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TEACHER AND STUDENT INTEREST, QUALITY OF  
MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN CONTENT-BASED  
EAP CLASSES

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

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TEACHER AND STUDENT INTEREST, QUALITY OF MOTIVATION  
AND ENGAGEMENT IN CONTENT-BASED EAP CLASSES

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**İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
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ENGAGEMENT IN CONTENT-BASED EAP CLASSES**

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May 2020

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## ABSTRACT

### TEACHER AND STUDENT INTEREST, QUALITY OF MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN CONTENT-BASED EAP CLASSES

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M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction

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The present study sought to investigate if there was a relation among ENG 101/ 102 instructors' and students' interest, quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled motivation) and students' engagement in content-based EAP classes. The study was carried out at an English-speaking private university located in Ankara. The participants of the study were 52 freshmen (51% female, 49% male; *Mean age* = 19.59, *SD* = 0.5) taking ENG 101 and 102 classes which are compulsory English and essay composition courses.

The results of the hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that students' interest in the theme of their ENG 101/102 classes was a significant and positive predictor for students' autonomous motivation as well as their agentic and behavioral engagement. Furthermore, instructors' perceived quality of motivation in teaching the content of ENG 101/102 classes was significantly and positively linked to students' 'quality of motivation. On the other hand, while instructors' and students' interest and enthusiasm in the themes of ENG 101/102 classes were significant and positive predictors of students' agentic engagement, students' behavioral engagement was only predicted by autonomous student motivation and student interest in the themes of their class. The implications for practice were provided in the light of the findings.

*Keywords:* EAP, content-based instruction, self-determination theory, autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, instructor interest, student interest, agentic engagement, behavioral engagement.

## ÖZET

### İÇERİK TEMELLİ EAP SINIFLARINDA ÖĞRENCİ VE ÖĞRETMEN İLGİSİ, MOTİVASYON NİTELİĞİ VE DERSE KATILIM

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, ENG 101/ 102 öğretim görevlilerinin ve öğrencilerin içerik temelli EAP derslerinde gösterdikleri motivasyon nitelikleri (Kontrollü ya da özerk motivasyon gibi) ve ders temalarına olan ilgileri ile öğrencilerin aracı ve davranışsal katılımları arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktır. Çalışma, Ankara'da eğitim dili İngilizce olan, özel bir üniversitede gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları zorunlu İngilizce ve kompozisyon derslerini alan 52 üniversite birinci sınıf öğrencisidir (51 % kız, 49 % erkek; yaş ortalaması = 19.59,  $SD = 0.5$ ).

Hiyerarşik regresyon analizlerinin sonuçları, öğrencilerin ENG 101/102 derslerinin temalarına olan ilgilerinin, derslerdeki özerk motivasyonları ile davranışsal ve aracı katılımları için anlamlı ve pozitif bir yordalayıcı olduğunu göstermiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, analiz sonuçları, öğretim görevlilerinin ENG 101/102 derslerini vermek konusundaki algılanan motivasyon nitelikleri ile öğrencilerin derste gösterdiği motivasyon nitelikleri arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir korelasyon olduğunu göstermiştir. Diğer yandan, bulgulara göre, öğretim görevlilerinin ve öğrencilerin ENG 101/102 derslerinin temalarına gösterdikleri ilgi ve heves, öğrencilerin aracı katılımlarını anlamlı ve pozitif bir şekilde tahmin ederken, öğrencilerin davranışsal katılımı yalnızca ENG 101/102 derslerine gösterdikleri özerk motivasyon ve ders temalarına olan ilgileri ile tahmin edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında uygulama için çeşitli öneriler sunulmuştur.

*Anahtar kelimeler:* Akademik amaçlı İngilizce (EAP), öz-belirleme kuramı, özerk motivasyon, kontrollü motivasyon, öğrenci ilgisi, öğretim görevlisi ilgisi, aracı katılım, davranışsal katılım.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background .....	2
English for academic purposes .....	2
Content-based instruction .....	3
Interest.....	5
Quality of motivation.....	7
Engagement.....	10
Problem .....	12
Purpose.....	13
Research questions .....	13
Significance.....	14
Definition of key terms .....	15
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	16
Introduction .....	16
The relation of student interest to motivation .....	16
The relation of student interest to engagement .....	20
The relation of teachers' interest or enthusiasm to students' motivation .....	22

The relation of teachers' quality of motivation to students' quality of motivation	25
Concluding statement	28
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	30
Introduction	30
Research design	30
Correlational research	30
Cross-sectional design	31
Context	31
Participants	33
Instrumentation	34
Relative autonomy continuum questionnaire	35
Interest and enjoyment questionnaire	36
Classroom engagement questionnaire	37
Method of data collection	38
Method of data analysis	39
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	40
Introduction	40
Preliminary analysis	40
Descriptive statistics	41
Correlational analysis	41
Main analysis	45
The predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' autonomous motivation	46
The predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' -controlled motivation	49

The predictive value of teachers’ and students’ quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students’ agentic engagement.....	52
The predictive value of teachers’ and students’ quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students’ behavioral engagement.....	55
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	58
Introduction .....	58
Overview of the study .....	58
Major findings and conclusions .....	60
Implications for practice .....	66
Implications for further research.....	69
Limitations .....	69
REFERENCES .....	71
APPENDICES .....	85
APPENDIX A: Questionnaires .....	85
APPENDIX B: Charts.....	89

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1.....	33
Table 2.....	33
Table 3.....	41
Table 4.....	44
Table 5.....	48
Table 6.....	51
Table 7.....	54
Table 8.....	57

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 The Self-Determination continuum demonstrating types of motivation. ....	9



## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

The growth of English as the global language of academic studies has changed the educational experience of numerous students since they are expected to be fluent in English in order to continue their academic endeavors successfully (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). Therefore, English for academic purposes (EAP) has become an important program in numerous countries including the ones where the mother tongue is English and other countries where English is the medium of instruction in the higher education such as Turkey.

There are many factors influencing EAP education in our country. One of the most crucial ones is students' quality of motivation. Motivation has always been viewed as an important element in language learning and this is also true for EAP. First year undergraduates in various Turkish universities are required to take compulsory EAP classes. Considering the fact that they attend a required course necessitating highly demanding work both for teachers and students, students' quality of motivation and engagement remains an issue of concern.

It is possible to address this concern by means of particular teaching approaches.

Content-based learning which integrates language and content instruction for second language learners is considered to be an effective approach that increases teachers' motivation towards the lesson which in turn helps students to be more enthusiastic about the courses given (Grabe & Stoller, 1997).

Taking all these into consideration, this study aims to explore the link between teachers' interest and motivation in content-based EAP classes and students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement during the aforementioned lessons.

## **Background**

### **English for academic purposes**

EAP, which is one of the branches of English for specific purposes (ESP), is defined as teaching English with the aim of helping learners to study or research through the medium of English (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002).

EAP instruction is based on cognitive, social and linguistics demands of certain academic disciplines. Therefore, it aims to provide students with the necessary communicative skills that facilitate their participation in certain academic and cultural contexts (Hyland & Lyon, 2002). More specifically, EAP equips students with diverse skills such as reading academic texts, writing essays, doing library research, giving proper references (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Not only the countries where English is the mother tongue, but also the ones which employ English as the medium of instruction in universities require EAP instruction for educational studies (Jordan, 1997).

The term English for academic purposes was found by Tim Johns in 1974 and the first publications related to it were edited by Cowie and Heaton in 1977 (Jordan, 2002). EAP was created as one of the branches of English for specific purposes along with EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) following the first publication of the journal of English for Specific Purposes in 1980 (Hyland, 2006). It has rapidly become widespread around the world. Although ESP and EAP share certain

fundamental characteristics such as meeting distinctive needs of learners and using contents which are related to particular disciplines, occupation and activities, EAP is different from ESP in terms of its academic focus (Hamp-Lyons, 2011). EAP can also be broken down into two categories which are English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). Blue (1988) was the first researcher who identified the distinction between the two branches in question. Accordingly, EGAP is related to the provision of English for students in all fields of study, whereas the main emphasis of ESAP is on the needs of students from specific disciplines (Jordan, 1989).

Today, EAP is a highly important tool for academic English instruction. According to Hyland (2006), thanks to the increase in English as the leading language to exchange academic knowledge, EAP has reached to global market. As a result, the popularity of EAP has increased considerably in the global scale. There are various approaches to EAP and Content-based EAP is one of them. According to Kasper (1997), EAP instruction can be promoted by Content-based instruction which supports language acquisition and also academic success.

### **Content-based instruction**

The advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) in 1970s which was defined by Hymes (1971) and his colleagues as the ability to use the language efficiently and appropriately in numerous contexts fostered the development of content-based instruction (CBI; Brinton & Snow, 2017). Content-based instruction can be described as an approach to language instruction that put emphasis on the learning of language through a meaningful content or subject matter rather than the more traditional

approaches focusing mainly on the learning of grammar, skills or tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, CBI focuses on the meaning rather than the forms. Moreover, in CBI classrooms, language is not only the goal of instruction, but also the medium of instruction (Coyle, 2007). In this regard, it is essential to make a distinction between CBI and CLIL (Content and language integrated learning) as they share numerous key features. CLIL is considered to be a European equivalent of CBI. It is defined as a dual-focused approach in which both content and language education were delivered by means of an additional language which is not necessarily English (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). Although the focus may be either on the content or the language, they are generally accommodated (Marsh, 2003). There is an ongoing discussion among researchers regarding the uniqueness of CLIL. While some researchers argue that despite having been introduced in Europe, CLIL is not pedagogically different from CBI and that the differences between these approaches are only accidental (Cenoz, 2015; Cenoz, Geneese, & Gorter, 2014), others point out that the dual focus of CLIL constitutes the distinctive difference between these two approaches (Lasagabaster, 2008).

To continue with the characteristics of CBI listed by Stryker and Leaver (1997), CBI is centered on subject-matter core. Namely, curriculum is organized based on the subject matter rather than forms, functions or skills. Also, it employs authentic texts. Lastly, it is suitable for the linguistic, cognitive and affective needs of students. All these characteristics make CBI an approach enabling students to master language skills by actually using them in realistic contexts, rather than memorizing certain structures or performing exercises related to them. In this sense, CBI is also supported by second language acquisition research. As Krashen (1982) suggests,

creating similar conditions to the ones in target language fosters the language acquisition. Moreover, while putting emphasis on functional use of language in authentic text, CBI also helps the development of four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, writing, and reading) (Leaver & Stryker, 1997).

Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989) have identified three prototype models of Content-based EAP which are theme-based instruction, sheltered instruction and adjunct instruction. In the theme-based model, particular themes serve as the structuring principal of the course and shape skill- and language-based instruction. (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2017). Additionally, while the content of sheltered and adjunct model is relatively predetermined, the content of theme-based instruction is chosen by the instructor (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). For this reason, teachers or instructors can prepare these contents based on their interests.

### **Interest**

Hidi (2006) describes interest as a unique motivational variable and psychological state taking place when individuals interact with their object of interest which results in increased attention, concentration and affect. Indeed, starting from 19th century, researchers such as Ebbinghaus (1964) and James (1890) highlighted the important role of interest in focusing attention and remembering. In addition to this, at the beginning of the century, one of the earliest theories of interest was proposed by Herbart (1841, 1965) who put forward that interest is closely linked to learning. According to him, interest fosters meaningful learning and long-term storage of knowledge. Moreover, it equips students with necessary motivation to learn more. Dewey (1913) put forward that interest doesn't only contribute to learning and

understanding, but also encourages greater effort and involvement in the activities or tasks. In addition to this, Hidi, Renninger, and Krapp (2004) maintain that interest is always associated with increased attention and/or engagement triggered by a particular content.

Interest construct is categorized as a relational concept considering that it involves an enduring particular relationship between a person and an object (Lewin, 1936).

Accordingly, the person who is the possible source of action and the environment which is the object of action form a bipolar unit (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 2002; Renninger, 1992). Concrete objects, a subject, an idea or any other content of cognitive domain may be regarded as *an object of interest*. Despite being regarded as a motivational variable, unlike other motivational constructs, interest is related to particular contents or objects most of the time (Schiefele, 2009). Therefore, content-specificity is what makes interest different from the motivation construct.

In educational research, authors distinguish between two types of interest which are situational and individual interest (Hidi, 1990, 2000; Hidi, Krapp, & Renninger, 1992; Krapp, 2002; Renninger, 2000). Situational interest is an emotional state triggered by a situational stimulus (Hidi, 1990; Mitchell, 1993). So, it is caused by particular conditions or concrete objects such as texts or movies (Hidi et al., 1992). Individual interest is a relatively long-lasting preference for particular topics, subjects, ideas or activities which develops over time (Hidi, 1990; Renninger, 1990; Schiefele, 2009). It is linked to increased value and knowledge as well as positive feelings (Krapp, 1999, 2000; Renninger, 1992).

Research demonstrates that learning motivation resulting from interest is likely to influence the process and result of learning positively. In this sense, both individual and situational interest are considered to facilitate cognitive functioning and learning (Hidi, 1990). Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989) state that the use of informational content which is considered to be meaningful by the learner increases motivation and promotes effective learning even though learners' needs, and interests are different. For this reason, finding the themes of the content based EAP classes interesting may contribute to learning motivation which in turn influence learning in a positive way.

### **Quality of motivation**

The importance of motivation in education has long been acknowledged by various researchers. Self Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2017) that explain motivation and its varying types in terms of their quality for the educational outcomes is a theory that can be employed to describe motivation in the EAP context. Accordingly, SDT investigates people's inherent tendencies and innate psychological needs which are essential for self-motivation and personal integration as well as the conditions that support these positive processes (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000a). Thus, the primary concern of SDT is the *quality of motivation*.

*Quality of motivation* can be defined as the underlying factor that influence learning behavior (Deci, Lens, & Vansteenkiste, 2006). It varies in amount and kind. It is categorized as *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to doing an activity because it is inherently interesting and enjoyable without the influence of any external impetus (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). This means that, when people are intrinsically motivated, they don't need any reward or punishment to do an activity,

they do it for its own sake. Individuals have an innate tendency towards intrinsic motivation. However, in order to maintain this, they need supportive conditions. According to Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000a).

Although intrinsic motivation is a crucial element for learning, students may not feel intrinsically motivated for each activity. External motivation can also be observed in educational settings. SDT suggests that there are different levels of motivation and the degree of motivation differs according to the extent to which a particular behavior is internalized and integrated. Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed a theory named Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) in order to explain the differences and factors that enhance or hamper internalization and integration of an activity. In the framework of OIT, different types of motivation (i.e., quality of motivation) are arranged from left to right on a continuum based on the degree of autonomy and self-determination (see Figure 1). The continuum starts with *Amotivation* which refers to not having necessary intention to do an activity as a result of lack of personal causation and intentionality. It continues with *extrinsic motivation* which refers to doing an activity to attain a separate outcome and ends with intrinsic motivation which refers to doing an activity of its own shake (Deci and Ryan, 2000a). *Extrinsic motivation* varies in degree of autonomy (Vallerand, 1997). It is divided into four main categories. Deci and Ryan (2000b) put forward that *Externally regulated* motivation is the least autonomous one. Behaviors that are externally regulated are performed as a result of an external impetus such as reward or punishment. *Introjected regulation* which is the second type of extrinsic motivation involves

performing an activity in order to avoid the feeling of guilt and anxiety or to enhance ego. *Regulation through identification* refers to performing an activity which is considered to be personally important. Lastly, *integrated regulation* which is the most autonomous external motivation is observed when identified regulations are consistent with one's own values and needs.

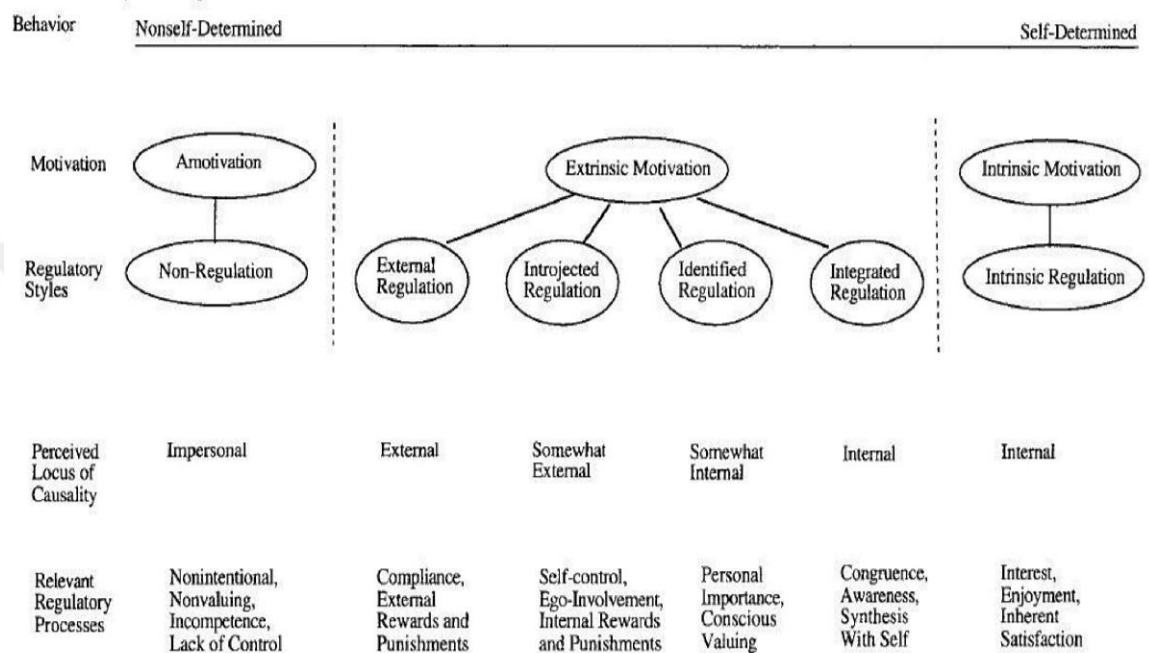


Figure 1. The Self-Determination continuum demonstrating types of motivation. Taken from “Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being”, by Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L., 2000, *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 72.

The most autonomous types of extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified and integrated regulations) and intrinsic motivation enhance student learning and form a good quality of motivation that has been labeled as autonomous motivation. The less autonomous types of extrinsic motivation (i.e., external and introjected regulations) impede student learning and lead to a poor quality of motivation that has been labeled as controlled motivation. In educational settings, it is important to put emphasis on factors supporting autonomous motivation in classroom (Niemic &

Ryan, 2009). According to SDT, satisfying psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness helps students internalize their motivation for learning.

Aside from students, satisfying basic psychological needs of teachers is also proved to be essential. According to SDT, undermining the teachers' need for autonomy, decreases their enthusiasm and creativity for their profession. Moreover, Roth et al. (2007) found that the more the teachers feel autonomy support, the more they become autonomy supportive towards students. In this context, supporting teachers' basic needs can lead to better student performances such as engagement.

### **Engagement**

Engagement is defined as students' active involvement in a learning activity (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). Engagement is also considered to be a key element in motivational models as it constitutes a pathway through which motivational processes promote learning and development (Wellborn, 1991).

Numerous definitions related to students' engagement are based on academic tasks and activities (Christenson et al., 2012). Nevertheless, engagement is not solely about academically engaged time. It is considered to be multidimensional and it includes student's emotion, behavior and cognition as well (Blumenfeld, Fredricks, & Paris, 2004). Namely, although academically engaged time is crucial, it is not adequate by itself.

Fredricks et al. (2004) have identified three components for engagement.

Accordingly, *Behavioral engagement* is mostly based on participation. It includes not only academic participation, but also extracurricular and social activities. It plays an

important role in positive academic outcomes. *Emotional engagement* is related to positive and negative reactions towards teachers, academics, other students and school. It is considered to ameliorate bonds to an institution and thus affects willingness to do an activity. As for *Cognitive engagement*, it helps students show necessary effort to understand complex ideas and master difficult skills.

These three components are highly important to comprehend engagement. However, Reeve and Tseng (2011) have suggested another component completing the construct of engagement named *Agentic Engagement*. They describe *Agentic Engagement* as students' constructive involvement into the flow of the instruction. Agentially engaged students try to form, ameliorate and personalize the learning conditions and circumstances in a proactive way (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). Offering input, expressing preferences, communicating thoughts and needs, sharing likes and dislikes, giving suggestions and contributing to the lesson can be some examples of agentic engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

Student engagement is essential for various reasons. First of all, it plays a significant role in students' learning. For example, learning a foreign language or mastering a musical instrument require substantial engagement (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006). Moreover, it makes it possible to predict academic progress of students (Dinella & Ladd, 2009). Lastly, it provides teachers with necessary information to assess their effectiveness in lessons as students' public engagement gives the most reliable clues on their motivation (Appleton et al., 2006).

Aside from that, it is also important to make the distinction between motivation and engagement. Motivation, by its nature, is a personal, unobservable, psychological and neural process contributing to engagement which is a behavior that can be directly observed (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012) or a cognitive or affective state regarding a specific activity. In addition to this, motivation is related to direction, quality and strength of a person's energy (Maehr & Meyer, 1997), whereas engagement is defined as "energy in action", namely the link between an individual and activity (Ainley, Frydenberg, & Russell, 2005). A student who is motivated for a task may not actively engage in it. Thus, although motivation is important, it is not solely enough for engagement (Appleton et al., 2006). For this reason, engagement is a construct that should be investigated separately.

### **Problem**

Most research on academic motivation put emphasis on students' motivation and interest, rather than teachers' motivation and interest (Butler, 2007). However, numerous studies show that teachers' motivation has a substantial influence on students' motivation and learning (Long & Hoy, 2006). On the other hand, content-based instruction contributes to student's motivation if students find the informational content relevant and interesting (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). However, could teacher interest on the theme of the content-based class inspire students to be motivated and engaged in the class? The themes of lessons may play an important role in students' effective learning as well. Nevertheless, there is not enough research focusing on the impact of teachers' interest in the themes of the content-based class and their quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) in teaching and/or the themes on students' quality of motivation and

engagement. Could content-based approach in EAP be considered effective for teacher and student optimal functioning? Although, intuitively, the answer could be “yes”, there is not enough evidence to justify this positive answer.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study, in the first place, was to investigate the relation between students’ perception about their instructor’s quality of motivation in teaching and interest in the theme of the content-based English classes and their interest, quality of motivation and engagement in these classes in order to provide EAP practitioners with necessary information to increase student engagement and quality of motivation. Teachers’ and students’ quality of motivation were determined in terms of being autonomous or controlled and students’ engagement was examined by taking only its behavioral and agentic aspects into consideration.

### **Research questions**

1. Do instructors’ perceived quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) in content-based EAP classes and their perceived interest in the core theme of the class as well as students’ interest regarding the core themes relate to students’ quality of motivation?
  - a. To what extend students’ autonomous and controlled motivation are predicted by instructors’ perceived quality of motivation in content-based EAP classes as well as their perceived interest in the core themes.
  - b. To what extend students’ autonomous and controlled motivation are predicted by their interest in the core themes of the class.

2. Do instructors' perceived quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) in content based EAP classes as well as their perceived interest in the core themes of the class and students' quality of motivation towards these lessons as well as their interest in the core themes relate to their engagement?
  - a. To what extent students' agentic and behavioral engagement are predicted by instructors' perceived quality of motivation in content-based EAP classes and their perceived interest in the core theme of the class?
  - b. To what extent students' agentic and behavioral engagement are predicted by their quality of motivation in content-based EAP classes and interest that showed towards the core theme of the class?

### **Significance**

This study aims to contribute to the field of EAP in Turkey by providing insights into the role of teachers' motivation and interest in students' quality of motivation and engagement in content based EAP classes. To be more specific, the results of the study could provide suggestions and guidance regarding the importance of supporting teachers' quality of motivation and permitting them to organize their classes according to their interest in order to promote students' autonomous motivation. Furthermore, the present study could shed some light into the benefits of fostering students' interest regarding the themes or materials of the classes and showing them autonomy support so as to further improve their engagement and quality of motivation in academic English classes. Lastly, the study could provide new directions for research.

## **Definition of key terms**

**Behavioral engagement:** Students' behaviors regarding their participation, effort, attention and persistence in learning activities and academic tasks (Fredricks et al., 2016).

**Agentic engagement:** Students' proactive and intentional contribution to the instruction (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

**Content-based instruction (CBI):** It is defined as a communicative language approach in which language learning and content learning are integrated (Leaver & Stryker, 1997).

**English for academic purposes (EAP):** Language and related practices that learners need to study or research through the medium of English (Gillett, 1996).

**Interest:** Increased attention, concentration and affect that occurs as a result of the interaction between individuals and their object of interest (Hidi, 2006).

**Quality of motivation:** According to SDT, quality of motivation is a construct that demonstrates to what extent behaviors shown by particular people are self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000a).

**Themes of ENG 101/101 classes:** In the theme-based model of CBI, classes are organized around particular themes chosen by the instructor (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2017).

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This study explored the relation of students' perception about their ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation and interest in content-based EAP instruction to students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes in the light of Self Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). This chapter aims to review literature findings related to the above-mentioned relation and provide readers with necessary background information with respect to the research questions. More specifically, this chapter reviews findings regarding the relation between students' interest and motivation; students' interest and engagement; instructors' interest or enthusiasm and students' engagement as well as teachers' quality of motivation and students' quality of motivation.

### **The relation of student interest to motivation**

Interest is considered to be an important motivational factor in learning and development (Claparède, 1905; Dewey, 1913). It is also a critical motivational variable impacting learning and achievement (Hidi, 2006). Numerous important authors recognize interest as an essential motivational condition for effective learning and a key element in individuals' personality and self-concept (Claparède, 1905; Dewey, 1913). Research demonstrates that students experiencing high interest and motivation, study learning materials more elaborately and can recall information more easily (Hidi et al., 1992).

Leading intrinsic motivation theorists (Deci, in press; Deci & Ryan, 1985) employ the term quite often as well. They regarded interest as an explicit aspect of motivation (Deci, 1992). Experiencing interest towards particular activities equip individuals with necessary energy to do them. These activities are considered to be intrinsically motivated because interest is an important source of intrinsically motivated behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000b). For example, reading a book can be viewed as an intrinsically motivated activity if the motive is interest. According to Schiefele (1999), interest can be a possible antecedent to cognition that indicates the strength of one's intrinsic or extrinsic motivation towards an activity. Unlike the other motivational constructs such as needs and motives, interest is object specific (Schiefele, 2009). Showing interest in the content being taught, and the positive results students obtained in respect to content learning (based on past experiences) may generate strong intrinsic motivation (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). As Hidi et al. (1992) highlighted, situational interest resulting from environmental factors, may trigger or contribute to the creation of long-lasting individual interest. Which means that interest in the content of a particular course may result in intrinsic motivation. (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Hidi et al., 1992).

Various authors attempted to highlight the relationship between situational interest, individual interest and intrinsic motivation (Hidi, 2000; Krapp, 1999). Accordingly, situational characteristics including new and/or complex stimuli accompanied with moderate or high coping potentially results in situational interest. Situational interest promotes intrinsic motivation to learn more about the content. On the other hand, for an existing individual interest, new and/or complex information may generate situational interest while activating the individual interest. Moreover, when activated,

individual interest may trigger intrinsic motivation either directly or indirectly. Therefore, environments promoting situational interest contribute to intrinsic motivation (Dennison & Schraw, 1994; Mitchell, 1993). From this standpoint, we can conclude that both situational and individual interest may lead to intrinsic motivation. Taking these into consideration, various researchers looked into the exact nature of the relation between interest and intrinsic motivation.

In a study conducted by Akşit (2015), the instructors' and students' perceptions regarding the strengths of the content-based EAP program were investigated. In the study which employed a mixed method, 280 freshmen and 27 instructors were presented with an online survey. Additionally, follow-up interviews were conducted with five students and five instructors which were randomly chosen among the participants of the survey. Accordingly, 49% of the students reported that only when they are permitted to choose the course based on their themes, could they consider the topics of their content-based EAP classes as enjoyable and meaningful.

Moreover, when they were asked to identify some challenges they experienced during the lessons, they reported some of the topics chosen by the instructors as intellectually challenging. In another study conducted by Schiefele and Csikszentmihalyi (1994) relation between interest and quality of experience in four different subjects (English, mathematics, biology and history) were explored. The participants who were nominated by their teachers based on their talent in the subjects were 208 freshmen and sophomores from a high school in Chicago. All participants were presented with questionnaires in order to investigate the relationship in question. The results showed that interest was an important predictor of the experience of intrinsic motivation, positive affect, concentration and potency.

In another study conducted in university context, Weber (2003) investigated the relation of interest to internal (intrinsic) and external motivation. Participants of the study were 209 college students from a large mid-Atlantic university in USA. The average age of the sample was 21.4. In order to explore the relation between the variables in question, students were presented with different scales such as the Learner Empowerment Scale (LES, Intrinsic Goal Orientation and Task Value subscales and EGO, Extrinsic Goal Orientation) to assess their internal and external motivation. The analysis indicated that interest was strongly related to internal but not external motivation. The results were consistent with those found by Pushkar, Bye and Conway (2007) who investigated the phenomenological differences between younger and older students' experience in an intergenerational university classroom. Participants were 300 undergraduate students from a midsized urban university. Students who entered the university after having completed the high school were categorized as traditional students, whereas students that re-entered the university after a specific period of time were considered as non-traditional students. Accordingly, the researchers tested the hypothesized differences between two age groups (18 to 21 vs older than 27) in terms of students' intrinsic motivation to learn and they explored the relation between age, interest, intrinsic motivation and positive affect by means of questionnaires distributed to the students. The results revealed that although age was an important factor influencing intrinsic motivation, interest was the most significant predictor of intrinsic motivation. All in all, the findings of the studies reveal that there is a positive relation between students' interest in the content being taught and their autonomous motivation to learn.

## **The relation of student interest to engagement**

Sansone and Smith (2000) argued that experiencing interest and enjoyment for a particular task, especially for the ones taking place over the long term, has an important impact on one's persistence and subsequent engagement for that task. Similarly, according to Hidi (2000), interest leads to focused attention, better cognitive engagement, persistence as well as affective involvement. Even though the first two constructs normally necessitate increased effort, feeling interested makes the activities seem relatively more effortless. Hidi (1990) argues that while interesting learning materials trigger spontaneous and effortless engagement, less interesting materials necessitate a more effortful, voluntary and active involvement. All in all, interest is considered to be a powerful construct fostering productive engagement and optimal motivation (Hidi et al., 1992). Therefore, there are a number of studies demonstrating the relation between student interest and engagement.

Schiefele conducted two studies to investigate the impact of personal interest on text learning. In the first study, three different kinds of open-ended questions were used to measure text learning (Schiefele, 1990). In the second study conducted by Schiefele and Krapp (1996) free recall protocols were used to find out indicators of different levels of text learning. The studies revealed that interest influenced deep-level learning and engagement positively. In another study, Ainley, Hidi and Berndorff (2002) examined processes mediating the influence of interest on learning by means of an interactive computer task which recorded students' responses in their real-time sequence. The study was carried out with the participation of 117

Australian grade 8 students and 104 Canadian grade 9 students. They were presented with an online interest measure followed by a set of four texts (two science-based and two popular culture texts) and a multiple-choice test aiming to assess their responses and learning. Students were recorded by the software while reading the texts and answering the related questions. The findings showed that topic interest had an impact on participants' affective responses and affect influenced engagement with the text which in turn lead to learning. In the very same year, Ainley, Hillman, Hidi (2002) investigated interest in literary texts among senior secondary students. More specifically, they looked into the individual and situational factors contributing to topic interest, the impact of topic interest on persistence and the role of gender in these relations. They also used interactive computer techniques which monitored students' reactions to the texts. The participants of the study were 86 grade 10 students from a high school in an Australian provincial city. The researchers chose four novels from senior curriculum and they used first 900 words of each of them as the main experimental task. Before the experiment, the students were presented with an individual interest scale determining the domains students were interested in prior to the experiment and topic interest scale measuring the level of interest students showed when they saw the title, author and a sentence about the books. Accordingly, topic interest triggered by the text title was related to positive affect and persistence. As for the lower interest texts, it was gender which impacted the level of persistence.

Flowerday, Schraw and Stevens (2004) conducted two studies to examine the impact of choice and interest on learning, engagement and attitude. Participants of the first experiment were 98 undergraduate students taking educational psychology course at a major Midwestern university. They were asked to complete an interest index, a

two-page text, an interest inventory, a multiple-choice test, 2 essay booklets and an attitude checklist. As a result, they found a significant relation between interest and attitude. In addition, interest was significantly related to content of essays.

The second study was designed to further investigate the relation between variables in question. The materials used in experiment one remained the same except for the text and multiple-choice test. The new text included more interesting information and it was less technical. New questions related to the text was added to the multiple-choice text. The study was conducted with the participation of 106 undergraduate students taking educational psychology course at an important Midwestern university. The findings showed that situational interest had a positive impact on attitude towards the learning task in both experiments and it positively affected engagement in the second experiment. Therefore, when situational interest increased, engagement and positive affect increased. The findings mentioned above suggest that students' situational interest and topic interest are positively related to their engagement.

### **The relation of teachers' interest or enthusiasm to students' motivation**

Although interest-related research focuses mainly on student's interest, teachers' interest and enthusiasm also have a substantial impact on student's motivation.

According to literature, demonstrating enthusiasm for the course content and being knowledgeable are qualities attributed to effective teachers (Highet, 1989; Woolfolk, 2004). There are a number of studies indicating that teachers showing interest and enthusiasm inspire intrinsic motivation to their students.

In a study taking place at a Swedish high school, student ratings revealed that teachers were the most important individuals effecting students' interest in subjects (Sjoberg, 1984). In another study conducted in Germany, students reported that their teachers' demonstration of subject interest was more motivating than quality of instruction and content relevance (Drechsel, Kramer, & Prenzel, 1998). In order to investigate this relation further, Long and Hoy (2006) conducted a two-phased study. In phase 1, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students were asked to nominate teachers who helped them become interested in a particular school subject. In phase 2, nominees and their students were examined through interviews and observations. The results of the study showed a positive relation between teachers' interest and students' intrinsic motivation.

In addition to teacher interest, teacher enthusiasm is also an important factor influencing students' motivational outcomes. Teacher enthusiasm has two different conceptual meanings. It may refer to teachers' instructional styles characterized by their demonstration of enthusiasm for the topic they teach (Meyer, Midgely, Patrick, & Turner, 2003) or it can be regarded as a person variable which is related to their profession (Long & Hoy, 2006). As a teaching style, it is defined as an animated style of teaching observed by positive affective expression (Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009; Patrick et al., 2003) and as a profession-related variable it is conceptualized as a habitual, repeated emotion showing the amount of enjoyment, excitement and pleasure experienced by the teachers (Baumert, Frenzel, Kunter, Nagy, & Pekrun, 2011).

It has long been known that teacher enthusiasm contributes to positive student outcomes such as students' attitudes towards learning (McMillan, 1976) and on-task behavior (Bettercourt, Gail, Gillet, & Hall, 1983). For this reason, researchers also looked into the relation of teacher enthusiasm to intrinsic motivation. Patrick, Hisley and Kempler (2010) conducted two studies to explore the link between teacher enthusiasm and student motivation. In the first study, 93 undergraduate students taking introductory- and intermediate-level psychology courses assessed their teachers' perceived enthusiasm and their own intrinsic motivation as well as their approach to course materials. The results showed that teacher enthusiasm was strongly correlated to students' intrinsic motivation. In study 2, 60 undergraduate students taking an introductory psychology lesson were taught the same lesson by an enthusiastic and non-enthusiastic teacher. The results indicated that lessons given by highly enthusiastic teacher helped students to experience greater interest and enjoyment for the material used and higher levels of energy. Moreover, they found a relation between teacher enthusiasm and student motivation.

In addition to this, in another study, Gorham and Christophel (1992) investigated students' perceptions of teacher behaviors as motivating and demotivating factors. Accordingly, 308 undergraduate students were presented with a questionnaire and they were asked to write down the things that motivate and demotivate them in class and list teacher behaviors and approaches that influence how students feel in class. The results showed that interest and perceived relevance of the material as well as teachers' effectiveness and enthusiasm in lecturing were among the most motivating factors.

Continuing with the studies focusing on teacher effectiveness, McKinney and Larkins (1984), conducted a study related to the effects of three levels of teacher enthusiasm (low, medium, high) on students' achievement and teacher effectiveness. Three treatment groups consisting of 57 undergraduate students were taught the same lesson by a professor demonstrating different levels of enthusiasm. Accordingly, students in the high and medium groups found the professor more effective than students in the low enthusiasm group.

Lastly, Frenzel et al. (2009) who employed teachers' reports on their emotional experiences while teaching in addition to students' reports and ratings, investigated the relation between teacher and student enjoyment. The participants of the study were 1,763 grade 7 and 8 students as well as 71 teachers from a state school located in Bavaria, Germany. The results revealed that teacher enjoyment and student enjoyment were closely linked, and this relation was mediated by teachers' enthusiasm. Taken together, the aforementioned findings highlight the positive relation between teacher interest and enthusiasm to students' motivation and engagement.

### **The relation of teachers' quality of motivation to students' quality of motivation**

In addition to teacher interest and enthusiasm, their perceived motivation seems to also have a substantial impact on students' motivation. SDT suggests that different types and sources of motivation have a considerable effect on the quality of behavior. While behaviors emanating from one's self are considered autonomous, behaviors caused by internal or external pressure are regarded as controlled (Deci & Ryan 2000a).

There are numerous studies underlining the positive student outcomes of their autonomous motivation (Deci, Reeve, & Ryan, 2004). Teachers also demonstrate varying levels of motivation, which has a considerable impact on students (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Research indicates that students' learning and quality of motivation are linked to their teachers' quality of motivation (Long & Hoy, 2006). Taking these into consideration, this section will focus on the relation between teachers' and student's quality of motivation. Literature related to SDT explains this relation in terms of the influence of teachers' autonomous motivation on student's motivation and the contagion effect of the quality of motivation in a shared environment.

The majority of the research related to teachers' autonomous or controlled motivation is based on teachers' self-reports, however there are also studies which employed student assessment of teacher motivation. Accordingly, Pelletier, Seguin-Levesque and Legault (2002) looked into social-contextual conditions leading teachers to be more autonomy supportive or controlling with their students. They found that when teachers had to meet certain performance standards, they had limited freedom to determine their course's curriculum and they had to conform with colleagues' behaviors and teaching methods, their self-determined motivation towards their job decreased because their basic needs of autonomy weren't fulfilled. Namely, when teachers perceived pressure from above, they put pressure on their students. Which means that, the more the teachers were autonomously motivated towards their job, the more they showed autonomy support towards their students (Pelletier et al., 2002). The findings were consistent with those found by Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, and Kaplan (2007). The researchers examined the relation between teacher's experience of autonomous motivation and students' autonomous

motivation using student and teacher ratings. 132 female teachers from seven Jewish urban elementary schools in Israel and their students were presented with a number of questionnaires. The results demonstrated that teachers' autonomous motivation for teaching was related to students' autonomous motivation for learning. Similarly, in another study, Lam, Cheng and Ma (2009), looked into the correlation between teacher and students' intrinsic motivation in project-based learning with the participants consisting of 126 Hong Kong secondary school teachers and 631 students. The result of the analyses demonstrated that teachers' intrinsic motivation predicted students' intrinsic motivation both directly and indirectly by means of the mediation of instructional support.

Additionally, Ahn (2014) conducted a study to explore the relation between teacher and student motivation within the framework of SDT. The participants of the study were 697 middle school students and 35 teachers in a school located in South Korea. The research instruments were questionnaires for motivation, basic psychological needs, and perceptions of teacher's instructional styles. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed a positive correlation between teacher and student motivation. Also, students' satisfaction of the need for autonomy mediated the relation between teacher and students' quality of motivation. In another study, Hein et al., (2012) examined how teachers' motivation to teach is related to different teaching styles. 176 PE teachers from five European countries were presented with questionnaires assessing their autonomous motivation for teaching as well as their teaching styles. The results demonstrated that while autonomously motivated teachers employed student-centered teaching style, teacher who were not autonomously motivated preferred teacher-centered teaching style.

To continue with the contagion effect, Ryan and Deci (2002) suggest that a controlling social environment is not necessarily the only factor undermining the quality of motivation. The perception of others' quality of motivation in a shared environment may also influence quality of motivation to some extent. In order to provide evidence for this contagion effect, Wild and his associates (1992) conducted a series of experiments to further investigate this issue. In their first study, a group of students participated in an introductory piano lesson. The participants took the same standardized lesson from teachers who they believed to be volunteer or paid.

Students who thought that their teacher was intrinsically motivated reported more enjoyment and interest in the activity compared to students who thought that their teacher was extrinsically motivated (i.e., paid). In the second study, participants were taught a specific magic trick (Wild et al., 1997). All participants took the same standardized lesson likewise. Results indicated that participants who were taught the trick by teachers having been trained to be intrinsically motivated reported more interest in the activity. These findings suggest that teachers' quality of motivation is positively related to students' quality of motivation.

### **Concluding statement**

The studies mentioned above provide significant findings regarding the role of teachers' interest, enthusiasm and quality of motivation as well as students' interest in the content being taught on students' quality of motivation and engagement.

Accordingly, interest was a powerful predictor of students' quality of motivation and engagement. Moreover, when students perceived that their teachers showed interest and enthusiasm for the course content, their intrinsic motivation and engagement increased. Thus, teachers' interest, enthusiasm was positively related to students'

quality of motivation and engagement. Furthermore, teachers' self-reports and student ratings showed that teachers feeling autonomously motivated, showed autonomy- support to their students, and therefore autonomously motivated teaching lead to autonomous motivation for learning. Lastly, when students perceived that their teachers were intrinsically motivated to teach the course, they were more interested and engaged in the activities. Hence, teachers' autonomous motivation for the lesson was positively related to students' quality of motivation. These findings have been employed as a springboard for the present study. In the light of this literature review, it has been hypothesized that;

1. Students' interest in the theme of the ENG 101/102 lessons will positively predict their quality of motivation and engagement in the ENG 101/102 courses.
2. ENG 101/102 instructors' interest and enthusiasm for the themes will predict students' quality of motivation and engagement.
3. It is expected that there will be a positive relation between teachers' autonomous motivation for the content of the course and student's quality motivation and engagement in ENG 101/102 lesson.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHOD**

### **Introduction**

The aim of the present study was to examine the relation between students' perception about their ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation and interest in content-based EAP instruction and students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes. In order to investigate this relation, a correlational research design was employed.

This chapter describes the research design employed to answer the research question and provides details as to the context of the study, participants, instruments and method of the data collection and analysis procedures.

### **Research design**

#### **Correlational research**

Correlational research design is a nonexperimental research which is employed to assess the relation among two or more variables in a single group (Ary, Irvine, Jacobs, & Walker, 2014). It enables researchers to explain crucial human behaviors or predict possible outcomes (Fraenkel, Hyun, & Wallen, 2012). In this sense, it is commonly used in educational or psychological research (Ary et al., 2014).

Correlational research is also considered to be a type of descriptive research as it describes the existing relation between variables. Contrary to the other studies including descriptions, it is mainly used to determine the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related by means of correlational coefficient. This index demonstrates the strength of relations among variables.

In addition, correlational research doesn't include manipulation of variables. Therefore, it doesn't imply any causal relations (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Another important point is that in order to conduct a correlational research, one should have at least 30 cases (Borg & Gall, 1979). Lastly, correlational studies could have cross-sectional or longitudinal designs (Barker, Elliot, & Pistrang, 2003).

### **Cross-sectional design**

In cross-sectional design data is collected from a representative sample of a given population at a single point in time. Data can be obtained from multiple groups or different types of people within a relatively short time period (Christensen & Johnson, 2008). In this way, the study provides a snapshot of the population studied. Using this snapshot, researchers obtain data for either a retrospective or a prospective enquiry (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, cross-sectional design doesn't provide any repeated measurements regarding data over a period of time. However, it is widely employed to describe the characteristics of particular groups and to explore the link between the predictors (Frey, 2018). The present study employed a cross-sectional correlational study design so as to investigate the relation between variables in question and to measure each variable at one point in time.

### **Context**

This study was carried out at a private English-speaking university located in Ankara. The sample for the study was taken from ENG 101 and 102 classes which are compulsory English and essay composition courses that all freshmen take in their first and second semester. The courses in question aim to provide students with necessary academic English skills for their departmental studies and it follows a

content-based EAP approach which is theme based. The instructors of the courses prepare their own lesson content and determine a particular theme of their interest. More specifically, in ENG 101, students are required to write three essays based on the readings related to topics/themes chosen by their instructors. In addition to these essays, they participate in in-class group discussions and give presentations. In the end, they take the final exam which assess their reading-into-writing skills.

To continue with ENG 102 classes which are designed to consolidate students' academic language skills and knowledge that they acquired in ENG 101 classes, students are, in the first place asked to write one drafted essay employing sources provided by their instructors and then they conduct an independent library research based on the theme of their classes and work towards a final research paper. Moreover, they are asked to give an in-course presentation and take part in the end of the course interview to further improve their speaking skills. In both of these courses, students are required to participate in at least 90% of the total lectures which are given five hours per week.

In order for students to continue their departmental studies and take the aforementioned classes, they need to either pass the language proficiency exam prepared by the institution or submit their results of external examinations (IELTS, a general average of 6.5; TOEFL IBT, at least 87 points) which indicates that the freshmen participating in these courses have similar English proficiency levels.

In respect to the themes, it is also essential to state that although students are entitled to preregister in the sections of the instructors based on their themes, given the

number of the students registered each year, it is not always possible for them to choose the topics.

### **Participants**

Fifty-six freshmen taking ENG 101 or 102 courses participated in the study from 14 different sections having nine themes. Their participation was voluntary and anonymous. As the questionnaires were administered in the second semester, 49 participants were from ENG 102 classes and they had already taken ENG 101 in the first semester and eight participants who were irregular students were from ENG 101 classes. Four participants were excluded from the final sample as they failed to answer the control question which was employed in order to test if they read the items of the questionnaires attentively. From the remaining 52 participants, 25 were male (49%) and 27 were female (51%) (Table 1). The mean age was  $M_{age} = 19.59$ .

Table 1  
Gender of participants (N = 52)

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	27	51 %
Male	25	49 %

The participants were studying in varying undergraduate programs which were classified together below in Table 2.

Table 2  
Departments of participants (N = 52)

Departments	n
1. Engineering	7
2. American Culture and Literature	3
3. Architecture	4
4. Communication and Design	4
5. Computer Science	4

Table 2  
 Departments of participants (N = 52) (cont'd)

Departments	n
6. International Relations	1
7. Economics	5
8. Law	5
9. Mathematics	2
10. Music	1
11. Translation and Interpretation	2
12. Molecular Biology and Genetics	3
13. Interior Architecture and Environmental Design	2
14. Physics	1
15. Management	1
16. Psychology	4
17. Computer Technology and Information Systems	1
18. Fine Arts	1

### Instrumentation

Research instruments used in the study were Relative Autonomy Continuum Questionnaire (RAC; Gordeeva, Osin, Sheldon, Suchkov, & Sychev, 2017), Interest and Enjoyment Questionnaire (Deci, Eghrari, Leone, & Patrick, 1994) and Classroom Engagement Questionnaire (Furrer, Kindermann, & Skinner, 2009; Reeve, 2013).

All questionnaires were employed in English and administered online. The items of each questionnaire were purposefully mixed. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to assess all the items with one indicating a strong disagreement and five indicating a strong agreement. A control item was added in the battery of questionnaires to make sure that participant read the questions thoroughly. Accordingly, participants were

asked to choose the option two (i.e., I disagree) and failure to choose this particular option indicated that the participant did not read the items and answers were given casually. Such participants were excluded from the final sample. The scales used in the study were briefly explained below.

### **Relative autonomy continuum questionnaire**

Relative autonomy continuum questionnaire (RAC; Sheldon et al., 2017) was employed in order to assess student's perception of their teacher's motivation as well as their motivation in the content based EAP classes. 16 items were used to assess students' motivation to participate in ENG 101/102 classes and eight were used to assess instructors perceived motivation for teaching ENG 101/102 classes in separate sections (see Appendices, pages 85-86). Participants rated each item in the questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The first questionnaire assessing student motivation included four subscales and four items each; (1) *external regulation* (e.g., "because I do not have any choice but to do") (2) *negative introjected regulation* (e.g., "because I would feel guilty if I did not do it") (3) *identified regulation* (e.g., "because it is personally important to me") and (4) *intrinsic regulation* (e.g., "because it is a pleasure to do it"). The second questionnaire assessing teacher motivation involved four subscales and two items each; (1) *external regulation* (e.g., "because important people (i.e., administrators, colleagues) will like her/him better if s/he does so.") (2) *negative introjected regulation* (e.g., "because s/he would feel guilty if I did not do it") (3) *identified regulation* (e.g., "because it is meaningful to her/him.") and (4) *intrinsic regulation*

(e.g., “because s/he enjoys it”). A composite score for controlled student motivation was computed by aggregating the items of external and introjected negative regulation. In the present study, the internal consistency of controlled student motivation expressed by Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .76$ . A composite score for autonomous student motivation was computed by aggregating the items of identified and intrinsic regulation. In the present study, the internal consistency of autonomous student motivation expressed by Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .93$ .

Additionally, a composite score for controlled teacher motivation was computed by aggregating the items of external and introjected negative regulation. In the present study, the internal consistency of controlled teacher motivation expressed by Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .79$ . Lastly, a composite score for autonomous teacher motivation was computed by aggregating the items of identified and intrinsic regulation. In the present study, the internal consistency of autonomous teacher motivation expressed by Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .95$ .

### **Interest and enjoyment questionnaire**

Interest and enjoyment questionnaire is one of the subscales of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) which is a multidimensional measurement device assessing participants’ subjective experience regarding a target activity. The subscale consisting of seven items was employed to assess students’ experience and their instructors’ perceived feelings regarding the theme of the class. The internal reliability of the questionnaire expressed by Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .78$  (Duncan, McAuley, & Tammen, 1987). It was adapted to assess students’ interest regarding the theme of the content-based classes instead of their interest on an activity that the

original questionnaire assesses. For this reason, only the items that are suitable for this context were used. The students' interest set of items included six out of the seven original items (e.g., The theme stimulates my curiosity; Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .66$  in the present study) while the one assessing instructors' perceived interest included four out of the seven original items (e.g., My teacher is enthusiastic about this theme; Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .95$  in the present study). All answers were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) (see Appendices, page 87).

### **Classroom engagement questionnaire**

Classroom engagement questionnaire was used in the study so as to assess student engagement in ENG 101/ 102 classes. The questionnaire developed and validated by Reeve and Tseng (2011) in a way to assess four aspects of student engagement which are agentic engagement, behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (internal reliability expressed by Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .85$  for agentic engagement and  $\alpha = .94$  for behavioral engagement). Of these aspects, only agentic and behavioral engagement were included in the present study seeing that there was an overlap between the items of emotional engagement and interest questionnaires and that the items of cognitive engagement weren't related to the purpose of the study. Overall, the questionnaire consisted of 10 items; five items for *agentic engagement* (e.g., "During this class, I express my preferences and opinions"; Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .85$  in the present study) and five items for *behavioral engagement* (e.g., "When I'm in this class, I participate in class discussions"; Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .81$  in the present study). The items were

purposefully mixed. Similarly, a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was employed (see Appendices, page 88).

### **Method of data collection**

In the present study, in the first place, necessary application forms including the informed consent form and data collection tools were submitted to the ethics committee of the related institution. After having obtained the permission from the ethics committee, research request proforma required to conduct the study was submitted to university's center for research. The proforma was reviewed and approved by the board. Based on their decision, online questionnaires were forwarded to instructors and according to instructors' discretion, the online questionnaires were forwarded to their students.

Following the approval process, the online survey consisting of five questionnaires and 51 items were combined in the Google forms and administered to voluntary participants receiving the link from their instructors. The data collection took place during the second semester of the academic year 2018-19, in March in order to make sure that students were exposed to the lesson contents and materials adequately and form a perception accordingly. The instructors informed the students about the scope and content of the study and that their answers would be kept confidential.

Moreover, before starting to the online survey, the participants were required to sign an online consent form reminding them that their participation is anonymous and voluntary, it doesn't affect their grade and that they have the right to quit the study

whenever they want. Lastly, following the consent form, they were asked to state their age, gender, departments, ENG 101 or 102 sections and themes of their courses.

### **Method of data analysis**

The quantitative data obtained by means of Google forms were analyzed and interpreted in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v.25). The internal consistency of each subscale was checked through Cronbach's Alpha shown in the reliability statistics. In the preliminary analysis, descriptive statistics for each variable and bivariate correlations among them were reported. In the main analysis, four different hierarchical regression analyses were conducted in order to test the hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relation of students' perception about their ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation, enthusiasm and interest in content-based EAP instruction to students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes. A correlational research design with a cross-sectional method was used to analyze the relation between the variables in question. This chapter describes the analysis and results of the study.

Data analysis is twofold; In the *preliminary analysis*, descriptive statistics of the measured variables as well as the bivariate correlations among these variables were reported respectively. In the *main analysis*, it was examined whether students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes can be predicted by their own quality of motivation and interest in the theme of the courses as well as their perception regarding ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation, enthusiasm and interest in content-based EAP classes.

### **Preliminary analysis**

The preliminary analysis of the study is divided into two sections which are descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. Descriptive statistics –means, and standard deviations of the studied variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3  
Descriptive statistics of the measured variables

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Autonomous student motivation	52	3.02	0.96
Controlled student motivation	52	3.10	0.72
Autonomous teacher motivation	52	4.20	0.92
Controlled teacher motivation	52	3.01	0.85
Agentic engagement	52	3.72	0.85
Behavioral engagement	52	3.79	0.82
Teacher interest	52	4.38	0.91
Student interest	52	3.50	0.65

### Descriptive statistics

The mean score for each measured variable (*Autonomous students motivation, controlled students motivation, autonomous teacher motivation, controlled teacher motivation, agentic engagement, behavioral engagement, teacher interest, student interest*) was ranged from 0.51 (*SD* = 0.51) to 4.38 (*SD* = 0.91) on a Likert type scale between 1 and 5.

### Correlational analysis

The bivariate correlations among the measured variables are presented in Table 4. The results of data analysis revealed a statistically significant and positive correlation between autonomous teacher motivation and autonomous student motivation ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ). There was also a positive relation between autonomous teacher motivation and controlled student motivation ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ). This indicates that perceived autonomous teacher motivation towards teaching ENG 101/102 classes can be linked to both autonomous and controlled student motivation.

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between controlled teacher motivation and controlled student motivation ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ); whereas there was no statistically significant correlation between controlled teacher motivation and autonomous student motivation ( $r = -.04, p > .05$ ). This shows that when students perceive their instructors as being controlled motivated towards teaching ENG 101/102 classes, they are also controlled motivated towards learning the content of ENG 101/102 classes. However, perceived controlled motivation of instructors is not linked to student's autonomous motivation.

Furthermore, according to the bivariate analysis, autonomous teacher motivation was significantly and positively correlated to agentic engagement ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ) and behavioral engagement ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ). However, there was no statistically significant relation between controlled teacher motivation and student agentic engagement ( $r = .02, p > .05$ ) and behavioral engagement ( $r = .18, p > .05$ ).

This means that perceived autonomous teacher motivation towards teaching ENG 101/102 classes is linked to students' agentic and behavioral engagement, whereas perceived controlled teacher motivation regarding the same classes is not associated to student engagement.

Additionally, there was a statistically significant and strong positive relation between teacher interest regarding the theme of ENG 101/ 102 classes and teachers' autonomous motivation ( $r = .74, p < .01$ ). Accordingly, when instructors show interest and enthusiasm in the theme of their classes, students perceive them as being autonomously motivated to give ENG 101/102 classes.

In addition to this, teacher interest was significantly and positively linked to students' autonomous motivation ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ) and controlled motivation ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). This means that, instructors' interest regarding the theme of their classes could be related to autonomous and controlled types of motivation.

Moreover, teacher interest was significantly and positively related to student interest ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ) student's agentic engagement ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ) and behavioral engagement ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ). Therefore, as expected, instructors' interest and enthusiasm towards the theme of the class is associated to student interest in the content being taught and engagement in ENG 101,102 classes.

Lastly students' interest was positively and significantly correlated to autonomous student motivation ( $r = .58, p < .01$ ), agentic engagement ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ) and behavioral engagement ( $r = .61, p < .01$ ). It indicated that, as expected, when students find the theme of ENG 101,102 classes interesting, they show high levels of autonomous motivation and engagement.



Table 4  
Bivariate correlations among the measured variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	-								
2. Autonomous teacher motivation	.13	-							
3. Controlled teacher motivation	.09	.22	-						
4. Teacher interest	.03	.74**	.18	-					
5. Student interest	.03	.37**	-.02	.44**	-				
6. Autonomous student motivation	.17	.48**	-.04	.43**	.58**	-			
7. Controlled student motivation	.18	.42**	.37**	.37**	.26	.04	-		
8. Agentic engagement	.08	.50**	.10	.59**	.59**	.55**	.13	-	
9. Behavioral engagement	.19	.47**	.02	.43**	.61**	.65**	.15	.79**	-

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . Gender was dummy-coded (0 = male, 1 = female)

## **Main analysis**

The study aimed to explore whether students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes can be predicted by their perception of ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation, enthusiasm and interest in content-based EAP classes. Having checked the bivariate correlations (see Table 2), two hierarchical, three-step and two hierarchical four-step multiple regression models were conducted in order to test the hypotheses.

By means of regressions, the following were checked: (a) the predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' autonomous motivation; (b) the predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation, student and teacher interest regarding students' controlled motivation; (c) the predictive value of teachers' and students' quality of motivation as well as teacher and student interest regarding students' agentic engagement; (d) the predictive value of teachers' and students' quality of motivation, teacher and student interest regarding students' behavioral engagement.

The first three-step hierarchical multiple regression was run with autonomous student motivation as the dependent variable. Independent variables were, in step 1, autonomous teacher motivation and controlled teacher motivation. In step 2, teacher interest was included among the predictors and in step 3, student interest was added in the analysis.

In the second hierarchical regression analysis, the dependent variable was controlled student motivation and independent variables in each step were kept same as the first

regression model. In the third hierarchical regression analysis, the dependent variable was students' agentic engagement and independent variables were, in step 1, autonomous teacher motivation and controlled teacher motivation. In step 2, teacher interest was added among the previous predictors. In step 3, autonomous and controlled student motivation was included in the predictors and in step 4, student interest was added in the analysis.

As for the last regression model, the dependent variable was students' agentic engagement, while independent variables in each step were kept same as the third regression model.

### **The predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' autonomous motivation**

Before conducting the regression models for students' autonomous motivation, assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were checked. Accordingly;

1. The scatterplots demonstrated that the relation between independent (autonomous teacher motivation, controlled teacher motivation, teacher interest, student interest) and dependent variables (autonomous student motivation) could be modelled by a straight line. Therefore, the variables were linearly related.
2. Analysis of collinearity statistics showed that there was no multicollinearity in the data, seeing that VIF scores were well below 10, and tolerance scores above 0.2 (statistics = 1.05- 2.39 and 0.44 - 0.95 respectively).

3. The plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values showed no noticeable signs of funneling which suggested that the assumption of homoscedasticity had been met (see Appendix B, page 89).
4. The P-P plot generated for the model indicated that the assumption of normality of the residuals had been met (see Appendix B, page 89).

Following the assumptions tests, the models for students' autonomous motivation were checked and found statistically significant in all three steps: Step 1 ( $F [2, 49] = 8.40, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .23$ ); Step 2 ( $F [3, 48] = 5.85, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .22$ ); Step 3 ( $F [4, 47] = 9.04, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .39$ ).

In the first step, autonomous teacher motivation was a positive predictor of autonomous student motivation. Similarly, in the second step, when teacher interest was included, the results revealed that only autonomous teacher motivation positively predicted autonomous student motivation. In the last step, student interest was added among the predictors. Accordingly, autonomous teacher motivation and student interest significantly and positively predicted autonomous student motivation. This means that when students perceived their instructors to be autonomously motivated to teach the content of ENG 101/102 classes, they also feel autonomously motivated towards the lesson. Also, when students show interest towards the theme of the ENG 101/102 classes, they have autonomous motivation for the lesson. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
The hierarchical regression for autonomous student motivation

Predictors	Autonomous Student Motivation								
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
1. Autonomous teacher motivation	0.54	(0.13)	.52**	0.41	(0.19)	.39*	0.35	(0.17)	.34*
2. Controlled teacher motivation	-0.17	(0.14)	-.15	-0.17	(0.14)	-.15	-0.12	(0.13)	-.10
3. Teacher interest	-	-	-	0.16	(0.19)	.17	-0.01	(0.18)	-.01
4. Student interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.67	(0.18)	.46**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## **The predictive value of teachers' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students'-controlled motivation**

Prior to the analysis of regression models for students'-controlled motivation, assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were tested. Accordingly;

1. The scatterplots indicated that the relation between independent variables (autonomous teacher motivation, controlled teacher motivation, teacher interest, student interest) and dependent variables (controlled student motivation) were linear. Hence, the variables were linearly related.
2. Analysis of collinearity statistics revealed that there was no multicollinearity in the data, as VIF scores were well below 10, and tolerance scores above 0.2 (statistics = 1.05- 2.39 and 0.42 - 0.95 respectively).
3. The plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values showed no apparent signs of funneling which suggested that the assumption of homoscedasticity had been met (see Appendix B, page 90).
4. The P-P plot obtained for the model indicated that the assumption of normality of the residuals had not been violated (see Appendix B, page 90).

After having performed the necessary assumption tests, the models for students' controlled motivation were investigated and found statistically significant in all three steps: Step 1 ( $F [2, 49] = 8.55, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .23$ ); Step 2 ( $F [3, 48] = 5.78, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .22$ ); Step 3 ( $F [4, 47] = 4.61, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .22$ ).

In the first step, autonomous and controlled teacher motivation were positive predictors of controlled student motivation. However, in the second step, when teacher interest was included, the results revealed that only controlled teacher motivation positively and significantly predicted controlled student motivation. In

the last step, student interest was added among the predictors of the analysis. Accordingly, controlled teacher motivation was a positive predictor of controlled student motivation. These findings suggest that when students perceive their instructor to be controlled motivated to teach the content of ENG 101/102 classes, they also demonstrate controlled motivation for ENG 101/102 classes. The results are shown in Table 6.



Table 6  
The hierarchical regression for controlled student motivation

Predictors	Controlled Student Motivation								
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
1. Autonomous teacher motivation	0.28	(0.47)	.36*	0.21	(0.15)	.27	0.20	(0.15)	.25
2. Controlled teacher motivation	0.25	(0.10)	.29*	0.25	(0.11)	.29*	0.26	(0.11)	.30*
3. Teacher interest	-	-	-	0.10	(0.15)	.12	0.05	(0.15)	.07
4. Student interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.16	(0.16)	.14

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

## **The predictive value of teachers' and students' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' agentic engagement**

Before running the regression models for students' agentic engagement, assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were checked. Accordingly;

1. The scatterplots showed that the correlation between independent variables (autonomous teacher motivation, controlled teacher motivation, teacher interest, student interest, autonomous student motivation, controlled student motivation) and dependent variables (students' agentic engagement) were linear.
2. Taken the results of collinearity statistics into consideration, there was no multicollinearity in the data, as VIF scores were lower than 10, and tolerance scores were greater than 0.2 (statistics = 1.05- 2.69 and 0.37 - 0.95 respectively).
3. There were no noticeable signs of funnel pattern in the plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values which suggested that the assumption of homoscedasticity had been fulfilled (see Appendix B, page 91).
4. The P-P plot obtained for the model indicated that the assumption of normality of the residuals had been violated (see Appendix B, page 91).

As all the assumptions stated above were met, the models for students' agentic engagement were checked and found statistically significant in all four steps: Step 1 ( $F [2, 49] = 7.94, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .21$ ); Step 2 ( $F [3, 48] = 8.97, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .32$ ); Step 3 ( $F [4, 46] = 7.91, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .40$ ); Step 4 ( $F [6,45] = 8.73, p < .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .48$ ).

In the first step, autonomous teacher motivation was a positive predictor of students' agentic engagement. However, in the second step, when teacher interest was added among the predictors, the results showed that only teacher interest positively and significantly predicted students' agentic engagement. In the third step, autonomous and controlled student motivation were included in the analysis. Accordingly, teacher interest as well as autonomous student motivation were positive predictors of students' agentic engagement. In the last step, student interest was entered in the analysis. This time, teacher interest and student interest were the predictors which positively predicted student's agentic engagement. According to the results, when instructors show interest and enthusiasm for the theme of ENG 101/102 classes, students demonstrate agentic engagement in the lessons in question. Additionally, when students feel interested towards the themes of ENG 101/102 classes, they show agentic engagement in the same lesson. The results are reported in Table 7.

Table 7  
The hierarchical regression for agentic engagement

Predictors	Agentic Engagement											
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
1. Autonomous teacher motivation	0.46	(0.12)	.50**	0.12	(0.16)	.13	0.01	(0.16)	.01	0.06	(0.15)	.07
2. Controlled teacher motivation	-0.01	(0.13)	-.01	-0.02	(0.12)	-.02	0.06	(0.12)	.06	0.10	(0.11)	.10
3. Teacher interest	-	-	-	0.47	(0.16)	.50*	0.43	(0.15)	.45*	0.34	(0.15)	.36*
5. Autonomous student motivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.31	(0.12)	.35*	0.14	(0.13)	.15
6. Controlled student motivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.09	(0.15)	-.08	-0.20	(0.15)	-.17
7. Student interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.48	(0.18)	.37*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## **The predictive value of teachers' and students' quality of motivation as well as student and teacher interest regarding students' behavioral engagement**

Before conducting the regression models for students' behavioral engagement, assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were tested. Accordingly;

1. The scatterplots indicated that the relation between independent variables (autonomous teacher motivation, controlled teacher motivation, teacher interest, student interest, autonomous student motivation, controlled student motivation) and dependent variables (students' behavioral engagement) were linear.
2. Based on the results of collinearity statistics, there was no multicollinearity in the data, as VIF scores were lower than 10, and tolerance scores were greater than 0.2 (statistics = 1.05- 2.69 and 0.37- 0.95 respectively).
3. There were no observable signs of funneling in the plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values which implied that the assumption of homoscedasticity had been met (see Appendix B, page 92).
4. The P-P plot for the model indicated that the assumption of normality of the residuals had been met (see Appendix B, page 92).

Following the aforementioned assumption tests, the models for students' behavioral engagement were checked and found statistically significant in all four steps: Step 1 ( $F [2, 49] = 7.26, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .20$ ); Step 2 ( $F [3, 48] = 5.15, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .20$ ); Step 3 ( $F [5, 46] = 7.67, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .40$ ); Step 4 ( $F [6,45] = 8.06, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .45$ ).

In the first step, autonomous teacher motivation was a positive predictor of students' behavioral engagement. On the other hand, in the second step, when teacher interest was included in the analysis as an independent variable, none of the predictors significantly predicted students' behavioral engagement. In the third step, autonomous and controlled student motivation were added in the analysis. The results revealed that only autonomous student motivation was a positive predictor of behavioral engagement. In the last step, student interest was entered in the analysis. This time, autonomous student motivation along with student interest were positive predictors of students' behavioral engagement. These findings suggest that students' behavioral engagement is only linked to their autonomous motivation towards ENG 101/102 classes and their interest in the theme chosen for the course. The results are reported in Table 8.

Table 8  
The hierarchical regression for behavioral engagement

Predictors	Behavioral Engagement											
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
1. Autonomous teacher motivation	0.44	(0.12)	.49**	0.32	(0.16)	.36	0.11	(0.16)	.13	0.16	(0.15)	.18
2. Controlled teacher motivation	-0.09	(0.12)	-.09	-0.09	(0.12)	-.10	-0.03	(0.11)	-.03	0.01	(0.11)	.01
3. Teacher interest	-	-	-	0.17	(0.16)	.18	0.08	(0.15)	.09	0.00	(0.15)	.00
5. Autonomous student motivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.47	(0.11)	.54**	0.31	(0.12)	.36*
6. Controlled student motivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.06	(0.15)	-.06	-0.03	(0.14)	-.03
7. Student interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.42	(0.17)	.34*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

The aim of the present study was to explore the correlation between students' perception about their ENG 101/102 instructors' motivation, enthusiasm and interest in content-based EAP instruction and students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes. A correlational research design was used to investigate these relations. This chapter presents the findings of the present research. It begins with an overview of the study. Next, major findings and conclusions are presented and discussed according to the relevant literature. Then, implications for practice and implications for further research are suggested with the aim of benefiting the EAP education and future studies. Finally, the limitations of the present study are presented in the last section.

### **Overview of the study**

The study aimed to investigate whether students' quality of motivation, interest and engagement in content-based EAP classes can be predicted by ENG 101/102 instructors' perceived motivation, enthusiasm and interest in content-based EAP instruction. To this end, the study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do instructors' perceived quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) in content-based EAP classes and their perceived interest in the core theme of the class as well as students' interest regarding the core themes relate to students' quality of motivation?

2. Do instructors' perceived quality of motivation (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) in content based EAP classes as well as their perceived interest in the core themes of the class and students' quality of motivation towards these lessons as well as their interest in the core themes relate to their engagement?

The study was conducted online at a private English-speaking university in Ankara.

The participants were 56 freshmen taking ENG 101 and 102 classes. Four participants who failed to answer a control question aiming to check their concentration on the online survey were excluded from the final sample. The research instruments consisting of five questionnaires with 51 items in total were combined in the online survey and administered to voluntary participants through Google forms.

In the light of the literature review, it was hypothesized that;

1. Students' interest in the theme of the ENG 101/102 lessons would positively predict their quality of motivation and engagement in the ENG 101/102 courses.
2. ENG 101/102 instructors' interest and enthusiasm for the themes would predict students' quality of motivation and engagement.
3. It was expected that there would be a positive relation between teachers' autonomous motivation for the content of the course and student's quality motivation and engagement in ENG 101/102 lesson.

A correlational research design with a cross-sectional method was employed to investigate the data obtained through the online survey and to test the above-mentioned hypotheses. Preliminary and main analyses were run respectively in the

data analysis procedure. In the preliminary analyses of the results, descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were checked in order to determine the mean and standard deviation as well as correlations of the study's variables. As for the main analysis, two hierarchical, three-step and two hierarchical four-step multiple regression models were conducted to test the hypotheses.

### **Major findings and conclusions**

Major findings and conclusions of the present study will be presented in this section based on the results of the regression analyses and hypotheses grounded in the literature review.

In Hypothesis (1), it was suggested that students' interest in the theme of the ENG 101/102 lessons would positively predict their quality of motivation and engagement in ENG 101/102 courses. Along the lines with our expectation, the findings of bivariate correlations showed that students' interest in the theme of their ENG 101/102 classes related positively and significantly to their autonomous motivation and agentic and behavioral engagement. Moreover, the findings of regression analysis indicated that student's interest in the theme of their ENG 101/102 classes was positively and significantly linked to their autonomous motivation to learn the content of the course even when the other predictors which were instructors' quality of motivation and interest were taken into consideration. Likewise, having checked the predictive value of all our predictors which were instructors' quality of motivation and interest as well as student's quality of motivation and topic interest, the result of the analysis indicated that students' topic interest was positively related to their agentic and behavioral engagement during the lessons.

The results were consistent with those found through previous research. Various prominent authors considered interest as an important source for intrinsic motivation (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Schiefele, 1999) which is a part of autonomous motivation in the present study. The studies given below also supported these views.

In a study conducted by Schiefele and Csikszentmihalyi (1994), the researchers investigated the relation between interest and quality of experience in four different subjects (English, mathematics, biology and history) and they found that interest was an important predictor of the experience of intrinsic motivation, positive affect, concentration and potency. In a similar study carried out in university context, Weber (2003) investigated the correlation between interest and quality of motivation. The results revealed that interest was strongly related to internal but not external motivation. In another study, Pushkar et al. (2007) investigated the phenomenological differences between younger and older students' experience in an intergenerational university classroom. Likewise, interest was found out to be the most significant predictor of students' intrinsic motivation.

Students interest is also regarded as a powerful construct supporting students' engagement in lessons (Hidi, 2000; Hidi et al., 1992; Sansone & Smith, 2000). Schiefele carried out two subsequent studies to explore the influence of personal interest on text learning (Krapp & Schiefele, 1996; Schiefele, 1990). The studies revealed a positive link between interest and engagement. Similarly, Ainley et al. (2002) investigated the processes mediating between interest and learning.

Accordingly, topic interest positively predicted participants' affective responses and affect, in turn influenced students' engagement with the texts given. In another study conducted within the same year, Ainley et al. (2002) examined the link between

topic interest and persistence in engaging with literary texts. The results revealed that topic interest triggered by the text title was not only related to positive affect, but also students' persistence in reading. Moreover, Flowerdew et al. (2004) carried out two experimental studies with undergraduate students to explore the impact of choice and interest on learning, engagement and attitude. The findings indicated that situational interest positively predicted students' attitude towards the learning task in two experiments and it positively affected engagement in one of the experiments. In line with the findings and the relevant literature, it can be concluded that students' interest towards the content of the lessons and materials are linked to their autonomous motivation and engagement.

In Hypothesis (2), it was expected that ENG 101/102 Instructors' interest and enthusiasm for the themes as perceived by their students would predict students' quality of motivation and engagement. Indeed, instructors' interest was positively and significantly related to students' quality of motivation and both types of engagement in the bivariate correlations.

There are a number of studies that can provide an insight for these relations, the literature suggests that teacher interest and enthusiasm can contribute to student engagement and motivation in different ways. In an article written for the purpose of discussing the possible ways to promote student engagement in college environment, Garrett (2011) suggested that teachers' enthusiasm and engagement in teaching a particular subject is among the factors impacting students' engagement in lessons. Similarly, in a study conducted by Streeter (1986), the effects of teachers' enthusiasm training on students' reading behavior was examined. The findings

revealed a positive link between teachers' enthusiasm and students' attitudes towards the reading material. In another study, Brigham et al. (1992) examined the impact of teacher enthusiasm on academic and behavioral performance of students with learning disabilities, they found that when teachers showed high levels of enthusiasm, students' on-task behavior increased. Moreover, in another study conducted by Patrick et al. (2010) the link between teacher enthusiasm and student motivation was investigated. The result of the study demonstrated that lessons given by highly enthusiastic teachers provided students with greater interest and enjoyment for the material used and higher levels of energy for learning. This relation is explained by the findings that teachers with high levels of enthusiasm may be regarded as role models by inspiring students to adopt their attitudes and thereby students may consider the topic to be more worthwhile (Frenzel et al., 2009). Also, teachers' emotions towards the content they teach can be contagious (Cacioppo, Hafield, & Rapon, 1994). However, in the present study, the findings showed that instructors' interest towards the theme of ENG 101/102 classes was a positive predictor only for students' agentic engagement over and above their own interest. While students' behavioral engagement was predicted only by their own topic interest (and their autonomous motivation), students' agentic engagement was predicted by both their own topic interest and teacher's interest when additionally, teachers' and students' quality of motivation were taken into consideration. Reeve and Shin (2020) argue that the difference between agentic engagement and other types of engagement is that agentic engagement is a reciprocal and proactive construct in terms of teacher and students benefits. Which means that the student benefits from positive instructional approaches and attitudes of teachers and the teachers benefits from students' proactive engagement during which they pose

questions, express their needs, opinions and preferences. The findings of the present study revealed that when students perceived hard effort and persistence (i.e., behavioral engagement) in themselves during their ENG 101/102 classes, they rated the theme of the class as interesting. On the other hand, when they considered that they demonstrated high agentic engagement, they perceived not only themselves, but also the instructors to be interested in the theme of the class. This finding implies that “it takes two to be agentically engaged”. When teachers create their own themes and contents and feel more interest and enthusiasm towards the learning material, students are more likely to take action, make suggestions or state their preferences (i.e., being agentically engaged).

Lastly, in Hypothesis (3) it was put forward that there would be a positive relation between instructors’ quality of motivation for teaching ENG 101/102 and students’ quality motivation and engagement in ENG 101/102 lesson. According to the findings of the study, autonomous teacher motivation for teaching ENG 101/102 classes was significantly and positively related to students’ autonomous motivation for learning the content being taught in the courses even when student and teacher interest were taken into consideration. Similarly, controlled teacher motivation for teaching ENG 101/102 classes was positively and significantly linked to students’-controlled motivation in the given course. On the other hand, the findings revealed a significant positive correlation between instructors’ autonomous motivation and student engagement. However, this relation was not verified when students’ quality of motivation and students’ and instructors’ interest were taken into consideration. Accordingly, agentic engagement shown by students in ENG 101/102 classes was predicted only by instructors’ and students’ interest and enthusiasm in the themes of

ENG 101/102 classes, whereas behavioral engagement shown by students was predicted by autonomous student motivation for ENG 101/102 classes and student interest in the themes of their class.

A number of researchers investigating students' quality of motivation emphasize that students' learning and quality of motivation are associated with their teachers' quality of motivation (Long & Hoy, 2006). SDT-related literature focused mainly on the link between teachers' autonomous motivation and student's motivation as well as the contagion effect of the quality of motivation in a shared classroom to explain this relation.

Pelletier et al. (2002) investigated social-contextual conditions causing teachers to be more autonomy supportive or controlling with their students. The findings indicated that teachers whose basic needs for autonomy were supported in the working environments showed more autonomous motivation for teaching and, in turn their students felt more autonomy support from them. In another study, Hein et al. (2012) explored the link between teachers' motivation to teach and different teaching styles they employ. Accordingly, autonomously motivated teachers used student-centered teaching styles, whereas teachers who were controlled motivated preferred teacher-centered teaching styles.

In addition to this, Roth et al. (2007), examined the correlation between teachers' experience of autonomous motivation and students' autonomous motivation through student and teacher ratings. The findings indicated that teachers' autonomous motivation for teaching was positively correlated to students' autonomous

motivation for learning. Similarly, in another study, Cheng et al. (2009), looked into the correlation between teacher and students' intrinsic motivation in project-based learning at a school located in Hong Kong. The result of the analyses demonstrated that intrinsic motivation of teachers predicted students' intrinsic motivation both directly and indirectly by means of the mediation of instructional support. Likewise, Ahn (2014) conducted a study to explore the relation between teacher and student motivation within the framework of SDT using student and teacher ratings. The findings demonstrated a positive link between teacher and student motivation. In addition, students' satisfaction of the need for autonomy mediated the correlation between teacher and students' quality of motivation.

To continue with the studies regarding contagion effect, Wild and his associates (1992) carried out two subsequent studies to explore this effect. The results of the first study suggested that students who perceived their teacher to be intrinsically motivated reported more enjoyment and interest in the activity in comparison to the students who perceived their teacher to be controlled motivated (i.e., paid). The findings of the second study revealed that participants who perceived their teacher to be intrinsically motivated reported more interest in the activity. Taking the results of the study and the related literature into consideration, it can be suggested that when teachers' quality of motivation to teach increases, students' quality of motivation for learning also increases.

### **Implications for practice**

The results of the study indicated that student's interest in the theme of their ENG 101/102 classes is correlated to their autonomous motivation to learn the content of

the course as well as their agentic and behavioral engagement during the lessons. The literature review also supported this result by means of the findings revealing that interested students are more likely to show autonomous motivation and engagement and they are more likely to have increased attention and persistence in the teaching materials. In the light of these findings and the related literature, the first implication for practice would be to provide students with themes that could stimulate their interest and curiosity. Considering the rapidly changing dynamics of today's world, it may be integral to keep up with their new areas of interest. Therefore, surveys aiming to determine particular topics that are appealing for both students and instructors could be conducted at the beginning of each educational year by collecting data from the freshmen or from the students studying in preparatory school.

In addition to this, the findings of data analysis also suggested that autonomous teacher motivation for teaching the ENG 101/102 classes positively and significantly predicted students' autonomous motivation for learning the content being taught in the course. The literature also highlighted the positive impact of autonomous teacher motivation on quality of motivation of students and the contagion effect of quality of motivation in a shared environment. In addition, studies revealed that the more teachers feel autonomy support, the less they put pressure on students and the instructors with high levels of autonomous motivation prefer to use student-centered teaching styles. In line with findings and the literature review, it can be proposed that the universities should put more emphasis on supporting instructors' basic needs such as their need for autonomy. According to Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985), in order to facilitate the intrinsic motivation, it

is essential to satisfy one's need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Nevertheless, it is only applicable for activities that have novelty, challenge or aesthetic value (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). Hence, giving instructors the opportunity to prepare their own themes and contents can be a very effective way to satisfy their needs for autonomy and competence at the same time because it provides them with optimal challenge and choice. In turn, when students perceive their instructors to be autonomously motivated, they are more likely to feel autonomously motivated towards the lessons. Therefore, another implication for practice could be to give instructors more time and flexibility to prepare and develop the themes and contents of the lessons.

Lastly, the findings indicated that instructors' interest towards the theme of ENG 101/102 classes was a positive predictor for students' agentic engagement. Similarly, literature demonstrated that teacher interest and enthusiasm is associated with students on task behavior, greater interest and enjoyment for the teaching material and high levels of energy in lessons. Furthermore, a number of studies revealed that enthusiastic teachers are perceived as role models and encourage students positively to engage in the materials. In view of the findings and the literature, the relation was explained by the suggestion that as creating their own themes and contents provides teachers with interest and enthusiasm towards the teaching material and autonomy support, they may have inspired students the same positive feelings. Taking all these into consideration, it can be concluded that an effective teacher and student relationship is a key to students' agentic engagement because as Reeve and Shin (2020) suggested, such a relationship can lead to need satisfying, interest-relevant and personally valued learning experiences. Therefore, teachers may be further

educated to be more autonomy supportive towards their students and they can be further encouraged to develop contents that they are interested in.

### **Implications for further research**

The study was conducted at a university located in Ankara. Nevertheless, in order to reach more participants and obtain a more detailed frame in relation to the EAP education in Turkey, similar studies can be conducted in different universities with more diverse data and higher number of participants.

Moreover, the present study was carried out using only student reports about instructors' quality of motivation and interest. In order to have a better understanding with regard to the findings, future studies could employ a multiple-informant approach by collecting data from instructors as well. Furthermore, instructor and student interviews could be conducted to compare the results of quantitative studies to those of qualitative ones so as to gain a more profound understanding in terms of the implications and practices of content-based EAP approach.

Lastly, the findings of the study showed a positive relation between teacher interest and students' agentic engagement. Given the fact that agentic engagement is a newly introduced construct of student engagement, the studies looking into this relation are quite limited. Thus, further research can be carried out to better interpret this relation.

### **Limitations**

Besides the aforementioned results and implications, there were also certain limitations that were acknowledged by the researcher. The first limitation of the

study was the number of participants. More participants could have revealed stronger results. Furthermore, the study was conducted at a single Turkish private university, therefore results cannot be generalized to all EAP education. Including more universities that have content-based EAP education may make it more possible to generalize the findings.

Moreover, the findings suggested a positive correlation between teachers' quality of motivation and students' quality of motivation. However, this could be the result of monomethod bias as the same informant (i.e., the student) reported both students' and teachers' interest and motivation. Students' own quality of motivation may have colored the motivation that they attributed to teachers. Similarly, instructors' interest positively predicted students' agentic engagement. The relationship between teachers and students may have colored teachers' perceived interest and enthusiasm. A multiple-informant approach or participation of a large number of students nested in large number of classrooms (where the classroom level could be taken into consideration) could have provided the study with more reliable results.

Another constrain was that, this study employed a cross-sectional, correlational design. For this reason, only the relation between the variables were sought. Therefore, findings did not provide information about any cause and/or effect. An experimental study could have shown the direction of the relation of the study's variables (i.e., the causes and effects).

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Questionnaires

#### Motivation for participating/teaching in English class (Gordeeve, Osin, Sheldon, Suchkov, & Sychev, 2017)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<p><b>Below, there are some questions regarding your experience in your Eng 101/102 class. Please, response as honest as you can by indicating the degree of your agreement with each statement. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.</b></p> <p><b>Why do I try to do well in my 101 class?</b></p>					
1. Because important people (i.e., parents, professors, peers) will like me better if I do so.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Because I would feel guilty if I didn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Because I strongly value it.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Because if I don't do so, others will get mad.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Because I would feel ashamed if I didn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Because I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Because it is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Because I would feel like a failure if I didn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Because it is my personal choice to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Because I don't have any choice but to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Because it is personally important to me.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Because it is a pleasure to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Because I don't want to feel bad about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Because it is fun.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Because it is meaningful to me.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I'll get in trouble if I don't do so.	1	2	3	4	5

**Why does my teacher try to teach well in my 101 class?**

1. Because important people (i.e., administrators, colleagues) will like her/him better if s/he does so.	1	2	3	4	5
2. S/he'll get in trouble if s/he doesn't do so.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Because s/he doesn't want to feel bad about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Because s/he would feel like a failure if s/he didn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Because s/he strongly values it.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Because it is meaningful to her/him.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Because s/he enjoys it.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Because it is a pleasure to do it.	1	2	3	4	5

**Interest/ enjoyment**  
(Deci, Eghrari, Leone, & Patrick, 1994)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Rate your teacher's feelings regarding the theme of this class:</b>					
1. My teacher is enthusiastic about this theme	1	2	3	4	5
2. My teacher tries to get students excited about the theme	1	2	3	4	5
3. My teacher is very interested in the theme	1	2	3	4	5
4. For this item please choose the disagree option	1	2	3	4	5
5. My teacher seems to take pleasure in teaching this theme	1	2	3	4	5

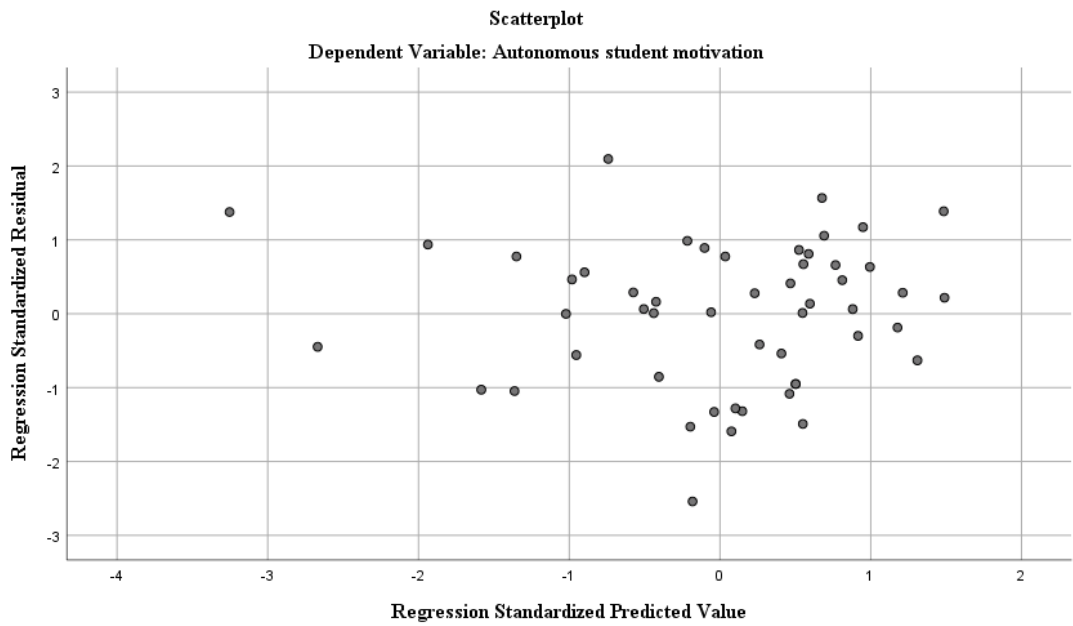
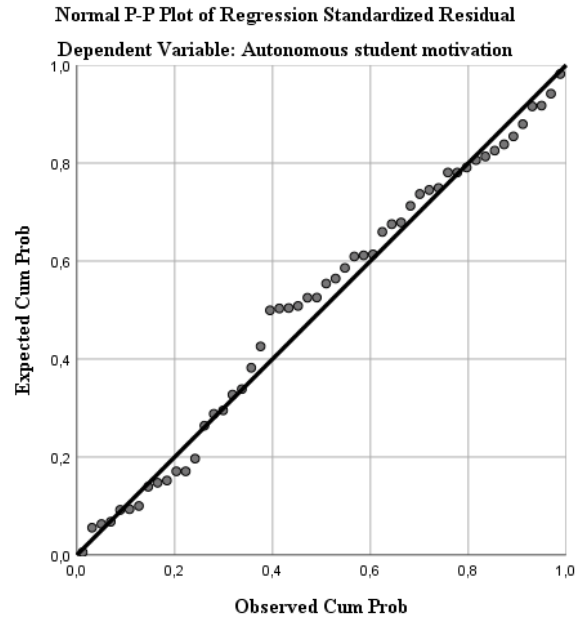
<b>Rate your typical experience regarding the theme of this particular class:</b>					
1. I enjoy doing the activities related to the theme	1	2	3	4	5
2. I think the activities related to this theme are boring	1	2	3	4	5
3. The theme attracts my attention	1	2	3	4	5
4. The theme doesn't attract my attention at all	1	2	3	4	5
5. The theme stimulates my curiosity	1	2	3	4	5
6. The theme is very interesting	1	2	3	4	5

### Classroom engagement

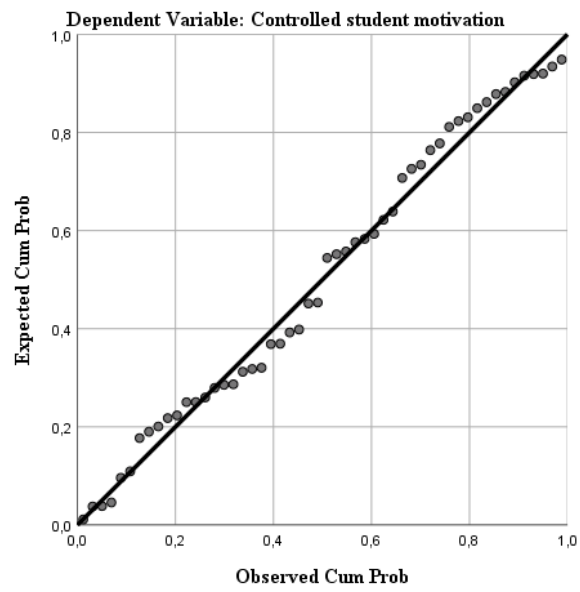
(Furrer, Kindermann, & Skinner, 2009; Reeve, 2013)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Rate your typical experience regarding your ENG 101/102 class:</b>					
1. I let my teacher know what I need and want.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I 'm in this class, I participate in class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
3. During this class, I express my preferences and opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I pay attention in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When I need something in this class, I'll ask the teacher for it.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I'm in this class, I listen very carefully	1	2	3	4	5
7. During this class, I ask questions to help me	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to do well in this class	1	2	3	4	5
9. I let my teacher know what I am interested in	1	2	3	4	5
10. In this class, I work as hard as I can	1	2	3	4	5

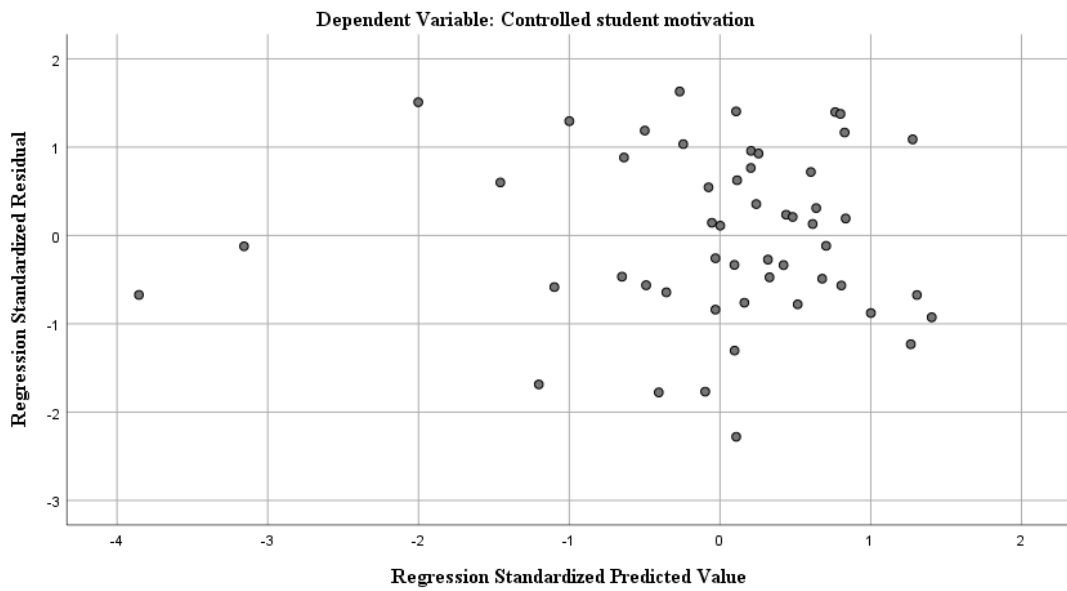
## APPENDIX B: Charts



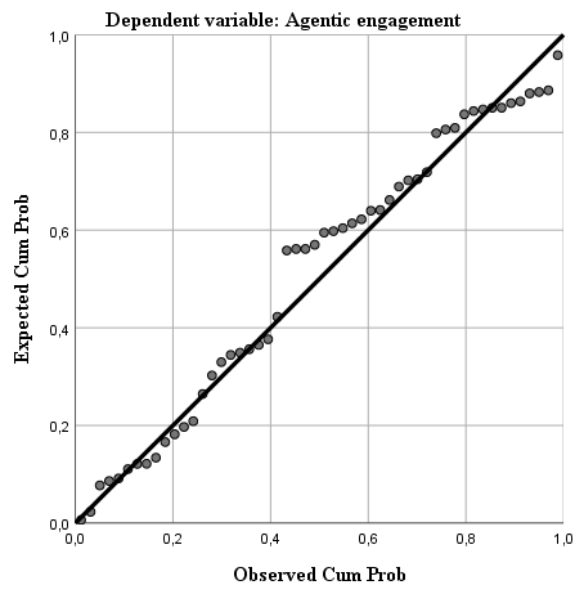
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Scatterplot



Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Scatterplot  
Dependent Variable: Agentic engagement

