kim— narrative 1,

Thus, in Kim's story, her parents' encouragement and support were helpful for her to reduce the embarrassment and shame triggered in the classroom. Without her father's encouragement, those negative emotions might have brought negative outcomes, such as giving up learning English. It was her father's encouragement that triggered admiration and inspiration in studying English.

In conclusion, the parents' encouragement and support helped the two students reduce anxiety, shame, embarrassment and frustration, and trigger interest, excitement, admiration and hope. These positive emotions positively influenced the students' language learning journey.

5.5 Role models as mediators

In the following stories, the students admired people who had possessed outstanding values or had attained achievements that the students wanted to gain. The people in the stories below were all outside the classroom and family environment. Although these people were not specifically experts at English, their competence in using it was inspirational.

Thoa's story, an account of a chance encounter with a proficient Vietnamese speaker of English, happened a long time ago when she was in Year 3. She travelled to Ba Vi, a place near Hanoi, with her family. There she lost sight of her parents. She was surrounded by foreigners, but she could not say anything in English to ask for help. At that time, she was "scared", and "extremely confused". She just sat down without moving. She looked around and "hoped that a miracle would happen". Then she saw a group of visitors being guided by a Vietnamese tourist guide. The tourist guide realised Loan had lost sight of her parents, so she helped her to go to the security office and find them. Loan was impressed by the tourist guide's kindness, but she was also struck by her apparent English ability which she could observe as she went about her job. The guide became Thoa's role model as her interest and inspiration in learning English was aroused when watching the guide talking to others in English, as in the case of Linh (discussed in Section 5.3.3). Right after the journey, Thoa asked her parents for permission to go to a private

English class near her house. She engaged positively in her English classes because she was clear about her purposes of learning, and she was eager as she wrote:

I was excited to attend in the first lesson. I listened to my teacher attentively.

(Thoa— narrative 1)

Additionally, the tourist guide inspired her to become a tourist guide in the future. This played a role in shaping the student's thinking. According to Thoa, her memory of the guide has never "faded", it is "imprinted" in her mind forever. It went along with her for her whole student life.

The role model in Chang's story below was a boy who could speak English fluently. It took place about four or five years earlier. She and her class went on a field trip at the end of the school year. They visited some famous places in Hanoi such as Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, The Temple of Literature and West Lake. Those beautiful places attracted a lot of foreign tourists. On that day, a foreigner came towards her and said something, but she could not understand it. She just stood there without saying anything. She could not communicate with the foreigner, not because of her low English proficiency, but because she was not experienced in talking face-to-face with foreigners and their use of English:

In the class, I was quite good at English, but this was the first time I talked face-to-face with a foreigner. Her speaking and pronunciation were quite different from what I had learned from school. (Chang— narrative 1)

As Chang was standing in front of the foreign visitor, a young Vietnamese boy came towards them and talked to the foreigner. She felt ashamed because she was not able to communicate with that foreigner, but she admired that boy for his ability to speak

English confidently. The boy became her role model and admiration for his communicative skills encouraged Chang to change her learning behaviours. It helped her to realise the importance of English practice in daily life. She recognized the disadvantages of not knowing English well. There were long-term results from this realization, and she did her best to study English.

As Bao indicates though, inspiration could come from a Korean singer who was considered as her role model. Bao's emotional response to her Korean idols was discussed in Section 4.3.6 where she talked about her hope to visit her Korean idols.

About three years before the study, Bao often listened to music or watched Korean game shows on websites or on YouTube. Gradually, she came to consider a particular Korean band as her idols. She really loved this band, especially one of the group leaders who was really good at English. Her admiration towards her Korean idols was related to their English proficiency and self-confidence. She wrote:

I really admired my idols when they were talking in the interviews with the audience in English. They looked so confident. (Bao— narrative 1)

Bao referred to the Korean band as her role models. She not only admired them for their English proficiency but also for their outgoingness in English on Facebook. This inspiration came from other celebrities, too:

In my Fan club there were many celebrities who were very good at English. They became successful in their careers. They often shared their experience of English learning on the Fanpage. (Bao— narrative 1)

With the desire to understand what the idols wrote on the Fanpage, Bao felt excited and energized to study English. Admiration and excitement enhanced the

student's agency in developing her English proficiency. As a result, her English improved a lot. She is now an English major and will become an English teacher in the near future.

To conclude, role models could emerge from all aspects of students' experience, from their engagement with a stranger who could use the English language in daily life, with Vietnamese people who demonstrated that high levels of English could be obtained and used in one's career, with celebrities from other cultures. The students' first inspiration in studying English originated from admiration for role models' English proficiency.

5.6 Interschool competitions

The students in the following stories reported events related to joining English competitions. The two students both failed in those competitions because they underestimated the difficulties they would confront. The failure brought them negative emotions. However, those negative emotions helped them to realise their weaknesses. Gradually, those negative emotions transferred to positive emotions with the help of their parents' encouragement.

Thanh's story happened when she was in Year 7. An English test for good students was organized at her school in that year. Students who passed this test would be selected to take part in an upcoming district-level English competition. At that time, Thanh was one of the best students in her class, so she was confident that she would pass the exam easily. Unexpectedly, she did not do the test well, so she was not selected to be a school representative taking part in the competition, at a higher level. She failed this test because she underestimated it. When she learned the result of the test, she was "shocked". She

blamed herself for being overconfident, careless, and neglecting the challenge of the test.

The failure of the test brought her negative emotions:

I started to worry. I was afraid of my friends' looking down on me, and of my teachers' and parents' disappointment. (Thanh—narrative 2)

Here Thanh experienced fear of failure in not meeting her expectation and expectations from her parents and teachers. She was disappointed in herself and disappointed in disappointing others. She thought that her parents and teacher believed in her English competence and hoped she would bring them happiness, thus when she was not able to do as they expected, they would feel disappointed. In Vietnam, many children feel guilty if they cannot learn as well as their parents expect. Additionally, many children think that academic achievements are not only for themselves but will also bring happiness to their family. These negative emotions impacted her studies. She wrote:

This affected my study and made me feel stressed. And my academic results went down. (Thanh—narrative 2)

Noticing Thanh's demotivation to learn after the tests, her friends helped her and encouraged her to study. Her teacher and parents also gave her some advice and encouraged her to feel relaxed. They did not show their anger or disappointment as she had supposed. This moved her. Gradually, Thanh freed herself from the fear of being mocked and judged. Thanh like other Vietnamese students was afraid of others assuming that she could not do well because making overt judgements of other people would lead to the feeling of losing face, which is constructed by the Vietnamese culture.

Thanh overcame bad feelings and considered this failure as a “good lesson” which would be helpful for herself as well as for her siblings. She told this experience to them many times and hoped that they could learn something from it.

Kim also considered her failure in an English competition as an unforgettable memory in her student life. It happened when she was in Year 9. Before the event took place, Kim had felt positive because she was a good student. She often achieved high scores for her English tests.

In that year, an English Olympic Competition was organized at her school, and she was selected to take part. After competing, she was one of the three students selected to take part in a further competition, the English district level competition for good students. Her classmates praised her and admired her. This made her feel proud of herself. With high scores from the previous competition, Kim did not focus much on studying since she thought that she was sufficiently prepared. Every day her teacher gave her a series of the sample tests and reminded her to practise thoroughly. Kim just looked over them quickly and left them on the desk because she thought they were easy for her and there was no need to do anything more.

Then the district-level competition took place. At the beginning of the test, she was very confident and expected to be able to do the test easily. However, when she read the instructions for question 3, she realised that it was not familiar to her. She started to panic and feel nervous. She left a lot of blanks in the answer sheet. Looking around the test room where her friends were studiously doing the test in silence, Kim felt ashamed because she had disregarded the competition. As a result, she could not do it properly. After the test, the school bus took her home. As soon as Kim arrived, she ran straight to her room and opened the practice tests which she had been given by her English teacher.

She found that there were many types of questions which were in similar formats to the actual test. She burst into tears. She felt regretful for being overconfident about preparing for the test. She met her English teacher and apologized to him for her lack of care.

In reply to Kim's apology, the teacher said: "Everything is over now. I am glad to know that you have recognized your weaknesses". The negative emotions originating from the failure in the test helped Kim to learn that overconfidence could lead to failure. She wrote about how to avoid the cost of failure as follows:

Since that time, I would not be overconfident because what I have learned was a speck of sand in a big desert. There are many other friends who are better at English than me, but they never quit learning and exploring new things. I should have learned more and more because knowledge is unlimited. (Kim— narrative 2)

This understanding helped her to keep seeking new knowledge and improve herself. This made her feel energised to learn more and more.

Thus, English competitions were a source of both negative and positive emotions. While students' success in those competitions triggered positive emotions such as pride, as in the cases of Cong, and Hoan (discussed in Section 4.3.2), failure from the English competitions led to negative emotions such as shame, disappointment in themselves and disappointment in disappointing others. The cases of Thanh and Kim in this section are examples of this. However, due to that failure, the students realised their weaknesses and tried to emerge from those negative emotions and prevent their recurrence in the future. Together with encouragement and support from their teachers and parents, those negative emotions diminished and were the foundation for many positive emotions.

5.7 Communication with foreigners

Hoa and Thuy both had negative experiences when they failed to communicate with foreigners who they met in their local communities. However, in Thuy's story, the young man who could help the foreigner then became Thuy's role model because of his English proficiency. The observation of a young boy with high English proficiency triggered her positive emotions.

The first story happened on a winter day in 2017 when Hoa was on her way home from work. She had a part-time job while she was studying at university at that time. On that day, she saw a group of people trying to talk with a taxi driver on the side of the road. The taxi driver could not communicate with his foreign passengers because he did not know English. Hoa came to them with the purpose of helping. However, she was unable to help because she could not understand what they were trying to ask. A few moments later, another girl arrived and helped the group. Later, reflecting on the story, Hoa explained:

During the time studying at high school I just focused on grammar, so my English speaking and listening skills were limited. (Hoa— narrative 2)

The reason for her low proficiency was understandable because most Vietnamese students focus on grammatical items and structures. Grammar is not incorporated into speaking and communicative situations, so when the students are involved in real-life situations, they may find it difficult to bring the knowledge they have learned into action. Hoa considered this experience as “both unforgettable and sad”. She reported her feelings as “regretful, ashamed and a little sad”. She regretted not being able to help, though she intended to give a hand, but she was not able to. It seemed “so much to do, so little to get

done” to her. She felt ashamed because of her low English level, though she was learning at university at that time and had already learned English at school for a long time. However, this “sad experience” changed her stance towards learning English. She understood that just focusing on learning grammatical items and structures for exam-orientation and ignoring the aims of communication was of limited value. She noted: “due to this experience I had more motivation to improve my English listening, speaking and pronunciation”. She realised that there were weaknesses in her approach to English learning and these weaknesses needed to be improved. This meant she did not want to experience those negative emotions again. If it had not been for that incident, she would not have been motivated to improve her English-speaking skills.

Like Hoa, Thuy experienced self-criticism and negative feelings when she failed to communicate with a foreigner. It happened one day while she was sitting and waiting for a bus. A Westerner came towards her and asked for directions, but she could not talk with the foreigner in English because she was not confident. She explained her actions when being asked for directions as follows:

My feelings in that moment were hard to explain. I was a student with a big reputation of studying in an English-major class, but I couldn't say a word in English. At that moment I just stood still and said nothing. (Thuy— narrative 2)

In her mind, a gifted student studying in a class specializing in English should have been better at English compared to other students since she had already passed a tough exam. This exam is a remarkable milestone in life for most Vietnamese students. However, she could not use simple English in communication with native speakers in daily life.

Suddenly, a young man came towards the foreigner and talked to him. Thuy admired him a lot because he did it well. When he finished talking to the foreigner, Thuy

just thanked him. He smiled at her. Thuy described his smile as “sunlight in the dawn”. The young man’s English competence and his smile had an impact on her follow-up actions. She decided to enrol in an English course for the purpose of communication. Thuy met the young man again in the English class at the English Language Centre. He became a near peer role model of hers. He shared learning materials and helped her to overcome difficulties in speaking. This made her feel happy and determined to learn English better. It was her admiration for him and inspiration from him that encouraged her to actualize her ideals (Schindler, 2014). According to her, admiration motivated her to learn English. Her motivation to learn English also originated from negative emotions she had experienced previously. She wrote: “I tried to learn better because I didn’t want to lose face”. She did not want to experience those negative emotions anymore. As a result, her academic results improved a lot as well as her communication skills. Thuy tried her best for the sake of maintaining high self-esteem.

In conclusion, in both stories the students reported negative emotions, which were associated with their failure to communicate with foreigners in English. Their failure originated from their limited English-speaking competence because they just focused on studying grammar at school. Those negative emotions, such as shame, sadness and regret, helped the students notice their limitations in study and to attempt to find a balance for all aspects of English in their ongoing study. In Thuy’s story, the young man appeared at the right time, and became her role model because she wished to possess English-speaking skills as good as his. Thuy’s near-peer role model helped lessen her negative emotions and triggered positive emotions such as admiration. Admiration for the role model’s English proficiency triggered positive outcomes, which motivated her and inspired her in studying English.

5.8 Social media sites as mediating factors

In the previous section, the influence of the internet has already been signalled. An important aspect of young people's engagement with that is social media, and this also proved to be important in the narratives. In the following story, the student's first inspiration and positive emotions in studying English were triggered by a post on Facebook that she accidentally came across.

An retold the story, which happened when she was in Year 12 at high school. She reported that at that time she had a lot of pressure and stress in her life due to the need she felt to achieve academically, pass exams and choose a future career. These factors caused her to feel exhausted. She wanted to "give up all the messy stuff" and live "her own lifestyle". Despite the pressure and stress, she thought about her responsibility for herself and for her family. She decided to make some changes because she realised that that time (Year 12) was important for her future. She knew the importance of English in modern life, especially in applying for good jobs, but she was struggling to make progress in her English learning. Suddenly, she found a post on her Facebook newsfeed which was a guide to how to learn English efficiently from the starting point. She clicked on the page. She had the feeling that the author of the post had written it just for her. She felt stimulated. She followed the guidelines on that post and found them interesting. The post gave her feelings of enjoyment.

The Facebook post brought a lot of changes to her life. It led to positive emotions such as enjoyment and hope, as well as actions. The post ignited a pathway to the future, and it nurtured her dream and hope. As she expressed it:

I wished I would become a good interpreter so that I could experience the diverse Western cultures. I also hoped to walk in the city of Love: Paris, and Singapore one day. (An– narrative 1)

An set goals that she needed to work hard on to achieve. Her hope motivated her and provided a pathway which enabled her to go on studying to reach the goals. As a result, she worked really hard to study English.

Thus, learning English from Facebook posts inspired the student in learning English, and it triggered excitement, interest, enjoyment and hope. These positive emotions positively influenced the student's learning process.

5.9 Emotions and the Self System

The following stories do not belong to any of the categories mentioned above because all of the others describe the direct effect of an event or an encounter of some sort on the emotions, but these stories suggest that the external event feeds into an internal construct, the Ought-to L2 self or the Ideal L2 self.

5.9.1 Emotional impact of students' Ideal L2 self

In the story below, Diu experienced negative emotions which were triggered from failure in studying. Those negative emotions created an urge for her to overcome them. They helped her look back at her potential in learning English and see the vision of her Ideal L2 self as a motivating factor to develop.

Diu's story about this topic also shows the impact of failure to meet her own expectations of herself when she encountered the new demands of university study. Diu started her story by saying that she had a lot of difficulties in studying at university

compared to high school, especially in English. She explained that the volume of work required at university was high and that English was the most difficult subject. She felt uneasy and fearful in every English lesson because the speaking and listening periods were difficult for her. At high school, only grammatical structures had been focused on, so her listening and speaking skills were not developed much. She described her experience, saying “I seemed to be ‘tortured’ and felt obsessed by the English sounds and words”.

One day in an English class at university, her English teacher started the lesson with a survey testing the students’ speaking competence. She asked the students to introduce themselves using their English vocabulary and knowledge. In Diu’s turn, she introduced herself with some simple sentences. When the teacher asked Diu the reason why she had chosen this university for study, she could not answer it in English. She just stood and looked at the classmate who was sitting next to her for help.

Being unable to communicate with the teacher successfully made her feel disappointed and she blamed herself. As in Nga’s case (discussed in Section 4.4.3), negative emotions were triggered as a result of being unable to communicate with the teacher because of the limits of her English proficiency. Diu felt ashamed and experienced a loss of face when her classmates could answer her teacher’s question while she could not. These negative emotions helped her to realise that she needed to improve her speaking skills. As a result, she felt determined to study English more and join an English club to improve her speaking skills. Diu wanted to speak English well. Her goal for her future was to become a person who could speak English fluently. She became motivated to learn English after that. This illustrates that her negative responses to the external event

created an internal construct her Ideal L2 self. She found a new vision of herself that needed a new response.

Thus, emotion (shame in this case) built up Diu's determination to reach the goal and plan a pathway towards it (Snyder et al., 2002). In the pursuit of the goal, she felt motivated and hopeful. Upset, disappointment and shame emerged from Diu's failure, but these negative emotions helped her to look back at her weaknesses, see their potential, realise what she needed to improve, and who she should become. In the pursuit of her goals, positive emotion such as hope were aroused overriding the negative emotions initially felt.

5.9.2 Emotional impact of the Ought-to L2 self

In the following story, Thanh's teammates did not do anything directly to change her emotions. Rather, it was what Thanh's perceptions of their expectations of her that impacted her emotions in ways that ultimately led to positive outcomes. Her teammates' expectations were influences on an internal construct that is the Ought-to L2 self.

The event took place in an English class in an English Language Centre when Thanh was nine years old. Her father enrolled her in an English course there. It was the first time she got to know a language which was different from her mother language, so she was nervous and shy and reluctant to talk with her classmates in class.

One day her teacher finished teaching the lesson and conducted an English game for the whole class to join. The students in the class were divided into small teams. They needed to identify hidden objects by expressing them in English words. After the first round, her team lost because she could not succeed in communicating with her teammates. She reported her emotion at that time as:

I felt regretful and ashamed when looking at my team's faces. They were so sad.

(Thanh— narrative 1)

Thanh felt that her timidity was the cause of her team's loss. However, feelings of guilt and shame helped strengthen her will. She did not want to be considered as “a chicken-hearted girl”. She realised that each team member was a chain leading to the team's success and every member should have tried their best to save the team.

Suddenly an idea came into my mind. I ignored my shyness and the fear of making mistakes. I played with my best effort. (Thanh— narrative 1)

Thanh's response to the external event fed into and expanded an internal construct, the Ought-to self of the L2 Motivational System (discussed in Section 2.8.1). She had a sense of who she should be, and the image of her future self was impacted and associated with her teammates.

Finally, Thanh's team won. This brought her momentary positive emotions and also long-term effects on her learning. Thanh's negative emotions such as shyness, shame and guilt gave way to positive emotions such as happiness, and self-confidence. She noted:

My team burst into expressions of joy. After the game I became more confident. I communicated more with everyone. Step by step I had more motivation to study English. Gradually I became interested in learning English. (Thanh— narrative 1)

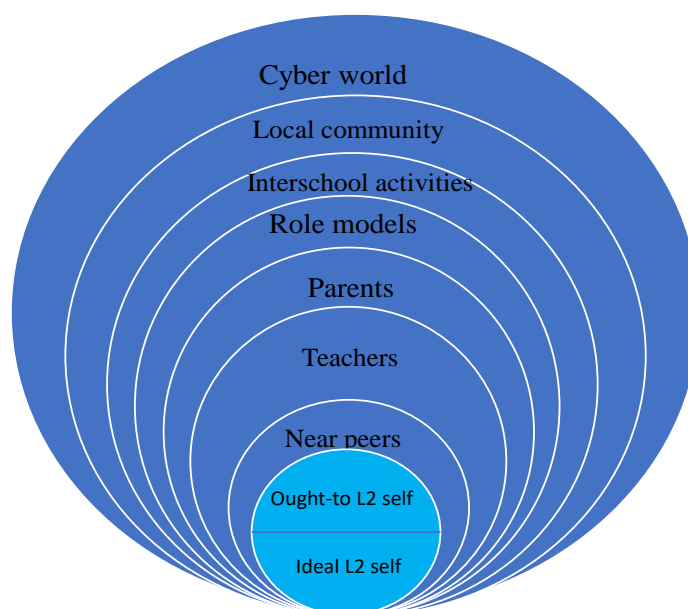
Thus, Thanh's motivation to learn English was constructed by the image of the Ought-to self of the L2 Motivational System. Emotional responses to that external event were a result of negative consequences in the pursuit of the goal.

5.10 Chapter summary

The findings have illustrated that people living around students and people that students came across had a significant role in constructing their emotions. Other artefacts such as English competitions and social media were also sources from which students' emotions emerged (as illustrated in Figure 5.1). Those mediating factors had effects on changing the students' emotions by giving the students hope, enhancing their self-efficacy, motivating them, and helping to minimise negative emotions. Those emotional shifts illustrated the dynamics of the nature of emotions, which changed from moment to moment, with a tendency for positive emotions to emerge when negative ones were removed or lessened.

Figure 5.1

Mediating factors



In addition, Figure 5.1 illustrates that these mediating factors contributed to an internal construct, the Ought-to L2 self or the Ideal L2 self in the Motivational Self System. Near peers fed into both the Ought-to L2 self and the Ideal L2 self. For example,

a student's idea of trying her best to improve herself in order not to disappoint her classmates (presented in Section 5.9.2) fed into the internal construct the Ought-to L2 self, while other students had senses of who they might be by comparing the image of themselves with their peers (discussed in Section 5.2). Parents and teachers strongly impacted an internal construct of the Ought-to L2 self. Role models supported expanding the students' image of the Ideal L2 self. Students' responses to the external events where they had negative feelings as a result of failure in English competitions or communicating with English-speaking people in the community fed into the internal constructs of both the Ought to L2 self and the Ideal L2 self.

It can be concluded from the stories above that peers' encouragement, peers' English proficiency, teachers' encouragement and advice, teachers' life stories, teachers' teaching approaches, parents' support and encouragement, role models' English proficiency, and social media were significant in triggering positive emotions and in arousing students' first inspiration in learning English. Reported positive emotions were also linked to other elements of the learning process such as increasing awareness, awakening self-efficacy, increasing motivation, and setting goals and pathways. Positive emotions often brought positive outcomes.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide key insights into the contribution of positive emotions reported by English language learners in the Vietnamese tertiary context to their English language learning, and their relationships with other elements including negative emotions. The discussion takes account of the diversity, complexity, and dynamics of emotions across a range of settings identified as significant by the participants. This section introduces the aim and structure of the chapter. Section two presents different types of emotions found in the data categorised by the criterion of student efforts to meet the social standards, social values, or personal expectations or targets and is intended to respond to the first research question. Section three discusses the contribution of hope and its rapport with other elements such as self-efficacy and mediating factors in shaping and changing students' emotions and aims to answer the third research question. Section four looks at the contributions of positive emotions in the language learning process and answers the second research question. Section five discusses the display of certain emotions in the light of the contribution of cultural features in the Vietnamese setting. Section six discusses emotions underpinned by the Ideal L2 self and the Ought to L2 self in the Motivational system. The chapter ends with a short conclusion.

6.2 The range, complexity, and fluctuation of emotions in students' narrative accounts

6.2.1 The range of reported emotions

The findings of this study have indicated that students experienced a wide range of emotions in their English language learning. This contributes to a wider understanding of the role of emotions in the literature. Recent research in the field has gone beyond the early concern with anxiety in second language learning; for example Horwitz (2001, 2010). Recently, researchers have been interested in studying enjoyment in English classrooms. Thus, enjoyment as a representative of positive emotions and anxiety as a representative of negative responses have been investigated; for example, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016). The current study adds to this body of research with its focus on a much broader range of emotions. This section aims to answer the first research question:

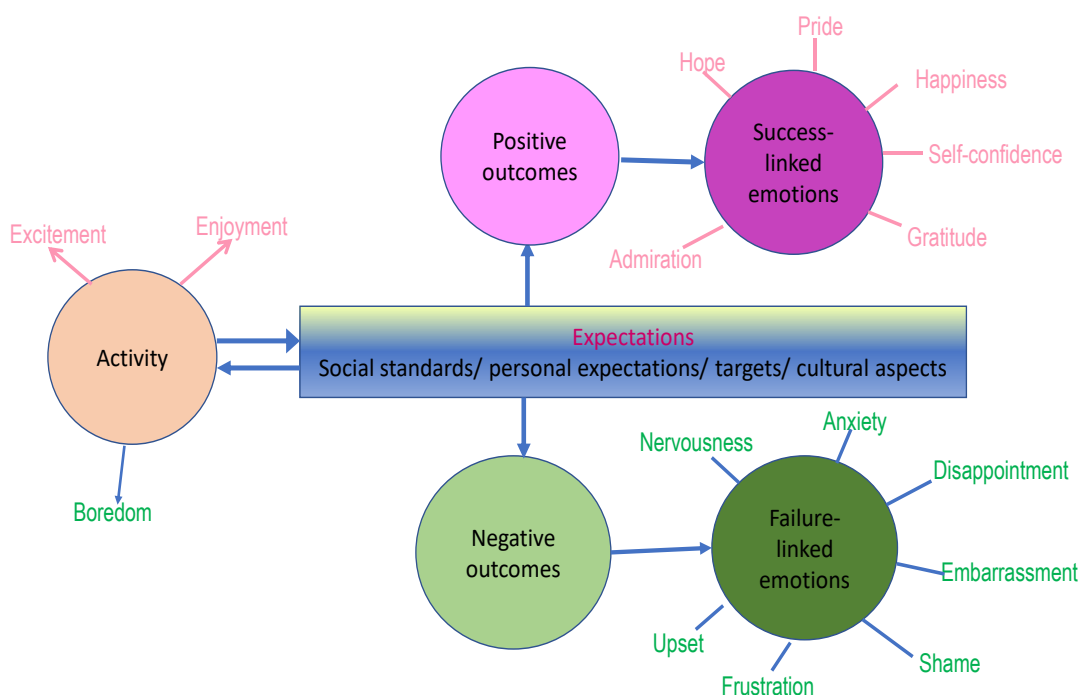
What is the range of reported emotions in university students' narrative accounts of English language learning in Vietnam?

The results of this study illustrate a diversity of emotions. Positive and negative emotions were associated with the success and failure of outcomes and the ability to trigger actions, so they were categorised into three types: success-linked emotions, failure-linked emotions, and activity-linked emotions based on the existing literature. The criterion of meeting individuals' expectations or targets or social standards and values provided a useful way to classify emotions in this study. Success-linked emotions, including admiration, gratitude, self-confidence, happiness, pride, and hope, were triggered by positive outcomes, which were linked to success or achievement in meeting those criteria. In contrast, failure-linked emotions, including negative emotions such as

nervousness, anxiety, disappointment, upset, frustration, embarrassment, and shame, originated from negative outcomes which were rooted in not meeting those criteria. In addition, activity-related emotions brought opportunities for shaping either positive or negative outcomes and those outcomes were likely to lead to positive or negative emotions. On the other hand, meeting or not meeting personal expectations, as self-assessed by students or by social standards and values, had an effect on activity-related emotions. The emergence of emotions from negative and positive outcomes and the impact of success or failure in meeting those criteria found in data of this research is illustrated as in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Range of reported emotions



6.2.2 The complexity of reported emotions

In addition to the diversity of emotion, the current research also reveals the complexity of emotion in English language learning. This aspect has contributed to the understanding

that emotions do not exist in isolation from each other, but they coexist, interplay and intertwine with each other. For example, excitement and nervousness or anxiety occurred together when students participated in unknown and challenging class activities in some students' narrative accounts. Pride and happiness coexisted in some events when students succeeded in doing something challenging.

Using the socio-cultural approach my study brought a wide and in-depth view on emotions which showed their close relationships with other aspects in language learning, such as motivation (this will be discussed further in Section 6.6) and self-efficacy (to be discussed in Section 6.3.2). Unlike many other studies, my study examined these links closely and mapped their trajectories.

6.2.3 The dynamics of reported emotions

The findings of this study illustrate that students' emotions shifted and changed with the help of people around them, the images produced by their Ideal L2 self, and hope. These findings add to the literature on emotion in language learning by describing in detail the transition of emotions reported in many students' written narratives. The specific contribution of this study to Hope Theory in applied linguistics will be discussed in Section 6.3.

In many students' written narratives, emotions were reported to change from negative to positive with the support and help from people in the students' surroundings. Support and help from teachers included their encouragement, gifts they gave their students, advice, and life stories they told their students. Support and help from parents included their encouragement and advice. Peers' encouragement and praise also played a role in changing students' emotions. These mediating factors enhanced students' self-

efficacy (see Section 6.3.2) and gave them hope, and motivated students to get closer to their goals in the journey of pursuit of the Ideal L2 self.

6.3 Hope and its relationships with other factors in the reported narrative accounts

Hope became an important focus during data collection, one that I had not foreseen at the outset of the study. A conceptualisation of hope as a combination of three components including goals, pathways and agency, has been theorised by Snyder and his colleagues in Snyder (2000); (Snyder et al., 2002). The components of this theory are explained clearly in MacIntyre et al. (2022): goals are “the targets that a person wishes to pursue”, and pathways, or pathway thinking, “reflect activities that lead to goal attainment” (p. 3). Pathways thinking is the route the learners planned to reach goals. Agentic thinking is the motivational component in hope theory: “Agentic thinking reflects the self-referential thoughts about both starting to move along a pathway and continuing to progress along that pathway” (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 258).

Hope is a positive emotion that has been investigated in the fields of psychology and medicine, but it has not been studied in detail in the field of applied linguistics. The findings of this research show the emergence of hope in the transition of emotions (discussed in Section 6.2.3), its motivational function in the pursuit the Ideal L2 self, and its relationship with self-efficacy (as will be discussed in Section 6.3.3). Thus, my study shows another nuance of hope which is very important, particularly for the shifts of emotions from negative to positive, and for increasing learner motivation. These contributions of hope answer the last research question of this study:

How does hope contribute to the shaping of the students' vision of their language learning journey?

6.3.1 The emergence and significance of hope in English language learning in the reported narratives

Hope was triggered by different events in different contexts. Hope was close to students' dreams as images of the Ideal self. Students hoped to sing English songs, improve their English proficiency and be able to understand and communicate with foreigners in English. Students hoped to visit Europe and discover Western cultures one day, go and visit their friend's family abroad, study and work in England, travel to beautiful places in the world. Students hoped to become interpreters, English teachers, and doctors in the future. As indicated in Snyder's Hope Theory, these targets that students wished to pursue were conceptualised as goals.

Hope triggered actions because the students set up particular actions to achieve the goals. For example, students hoped that they would sing English songs in the future, so they tried their best to learn English. To actualise the hope of visiting a friend in another country, the students resolved to improve their English by taking an English course at an English Language Centre. These students' activities that brought about more opportunities to attain their goals can be viewed as pathways or pathway thinking in Snyder's Hope Theory.

Hope appeared to be associated with students' expectations, either their own expectations or expectations imposed on them by others. Expectations can be considered as the actual goals that the students felt they could achieve. Students were liable to expectations at every step, emanating from themselves, parents, teachers, and society.

Hope was the emotion associated with expectations, so many emotions were connected to hope. Emotions function as mediating the initiation and maintenance of the journey of pursuing goals (Lerner & Small, 2002). When hope emerged, it helped the students to set goals and motivated them to find a way to achieve those goals.

Hope in this study is found as the connection from negative emotions to positive ones. Hope is the way of shifting emotions to actions, from demotivation to motivation. Hope appeared to act as a way of shifting from low levels of self-efficacy to high levels of self-efficacy in performing tasks. As indicated in Snyder's (2000) Hope Theory, this motivational component is called agency or agentic thinking.

Hope in this study played an important role in shifting students' emotions. When students experienced negative emotions which originated from negative outcomes, hope helped them to build up their self-efficacy, to develop their confidence, to motivate them to do more, and to increase interest and enjoyment. This helped students feel positive and enhanced their belief that they had potential in English language learning. When hope existed, it helped the students to set the goals for the future and to make clear plans to actualise those goals in the future (Marques et al., 2014; Snyder et al., 2002) .

The findings about hope and factors around hope such as goals, pathways thinking, and agency thinking align with the Hope Theory (Snyder et al., 2002). The goals set in these reported narratives are points the learners wanted to reach. In English language learning, pathways thinking can be a series of actions that learners were planning to do, such as learning English more, working harder, and improving English speaking skills. Marques and Lopez (2014) stated that hope is positively related to academic achievements. This supports the findings of the current research. In this

research, hope was also shaped by the influence of near peer role models' specific values, by teachers' and parents' encouragement and advice.

6.3.2 Mediating factors and self-efficacy

As discussed in Section 6.3.1, hope itself is a positive emotion but functioned as a motivational factor. Many students reported that hope was triggered by encouragement, support, advice, and care from people around them. When those people gave them hope, their self-efficacy beliefs in being able to do something, increased. Thus, this study shows the relationships between hope, emotions, and self-efficacy. Mediating factors here include perceived teacher support, peer encouragement, and perceived parent support. Support from teachers can fall into two categories: academic support or emotional support (Liu et al., 2021).

In this study, some students experienced negative emotions such as anxiety, nervousness, and frustration when performing challenging tasks or tasks with high demands or tasks that they had never done before. They experienced embarrassment and shame when they failed in performing the tasks. They had low levels of self-efficacy belief, doubting whether they could do those tasks successfully. Some students reported that without any support from teachers, parents, and peers they continued to experience low self-efficacy and negative emotions. Nga, for example, reported that she felt more anxious when her teacher criticised her low English competence.

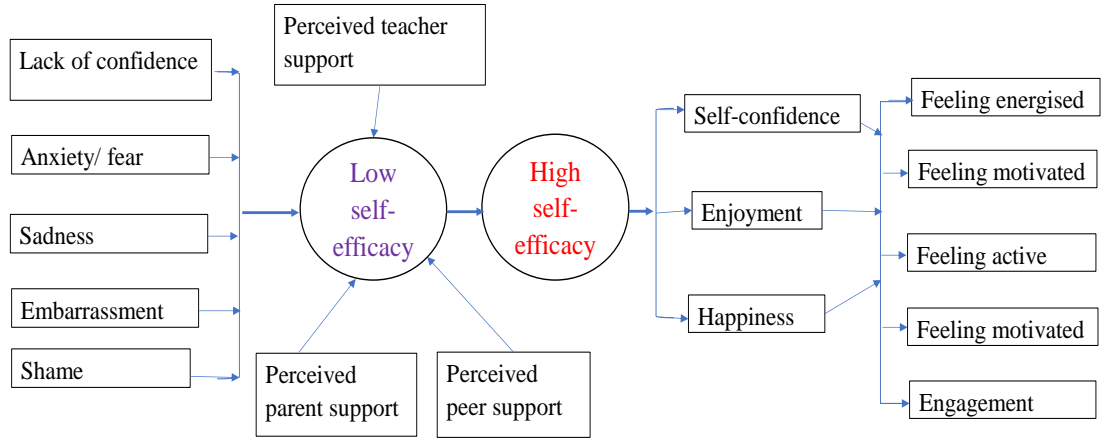
In contrast, when some students performed challenging tasks, they felt shy, frustrated, reluctant to speak English, and unsure if they could perform them or not, but when their teachers, parents, or peers offered encouragement and support, their levels of self-efficacy belief grew. The perceived teacher support here took the form of

encouragement, trust in the students' ability to do the work, the creative and friendly learning environments that teachers created, and small gifts the teachers gave to the students when they gave the correct answers. With this perceived teacher support, students felt more confident in their ability to complete their tasks. In some other cases, when students experienced negative responses to failure in performing a task in class, such as anxiety, embarrassment, and shame, their parents' encouragement and support helped strengthen their belief that they could do better in the future. Peer encouragement and support, in other cases, was another source that enhanced some students' self-efficacy in task performance and belief in being able to learn English in this study. They became more active and engaged in classroom activities. As a result, students' positive emotions such as happiness, enjoyment, relaxed feeling, and pleasure originated from the successful task performance.

Thus, the mediating factors in this study appeared to have a positive effect on the students' self-efficacy. Perceived teacher encouragement, parental support, and peer encouragement played a role in developing the students' self-efficacy through the cognition of hope that they could do better. With the effect of support from mediating factors, negative emotions lessened. Moreover, under the effect of mediating elements, students' low self-efficacy responded differently in another positive direction and self-efficacy was developed. High levels of self-efficacy were likely to bring students opportunities to attain academic achievements, and positive emotions emerged from academic achievements. The relationships of these factors in this study can be illustrated as in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2

The relationships of self-efficacy with perceived support and emotions



These findings align with those of previous studies such as Ozer and Akçayoğlu (2021) and Liu et al. (2021) in terms of the relationship between positive achievement emotions, perceived teacher support and self-efficacy. The findings of Liu et al. (2021) point out that perceived teacher support affected students' creative self-efficacy through their autonomous motivation and achievement emotions, such as enjoyment, relaxation, anxiety and boredom. In the current study the order of the elements in the relationship of emotions, self-efficacy, mediating factors and perceived support factors are slightly different from Liu et al.'s (2021) study. Liu et al. (2021) found teacher support boosts students' autonomous motivation level, then builds up students' positive emotions that strengthen their creative self-efficacy. In contrast, in the current study, teacher support enhanced students' self-efficacy which built up learners' positive emotions, and those positive emotions became mediating factors to enhance positive outcomes such as motivation and engagement.

The findings of this research indicated that the students' emotions fluctuated and changed across time with the influence of the mediating factors, and that negative and

positive emotions were closely linked together. Studying the representative positive emotion of enjoyment and the representative negative emotion of anxiety, Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) point out that these two emotions worked together in second language performance and enjoyment “seems to be more strongly linked to performance in the FL than negative emotions” (p. 41). The data around the cooperation of negative and positive emotions in the current study are in line with those of Oxford (2015) in which emotions seem to be closely connected to cognition and affect learners’ learning behaviours.

Thus, the findings of positive emotions emerging from the sequence of hope and students’ high self-efficacy level have highlighted the important role of hope in changing students’ emotions with the contributions of perceived support from parents, teachers and friends and the role of hope in motivating future action. These findings contribute to understanding the role of mediating factors, the dynamics of emotions, and a nuance of hope that functions as a motivating factor.

6.3.3 Hope, self-efficacy, and motivation in English language learning

According to Bandura (1989), self-efficacy beliefs, motivation and emotion have a strong relationship: “People’s self-efficacy beliefs determine their level of motivation” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1176) because when individuals have strong belief in their abilities, they can make greater effort in facing their problems. Individuals’ emotions, including anxiety, depression and level of motivation, are impacted by their self-efficacy beliefs.

When teachers empowered students by encouraging them to perform challenging speaking tasks or take part in an English competition and suggested a learning approach, they gave the students hope, enhanced their self-efficacy, and developed their confidence. Students set goals for themselves and particular plans to get closer to the goals. Plans here

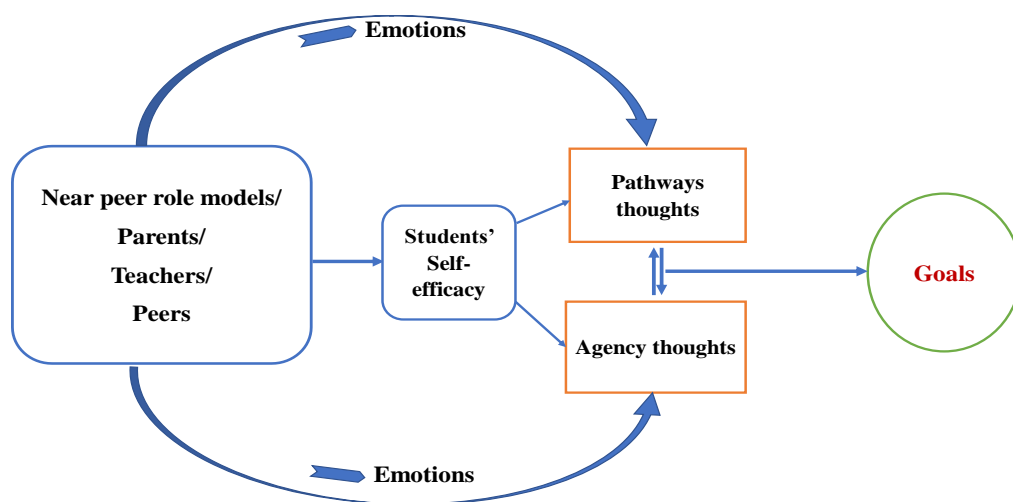
include working hard, listening to English songs, learning five new words a day, reading books and learning basic English grammar. While carrying out the plans, they felt hopeful that they could reach their goals. They were motivated to carry out plans to achieve their goals. As a result, they had positive outcomes.

The data showing the relationships between emotions such as anxiety, self-confidence and self-efficacy are in line with the results of Wang and Pape's (2009) study. Wang and Pape found that emotions, such as anxiety, impacted students' self-efficacy beliefs and students who felt less anxious were more likely to have a higher level of self-efficacy.

Thus, the data in this study show the relationships among elements in Hope theory (agency thoughts, pathways thoughts, and goals), efficacy and motivation (see more in Section 6.6). The influence of peers, teachers, and parents on students' motivation and belief in getting near their goals has been identified. The images of near peer role models with special skills become sources for shaping the students' hope, as illustrated in Figure 6.3. The model of hope in this study is different from Snyder's in that this model includes two more elements: mediating factors and students' self-efficacy. Mediating factors such as role models, parents, teachers, and peers, were found to be external resources that positively impacted students' journey reaching to the goals. In addition, the positive influence of those mediating factors developed students' self-efficacy.

Figure 6.3

Hope in English language learning adapted from Snyder et al. (2002)



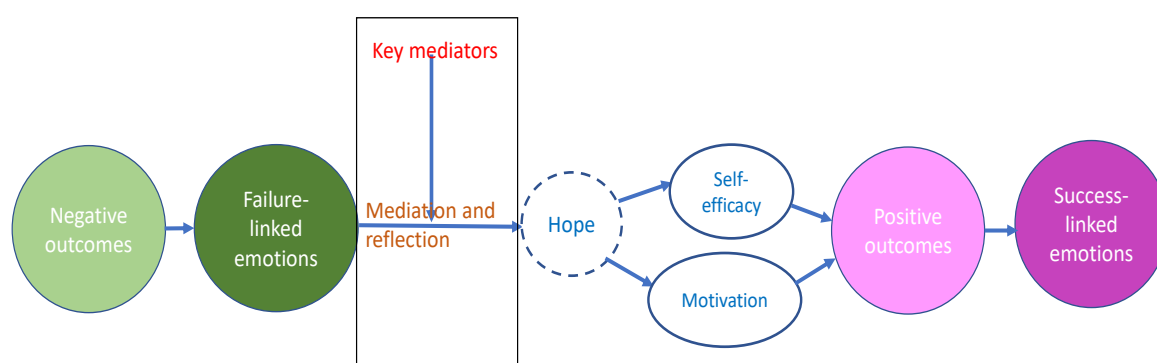
This finding is close to Hiver's (2016) study, and supports the findings around self-efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1989). Bandura (2006b) states that individuals' self-efficacy plays a mediating role in the process of reaching goals and performing tasks. Seeing other people succeed in doing the tasks with the effort they put in can enhance an individual's self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), referring to self-efficacy theory, a goal-related outcome is of important value to capture individuals' attention. This affirmation is also similar to that of Snyder et al.'s (2002) Hope theory.

The relationship between hope, motivation, and self-efficacy in this study relates to shaping and changing students' emotions is illustrated in Figure 6.4. As is shown, mediating factors such as role models, parents, teachers, and peers were a source of shaping hope in students. They helped students believe in themselves and believe that they could reach the goal by finding a way or building up actions. They supported students in the process of changing negative emotions that were triggered from failure or negative outcomes to positive. These mediating factors were a source that triggered positive

emotions and developed students' self-efficacy to get closer to the goal set for themselves. When students experienced high efficacy beliefs, they were likely to attain positive outcomes, and as a result, success-linked emotions were triggered. The processes of changing emotions, the effects and role of key mediators, and the rapport of aspects of English language learning with emotions were reflected in students' stories. As discussed in 3.3, narrative qualitative research provides opportunities for students to reflect on their lived experiences and emotions emerged in those particular events in the form of storytelling. Narrative research was suitable for this specific study because it gave students opportunities to reflect their stories of learning English. Students' reflection is seen as an important component of narrative research, and as the product of an embedded process of reflection on their own experiences and associated emotions.

Figure 6.4

The role of mediating factors in shaping and changing students' emotions



6.4 The contributions of positive emotions

This section aims to discuss the contributions of positive emotions in language learning and sees how Fredrickson's "Broaden and-Build" Theory (presented in Section 2.5) supports the findings of my study. It aims to answer the second research question:

What role do the reported positive emotions play in the language learning trajectory of the students?

Success-linked emotions originated from positive outcomes associated with the students' abilities to meet personal expectations, their targets or social standards. Success-linked emotions played an important role in motivating students in further study, they positively resulted in students' follow-up actions, learning perspectives and behaviours. Positive emotions, such as happiness, had the function of broadening the learners' thought-action capabilities because when learners were experiencing positive emotions, their mind-sets were open to information (Fredrickson, 1998, 2003). Kok and Fredrickson (2013) assert that "positive emotions also create openness to new experiences" (p. 61). Thus, learners felt at ease to learn and explore more, as exemplified in the cases of Hien and Thu.

Pride, which was evoked by academic achievements during English language learning, functioned as motivation that encouraged the students to learn more and more. Pride played an important role in interpersonal interactions, supporting Tracy et al.'s (2014) claim that it "is the single most important emotion underpinning the attainment and maintenance of social status" and it also "shapes each individual's self-concept and self-esteem" (p. 306). Pride opened a person's "thought-action repertoires by creating the urge to share news of achievement with others" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 220). Pride also encouraged the students with achievements to explore new experiences.

Additionally, students who are grateful and engaged in positive emotions are likely to experience joy and happiness because gratitude functions like other positive emotions, broadening a person's "momentary thought-action repertoire" and building "enduring personal resources" (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 148). These processes are linked to

a tendency called grateful disposition to respond with grateful emotion to positive experience (McCullough et al., 2002; McCullough et al., 2001). Thus, “it is possible that cultivating gratitude may boost happiness while also generating hope” (Witvliet et al., 2019, p. 272).

Interest in or excitement about English often led to positive learning outcomes. Interest in the classroom stimulated students to explore and learn more, and to be more engaged in class activities. Interest also opened their mode of thinking and developed their resources. Interest contributed to developing students’ well-being and changing their attitude to learning English. A learning environment that was characterised by interesting engagement made the students more likely to get involved and employ a wider range of exploration into the objects of interest. This often drove the student’s development and influenced their social engagements (Renninger, 1992). Excitement or interest “broadens an individual’s momentary thought-action repertoire as the individual is enticed to explore” and “builds the individual’s store of knowledge” (Fredrickson, 1998, p. 305).

Thus, the reported positive emotions or success-linked emotions of happiness, pride, admiration, self-confidence, gratitude and hope, positively resulted in changes in students’ cognition, awareness and actions. The findings here support those in Fredrickson and Branigan’s (2005) study in that positive emotions change an individual’s thoughts and actions, and these changes have long-lasting impacts.

The findings of the data in this study also align with the key insight of the Broad-and-Build theory in that positive emotions open an individual’s scope of cognition, thought and actions, and build personal enduring resources and social resources (Conway et al., 2013; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001, 2003; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). In other

words, positive emotions “broaden the way a person experiences the world” and “support well-being by building resources for the future” (Gregersen et al., 2016, p. 148).

6.5 The influences of cultural factors in constructing some particular emotions in the Vietnamese context

The findings of this study show that social and cultural features shaped, constructed and impacted students’ emotions. These findings contribute to the literature on emotion by illustrating how emotions were associated with features of the Vietnamese culture, in particular with the local Confucian heritage. For example, the construction and display of anxiety, embarrassment and shame were, in particular cases, influenced by the notion of saving and losing face. In addition, displays of other emotions, such as disappointment and gratitude, reported in this study were characterised by the Vietnamese culture.

6.5.1 The manifestation of some emotions related to the notion of saving and losing face

The concept of face, which is defined as “the ideal image a person claims for themselves” (Choe, 2018, p. 17), and its features in some particular cultures have been discussed in Section 2.7. The existence of the concept of face plays a part in social interactions in many collective, ‘Confucian-heritage’ cultures such as Vietnamese and Chinese cultures. Face is viewed as an important ‘constraint on behaviour’ characterised by the culture (Jones, 2004).

One feature of the Vietnamese culture that constructed the students’ notion of face saving is fear from social evaluations such as the judgement by other people. Vietnamese people are afraid of “eyes” around them and negative evaluations from other “eyes”

(Greer, 2000). Thus, in class if students make mistakes, or do anything which is below the social norms or cannot meet the social demands, it seems to bring possibilities of negative evaluations from their teachers and peers. It is likely that they will face and suffer from others' looking down on them. This will be a potential cause of anxiety, shame and embarrassment. Thus, students' fear of negative evaluations can be considered as an explanation of learner apprehension or an illustration of anxiety (Jones, 2004).

Face saving was manifested with feeling enjoyment in a comfortable learning environment, the case of Nga (discussed in Section 4.2.1) for example. Students felt their face was protected by the way their teachers gave feedback: they did not give negative feedback publicly or they never complained about students' wrong answers. In these cases, they felt they had saved face. Those students' notion of face being saved was different from other cases where students reported their feelings of losing face.

In social constructionism, the manifestation of the feeling of loss of face have cultural variations in their typical display and they "are associated with problems of social status, cooperation, and reciprocity across cultures" (Goetz & Keltner, 2007, p. 167). Shame is a good example of such a case. Shame in Western cultures has been found to be different from in Confucian heritage cultures. As Bedford (2004) asserts: "the literature on guilt and shame in Western countries cannot provide a complete picture of the roles and functions of guilt and shame in Chinese culture" (Bedford, 2004, p. 30). Like other Confucian-heritage cultures such as Japan and China, shame and self-criticism are considered as strong socializing forces in childrearing in Vietnam (Goetz & Keltner, 2007) and shame is related to feeling of losing face.

Shame which was triggered in the English language learning in the Vietnamese context in this study was often associated with students' perceived laziness. This can be

explained by the fact that in Vietnamese culture, a student is supposed to be hard-working, and to have good behaviour and attitudes. In the Vietnamese learning context, students do not have the right to refuse to do the work. If they cannot complete their tasks, cannot perform the class activities well, or receive low scores, they will be criticised as “lazy students”. Like other Asian cultures such as Korean, people work hard to meet others’ expectations and to save face (Kim & Nam, 1998). Reported shame in this study also appeared as the result of low scores and low English performance. This finding is in line with that of the study by Chen and Brown (2018).

Being ridiculed by peers for incorrect English words used, low English competence or poor English pronunciation was another source that triggered students’ embarrassment and shame. Sang, Kha and Kim were examples of this. This reflected Vietnamese cultural features because it is an acceptable reaction in a Vietnamese class and teachers at that time did not try to prevent it to protect students’ face within the class, and as a result, these students felt loss of face.

Anxiety was an emotional response to the events in which students felt their face was not protected. In this study, the students’ anxiety in foreign language classes stemmed from communication apprehension. Their communication apprehension originated from a fear of making mistakes and being negatively judged by the teacher and students, and this caused their feeling of losing face. The students reported their experiences of anxiety, trembling, panic, nervousness and fear when they were called on by name to communicate with their English teachers or to give answers to the teacher’s question in English classes. Similar negative emotions were described clearly by one participant in Cohen and Norst’s (1989) study. The reason for Vietnamese students’ communication apprehension was explained in Tran et al.’s (2021) study:

In Vietnamese high school context, both male and female have not been trained to present confidently and logically in front of people yet. Therefore, when starting their new stage of education in the university, they have the same conditions and experiences to adapt in the new environment”. (p. 65)

The fear of making mistakes during oral class performance such as in pronunciation, grammatical structures or intonation, made a student feel shy in combination with anxiety and as a result, led to their reluctance to speak in class. These findings are similar to those of King (2014) and King and Smith (2017), who investigated learners studying under Japanese culture and society. King (2014) explained that “socio-cultural values, norms and expectations all help to shape anxiety within social situations” (p. 234). In these two studies, language classroom anxiety is viewed as social anxiety because students’ fear is “related to a socially anxious individual’s belief that his or her social performance is not of an acceptable standard and will likely be judged harshly by others” (King & Smith, 2017, p. 100).

Students’ anxiety was associated with fear of negative evaluation and being criticised by their teachers. Failure in communication with teachers also caused students’ disappointment, upset and shame. These findings align with those in Pham’s (2017) study, which indicates that when participant students spoke in front of their teachers and peers “they might have felt embarrassment and vulnerable for the fear of negative evaluation [sic]” from their teachers and peers, and “their concerns for loss of face might have made them feel more anxious” (Pham, 2017, p. 129). As a result, choosing to reduce talk in class is a safe way that may have helped students to avoid these negative emotions. The findings around reduction in oral production were in line with the cognitive model of silent L2 learners’ social anxiety in King and Smith (2017). These findings around the

relationship between shyness, anxiety and willingness to communicate align with the results of other studies, such as in Mohammadian (2013), Oflaz (2019) and Gregersen and Horwitz (2002).

In some students' spoken and written narrative accounts in this study, shame was found to derive from failure in achieving goals and it was related to a feeling of loss of face. Shyness and embarrassment in some cases are psychological reactions to shame with feelings of losing face. Kha's, Diu's, Ly's and Sang's shame are examples of this. The findings have also indicated that embarrassment is closely linked to "face" and feeling of loss of face. Choe (2018) investigated the display of the student embarrassment in an adult English classroom which emerged from classroom interactions and points out that students' embarrassment resulted from making a mistake or contributing an incorrect answer in front of the class. Goffman (1956) also asserts that "embarrassment has to do with unfulfilled expectations" (p. 268) and embarrassment is linked to individuals' responses to protect their face in social interactions where their face is threatened. Additionally, feelings are attached to face, so 'losing face' can be seen as originating from embarrassment (Goffman, 1967).

In Vietnamese culture, loss of face is considered painful, as Borton and Ryder (2000) noted: "Loss of face is painful in any society, but unbearable in Vietnam. The Vietnamese have an expression: "Better to die than to lose face" (p. 24). There are some Vietnamese sayings which demonstrate the strength of feeling associated with losing face: "I can find no place to hide myself away", "I want to dig a hole to bury myself", or "If there were a hole in the ground, I would have crawled into it". In some written narratives, students described how they experienced negative emotions similar to these.

For example, Ly reported her reactions to shame as: “I did not know how to hide my shame away”.

Thus, the data indicating shame in relation to fear of face loss or failure to have their face protected within the Vietnamese culture are close to the findings of shame in Li et al. (2004), Kam and Bond (2008) and Bedford (2004) within the Chinese cultural context. These findings in the present research are close to those in McGregor and Elliot (2005), which found that “shame is the core emotion of fear of failure” (p. 227). This finding of the loss of face in Vietnamese culture was similar to that of Thai culture because “one aspect of Thai culture is keeping face [...]. Thai people do not want to do things that lead them to lose face” (Namwong, 2019, p. 186). While there are similarities across Asian cultures, this study adds particular insights and nuances into how students in the Vietnamese context experience a loss of face and the impact this has on their emotions and subsequent actions.

6.5.2 The impact of power distance in the classrooms

The power distance of the Vietnamese culture had an effect on shaping and constructing students’ emotions in this study. Vietnam is considered a large power distance country where people tend to accept the unequal distribution of power in their social positions (H. T. M. Nguyen, 2016). According to H. T. M. Nguyen (2016) , the high power distance of Vietnamese culture reflects in general norms, family, workplace, and school. At school, “the inequality between teacher and student is manifested by high respect for teachers and the dependence of students on them” (p. 39) because of “the teacher’s dominant role as a knowledge source” (p. 41). In classrooms, students rarely speak up until they are singled out by their teachers because “arguing and discussing with teachers, parents or elder people is often considered as *rude* and *disrespectful*” (Nguyen, 2011, p. 6). They show

their respect to their teacher by listening to lessons in an orderly fashion without discussions or interactions (Le, 2001; Yates & Trang, 2012).

The social gap between the teacher and students can make the students feel uncomfortable communicating. The existence of fear in foreign language classrooms in the Vietnamese context partly originates from the features of teachers' classroom management. Students are required to sit quietly in the class; they can talk only when they are summoned to give the answers. They rarely make arguments or raise questions during class time, and they avoid arguing and debating with their peers about the disagreement of ideas because "if they think differently from other people they often do not write or say their own thoughts and they seem to be expected to do what the majority think and value" (Nguyen, 2011, p. 6).

Thus, the power distance in Vietnamese culture impacts students' ability to communicate in the classrooms and the power distance leads to high levels of anxiety in the classroom (Tran et al., 2021). In this study, students often experienced anxiety, even fear when being singled out by their teachers, or when discussing something because they tended to want to protect their face and avoid feelings of loss of face. This finding about the power distance in the culture is similar to Namwong's (2019) study on Thai culture, in which students show their respect towards their teachers by "avoiding expressing their opposing ideas and instead comply with teachers' instruction" (p. 186).

While there are studies on the power distance in classrooms in other Southeast Asian cultures, the current study exemplifies how this works within Vietnamese classrooms, an area which has not received much attention in the research literature.

6.5.3 The effect of culture on constructing disappointment

Disappointment was reported in several students' interviews and was associated with failure in an English competition at school, missing a chance to talk with a foreigner, and failure in an entrance exam to a gifted high school. Rather than focusing on these causes of disappointment, this section discusses what students thought and felt when experiencing this negative emotion, as this is in part reflective of Vietnamese culture.

When the students could not achieve their particular goals, they felt disappointed in themselves, and this raised doubts about their English ability. They felt disappointed because they felt they had let their parents and teacher down. This is understandable as in the Vietnamese learning context, students learn not only for themselves, but to meet their parents' and teacher's expectations. Parents work hard to support their children and have high hopes that their children can learn and do better than their own generation. Parents often desire to provide a better life for their children, so they put the pressure of high academic achievements on their children's shoulders (Pham, 2016). Teachers provide another source of pressure: often, trying their best to provide students with sufficient targeted knowledge, they also expect that with their career responsibility, care, and enthusiasm their students will perform well in class and attain high academic achievements. When students could not attain a good level of academic performance, they felt disappointed and were afraid that they would let their parents and teachers down. Teachers and parents motivated learners and the motive such as studying to avoid parental disappointment is related to the Ought-to L2 self (Wen et al., 2020).

Thus, in the current study the motivational factors from an external source such as parents and teachers have strong influence on students' internal construct of the Ought-

to L2 self. Those factors also impacted students' emotional pressure that emerged from the students' awareness of their teachers' concern and the rapport they have built up.

6.5.4 Showing gratitude as influenced by cultural features

The display of gratitude as cultural features has been studied by various researchers, such as Floyd et al. (2018) and Zhang et al. (2017), in terms of verbal expressions of gratitude. The findings of these studies show that in different cultures, the rates of verbal expression of gratitude, saying "thank-you", are different. However, in the current research, the verbal expression of gratitude is not in focus, but the non-verbal expression of gratitude is analysed, and it is found here that displays of gratitude appear to be impacted by cultural features.

When receiving help or a present from others, the beneficiaries, the students, did not simply say "thank-you" in words directly after receiving help, they tried to do something in appreciation of the benefactors, i.e., their parents, teachers and friends. The students in this research felt thankful for their parents' care, enthusiasm or things which might be taken for granted in other contexts. The participant students reported that they felt gratitude to their parents as people who were important in educating and nurturing them and had a significant effect on their thoughts, behaviours, and perspectives in life. Students often felt grateful and showed their gratitude to their parents by working hard and studying well. This emotional response to parental care is common among Vietnamese people because they are often brought up to believe that showing gratitude to parents is one of the social moral standards in Vietnamese culture.

Teachers in this study were also a source of students' gratitude, which reflected this cultural feature. Showing gratitude to teachers is another tradition in Vietnamese culture.

Students' gratitude toward their teachers could be considered a motivational factor that urged them to study more and work harder to repay what their teachers had done for them. Gratitude triggered actions and developed students' willingness to improve themselves.

The participants in the current study reported their gratitude to their teachers for their care, enthusiasm, encouragement and their role in loco parentis. Loan, for example, reported her gratitude towards her English teacher, who gave her a book as a gift, which gave rise to her first inspiration in studying English. Her inspiration in learning English did not come from the interest and values of the book itself, but her emotions were triggered by her teacher's encouragement, care and action. This made her feel grateful to her teacher and she considered this as a privilege that she needed to work to repay. Thus, gratitude is one of the positive emotions which emerge from indebtedness (McCullough et al., 2001).

Other students who participated in this study expressed their gratitude towards their teachers by sending them flowers, cards and best wishes on special occasions such as on Vietnamese teachers' days, and Tet holiday (Lunar New Year occasion). This way of displaying gratitude reflects a particular feature of the Vietnamese culture.

Thus, the displays of reported gratitude are affected by features of the Vietnamese culture, which may differ from Western cultures. The students in this study did not simply express their gratitude towards the people who helped them by saying "thank-you" after receiving help; they experienced positive emotions about what their parents and teachers did for them; they appreciated the help and considered it as a personal privilege. This is an aspect which has not been studied before in researching emotions of Vietnamese English language learners.

6.5.5 The influence of cultural factors in constructing particular emotions in the Vietnamese context: Summary

The displays of emotions described above show that reported emotions may be mediated by social expectations (Vrana & Rollock, 2002) because “the social structures help shape the way emotion is experienced and expressed” (Vrana & Rollock, 2002, p. 166). The findings in this study indicated the close relationships between cultural features, such as the notion of saving face and losing face, and the displays of particular emotions, in agreement with Goetz and Keltner’s (2007) research. The findings of the study also showed that features of Vietnamese culture imbue all the data. These findings contribute to knowledge of the significance of cultural features in constructing and shaping the emotions. They also contribute to the literature on the influence of Vietnamese cultural aspects on emotions in the field of applied linguistics, which has thus far received limited attention.

6.6 The constructions of the Ought-to L2 self and Ideal L2 self in the Vietnamese cultural context

The results of the current study have highlighted the implications of emotions for the motivational constructs of the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self in the L2 Motivational system. In the literature, there have been studies on the relationship between emotion and motivation, but details about how emotions underpin motivational constructions are scarce. This study did not aim to focus on motivation, but in the journey of undertaking this research, it has uncovered the emergence of emotions in motivational constructions.

6.6.1 The constructions of the Ideal L2 self

In the literature, there have been many studies on the role of the Ideal L2 self in the L2 Motivational System. The data of my study highlight how emotions underlie the Ideal L2 self. Students' positive emotions appeared to be triggered during and to contribute to the journey of obtaining and expanding future images of themselves. These contribute to the knowledge of the emergence of emotions in the Ideal L2 self.

The concept of the Ideal L2 self was discussed in Section 2.8.1. In this model, the Ideal L2 self is defined as “the L2-specific facet of one’s ‘ideal self’ (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 9). The concept of the Ideal L2 self can be viewed as “one’s ideal self-image expressing the wish to become a competent L2 speaker” (Csizér & Kormos, 2014, p. 74). In this study, developing and calling on images of the Ideal L2 self can be considered as an internal motivational factor since when the students wish to become a person with good English proficiency, for example, they see their goals and have actions to reach their goals.

In this study, emotions were linked to the Ideal L2 self in different ways. When students experienced negative or positive emotions in relation to events, this created a new vision which then became part of their ideal self. The image of the future Ideal self gave them a clear goal and clear ideas of who they could become. This made a sense of possibility that spurred students' new actions to attain the goals and during the journey of pursuit of the goals, positive emotions were triggered. For example, when students saw a tourist guide or other Vietnamese people conversing in English that gave rise to the image of Ideal L2 self that inspired them in further study and evoked positive emotions. According to Irie and Brewster (2014), one's desire can result in changes in their Ideal

self and it impacts their views and behaviours. These students felt hopeful that one day they could reach their goals for the future.

The images of the Ideal L2 self in some students' narratives were associated with role models who had particular values or attributes that students admired or wished to have, people who could speak English well such as their teachers, peers, or someone they met in the community. Admiration for a role model's values, attributes or ability is connected with other positive emotions (Schindler, 2014) and it was a means to change students' emotions in this study. Role models played a relatively important role in shaping students' positive emotions such as admiration, hope, and inspiration. Admiration towards (near peer) role models urged students to reach the goals and helped them to grow, to develop and change themselves by helping them see the images of their Ideal L2 self (Schindler et al., 2013). Admiration motivated students to actualise their ideal selves and strengthened their agency to achieve the goals (Schindler, 2014). Role models have powers because people are likely to imitate the successful behaviours of the model (Ruddick, 2013).

Thus, role models play an important role in shaping students' admiration, hope and inspiration. Admiration, inspiration and hope are linked to setting goals and actualising ideals. Inspiration was found to be in positive relation to intrinsic motivation. These findings align with those of Fredrickson's (1998), Thrash and Elliot's (2004) and Thrash and Elliot's (2003) studies. As a result, admiration is relevant to the growth of well-being. This point is similar to Schindler's (2014) perspective.

Additionally, the future images of the Ideal L2 self for students in the study included a person who would be able to sing English songs to their friends and close relatives, a person who would speak English confidently in public, a good interpreter, and someone

who was familiar with diverse Western cultures. When they had a desire to improve themselves, they actualised their wishes by actions to get closer to the image of the Ideal L2 self, such as taking an optional English course at an English language centre to improve their English, finding appropriate approaches to improve English, and following the guidance of a post on Facebook. To get closer to the images of the Ideal L2 self, these students set goals and had actions to minimise the discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves. In the process of reaching goals, positive emotions such as enjoyment, happiness, and hope emerged. They felt motivated and interested in the lessons. These findings align with those of Csizér and Kormos (2014), which indicated that “students who have a strong vision of themselves as successful language users in the future commit themselves more effectively to language learning” (p. 83).

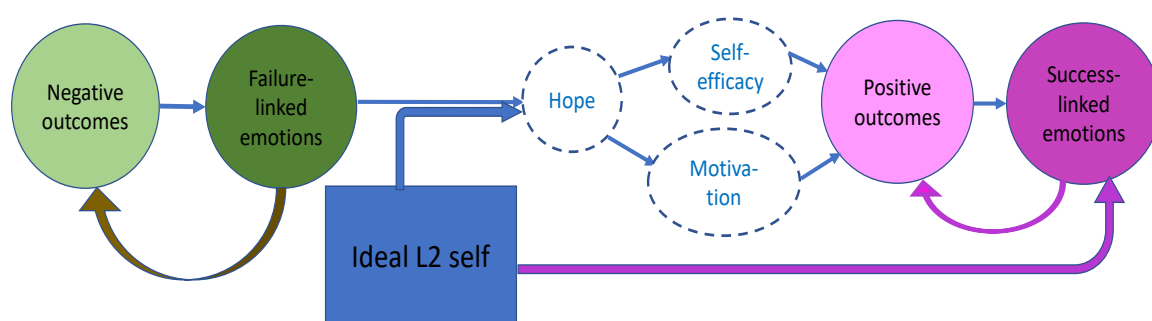
The third component, the L2 learning experience in Dornyei and Ushioda’s (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, could motivate students to reach their Ideal L2 self. The L2 learning experience includes situations related to the immediate learning environment such as the influence of the teacher, peer groups and class experience. With the reflection of the mediation in the learning environment, “Students may have favourable experiences in a particular English teacher’s class, and these positive feelings may encourage a desire to do well in the subject and an association of English with enjoyment” (Irie & Brewster, 2014, p. 172). In one of the stories from this study, the student stated that her English teacher’s classroom management supported her to reach closer to her Ideal L2 self. Her English teacher created a competitive and active learning environment which stimulated and encouraged her to improve her speaking skills. Thus, positive emotions encouraged students to do better in English.

On the way to getting closer to the Ideal L2 selves, the students in the current study reported positive emotions they experienced during this process, such as hope (see Section 6.3), enjoyment and excitement. When the students could develop themselves and minimise the discrepancy between their actual selves and their ideal L2 images, they felt confident and happy about what they had tried. That suggests emotion is related to motivation. The roles of the Ideal L2 self in shaping students' and developing students' positive emotions are illustrated in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 also illustrates that in some cases when students experienced negative emotions related to failure, the actions of the Ideal L2 self functioning as mediation contributed to enhancing students' self-efficacy, giving them hope, or motivated them. These helped students achieve positive outcomes, which triggered further positive emotions.

Figure 6.5

The role of the Ideal L2 self in shaping students' emotions



The findings about how students' emotions emerged in the process of getting close to their images of their Ideal L2 self, or in other words, how the images of learners' future selves constructed their emotions and actions were similar to the findings of Miyahara's (2014) and Miyahara's (2015) studies. These two studies focused on how learners

construct their identity through imagining their ideal selves in English community contexts and how emotions are implicated in this process. Both negative and positive emotions generated in the development of the Ideal L2 self impacted on learners' responses to their learning environment. My study adds to the literature that has found the image of Ideal L2 self constructed emotions, and developed students' self-efficacy, motivated students and played a role in shifting emotions.

6.6.2 The constructions of the Ought-to L2 self

This study shows that the Ought-to L2 self was constructed differently from the Ideal L2 self, and its emotional implications seemed to be opposite to those of the Ideal L2 self. Additionally, the Ought-to L2 self was influenced by the features of Confucian-heritage culture. Consequently, emotions triggered in the journey of getting closer to the image of the future self were affected by social and cultural features. These contribute to an understanding of the role of social and cultural aspects in constructing emotions and the emotional implications of the Ought-to L2 self.

The Ought-to L2 self, which “concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e. various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) to meet personal expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106), has been discussed in Section 2.8.1. Students with a high level of Ought-to L2 self would be motivated to learn another language because learners think they need to meet others' expectations such as their parents' expectations (Kim & Kim, 2014). The Ought-to L2 self is an attribute of the learner themselves but can be constructed by their response to other people. In this study, the Ought-to L2 self was constructed by expectations from other people around students such as parents and teachers, and from society. Due to the features of the Vietnamese culture, the Ought-to L2 self in this study seemed to be

strongly imbued with the notion of the need to please their parents and teachers, work hard, be successful and not to bring shame.

The Ought-to L2 self motivated students from the negative perspective of the consequence of not being able to achieve their goals. Because of the features of the Vietnamese culture, students felt that they needed to make their parents and teachers happy and please their parents and teachers by working hard and becoming successful. They felt that their parents and teachers would feel disappointed and upset if they were not able to please them, so negative emotions including anxiety and a sense of fear of failure were triggered. Pressure in meeting the parents' and teachers' expectations might have brought disappointment when some students were not able to reach their targets.

Thus, the Ought-to L2 self motivated students in the journey of pursuing their targets or goals. Due to the impact of cultural aspects, negative emotions underpinned aspects of the motivation of the students' journey of learning. Many students reported that they worked hard, studied well, and improved themselves in order to make their parents and teachers happy and they felt that their parents and teachers would not be pleased and would feel disappointed if they could not meet their expectations. As a result, negative emotions such as anxiety and fear were triggered in this journey.

6.6.3 Summary of the Ought-to L2 self and Ideal self as mediators

The Ought-to L2 self in this study was shaped by the expectations of the people in the students' surroundings and society. The Ought-to L2 self also contributed to shaping the students' vision of their English language learning journey and setting goals for them to reach. Its impact on shaping students' negative emotions on the journey of English language learning reflected Vietnamese cultural features. The findings in this study

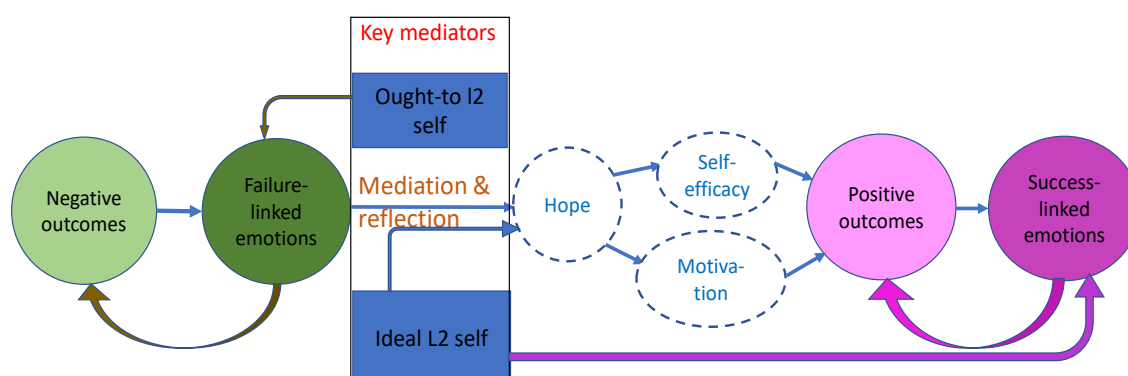
illustrate that teachers and parents were external sources that had a strong effect on the internal construct: the Ought-to L2 self. Emotions triggered in the journey of goal pursuit were often negative.

Alongside the Ought-to L2 self, the Ideal L2 self appeared to play an essential role in motivating students to study more and shaping positive emotions. The data show that emotion shaped motivation to study English as a way to get closer to the L2 imaginary self-image and positive emotions were triggered in this journey of reaching the goal.

The relationships between the Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to L2 self as motivational factors, hope and the students' self-efficacy in relation to shaping and changing students' emotions are illustrated as Figure 6.6. The mediating factors in some cases, negatively impacted the internal construct of the Ought-to L2 self. This triggered negative emotions that led to negative outcomes. However, in other cases, they had a positive effect on the internal construct of the Ideal L2 self. This triggered success-linked emotions that led to positive outcomes. In other cases, mediating factors changed students' negative emotions that were a result of negative outcomes or failure by giving hope, enhancing students' self-efficacy and developing their motivation.

Figure 6.6

The role of Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to self in constructing students' emotions



6.7 Chapter conclusion

This study has indicated that emotions are socially and culturally constructed and in particular how they relate to the features of Confucian-heritage culture within the Vietnamese setting. Those features imbue all the data in this study. The displays of certain emotions such as disappointment, anxiety, shame and gratitude, consequently, appeared to be different from Western cultures.

This study indicates the diversity, complexity and dynamics of emotions students experienced in their English language learning. Students experienced a wide range of emotions in their English language learning. Positive emotions and negative emotions were intertwined. The study also illustrates the shifts in emotions with the investment of other people in the students' surroundings and with the occurrence of hope.

In addition, the study indicates the relationship between emotions and motivation, through the image of the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self. On the way to get closer to the image of the Ideal L2 self, students felt motivated, and positive emotions emerged as a result of this. In contrast, emotions emerging from the journey of goal pursuit that was constructed by the Ought-to L2 self originated from negative consequences.

Positive emotions have been shown to have a positive effect on enhancing students' self-efficacy and motivation. Reported positive emotions played crucial roles in developing students' well-being, enhancing students' self-efficacy, encouraging students to learn more, and explore more new things. Positive emotions seemed to result in positive perspectives, thinking, behaviours and actions for the students.

Hope has been found to be an emotion connected to both negative and positive feelings, though it is a positive emotion. Hope was found to underlie most of the students'

narratives. Hope played an important role in changing emotions. When hope emerged, other positive emotions arose. Near peer role models and role models are a source to trigger hope. Hope in this study was investigated in relation to self-efficacy and motivation and positive emotions were triggered in the way that hope worked.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the major findings in relation to reported emotions that were triggered in students' English language learning in the Vietnamese context. This chapter concludes the thesis by highlighting the contributions of the study to the literature on emotion in applied linguistics and its practical implications. This concluding chapter starts with a brief summary to show how the thesis has addressed the three research questions, followed by an acknowledgment of the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the study. It highlights the significance of features in Vietnamese culture in shaping and changing students' emotions and points out some values of the findings in this study contributing to the field of emotion research. Recognising some limitations of this study related to participant recruitment and research tools, the chapter also suggests possibilities for further research. The chapter ends with my closing words.

7.2 The research questions revisited

7.2.1 Research question one

What is the range of reported emotions in university students' narrative accounts of English language learning in Vietnam?

The present study showed that participants experienced a wide range of emotions in their English language learning. Students' responses also illustrate the complexity of emotions, which was featured by the co-existence of both positive and negative emotions triggered

within one narrative event. The dynamics of emotions were highlighted as shifting from negative to positive emotions or revealing fluctuations from one state of emotion to another.

Positive and negative emotions in this study reflected the success or failure of outcomes, so they were presented in three main types: activity-related, success-linked, and failure-linked emotions. Activity-related emotions could either trigger students' further actions or impede actions. Success-linked emotions were initiated by students' self-assessed success or achievements in meeting their study goals or personal targets or satisfying their parents' or teachers' desires or expectations. Success-linked emotions also originated from achievements in meeting standards expected of them by the community or the society. This reflected aspects of a collective, Confucian-heritage culture. In contrast, failure-linked emotions were linked to students' failure in meeting the above goals and expectations. Failure-linked emotions were also associated with students' recognition of their shortcomings in response to standards that were evaluated by other people in the community or the society.

7.2.2 Research question two

What role do the reported positive emotions play in the language learning trajectory of the students?

The current research illustrates that positive emotion significantly motivated students to study further and stimulated students to learn new things. Positive emotions contributed to building up students' social experiences as well as opening their scope of cognition, thought, and actions. With the benefits of positive emotions, positive outcomes were

likely to emerge. Those positive outcomes often brought further positive actions and better learning behaviours. On the contrary, negative emotions often demotivated students in their studies and had negative effects on their learning behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs, though in some cases negative emotions helped to alert students to weaknesses that might cause negative outcomes, and they responded appropriately to improve their states. Those appropriate responses could prevent further negative outcomes and lead to positive outcomes.

7.2.3 Research question three

How does hope contribute to the shaping of the students' vision of their language learning journey?

Hope in this study was explicitly reported in some written narratives. Hope revealed the function of motivating students to study because they would seek to find strategies to reach the goals that were set by themselves or by other people. To achieve their goals, students followed routines and strategies, and these steps triggered actions.

Hope played an important role in shifting emotions from negative to positive. When students experienced failure, negative emotions emerged, and hope gleaned from mediators such as teachers, parents, or role models helped to reduce their negative emotions and build up their positive emotions. Those positive emotions opened opportunities for positive outcomes.

According to students' narrative accounts, hope played a significant role in enhancing their self-efficacy. Hope from mediators helped to develop and enhance

students' beliefs in achieving their study targets or goals. Hope was evidence of enhancing students' belief in their ability to fulfil tasks. Hope also functioned in inspiring students in their study, when they encountered role models who possessed special skills that students wished to possess. Those role models inspired students in striving to reach their images of the Ideal L2 self. This injects an emotional component into the thinking about self-efficacy which is often seen as cognitive only.

7.3 Contributions of the study

This section presents the contributions of this study including implications for theory and methodological implications.

7.3.1 Implications for theory

The insights of the study contribute to the theory of emotions in English language learning research by indicating the impacts of cultural and social features on the co-constructing and shaping of emotions in students' English language learning. Features of the Confucian-heritage culture permeated participants' thoughts, actions, and interactions, which were sources of negative and positive triggers. This finding supports the literature on the socio-cultural approach to emotion in that emotion was socially and culturally constructed. It shows clearly how emotions are constructed by English language learners in the Vietnamese culture which has never been done before.

The insights of this study contribute to the literature of cultural aspects associated with emotions on the socio-cultural approach to emotions. The implication of this study goes beyond Vietnamese contexts, to other contexts where similar cultural dimensions (e.g., face saving and Confucian influences) might be associated with emotional dynamics having an impact on language learning. The study's findings relating to emotions (and

particularly hope) and their relationship to language learning would also be worth investigating in other contexts, but in terms of exploring how emotional dynamics vary cross-culturally and possibly to developing further theory around the role of emotions in L2 learning.

The findings of the study illustrate that “language learning is not a unique individual activity, but rather involves complex reciprocal interactions between the learner and the social environment” (Pham, 2016, p. 282). Thus, people around learners, such as teachers, parents, friends, relatives, and foreign strangers can have an effect on the learner’s emotions and actions; these findings are novel in highlighting the role of those people in the interrelationships that trigger students’ emotions in the Vietnamese context. They support the idea that emotions originate from social and interpersonal events as Swain (2013) has noted.

The study gives a close-grained perspective on the complexity and diversity of emotions that emerged during students’ learning experiences. It indicated the value of considering a wide range of both negative and positive emotions in English language learning, rather than only the two representative types of emotion, enjoyment and anxiety, which have typically been the focus of previous studies. I hope this will encourage a wider perspective in future investigation of emotions in English language learning.

The current study illustrates the significant role of people around the students, such as parents, teachers, friends, and people they met, in the emergence and changes of emotions. Those people played an important role in shifting students’ emotions from negative to positive. Changes in emotions caused by those mediators revealed the dynamics of emotions, different from moment to moment. The study also shows the role of people in students’ surroundings in shaping and constructing their negative or positive

emotions. Those emotions were impacted by Vietnamese cultural features in ways which have been illustrated in the thesis. This can be a unique contribution that my study makes, and it might help us to better understand the important role of those mediating factors in affecting and constructing emotions.

The current research contributes to the theory of emotion in English language learning by describing the close and reciprocal relationship between emotion, self-efficacy and motivation under the effect of the mediating factors, the Ought-to L2 self and the Ideal L2 self in the Motivational Self System. The people in the students' surroundings could be causes of negative emotions, originating from negative outcomes triggered when students failed to achieve what they had expected them to achieve, all of which were strongly influenced by the Vietnamese culture. In contrast, other people could be a source of positive outcomes when they positively influenced them. Other people's actions and behaviours encouraged and motivated them to get closer to the targets or goals that they needed to achieve. In these cases, other people's actions strengthened students' self-efficacy. As a result, students became more confident and motivated, and this could lead to positive outcomes. In addition, the image of the Ideal L2 self was a motivational factor for students that stimulated them to study and do more. The Ideal L2 self played a significant role in shaping students' positive emotions as well. Emotions emerging in the pursuit of goals or targets in the journey of English language learning were also constructed by the image of the Ought-to L2 self and Vietnamese cultural features. These findings of emotions weaving with motivation in the learning journey contribute to the literature on emotion under a sociocultural theory perspective, within which emotions are seen as complex and dynamic. These constructions have been mentioned in the literature, but researchers have not investigated in detail how emotion underpinned the motivational constructs.

The findings about hope illustrate a nuance of hope with the function of shifting emotions and motivating students in the journey of pursuit of their goals or targets. Hope has been found to play a role in motivating students and enhancing their self-efficacy. Additionally, hope was an emotion that enabled the transition between negative and positive responses. Hope appeared to minimize negative emotions that students experienced and bring more opportunities for positive emotions to emerge. These findings add some contributions to the theory of hope such as the functions of hope in motivating students in study and in shifting students' emotions. These results encourage further research to explore the implications of hope in applied linguistics to supplement those found in psychology or health studies.

The findings of this research also contribute to understanding the functions of positive emotions in English language learning in motivating students, inspiring them in their further studies and building up their personal experiences. This warrants further research to investigate the benefits of positive emotions in English study.

7.3.2 Methodological implications

This study explored reported emotions triggered in students' English language learning experiences in different learning contexts. It followed a qualitative narrative approach with written narratives and interviews as research tools. The use of written narratives and interviews could be considered as platforms for exploring emotions in real-life moments because they are relevant for investigating learners' learning experience from which emotions emerged.

The use of retrospections in the form of small events with prompt questions built into the task design and leaving the writing task with the students over a period of time

that allowed them to elaborate on it provided in-depth information about events and those small events were evidence of the appropriateness of exploring emotions emerging from personal experiences. Thus, narrative inquiry with the use of written narratives supported the research design for developing the understanding of emotions from social and cultural perspectives.

The use of interviews as a social practice in investigating emotions in English language learning, with its focus on the co-construction of meaning, the interview atmosphere, and the process leading to the interviews provided reliable and situated accounts of emotional experiences. Interviews were collected after the written narratives, so all the interviewees had already prepared a written narrative. They were primed to think about emotion in their language learning and ready to take it to a new level. The uses of scenarios, emoji icons, and picture paper slips in the interview encouraged students to talk, importantly too they proved useful to supplement the traditional question-answer format to avoid interviewee fatigue. This technique used in the current study supported students to retrospect about feelings that they had experienced during their English language learning.

7.4 Implications of the study

The findings of this research have a number of implications. They will be helpful for policymakers, teacher trainers, teachers, especially for English teachers, and for parents, and students.

7.4.1 Implications for policymakers

The findings of the current study draw our attention to the importance of other aspects of learning such as emotion, self-efficacy, and motivation that interconnect with each other

in English language learning. The findings suggest policymakers consider the content and these aspects in designing the curriculum and syllabuses.

7.4.2 Implications for teacher trainers

The findings of this study could be useful for teacher educators in their courses to prepare future teachers to take emotion into consideration. With the understanding of the significance of positive emotions in motivating students, educational trainers should make awareness of this factor a key point in supporting prospective teachers to understand the processes of curriculum and syllabus design and lesson planning. The findings about the effects of negative emotions could be helpful for teachers in applying appropriate pedagogical approaches in practice.

7.4.3 Implications for teachers

The findings of the current study help English teachers in Vietnam to better understand the importance of moments when their students have experiences that are challenging, they can provide an important source of morale and learning advice and support that stays with learners for a long time and contributes to their setting of future goals.

The findings of the current study help English language teachers see the rewards of success-linked emotions, such as pride originating from achievements, happiness, enjoyment, self-confidence at academic success, and admiration of others' special skills. Those positive emotions are important in motivating students in their studies, so teachers should see positive emotions as a source of student motivation, and as a tool for achieving positive learning outcomes. Through the results of the current study, teachers can understand the benefits of positive emotions: as Arnold (2011) asserts, "Positive affect can provide invaluable support for learning just as negative affect can close down the

mind and prevent learning from occurring altogether” (p. 1). Teachers can consider the benefits of positive emotions in their lesson planning by designing classroom activities that enable students to experience positive emotions, including activities that might intrinsically engage and motivate students.

The results of the study will help teachers, parents, and educators to be more aware of the role of near-peer role modelling in shaping students’ positive emotions and shaping their vision of their language learning journey. Teachers and parents should see near-peer role modelling as a source to motivate learners of English. They can recommend students who have special skills or high English proficiency for their students or children to follow. In the classroom, teachers can give opportunities for students with high English proficiency or special skills to help and inspire their peers in studying English. For example, teachers can invite those near-peer role models to have a talk and share their experience with students.

The study focuses on the significance of hope in shaping students’ vision of the English language learning journey. The theoretical framework of hope can shed light on actualizing learners’ future goals in language learning. Teachers can assist students in developing and actualizing their future goals by showing them images of their future selves and telling them the way to achieve their goals and drawing their attention to successful role models, including the teachers themselves. Teachers can develop and strengthen students’ positive emotions by encouraging and giving them positive feedback, and compliments when they do something well, or when they make efforts to do something.

The findings of the study help English language teachers understand the benefits of positive emotions in English language learning by promoting and creating positive

learning climates (Gabryś-Barker, 2016), and providing a low-anxiety language classroom (Young, 1991). For example, when implementing an exciting classroom activity, teachers should be aware of what is going on in these moments and take the opportunity to try to support students in the process of changing these emotions from negative to positive. Thus, teachers can support the transition to more positive emotions and actions.

The results of this study also indicated that a number of negative emotions were associated with students' failure in meeting their teachers' expectations. They are terrified of failure. In this case, teachers can motivate students by suggesting the image of the Ideal L2 self rather than feeling their study is driven just by the Ought-to L2 self. Teachers can motivate students by inspiring them with possibility rather than making them cower with fear of failure. Although teachers cannot always avoid students' failure or poor performance that often leads to negative emotions, they can support students in the process of moving from negative emotions to positive emotions.

Teachers should minimise any reactions that might trigger the feeling of shame, which often leads to students' feelings of face loss. For example, when students in the class laugh at someone's mistakes or their inappropriate actions, teachers should discourage that response. Teachers should help them understand that those reactions might be harmful for their peers. In addition, one of the actions that Vietnamese teachers feel to be acceptable is giving feedback to students publicly, even if it is negative feedback. This action often causes negative emotions such as embarrassment and shame when students are not able to do well. Therefore, teachers also should avoid giving assessments or negative feedback publicly.

7.4.4 Implications for parents

The findings of this study revealed the significant role of parents in shaping, constructing, and shifting students' emotions. Therefore, this could be helpful for parents in revealing the important role they have in supporting and motivating their children in learning English. Parents should be aware of how their choices and behaviours affect their children's emotions, both positively and negatively, so they should limit actions that may lead to negative emotions.

Parents should not expect too much of their children or demand achievements or success that might be beyond their ability. This may trigger negative emotions when their children cannot achieve those targets. It is good that parents motivate their children to study by setting particular goals or targets for them, but those goals or targets should be within their children's reach.

Parents should know about the benefits of positive emotions in motivating their children to study. They should encourage students to study and praise them when they do something with good results. They should support their children by giving them hope, which often leads to the development of self-efficacy, and will possibly trigger positive outcomes.

The findings of this study would be helpful for parents in motivating their children to study. Parents may need to know about the role of the Ideal L2 self, such as role models, including near-peer role models, in shaping their children's vision of their language learning journey and in supporting them to achieve personal targets or goals. They can encourage their children to study by recommending to them someone with special skills as a good example to follow.

7.4.5 Implications for students

It would be useful for students to be given knowledge of emotion, its functions in motivating as well as demotivating themselves or their peers in study, and how it affects their behaviours and actions.

Students should be aware of some reactions in public that seem to be acceptable in Vietnamese culture, but may be ‘harmful’ for other people, as they are often a source of negative triggers. In particular, students should avoid using any words or giving assessment that are likely to bring others the feeling of shame. They should avoid laughing at their peers’ mistakes or judging their inappropriate actions. If their peers make mistakes, it is better to give them negative evaluations gently and privately.

Students may need to know the significance of positive emotions in study and their role in constructing and mediating their peers’ emotions. They can assist their peers by supporting and encouraging them in study. They can also become an Ideal L2 self for their peers to follow.

7.5 The limitations of the study

There are some limitations of the current research which are associated with participant recruitment, research tools and generalizability.

The choice of the research approach inevitably imposes some limitations. The data of this research were based on retrospective narrative accounts of small events, so they were not able to catch the moment-by-moment emergence of emotion that a classroom-based study might have done.

The participants in this study were recruited based on their voluntary decisions. Some participants were from English-major classes and these participants, who were training to be English teachers, can be assumed to be more motivated to learn English and have more positive emotions in their English language learning experience than others, who were not English-major students. Although the study did not aim to investigate each university per se and data were not presented separately based on the different research contexts, doing so might shed light on differences between the two cohorts.

Although the research has some limitations, these limitations suggest many positive directions for future research. The next section will suggest further research in relation to this study.

7.6 Further research suggestions

This study could be a starting point for future research that adopts a socio-cultural perspective on emotion in second language learning, opening more possibilities for research on emotion.

One insight of the current study suggests further research about the influence of cultural features on constructing emotions, with a focus on other cultures. A comparison could then be made between the cultures investigated. This insight is valuable for teachers teaching multi-ethnic or multicultural classes.

Further research could focus, too, on teachers' emotions in English language teaching in the Vietnamese context, which is fundamentally based on the emotional component of student-teacher relationships.

Another of the insights of the current research is the changes, fluctuations, and shifts in emotion. These could provide opportunity for future research that could be based on longitudinal study with a small number of participants for in-depth qualitative research since longitudinal research allows researchers to explore time-crossing fluctuations in students' emotions.

Future research on emotion should be carried out to catch the in the moment real-life emergence of emotion by using other research tools such as observations and recordings of learning sessions followed by stimulated recall interviews to ask participants to elaborate on the emotions triggered in the experience.

A further avenue of research could focus on the values of near-peer role modelling in English language learning and look at situations where students look forward and see themselves as near-peer role models.

7.7 Closing words

The current study explored students' positive emotions emerging from their English language learning experience. Drawing on a socio-cultural approach to emotion, the study has contributed to the literature and knowledge on the impact of cultural aspects on constructing emotions. The findings of the research help me understand the diversity, complexity, and dynamics of emotions and other elements that have an effect on shaping and changing important aspects of students' life in the English learning classroom. It is important to highlight the contributions of positive emotions in motivating students in their study and the role of people around students in different contexts, from inside to outside the classroom contexts, in the transition process of negative to positive emotions.

On a personal note, the data gathering process in this study has developed my interview skills because I have learned some techniques for constructing questions, managing time and turn-taking in the interview. In terms of language teaching, this study has sharpened my perspectives on elements that impact students' emotions. The research findings confirm my belief that the teaching of English should not simply focus on the content of lessons and equipping students with practice skills, but that students' emotional lives are important as well. In terms of knowledge, the research findings also support my belief in the contributions of positive emotions in enhancing students' self-efficacy and motivating them. This study also gives me a better understanding of emotions in terms of their relationships with other elements such as self-efficacy and motivation. The emergence of those findings was beyond my expectations, because this study first aimed to find the complexity and diversity of emotions alone. These findings will help me and other English teachers design tasks that may stimulate students' positive emotions. The findings about the roles of mediators reflected in shaping and shifting students' emotions suggest the vital importance of building good relationships with my future students. Finally, the findings and knowledge of emotion have helped me understand my own emotional journey as a student on the doctoral journey of this research.

During this journey, I have experienced a lot of up and down feelings. This has paralleled some of the findings in my study about the shifts of positive to negative emotions, and vice versa. In this journey, sometimes I felt a little bit doubtful of my research ability, but my supervisors encouraged me and gave me positive feedback. Their actions helped me feel more confident and gave me hope that I would complete my work. This is in line with some of the findings of my study about the role of mediating factors and the motivational function of hope. In the pursuit of my goal, I have worked hard and my motivation to study was related to the notion of being successful because my family

and colleagues in Vietnam have hoped and expected that I will become a doctor one day. This motivational aspect of a sense of success has paralleled some of those in my study and it is constructed by the Vietnamese cultural features.

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Appendices

Appendix A

BẢN CAM KẾT ĐỒNG Ý DÀNH CHO SINH VIÊN

Tôi đã được cung cấp các thông tin chi tiết của nghiên cứu này một cách rõ ràng. Tôi đã được giải đáp thắc mắc một cách thỏa đáng. Tôi biết rằng tôi có thể hỏi thêm câu hỏi vào bất cứ lúc nào.

Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này với các điều kiện đặt ra trong tờ Thông tin dành cho sinh viên.

Ngày..... Tháng.....năm 2018

Ký tên

Họ và tên (viết hoa):

.....

Trường.....

Điện thoại LH:.....

Appendix B

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Dear students,

Thank you for having joined the writing activity. I would like to invite you to participate in another activity: Interview. In the interview you will be asked some questions and discuss some topics about your English learning. The interview will be recorded and translated into English, but I can make sure that your personal information will be kept in secret and safely.

If you are interested and want to have special and new experiences, do not hesitate to participate the interview.

If you have any inquiries or questions, please read the Information Sheet attached or contact the researcher in the Information Sheet.


Appendix C

THE DESIGN OF STORY 1 IN VIETNAMESE VERSION

CÂU CHUYỆN THỨ NHẤT: Cảm hứng ban đầu giúp tôi học ngoại ngữ

Bước 1: Trước khi bạn viết câu chuyện riêng của mình về cảm hứng ban đầu giúp bạn học ngoại ngữ, hãy đọc các câu hỏi dưới đây và nghĩ về chúng. Bạn có thể sử dụng các câu hỏi để viết câu chuyện của mình.

Bước 2: Bây giờ hãy viết câu chuyện của bạn với mô đầu như sau.



Câu chuyện của tôi diễn ra.....

Câu chuyện diễn ra khi nào? Điều gì đã xảy ra?

Bạn đã làm gì?


Ài là giáo viên Tiếng Anh đầu tiên của bạn?

Cảm xúc đầu tiên trong lớp học Tiếng Anh của bạn ra sao?

Còn điều gì nữa mà bạn không thể quên được trong câu chuyện này?

Bạn đã kể cho ai nghe về câu chuyện này chưa?

Bây giờ bạn cảm thấy thế nào khi kể lại cho chúng tôi nghe câu chuyện của mình?



Câu chuyện của tôi kết thúc ở đây.


Appendix D

THE DESIGN OF STORY 2 IN VIETNAMESE VERSION

CÂU CHUYỆN THỨ 2: Kỷ niệm đáng nhớ của tôi trong quá trình học Tiếng Anh

Bước 1: Trước khi bạn viết câu chuyện riêng của mình về **Kỷ niệm đáng nhớ của bạn trong quá trình học Tiếng Anh**, hãy đọc các câu hỏi dưới đây và nghĩ về chúng. Bạn có thể sử dụng các câu hỏi để viết câu chuyện của mình.

Bước 2: Bây giờ hãy viết câu chuyện của bạn với mở đầu như sau.



Câu chuyện của tôi diễn ra

Bạn có nhớ câu chuyện này diễn ra vào thời gian nào không?

Bạn đã ở đâu?

Điều gì xảy ra? Và bạn đã làm gì?

Bạn đã kể câu chuyện này cho ai chưa?

Ai đã ở đó?

Bạn cảm thấy như thế nào về trải nghiệm này?

Bạn có nghĩ câu chuyện này quan trọng đối với bạn không? Vì sao nó đáng nhớ?

The End

Câu chuyện của tôi kết thúc ở đây.

Appendix E

ETHICS NOTIFICATION LETTER



Date: 16 January 2018

Dear Hong Nguyen

Re: Ethics Notification - **4000018848 - New Application**
Positive Emotions in Second Language acquisition in Vietnamese high school contexts

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please go to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise

Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 350 5573; 06 350 5575 F 06 355 7973
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz W <http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz>

Appendix F

COVER LETTER TO UNIVERSITY RECTOR

Dear (The name of the university's Rector)

I am Nguyen Thi Anh Hong, an English teacher of Thai Nguyen University of Technology. I am currently a PhD student at the School of Humanities and Social Science at Massey University, New Zealand. I am carrying out research titled *Positive Emotions in Second Language Learning in Vietnamese contexts* for my doctorate degree. Briefly, I am studying emotions (including positive emotions) that students and teachers at high schools in Vietnam are experiencing during their English language learning and teaching. My research contexts are high schools in Vietnam, so I would like to access your school from the beginning of September 2018 to the end of December 2018. To collect data to complete my research I would also like to recruit approximately 40 students of Year 2 at your university to take part in the written narrative frames. Before doing this, I would like to hold some assemblies and gatherings with students and teachers. Then I want to invite students to take part in the individual interviews and focus group discussion. In addition, I would like to invite 3 English teachers at your school to participate in teacher interviews and focus group discussion. With your permission to access to school, I assure you that all the recruitments or assembly will be held during break time; therefore, it will not interfere with the teaching processes of your school. Data collected will be used for the purposes of research only. I would like to assure that the identity of the school, the teachers and the students who participate in this study will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions, please read the Information Sheet attached or contact the researcher in the Information Sheet.

Thank you for your permission

Yours sincerely,

Nguyen Thi Anh Hong

Appendix G

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE RECTOR

Title: Positive emotions in English language learning in Vietnamese learning contexts.

Researcher

Nguyen Thi Anh Hong

I am an English language teacher at Thai Nguyen University of Technology in Vietnam. I am currently studying a doctorate degree at School of Humanities, Massey University, Manawatu Campus, New Zealand. My field of study is Applied Linguistics. This project is being supervised by Professor Cynthia J. White and Dr Arianna Berardi-Wilshire.

Project Description

The project aims at researching positive emotions that students and teachers experienced in their English language teaching and learning. Therefore, I would like to invite the English language teachers in your university to take part in interviews if possible. I also need university students who are willing to support my research to participate in this study.

Participant identification and recruitment

I hope to talk to English teachers about emotions in their relationships with students in this research at universities in Vietnam. I will find a time that is convenient for your colleagues to join the interviews, and for students to take part in the narrative frames, so it does not interfere with the teaching and learning process, the programme, or other commitments.

An explanation of how data will be gathered, stored, used and disposed of

The interviews and the focus group discussion will be conducted using your mother tongue language (Vietnamese). Then the information will be recorded, transcribed and interpreted by the researcher. I will send the participants the transcripts for checking if they wish.

All the data collected will solely serve the purpose of the present study and will be destroyed five years after the project completion.

All information about school and personal information of participants will be kept secret.

Project contacts

If you have any further queries about the research project, please feel free to contact the researcher or her supervisor at the above contact details.

Contact detail:

Nguyen Thi Anh Hong

Email: [H. Nguyen1@massey.ac.nz](mailto:H.Nguyen1@massey.ac.nz); ahongdungnn@gmail.com

Mobile: +64 275147167; Facebook: Nguyen Anh Hong

Professor Cynthia J. White

Office phone: +64 63569099 ext. 83565

Email: c.j.white@massey.ac.nz

Doctor Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire

Phone: 64 6 356 9099 ext. 81144

Email: A.Berardi-Wiltshire@massey.ac.nz

Appendix H

RECTOR'S CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet, the cover letter and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I am willing to offer the researcher the opportunity to work with the language staff and the students, and the access to relevant information as stated in the Information Sheet and cover letter. I agree that my colleagues and my students participate and cooperate into the research if they want to.

Signature: Date:

Full name – printed:

Position: School:

.....

Appendix I

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Dear students,

I would like to give some information about my project: Positive emotions in English Learning and Teaching in Vietnamese contexts.

What is the degree of this project?

This project is conducted as a completion of fulfilment for my doctorate degree.

What am I doing in this project?

I want to find out how you feel about your English language learning, and what makes you feel happy and good when you are learning English. In order to know about your emotions and feelings about learning English you will need to use words and writing to disclose your emotions.

Who is the researcher?

My name is Nguyen Thi Anh Hong. I am an English language teacher at Thai Nguyen University of Technology, in Vietnam. I am currently doing a PhD course at Massey University. My project is being supervised by Professor Cynthia J. White and Dr Arianna Berardi-Wilshire.

Why are you being invited to participate?

Because you are in second year of university, and you have experienced one year at university. You are not too busy with your study as students in the Third or Fourth year.

What will you be asked to do?

First, you will be asked to write about your own experience and memories of learning English by completing the guided form. The written narratives frames will be delivered once, and it will take approximate 1 hour to complete, but you are encouraged not to hand it over immediately after delivery.

Then, I will need six students to take part in the individual interviews if you agree to join voluntarily. Each interview will last for about one hour. Next, these students will be invited to take part in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion will take about for one hour and half or two hours.

How data will be gathered, stored, used and disposed of?

The interviews, written narratives frames and focus group discussion will be conducted by using the participants' mother tongue language (Vietnamese). Then I will transcribe and translate all the information into English on my own. I will show you transcripts for checking if you want. All the information will not be changed, made up, omitted in any purposes or stolen from other's ideas. Data will be used for discussion in my Doctorate Thesis, and for further research.

All the data collected will solely serve the purpose of the present study and will be destroyed five years after the project completion.

What are your rights to do?

You are under no obligations to join the project and reserve the rights to:

- decide not to join (there will be no problems for you if you decide not to participate the research);
- refuse to answer any particular question if you don't like;
- withdraw from the study before the interviews and discussion;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview and focus group discussion.
- Permit me to use your real names in the discussion part or not;
- check my transcript of the interview and group discussion if you want;
- be given access to a summary of the findings when the study is finished;

What are your benefits to join this project?

-You can get familiar to doing research

-You can learn something new about New Zealand at assembly which will be held by the researcher;

-You will freely get materials, stories and books to improve your English.

How can you get in touch during participation?

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Appendix J

STUDENT'S CONSENT FORM

The details of the study have been explained clearly to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may be asked further questions at any time.

I agree to take part in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet for Student Participants.

Date:

Full name – printed:

School.....

Contact number: