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RESEARCH ARTICLES

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to present the latest issue of the *ELT Research Journal*, featuring three insightful research articles that address key areas of English language teaching and learning. This issue reflects our ongoing commitment to advancing research that contributes to the professional growth of scholars, educators, and graduate students in the ELT community.

The first article, *Exploring Motivation Types and Study Habits of Turkish Adult English Language Learners* by Suzan Astaneh Kaya and Gonca Eksi, investigates the motivational drivers and study habits of Turkish adult EFL learners. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study highlights learners' career-oriented motivations and reveals that while their integrative motivation is notably high, their study habits show room for improvement, particularly in managing their physical learning environment.

The second paper, *Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Research Attitudes and Critical Thinking Dispositions* by Seda Boy and Merve Savaşçı, explores how research engagement within a research methodology course influences pre-service teachers' attitudes toward research and critical thinking dispositions. Findings reveal that research participation significantly enhances students' research attitudes, reduces research anxiety, and fosters critical thinking skills such as reasoning and truth-seeking—critical competencies for future educators.

The third article, *Secondary School Students' Language Learning Motivation and Perceptions About English as a Lingua Franca in Iran* by Reza Sahmaniasl and Ceylan Yangın Ersanlı, examines Iranian secondary students' motivations and attitudes toward learning English. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study uncovers that students are primarily driven by career aspirations and the desire to participate in global communication. Insights from this research suggest actionable recommendations for improving language education policies in Iranian schools.

The fourth article, *Conceptualization of "Teacher Identity": How Do Teachers at Different Career Phases Define It?* by Pınar Kahveci and Kadriye Dilek Bacanak, delves into how teachers at different stages of their careers—pre-service, novice, and experienced—define and understand their professional identity. Using a phenomenological approach, the study employs semi-structured interviews to uncover how contextual factors shape these conceptualizations. The study underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of teacher identity, offering valuable insights for teacher training programs to better support identity formation across career phases.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors for their valuable contributions and to our dedicated reviewers and editorial team for their professional commitment throughout the publication process. We invite researchers, educators, and graduate students to submit their work to future issues as we continue to support and disseminate innovative research in English language teaching.

Best Regards,
The Editorial Team
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Exploring Motivation Types and Study Habits of Turkish Adult English Language Learners

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Abstract

Personal factors and thoughts on how a learner learns a language are observed as substantial issues for foreign language learning. The aim of this study is to examine motivation types, study habits, and main reasons for taking language courses. To this end, qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted. The participants encapsulated (102 Turkish adult EFL learners attending a language course. Furthermore, 11 learners were chosen randomly to participate in the interview. The instruments embraced a motivation questionnaire developed by Wimolmas (2013) and Palsan and Sharm Study Habits Inventory (1989). The data for the qualitative phase was gathered by an open-ended semi-structured interview developed by the researcher. The validity and reliability were ensured. The data were evaluated by descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed by means of the content analysis method. The obtained results revealed the main reason for taking language courses is to find a suitable/better job. The participants have a high level of motivation and integrative motivation is higher. Learners' study habits are at the average level, the component of Budgeting Time has the highest mean score, and the Physical Condition component has the lowest mean score. In the qualitative stage, responses were categorized into main reasons, learning English for using abroad, English in professional situations, and general activities to practice English.

Keywords: EFL learners; Instrumental motivation; Integrative motivation; Motivation; Study habits

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Introduction

Language education is one of the most stimulating tasks one has to handle. This enduring process evidently encompasses educational and professional assistance along with personal systematic, attentive, and conscious engagements in the language learning process. Consequently, personal factors and thoughts on how one learns a language are observed as essential for academic mastery of the foreign language. The characteristics of students in applied linguistics have conventionally been inspected in the framework of individual differences (IDs) which are perceived as features that mark an individual as a distinct and unique human being. Obviously, individuals vary from each other in numerous qualities. ID aspects take into account consistent and regular departures from a normative framework (Dornyei, 2007).

The vast scope of individual differences has made it difficult for researchers to investigate all variables that might affect the teaching and learning process. Teachers must recognize that everyone has their own innate assets and capabilities that can either foster or hinder their attempts in language learning. Thus, it can be argued that distinct social, cognitive, and affective factors are believed to affect the foreign language acquisition process. Among these issues, motivation is the crucial issue impacting EFL learners' achievement (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2021).

The major problem of the present study is that EFL learners and teachers need to get a deeper understanding of the affective elements and their impression on the learning process. When they get to know the applicability of personal and affective factors, they can use their knowledge to promote and improve learning performance and avoid inhibiting feelings which may decrease the quality of learning outcomes. As declared by Seven (2020), one of the most challenging dimensions of teaching is by what means we can motivate a language learner. The secret lies in recognizing the learners' motivation and then making the lesson applicable and pleasant. He added that most people learn English since they think that it will bring some sort of advantages for them in one manner. They wish to receive more money to fulfill definite education necessities, to encounter extra individuals with the assistance of English or to travel abroad. Lacking robust motivation, learners will be unsuccessful in their endeavor and their expectations of learning. It is additionally possible to improve language learning by taking into justification the study habits and various learning tactics that students employ. The main external factors that speed up the study process are study habits, which incorporate thorough

study routines that take into account how frequently a student participates in study sessions, clarifying the material, reviewing the material covered in class, self-assessing, practicing, and studying in a supportive environment (Mahmoud Ahmad, 2018). Therefore, by selecting proper, applicable, and encouraging methods and styles of language learning, learners can not only expand their language proficiency but also increase their motivation levels throughout language learning.

Many studies have been directed in this regard, examining dissimilar aspects of motivation in EFL contexts and their effects on the expansion of language abilities (Babaee, 2012; Cheng & Dorneyi, 2007; Hamilton, et al., 2012; Marszalek, Balagna, Kim & Patel, 2022; Quan, 2014; Weger, 2013). Moreover, study habits have been investigated profoundly in the literature and they are regarded as predictive factors of academic performance (Ebele & Olofu, 2017; Looyeh, Fazelpour, Masoule, Chehrzad & Leili, 2017; Atsiaya Siahi & Maiyo, 2015). These studies considered various aspects and models of motivation and learning styles among learners of dissimilar age groups and proficiency levels. Nevertheless, a review of the related literature confirms a scarcity of research examining motivation types and study habits and their relationship among adult language learners in Turkiye. Therefore, despite numerous studies that investigated individual discrepancies and personality traits, the present study attempted to explore the motivation types and study habits of Turkish adult EFL learners.

Since the reasons for learning foreign languages, especially among adult learners, greatly affect their motivation, the first intention of this research is to identify and inspect the reasons why adult learners in Turkiye participate in English classes. Moreover, it is crucial to identify their reasons for improving their English as a foreign language. The central aim of the study is to investigate motivation; therefore, it is crucial to determine the learners' reasons for improving their foreign language skills. Additionally, the study aims to identify Turkish adults' study habits, as these are momentous for learners to maintain and enhance their learning based on their motivation. Furthermore, identifying learners' motivation can help uncover their preferred study habits and materials, as they may select their learning strategies, materials, and habits based on their motivation. Another goal of the study is to clarify potential elements affecting adult foreign language learners' motivation.

Based on the above-mentioned important factors, in order to achieve the objective of the study, the succeeding research questions have guided this study:

1)   What are the most important reasons for taking English courses among Turkish EFL learners?

2)   What are the Turkish EFL learners' motivation types?

3)   What are the Turkish EFL learners' study habits?

4)   What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners toward learning a foreign language?

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-method design was executed to gather quantitative data to obtain in-depth information about learners' motivation types and study habits and qualitative data to reveal diverse perceptions of individuals toward taking English courses.

Participants

The participants of the study included 102 Turkish adult EFL learners (49 males and 53 females) who were learning English as a foreign language in Ankara city. They were required to participate in the quantitative phase of the present study by responding to the questionnaire items about motivation type and study habits. They were randomly chosen from different language classes at different class hours through convenience sampling. Furthermore, 11 of them were chosen randomly on a voluntary basis to participate in the interview stage to gather data for the qualitative phase. The participants in both quantitative and qualitative stages were from both genders. Their age group range was from 18 to 39.

Data Collection Tools

The instruments of the study in the quantitative stage enclosed motivation type and study habits questionnaires. The motivation-type questionnaire consisted of two parts revised and adopted from Wimolmas (2013).

Part I of the questionnaire aimed at collecting demographic information of participants. These factors were gender, age, occupation, major, and possessing any English certificate or not. Four age groups were present in the questionnaire including 18-25 years, 26-32 years, 33-39 years, and +40. The occupation had two options employed and student. Major included the options of international relations, economics, medicine, engineering, law, education, and

others. The English certificate part consisted of yes or no choices, and participants were asked to announce their score in case of possessing an English certificate or degree.

The second part (Part II) of the questionnaire embodied a 20-item motivation scale developed by Wimolmas (2013). These items were designed in two sections, half of which were used to determine the participants' instrumental motivation (1 to 10) and the second half (11 to 20) were used to determine the integrative motivation of the participants. Each statement was checked based on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 indicates 'strongly disagree', 2 'disagree', 3 'neither agree nor disagree', 4 'agree', and 5 'strongly agree'. The reliability was assessed through Cronbach's alpha and the validity was ensured through content validity.

The study habit variable is connected to the other tool of the quantitative stage. The Palsan and Sharm Study Habits Inventory (PSSHI), generated by Palsan and Sharm (1989) and built using a three-point Likert scale, was the tool utilized in this study. Within the eight categories of budgeting time, physical condition, reading ability, note-taking, memory, learning motivation, taking exams, and health, this measure has 45 statements.

In this questionnaire, '0 = seldom or never,' '1 = sometimes,' and '2 = always or mostly' were the ratings for the points. Better study habits are indicated by a higher score. The items 6, 9, 13, 15, 24, 26, 34, 36, 37, 41, and 42 had their scores reverted because of the way they verbally interpreted these negative things. Ninety is the greatest possible score. Better study habits are indicated by a higher score. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability, while content validity was used to guarantee validity.

After completing the questionnaires, 11 participants were asked to further contribution via attending an open-ended semi-structured interview. Fairly employed in applied linguistic qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are at the middle point of two extremes: "There is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 136). The data gathered for the qualitative stage was scrutinized through the content analysis method. The questions and topics of the interview phase were related to the reasons for learning the English language and the activities to improve their language level.

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were administered to designate the frequency and percentage of the items that learners selected as the main reasons

for attending English classes. The second and third research questions were answered by using mean scoresand standard deviation to reveal the status of the learners' motivation type and study habits obtained from the questionnaires. The data with regard to the qualitative stage was gathered through a semi-structured interview developed by the researcher. The data were analyzed and categorized grounded on content analysis to reveal the obtained points of the responses offered by the learners. Accordingly, the researchers analyzed the participants' answers one by one based on the stages proposed by Bengtsson (2016) comprising the decontextualization, the recontextualization, categorization, and compilation stages.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: What are the most important reasons for taking English courses among Turkish EFL learners (participating in the study)?

The following table demonstrates the results related to the learners' reasons fortaking language courses.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Most Important Reasons for Taking Language Classes

Rank	Reason	Frequency	Percent
1	To find a good/better job	77	75.5
2	To speak good English	76	74.5
3	To communicate with foreigners	73	71.6
4	To improve English	72	70.6
5	To go abroad	67	65.7
6	To pass YDS/ TOEFL	67	65.7
7	For a beautiful future	56	54.9
8	Being interested in English	55	53.9
9	To listen to English	50	49
10	To increase my self-confidence	45	44.1
11	To see English movies	43	42.2
12	Good for studies and tests	37	36.3
13	To learn more for graduation	34	33.3
14	English being a requirement for my job	32	31.4
15	For job hunting	32	31.4
16	To enjoy the new learning environment	32	31.4
17	American movies being funny	29	28.4
18	To become graduate students	27	26.5
19	To play computer games	21	20.6
20	For post-graduate studies	19	18.6
21	Realizing what has been learned is limited	17	16.7
22	Teachers being interesting and not stiff	8	7.8

Based on the information in Table 1, 22 discrete factors are found to be the most important reasons for taking language courses for Turkish EFL learners in the present study. These reasons are as follows: 77 (75.5%) learners learn English to find a suitable/better job, 76 (74.5%) learners want to speak English better, 73 (71.6%) of the participants take language courses so as to make connections with foreigners and 72 (70.6%) of them learn English with the aim of improving their English level.

Based on the outcomes, it can be stated that the majority of the participants in the current study, learn English for professional reasons and find better jobs, communicate in English, make connections with foreigners and improve their English level. English is the global language of communication, making it essential for study, work, international communication, and travel and tourism. English is habitually a prerequisite for many jobs and academic programs in Turkey. Many Turkish universities, schools, and workplaces require a definite level of English proficiency for admission. It is hard to downplay or ignore the prominence of English in today's linked and globalized world since it is the language spoken by the majority of people in the world. With the development of more advanced technological tools, English has become the primary language. Thus, it can be declared that English is the language of international business and education, and proficiency in English is crucial for success in the global domains. People learn this language for different reasons including personal interest, professional reasons, and social and cultural benefits. In this regard, Crystal (1997) declared that English acquisition could guarantee the obtainability of occasions to employment, greater education, traveling, and even a superior life.

Effective communication is a vital skill for success in the business. The capacity for both written and verbal communication to be clear and concise is essential for a successful job. Given that English is the language used in business context the most, it is imperative for job seekers to have a functional command of the language. Proficiency in written and spoken English is highly valued in professional settings. There are more requirements for using good English than just knowing how to construct items with proper syntax. It comprises not just interpersonal skills in the target language but also presenting, exchanging, and persuading abilities.

The answers to the initial research question are consistent with Goktepe's (2014) study, which found that professional needs are the main source of inspiration for students. Many of the participants are studying the language because of their obligations, despite the fact that

everyone is expected to learn it and has a strong predisposition to recognize its relevance. Additionally, they expressed a desire to go to English-speaking nations in order to interact with people and become familiar with their cultures.

In line with the findings, Akther (2022) revealed that enhanced English communication skills could outcome in extra occasions for social interaction and employment in the future. While lacking proficiency in the English language does not guarantee success in the workplace, possessing the requisite language abilities and knowledge will help one excel in any line of work. English language competency is a requirement for efficient communication since it is essential to communicate succinctly and effectively in professional contexts as well as during job interviews. English language proficiency has a significant impact on our businesses and professions. Whatever the differences in geography, society, politics, or religion, English has become the language of choice for anyone doing business internationally.

RQ2: What are the Turkish EFL learners' (participating in the study) motivation types?

The following table demonstrates the results related to the learners' motivation status and its different types.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of the Motivation Status and its Different Types

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Min	Max	Range	Percent
Instrumental	102	3.56	0.3	0.07	2.8	4.3	1.5	71.2
Integrative	102	4.34	0.24	-0.52	3.5	4.9	1.4	84.8
Total	102	3.95	0.2	0.16	3.5	4.45	0.95	79

According to Table 2, it can be noticed that the mean score of instrumental motivation among the participants is 3.56 with a standard deviation of 0.3 and skewness of 0.07. As the results reveal the lowest score is 2.8 and the highest is 4.3. The status of instrumental motivation of EFL learners is higher than the mean score (71.2%). In addition, the mean score of integrative motivation among Turkish EFL learners is 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.24 and skewness of -0.52. As the results expose the lowest score is 3.5 and the highest is 4.9. The status of integrative motivation of EFL learners is at a high level of 84.8%. In total, it can be seen that the mean score of motivation among the participants is 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.2 and skewness of 0.16. Based on the results, the lowest score is 3.5 and the highest is 4.45. The motivation of Turkish EFL learners is at a high level of 79%. The following figure demonstrates the status of the learners' motivation.

The findings of the second research question presented that the participants have a high level of motivation and considering the type of motivation, the integrative motivation of the participants was at a greater level compared to the instrumental motivation. That is to say, the participants of the current study are motivated to learn English to be able to comprehend English books, movies, pop music etc., to gain a deeper comprehension and appreciation of native English speakers' lifestyles, behave like native English speakers, and to be competent to keep in touch with foreign contacts. They also believed that learning English could empower them to converse in English on engaging subjects with individuals of different nationalities, appreciate English arts and literature, and transfer knowledge to other people. Moreover, by learning English they can participate liberally in social, educational, and professional activities amongst other cultural groups. Achieving maximum proficiency in English can also help learners to be open-minded and outgoing individuals, which is one aspect of being an integrative motivated learner.

The urge to pick up the language with the intention of interacting with community members is referred to as integrativeness. Integrativeness, according to Gardner (2007), is characterized by a sincere yearning to acquire a second language to transform oneself into a more integrated into the community of speakers of that language. This suggests, on the one hand, that one is accepting of and respectful of many cultural groups and lifestyles. At its most extreme, this could mean total community identification (and even breaking away from one's original group), but integration into both communities is more likely to occur.

The findings are not in line with the study of Goktepe (2014), which showed that Turkish first-year university learners learn English as a foreign language frequently for instrumental motives. Correspondingly, the study by Hong and Ganapathy (2017) intended to explore the diversities concerning instrumental and integrative motivations among ESL learners. It showed that students often exhibit higher levels of instrumental motivation, driven by utilitarian goals, compared to integrative motivation, which is characterized by a desire to connect with the target language community. This finding does not corroborate Wong's (2011) study, which found that most Chinese students learn the language primarily for instrumental objectives. The majority of them study English with the intention of passing the test, improving their employment prospects in the future, or realizing how crucial English is to their accomplishments.

Additionally, Warden and Lin (2000) proposed that when considering learning a second language, students are typically driven primarily by instrumental factors. The results contradict the findings of Burcu and Carol (2012), whoexposed that students' central motivation for studying English was generally instrumental. Nevertheless, it was integrative motivation that was verified to be the most powerfully connected with successful test outcomes of ESL learning.

RQ3: What are the Turkish EFL learners' (participating in the study) study habits?

The study habits questionnaire contains 45 statements that belong to the eight components: budgeting time, physical condition, reading ability, note-taking, learning motivation, memory, taking examinations, and health. The results related to the distribution of each of these items and components are illustrated in the following tables. Table 3 demonstrates the results related to the learners' status of Budgeting Time.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of the Time Budgeting

Items	Mean	Explanation
1. Every single day, I practice and study.	1.73	High
2. I have a specific time of day that I study.	1.42	High
3. I do my homework daily.	1.24	Average
4. I take breaks if I have to study for an extended period of time.	1.71	High
32. I allocate the time based on the type of question and the amount of information that needs to be addressed.	1.56	High
Budgeting Time	1.53	High

According to the information in Table 4, the learners acquire an overall mean score extending from 1.24 to 1.73 that spread over to average level up to a high degree of study habits concerning time budgeting. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 24 (I do my homework daily) and the highest mean is related to item 1 (I study every day). Table 4 demonstrates the results related to the learners' status of Physical Condition.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Physical Condition

Items	Mean	Explanation
5. I have with me entirely the necessary course books and additional study materials and .	0.98	Average
6. During the study period, I become distracted by the surrounding environment.	0.92	Average
7. As soon as I begin studying a subject, I automatically become interested in it.	0.86	Average
8. I understand how crucial the subjects are to my future profession.	1.02	Average
9. I become distracted by other random ideas when I sit to practice.	0.9	Average
43. I believe I am able make a decent improvement to my study habits.	0.99	Average
Physical Condition	0.94	Average

According to the information in Table 5, the students receive a mean score that ranges from 0.86 to 1.02 overall, reflecting an average level of study habits concerning physical condition. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 7 (As soon as I begin studying a subject, I automatically become interested in it) and the highest mean is related to item 8 (I understand how crucial the subjects are to my future profession). Table 5 demonstrates the outcomes connected to the learners' status of Reading Ability.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Ability in Reading

Items	Mean	Explanation
10. Prior to reading the text, I reread the key elements.	0.99	Average
13.Even though I am having trouble comprehending several of the terms, I keep studying.	0.92	Average
14.I thoroughly read to make sure I understood everything.	1.39	High
15. I don't ever read by myself.	0.84	Average
16.I vary and adapt my reading pace according on the significance and complexity of the material.	1.47	High
17.I pay close attention to graphs and charts whilst I read.	1.2	Average
22.When I have leisure time, whether it's at home, at school, or in college, I read books.	1.39	High
28. I frequently study in libraries.	0.87	Average
Reading Ability	1.13	Average

According to the information in Table 5, the students' overall mean score falls between 0.84 and 1.47, indicating average to advanced study habits related to reading ability. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 15 (I never read silently), and the highest mean is related to item 16 (I vary and adapt my reading pace according to the significance and complexity of the material). Table 6 demonstrates the results related to the learners' status of Note-taking.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Taking Note

Items	Mean	Explanation
11. I make notes whilst I read.	1.03	Average
18. When I'm lecturing in the classroom, I really take notes.	1.13	Average
19.I compare my notes from class with the text book notes at home.	1.1	Average
Note Taking	1.09	Average

According to the information in Table 6, the students receive a total mean score that falls between 1.03 and 1.13, indicating an average degree of note-taking study habits. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 11 (I make notes while I read) and the highest mean is related to item 18 (When I am lecturing in the classroom, I really take notes.). Table 7 demonstrates the results related to the learners' status of Learning Motivation.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Motivation in Learning

Items	Mean	Explanation
20.If I do not follow anything, I ask for assistance from anybody.	1.2	Average
21.Prior to the material is taught in the classroom, I thoroughly study it at home.	0.94	Average
23.I consistently show up for school promptly.	1.79	High
24.I miss a lot of class.	1.83	High
25.I read and commit a topic to memory piece by piece if it is something I need to know by heart.	1.41	High
40.I make every effort to make up for my deficiencies in the weaker disciplines.	1.65	High
Learning Motivation	1.47	High

According to the information in Table 7, with regard to learning motivation, the students receive a total mean score that falls between 0.94 and 1.83, indicating average to advanced study habits. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 21 (Before the topic is taught in the classroom, I thoroughly research it at home) and the highest mean is related to item 24 (I miss a lot of class). Table 8 demonstrates the outcomes connected to the learners' status of Memory.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Memory

Items	Mean	Explanation
12.I read the issue and attempt to remember it.	1.39	High
26.I usually cram some things while not really understanding them.	1.66	High
27.I occasionally make changes to the topic.	1.48	High
37.Following the test, I become aware that some of my written responses were incorrect or that I had overlooked some crucial information.	0.5	Low
Memory	1.25	Average

According to the information in Table 8, the students receive a total mean score that falls between 0.5 and 1.66, according to low to high levels of memory-related study habits. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 37 (Following the test, I became aware that some of my written responses were incorrect or that I had overlooked some crucial information) and the highest mean is related to item 26 (. I usually cram some things while not really understanding them). Table 9 demonstrates the results connected to the learners' status of Taking Examinations.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Taking the Examinations

Items	Mean	Explanation
29. I additionally sleep through the night as normal on exam days.	0.32	Low
30. I reviewed the whole question sheet very attentively before I started writing the answers to the exam questions.	1.87	High
31. I respond to the questions in the exam by answering them sequentially.	1.9	High
33. I thoroughly read my own notes preceding the test.	1.88	High
34. I use the market-available guidelines and notes to help me study for the exams.	1.21	Average
35. Prior to writing my responses to the test questions, I create an outline of each question's replies.	0.12	Low
36. At the start of the exam, I am nervous.	0.42	Low
38. I meticulously document the outcomes of my exams.	0.47	Low
39. Using my exam scores as a guide, I identify my weaker topics.	1.29	Average
42. After the results are announced, I often compare my grades to those of other students.	0.86	Average
Taking Examinations	1.03	Average

According to the information in Table 9, the students' overall mean score falls between low and high ranges (0.12 to 1.9) in terms of their exam-taking study habits. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 35 (Prior to writing my responses to the test questions, I create an outline of each question's replies) and the highest mean is related to item 33 (I thoroughly read my notes preceding the test). Table 10 demonstrates the results connected to the learners' status of Health.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution of Health

Items	Mean	Explanation
41.If the exam results are not good, I am dissatisfied.	0.55	Low
44.My instructors provide me advice on good study habits.	1.51	High
45.If a study habits guidance plan is set up, I will take use of it.	1.51	High
Health	1.19	Average

According to the information in Table 10, the students' overall mean score falls between 0.55 and 1.51, indicating modest to high levels of health issues in study habits. In this component, the lowest mean is related to item 41 (If the exam results are not good, I am dissatisfied) and the highest means are equally related to items 44 and 45 (My instructors provide me advice on good study habits, and If a study habits guidance plan is set up, I will make use of it). Generally, based on the results related to each component of study habits among the participants, it can be declared that the component of Budgeting Time has the highest mean score among other components and the Physical Condition component has the lowest mean score. That is to say, the learners in this study pay attention to the time of their studying and they manage it based on their routines and the amount of homework, in terms of the quantity of questions on tests, they also divide the time with reference to the subject that needs to be addressed. However, physical conditions and distractors have less importance for the learners in the present study.

In general, founded on the findings, it can be declared that the level of study habits of the learners participating in the current study is at an average level. Specifically, the participants are moderately good at budgeting time, memory, reading ability, taking notes, physical condition, learning motivation, taking the examinations, and health. Since there is a strong positive association between study habits and academic success, study habits are important. Furthermore, one useful method for projecting student achievement is understanding their study habits. A strategy can be created by educators and academic advisors to assist students in altering their study habits, which will improve their academic performance.

Contrary to the findings, Alrefaai et al., (2013) reflected that the widely held of learners study in a disorganized, disordered manner and they only cram afore examinations. Having poor study habits can similarly lead to low academic performance. Study planning habits (study plan, stable agenda, the least amount of study time every week) and study habits from an organizational and behavioral perspective (location, kind of room, library usage, study circumstances, aloneness) were measured here by De la Fuente and Elawar (2009), demonstrating the interdependence of behaviors related to study habits and academic performance.

8. What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners toward learning a foreign language?

Corresponding to answering the final research question, a qualitative method was directed by interviewing the participants about their perceptions toward foreign language

learning. The succeeding part is related to the qualitative stage of the study, which was conducted through open-ended questions inquiring about the learners' reasons forlearning English, and the activities they do to improve language skills and subskills. Here, 11 learners were interviewed about their perceptions of learning English. The data for the qualitative stage was gathered through a semi-structured interview. The data were scrutinized and categorized founded on content analysis to reveal the obtained themes related to the responses offered by the learners. Accordingly, the researcher analyzed the participants' answers one by one in respect to the stages proposed by Bengtsson (2016) including the decontextualisation, the recontextualisation, the categorization, and the compilation stages. The answers to the content analysis including the central themes and the related items are summarized and illustrated in the succeeding table.

Table 11. Reasons of Taking Language Courses

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
General Reasons	* Improving English * Travelling other countries, Studying at university, Reading and watching TV * Advantages of knowing more languages * Overcoming the needs * Necessity of knowing two languages * Ease of communication in any place * Improving linguistic and communicative abilities * Being able to speak like a native * Necessity of learning English for academic purposes * The possibility of finding job abroad * Liking this language * Being an important language and affecting socioeconomic status of person
Using English in Abroad	* Depending on the country and English level of its people * For communicating * In daily life and workplace * To cover basic needs * Finding friends and joining different communities * To deal with professional issues * Communicating, living, studying, and working abroad
Use of English in Professional Situations	* Using computer and electronic devices to communicate with international society * Preparing manuscripts, books, and following state-of-the-art science * Preparing contracts in international relations unit * Advertising and communicating with other companies * Using English to communicate with clients * Improving speaking to advance in career *Using in international relations * Being an official and international employee

The results of Table 11 revealed the themes of the learners' answers about their reason of attending language courses. Accordingly, the answers were categorized into general reasons,

learning English for using abroad, and English in professional situationsthat are regarded as the reasons for taking English classes. Some samples of the learners' quotes include: "Learning English is a must for my company", "I want to watch native films", "I must speak English in my trips to Europe".

Table 12. Activities and Study Habits to Improve Language Skills and Subskills

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
General Activities	* Reading, watching movies, joining English courses * Using applications and online sources * Watching movies and listening to music * Reading more magazines and newspapers * Trying to work on speaking * Listening to native speaking for improving language ability * Improving listening and speaking abilities * Knowing about new cultures * Learning about foreign history * Receiving updated news * Recognizing different traditions and customs
The Strategies and Study Habits to Practice English	* Participate in study groups * Set specific goals * Make notes during every class * Think in the language outside the classroom * Test and advance your language, receptive and productive skills by means of self-study sources and material * Create a vocabulary notebook * Joining English course and studying 1-2 hours a week

Table 13 reveals the information about general activities and study habits and strategies to improve and practice English. Some samples of the learners' quotes include: "I enjoy studying with my friends", "I use ai and applications", "I watch films to learn the cultural issues".

In general, it is true that many people take English language courses to improve their language abilities for travel, education, or residing in an English-speaking nation. The efficiency of teaching strategies and instructional resources employed in language lessons can be greatly increased by adopting positive attitudes toward learning the language. Learners can accomplish their language objectives more quickly by concentrating on both practical applications—such as travel and professional needs—and by utilizing efficient activities, techniques, and study habits. Moreover, the efficiency of instructional strategies and classroom resources can be greatly increased by having a thorough understanding of the reasons why people learn English.

Conclusion

English has turned into an international language and it is extensively used in educational and professional settings. The learners need to attain linguistic and communicative skills with the aim of achieving enhanced educational and professional visions. In this regard, individual psychological factors as the most unwavering predictors of success, assume a noticeable position in the arena of foreign language acquisition. They were considered as the major facilitators of language learning. The notion of motivation has been an important aspect of social and human studies since its emergence. The same story happened on the ground of language learning. Dominant figures in the field of language learning, such as Gardner, Lambert, Dornyei, and others introduced the notion of motivation and its impact on language learning from new perspectives. This study was conducted in order to explore the motivation types and study habits of the participants and the reasons for taking language classes along with the perspective of the learners toward language learning. The results of the research questions are presented as follows:

The findings of the first research question exposed 22 different factors as the most important reasons for taking language courses by the participants in the present study. These reasons are as follows: learners learn English to find a suitable/better job, learners want to speak English better, participants take language courses to make connections with foreigners, and learn English with the aim of improving their English level. Accordingly, it can be concluded that for learners of this study professional aims are among the most important reasons for taking language classes. They learn English to find better jobs and be promoted in their current positions.

The outcomes of the second research question exposed that the participants have a high level of motivation and considering the type of motivation, the integrative motivation of the participants was at a higher level associated with the instrumental motivation. Thus, it could be established that EFL learners of this study are motivated by an intrinsic desire to learn and understand English. This point is often associated with personal interest, curiosity, and a sense of enjoyment in learning a foreign language. Turkish culture places great worth on education and intellectual pursuits, which could contribute to higher levels of integrative motivation among EFL learners. Many Turkish EFL learners might have a genuine interest in the English language and culture, leading to a strong stage of motivation to acquire. The teaching methods and approaches employed in Turkish EFL classrooms might raise integrative motivation by

highlighting the prominence of language learning for personal growth and enjoyment. Learners with great points of integrative motivation are more likely to be engaged in their language learning and actively seek out opportunities to practice.

The findings of the third research question revealed that the participants are at a good level of using different study habits. Furthermore, based on the results related to each component of study habits among the participants, it could be declared that the module of Budgeting Time has the highest mean score among other components and the Physical Condition component has the lowest mean score. Budgeting time effectively is crucial for language learning as it ensures consistent practice and exposure to the language. Proper time allocation helps learners expand their language learning goals and avoid procrastination. Moreover, effective time management can reduce stress and anxiety related to language learning, creating a more positive learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that Budgeting Time is the most significant factor inducing language learning among the components assessed. This indicates that effective time management is crucial for operative language acquisition. Hence, learners should develop effective time management strategies to ensure consistent practice and progress in language learning. While budgeting time and physical condition may be the most and least significant factors, it is likely that they are interconnected. For instance, poor physical condition can make it difficult to concentrate and manage time effectively.

To answer the final research question, a qualitative method was conducted by interviewing the participants about their perceptions toward foreign language learning. The succeeding stage is related to the qualitative stage of the study, which was conducted through open-ended questions asking about the learners' reasons for learning English, and the activities they do to improve language skills and subskills. Here, 11 learners were interviewed with regard to their perceptions of learning English. The data for the qualitative stage was gathered through a semi-structured interview. The data were scrutinized and categorized founded on content analysis to reveal the obtained themes related to the responses offered by the learners. Accordingly, the researcher analyzed the participants' answers one by one based on the stages proposed by Bengtsson (2016) including the decontextualisation, the recontextualisation, the categorization, and the compilation stages. Accordingly, the answers were categorized into main reasons, learning English for using abroad, and English in professional situations are regarded as the reasons for taking English classes and the information about general activities and study habits and strategies to improve and practice English.

The Conflict of Interest Statement

We hereby declare that we have no conflicting interests with respect to any parties involved in this investigation.

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The Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Data collection for this study was initiated after obtaining ethical approval fromthe University's Social and Humanities Ethics Committee on 07.03.2023.

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Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Research Attitudes and Critical Thinking Dispositions

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Abstract

Pre-service teachers (PSTs) usually tend to hold negative research attitudes and later display a low tendency to be research-engaged in their future career. Among the cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal factors (pre)determining their research engagement might be their attitudes towards research (ATR) and critical thinking dispositions (CTDs). As there is also scant research on whether research engagement could have any impact on PSTs' research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions, this small-scale study sought if research engagement within the scope of a research methodology course at the undergraduate level would affect pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' ATR and CTDs. Accordingly, 14 PSTs from a state university in Türkiye participated in this study. The study adopted a pre-experimental quantitative design, where data were elicited via two scales; namely an attitude towards research scale and a critical thinking dispositions scale. Findings highlighted the positive changes in PSTs' ATR and CTDs after their research engagement. After conducting research, their overall ATR improved. PSTs' research anxiety notably decreased besides the fact that they found research more useful and held more positive research dispositions. Correspondingly, their CTDs enhanced, too, particularly regarding their dispositions of searching for the truth and reasoning. Findings are interpreted, and the discussion highlights the key takeaways with specific reference to those of earlier studies.

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Introduction

Meeting and sustaining the demands of the contemporary as well as future dynamic educational landscape substantially lies in empowering teachers. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) (United Nations, UN, n.d.), which aims for quality education in general terms, also hinges upon well-trained, qualified, and skilled teachers. As an evidence-based practice, the act of teaching demands teachers to possess the skills to pursue new knowledge, the experience to examine new methods and approaches, and the confidence to apply inquiry-based processes to bring solutions to problems—all of which could be possible through the professional development (PD) of teachers. Given that PD refers to "[...] structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices" (Darling-Hammond et al., p. v), one way to promote it—along with other methods—is teacher research (Ulvik, 2014). Additionally, commonly termed as action research, critical inquiry, self-study (Roulston, Legettre, DeLoach, & Pittman, 2005), or practitioner research (Yuan, Yang, & Stapleton, 2020), teacher research—as an umbrella term—fundamentally refers to the type of research teachers conduct either to enhance their teaching practices or to solve a classroom-based problem, with three major interrelated facets: reading, conducting, and using research (Hosseini, Bahrami, & Dikilitaş, 2024). Always at the core of such endeavors is promoting teachers' inquiry-based mindset and research-oriented (or informed) practices, helping them to transform into reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983) and teachers as researchers (Stenhouse, 1975). Research engagement of any kind, namely engagement with (i.e., reading/using) and in (i.e., doing/conducting) research (Borg, 2009, 2010), yields several benefits for teachers themselves, as evinced by a large volume of published studies (e.g., Borg, 2007, 2009, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 1999). Indeed, teacher research is a fruitful continuing professional development (CPD) activity (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2015).

Notwithstanding its benefits, teacher research—at the same time— "remains a minority activity" (Borg, 2010, p. 391), though. Whether or not teachers are research engaged is generally affected by an array of personal, professional, and contextual factors (Borg, 2010). These factors, what Borg (2010) calls "barriers" (p. 408), include yet are not limited to non-collaborative school culture, limitations in teachers' awareness, beliefs, skills, and knowledge, and so forth (p. 409). Going beyond such "barriers", cognitive, behavioral, or attitudinal factors could also play a role in teachers' research engagement. In a sense, attitudes could also affect the extent to which teachers are research engaged given that they guide as well as predict behavior (Vogel & Wanke, 2016). As also indicated by Borg (2010), one of the major "barriers"

lies in teachers' negative attitudes to research. Besides attitudes, individual differences (IDs)—despite not being investigated much—could also affect the extent to which teachers are research-engaged (Bahrami & Hosseini, 2023). And one such influential factor could be their critical thinking (CT) in this regard, a fundamental thinking form widely referenced among the 21st century skills. As a form of higher-order thinking, CT is characterized as "[...]judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe" (Facione, 2000, p. 61). As Sosu (2013) stated, the cognitive dimension of CT emphasizes reasoning and logical thinking and focuses on one's ability to understand problems and produce logical solutions, illustrating that critical thinking closely resembles the research process. With reference to this notion, it would be somewhat fair to claim that teacher researchers are—in some way—critical thinkers. Suter (2012) elucidates this line of reasoning by explaining that "[...]critical thinking involves keen observation and reflection plus the cognitive skills associated with analysis and evaluation" (p. 14). Suter then goes on with employing a metaphor to portray this relationship by arguing that "Teacher action researchers are scientists in their classrooms. They use critical thinking to test ideas by collecting data and revising their practice" (p. 15). Accordingly, as a component of their professional competence, teachers' CT development yields substantial importance (Wang & Jia, 2023), possibly (pre)determining their research engagement at the same time. However, concentrating on rather the CT "disposition" than the "skill", which are two distinct constructs, could be more explanatory since disposition is more comprehensive and concerned with one's motivation and willingness to employ CT skills. As Facione (2000) clearly noted, "being skilled does not assure one is disposed to use CT. And being disposed toward CT does not assure that one is skilled." (p. 81). Also, in the absence of "disposition", possessing the "skill" or "ability" is not enough for critical thinking to happen (Facione, 1990, 2000; Facione et al., 1995; Sosu, 2013).

Overall, while (in-service) teachers' research engagement is considered a substantial aspect of their PD, of equal importance is pre-service teachers' (PST) engagement. Although it is not an obligation for PSTs to conduct research—nor is it actually so for in-service teachers either, particularly in the Turkish educational context—it could be high time they become research engaged. As Kennedy (1999) remarked, pre-service teacher education is positioned between PSTs' "[...]past experiences as students in classrooms and their future experiences as teachers" (p. 57), underscoring it as the exact time for (re)shaping PSTs' own existing ideas. Otherwise, these ideas could fortify "[...]cementing them even more strongly into their apprehension of teaching and reducing the likelihood that these ideas might ever change" (p.

57). Therefore, investigating PSTs' research attitudes during their pre-service teacher education years could help understand their already existing ideas, which could also provide information about their future research orientations and practices. Like Damşa and Nerland (2016) indicated, engagement with inquiry-based tasks such as research can provide undergraduate students with specific benefits in terms of learning and development of their PD during higher professional education. Therefore, in higher education, inquiry-based learning which incorporates students' research engagement could indeed serve as an effective instrument in strengthening the teaching–research nexus (Spronken-Smith & Walker, 2010). Despite the confirmed benefits of teacher research, negative attitudes towards research are among the main reasons that prevent PSTs from doing research, though (Müjdeci, 2020). Although many studies emphasized the effect of meaningful, curricula-based research experiences on the improvement of PSTs' research skills, the number of studies which examined how these might change their attitudes towards research appears to be limited (Guilbert et al., 2016). Similarly, empirical data examining the potential effect of pre-service EFL teachers' research engagement on CTDs are very scarce. In response to these limitations and bearing also in mind the scant theoretical and empirical interest in the potential role of IDs in teachers' research engagement (Bahrami & Hosseini, 2023), this study aims to contribute to closing the gap arising from the lack of research on PSTs' research attitudes and critical thinking as a part of their research engagement.

Literature Review

Research Attitudes

As has been one of the most primary concepts in social psychology starting from the 1930s, attitude refers to "a summary evaluation of an object of thought" (Vogel & Wanke, 2016, p. 2). Attitudes comprise affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses (Vogel & Wanke, 2016) or outcomes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), providing explanations for human behavior (Zimbardo et al., 1970). As Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) claimed, attitudes are critical in understanding and predicting people's reactions to a subject and in elaborating the influence of attitudes on behaviors. Like several studies have reported, these negative attitudes and feelings serve as great obstacles to learning (Waters et al., 1988; Wise, 1988). Additionally, evaluating students' attitudes toward the research related courses could prove useful to teachers in the way of enabling them to develop teaching techniques that would grant a more positive attitude toward the subject (Waters et al., 1988). Given that attitudes guide (and predict) behavior

(Vogel & Wanke, 2016), PSTs' research attitudes could be particularly important in (pre)determining their future research practices alike.

The review of literature on pre-service teacher research engagement as an undergraduate student activity embodies several empirical studies which investigated the interface between research engagement and research attitudes with pre-post designs in the international context (e.g., Ulvik, 2014; Van der Linden, 2012; Van der Linden et al., 2015; Van Katwijk et al., 2021) as well as in the Turkish context (e.g., Atak-Damar & Salı, 2022; Akyel, 2015; Savasci & Rets, 2021). Those conducted in other EFL contexts were from the Dutch and Norwegian contexts. The majority of these studies highlighted positive research attitudes after pre-service teachers' research engagement (i.e., Van der Linden, 2012; Van der Linden, 2015; Van Katwijk et al., 2021), all of which were conducted in Dutch primary teacher education programs. In their studies, participants who undertook research developed more positive attitudes towards research. In Van der Linden et al.'s (2015) study, for example, they reported that PSTs "positive beliefs about research became more positive, while their negative beliefs about research decreased" (p. 4).

Studies in the Turkish context similarly generally reported positive research attitudes of PSTs subsequent to their research engagement. One of the earlier studies was conducted by Atay (2006), where she employed pre (n= 6) (senior students) and in-service (n= 6) EFL teachers who undertook collaborative research projects. Analysis of data elicited via informal talks, journals, and research field notes illustrated that PSTs improved their research knowledge. They learned about and became encapsulated in research, by demonstrating positive attitudes towards the effect of such experience on their future teaching careers. In Cabaroğlu's (2014) study, pre-service EFL teachers (N= 60) in their senior year, conducted action research projects. Findings illustrated significant increases in their teaching self-efficacy, besides enhancements in their problem-solving skills, reflective learning, and deep thinking. Overall, they felt positive about undertaking action research. Likewise, pre-service EFL teachers (N= 24) conducted research within the scope of their senior-year practicum in Akyel's (2015) study. After their research engagement, they recognized the importance of research to promote classroom teaching and student learning as well as considered research an important aspect of PD. In Savasci and Rets's (2021) study, pre-service EFL teachers' (N= 32) attitudes towards research engagement improved; they furthermore felt more self-efficacious and overcame their research anxiety. Atak-Damar and Salı (2022) similarly investigated senior pre-service EFL teachers' (N= 85) perceptions of educational research and their own research

experiences in their research methodology courses. They held positive research attitudes, while some were not sure about the role of being research oriented.

On the contrary to all the positive enhancements, some earlier studies in the literature also reported mixed findings of negative attitudes besides positive ones (e.g., Tanış, 2019; Ulvik, 2014) although neither of them focused specifically on research attitudes. For example, Ulvik (2014) questioned the student-teacher research. In Ulvik's study, the participants, who were Norwegian student teachers in a secondary school teacher education program, verbalized both positive and negative aspects of research engagement. Although they learned from their experience, some of them reported negative attitudes, highlighting frustrations due to the challenging and unfamiliar nature of the research they needed to accomplish during a limited time. Ulvik (2014) concluded that student-teacher research comes with its costs, yet contributes to PD eventually. Similar issues were raised by Tanış (2019) in her study with Turkish pre-service EFL teachers. Subsequent to their research engagement, some noted the "irrelevance" of research engagement to practice and PD. She concluded that some PSTs may not have developed an awareness of teacher research.

From a critical standpoint, the review of literature points out some issues to consider. First, earlier empirical studies focusing specifically on PSTs' research engagement and research attitudes are comparatively fewer (e.g., Van der Linden et al., 2015). All of these studies in the international context employed PSTs from primary teacher education programs (i.e., Van der Linden, 2012; Van der Linden, 2015; Van Katwijk et al., 2021), whereas the studies in the Turkish context sampled pre-service EFL teachers. Besides, the fact that past studies employed distinct groups of PSTs, namely second grade and fourth grade student teachers, it might not be quite possible to make eloquent comparisons. Senior PSTs, in a way, have remarkable advantages over second-grade PSTs since they already took the introductory research methods course and have opportunities to observe the real-classroom environment within the scope of their teaching practicum. Therefore, studies employing senior PSTs (e.g., Akyel, 2015; Cabaroglu, 2014) are not comparable to those conducted with second-grade PSTs. In other words, comparing senior PSTs' attitudes to those of sophomores may not be fair. The literature comprises few studies of such kind (e.g., Van der Linden, 2012; Van der Linden et al., 2015; Savasci & Rets, 2021; Savasci & Atar, 2024). Also, almost all relevant studies resorted to qualitative instruments to identify research attitudes; none of them elicited data via a scale. Finally, none of them studied PSTs' research attitudes with critical thinking under the same research design.

Critical Thinking Dispositions

Building upon the seminal work of Dewey (1933), "How we think", different forms of thinking such as reflective and critical thinking have gained prominence over the years, particularly in the field of education. Critical thinking (CT), which also comprises the act of reflection, is generally defined as "[...]the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions." (Halpern, 1998, p. 70). As Facione (2000) noted, it "is a powerful tool in the search for knowledge" (p. 24), by fostering "[...] the objective, reasoned and evidence-based investigation of a very wide range of personal and social issues and concerns." (pp. 24-25).

Thinking critically embraces both cognitive skills and dispositions (Ennis, 1985; Lai, 2011). Disposition is discrete from being "able" to think critically (Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990, 2000); CT demands the acknowledgment of when to employ critical thinking skills (CTS) and the enthusiasm to use those skills that refer to critical thinking dispositions (CTD) (Harrell & Wetzel, 2015). To illustrate, a person who is equipped with the ability and awareness of when to think critically may not be very willing to engage in such an endeavor; acting on this internal motivation is related to the person's predisposition to think critically (Halpern, 1998). CT disposition, accordingly, refers to "the consistent internal motivation to use CT skills to decide what to believe and what to do" (Facione, 2000, p. 73). In the lack of such dispositions for effortful thinking, student researchers can experience diverse tasks as enforced by others, prompting negative emotional reactions and disengagement towards research (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). In a way, CT dispositions illustrate to what extent an individual is "positive, ambivalent, or negative towards the use of CT" (Facione, 2000, p. 73).

Also, considering that CT encompasses dispositions like "open- and fair-mindedness, inquisitiveness, flexibility, a propensity to seek reason, a desire to be well-informed, and a respect for and willingness to entertain diverse viewpoints." (Lai, 2011, p. 42), it can be suggested that critical thinking dispositions (CTDs) are not quite different from those required for undertaking research. In a sense, they have a bidirectional relationship: From one side, teachers' research engagement is likely to be fueled by the extent to which they can think critically. From the other side of the coin, research engagement offers students the opportunity to engage in a structured inquiry process through which they can develop their CT (Yuan et al., 2020). Overall, there appears to be an interface between the skills utilized to conduct research and the dispositions employed for CT.

When the literature on undergraduate research engagement is reviewed, although the potential link between CT and research engagement has been indicated by scholars in the field (e.g., Brew, 2013; Damşa & Nerland, 2016), there is—empirically speaking—only one study specifically linking research engagement to CT. In their qualitative study, Yuan et al. (2020) investigated Chinese university students' (N= 6) research engagement, who were senior undergraduate students in the English Language Program and worked as assistants in a project over one academic year. Data elicited via in-depth semi-structured interviews and their written reflections designated participants enhanced their CT skills and dispositions. However, they also reported the challenges of some participants as well as indicated the complex nature of the research process interwoven with cognitive, social, and emotional aspects.

Overall, the general review of literature on CT suggests certain drawbacks. To exemplify, some of the earlier studies on undergraduate student research focused on participants' CT skills, not dispositions. Also, these two terms have sometimes been used interchangeably, which in fact should not be the case. Therefore, studies from the dispositional perspective appear to be comparatively scarce. From a narrower perspective, there is only one empirical study (i.e., Yuan et al, 2020) to the best of the researchers' knowledge, which focused on the potential interface between research engagement and CTDs. They measured CTDs through self-reported data via qualitative instruments; namely, via in-depth semi-structured interviews and written reflections (Yuan et al., 2020). However, they did not employ scales as quantitative instruments to measure such a construct like CTD, which could provide more precise data without bias or subjectivity.

Significance, Aim, and Research Questions

Taken collectively, previous research has underscored the significance of PSTs' research engagement, yet they have—as discussed above—certain limitations and the results also ask for further empirical endeavors. As the literature also suggests, cognitive, behavioral, or attitudinal factors shaping research engagement haven't drawn much attention, either. Furthermore, none of the earlier studies focused on research attitudes and critical thinking under the same research design, embodying the ones in the international and Turkish context. Accordingly, scrutinizing the PSTs' research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions as well as seeking for potential changes in their CTDs and ATR before and after their engagement in research could be of great importance. Also, this decision was informed by Papanastasiou's (2005) suggestion; she recommended collecting data at various times during the semester to be

able to reflect the changes clearly. Therefore, this study comprised a collection of data before and after the students' engagement in research within the scope of the research methodology course. In sum, this study aimed to reveal if research engagement would have any effect on pre-service EFL teachers' research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions, specifically within the framework of language teacher education. The following research questions (RQ) guided this study:

1.	Is there a difference in pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards research (ATR) before and after engaging in research within the scope of the undergraduate research methodology course? If so, how??

2.	Is there a difference in pre-service EFL teachers' critical thinking dispositions (CTDs) before and after engaging in research within the scope of the undergraduate research methodology course? If so, how?

Methodology

Design

Since this study aims to examine and document students' ATR and CTDs at two time periods, namely before and after engaging in research, a pre-experimental design was adopted (Fraenkel et al., 2022). Given the lack of any comparison or control groups, a one-group pretest-posttest format was followed. Inasmuch as data were elicited via two scales, the study was quantitative in nature, too. A quantitative research design entails collecting numerical data and analyzing it with statistical methods (Mackey & Gass, 2022), enabling the systematic examination of social phenomena using mathematical and statistical techniques (Given, 2008). Participants were examined at two different points in time to provide a "snapshot" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 348) of the participants at a specific moment in time.

Setting and Participants

Data for this study were collected in a Turkish university context where students studied English as a foreign language (EFL). They were enrolled in a four-year 240-ECTS pre-service teacher education program where the course plan involves both theoretical and practical courses on foreign language education. Upon their graduation, they generally become in-service EFL teachers at private or state K-12 schools or language institutions affiliated with the Turkish Ministry of Education (MoNE). The participants of this study were pre-service EFL

teachers enrolled in a four-year undergraduate foreign language teacher education program at a state university in the Marmara Region, Türkiye. At the time of the data collection, they were sophomore (i.e., second year) students who took the "Research Methods in Education" course, which is a compulsory course in their fourth semester in their course plan. Participants were fourteen students (12 females, 2 males), whose ages range between 20 and 28 (M= 21.86, *SD*= 2.214). They were employed through convenience and purposive sampling, for they were conveniently accessible to the researchers and fit the criteria—which is taking the research course and engaging in research. Participants were invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis after making sure they met the research participation criteria. Among 71 students who took the course, 14 of them provided their consent to participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate were asked to respond to a pre-test battery before engaging in research in the 8th week of the course, after the theoretical issues were covered. As their final assignment, they were required to find a research topic and conduct a small-scale research study collaboratively in groups (comprising a minimum of three and a maximum of five members) they had chosen. During their research engagement process, they initially started searching for a topic and were given six weeks to complete their study. Some of the research topics they investigated were as follow: Assessing peer feedback literacy level of EFL learners, High school teachers' perceptions towards teaching pronunciation in EFL classrooms, Engaging inclusivity in general education: Understanding the perceptions of pre-service English language teachers, Novice EFL teachers' challenges in their initial years, Pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards English varieties. After completing the research (i.e., conceptualization; data collection, analysis, and interpretation), they were asked to respond to the post-test battery of the study in the 15th week to track the potential changes in their previous attitudes and dispositions. Obtaining their voluntary consent, participants were specifically notified that participating in research would not by no means affect their course grade or performance.

The compulsory Research Methods in Education course in which the participants of this study were enrolled was designed to enable students to acquire theoretical knowledge about the concept of scientific research, different principles, methods, and stages of scientific research, as well as to learn practically how to conduct a scientific study through a small-scale research study. The course covers the following content: Basic concepts and principles related to research methods, data collection tools and procedure, analysis and evaluation of data, basic

paradigms in scientific research, quantitative and qualitative research patterns, sampling, and preparing a research report in accordance with research principles and ethics.

Instruments

Two quantitative instruments were used to elicit data: 1) the Revised Attitudes Towards Research Scale (R-ATR) (Papanastasiou, 2014) and 2) the Marmara Critical Thinking Dispositions Scale (MCTDS) (Özgenel & Çetin, 2018).

Considering RQ1, which sought to investigate participants' research attitudes, the Revised Attitudes Towards Research Scale (R-ATR) by Papanastasiou (2014) was administered. This scale was specifically selected since it yields strong psychometric properties and is one of the few tools created for measuring undergraduate student attitudes towards educational research methods in the field of education. It was administered in its original language English, given that participants had upper-intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency Overall, the scale comprises 13 items, which are divided into three factors, namely Research usefulness (4 items), Research anxiety (5 items- all reverse coded), and Positive research predispositions (4 items). Responses on the scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The maximum score on this scale is 91, whereas the minimum is 13—with higher scores displaying more positive research attitudes. The reliability coefficient of the three factors ranged between 0.86 and 0.92, indicating a very good to excellent range in terms of internal consistency.

To address RQ2, the Marmara Critical Thinking Dispositions Scale (MCTDS) developed by Özgenel and Çetin (2018) was used to elicit data about the participants' critical thinking dispositions. The scale, developed originally in Turkish, was also administered to the participants in this study in its original language, in Turkish. However, to ensure clarity and consistency in the presentation of findings, the items are presented in their translated versions in English in this manuscript. Therefore, researchers who tend to use this scale should not use these English versions of these items but use the original versions in Turkish. The MCTDS consists of 28 items, divided into six sub-dimensions: Reasoning (items 1-6, 6 items), Reaching judgment (items 7-12, 6 items), Searching for evidence (items 13-16, 4 items), Searching for the truth (items 17-20, 4 items), Open-mindedness (items 21-24, 4 items), and Systematicity (items 25-28, 4 items). The students rated each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging between 1 (never) and 5 (always). The MCTDS scores range from a minimum of 28 to a maximum of 140 points, with higher scores illustrating greater dispositions. While the sub-

dimensions of Reasoning and Reaching judgment constitute 30 points, the other four categories (i.e., Searching for evidence, Searching for the truth, Open-mindedness, and Systematicity) constitute 20 points each. This scale was particularly selected for this study since it was designed to measure the general critical thinking dispositions of teachers and administrators in a valid and reliable way. The scale's general reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) was 0.91, indicating higher internal consistency levels. When the validity of the MCTDS is examined, it is seen that it is supported by its strong content validity, solid construct validity proven by factor analysis, significant criterion-related validity through correlation analysis, and high internal consistency reliability. This made the MCTDS a reliable and valid tool for assessing the CTDs of participants in this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected at the end of the 2023-2024 academic year Spring semester. Initially, the consents of the scholars who developed the instruments, namely the R-ATR and MCTDS, were obtained via email, followed by researchers applying to the university's Educational Research and Publication Ethics Committee, where they are affiliated with. Having received the committee's approval, the participants were invited to participate in the study and those who provided their consent were sent the online instrument battery (through Google Forms). Before they engaged in research, they responded to the pretest (i.e., in Week 8), whereas they completed the posttest subsequent to the completion of the research methods course (i.e., in Week 15).

The quantitative data elicited via two scales were analyzed using the SPSS 21.0 statistical program (IBM, 2021). First, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests as well as Q-Q plots and Histograms were used to check the normality of the data and potential outliers. Results showed that the data were normally distributed on the R-ATR scale; however, the data in MCTDS did not meet the assumption of normality. First of all, descriptive statistics (mean, median, and standard deviation) and frequency analyses were employed to report the responses to pre-test and post-test in each scale separately. Besides descriptive statistics, inferential statistics were also administered. Due to data not being distributed normally and the small sample size, the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to identify the potential differences between pre and post-test results to seek whether there was a significant change in students' CTDs and ATR.

Findings

With regard to participants' ATR, findings of the descriptive statistics analyses of the R-ATR scale, including mean, median, and standard deviation values (for both pre and post-test), are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the R-ATR Scale

Factor	Point Range	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Tendency	Wilcoxon	
		M	Mdn	*SD*	M	Mdn	*SD*		Z	Sig. (*p*)
Research Usefulness	4-28	19.21	19.50	5.873	19.43	21	5.214	↑	-.070	.944
Research Anxiety**	5-35	28	28.50	4.279	23.71	23	6.707	↓	-1.926	.054
Positive Research Dispositions	4-28	12.57	12	4.603	15.71	16.50	5.511	↑	-1.854	.064
Overall	13-91	43.79	45	11.892	51.43	53.50	13.838	↑	-1.609	.108

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference; ** comprises reverse-coded items; ↑ illustrates an increasing tendency; ↓ illustrates a decreasing tendency
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation

As presented in Table 1, analyses overall indicated that from the pre-test (namely, before research engagement) to post-test (namely, after research engagement), participants had more positive ATR overall and in all factors. In the pre-test, participants displayed comparatively higher levels of research anxiety (M= 28, *SD*= 4.279), yet it decreased noticeably (M= 23.71, *SD*= 6.707). Similarly, improvements in participants' attitudes both regarding research usefulness and positive research dispositions were found, with greater improvements in the latter. In other words, their positive research dispositions (M= 12.57 in the pre-test, M= 15.71 in the post-test) enhanced more than did their attitudes towards research usefulness (M= 19.21 in the pre-test, M= 19.43 in the post-test). As also provided in Table 1, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test results reflected that research engagement did not elicit a statistically significant change in participants' attitudes toward research in any of the factors (Research usefulness Z = -.070, p = .944, Research anxiety Z = -1.926, p = .054, Positive research dispositions Z = -1.854, p = .064, and Total Z = -1.609, p = .108). Nevertheless, their ATR overall improved considerably.

Corresponding to research usefulness, PSTs considered research to be above average in importance, and after their engagement, there was a slight increase in the post-test suggesting

that this view did not change much. Results of items before and after research engagement are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, pre-test results illustrated that before their engagement, the majority of PSTs considered that research was useful for their career (78.6%), the research skills would be helpful to them in the future (85.8%), and research was connected to their field of study (71.4%), whereas they did not consider research that indispensable for their professional training as their responses highly varied and only less than half of them (42.8%) agreed. Subsequent to their research engagement, on the other hand, post-test results illustrated a slight decrease in PSTs' attitudes towards the usefulness of research for their career (71.4%, with a -0.15 mean difference) and research skills (71.4%, with a -0.57 mean difference) as well as a slight increase in connection between research and the field (64.3%, with a +0.36 mean difference). Despite these slight decreases, the majority still agreed with the aforementioned statements. Yet more strikingly, there was a notable increase in their attitudes towards the criticality of research in their professional training as this time, more than half of them (57.2%) acknowledged its criticality.

Besides the changes in their attitudes towards the usefulness of research, PSTs' research anxiety also underwent some changes during the process. In fact, among three factors of the R-ATR scale, this is the one where the greatest improvement was observed (see Table 1). After research engagement, participants had comparatively lower anxiety levels in the post-test. Details regarding the research anxiety factor are provided in Table 3.

Table 2. Results of the Research Usefulness Factor

Items	Pre-Test										Post-Test										Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Z	Sig.(p)
4. Research is useful for my career.	5.36	6	2.098	2 14.3%	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	5.21	5.50	1.528	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	3 21.4%	-.365	.715
10. The skills I have acquired in research will be helpful to me in the future.	5.36	6	1.499	1 7.1%	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	4.79	5	1.762	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	5 35.7%	3 21.4%	2 14.3%	-1.065	.287
7. Research is connected to my field of study.	4.64	5	1.737	2 14.3%	0 -	0 -	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	3 21.4%	1 7.1%	5	5.50	1.881	0 -	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	-.353	.724
11. Research should be indispensable in my professional training.	3.86	4	1.791	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	2 14.3%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	4.43	5	1.158	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	0 -	-1.081	.280

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neutral, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree.

Table 3. Results of the Research Anxiety Factor

Items	Pre-Test										Post-Test										Z	Sig. (p)
	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8. Research courses are stressful**	6.07	6	.829	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	4 28.6%	5 35.7%	5 35.7%	5	5	1.301	0 -	1 7.1%	0 -	3 21.4%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	-2.226	.026*
12. Research courses are difficult**	6	6	.961	0 -	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	5 35.7%	5 35.7%	5.50	6	1.401	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	0 -	2 14.3%	8 57.1%	2 14.3%	-.907	.365
9. Research courses make me nervous**	5.86	6	1.231	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	0 -	5 35.7%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	4.64	5	1.447	0 -	2 14.3%	0 -	4 28.6%	4 28.6%	3 21.4%	1 7.1%	-2.291	.022*
3. Research courses scare me**	5.07	5	1.542	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	4.29	3.50	1.939	0 -	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	0 -	4 28.6%	2 14.3%	-1.552	.121
1. Research courses make me anxious**	5	5.50	1.664	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	0 -	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	6 42.9%	1 7.1%	4.29	4.50	1.978	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	5 35.7%	1 7.1%	-1.141	.254

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference; **denotes reverse-coded items.
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neutral, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree.

As documented in Table 3, before research engagement, PSTs mostly felt stressed (100%), nervous (92.9%), anxious (78.6%), and scared (64.2%) about the research course besides finding it highly difficult (92.8%) in the pre-test. Nonetheless, in the post-test, PSTs' anxiety level decreased moderately in two items, the ones regarding their anxiety (49.9%, with a -0.71 mean difference) and fright (42.9%, with a -0.78 mean difference). Their stress (71.5%, with a -1.07 mean difference) and nervousness (57.1%, with a -1.22 mean difference) also decreased, where decreases in their stress (Z= -2.226, p= .026) and nervousness (Z= -2.291, p= .022) were statistically significant, as the Wilcoxon signed-rank test results yielded. Albeit not significantly, a slight decrease was observed in their attitudes towards course difficulty, yet a considerable majority (85.7%) still found the research course difficult. Overall, these results suggest that research engagement helped them alleviate these negative attitudes to some extent.

Like in the previous two factors, increases were found in the final factor of the R-ATR scale, namely in Positive research dispositions. Results pertinent to this factor are provided in Table 4. As compared to the other factors in the scale, PSTs' research dispositions were not much positive before their engagement. In the pre-test, not more than a quarter of them found the research course interesting (28.6%), enjoyable (14.3%), pleasant (7.1%), or loved it (7.1%). In the post-test, however, they held more positive research dispositions. Notably, more PSTs started to think that the research course was enjoyable (57.1%, with a +1.21 mean difference), interesting (50%, with a +0.28 mean difference), and pleasant (42.8%, with a +0.79 mean difference), with the increase in their enjoyment being statistically significant (Z= -2.413, p= .016). However, a minority of PSTs indicated their love towards research (28.5%) after the course; even so, there was an increase from the pre-test to post-test. As the post-test results yielded, overall positive research dispositions moderately increased compared to the pre-test, indicating research engagement helped PSTs develop more positive attitudes towards research.

Table 4. Results of the Positive Research Dispositions Factor

Items	Pre-Test										Post-Test										Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	Mdn	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Z	Sig. (*p*)
6. I find research courses interesting.	3.86	4	1.460	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	0 -	4.14	4.50	1.657	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	0 -	-.408	.683
13. Research courses are pleasant.	3	3	1.117	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	5 35.7%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	0 -	0 -	3.79	4	1.528	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	5 35.7%	1 7.1%	0 -	-1.541	.123
2. I enjoy my research course(s).	2.93	3	1.328	2 14.3%	4 28.6%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	2 14.3%	0 -	0 -	4.14	5	1.406	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	7 50%	1 7.1%	0 -	-2.413	.016*
5. I love research courses.	2.79	2.50	1.578	4 28.6%	3 21.4%	1 7.1%	5 35.7%	0 -	1 7.1%	0 -	3.64	3.50	1.692	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	-1.749	.080

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neutral, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree.

Likewise their research attitudes, participants' CTDs also improved after their research engagement. Results of the descriptive statistics analyses of the MCTDS, embracing the mean, median, and standard deviation values (for both pre-test and post-test) as well as inferential statistics for Wilcoxon-signed rank test, are presented in Table 5 according to the mean score increases from largest to smallest.

As tabulated in Table 5, the total mean scores of participants' CTDs were above average before their research engagement (M= 107.07 out of 140 maximum points), yet also improved after their research engagement (M= 111.21, with +4.14 mean difference) with no significant differences (Z= -1.613, p= .107). With respect to the order of the average score differences between the pre-test and post-test, there were considerable gains in the sub-dimensions, particularly in Searching for the truth (M= 14.71 in the pre-test, M= 16.07 in the post-test), which was statistically significant (Z= -2.980, p= .003). Increases in other sub-dimensions, from largest to smallest, were also observed in Reasoning, Systematicity, Reaching judgment, and Searching for evidence with the exception of the sub-dimension Open-mindedness in which participants displayed a very slight decrease (M= 16.07 in the pre-test, M= 15.71 in the post-test, with a -.36 mean difference). When the total means of the MCTDS are compared, an overall growth is evident. Concerning the inferential statistics results, with the exception of one factor, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test demonstrated no statistically significant differences in PSTs' CTDs in any of the factors after research engagement. Searching for the truth sub-dimension was the sole factor that experienced a statistically significant change (Z= -2.980, p= 0.003), suggesting that research engagement had a positive and significant impact on PSTs' searching for the truth dispositions.

Results in connection with participants' Searching for the truth sub-dimension are given in Table 6.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the MCTDS Pre-test and Post-test Comparisons

Sub-dimensions	Point Range	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Tendency	Wilcoxon	
		M	Mdn	*SD*	M	Mdn	*SD*		Z	Sig. (*p*)
Searching for the truth	4-20	14.71	14.50	2.054	16.07	16.50	2.200	↑	-2.980	.003*
Reasoning	6-30	23.50	24.50	4.256	24.71	25	3.730	↑	-1.344	.179
Systematicity	4-20	15.57	15	2.766	16.50	16.50	2.139	↑	-1.264	.206
Reaching Judgment	6-30	21.43	21.50	4.380	22.14	23	3.416	↑	-.889	.374
Searching for evidence	4-20	15.79	15.50	2.636	16.07	16.50	3.149	↑	-.583	.560
Open-mindedness	4-20	16.07	16	2.645	15.71	16	2.614	↓	-.162	.871
Total	13-140	107.07	105.00	15.969	111.21	114.00	14.482	↑	-1.613	.107

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference; ↑ illustrates an increasing tendency; ↓ illustrates a decreasing tendency
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation

Table 6. Results of Searching for the truth Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
17. I do not rush when evaluating the information or ideas I acquire.	3.07	3	.997	0 -	5 25.7%	4 28.6%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	3.64	4	.745	0 -	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	8 57.1%	1 7.1%	-2.309	.021*
20. I handle problems or events realistically.	4.07	4	.730	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	7 50%	4 28.6%	4.36	4	.633	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	7 50%	6 42.9%	-1.414	.157
19. I use my mental and emotional skills to do or learn something new.	3.86	4	.663	0 -	0 -	4 28.6%	8 57.1%	2 14.3%	4.14	4	.864	0 -	0 -	4 28.6%	4 28.6%	6 42.9%	-1.265	.206
18. I investigate the reasons behind an idea, event, situation or problem.	3.71	4	.726	0 -	0 -	6 42.9%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	3.93	4	.616	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	9 64.3%	2 14.3%	-1.342	.180

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.

Findings illustrated that after their research engagement, PSTs improved their CT dispositions regarding handling problems or events realistically, using their mental and emotional skills to do or learn something new, and investigating the reasons behind an idea, event, situation, or problem. The major and the only significant gain was in the item regarding their rush while evaluating the information or ideas they acquired (M= 3.07 in the pre-test, M= 3.64 in the post-test, with a +.57 mean difference).

Besides gains in sub-dimension Searching for the truth, there were considerable (yet not statistically significant) gains in the Reasoning sub-dimension, as reported in Table 7. As Table 7 illustrates, there were improvements in PSTs' CT dispositions in almost all items, with the most noticeable ones in evaluating all aspects of a problem, situation, or event (M= 3.71 in the pre-test, M= 4.21 in the post-test, with a +.50 mean difference) and gathering sufficient information before evaluating an idea, problem, or situation (M= 3.64 in the pre-test, M= 4.07 in the post-test, with a +.43 mean difference). On the whole, when the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the reasoning sub-dimension are considered, findings indicate that PSTs displayed higher levels of reasoning after their research engagement.

Another sub-dimension of the MCTDS where PSTs enhanced their dispositions was Systematicity. As illustrated in Table 8, there were increases in all the items.

Table 7. Results of Reasoning Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
3. I evaluate all aspects of a problem, situation or event.	3.71	4	.914	0 -	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	8 57.1%	2 14.3%	4.21	4	.802	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	5 35.7%	6 42.9%	-1.897	.058
4. I gather sufficient information before evaluating an idea, problem, or situation.	3.64	4	.842	0 -	1 7.1%	5 35.7%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	4.07	4	.917	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	5 35.7%	-1.513	.130
2. I try to explain problems, situations or events.	3.86	4	.949	0 -	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	8 57.1%	2 14.3%	4.07	4	.917	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	5 35.7%	-1.000	.317
1. I analyze the relationships between events, ideas or problems.	4.07	4	.730	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	7 50%	4 28.6%	4.21	4	.579	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	9 64.3%	4 28.6%	-.816	.414
6. I investigate the cause of events or problems.	4	4	.877	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	7 50%	4 28.6%	4	4	.877	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	7 50%	4 28.6%	.000	1.000
5. I question an idea, information, problem, event or situation I encounter.	4.21	4	.893	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	6 42.9%	6 42.9%	4.14	4	.535	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	10 71.5%	3 21.4%	-.447	.655

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation

Table 8. Results of Systematicity Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
25. I draw conclusions from the events I experience or the information I obtain.	3.86	4	1.027	0 -	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	4 28.6%	4.21	4	.579	0 -	0 -	1 7.1%	9 64.3%	4 28.6%	- 1.299	.194
26. I plan when and how I will do something.	3.93	4	1.141	0 -	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	3 21.4%	6 42.9%	4.21	4	.893	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	6 42.9%	6 42.9%	- 1.190	.234
27. I take my own values into account when evaluating ideas or events.	3.79	4	.893	0 -	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	6 42.9%	3 21.4%	4	4	.877	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	7 50%	4 28.6%	- 1.134	.257
28. I make inferences about an idea, event, problem or situation.	4	4	.679	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	8 57.1%	3 21.4%	4.07	4	.730	0 -	0 -	3 21.4%	7 50%	4 28.6%	-.378	.795

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation

According to results presented in Table 8, PSTs reported comparatively higher levels of systematicity after their research engagement. Specifically, the highest gains were concerned with their dispositions regarding drawing conclusions from the events they experience or the information they obtain (M= 3.86 in the pre-test, M= 4.21 in the post-test, with a +.35 mean difference) and planning when and how they would do something (M= 3.93 in the pre-test, M= 4.21 in the post-test, with a +.28 mean difference). Nevertheless, making inferences about an idea, event, problem or situation attained the smallest gain between pre and post-test mean scores, for PSTs did not enhance their relevant dispositions much. Overall, though, despite none of them being statistically significant, an increase in all items were observed.

Results of PSTs' Reaching Judgment sub-dimension are displayed in Table 9. Similar to the other sub-dimensions, the Reaching Judgment sub-dimension had an increase in the mean scores as well. As illustrated in Table 9, in Reaching judgment, PSTs generally had moderate to high mean scores in this sub-dimension. After research engagement, they displayed an increase in their disposition regarding classifying information (M= 2.79 in the pre-test, M= 3.29 in the post-test, with a +.50 mean difference), followed by evaluating the risks, drawing conclusions, and asking appropriate questions to understand a topic. However, in the post-test there was a slight yet nonsignificant decrease in reaching a new conclusion from the general information and trying to understand a problem or idea that they have encountered. Overall, almost all items demonstrated gains in mean scores.

Another sub-dimension in the scale was concerned with Searching for evidence sub-dimension, where participants experienced slight gains. Table 10 presents the results.

Table 9. Results of Reaching Judgment Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
7. I classify information about an event, idea or problem according to their similarities and differences.	2.79	3	1.051	2 14.3%	2 14.3%	8 57.1%	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	3.29	3	.914	0 -	3 21.4%	5 35.7%	5 35.7%	1 7.1%	-1.658	.097
11. I draw a general conclusion from an idea, event or situation that I consider individually.	3.50	3.50	.941	0 -	2 14.3%	5 35.75%	5 35.7%	2 14.3%	3.71	4	.726	0 -	0 -	6 42.9%	6 42.9%	2 14.3%	-.879	.380
9. I evaluate the risks I identify regarding a situation, problem or event.	3.43	3.50	1.222	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	4 28.6%	4 28.6%	3 21.4%	3.64	4	.929	0 -	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	7 50%	2 14.3%	-.965	.335
12. I ask appropriate questions to understand a topic or idea.	3.71	4	.914	0 -	1 7.1%	5 35.7%	5 35.7%	3 21.4%	3.86	4	.663	0 -	0 -	4 28.6%	8 57.1%	2 14.3%	-.632	.527
8. I reach a new conclusion from the general information I have learned.	3.71	4	.825	0 -	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	7 50%	2 14.3%	3.64	4	.929	0 -	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	7 50%	2 14.3%	-.447	.655
10. I try to understand a problem, idea or event I encounter.	4.29	4	.825	0 -	1 7.1%	0 -	7 50%	6 42.9%	4	4	.784	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	9 64.3%	3 21.4%	-1.633	.102

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation

Table 10. Results of Searching for evidence Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
16. I evaluate the rightness or wrongness of my thoughts and actions.	3.93	4	.730	0 -	0 -	4 28.6%	7 50%	3 21.4%	4.07	4	.829	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	8 57.1%	4 28.6%	-.632	.527
15. I look for strong evidence to accept the truth of an idea or information I encounter.	4.07	4	.917	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	6 42.9%	5 35.7%	4.14	4	.864	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1%	7 50%	5 35.7%	-.378	.705
14. I obtain information from reliable and different sources.	3.86	4	1.099	0 -	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	5 35.7%	3.93	4	.917	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	6 42.9%	4 28.6%	-.333	.739
13. I support my opinions with reliable information and strong evidence.	3.93	4	.917	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	6 42.9%	4 28.6%	3.93	4	.997	0 -	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	7 50%	4 28.6%	-.087	.931

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation.

As reported in detail in Table 10, results showed slight increases in all items, except for one. The largest gain among all was in evaluating the rightness or wrongness of thoughts and actions (M= 3.93 in the pre-test, M= 4.07 in the post-test, with a +.14 mean difference). Besides, participants ameliorated their disposition regarding looking for strong evidence and obtaining information from reliable and different sources, while they still needed to experience the change in supporting their opinions with reliable information and strong evidence.

Lastly, the sub-dimension where the smallest increase among others was observed is Open-mindedness. Table 11 displays the results of this sub-dimension. As the results suggest, the items in the Open-mindedness sub-dimension displayed either slight increases or decreases, or were the same, yet none of them were statistically significant. The only item with a slight increase was explaining the reason for a mistake or behavior they made (M= 4.14 in the pre-test, M= 4.21 in the post-test, with a +.07 mean difference). Although there were slight (and non-significant) decreases in two items regarding their dispositions about respecting people having different ideas and considering other people's opinions in problem-solving and decision-making, the percentage of participants who "usually" and "always" do so was almost the same or even higher (78.6% in the pre-test-78.5% in the post-test, 64.3% in the pre-test-71.4% in the post-test, respectively). Overall, item 23 attained the highest mean gain, representing that PSTs tend to explain the reason for a mistake or behavior they made.

Table 11. Results of Open-Mindedness Sub-dimension

Items	Pre-Test								Post-Test								Wilcoxon	
	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	M	Mdn	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	Z	Sig. (*p*)
23. I explain the reason for a mistake or behavior I made.	4.14	4	.864	0 -	1 7.1%	1 7.1.6%	7 50%	5 35.7%	4.21	4	.699	0 -	0 -	2 14.3%	7 50%	5 35.7%	-.277	.782
24. I look at situations, ideas or events from different perspectives when dealing with them.	3.86	4.00	.770	0 -	0 -	5 35.7%	6 42.9%	3 21.4%	3.86	4.00	.864	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	7 50%	3 21.4%	.000	1.000
22. I respect people who have different ideas.	4.14	4	.949	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	5 35.7%	6 42.9%	3.93	4	.829	0 -	1 7.1%	2 14.3%	8 57.1%	3 21.4%	- 1.000	.317
21. I take other people's opinions into account when solving problems or making decisions.	3.93	4	.829	0 -	0 -	5 35.7%	5 35.7%	4 28.6%	3.71	4	.726	0 -	1 7.1%	3 21.4%	9 64.3%	1 7.1%	- 1.000	.317

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always.
M= Mean, Mdn= Median, *SD*= Standard Deviation.

Discussion

This study sought to explore whether research engagement within the scope of an undergraduate research methodology course would make any difference in pre-service EFL teachers' research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions. Analysis of data collected through scales revealed improvements in both research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions subsequent to their research engagement. The first research question, seeking pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards research, provided insights into their research attitudes. The analyses yielded considerable positive changes, which concur with the findings of Van der Linden (2012) and Van der Linden et al. (2015). In their studies with Dutch second-year student teachers, they similarly reported improvements in positive research attitudes and regressions in negative ones. Findings of this study illustrated positive changes particularly in participants' research anxiety, followed by the improvements in positive research dispositions and research usefulness (see Table 1). Although they still found the research course difficult echoing the findings of Ulvik (2014), Tanış (2019), and Savasci and Rets (2021), their stress and nervousness significantly decreased as in Van der Linden et al.'s (2015) and Savasci and Rets's (2021) studies and they started to find research much more enjoyable. Before their engagement, they felt stressed, anxious, and scared, all of which were alleviated to some extent after their research engagement. This finding is consistent with that of Lombard and Kloppers (2015), who also noted that the majority of PSTs felt insecure and nervous before engaging in research. Given that participants in this study needed to conduct their study in a considerably short time period (i.e., six weeks), they might have suffered from those negative attitudes at the onset but later on could surpass them to a moderate degree because the research anxiety level went through a moderate level of decrease after research engagement. A few reasons can be suggested for this positive change: One of them is the fact that participants worked on their research projects collaboratively (i.e., in groups). As working collaboratively is often more comforting than taking on the entire task alone, particularly while undertaking tasks for the first time, such collaboration might have caused a decrease in their anxiety levels and an increase in their research attitudes overall. In Atak-Damar and Salı's (2022) study, fourth-year Turkish EFL pre-service teachers found collaboration as a critical aspect of the research process. From another perspective, after research engagement, they might have gained confidence in their research skills as in Van Katwijk et al.'s (2021) study, which might have caused a decrease in their anxiety; similar findings were reported in Müjdeci's (2020) study as well.

The most striking finding regarding their research attitudes was that PSTs acknowledged the criticality of research for their profession, who had not substantially considered this to be the case before their engagement. This finding aligns with those of earlier studies (e.g., Akyel, 2015; Van der Linden, 2012; Van der Linden et al., 2015; Savasci & Atar, 2024), who similarly reported that PSTs found research prominent and useful for their profession. After their research engagement, PSTs might have realized the substantial impact that research might have on their profession. Overall, there was an increase in participants' positive research dispositions after engaging in research. This increase might be because of the same reason mentioned earlier, which is gaining confidence in their ability to conduct research (Müjdeci, 2020). Once their self-confidence improved, they might have started to feel more positive about doing research.

Likewise, their research attitudes, their critical thinking dispositions (CDTs) addressed in the light of second research question also improved considerably (see Table 5) after PSTs' research engagement. The finding that CTDs improved after research engagement concurs with that of an earlier study conducted with students at the undergraduate level (i.e., Yuan et al., 2020). In Yuan et al.'s (2020) study similarly, participants reported enhanced critical thinking dispositions after their experience as student assistants in a research project, particularly regarding "independence and persistence in resolving challenges; willingness to consider different perspectives; self-correction; and open-mindedness about uncertainty" (p. 7). Improvements in the CDTs could also be interpreted considering the in-classroom activities and assignments that were a part of the course. They learned how to search for information by using research databases, read between and beyond the lines, and critically evaluate credibility of studies. Furthermore, since they worked in groups for their research projects, collaborative efforts could have played a significant role in the improvement of reasoning and judgment skills. Also, previous research has shown that collaborative and/or cooperative activities are strongly associated with critical thinking skills or the development of essential thinking skills (Chen & Swan, 2020; Fisher, 2003).

Among the six sub-dimensions of the MCTDS, there was only one specific sub-dimension, Searching for the truth, which yielded a significant increase. This crucial finding indicates that PSTs became more committed to seeking accurate and objective information through a detailed investigation and evaluation. Also, as Chamizo and Garcia-Franco (2013) stated, when teachers carry out research, they become more critical. Based on this, in a way, it can be said that after research engagement, they learned how to seek and evaluate information.

Regarding Reasoning and Systematicity, findings indicated that PSTs demonstrated higher levels, enabling them to improve their dispositions of versatile thinking, gathering adequate information before evaluation, and drawing conclusions. Since within the scope of the course, the participants found a research problem to investigate; designed a study in groups; collected, analyzed, and interpreted data trying to find answers to the research questions, it is possible that they improved their reasoning and systematicity dispositions collaterally. After PSTs' research engagement, except for Open-mindedness, all sub-dimensions, namely Searching for the truth, Reasoning, Systematicity, Reaching judgment, Searching for evidence yielded enhancements. If we were to speculate the reason behind the slight regression in open-mindedness, rigid guidelines of the research engagement process and the credibility of ideas might have contributed to this. There were slight decreases in items concerned with respecting people having different ideas and considering other people's opinions in problem solving and decision making. Since PSTs learned to carefully consider (in)credibility of sources of information, this could have resulted in decreases. From another perspective, since research engagement requires PSTs to become much more critical and skeptical, it is possible such skepticism decreased their reliance on "other people's" opinions as long as they are not from credible sources or scholars.

Overall, neither ATR nor CTDs improved significantly after research engagement, but slight increases were found overall. It is possible that some PSTs might not have conceptualized research in such a short time period, a finding that is also echoed by Tanış (2019). Indeed, as Yuan et al. (2020) noted, "CT development is a complex and idiosyncratic process for individual students" (p. 9). Therefore, although slight increases or decreases with a sample size like the one employed in this study may not mean much, they tend to reflect tendencies and could guide future studies.

Conclusion

This quantitative pre-experimental small-scale study confirmed the positive effects of research engagement on Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' research attitudes and critical thinking dispositions, highlighting enhancements in both constructs. Findings also underscored that being research engaged could indeed result in improvements in critical thinking dispositions which teachers of the 21st century skill highly need to possess. To the best of our knowledge, the trajectory of critical thinking dispositions *per se* has not been investigated in

earlier teacher research studies. Therefore, this study, albeit being small-scale, is considered to establish a scientific rigor in the field.

Nevertheless, results should be interpreted acknowledging the limitations of this study, highlighting more elaborate designs for future studies. To start with, since the PSTs in this study took the research methodology course and conducted research within its scope, the increases in ATR and CTDs might be due to the course activities to promote research knowledge and skills. However, course activities to foster research knowledge and skills are not exactly separable from research engagement and rather components of them. Furthermore, this study was a small-scale study with a small sample size, limiting the generalizability of the results. Nevertheless, because participation in the study was voluntary, only fourteen of them gave their consent. Also, the fact that the participants were not selected randomly and consisted only of pre-service teachers from one university might lead to the results being specific to this specific group, again limiting the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the study adopted a pre-experimental research design, meaning that there was no control group. Future studies could compare an experimental group with a control group. What is more, the participants in this study worked collaboratively on their research projects. In other words, we cannot precisely tell what the results would have been if participants had worked individually since collaboration might have affected the results. Therefore, future studies could design experiments where they can investigate the potential changes in participants' research attitudes and/or critical thinking skills in two different cases, namely where they work either individually or collaboratively for their research projects. Another limitation concerns the data collection. Data for this quantitative study were collected by means of two scales and lacked qualitative data collection methods (e.g., interviews and focus groups), making it challenging to fully understand the reasons behind results as well as limiting the in-depth interpretation of the quantitative findings. Therefore, future studies could meticulously examine the research engagement processes of PSTs through rich qualitative data. Furthermore, future studies could integrate qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the results. Looking towards the future, further studies can also enrich their data by using a combination of data collection methods such as interviews and focus groups.

Despite these limitations, the results of the study bear educational significance for teacher education programs, highlighting several key implications. In this study, positive developments after research engagement specifies the necessity to integrate research into undergraduate education. Even after their first engagement, which was a considerably short

time period, participants could improve their ATR and CTDs. Accordingly, research could be integrated into teacher education programs in a more holistic way rather than just within the scope of a single research methodology course. Also, considering that PSTs' anxiety may have decreased because they did research collaboratively, it might be worthwhile to allow (pre/in)-service to start their research journey in groups. When research is first included in educational programs, they can be guided to engage in research in groups. If anxiety can be reduced in this way, an increase in engagement rates might also be observed.

For long years, a myriad of obstacles to the research-practice dialogue (or "(link, interface, or nexus" so to say) (p. 509), which can be categorized as epistemological and practical ones (Sato & Loewen, 2022), have been reported. Likewise, several scholars have spotlighted the problem of the research-practice gap or that teachers are not research engaged. As much as it is important for in-service education and training (INSET) programs to promote research, undergraduate teacher education programs should also share the responsibility— without thinking it might be a bit too "early" to introduce research. If we would like our teachers to be research engaged, they should understand the philosophy of teacher research and set to work as early as possible. As stated clearly in UNESCO's Global Report on Teachers (2023), teacher education and professional development need to be transformed in a way that teachers become "knowledge producers" (p. 31), rather than being passive recipients of knowledge (Atay, 2006, p. 2). In our humble opinion, it could be realized through their research engagement to some extent. As the findings of this study illustrated, even shorter time periods could result in positive changes. Accordingly, university instructors in teacher education programs should make sure that they integrate research into all the program courses to promote future teachers to be research engaged as well as foster their CT so that they can become "future-proof" (Van Katwijk et al., 2021, p. 435) teachers. Given that universities are responsible for making students ready for professional life by training them to be ready to expect changes in their knowledges, handle diverse knowledge, and manage ambiguities and super-complexities of the twenty-first century (Brew, 2013), they can deal with such challenges by being research-engaged. As Yuan et al. (2020) noted, it is essential to "[...]provide continuing and contextualized support to facilitate undergraduates' research engagement and transform them from consumers of knowledge into active producers with a high level of CT." (p. 3). It must be the case particularly in contexts where there is no research culture because research in education, which was once considered "scientific" has expanded beyond a scientific

understanding in the past few decades and moved towards a more embracive mindset where teaching is considered a research-informed practice demanding critical thinking.

Ethics Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Sakarya University Rectorate Ethics Committee with the identification number E-61923333-050.99-376327.

The Conflict of Interest Statement

In line with the statement of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), we hereby declare that we had no conflicting interests regarding any parties of this study.

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Secondary School Students' Language Learning Motivation and Perceptions about English as a Lingua Franca in Iran

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Abstract

This study delves into the motivations and attitudes of Iranian secondary students in Tabriz towards learning English, incorporating their inspirations and perceptions of English as a global language. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through a structured questionnaire and random interviews with students. Instructors ensured that students comprehended the questionnaire's inquiries, and SPSS was used to facilitate the analysis of quantitative data.

Findings of the study revealed that students are primarily motivated by goal orientation, with their participation in English language learning driven by specific objectives such as enhancing future career prospects, accessing broader economic opportunities, and facilitating effective communication and cultural comprehension within the English-speaking community. These findings underscore the varied reasons students articulated during interviews, providing a nuanced understanding of their motivations. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed through content analysis, yielding comprehensive insights. After disseminating the research's strong data to be implemented in education systems, both favorable and unfavorable aspects should therefore be brought to their attention. Understanding what drives these aspirations could help in making policies that facilitate the realization of learners' goals, thereby making Iranian high schools' language instruction system more successful in general.

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Introduction

Overview

For many years researchers have tried to discover why some students fail or succeed in learning another language; they are convinced that motivation and attitude toward English are key to the problem. This issue is especially crucial with respect to the initial stages of English language learning.

To achieve substantial results in learning a new language, learners need to have aspirations towards their mind-set, not just for language acquisition but also for acquiring knowledge in various disciplines. If learners can establish strong ambitions, they can enjoy a progressive path towards achieving their goals.

The key role of motivation in language learning is to bring purpose and direction to it. Therefore, without motivation, learners are expected to encounter some difficulties. Lack of desire causes learners to have problems in learning effectively. Paying attention to the importance of language will help learners improve their motivation to learn even if they do not have enough intrinsic motivation (Huitt, 2001). For this reason, teachers should be aware of the significant effect of motivation in language learning and how they can help language learners to enhance their motivation.

Literature Review

Gardner's Social-Psychological Theory

Investigating many scholarly studies, the history of studying motivation flashes back to the 1960s. Studying motivation has been associated with the work of Robert Gardner in a bilingual context in Canada. Considering Gardner's theory, social context and attitudes towards the L2 and L2 communities are the foundation for understanding language learners' motivation. According to Gardner & Lalonde in Second-Language Learning: A Social Psychological Perspective "A socio-educational model of second language learning suggests that the learning of a second language involves both an ability and a motivational component and that the major basis of this motivation is best viewed from a social psychological perspective" (Gardener & Lalonde, 1985, p.1). According to Dailey (2009) study of motivation, these researchers argued that "The motivation of an individual to learn a second language (L2) is maintained by their

attitudes towards the L2 community and the objectives or orientations they aim to achieve through acquiring the L2.

In exploring the dynamics of language acquisition, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of various factors on an individual's willingness to adopt 'foreign' behavior patterns. "The motivational component is influenced to some extent by factors that affect an individual's willingness to accept "foreign" behavior patterns" (Gardener, 1985). Gardner and Lambert's theory argues that motivation to learn an L2 requires a positive attitude towards the L2 community and a desire to become a member of that community (Clement et al., 1994). Based on this idea, they introduced two kinds of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Dörnyei characterizes the former as having a positive attitude toward the L2 society and "…the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community" (1994, p.274).

Definition of Motivation

Motivation can be apprehended as a dynamic process involving the interaction between a learner and their environment, characterized by the selection, initiation, enhancement, or continuity of goal-driven actions. It has been conceptualized differently, being seen as a trait of the individual, the circumstances, or the specific task in which the individual is involved (Svinicki & Vogler, 2012). According to Narayanan (2006), motivation represents the driving force or reasons that underlie a person's actions and behaviors. Guay et al. (2010) similarly describe motivation as the underlying rationale for behavior. Broussard and Garrison (2004) provide a definition of motivation as 'the intrinsic quality that propels us to either engage in or refrain from particular actions'.

According to researchers, motivation can be defined in various constructs, and it is not possible to define it in a single sentence. Gilakjani, Leong, & Saburi (2012) argue that the achievement of any endeavor hinges on the degree to which individuals exert effort to attain their objectives, in conjunction with their willingness to do so. Typically, people identify this psychological element, which serves as the driving force behind actions, as motivation. It acts as a propellant that triggers, encourages, or inspires action. Motivation significantly influences learners' willingness to participate in communication (Alizadeh, 2018).

Different Types of Motivation

Brown (2000) and Gardner (1985) have outlined two fundamental categories of motivation: integrative and instrumental. According to Gardner and Lambert (1959, as cited in

Gilakjani, Leong, & Saburi, 2012), integrative motivation involves language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment. In other words, learners are driven by their desire to enter successfully into the target language society. On the other hand, instrumental motivation arises from the need to learn a second language for practical or external purposes, such as passing exams or earning financial rewards.

Dörnyei (1998) introduced the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means wanting to do something since you find it interesting. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to doing things to get rewards or avoid punishments. Brown (2000) pointed out that these two types of motivation always interact. When another person desires the language learner to acquire the language because of integrative reasons, extrinsic motivation can change into integrative motivation. The extrinsic motivation turns into instrumental every time an external power forces the language learner to study it for practical purposes.

Furthermore, intrinsic motivation becomes integrative motivation when the L2 learner tries to assimilate into the culture of the L2-speaking group. If the L2 learner wishes to achieve specific goals using the L2, it may also be termed as instrumental motivation. It is substantial to stress that learners with identical internal motivational factors can display considerable variances in terms of external ones. Such internal and external aspects of motivation- intrinsic and extrinsic respectively, also appear to have strong parallels to integrative as well as instrumental orientation as far as second language learning is concerned (Brown, 2000).

Integrative Motivation

Integrative motivation encompasses these three aspects as they pertain to the individual, setting it apart from other motivational concepts within the realm of second language acquisition. That is; integrative motivation extends beyond the immediate classroom context and encompasses factors such as learners' background, interests, and concerns, as well as their life beyond the language course. As a result, comprehension of integrative motivation isn't ordinary thus goes beyond showing a holistic stance in language learning; it encapsulates various psychological, social and cultural dimensions that shape one's attitude towards studying languages and becoming part of a speech community. The complexity of this situation designates that integrative motivation is sophisticated. It goes beyond superficial manifestations of cultural closeness to embrace inner mental as well as sociocultural aspects of learning a new language (Gardner, 2000).

It is important to note that while integrative motivation is not a distinct unit of analysis but rather a bundle of related constructs, it does not reflect what some people have and others have not got. Integrative motivation is a comprehensive and inclusive term, concerning a "positive interpersonal/ affective disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.5). This suggests a willingness to embrace and show regard for another cultural community, including their values, identities, and lifestyles.

In summary, when defining the concept of integrative motivation, it is advisable to tailor the definition to the specific context in which second language (L2) learning is occurring. The way the integrative motive is understood is shaped by the characteristics of the context. In other words, integrative motivation, as a component of individuals' identities (IDs), is contingent on the particular context in which it is put into practice. Therefore, its interpretation should align with the context in which it is being applied.

Instrumental Motivation

Instrumental motivation is a component of Gardner's socio-educational model, as outlined by Gardner (2001). Instrumental reasons comprise motivations like learning a language to secure employment, preparing for future career prospects, or aiming to enhance one's education. Consequently, instrumental motivation revolves around the advantages that second language learning can offer to the learner.

In his description of the instrumental aspect, Dörnyei (2005) refers to the 'perceived pragmatic benefits of L2 proficiency'. Instrumental motivations can be classified into two categories: those with a promotion focus and those with a prevention focus. Motives with a promotion focus, such as learning English for career advancement, is aligned with the ideal self, while motivations with a prevention focus, such as studying to prevent failure on a test, are associated with the ought self. As indicated by this differentiation, both types of instrumentality share a common emphasis on utilitarian value, despite their varying objectives. In other words, the nature of the learning goal dictates the specific form of instrumentality.

An integrative orientation in language learning arises when a learner studies a language with the intention of connecting and identifying with the culture associated with its speakers. Conversely, an instrumental orientation involves motivations driven by external objectives,

such as achieving exam success, financial incentives, or advancing one's career (Burden, Williams, & Lanvers, 2010).

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation represents a unique form of drive stemming from internal sources of satisfaction and enjoyment. This particular brand of motivation is deeply rooted within language learners themselves, intimately connected to their personal identities and overall sense of well-being. Noels et al. (2000) have delineated intrinsic motivation within the framework of the self-determination theory, identifying three distinct categories: a) intrinsic motivation for knowledge, which pertains to the pleasure derived from acquiring new information, b) intrinsic motivation for accomplishment, associated with the delight of achieving goals, and c) intrinsic motivation for stimulation, reflecting the joy experienced while engaging in a particular task. According to Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003), individuals driven by intrinsic motivation find their rewards embedded within the act of learning itself, deriving a profound sense of competence and accomplishment from their endeavors. In essence, intrinsically motivated learners are primarily guided by their internal desires rather than external incentives.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is defined as "actions undertaken to attain a specific outcome, such as gaining a reward or avoiding punishment" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 39). In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation falls on a spectrum between non-self-determination and self-determination. In the self-determination theory model, motivation is classified into three levels: from lack of desire to passive agreement and finally to enthusiastic personal dedication. External regulation embraces learners' actions directed at gaining external rewards or advantages for finishing a task. In such instances, learners perform tasks to fulfil an external requirement or gain rewards imposed by external sources. In this case, learners engage in behaviours to meet an external demand or obtain rewards imposed from outside sources. Introjected regulation, on the other hand, embodies a partial internalization in which external regulations are adopted by the individual but are not fully embraced as their own (Black & Deci, 2000). Actions driven by introjected regulation stem from external pressures, such as a person learning a language to avoid embarrassment for not knowing it. Identified regulation is motivated by personally relevant reasons, often tied to the belief that the activity is crucial for achieving a valued goal (e.g., individuals studying a second language because they see it as

vital for their educational advancement). Those guided by identified regulation engage in the learning process due to the internal values and positive aspects they associate with it.

The Interrelationship of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Numerous recent studies have tended to investigate the impact of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. Researchers have discovered compelling evidence indicating that intrinsic rewards tend to be more potent motivators than external rewards such as monetary incentives (e.g., Goudas, Biddle & Underwood, 1995; Dündar, Özutku, Taspınar, 2007). Moreover, there is proof to indicate that the use of extrinsic rewards decreases intrinsic motivation (Hitt et al., 1992; Sherman & Smith, 1984; Staw & Ross, 1980).

A critical part of this review that discusses motivation as the facilitator of academic success in society is contained in the distinction made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation according to social-cognitive models of motivation. Intrinsic motivation entails engaging in an activity for its inherent value, while extrinsic motivation associates with participating in an activity as a means to achieve a specific outcome (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Positive Attitude towards L2 Community

When learning a foreign language, it is prominent to have a positive attitude towards the foreign-speaking community and country. This was echoed by Gardner and Lambert (1980 in Pae, 2008) that one's attitude towards the community linked to that particular language influences how fast or effectively he/she acquires fluency in it. Claimed that the motivation to learn a second language (L2) generally depends on the attitude towards L2 society and a wish to become a valuable part of this society. These opinions demonstrate how significant one's attitudes toward members of L2 societies are if he/she wants to succeed in mastering L2.

Thinking of obtaining competency with a second language must, above all else, be combined with the requirements one has towards its speaking community. According to Gardner and Lambert, a person's motivation for involvement in studying another language is to a large extent determined by their opinions about a particular group of second language users and their wish to belong to such a group. This then underscores the importance of developing a favorable attitude towards a community using L2 for propelling motivation in learning an L2.

The Enjoyment of Learning

For one to develop motivation in learning the L2, they must have fun during the process. Those people whose lone reason for participating in learning is to enjoy the fun associated with mastering L2 tend to work harder than others who do it because they have no option. In the same way, learners who are motivated integratively feel good whilst learning the second language as well as when they are in contact with communities where that language is spoken. Basically, motivation in learning a new language requires an enjoyable experience as it helps in keeping the desire to advance the study of the L2 alive rather than for instrumental reasons as noted by Wu (2003).

For a person to be motivated it is important that they find fun when learning the second language (L2). The students who are self-motivated will keep on going with their studies as they enjoy learning the L2, unlike their counterparts who do it for distinct reasons. Moreover, individuals who are motivated by the need to integrate experience this integration as occurs with mastery of a new language, it is an experience that besides satisfaction, is fulfilling when one indulges him/herself into the society they live in. It is evident from what Wu (2003) says that the verve during these periods of learning tends to encourage positive attitudes as well as influence L2 commitment, consequently becoming one of the cornerstones for language learning processes.

External Pressures

External pressures motivate individuals to learn L2. It could mean meeting a parent's expectations, receiving something valuable or doing something practically avail — learners are often pushed this way. Noels et al. (2000) highlights that extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation are connected in that they both aim at achieving proficiency in a second language because of the surrounding society's controls or rewards. Noels et al. underscored an importance on personal desires, internalized motives, and the value attached to accomplishing particular objectives as a basis for such motives (2001, as cited in Liu, 2007).

Various external pressures often make learners move forward with their L2 learning. People take action since they must fulfill certain parental expectations or get rewards as well as accomplish practical objectives. The study by Noels et al. uncovers the link between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation showing that the two are similar in that they both aim at mastering a second or foreign language through outside pressures, internalized motivations,

individual choices, and perceivable importance of achieving certain objectives this was earlier stated in their work (2001, as cited in Liu 2007).

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the levels of language learning motivation among secondary school students in Iran?

2. How do secondary school students in Iran perceive English as a Lingua Franca?

3. Do language learning motivation and perceptions of English as a Lingua Franca vary across different student demographics (e.g., gender, age, proficiency level)?

Methodology

Research Design

The study's structure is established by its research designs which form the heart of the study including such facets as implementation, group work, tasks and timing.

The use of scales and interviews allows for an in-depth study of the phenomenon being studied. While the scales enable the collection of quantifiable information that can help measure participants' responses and attitudes, the interviews explore deeper into the experiences and perceptions of the participants."

The utilization of both scales and interviews in this specific research endeavour facilitates a nuanced examination of the phenomenon under investigation. The scales provide quantitative data, which represents measurable indicators and numerical data points for evaluating the responses and attitudes of the respondents. Interviews, on the other hand, allow for a qualitative exploration that goes deeper into the experiences, perceptions, and subjective viewpoints of participants.

In this mixed-method research, it was systematic and structured approach followed in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Researchers designed the study align with the research objectives and hypotheses There was a meticulous collection of data, from scales to interviews with strict adherence to standardized protocols and techniques which ensures that consistency and rigor are maintained throughout the research process. Given the

comprehensive nature of the data collection and analysis methods employed, this study was categorized as a case study research endeavor.

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 148 secondary school students in Tabriz, Iran. The students were selected from those who registered at the Goftogoo Language Center and were chosen randomly based on the selection criterion of being secondary school students. Among those participants, there were 80 female students, and 68 of the participants were male students. When asked about their enthusiasm for learning a foreign language, 81 students attended lessons voluntarily. Other 67 students faced external obligations such as parental expectations, aspirations for occupational success, and the pursuit of high academic grades in school lessons, etc.

Among participants, there were 2 different age groups, 12-13 and 14-15. According to the Persian calendar (solar calendar), a new year in the country starts with the start of spring, which is about 19 or 20 March. According to the educational system in Iran, children who were born in the first half of the year, spring and summer seasons, can start their education earlier than children born in the second half. This is why there are students of 4 different ages for a 3-year educational period.

Context of the Study

Divisions of the schools in Iran have been changed throughout the years. Previously there were 5 years of primary school, 3 years of secondary school, and 4 years of high school. Before the program changed to this format, there were 6 years of primary school, 3 years of secondary school, 3 years of high school, and there was a year that was called preparatory school for university. While the research was conducted in the context, the educational system is divided into 3 groups, 6 years of primary school, 3 years of secondary school, and 3 years of which school. Therefore, students of 12-15 years old are secondary school students according to the new educational grades. It is noteworthy that 12 and 13-year-old students are from both 6th and 7th grade, and 14 and 15-year-old students are also from 7th and 8th grades.

Among participants, 72 students who joined the research belonged to the lower levels, while 76 were intermediate and upper-intermediate level students. The underlying reason for putting participants into 2 different levels lay behind their understanding of the questionnaire items.

Considering their educational experience as an effective item in the research, 53 of the participants were in the language center's English classroom for the first time, 48 students were studying their 2nd term, and 47 students were studying their 3rd term at the language school. This variable is important because as they develop their skills toward the target language, their motivation orientations may face conversions.

The second phase of the study enclosed qualitative data collection through 18 interviews conducted with the students. Collected data were analysed by content analysis method according to the research's nature. To keep the reliability of the analysis, it was done with the help of another scholar from the field of the study, Sonia Valizadeh who was a Ph.D. student in English Language Teaching at Ondokuz Mayis University.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Categories	Sub-Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12 years old	35	24%
	13 years old	41	28%
	14 years old	47	32%
	15 years old	25	17%
Gender	Male	68	46%
	Female	80	54%
Level	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	51%
		72	49%
Native Language	Persian	148	%100
Participation	Voluntary Attendance External Obligations	81	55%
		67	45%
Learning Language Experience	1st Term	53	36%
	2nd Term	48	32%

Instruments

The quantitative data was collected through the Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire consisting of 40 questions and students were asked to answer them using a 5-point Likert scale with options including: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), slightly disagree (LD), slightly agree (LA), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The questionnaire was designed and developed by Gonzales and Lopez (2015). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted for qualitative data and to make an in-depth analysis of the current situation.

The questionnaire comprises 40 Likert items designed to assess six distinct motivational orientations in foreign language learning, specifically; the six motivational orientations measured by the questionnaire include: (1) aspiration for professional and financial advancement; (2) eagerness to become global participants; (3) enthusiasm to engage in communication and establish connections with individuals from different cultures; (4) aspiration for personal fulfillment; (5) belief in own capabilities; and (6) aspiration to integrate with diverse cultures.

The reliability of the questionnaire is high, with an alpha coefficient of .96. The combined factors captured by the questionnaire can explain 60.0% of the overall variance of the test. Participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A semi-structured interview was conducted on a group of 18 students in order to collect qualitative information. It provided for an adaptable yet targeted examination of the research issue in which the participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights were sought after regions of interest centered on participants' views with regard to the topic under investigation. Participants were encouraged to speak their minds but the researcher also had a list of prepared questions and prompts but encouraged participants to freely share their thoughts while being guided by the interviewer through prepared questions and prompts.

In summary, combining semi-structured interview methods with recording and transcription enabled an appropriate approach for receiving and evaluating qualitative data. This approach facilitated going deeper into the research question according to the views of study participants thus providing meaningful discoveries that enhanced clearer understanding of this occurrence."

Data Analysis Procedures

In the present study, participants' motivational orientations were closely examined to determine what drives them. All the data collected were entered into various Excel files for proper sorting before being analyzed using SPSS software, a widely used tool for the statistical analysis of quantitatively expressed ideas. Numerous statistical methods were employed to shed light on and compare the subjects' responses across various parameters. These methods include descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA.

Specifically, the means of two groups are compared using t-tests to examine if there exist significant differences in motivation orientations while for example t-tests are used to compare motivation orientations of participants depending on categorical variables like age group or gender. The research was aimed at spotting striking differences in motivation orientations between male and female participants or among those at different ages through t-tests.

This study used ANOVA to see if there were significant differences in motivational orientation across categorical variable levels. Content analysis was selected as the most suitable technique for interpreting and understanding the interview responses for the qualitative section to collect comprehensive information. A thorough study of the content explored how rich and deep the qualitative data was, hence giving way for an all-encompassing insight in terms of participant outlooks, experiences, and drives concerning language acquisition.

Implementation

The research was executed in the Goftogoo Language Center, Tabriz, Iran, which specifically deals with language learning on a private and special basis. In there, some classes accommodate various levels of English and Turkish proficiency thus ensuring that learners get an education that suits their linguistic capabilities. Participants were selected from the secondary school level meaning that they were students aged between twelve to fifteen years old as mentioned in the participant section.

The first step was the distribution of the questionnaire for administration to help obtain data on quantitative terms that favored the research objectives. There was a condition in regular class where there was a task put forward to the students in filling out this questionnaire with the instructor overseeing them. In this case, the presence of teachers was to help make sure students understood the questions and that they were within their ability levels. It is worth

noting that the survey happened to be in its original language since it was aimed at answering research questions, not testing language proficiency. Questions were expected to be understood by students who were at an intermediate or upper-intermediate level while those below that level required personal help accorded by their teachers for ease of comprehension.

In the fourth week, the questionnaire was put in place to ascertain the adaptation period that students undergo in new learning environments, materials and teaching methods. The decision on the timing with which it was done was intentional, and was meant to give students time to acclimatize and facilitate impartial and reliable reactions.

The research was made more qualitative by conducting one-on-one online interviews with 18 randomly chosen pupils. The research's qualitative aspect was improved by recording, transcribing and thorough analysing these interviews which gave first hand insights that cannot be obtained by any other means.

Findings

Based on the findings from the FLLM-Q, the primary motivating factor for participants is the improvement of their career prospects and financial well-being (Item 1: Mean=4.08; Standard Deviation=0.51). The students are very ambitious in connection with learning foreign languages because they want to obtain better work chances, get high-remuneration jobs, and outshine others in terms of language capacity and access to global job markets as well as wider academic endeavors.

Similarly, these students' desire to speak to and connect with individuals from various countries is another motivating factor for them to learn foreign languages (Item 3: Mean=3.86; Standard Deviation=0.54). Furthermore, they are motivated by the ambition to comprehend diverse cultures more profoundly and see things from a worldwide point of view (Item 2: Mean=3.81; Standard Deviation=0.48).

The results strongly suggest that Iranian EFL students at secondary levels show motivation largely as a goal-directed process. This means that the primary reason they want to learn another language is to cater to particular interests such as better employment chances, prospering economically over time as well as understanding other societies through effective speech or listening skills in the natives' environment.

Statistical Information of Quantitative Data

Differentiation of Motivational Orientations

The findings that were presented here augment our knowledge about a variety of different reasons why people become motivated when it comes to their learning experiences and what they eventually achieve as a result.

Table 2. Gender-Based Comparison of Motivational Orientation

Factors		N	M	SD	t
Economical and career advancement	Male	68	4.10	.57	0.845
	Female	80	4.18	.50	
Understanding Various Cultures	Male	68	3.95	.43	0.002
	Female	80	3.97	.49	
Interacting with Foreign Individuals	Male	68	3.91	.57	4.238*
	Female	80	3.81	.48	
Self-Contentment	Male	68	3.96	.72	0.175
	Female	80	4.02	.59	
Self-Competence	Male	68	3.53	.64	12.143**
	Female	80	3.78	.69	
Cultural adaptability	Male	68	3.60	.67	1.152
	Female	80	3.82	.73	

*>.05   **>.01

The data noticed in Table 2 will exemplify the effects of gender on motivational orientation in foreign language students. Our findings suggest that males have differing levels of motivation from females when it comes to wanting to talk or relate with other cultures through self-efficacy and other variables. Female learners reflect more desire to master a new language to enable them to communicate with other people from other countries and interact within the society of the target language. Additionally, the results reveal that female learners are more motivated to study foreign languages due to their belief in self-efficacy, recognizing

that possessing the ability and skills to learn a foreign language will further drive their pursuit of language learning.

Table 3. Assessment of Motivational Orientation Based on Grades Categories

Factors		N	M	SD	F
Economical and career advancement	7th-grade students	76	4.08	.68	1.241
	8th-grade students	72	4.15	.53	
Understanding Various Cultures	7th-grade students	76	4.03	.44	6.786
	8th-grade students	72	4.21	.39	
Interacting with Foreign Individuals	7th-grade students	76	3.75	.58	2.417*
	8th-grade students	72	3.86	.49	
Self-Contentment	7th-grade students	76	3.73	.61	6.508***
	8th-grade students	72	3.94	.63	
Self-Competence	7th-grade students	76	3.49	.68	1.290**
	8th-grade students	72	3.60	.54	
Cultural adaptability	7th-grade students	76	3.71	.38	37.320***
	8th-grade students	72	3.34	.47	

*>.05   **>.01   ***>.001

Regarding the age group, notable variations were observed in the motivational orientations of learners across three factors of the questionnaire. The results indicate that 6th and 7th-grade students exhibit greater motivation to learn a foreign language due to the self-satisfaction they derive from the learning process. Additionally, the findings reveal that older learners display a higher motivation towards cultural integration. Conversely, 8th-grade students show the highest motivation toward cultural understanding and a desire to become global citizens.

Table 4. Analysing Motivational Orientation Based on Proficiency Levels

Factors		N	M	SD	F
Economical and career advancement	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	4.12	.49	2.205
	Lower	72	4.29	.50	
Understanding Various Cultures	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	4.02	.46	1.516
	Lower	72	3.91	.53	
Interacting with Foreign Individuals	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	4.10	.36	2.872*
	Lower	72	3.80	.55	
Self-Contentment	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	3.67	.51	3.563***
	Lower	72	3.95	.53	
Self-Competence	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	3.64	.70	1.544**
	Lower	72	3.62	.64	
Cultural adaptability	Intermediate and Upper Levels	76	3.92	.67	0.328***
	Lower	72	3.89	.56	

*>.05   **>.01   ***>.001

Considering learners' age range and language background, they are divided into different stages. Therefore, taking into account CEFR stages, participants belong to three levels, A2, B1, and B2 Stages. When examining the learners based on their proficiency levels, significant differences were observed in two factors: interacting with foreign individuals, and self-contentment. Proficient learners demonstrate the highest motivation to learn a foreign language as they derive self-satisfaction from the language learning experience. Conversely, elementary (A2) learners display the highest motivation to learn a foreign language in order to effectively communicate and establish connections within the target language community.

Table 5. Evaluating Motivational Orientation Based on the Inclination of Foreign Language

Factors		N	M	SD	F
Economical and career advancement	Voluntary Attendance	81	4.21	.42	0.251
	External Obligations	67	4.32	.49	
Understanding Various Cultures	Voluntary Attendance	81	3.87	.52	0.436
	External Obligations	67	3.62	.55	
Interacting with Foreign Individuals	Voluntary Attendance	81	4.12	.51	2.190
	External Obligations	67	4.02	.65	
Self-Contentment	Voluntary Attendance	81	3.92	.52	8.416
	External Obligations	67	3.60	.54	
Self-Competence	Voluntary Attendance	81	3.74	.58	0.240
	External Obligations	67	3.59	.56	
Cultural adaptability	Voluntary Attendance	81	3.85	.53	15.279
	External Obligations	67	3.41	.56	

Within the framework of this study, it is crucial to recognize the extensive prevalence of English language instruction in higher education. With this context in mind, this research explores an additional dimension of learner dynamics, specifically concerning how foreign language (FL) education is pursued. When participants were sorted based on whether they selected to study the language voluntarily or as a result of external obligation, significant distinctions emerged in two key aspects.

Individuals who had selected foreign language (FL) voluntarily demonstrated the most elevated motivation levels concerning personal fulfillment and a sincere aspiration for cultural integration. Those involved in studies with external obligations have the least motivation in

these particular realms. The most profound motivational orientation in terms of cultural inclusion was also demonstrated among volunteer students of FL.

Table 6. Assessment of Motivational Orientation Based on the Duration of Learning Foreign Language

Factors		N	M	SD	F
Economical and career advancement	1st Term Learners	53	4.23	.49	
	2nd Term	48	4.10	.54	0.928
	3rd Term	47	4.02	.37	
Understanding Various Cultures	1st Term Learners	53	4.28	.41	
	2nd Term	48	3.92	.48	2.651
	3rd Term	47	3.78	.46	
Interacting with Foreign Individuals	1st Term Learners	53	3.89	.57	
	2nd Term	48	3.84	.48	8.820
	3rd Term	47	3.67	.40	
Self-Contentment	1st Term Learners	53	3.87	.60	
	2nd Term	48	3.72	.55	3.438
	3rd Term	47	3.78	.52	
Self-Competence	1st Term Learners	53	3.49	.53	
	2nd Term	48	3.53	.72	0.574
	3rd Term	47	3.60	.60	
Cultural adaptability	1st Term Learners	53	3.51	.49	
	2nd Term	48	3.25	.57	3.792
	3rd Term	47	3.02	.50	

There are significant differences between students' motivation to learn foreign languages and the length of time they have studied FL. (FLLM-Q provides this information on

the five motivational orientations used). What was distinctive for each of these items turned out to be one thing; how long someone has been learning his/her own FL. Upon categorization of students in accordance with the number of years that they have engaged in FL learning, their motivational orientations towards culture, the community of the target language, and the three aspects of these connections demonstrated significant dissimilarities. Additionally, differences also emerged in the levels of their self-fulfillment during the process of learning FL.

A closer look at the means showed that while the length of the FL study was increasing, learners were demonstrating more diverse motivational orientations. In particular, respondents with a history of studying foreign languages for four semesters were found to have increased motivation towards such things as integration into other cultures, communication, reaching out to people from discrete backgrounds, and a desire to feel satisfied during their own learning process. This was in contrast to learners who had only studied FL for a single term. Conversely, motivation related to cultural comprehension was more pronounced among those who had undertaken FL studies for a solitary term, in contrast to those with an FL learning experience exceeding two terms.

Findings of Qualitative Data

In addition to administering questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into students' perspectives in their own words. The interview questions were formulated concerning the research inquiries. Consequently, the researchers employed an inductive content analysis to scrutinize the participant responses.

In the context of the research, according to the existing curriculum, each educational term lasts 6 weeks. Due to a lack of time, the interview was conducted individually with a selected group of language learners, and these sessions were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. These online interviews were conducted to collect comprehensive information regarding students' enthusiasm for learning the English language. The participants were selected from two distinct age groups, 12-13 and 14-15 years old, with both male and female students represented. Also, included in the sample group were some students who were at the upper intermediate as well as some at the lower intermediate proficiency levels.

Semi-structured interviews were generated with specified questions, ensuring uniformity among all respondents. The findings revealed that there was an increased enthusiasm among the older category of learners (14-15 years old) to achieve fluency in

English largely due to their professional orientation. Those old students desired rapid and effective language learning, since they believed mastering a foreign language and merging with its culture would greatly improve their chances of getting employed. These interesting and significant results offer an notable picture of how biological factors affect the emergence of motivation. This occurrence portrays a constantly changing relationship between age-related factors and motivation, with an older learner having a more definite direction in life and potential career development through language expertise.

Additionally, the accelerated and effective learning of older students can acquire reason from diverse points of view such as their cognitive maturity, prior academic encounters, or developed sense of purpose. As people get into a transition from their teenage lives into adolescence, the majority of them become more objective-focused and concentrate on realizing particular goals in life- that are related to advancement in a career.

Basically, the motivational orientation of the elderly students who take it as they can improve their job opportunities is a classic example of how the motivation of an individual to learn a language can be shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These results underscore the complexity of motivation in language learning and the importance of considering age-related influences when designing effective language education programs.

Exploring the complexity of the target culture of the language of the younger group is marked by high enthusiasm. It was observed that the motivational inclinations of this group differ from those of the older group. Not just acquiring linguistic proficiency, these learners also respresented a genuine concern in acquiring a deeper understanding of cultural nuances that underlie the language they were studying. Their motivation seemed to be mediated by curiosity and a craving for cultural exploration.

On the flip side, the older generation of individuals showed a distinctive motive concentrated on cultural fusion. To them, learning the language was seen as a strategy for smoothly blending in with the culture of that language they were learning. The students found understanding a language as a major ability that could improve how they can blend with the people and be involved. This thirst for cultural integration was more notable with mature learners showing that their past experiences plus future job expectations informed their motivational priorities.

Moreover, it became evident that female students are more interested in studies compared to male students, a point that underscored the gender imbalance in terms of motivation. Here, it should be noted that such an imbalance was conspicuous especially with respect to integrative motive among women who indicated more desire unlike their male counterparts. The importance of considering gender as a factor that can significantly influence learners' motivational orientations in the context of language acquisition is underscored by this finding. This research therefore needs to investigate the basis for these dissimilarities between males and females so that it may lead to improved language teaching methods for learners with different backgrounds.

There was a fascinating tendency evident among students who had been busy learning languages for a long time, at least two terms or more. In the long run, the way they undertook their language acquisition seemed to change significantly over time because people were more interested in what they found out about that particular society. Their initial interest in cultural understanding has developed into a desire for cultural inclusion. These learners had an extraordinary degree of involvement in learning cultural subtleties and were active participants in foreign language communities. This means that staying and being involved in an environment where there are very many words of a language can greatly affect the will of learners to learn more of it, indicating that life experiences determine how one feels about a certain language.

Table 7. Statistical Information Defining Interview Responses

Primary inquiries	Unified responses	
Participants' Perspective on the English Language	Essential For Communication	100%
	Essential for Career Prospects	67%
	A Global Communication Device	56%
Perceptions about ELF	Yes, Everyone Needs to Learn the Language	72%
	Yes, the Importance of Global Communication is inevitable	56%
	Yes, But not for everyone and under every circumstances	22%
Their Experiences	Feeling Shy to Communicate	61%
	Feeling Confident to Communicate	39%
	Increases Enthusiasm to Enhance Learning	78%
Primary factors driving motivation	Communication	67%
	Occupational Purposes	72%
	Cultural Integration	45%
Challenges learners encounter	Specific Skills (speaking, Writing)	78%
	Time Limitations	56%
	Not having access to English language speakers/users	45%

Corresponding to the answers given by the students, Table 7 collected a summary of the given responses for better analysis and comprehension. All participants (hereafter P) believed that English is essential for oral or written communication for the first question "What are your thoughts regarding the English language?". P2 and P7 claimed that "while we are playing video games or we are hanging around social media, we find out people from all countries with different languages, but we speak to them in English".

As previously noted, older students demonstrate a stronger inclination towards learning English for occupational prospects. P6 and P7 stated "With a better knowledge of the English language, we can find better opportunities for work". This factor is considered as an external influence as students feel compelled to learn English to secure better job prospects in their future careers. In the third part of the initial question, three students made notable statements. They asserted that in countries they previously visited, such as Germany, China, and France, individuals were not enthusiastic about communicating in English. P3 claimed, "There was a translator with us even in shopping centers which are tourist centers in China".

In response to the second question, "To what extent do you agree with the English language as a lingua franca?", nearly all participants acknowledged the significance of English as a lingua franca in global communication. Nevertheless, four participants expressed that elderly individuals or those whose communication is solely within their domestic circles might not find it necessary to acquire the language. P9 stated, "My grandfather and my older uncle never travel abroad, they never meet a foreigner in the village, and I think it is not necessary for them to learn English". P16 said, "My uncle works as a lifeguard, he does not even speak to the swimmers, sometimes he whistles, and he does not need any foreign languages".

Acquiring proficiency in English is an intriguing facet of communication, particularly in settings where this skill holds substantial value. This recognition motivates individuals within a society to pursue mastery of the language, considering its significance in various domains such as academia, business, and cultural exchange. The recognition of English as a lingua franca pushes individuals to engage in the process of language acquisition, acknowledging its pivotal role in facilitating effective communication and global interaction.

When questioned about their past experiences and their willingness to interact with English-speaking individuals, some students expressed pride in their capacity to communicate in languages beyond their own. They found contentment in applying their refined language abilities and felt a sense of fulfillment by assisting others in unfamiliar circumstances. While talking about their experiences, P9 explained a memory with a group of tourists in the Grand Bazaar in Tabriz "There was a souvenir store full of visitors from France, they wanted to get some information about those traditional handmade bags and wallets, but there was no one to be able to communicate, they were using Google Translate application, I asked them whether I can help or not, then I helped them and the store owner."

In both groups, the motivation to advance their skills or even conquer feelings of shyness acted as a driving force to persist in their educational journey. This determination stemmed from a desire not only to enhance their language proficiency but also to build confidence in their communication abilities. They construed education as a means to overcome inhibitions and further develop their capabilities, fostering a sense of self-assurance in their linguistic endeavors. This dedication to progress reflected a commitment to continuous improvement and the pursuit of personal growth within their educational pursuits.

Within the interviewed participants, diverse motivating factors emerged. While some students expressed eagerness to achieve high marks in exams, three individuals discussed their future study plans and the rationale behind initiating language acquisition from a young age. Among the 14-15-year-old cohort, several students cited learning English as prospective career aspirations. Echoing the quantitative data, this subgroup exhibited remarkable enthusiasm for mastering English for cultural integration. P7 articulated, "When we learn a language, without learning the culture of the society that uses this language, we cannot learn it better. To exemplify, if you know English but you do not know the culture in the United Kingdom, you cannot understand some speeches in movies or series".

Within the expanding landscape of English language education, there is a noticeable increase in the variety of learning resources catering to individuals from diverse cultural and lexical backgrounds. This comprises an assortment of methodologies that adopt latest technological advancements and tools with a view of facilitating learners' pathways. Students on their part get to evaluate available resources and reveal the obstacles they face in the learning process, especially as concerns their productive skills. To point out this problem, P15 stated "It is hard to find an English-speaking person to speak to them or write emails."

The students expressed concerns that limited time affected their progress in learning languages because they had to balance languages with schoolwork. This made it difficult for them to find time for their assignment. As a result, both schoolwork and commitment to mastering a foreign language were hampered by inadequate time. Given their academic constraints, there was minimal time left to dedicate to language learning activities leaving them facing a big fight in their quest to master another language.

Discussion and Conclusion

The need to learn new languages is among the most essential things in Iran because there are many types of language and education systems; a situation created by different ethnic groups living together in the same society which has resulted in over 78 mother tongues spoken here. Farsi in all educational institutions is prioritized as the medium of instruction with all the diverse communities sticking together because of it.

However, what is captivating about Iranian education is the paradox in it. The initial two to three years of elementary schooling are taught in Farsi while at the same time integrating mother languages. The purpose of incorporating mother languages in such a manner is to make

it easy for them to apprehend things happening around them and as they grow up deepen their cultural and linguistic origins better.

Against this background of language, the issue of foreign language acquisition is complex. In Iran, English is compulsory as a second language reflecting its global importance. But it should be made clear that within the purview of the study, English is just one of the many foreign languages taken into account. At the high school level, secondary education provides the groundwork for elementary Arabic studies, especially in schools that teach social studies.

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the motivational orientations of Iranian FL learners, especially to understand the motivational factors that the questionnaire evaluated. Various dimensions were encompassed by these inspiring factors: (1) The pursuit of economic and career advancement; (2) The desire to comprehend diverse cultures in order to become global citizens; (3) The motivation to engage with foreign individuals; (4) The quest for self-contentment in the process of learning; (5) The aspiration for self-competence; and (6) The adaptability to different cultures.

In broad strokes, the study's findings suggest that Iranian secondary school FL learners exhibit a pronounced inclination toward instrumental and extrinsic motivations. As discussed before, reaching specific goals, attaining a certain status, improving conditions, and developing skills can all serve as motivators and create a desire to learn something effectively, attaining a certain status, improving conditions, and developing skills can all serve as motivators and create a desire to learn something effectively. Their motivation to engage in FL learning is substantially driven by economic considerations and the pursuit of career opportunities. This underscores a prevailing instrumental motivation, wherein the primary impetus for FL acquisition lies in pragmatic objectives, such as enhancing employment prospects, including opportunities abroad.

Results of this research suggest that Iranian secondary school students' motivational orientation is a combination of both instrumental and integrative, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Besides, students' urge to accomplish their goals, which can be graded, is complexly related to the level of knowledge of the language they acquire. Generally, Elliot & McGregor's study disclosed that goals are defined as the benchmark of competence on the basis of achievement objectives in the field of learning foreign languages. To elaborate further, learners are motivated to acquire a foreign language to achieve mastery, which facilitates integration into the language community, as well as competence, which enhances their

prospects of employment and acceptance into educational programs that necessitate foreign language proficiency. As a result, evaluating the motivational focus of such learners will call for an examination of their orientation in terms of mastery goals and achievement goal orientation.

It is possible that the observed pattern of thought is related to the higher levels of multiple cultures among Iranian children in grade nine, which is indeed true because they are exposed to different languages. Moreover, enrolling in foreign language (FL) courses is also an additional encouragement for these students hence; this serves as an explanation for why they are motivated. In order to explore this particular occurrence in more detail, one needs to take into account the vast range of chances that have been presented to the participants in this research in their association with foreign languages and cultures. These changes come in the form of scholarships for exchange, study tours, and internships that enable learners to relate with the target language communities. As a result, these experiences are very supportive in the motivation of learners incorporating ingredients from instrumental (speech community) motivation with integrative (cultural and social interaction) motivation.

In this complexity, it is imperative for language educators to take a big-picture approach to motivation. This therefore entails understanding that motivation is not a one-dimensional phenomenon; rather it is dynamic and can be derived from multiple sources by learners for different purposes. It is noteworthy that we understand the details of how and why learners become inspired. Teachers should make efforts in their research in the same direction as seen with 2002 Linnenbrink and Pintrich's findings on motivation which suggested more investment should be made towards deciphering learners' motivational levels for better and responsive English environments that address different desires different learners have.

Conclusion

Throughout this research, findings established that ELF is a need for a large number of people who want to interact in different contexts. It is true that the use of this language mode with its many local variations is very significant, especially within academia, industry, social circles, etc.

Essentially, students consider ELF extremely useful and able to serve as a link among various groups of individuals across the globe other than being a first language. Globally, English acts as a lingua franca, making communication among people from different languages

and cultural groups to become easier. The practicality of ELF and its effectiveness in promoting cross-border and cultural communication have been underscored by the general acceptance of the language. The value that English proficiency has in enabling individuals to reach out for information, interact on international platforms, and connect to global audiences is understood by learners of foreign languages.

Foreign language learners' ability to recognize ELF highlights its importance as a worldwide communication and collaboration in an increasingly multicultural as well as multilingual society. Full participation in world affairs becomes a possibility through personal, academic, and career development made possible by embracing proficiency in English. Therefore, if students are encouraged to feel good about learning English and also to use it widely as a world language, they can do really well in the new generation of humankind, whereby everything is a global village.

This research examines complex relations between motivation in learning different languages. How these factors affect the motivation of learners was studied by analyzing the effects of gender variation and level of education attained on motivational orientations among students studying at high school or university level within an English medium program. The results provide strong support for our predictions about motivational differences between males and females. This research has taken into account two specific individual factors which include: learners' gender and their age. It is hypothesized that the motivational orientations of males are that they differ from those of females, and also ages contribute to their formation in learning foreign languages (FL). Some hypotheses were verified by the conclusions of this study. For example, the aspirations concerning economic and professional growth as well as the interactions with foreigners were found by using the FLLM-Q scale on specific motivational drivers such as career advancement ambitions among others.

Interestingly, the study discerns a significant disparity between male and female learners in these specific motivational aspects. Notably, it is observed that female learners exhibit a significantly higher degree of motivational orientation compared to their male counterparts in the domains of desiring to communicate and connect with individuals from foreign backgrounds. Consequently, this suggests that females tend to be more integratively motivated in their pursuit of FL learning as compared to males.

These findings echo the results of Swanes (1987), who identified similar trends among Asian women, highlighting that they were considerably less instrumentally motivated than

Asian men. Importantly, the same research represents that such gender-based motivational differences were not as pronounced among European, American, Middle Eastern, and African women. It is noteworthy to consider that these disparities might be rooted in the potential shortage of opportunities for females to pursue careers abroad and utilize their foreign language skills in future professional endeavors. This observation may hold true, particularly within the context of Iranian female learners.

Furthermore, the gender-specific divergence in motivational orientation can be partially elucidated by the fact that the FL courses are designed with a focus on addressing specialized needs, such as preparing students for careers abroad, facilitating entry into international development agencies, enabling roles in foreign service, and fostering opportunities in hospitality industries overseas. It is worth specifying that these findings go hand in hand with earlier research conducted by Williams, Burden, and Lanvers (2002), which highlighted how girls usually see learning French as being socially advantageous thus showing a serious determination to acquire the language.

Participants' age groups were separated into two clear divisions. There were significant discrepancies between respondents with regard to three motivational factors as revealed in the study: the attitudes of respondents towards cultural understanding; the respondents' desire for cultural assimilation; and personal contentment among those who learn a foreign language.

The view supported by Collier (1988) is compatible with this study's discovery about the relationship between success in acquiring another language and age. Several scholars suggest there is a specific time span when one can grasp another language (L2) very well and this motivates them a lot. On the other contrary, older pupils within a school environment learn more rapidly and develop linguistic competence better than their younger counterparts in the same academic program as per his statements.

This research essentially illustrates us that age-related dynamics affect the motivational aspects of people studying languages, adding to the existing thought that it may alter the way in which people will decide to take their acquisition processes especially while at school.

In this study, it was found out that the younger age group which is composed of individuals ranging from 12 to 13 years old and below had a significantly higher desire to comprehend other cultures compared to the older age groups especially for individuals aged 14-15 years old. It appeared differently that the older age bracket showcased a greater liking of

cultural blends than their younger age set. The implication is that the motivation of persons towards culture is directed by the growth of gender and age.

Lenneberg (1967) posited the idea of a critical period for L2 acquisition, stressing that the acquisition of language is an in-born process that is closely connected with the biological as well as social maturation process of an individual. With reference to his theory, older learners could perform well in language acquisition by combining these cultural elements, whereas their juniors might outshine them through an enhanced capability for perceiving and enjoying other cultures. This perspective is further supported by previous research by Thompson and Gaddes (2005) thematized the benefits of language and cultural maturity where mature students are concerned. Additionally, Lasagabaster and Doiz (2003) in their work on the relative importance of age in students' linguistic development, found out that it is the elder who demonstrates more power over it.

The main point of the study is that as they advance further into language proficiency, motivation changes among learners studying foreign languages at the secondary school level in Iran. To begin with, a lot of them are interested in knowing about other cultures far away from home, but later on, their focus becomes integration within the target language community.

Three more variables were taken into account by this study as well: foreign language (FL) which was studied, length of FL studies, and type of FL to be pursued. It was first thought that the motivations of FL learners would not be affected much by the characteristics of FL courses. Nevertheless, the findings have shown that students who were studying different foreign languages had various motivational orientations. In particular, these variations could be observed in their own desires to communicate with other nationals, group membership inclinations or just feeling that they are achieving something out of studying those languages by themselves alone.

Using our knowledge of language teaching methods, motivation theory, and social psychology it is possible to deduce that if there is a target language community in another state, this will greatly increase the integrative motivation of foreign language learners. Learning a language involves not only mastering grammar but also cultural aspects related to this field.

An observation was made that despite similarities in results and recommendations, long-term exposure to FL classroom instruction significantly affects the motivational orientation of FL learners. Whenever learners have acquired enough experience in the target

language, there might be a time when the proportion of the numerous linguistic structures in the input matters. The situation is different from that of the less skilled beginners. It is in this way that her findings correspond to what we have found out.

The importance of fostering shifts in motivational orientations that refer to self-satisfaction and not just learning a language for utilitarian purposes by FL educators is being underscored.

Yu further contends that both socio-cultural adaptation and academic adaptation play pivotal roles in shaping FL motivation and fostering positive attitudes. Consequently, FL educators must ensure they possess accurate insights into their students. Their awareness and understanding of the various attitudes and goals that students bring with them should inform the strategies employed to enhance motivation, ultimately leading to the creation of a more effective language-learning classroom environment.

The knowledge of learners' motivational orientations should serve as a guiding principle in designing a responsive FL curriculum, study programs, and learning materials. Overall, while motivational orientation may be considered a dynamic and evolving aspect, it should be harnessed to maximize learners' potential not only in mastering the target language but also in appreciating the culture associated with it. Therefore, the utilization of diagnostic assessments, encompassing both cognitive and non-cognitive measures, is strongly recommended, especially in contexts where FL learners possess diverse and contrasting backgrounds and compositions.

To make extensive research, investigators could study the longitudinal repercussions of motivational orientations on learners' language proficiency. Over a prolonged period, it would be very helpful if subjects were monitored since it would give feedback with regard to the maintenance and development of motivational orientations. For a more comprehensive grasp of the intricacies that underlie foreign language motivation, examining how contextual factors like classroom environment and teacher-student relationships play out in motivational orientations may be of help.

Future exploration may yield significant results on how FL learner motivational orientations are influenced by their cultural and societal environments. Learning how cultural norms and societal pressures prompt people's engagement in acquiring a new language may be used to generate ideas helpful when designing for learners with varied backgrounds and needs.

Teachers might as well take part in assisting students improve their motivational orientations by applying tactics that introduce independence, ability as well as belongingness in the process of learning a language. Offering more constructive and interesting ways of studying can be one way through which students develop personal inclinations towards particular fields thereby increasing their internal drive (intrinsic motivation) and confidence (self-efficacy) as well.

Educators need to adopt a learner-centered approach that acknowledges the various motivational orientations present among FL learners for practical implications. This will foster positive motivation in the classroom for language learning when it is developed through a supportive environment that includes all students and makes them feel appreciated and respected

Furthermore, creating an atmosphere in the classroom where everyone feels they belong and that their way of life is respected among different people can help learners want to include more than one thing simultaneously about a language as they learn it. In order to accomplish this objective, educators can encourage learners to work together on certain tasks; they should also promote respect for language variation and multiculturalism while incorporating original materials into classroom communication.

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Conceptualization of "Teacher Identity": How Do Teachers at Different Career Phases Define It?

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Abstract

Teacher identity is a concept that can be defined via negotiation (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004) and extraction of patterns from everyday teacher experiences (Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006). Therefore, this study assumes that pre-service (PST), novice, and experienced teachers may define teacher identity from different points of view because their everyday experiences and teaching contexts are also different (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Izadinia, 2015). Adopting the phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit teachers' conceptualizations of teacher identity. The findings revealed that PST, novice, and experienced teachers defined teacher identity by drawing on different factors and positionings, which were mainly driven by their contextual peculiarities.

Keywords: Teacher identity; Pre-service teachers; Novice teachers; Experienced teachers

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Introduction

The concept of teacher identity (TI) may be labelled as elusive, intangible, and highly idiosyncratic because it is abstract and cannot be directly revealed or observed; however, it can be still defined in the form of beliefs, assumptions, values, actions, self-concepts, and other's concepts. (Bukor, 2015; Garner & Kaplan, 2018). Despite the complex nature of defining teacher identity, scholars agree that it is both fixed and fluid, unitary and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, and individual and social (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Ye & Zhao, 2018). Based on the conceptualization of identity as a 'relational phenomenon' (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004), this study aims to explore the differences among PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers' definitions of teacher identity.

The study envisages that PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers have different identity construction trajectories determined by contextual peculiarities, which is an assumption supported by research findings (Anspal, Eisenschmidt & Löfström, 2012; Izadinia, 2015; Nichols, Schutz, Rodgers & Bilica, 2017). For example, while PSTs' identity construction is influenced by university teachers and mentors in the practicum (Yuan & Lee, 2016), this may not be true for novice or experienced teachers who do not have any practicum experience. However, novice teachers must manage issues that are predominantly evident in the early years of their teaching career. These early career challenges include balancing personal and professional identity (Pillen, Beijaard & DenBrok, 2013); dealing with tensions and conflicts (Olsen, 2008), difficulties in creating a professional knowledge base, classroom management, and dealing with students (Kanno &Stuart, 2011) and higher rates of dropout from the profession (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

On the other hand, comparative studies of novice and experienced teachers (Nunan, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Richards, Li & Tang, 1998; Tsui, 2003) revealed that experienced teachers are more skilled at making student learning a priority because they adopt a student-centered approach and present the content in a more meaningful way while novice teachers are mainly busy with classroom management and control, which leads to poorer performance in other aspects of teaching.

Scholarly emphasis on the differences in PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers' professional identity development trajectories is extant in the literature. However, there seems to be a dearth of studies on how they conceptualize teacher identity and possible differences in these conceptualizations that can be caused by the peculiarities in their professional identity

development trajectories. The need to explore these differences arises from the fact that understanding these differences may shed light on teachers' professional development paths and offer ways of empowering PST, novice, and experienced teachers. Similarly, recognition of the differences in what they think being a teacher is may facilitate customized solutions to the challenges PST, novice, and experienced teachers have in their careers. As such, this study assumes that there are differences in these three groups' conceptualizations of TI and aims to explore the answer to the following research question:

-In what ways are PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers' conceptualizations of TI different?

Methodology

The qualitative approach to research is mainly favored to explore TI (Anspal et al., 2012; Bukor, 2015, Watson, 2006; Watson, 2009) as it allows for a vivid description (Creswell,2014) of this multi-faceted and complex concept by offering "flexibility, richness and authenticity" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Among the qualitative research approaches, this study adopted the phenomenological approach because it is best suited for qualitative studies exploring "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p.57), which is the conceptualization of TI in this study.

Therefore, this study focuses on how teachers define TI based on their past and present experiences or future projections and interpretations of their conceptualizations. Accordingly, the phenomenological approach is concerned with not only the description but also the interpretation of the participants' meaning-making (Creswell, 2007). Thus, data analysis involves "reducing the information to significant statements and quotes" (Creswell, 2007, p.60) based on a combination of textual and structural description as required by the phenomenological approach in this study.

Participants and Setting

Research sampling involved a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, which meant that participants were invited based on their voluntariness to reflect on their experiences and the researcher also asked already recruited participants if they could inform other colleagues who could be willing to be a participant. 15 participants, which is acceptable for studies that adopt the phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007), were recruited for the

study via online announcements and personal communications, i.e., face-to-face or via online social and professional networking platforms, e.g. Instagram, and LinkedIn.

The research context was Türkiye, and data was collected between November 2021 and August 2023. Detailed information on demographics and contextual information of the participants are presented in Table 1, which contributes to offering a thick description of the research context. This is needed to ensure descriptive validity, which in turn leads to interpretative validity (Maxwell, 1992).

Table 1. Participants' demographic and profile information

Pseudonym*	Gender	Undergraduate/ Graduate Degree	Career Phase	Current/ Practicum Institution	Current City& Region
Burak	Male	BA in ELT**, Türkiye	Senior ELT student	Anatolian High School	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Banu	Female	BA in ELL***, Türkiye	Sophomore in ELL	Online tutoring	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Gizem	Female	BA in ELT, Türkiye	Senior ELT student	Elementary School	Isparta, South Anatolia
Harun	Male	BA in Mechanical Engineering, BA in ELT	Senior ELT student	Anatolian High School	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Yalım	Male	BA in ELT, Türkiye	Senior ELT student	Elementary& High School	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Ali	Male	BA in ELT, Türkiye	2 years	Elementary boarding school	Diyarbakır, Southeast Anatolia
Aylin	Female	BA in ELT, Türkiye	2 months	Private Elementary School	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Aycan	Female	BA & MA in ELT, Türkiye	4 years	Higher Education	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Helin	Female	BA in ELT, Türkiye	5 years	Higher Education	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Güneş	Female	BA in ELT, Türkiye	4 years	Elementary School	Şanlıurfa, Souteast Anatolia
Aysu	Female	BA in ELT, Türkiye	10 +years	Anatolian High School	Kahramanmaraş, Central Anatolia
Feride	Female	BA in American Literature and Culture, Türkiye	18+ years	Elementary School	Ankara, Central Anatolia
Faik	Male	BA & MA in ELT, PhD Candidate in ELT	13+ years	Ministry of National Education	İstanbul, Northwest Anatolia
Öykü	Female	BA in ELT	17+ years	Anatolian High School	İstanbul, Northwest Anatolia
Suat	Male	BA in ELT	12 +years	Elementary School	Aksaray, Central Anatolia

*A pseudonym is used for each participant to facilitate anonymity and to preserve confidentiality.
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***English Language and Literature

Data presented in Table 1 shows that three male and two female PSTs were mainly senior ELT students having their practicum experience in high schools in Ankara. Only Gizem was studying in Isparta and having her practicum in an elementary school. Banu was the only sophomore studying ELL and tutoring online. However, one male and four female PSTs participated in the study whose years of teaching experience were two months (Aylin), four years (Aycan), five years (Helin), and four years (Güneş) respectively at the time of the interviews. They worked in different cities around Türkiye, i.e., Diyarbakır, Ankara, and Şanlıurfa, and at different levels; i.e., elementary schools and higher education. Among five experienced teachers who participated in the study, three were female and two were male. Their

years of teaching experience were 12 years (Aysu), 18 years (Feride), 13 years (Faik), 17 years (Öykü), and 12 years (Suat) at the time of the interviews. While Aysu and Öykü worked at Anatolian High Schools in Kahramanmaraş and İstanbul respectively, Feride (Ankara) and Suat (Aksaray) worked at elementary schools.

Research Instruments and Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit teachers' conceptualizations of TI. In truth, the interview included 14 questions focusing on various aspects of teacher identity. However, this study is to discuss merely the differences among PST, novice, and experienced teachers' definitions of TI because it presents the preliminary findings from a larger study as previously stated. The question each participant asked was "How would you define teacher identity in your own words?". The interviews were conducted online via Zoom, and they were video, or audio recorded depending on the participants' choice. Each participant's oral consent was taken and recorded before the interview began. Research instruments and procedures were approved by the Gazi University Social Sciences Ethics Committee upon careful examination. Semi-structured interview questions were validated via expert opinion which involved revision by three experts in language teacher education. Similarly, the researchers conducted piloting interviews before data collection and revised the questions based on participants' feedback.

Data analysis involved a cycle of open and axial coding (Creswell, 2007), which means that data was first read to reveal emergent codes, which involved inductive coding. Next, the emergent codes were compared among different categories, i.e., PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers. Reliability of data analysis was facilitated by member-checking (Creswell, 2014) which involved participants crosschecking the researchers' interpretation of data to ensure that their meanings were accurately represented in the interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of data revealed that PSTs consider students a core part of their definitions of TI as it is evident in the definitions provided by all of them. In addition, the methods and techniques they use, facilitating changes in students' attitudes, motivating students into learning, passing down knowledge to them, shaping Ss' personality following the curriculum, and helping students achieve the targeted outcomes were phrases commonly cited by PSTs when defining their teacher identity. PSTs defined teacher identity from a fixed rather than fluid, discontinuous rather than continuous, unitary rather than fragmented (Akkerman &

Meijer, 2011) perspective. PST's definitions were mainly based on educational terminology, e.g., changing attitudes, good communication with students, achieving outcomes, sticking to a curriculum, and motivating students. For example, Yalım offered the following definition when asked how he would define teacher identity:

> A teacher follows the curriculum based on their responsibilities and duties. Within the framework of this curriculum, they facilitate both students' inspiration, and changes in their attitudes and learning.

In a similar vein, Gizem defined teacher identity mainly in terms of teacher roles; i.e., knowledge-giver, guide, motivator, and the applier of teaching methods and techniques. It is possible to argue that she offered this definition based on her scholarly reading on teacher roles rather than her unique experiences as a teacher because she was a PST without extensive teaching experience. Gülce also defined teacher identity based on educational terminology:

> First of all, a teacher should be good at their subject, and classroom management. They should have good communication with students and should be kind but firm. I would define being a teacher like that.

However, Banu, who was the only PST majoring in not ELT but in English Language and Literature, defined teacher identity not in terms of educational terminology but as a "journey":

> "It is not just that you have a degree in English Language Teaching, and you become a teacher- the end. It is also your character that comes from within. Yes, you certainly need training but you should also have the enthusiasm and motivation to teach. Teaching practise is more important than just training. I am majoring in English Language and Literature and I am not taking any courses on language teaching but I teach online English courses and they make my teacher identity. I understand whether my teaching is clear for my students or not from their feedback and the way they look at me and I design materials accordingly. I think being a teacher is a journey, it is something you learn by doing. It is not enough just to be trained on it and think it is done.

Banu justifies her definition by arguing that despite that her training is not on teaching, she could still tutor students online based on her teaching experiences. The reason why she was the only one to define teacher identity as a process rather than a unitary concept might be that despite not having any preconceived ideas about teaching that come from her major, she has managed to teach via hands-on experience. Another reason why Banu's definition of TI diverges from other PSTs who mainly base their definitions on educational terminology might be that she was not receiving any courses in language education. This may have led to creating her unique conceptualization of TI based on her experiences of online tutoring without being confined to educational terminology. The fact that PSTs majoring in ELT mainly base their definitions on education jargon and barely mention the dynamic nature of TI is understandable because they do scholarly reading on ELT as part of their training. However, Banu's definition

was only based on her hands-on experience that comes from teaching courses via an online platform.

In contrast to PSTs, novice teachers predominantly emphasized the fluid, continuous, and fragmented (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) nature of TI as they state that they cannot define TI "fully or certainly" (Güneş and Aylin). Aycan explained that she had a lot in mind when it came to defining TI and Gaye emphasized that it changed depending on the person and context. Novice teachers used education jargon less compared to PSTs. Instead, they emphasized the situational, dynamic, and multi-faceted nature of teacher identity which made it hard to define for them. For example, Helin defined teacher identity as follows:

> I don't know how to define it but people have an identity in their personal lives and they also have an identity in their professional lives. It is a process of a bit more formal professional development in which we also display our personality. It is actually creating an identity that is close to what it should be like in professional life by drawing on our character.

Unlike PSTs, novice teachers were less certain about defining teacher identity and they rarely mentioned educational jargon, e.g., teaching goals, following the curriculum, or facilitating classroom management. As seen in Helin's definition, she focused on the interplay between personal and professional identity with an emphasis on the continuous nature of teacher identity while PSTs conceptualized teacher identity as a unitary and fixed entity that has clear-cut boundaries. However, for novice teachers, these boundaries were fuzzy as can be seen in Güneş's definition:

> Being a teacher is unique, and so is teacher identity. We are working on educating people. I can't offer a comprehensive definition. It is something that already keeps changing in its own respect. I can't define it fully.

While PSTs were more certain about what teacher identity is, novice teachers mainly agreed that teacher identity was not a fixed or unitary concept that could be clearly defined as Aylin also emphasized:

> I don't have a clear idea about what being a teacher is yet, but my goal as a teacher is to raise individuals who will serve future generations well.

However, experienced teachers mainly defined teacher identity in terms of values, virtues, and emotions, e.g., altruism, patience, effort, sense of responsibility, being a good and exemplary person, happiness, and fun. Similarly, they also considered being a guide, facilitator, and corrector a part of teacher identity. Experienced teachers also refer to socioeconomic factors, e.g., teachers' income, and the status of being a teacher in Türkiye as part of their teacher identities. For example, Öykü defined TI as follows:

> Teaching is one of the most important jobs in society because they are the ones who educate members of other professions. Therefore, it is the profession that should have the highest status but it is not the case in Türkiye conditions. You can't do this job if you don't love it. Having a teacher identity requires great altruism and responsibility. I can briefly summarize like this.

Similarly, Suat associated TI with values, i.e., effort and patience, and emphasized "loving the job" as the core part of TI. He stated that there would be few teachers who would be satisfied with the financial status of teaching and the greatest happiness comes from seeing students learn:

> Teaching is primarily a matter of patience and then we have effort. As I see the teachers around me, I see they do many things without reasoning. It should be more innovative, and bring innovation. I mean, kids should benefit from teaching. When it's typical or usual, I can't do it like that. In my teaching, I design something new for the next day nearly every day. I mean it is not just about following the coursebook, we need to put in effort and patience, we are working with students but in the end, you are happy. I mean when you see students are learning, making progress. I don't even mention the socioeconomic status of teachers, I don't think that there is anyone happy with that. But the greatest happiness is seeing students learn and when you do this with joy. You know when we were at university, we had groups of three and four and we did everything having fun. You can't keep doing this job unless you are having fun, I mean I define it like that.

Similar to Öykü and Suat, Feride also defined TI in terms of values such as altruism and caring:

> A teacher is an altruistic person who is also an exemplary person for their students, someone who cares for their development. A teacher is a person who shares everything they have within, I mean, their knowledge, manners, and faith.

While PSTs define teacher identity based on micro-level factors related to the classroom and teaching, i.e., methods and techniques, curriculum, objectives, and outcomes, novice teachers mainly think TI is multi-faceted and hard to define. However, experienced teachers' conceptualization of TI centers around values, virtues, and emotions in addition to the macro-level factors, e.g., the socioeconomic status of the profession in Türkiye. In this respect, it can be argued that PSTs have a more technical approach to defining TI while it is a fuzzy concept for novice teachers. However, experienced teachers have a more critical approach to defining TI by adopting a value-based and contextual approach. In Figure 1 below, the evolution of TI conceptualization in PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers is displayed.
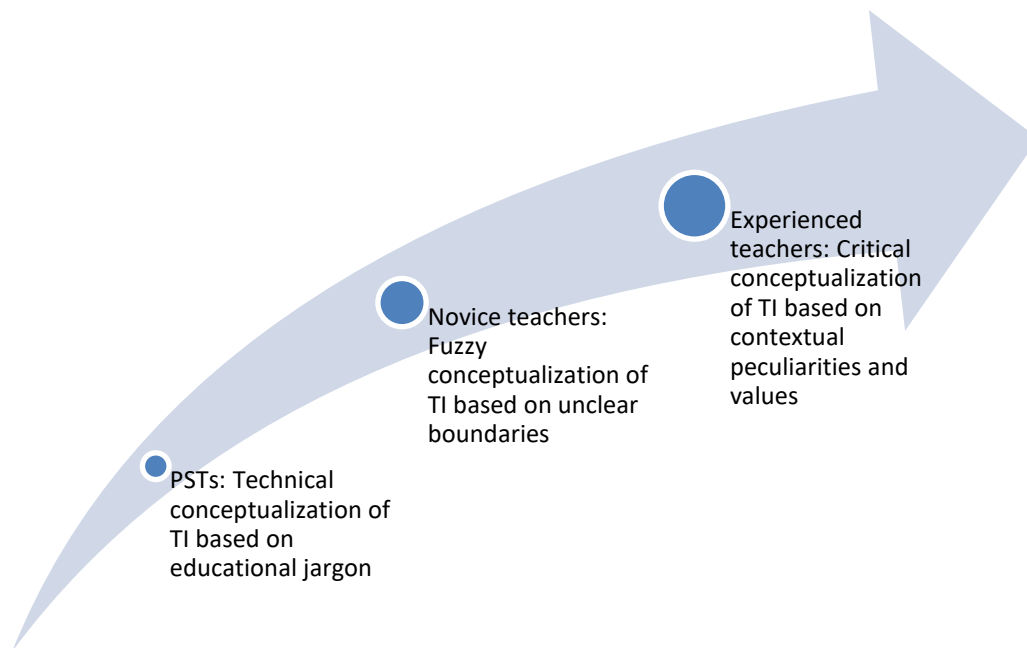
Figure 1. Evolution of TI conceptualizations in PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers

The underlying reason for this evolution from technical to fuzzy and then critical conceptualizations of TI might be that experienced teachers begin to associate the core of being a teacher with more than just achieving curricular goals, classroom management, or having pedagogical content knowledge after overcoming the tensions, conflicts, and challenges they face in the early years of their career; e.g., higher rates of attrition (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). These challenges may cause identity tensions making novice teaching career a "transitional" period (Olsen,2008). The fact that it is a transitional period for novice teachers explains why novice teachers have a fuzzy conceptualization of TI.

On the other hand, experienced teachers' accounts of defining TI reveal that TI means transforming students' lives in every aspect rather than only in academic aspects by being a role model for them. Studies (Richard, 1998, Borg, 2006) also reveal differences in cognitions, behaviors, and practices of experienced and less experienced teachers, e.g. experienced being more skilled in viewing the material from learners' perspective, being involved in more improvisational teaching without any pre-conceived ideas, and better knowledge of combining language learning with broader curricular goals. These differences align with experienced teachers' approach to conceptualizing TI as they emphasize macro-level factors that refer to the social, psychological, and socioeconomic transformation of the students rather than micro-level factors that involve only the classroom teaching and the school they teach in. In addition, experienced teachers also consider the enjoyment of this process a core part of TI so that this

enjoyment ensures a strong bond with the profession which helps them manage the displeasing aspects, e.g. lower socioeconomic status of the job.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This qualitative study revealed that PSTs are more certain about their definitions of teacher identity while novice teachers did not offer such clear-cut definitions as some also stated they could not fully define it. This abrupt shift from certainty to fuzziness in defining teacher identity between PSTs and novice teachers may be due to that novice teachers experience a 'praxis shock' (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) due to the unrealistic concepts of teaching (Lundeen, 2004) they enter the profession with. It may be argued that PSTs' fixed conceptions of who a teacher is or what being a teacher requires are shattered by the realities they experience in their peculiar contexts. This praxis shock may lead novice teachers to questioning and reconstructing conceptions, beliefs of ideas from their practicum experience, and teacher training about what being a teacher means, which results in a more skeptical approach to defining teacher identity. However, experienced teachers' definitions of teacher identity mainly revolve around values and contextual idiosyncrasies. This may indicate that novice teachers settle down the fuzziness about what being a teacher is as they experiment with a wider range of teaching contexts for a longer period.

This study adopts a cross-sectional approach to explore the problem; however, longitudinal studies with the same but fewer participants over a longer period could offer a clearer pathway on how PSTs, novice, and experienced teachers' conceptualizations of teacher identity evolve over time. Further studies could focus on conducting studies with the same teacher(s) over a long period of time starting from their PST years to being an experienced teacher so as to reveal the trajectory of the changes in their teacher identity definitions.

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