BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
MASTER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH THESIS

EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR USE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN BLENDED LEARNING

PREPARED BY

GÜLCAY KARAKOYUN

MASTER THESIS

ANKARA – 2022

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ASST. PROF. DR. SEVGİ ŞAHİN

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BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ

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Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Sevgi ŞAHİN

To my husband…

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The idea of researching student engagement came up right after a conversation with a teacher I was co-teaching during the COVID-10 pandemic when the institution was implementing a blended approach. One day at break time, she approached me and complained about how difficult to teach online in that class as students did not take part in any of the activities and respond to her questions. Obviously, she couldn't build rapport with the students, resulting in a negative teaching experience and an ineffective environment for teaching. Meanwhile, the same class was quite engaging (I was barely aware of the concept in detail back then) in face-to-face lessons because the students actively participated in every lesson stage, interacted with each other and showed positive attitudes toward their peers and me. Then, I began to wonder what could be the reason for this difference between our teaching experiences in the same class. After a year of hard work and commitment, I completed my master thesis about our experiences, as EFL teachers, in a blended learning and teaching environment and tried to give an answer to the question that had been hanging over in my head.

I am extremely thankful to everyone who has accompanied me during this challenging but enlightening journey. However, in particular, I would like to express my genuinely profound thanks to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Sevgi ŞAHİN, for her academic guidance and assistance throughout all phases of this research. Her endless enthusiasm and considerable efforts have helped me to create this diligent work.

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ÖZET

GÜLCAY KARAKOYUN

İngilizce Öğretim Elemanlarının Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf İçi Katılımı İle İlgili Algıları ve Kullandıkları Stratejiler

Başkent Üniversitesi
Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü
Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı

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Bu çalışma Türkiye'de özel bir üniversitede hazırlık okulunda İngilizce öğretim görevlilerinin harmanlanmış öğretimde öğrenci sınıf içi katılımına ilişkin algılarını ve öğrenci katılımını arttırmak için hangi stratejileri kullandıklarını anlamayı ve aynı zamanda öğrenci katılımı konusunda karşılaştıkları sorunları ve söz konusu sorunlara önerilen çözümleri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu anlatısal vaka çalışmasında, veriler 10 İngilizce öğretim görevlisiyle yapılan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle toplanmıştır Toplanılan nitel veriler Creswell'in (2013) sistematik içerik analiz çerçevesi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler İngilizce öğretim görevlilerinin öğrenci katılımı tanımını öğrencilerin "gözlenebilir davranışlarına" dayandırdıklarını ortaya koymuştur ki bu da öğretim görevlilerinin çok boyutlu yapısı olan öğrenci katılımına dair sınırlandırılmış bir yaklaşıma sahip olduklarını gösterdiği söylenebilir. Sınıf içi öğrenci katılımının bilişsel ve duygusal boyutlarının gözden kaçtığı ve bunun da öğrencilerin katılımlarının seviyesi konusunda öğretim görevlilerinin yanlış ya da eksik çıkarımlar yapmasına sebebiyet verebileceğini de göstermektedir. Öğrenci sınıf içi katılımının diğer alt boyutlarına dair farkındalıkları az olmasına rağmen, İngilizce öğretim görevlilerinin öğrencilerin yüz yüze ve çevrimiçi öğrenme ortamlarında davranışsal, duygusal ve bilişsel olarak katılımlarını arttırmak için çok çeşitli stratejiler uyguladıkları bulunmuştur. Çalışma bulgularına göre, öğretim görevlilerinin öğrenci katılımını arttırmada karşılaştıkları sorunlar öğrenci ve kurumsal temellidir; ancak önerdikleri çözümler sadece kurumsal temellidir. Ek olarak bu çalışmanın sonucunda araştırmanın sonuçları dikkate alınarak daha sonraki çalışmalar ile yabancı dil öğretim görevlileri, müfredat planlayıcıları, öğretmen eğitmenleri ve yabancı dil okul yöneticileri için önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenci katılımı, öğrenci katılımını arttırma stratejileri, harmanlanmış öğretimde öğrenci katılımı, yüksek öğretim, yabancı dil öğrenimi

ABSTRACT

GÜLCAY KARAKOYUN

EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Student Engagement and Their Use of Student Engagement Strategies in Blended Learning

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Master in English Language Teaching with Thesis

2022

This study aimed to understand EFL instructors' perceptions of student engagement and their use of student engagement strategies in blended learning in a preparatory school in Turkey. Moreover, the study also aimed to find out the problems they encountered for student engagement and the solutions recommended to the mentioned problems. In this narrative case study, 10 EFL instructors were interviewed to collect the data. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using Creswell's (2013) systematic content analysis framework. The findings revealed that the EFL instructors' definition of student engagement referred to students' observable behaviors: behavioral engagement, which implies that the instructors have a narrow understanding of the multidimensional construct. It was found that emotional and cognitive engagement indicators might escape the instructors' attention, which mistakenly results in misinterpreting the level of student engagement for some individual learners. This might be a call for expanding instructors' conceptualization of the student engagement to have a good grasp of the dimensions of engagement for better teaching supported by in-service trainings. Despite their narrow understanding of the construct, EFL instructors implemented a wide range of strategies in face-to-face and online teaching to engage students behaviorally, cognitively and emotionally. Moreover, the findings also revealed that the problems they encountered for student engagement were learner-based and institutional-based; however, the solutions they recommended were institutional-based. Taking the results of the study into consideration, several implications and suggestions were made for foreign language instructors, curriculum designers, teacher trainers and language program administrators as well as further studies.

Keywords: Student engagement, student engagement strategies, student engagement in blended learning, higher education, foreign language learning

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ABBREVIATION LIST

ACL	American Culture and Literature
AH	American History
BL	Blended Learning
EL	English Linguistics
ELL	English Language and Literature
ELT	English Language Teaching
IR	International Relations
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The innovations in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have impacted almost every aspect of education and consequently mirrored the developments in educational domains. New technologies have led to the need for a change to improve educational processes and necessitated integrating new approaches with traditional methods and successful implementation. For this reason, the modes of instruction have changed to a great extent as a consequence of the developments in computer-based technology and the effective use of technological tools. Moreover, advances in technology have influenced the instructional design of educators because education takes its shape according to the dominant paradigm of the age and structures (Garison & Kanuka, 2004). Consequently, integrating technology into education has paved the way for new educational contexts where traditional face-to-face learning and teaching are combined with online education.

Integration of technology into education has transformed the nature of learning and teaching contexts. Adopting a combination of different instructional delivery modes can address the needs of students with different learning styles. The application of digital learning technologies has helped educators to transcend the barriers of traditional instruction in a language classroom and to find alternative ways of contemporary teaching practices for deep and meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, as Schmitz et al. (1996) stated, teachers should be responsible for applying technology to teaching because it is easy to access data in the Age of Information. Besides, the young generation, called as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), is born into the world of technology now; therefore, they "… come pre-skilled with technology proficiencies to universities and a built-in acceptance for new technology" (Uğur et al., 2011, p. 6).

An engaging learning environment is a significant contributor to successful learning (Kuh, et al., 2005). Concurrent with the developments in technology, the goals of interactive and engaging learning experiences have made it possible to reconcile the strengths of face-to-face and online education. To this end, blended learning, which emerged as an alternative way to deliver instructions and overcome difficulties related to the engagement between instructors and learners in formal and online education, incorporates the best features of technology and traditional methods to address different educational goals. It engages learners by attuning different instructional settings and catering to learners' needs with a specific focus on learning objectives, educational backgrounds, age, and learning preferences for learning a foreign language. Blended learning "… is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p. 96), thereby involving the vital aspects of face-to-face and online learning. This offers the possibility to reshape and improve traditional classroom instruction. In other words, it improves both the quality of the teaching and learning in face-to-face education and enables the effective use of online components. Simply put, blended learning represents an educational approach that combines classroom and online activities designed in alignment with the objectives of specific courses and programs (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

However, difficulties can arise during the implementation of a blended approach. One of the most significant challenges in learning and teaching is to sustain student engagement with various learning technologies, instructional strategies, and delivery of instruction (Guthrie, 2001; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2004). As a way to manage this challenge, blended learning is often suggested because it may provide an effective learning environment for student engagement and success (Picciano, et al., 2013) when and if properly utilized. To illustrate, students feel more motivated to interact and collaborate with peers and teachers (Maman & Rajab, 2012). However, there are some challenges in ensuring and maintaining student engagement in blended learning. One of the issues may arise from students' choices regarding in which context they choose to participate more and how teachers can support and manage students' learning (Bonk & Graham, 2012) as well as promote and sustain engagement in the class. Blended learning in its nature requires proactively engaged students in the learning process; therefore, creating a highly interactive learning environment could resolve the issue (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Active research on student engagement started more than 30 years ago (Christenson et al., 2012), and research on the term engagement is on the rise due to its increasing use in the literature on Second Language Acquisition and language teaching methodology (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). In addition, student engagement has become an issue that should be investigated from different perspectives as it has adopted a further understanding with the changes in educational contexts. Thus, there is a need for research to uncover the state-of-the-art in the concept of student engagement in blended learning (Halverson & Graham, 2019). Moreover, with the COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning has extended its use in scholarly contexts, especially in higher education because educational institutions switched from predominantly face-to-face teaching to fully online or blended modes. Instructors were propelled to adopt online teaching practices that they were not ready for and had to move their face-to-face instruction to online learning without making any adaptations. The need for adopting blended learning resulted from an emergency health crisis; therefore, instructors with little or no experience in online teaching had to use teaching and learning materials designed for face-to-face teaching in online teaching. Moreover, students were also forced to adopt this new learning and teaching mode which affected their readiness and in turn, resulted in several problems in relation to their engagement in face-to-face and online learning and teaching contexts. For this reason, one particular and common challenge for instructors in this process was to sustain student engagement and make use of strategies to engage students in face-to-face and online teaching. The increasing use of the blended learning in educational institutions in response to the immediate crisis has added a new dimension to the discussions on student engagement. In addition, student engagement as a concept has not received the attention it deserves in the field of second language learning and teaching, mostly because the focus has been on motivation and diverted away from engagement (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). As a result, the challenge is to conduct a deep investigation into the strategies for active student involvement in blended learning and understand student engagement from teachers' perspectives. Moreover, the changes in the instructional modes and student engagement strategies used by teachers to promote student engagement need to be reevaluated. In similar vein, it becomes necessary for teachers to revisit their teaching methods and strategies to engage students in a blended learning and teaching environment because student engagement positively impacts learning achievement (Carini et al., 2006; Krause & Coates, 2005; Park, 2005).

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

Student engagement has been defined as the "holy grail of learning" (Sinatra et al., 2014, p. 1). An engaged student moves from passive recipient of knowledge to active participant in examining, questioning, and relating new ideas to the previously learned and experienced, which leads to achieving the retention of learned information (Barkley, 2010). Therefore, student engagement is significant for students' academic efficacy, learning, and achievement (Lewis, 2010), and this makes it a significant contributor to language learning success. However, especially in the field of second language acquisition, discussions of student engagement have been insufficient as language specialists have mostly focused on psychological dimension of student involvement; that is motivation (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Moreover, with the increasing implementation of blended learning in response to the needs in education due to the immediate COVID-19 crisis, further research is needed to understand EFL instructors' perceptions of student engagement and their use of in-class practices to engage students in blended learning and teaching environments.

Blended learning can be an optimal learning environment for students since it opens up a new opportunity to have a learning experience beyond the classroom. Indeed, it enables participants to access information quickly and bridge the gap between teachers and students beyond the classroom. However, as is for all instructional designs, one of the challenges is to maximize student engagement. Although students can access information more easily than before, this does not necessarily mean that the input they themselves receive turns into the intake or that they take ownership of their learning and engage in both instructional settings. Moreover, feeling disconnected from teachers and peers, external distractions, contextual barriers such as lack of technology or technological devices, repeated absence from class discussions and collaborative activities, and more importantly, navigating between different modes of course delivery may result in disengagement (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019).

Given this notion, it posits that implementing effective strategies to facilitate student engagement could be the greatest challenge in blended learning environments. Therefore, it is timely to investigate teachers' perceptions of student engagement and their strategies to create an engaging learning environment. In the current research context, instruction delivery has moved from a traditional model of face-to-face education to blended education due to the outbreak of the pandemic. However, from the onset of the pandemic, studies

regarding English language teaching and learning focused solely on teachers, students, instructional practices, technology, and teaching environments in online education (e.g. Andriivna et al., 2020; Jones, 2020; Maican & Cocoradă, 2021; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Russell, 2020; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Moreover, regarding the blended learning, the studies focused on students' and instructors' perceptions (Aji, et al., 2020), the benefits and challenges of blended learning (Dahmash, 2020), and the implementation of the communicative approach in blended learning from students' perspectives (Mustadi et al., 2021). Considering its proven importance for learning, the rapid changes in educational contexts due to the pandemic as well as the scarcity of research on student engagement in blended learning, further research needed to be investigated in a related context. With the purpose of filling this gap, the preparatory school which implemented blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was selected as the research context for this thesis.

Therefore, firstly the present study attempts to discover how EFL instructors conceptualize and perceive student engagement in the new educational approach; that's, blended learning. Second, the study also aims to identify EFL instructors' choices of student engagement strategies based on their conceptualization and perceptions of the construct and the problems and challenges they encounter to foster student engagement in blended learning as well as the recommended solutions to the problems caused by contextual factors.

Although studies have considered student engagement as the predictor of learning (Appleton et al., 2008; Finn, 1993; Fredricks et al., 2004; Jimerson et al., 2003; Klem & Connell, 2004; Kuh, 2003), research regarding the understanding of student engagement and investigation into teachers' in-class practices to facilitate engagement in blended learning environments needs for further research (Halverson et al., 2014; Halverson & Graham, 2019; Heilporn et al., 2020; Raes, et al., 2020). Thus, in order to contribute to fill in this gap in the relevant literature, the current study aims to focus specifically on EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement and teachers' perceptions of their student engagement strategy practices to optimize engagement in blended learning in a preparatory school context.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Student engagement has adopted a different understanding due to the changes in educational contexts. Following the improvements, technology has enabled educators to extend teaching and learning beyond the classroom. Blended learning, benefiting from technology, integrates online education with traditional face-to-face instruction and offers students a new learning experience. However, students may encounter difficulties in navigating between different learning environments; therefore, teachers need to use student engagement strategies to engage students actively in both educational contexts. For these reasons, student engagement needs to be investigated concerning specific learning environments with a context-specific glance. The breakout of the COVID-19 and transmission to partly or fully online teaching and learning contexts made it necessary to conduct a study in a blended learning course. Hence, the present study aimed to investigate how EFL instructors in a preparatory school conceptualize student engagement and to find out the strategies they employed to engage students in blended learning. It also aimed to uncover whether there were any differences between the student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching environments. The phenomenon under the investigation was examined with its three major components (behavioral, emotional and cognitive) in a blended learning environment. Moreover, this study investigated the problems and challenges the instructors encountered for student engagement in blended learning and their solutions to the mentioned problems. This study is believed to fill a niche in the research on student engagement because the scrutiny of the related literature shows the lack of qualitative data about student engagement and teacher strategies to enhance it in blended learning environments.

1.3.1. Research questions

The following research questions are addressed in the study:

1. How do the EFL instructors conceptualize “student engagement”?
    1.1. Do online teaching and face-to-face teaching make a difference in EFL instructors’ conceptualization of student engagement?
2. What student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors use in face-to-face and online teaching to foster student engagement?

2.1. Which of the student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors consider the most effective and the least effective in face-to-face and online learning and teaching? And why?

3. Are there any differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, what are they?

    3.1. Are there any changes in students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching?

    3.2. Are there any differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching?

4. What are the problems that EFL instructors encounter in student engagement and the solutions they recommend to the mentioned problems?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Student engagement has been the topic of investigation in educational psychology for years. In addition, the pandemic has opened up an opportunity to revisit the construct with a new understanding of second language learning and teaching. Student engagement is highly critical for second language learning because "no method of language teaching can deliver results without ensuring that students are actively engaged in the learning process" (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020, p. 5). Therefore, teachers can employ different strategies to create a meaningful learning environment where students actively engage in pedagogical tasks. However, the pandemic has reshaped the ways of learning and teaching and, in particular, the changes in the educational contexts with the developments in technology have enabled the extension of the learning and teaching experience beyond the classroom. Due to those changes, the implementation of blended learning, as the mixed method of face-to-face and online learning, has been increasing recently. Student engagement, on the other hand, has adopted a different understanding of blended learning due to its increase in use and as well as the talks about the concerns about the need for more research.

In the light of these developments, this study aims to open up a new pathway around the construct by adding a new dimension. It also aims to contribute to the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) literature with regard to EFL instructors' perceptions of student engagement and in-class practices they use to increase student engagement in face-to-face

and online teaching environments as the investigation of how to improve student engagement is still open to discussion (Raes et al., 2020). Similarly, the strategies to enhance student engagement in blended learning contexts need further investigation (Graham, 2019; Raes et al., 2020; Siemens et al., 2015).

As stated earlier, student engagement is a significant element of effective learning and an important issue to be addressed and this study is believed to have made theoretical and practical contributions to the field. Accordingly, we considered that it would be another major contributor of this study to inform instructors, teacher educators, curriculum designers, and mostly importantly, English language program administrator at universities about the dimensions of student engagement and in-class practices to increase student engagement in blended learning.

In addition to these contributions, we also considered that it would be useful to investigate what language school administrations should do to provide support for instructors to deal with the problems and challenges in encountering student engagement specific to face-to-face and online teaching. Moreover, we believed that the solutions recommended by the instructors to the mentioned problems would contribute to the efforts for effective language education.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

This is a narrative case study that investigates EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement and perceptions of their in-class practices of student engagement strategies in a blended learning environment in a preparatory school context in tertiary education. The reader should bear in mind that within the scope of this research, due to the research questions and the time limitation, the study is based on one educational context with few participants focusing on their perspectives since it aims to provide thick descriptions of a specific educational context to uncover its context-sensitive aspects to reach out a localized understanding of the concept of student engagement in blended learning from a teacher perspective. Further research can be conducted on students' perceptions of engagement strategies in a similar context.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a review of literature on student engagement, blended learning, student engagement in blended learning, and in-class practices implemented for student engagement are presented in detail.

2.1. Introduction

The advances in technology have driven education forward from the traditional settings. Conventional methods have become insufficient to address the needs of learners as the sole source. Therefore, technology integration has become necessary to reform the educational approach and learners' educational experiences in a face-to-face learning setting. Increasing awareness and adoption of communication technology have led to understanding the potential of this tool and how it can be integrated well into face-to-face learning and teaching. As a result, new technologies have been implemented in educational contexts over the years, allowing the integration of new teaching practices.

Blended learning, which emerged from integrating new technologies into education, is a learning and teaching approach combining the best practices of technology-mediated learning and face-to-face instruction. Riel et al. (2016) define *blended learning environments* as those that "… provide students with online and face-to-face places to meet, collaborate, and work on meaningful projects. Each of these spaces has particular benefits to successful learning" (p. 189). It "provides more productive engagement among students in the online environment and course content" (Ziegler et al., 2006, p. 27). The strength of blended learning lies in using traditional teaching practices with web-based tools effectively using traditional teaching practices with web-based tools. That provides an opportunity for students to achieve their learning goals in different learning contexts. Blended learning is a "strategic and systematic approach" to using technology and traditional methods that effectively integrate different modes of instruction delivery (Krause, 2007). The integration and the effective utilization of technology in curricula enhance the learning environment and keep students and teachers engaged in a way that may not be merely available in face-to-face or online learning environments (Krause, 2007).

On the other hand, as blended learning environments provide multiple modalities of delivery; therefore, maintaining student engagement could be more difficult for students as they may encounter problems navigating between instructional modalities (Meyer, 2014). Teachers may face issues regarding the level of student engagement in face-to-face and online learning and teaching contexts. As it has a pivotal role in student success, student engagement has gained importance in the last decade and received attention from administrators, researchers, and educators (Eichhorn et al., 2019; Kahu & Nelson, 2018). Additionally, contextual variations affect student engagement in learning settings and teacher strategies to improve it (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019; Fredricks et al., 2004). On the other hand, educators encounter many problems and challenges fostering student engagement in specific learning settings. They employ different student engagement strategies to erode those challenges and problems and maximize students' engaged time. However, few studies investigated student engagement in blended learning (Martin et al., 2017; Halverson & Graham, 2014; Bolliger et al., 2018; Raes et al., 2019) and teacher strategies to foster student engagement (Halverson & Graham, 2019; Halverson et al., 2014; Jeffrey et al., 2014; Manwaring et al., 2017; Siemens et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2018). Still, how to optimize student engagement is not clear (Raes et al., 2020), and the strategies that teachers use need further research (Graham, 2019; Raes et al., 2020; Siemens et al., 2015). For this reason, different strategies concerning the context in which they are implemented for creating an engaged learning environment for students and teachers need further investigation.

2.2. Definition and Conceptualization of Student Engagement

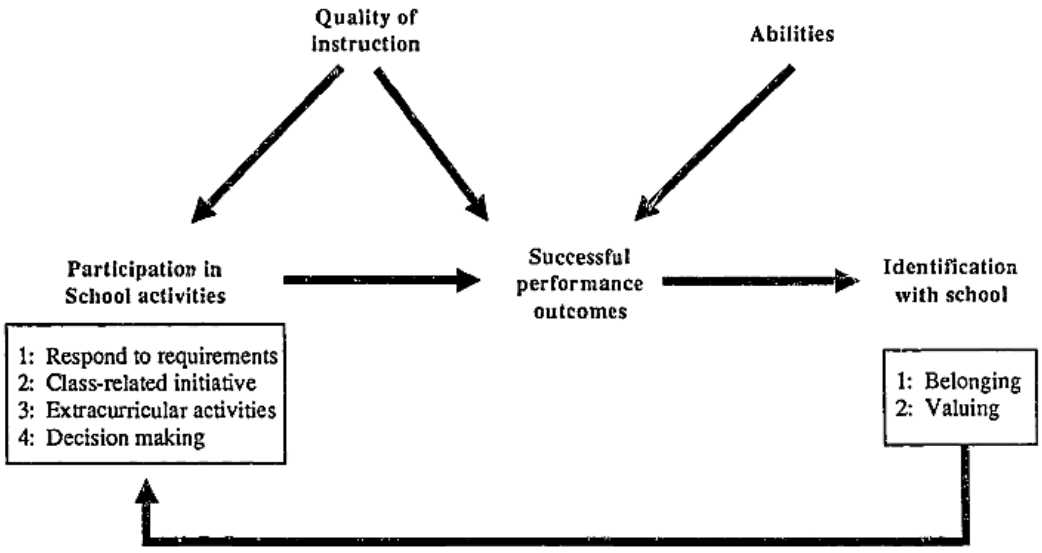
Researchers have made several definitions of student engagement and put forward many theoretical models demonstrating the relationship between student engagement and academic success at school (Fredricks et al., 2011). Each model varies in the number and the way they define the sub-dimensions of engagement. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate that there is a common agreement regarding what comprises the construct: namely behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004; Jimerson et al., 2003; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Svalberg, 2009).

Mosher and McGowan (1985) defined student engagement as engagement with the school stating, "the attitude leading to, and the behavior of, participation in the secondary

school's programs" (p. 14). They concluded that engagement has multiple interactive determinants involving (1) "societal, economic, community, and legal factors", (2) "family and student characteristics (including psychological characteristics)", and (3) "school characteristics that influence student and school outcomes" (p. 13). Their definition descends into the behavioral dimension of student engagement.

Finn (1989) defined student engagement with two dimensions, behavioral and emotional engagement. He defined engagement as student participation in school and feeling a sense of belonging to the school community and valuing what school offered. He believed that there was a strong connection between students' participation in school-relevant activities, their identification with school, and behavioral and emotional engagement. He proposed a model called the "participation and identification model" as a solution to the problems in relation to school drop-outs in the USA (See Figure 2.1.).

Figure 2.1. Participation-identification Model



Note. Adapted from "Withdrawing from School" by J.D. Finn, 1989, *Review of Educational Research, 130*(59). Copyright 1989 by The American Educational Research Association.

According to the model, participation is students' involvement in school and classroom activities, accompanied by success, and a sense of belonging to the school. Successful performance leads to increased identification, resulting in active participation in the classroom.

Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell (1990) defined student engagement as "initiation of action, effort, and persistence on schoolwork, as well as their ambient emotional states during learning activities" (p. 24). They stated that teacher behaviors influence student perceived control which fosters or undermines student engagement and as a result affects academic success.

Newmann et al. (1992) defined student engagement as students' psychological investment in learning. In their study, they explained the factors that affect student engagement and achievement including family, peers, participation in extra-curricular activities, and part-time employment, and offered several implications to engage students in academic work. Students' socioeconomic backgrounds and their attitudes toward school were identified as the factors that influence their engagement in authentic work.

Skinner and Belmont (1993) defined engagement referring to behavioral and emotional components as "sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone" (p. 572). They furthered their definition that an engaging learner chooses tasks according to their competencies, initiates action, and puts an effort and focus on learning tasks by showing enthusiasm, curiosity, and interest. The focus of the study was to investigate the relationship between teacher behaviors and student engagement.

Finn and Rock (1997) defined engagement as referring to two dimensions, participation, and identification with school. The aim of the study was to understand how students with low socioeconomic backgrounds achieved more success than their counterparts. Compliance with rules, student initiative, and participation in school life were investigated in the study. They concluded that a low level of engagement has a direct relationship with school dropouts.

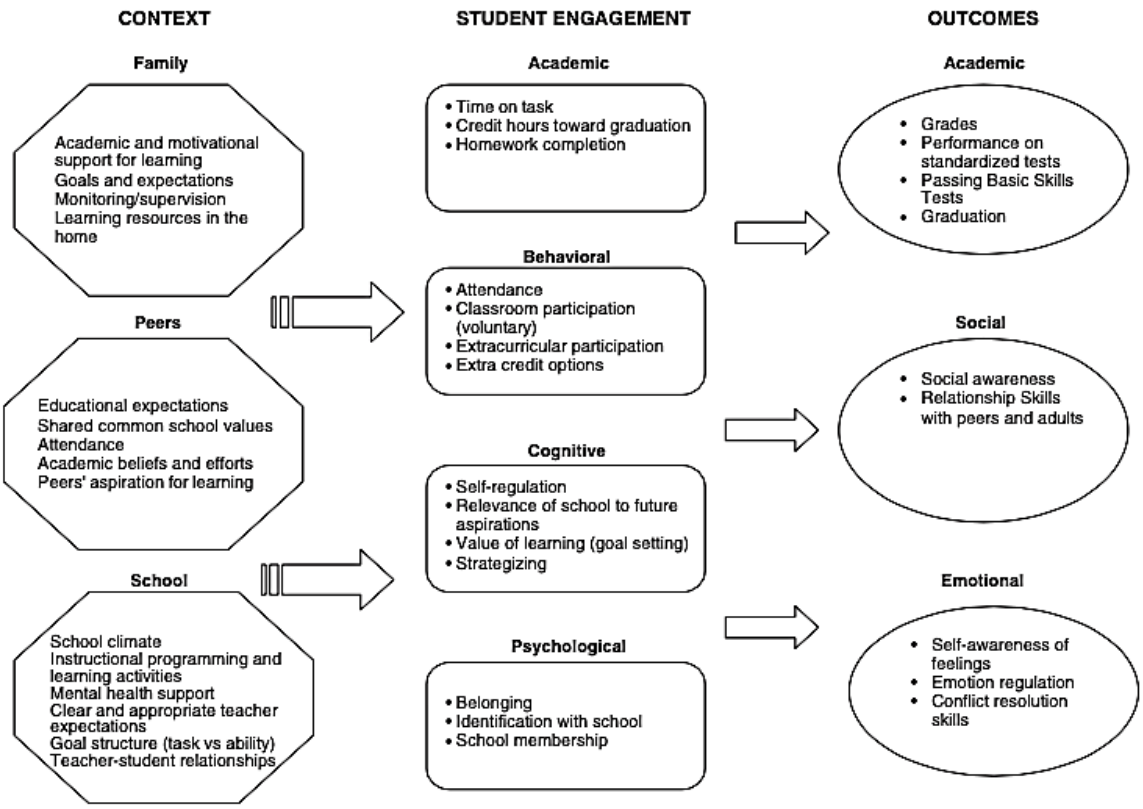
Jimerson et al. (2003) defined engagement in the context of school engagement with three components: behavioral dimension is concerned with students' observable behaviors such as participation in extracurricular activities, doing homework, and academic success; cognitive dimension means self-efficacy, motivation, perceptions related to school, teachers and peers; and affective dimension refers to students' feelings, about the school, teachers,

and peers. They stated that each dimension is interrelated due to the multidimensional nature of engagement.

Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2004) defined engagement as a meta-construct including behavioral engagement (participation in school), emotional engagement (positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school), and cognitive engagement (investment in learning). They also suggested that engagement is influenced students' interaction with the context and their reactions to changes that take place in learning environments. Until this time, student engagement was considered a strong predictor of school completion and school dropout, and the focus was on students at risk (Christenson et al, 2008; Finn, 2006; Reschly & Christenson, 2006). However, the National Research and Council and the Institute of Medicine (2004) included all students reporting that engagement manifests itself in student effort, persistence, self-regulation for achieving goals and enjoying learning (Klem & Connel, 2004; National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004). Then, engagement became the foundation of high school reform efforts (Appleton et al., 2006) and was regarded as a multidimensional construct involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Different from the previous approaches, Appleton et al. (2006) defined student engagement as a "multidimensional construct comprised of four sub-types: academic, behavioral, cognitive and psychological" (p. 429). They defined psychological dimension as students' sense of belonging, identification with school, and school membership. They also highlighted that students' perspectives are the best indicators to measure the cognitive and psychological engagement and provide a better understanding of students' experiences in a learning environment (See Figure 2.2.)

Figure 2.2. Engagement sub-types, indicators and outcomes



Note. Student Engagement Model. Reprinted from "Measuring cognitive and psychological engagement: Validation of the student engagement instrument," by J.J. Appleton, S.L. Christenson, D. Kim, and A.L. Reschly, 2006, Journal of School Psychology, 44, p. 430. Copyright 2006 by the Study of School Psychology.

Appleton et al. (2006) criticized that research focused mostly on observable behaviors in relation to academic and behavioral engagement; consequently, less attention and importance were given to psychological and cognitive engagement and their relation to school performance. Psychological engagement refers to positive school behaviors such as tasks persistence, participation, and attention (Goodenow, 1993). Considering its contribution to school performance, they urged that students' psychological and cognitive needs should also be taken into consideration (Appleton et al., 2006).

Reeve and Tseng (2011) proposed agentic engagement as the fourth component, suggesting that it is important to understand students' contributions to the teacher's instruction and thus improve learning conditions. They defined agentic engagement as "students' constructive contribution into the flow of the instruction they receive." (p. 258). More specifically, agentic engagement refers to students taking an active role in the

instruction by offering input, suggesting a goal to be achieved, asking for help such as feedback or modeling so on.

Despite the consensus about its multidimensional nature, student engagement is defined by different types of dimensions whose number range from two to four namely behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and agentic (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Moreover, these definitions include "engagement, engagement in schoolwork, academic engagement, school engagement, student engagement, student engagement in academic work, student engagement in/with school, and participation identification" (Smiley & Anderson, 2011, p. 18). Table 2.1. (Appleton et al., 2008) demonstrates definitional variations across conceptualizations of engagement.

Table 2.1. Definitional Variations Across Conceptualizations of Engagement

Name	Research Citation[a]	Construct Definition
Engagement	A. Audas & Willms, 2001	A. Extent to which students *participate* in academic and non-academic activities and *identify* with and *value* the goals of schooling
	B. Connell & Wellborn, 1991	B. When *psychological needs* (i.e., autonomy, belonging, competence) *are met* within cultural enterprises such as family, school, and work, engagement occurs and is exhibited in *affect, behavior,* and *cognition* (if not, disaffection occurs).
	C. Russel, Ainley & Frydenberg, 2005	C. Energy *in action*, the connection between person and activity; consisting of three forms: *behavioral, emotional,* and *cognitive*
	D. Skinner & Belmont, 1993	D. Sustained *behavioral involvement* in learning activities accompanied by *positive emotional tone* (vs. disaffection).
	E. Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990	E. Initiation of *action, effort,* and *persistence with schoolwork* and ambient *emotional states* during learning activities.
Engagement in schoolwork	F. National Research Council/Institute of Medicine (2004)	F. Involves both *behaviors* and *emotions* and is mediated by perceptions of competence and control *(I can),* values and goals *(I want to),* and social connectedness *(I belong).*
Academic engagement	G. Libby, 2004	G. Extent to which students are *motivated to learn* and *do well* in school.
School engagement	H. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004	H. *Emotional* (positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school), *Behavioral* (participation in school), and *Cognitive* (investment) *Engagement* subtypes.

Table 2.1. (continued) Definitional Variations Across Conceptualizations of Engagement

Name	Research Citation[a]	Construct Definition
Student engagement	I. Furlong et al., 2003	I. *Affective, Behavioral*, and *Cognitive* Engagement subtypes (same as Jimerson et al., 2003) within *student, peer group, classroom* and *schoolwide contexts.*
	J. Jimerson, Campos & Greif, 2003	J. *Affective* (feelings about school, teachers, and peers), *Behavioral* (observable actions), and *Cognitive* (perceptions and beliefs) *Engagement* subtypes.
	K. Chapman, 2003	K. *Willingness to participate* in routine school activities with subtle *cognitive, behavioral,* and *affective indicators of* student engagement in specific learning tasks.
	L. Natriello, 1984	L. *Student participation* in the activities offered as part of the school program
	M. Yazzie-Mintz, 2007	M. *Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic* (students' effort, investment, and strategies for learning), *Social/Behavioral/Participatory* (social, extracurricular, and nonacademic social activities; interactions with peers) and *Emotional* (feelings of connection to school, including their performance, school climate, and relationships with others).
Student engagement in academic work	N. Marks, 2000	N. *Psychological process* involving the *attention, interest, investment,* and *effort* students expend in the work of learning.
	O. Newmann, Wehlage & Lamborn, 1992	O. The student's *psychological investment* in and *effort* directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote.
Student engagement in/with school	P. Mosher & MacGowan, 1985	P. *Attitude* leading toward and *participatory behavior* in secondary school's programs (state of mind and way of behaving)
	Q. Klem & Connell, 2004	Q. *Ongoing engagement* (behavioral, emotional and cognitive components); *reaction to challenge* (ideally engage optimistically).
	R. Christenson & Anderson, 2002	Participation identification[b] R. *Psychological* (e.g. belonging), *Behavioral* (e.g., participation), *Cognitive* (e.g., self-regulated learning), and *Academic* (e.g., time on task) *Engagement*
	S. Finn, 1989, 1993; Finn & Rock, 1997	S. *Participation* in (at four increasing levels) and *identification* with school (belonging in school and valuing school-related outcomes.)

[a]Letters are intended for aligning citations with definitions and not meant to convey a hierarchy.

[b]Although not labeled "engagement," this theory is at the core of many conceptualizations of engagement

There has been a proliferation of meanings of student engagement evolving over time in the literature. Barkley answered the question about the definition of student engagement as, “Well, the answer is that it means different things to different people” (2010, p. 4). There has been a little consensus in the literature about how to define student engagement (Appleton et al., 2008). However, there is a general consensus that student engagement is concerned with students’ involvement in school-related tasks and activities (Appleton et al., 2006) and an umbrella term encompassing three major components: behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004; Handelsman et al., 2005).

2.3. Defining Blended Learning

The educational field has always reflected concurrent developments in Information and Communication Technology. One of the examples to this is the integration of technology with traditional teaching methods and creating new educational contexts for learning. The growing understanding of the importance of interactive and engaging language-learning experiences has paved the way for the widespread use of blended learning in education due to those developments. Especially in recent years, the implementation of blended learning has been increasing in higher education (Bernard et al., 2014, Lim & Wang, 2016). The reason is that blended learning has the potential for increased student engagement. Therefore, it has been a direct benefit to language learners (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham & Robinson, 2007; Dringuss & Seagull, 2015). Among these benefits are developing language learners’ autonomy, practicing language outside the classroom, increasing students’ communication and engagement, facilitating interaction in the target language, and promoting collaboration (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019; Marsh, 2012).

Blended learning has emerged as a contemporary approach to learning and teaching. Picciano et al. (2013) associate blended learning with other educational fields such as English teaching methodology, distance education, and technology. However, blended learning differs from these teaching methods in terms of delivery of instruction by combining traditional and online teaching methods. In other words, it involves more than one delivery mode. Sharma (2010) categorized the definition of blended learning into three groups. The first one defines it as a “combination of face-to-face and online teaching” (p.456).

Similarly, Stein and Graham (2014) defined it as "If one imagines a spectrum of technology enhancement, with traditional onsite on the left and fully online on the right, a blended course could fall anywhere in between the two" (p.12). The second definition refers to "a combination of technologies" (p.456). Delialioğlu and Yıldırım (2007) explain the description as the systematic and strategic integration of online tools, which created a new way of instruction. The instruction delivery is provided both in the classroom and online, and the third definition defines it as a "combination of methodologies" (p. 456). Likewise, at the most basic level, Driscoll (2002) described blended learning as the mix of instructional technology with face-to-face education and is not implemented unilaterally.

According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), blended learning is the transformational approach to teaching and learning. It represents the transformation of rethinking and redesigning learning settings and revisiting teaching methods and techniques. Additionally, it has led to the shift of teaching practices and delivery of instruction to enhance engagement and increase the opportunities to have online learning experiences. Driscoll (2002) proposed four different concepts about the definition of blended learning in the language and teaching context by concluding that "the point is that blended learning means different things to different people, which illustrates its widely untapped potential." (p. 1).

1. To combine or mix modes of Web-based technology (e.g., live virtual classroom, self-paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio, and text) to accomplish an educational goal.
2. To combine various pedagogical approaches (e.g., constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism) to produce an optimal learning outcome without instructional technology.
3. To combine any form of instructional technology (e.g., videotape, CD-ROM, Web-based training, film) with face-to-face instructor-led training.
4. To mix or combine instructional technology with actual job tasks to create a harmonious effect of learning and working.

Blended learning aims to engage students in the learning process and provide students with a highly interactive learning environment where a sense of community is built through collaboration (Neumeier, 2005). This interactive environment combines the two delivery

modes for student learning subjects, context, and objectives. For this reason, the implementation of the blended learning and teaching approach has increased because the instruction delivery promotes students' satisfaction with their learning process and learning outcomes (Lim & Morris, 2009). With the widespread application of learning technologies, teachers have found the opportunity to integrate technology into the traditional learning environment and provide students with more opportunities to discover different learning styles catering to their needs to create more meaningful learning experiences (Lim & Morris, 2009). Significantly, blended learning allows for a more different learning experience than based solely on traditional or online learning and gauges student engagement in and outside of the classroom, making it a "scalable, flexible and meaningful way of teaching and learning" (Senffner & Kepler, 2015, p. 1).

2.4. Student Engagement in Blended Learning

Student engagement is the essential component of learning, achievement, retention, and performance (Bryson & Hand, 2008). Meaningful learning can occur when learners are actively engaged (Kuh et al., 2005). Therefore, the ultimate goal is to create a learning environment where learners pursue learning proactively. In this sense, blended learning provides engaging learning experiences for students with a mixed teaching and learning approach where they participate in-class activities and develop a sense of belonging in face-to-face learning and manage their learning, utilize technology, work in collaboration, and develop their learning strategies in online learning (Hu et al., 2008). Student engagement should be supported with purposeful educational tasks and activities to create a learning environment where students improve academically. With regard to this, blended learning offers the opportunity for optimal conditions for language learning (Barkley, 2010).

On the other hand, blended learning can make it difficult for students to be fully engaged, as they have to navigate two different instruction delivery modes (Banerjee, 2011). In addition, sustaining student engagement in online settings may be more complicated than in face-to-face learning environments. Students may feel disconnected from instructors and peers as they require students' self-regulation in time and effort. Likewise, Meyer (2014) emphasized the importance of engagement in online learning settings in higher education as:

"Achieving student engagement in online courses may be more critical than in on-campus courses because online students have fewer ways to be engaged with the institution and perhaps greater demands on their time and attention. In other words, engagement may be the critical key to making online learning an essential component of higher education and an indispensable part of an institution's future" (p.1-2).

Bonk and Graham (2012) presented six major issues in their comprehensive work, namely (1) "the role of live interaction" which refers to the quantity of student interaction in both face-to-face and online learning settings; (2) the role of learners' choices and self-regulation" is related to students' preferences of the context they participate in more and how a teacher can manage students' learning; (3) models for support and training is the support for technical issues and delivery of instruction; (4) "dealing with the digital divide" is related to the differences between the societies in terms of access to modern information and communication technology; (5) "cultural adaptation" refers to the relevance of teaching and learning materials to students' cultures and (6) "finding the balance between innovation and production" is related to the issues may occur in efforts to incorporate technology and obtaining cost-effective outcomes simultaneously (p. 14-16).

It is unlikely for teachers to create an engaging learning environment for each individual student; however, blended learning offers an "accessible, interactive, flexible, active, encouraging and inspiring" learning and teaching context (Zhang & Zu, 2018). Neumeier (2005) proposed a framework for designing a blended learning setting in foreign language teaching and learning and described two stages. The first stage is related to decide on the learning context to manage the learning process as a result of the detailed analysis of the purposes for learning, the learner characteristics and the infrastructure. In the second stage, the learning objectives and content are set and the activities and their use in face-to-face and online mode are planned.

2.5. In-class Practices Implemented to Foster Student Engagement in Face-to-Face and Online Learning and Teaching Environments

Research indicates specific teacher behaviors, when employed effectively, foster student engagement (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Those strategies constitute a significant factor in an engaging learning environment. Teachers can develop and implement strategies to

promote and enhance student engagement in the classroom. It is essential to understand the level of attention and use effective strategies to create an optimal learning environment accordingly. Numerous methods have been identified to correlate positively to maximizing student engagement in face-to-face and online learning settings. They are generally related to an interactive learning environment: effective questioning, modeling, effective feedback, facilitating active cooperative learning, rapport building, teaching and learning materials and use of technology. (Benson et al., 2005; Frisby & Meyers, 2008; Good & Brophy, 2003; Granitz et al., 2009; Harbour et al., 2015; Krause, 2007; McDuff, 2012; Newmann, 1991; Rosenshine, 1995).

2.5.1. Effective questioning

Questioning has a considerable potential to engage students successfully; to engage students with questions, teachers must create a learning environment based on reciprocity between the teacher and encouraged and willing students to respond (Caram & Davis, 2005). In addition, teacher questions improve student learning and increase their participation. Thus, effective questioning has an array of strategies that develop critical thinking, increase student responses, and stipulate their behavioral engagement (Caram & Davis, 2005).

Questioning strategies are divided into convergent, divergent, evaluative, and reflective questioning (Orlich et al., 2013). The convergent questioning strategy focuses on eliciting short responses from students and hence requires lower levels of thinking. In other words, answers to convergent questions are about facts, require remembering the information previously provided by the teacher, and also elicit short responses like yes/no questions (Zhao et al., 2016). To help students improve speaking skills and vocabulary in foreign language classes, teachers can apply to convergent questioning strategy. Besides, it offers opportunities for all students to participate.

On the other hand, divergent questions seek a wide range of student responses. It also allows for eliciting multiple and diverse responses for teachers by calling on more than one student after asking a question. They can communicate various opinions and listen to each other, reinforcing positive classroom behavior and participation. To answer divergent questions, also known as higher-level questions, students must infer, analyze, and evaluate the questions asked by the teacher to give an answer, which also demands students'

considerable effort (Zhao et al., 2016). The level of the questions determines the status of the students' responses; therefore, higher-level questions increase the number of students' reactions to teacher questions (Orlich et al., 2013). Convergent and divergent questions engage students in the content of the lesson, promote classroom interaction and reinforce their understanding (Erlinda & Dewi, 2016).

Evaluative questions demand students' judgments based on specific criteria set by the teacher (Richard & Lockharts, 1994). For example, an evaluative question asks for students' assessments, experiences, values, or knowledge to develop a logical basis for their responses. Examples of evaluative questions are specifically "why" and "what" questions. The last questioning technique is the reflective questioning strategy. Thoughtful questions arouse various student responses and get students to develop higher-order thinking. They are expected to make inferences and interpretations, express their ideas on causes, and consider outcomes. This strategy allows students to elaborate on their responses. In addition to the question mentioned above types, procedural questions provide another framework for understanding the types and functions of teachers' questions in second language classrooms. Procedural questions are concerned with classroom management, routines, and procedures. They check task completion, correct understanding of instructions, and monitor students' readiness for a new task or activity (Richard & Lockharts, 1994).

Concerning elicited responses, teacher questions can be categorized as open-ended and close-ended questions (Yang, 2010). Open-ended questions elicit more than one correct answer (Yang, 2010). They require respondents to communicate and discuss ideas, speculate on them, and allow for discussion. Conversely, closed questions provoke a simple response which is only a correct response. On the other hand, Long and Sato (2013) propose two questions based on the interaction. These questions are display and referential questions. Display questions associated with lower-level thinking elicit particular structures and responses that the teacher already knows. Referential questions, despite stimulating learners' opinions, ideas, and personal experiences. (Long & Sato, 2013). In short, regarding the similarities, close-ended and display questions can be classified under convergent questions. However, referential and open-ended questions belong to divergent question types, requiring diverse responses requiring higher-level thinking.

Along with the effective questioning strategies, according to Orlich et al. (2013), allocating sufficient time for students to respond has many benefits for increased student engagement. The framing technique involves asking a question, pausing, and calling a student. By doing so, student participation increases since it reaches all students to think about a response. Besides the framing technique, the teacher also could allocate time for a nominated student before responding to the teacher's question. Orlich et al. (2013) suggest two types of wait time. Wait time one entails allocating time for students to think about their responses after the teacher poses a question. Wait time 2 is the pause after the student that has been nominated responds to the question. It allows more time to think and elaborate on the response. Research indicates that wait time has many benefits to increase student responses to teacher-initiated questions, such as more extended responses, more student involvement in class, and increased peer interaction (Tobin, 1987).

Using positive prompting techniques or follow-up questions allows students to communicate more ideas and give a more complete or logical response, which provides students with positive reinforcement to complete their responses or edit incorrect ones (Orlich et al., 2013). Due to the interaction based on rapid exchanges of questions and answers, a student could play a passive role; therefore, having interactive communication with students, the teacher can engage students in the question-response process by providing them with follow-up questions (Fisher, 2011).

2.5.2. Modeling

Modeling is associated with positive student outcomes (Rosenshine, 1995). Teachers demonstrate the desired actions that students will perform to prevent confusion and prepare them for complex and simple tasks (Bandura, 1977; Sandholtz, 2011; Scott et al., 2012). For this reason, teachers must demonstrate a good model which is (1) clear, consistent, and concise; (2) includes several demonstrations depending on the complexity of the skill being taught; and (3) involves students (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 30) Modeling affects student engagement positively as it offers explicit examples for unclear instructions, reduces the mistakes that students can make during production stages through repetitions of the desired skills and improve their understanding (VanDeWeghe, 2006).

The standard features of effective teacher modeling are guided practice, improving on-task behavior, supporting reflective learning, and fostering student engagement (Housand & Reis, 2008; Methe & Hintze, 2003; Sandholtz, 2011; VanDeWeghe, 2006; Watson & Bradley, 2009). Examples of teacher modeling in language classes include task and performance modeling, metacognitive modeling, scaffolding, and student-centered modeling (Harbour et al., 2015). Task and performance modeling involve explicit explanations of what the students are expected to do in the task. This strategy allows students to observe the desired action they are expected to perform and helps them to engage in the new assignment. With scaffolding, the teacher models the task first, and students move into the other stages with teacher support which reduces through the steps. Teachers show a skill, gradually withdraw their consent, and enable students to practice independently by providing feedback (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994). Metacognitive modeling requires students to make analyses, conclusions, and interpretations of what they have learned. Contrary to scaffolding, in this strategy, the teacher guides students through the stages by explaining the rationale, called a think-aloud approach. An example of metacognitive modeling in a language class is a reading lesson where the teacher poses questions to students to make predictions about a story. Student-centered modeling reduces teacher involvement. Therefore, students who have achieved the learning goals become the model for their peers in implementing the task.

2.5.3. Effective feedback

Providing timely and effective feedback is an instructional strategy that contributes to increased engagement. Effective feedback is accurate, detailed, relevant, constructive, and immediate (Gettinger & Ball, 2007). It helps students apply what they have just learned and contributes to their self-evaluation skills. Specific, relevant, and timely feedback positively impacts a high level of engagement (Gettinger & Ball, 2007). Effective feedback directly links with how students engage with it (Nicol, 2013). Engagement with feedback requires receiving, understanding, interpreting, and revising to achieve learning (Handley et al., 2011; Nicol, 2013). With corrective feedback, behavioral engagement manifests itself in students' understanding of corrections and taking observable actions to revise their outcomes accordingly (Ellis, 2010). Their activities include using feedback, adjusting their work, modifying their products, and internalizing correct forms (Ellis, 2010; Ferris et al., 2013; Hayland, 2003). Zhang and Hyland (2018) designed a model to investigate student

engagement with feedback in second language writing, linking with the conceptualization of student engagement by Fredricks et al. (2004). According to the model, behavioral engagement involves students' observable reactions to feedback, revising written works and investing time and effort in an assignment to make revisions. For feedback to be effective, to what extent students attend to corrective feedback and generate modifications to gain target structures is a determinant factor (Han & Hyland, 2015). Besides, finding the right time and amount when giving feedback is crucial to facilitating engagement in online discussions. This leads to an optimal level of teacher intervention in the ongoing discussions (Maddix, 2012). Similarly, Metcalfe et al. (2009) argue that the timing of the feedback should ensure that the input is processed and received by the learners, whether it is provided immediately or at a delay. Moreover, several studies revealed the effectiveness of feedback in terms of the timing, modes of delivery, content, and length (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Henderson, et al., 2019; O'Donovan et al., 2016; Price et al., 2011; Yang & Carless, 2013; Zhang & Hyland, 2018;).

2.5.4. Facilitating active collaborative learning

Cooperative learning is based on the principle of constructivism and emphasizes the contribution of social interaction. Constructivism holds the idea that individuals construct their knowledge, integrate new knowledge and experiences with what they already know, and must form new understanding (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). For creating a constructivist classroom, Brooks and Brooks (1993) suggest several teaching behaviors among them are encouraging students to engage in dialogue with the teacher and with one another and engaging students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses, and then encouraging discussion by stressing the importance of collaboration and interaction among members of a learning community.

Active learning is facilitated through collaborative work, and correspondingly, collaboration enhances involvement in learning activities (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). A collaborative learning community includes students and teachers who communicate and collaborate to achieve a learning goal (Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Garrison, 2011). In other words, an educational community is formed by students, and shared goals are shared and achieved in collaboration. Collaboration and peer interaction among students help them develop a sense of belonging to the community and increase student engagement. Research

shows that collaborative activities support students' developing understanding, promote engagement and enrich the enjoyment of the learning process (McDuff, 2012). In addition, they open up opportunities for students who have speaking anxiety to take part in discussions with peers in a way that is non-threatening learning environment (Davis, 1993) which allows increased engagement during the implementation of learner-designed and learner-generated tasks (Lambert et al, 2017). Likewise, Wentzel and Watkins (2002) argue that in a cooperative learning activity such as group work, peer relationships motivate students to engage in academic tasks. In addition, peer relationships reinforce appropriate class behaviors as they hold each other accountable and accordingly listen to one another and motivate on-task engagement. In a foreign language learning context, collaborative activities improve language learners' problem-solving skills. So, they achieve success and find opportunities to rely on their logical thinking skills (Wentzel & Wakins, 2002). Consequently, students engage more in the language learning process and gain more positive results with collaborative language learning activities (Chen et al., 2018). For example, problem-solving activities are practical to engage students in the learning process. A problem-solving activity is a problem-centered approach that involves collaborative learning, problem-solving skills, and interaction based on dialogues to solve an issue (Samson, 2015). As they create student-centered learning environments, students engage in more interactive ways and help students develop relevant skills to collaborate with others (Yen & Lee, 2011). In relation to this, when students are guided for what they are expected to do in an activity, they know what they need to focus on (Balaman & Can Daşkın, 2019). In their study, Balaman and Can Daşkın (2019) suggested a series of activities to raise students' awareness of interactional mechanisms and develop interactional competence in second language. They suggested that those activities enable students to interact more in a foreign language learning environment where interaction is limited and to engage them in second language in a guided and focused way.

As for specific learning environments, active student participation in online learning and teaching environments is an essential facilitator for engagement. Therefore, employing various strategies is necessary to increase student participation regarding the nature of the specific learning setting (Stear & Mensch, 2012). In face-to-face lessons, discussions can engage students with the course content and interact with other students through exchanging ideas (Dallimore et al., 2008). Likewise, various online meeting platforms, including forums, breakout rooms, texting, and document sharing increase participation and engagement

(Bradshaw & Hinton, 2004). In other words, these tools offer students an opportunity to contribute to discussions and foster student interaction, which directly and positively influences student engagement. Simply put, to promote collaboration and exchange, instructors can create opportunities for students to collaborate in online and face-to-face educational contexts. However, in this case, the goal of the group work should be explicitly set, and each student's role should be assigned (Johnson & Johnson, 1993) to ensure participation in the activity.

2.5.5. Building rapport

Learning environments are "social spaces" in which individuals build relationships and communities during the learning process, and establishing social relationships is crucial for learning to occur (Ohta, 2008). In language classrooms, social relationships are part of the learning and teaching processes because language learning and teaching are based on continual interaction between students and the teacher; therefore, building rapport influences students' learning and the learning environment (Nyugen, 2007). Positive student-teacher interactions provide a comfortable space for learning and increase participation in the classroom (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Rapport is a relationship between two people based on mutual trust and feelings based on empathy and concern for others (Faranda & Clarke, 2004; Frisby & Martin, 2010). Faranda and Clarke (2004) define rapport as a relationship built on mutual trust and harmony. Wilson et al. (2010) suggested that rapport can be established through teacher immediacy behaviors. Teacher immediacy refers to verbal and nonverbal behaviors to create a close relationship between teachers and students (Christophel, 1990). Verbal behaviors include positive reinforcement, using humor, having conversations with students, nominating students by their names, and sharing personal anecdotes in teaching. Nonverbal behaviors are paralinguistic features such as making eye contact, using gestures, and tone and pitch of voice.

Building good rapport with students generates higher motivation and satisfaction with the course content and enhanced participation (Frisby & Meyers, 2008; Granitz et al., 2009). For this reason, motivation can be a driving factor for increased student engagement (Pintrich & Zusho, 2007). Motivation comprises affective factors such as emotions, values,

self-determined goals, and self-efficacy (Pintrich, 2004). It is directly related to those factors; therefore, students' academic engaged time increases when they feel comfortable in a learning environment (Pintrich & Linnenbrink, 2004). Building positive relationships between students and instructors could promote motivation (Rodriguez et al., 1996). According to National Research Council (2009), pedagogical strategies to create comfortable learning environments make up effective teaching in higher education.

For online teaching environments specifically, Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzaranes (2012) proposed some ways to build rapport. They categorized rapport-building into 6 six groups (1) recognizing the individual, (2) supporting and monitoring, (3) availability, accessibility, and responsiveness, (4) non-text-based interactions, (5) tone of interactions, (6) non-academic conversations/interactions. Those indicators respectively refer to knowing students' personal information such as hobbies and interests; giving praise and support for student outcomes; being accessible to students by allocating office hours, sending emails and, responding to students' needs and questions immediately; keeping real-time interactions with students, being positive, friendly, and approachable as well as having a sense of humor and respect for each student; and having small talks with students about their daily lives.

2.5.6. teaching and learning materials

The learner-content relationship is crucial for learning (Zimmerman, 2012). Supported by cooperative learning activities, relevant and challenging content is highly effective in promoting student engagement (Cakir, 2015; Coates, 2007). Newmann proposes that engagement in learning is fostered through authentic tasks, provides opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning knowledge, provides collaborative learning experiences, and offers opportunities for fun (Newmann, 1991; Newmann et al., 1992). For example, engagement with reading can be enhanced through interesting texts, autonomy support, real-life experiences, collaborative work, and teacher involvement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Fredricks et al. (2002) found that task challenge influences behavioral engagement positively. The findings show that authentic tasks help increase behavioral engagement. Willms et al. (2009) describe practical learning tasks as (1) providing real-world connections, (2) being rigorous, (3) encouraging higher-level thinking, and (4) applying the spirit of disciplinary inquiry. The tasks need to be authentic, meaningful, and

relevant for students to spend time and focus their attention (Willms et al., 2009). Similarly, Claxton (2007) stresses the importance of relevancy that activities and curricula need to be connected to students' interests and concerns to engage the student in the learning process. In addition, specific to online learning and teaching settings, real-world application of projects, which refers to presenting content through real-world examples, ensures increased student engagement. Revere and Kovach (2011) suggest that authentic activities offer students different perspectives to examine the tasks and help them use relevant information.

2.5.7. Use of technology

Enriching the learning environment with the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) enables teachers to create learning environments that are more conducive to student engagement (Krause, 2007). Technology helps educators to build a learning environment where the focus of instruction shifts from teacher to students as it helps instructors to customize content to cater to individual needs and learning styles, eliminating the one-size-fits-all approach (Krause, 2007). Active student participation in learning and teaching environments is an essential facilitator for engagement. Therefore, employing various tools and strategies is necessary to increase student participation (Stear & Mensch, 2012). Moreover, effective implementation in learning and teaching environments and incorporation in pedagogical strategies enhances students' academic performance and fosters student engagement (Rashid & Asghar, 2016).

Research shows that technology as an educational tool positively correlates with increased engagement. Annetta et al. (2009) found that video games increased student level of participation. Chen et al. (2018) investigated the impact of Web-based learning technology on student engagement in face-to-face and online learning contexts and found a positive relationship between technology and student engagement. Trimmel and Bachmann (2004) compared two groups of students and indicated that student participation, interest in learning, and motivation to perform increased compared to non-technology users. Alley and Jansak (2001) provided substantial evidence that active learning using technology-enhanced student engagement. They concluded that students focused on learning activities and were motivated to use new skills. Similarly, Barak (2006) reported that students engaged in active learning using technology are focused, motivated and engaged. Fonseca et al. (2014) found that student engagement with the content improved to a great extent with the use of

technology and thus increased their overall achievement. Duderstadt et al. (2002) emphasized that when inquiry-based learning pedagogies are incorporated into online learning, students are stimulated to employ problem-solving skills and work in collaboration, which in turn enhances student engagement (McDuff, 2012). Schindler et al. (2017) presented a review of the literature related to the impact of the use of web-conferencing, wikis, logs, social networking sites, and digital games in educational contexts. They made a detailed analysis of the impact of five technologies across the different dimensions of engagement and indicated that effective implementation of computer-based technology affects student engagement.

Online tools and applications such as videos, interactive boards, sound recording tools, animation, and games are important contributors to engaging students in learning (Barnes et al., 2007; Dunleavy & Milton, 2009). In a paper titled "Unleashing the Future: Educators "speak up" about the use of emerging technologies for learning" (2010), highlighting the views about the use of technology in classrooms, teachers reported that technology has a positive impact on students' behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. They furthered their opinion that the use of technology facilitates student-centered learning as the lessons become more relevant and interactive, resulting in meaningful learning for the students. Therefore, consideration should be given to providing high-quality technology-enhanced learning activities that are found to be effective in engaging students in the class (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019).

2.6. Related Research Studies Conducted on Student Engagement and In-class Practices to Engage Students throughout the World

There is growing evidence regarding the importance of student engagement in a foreign language learning in different learning and teaching environments; however, the theoretical understanding of the construct by EFL teachers and the implemented strategies to foster engagement and experiences of EFL teachers in engaging students in blended learning have been displayed in few studies. With the COVID-19 pandemic, recent studies have primarily focused on student engagement in online education.

In a large-scale study, Garcia and Appel (2021) aimed to investigate student engagement in English as a foreign language (EFL) and Spanish as a foreign language (SFL)

in Language Massive Open Online Courses (LMOOCs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the study aimed to find out the practices that fostered students' cognitive, affective and social engagement. The study comprised 2,585 language learners. The data collected from learners' participation reports was obtained from the course system and a questionnaire was administered to the participants at the end of the course. According to the results, learner engagement increased during the pandemic. The findings obtained from students' self-reports demonstrated a significant increase in the social dimension of engagement to build social relationships, and explore other people's experiences during the pandemic. Besides, students' feelings of isolation resulted from the lockdown reduced.

In another large-scale study, Guo (2021) aimed to find out the dynamic interplay between foreign language enjoyment and learner engagement with regard to EFL achievement and absenteeism. The researcher completed the data collection process in two stages: the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview stages. The researcher administered a questionnaire including the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale adapted by the researcher and the four-aspect engagement inventory to 707 university students taking English as a compulsory course at three different universities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with only 28 of the participants. The results indicated that foreign language enjoyment positively correlates with learner engagement. Another finding was that students engaged more behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively than agentically. It was also found that foreign language enjoyment and learner engagement did not significantly correlate with students' academic achievement and absenteeism.

In another study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jiang et al. (2021) aimed to determine the effect of online and offline blended modes on students' achievement and their interest, attitudes and strategy use in listening activities in English lessons. The study adopted a mixed-method qualitative and quantitative approach. The participants consisted of 42 junior high school students divided into two groups: the experimental and the control groups. The control group received instruction in face-to-face offline mode, while the experimental group attended both online and offline blended mode. As a result of the data analysis, it was found that blended learning activities developed the listening performance of the students in the experimental group. In addition, the results demonstrated that students' attitudes positively changed, resulting in employing various learning strategies while engaging in blended activities.

In an investigation into the strategies for student engagement, Li (2017) examined the effectiveness of MUSIC® Model of Motivation – stands for e**M**powerment, **U**sefulness, **S**uccess, **I**nterest and **C**aring in communicative language teaching (CLT) classes at a university in China. To this end, the researcher applied a self-report survey to 259 students. According to the findings, students' perceptions of the use of MUSIC model, effort and achievement differed between the CLT classes and traditional English classes. It was found that MUSIC model strategies engaged students in CLT English classes, contrary to traditional English classes.

Akbari et al. (2016) conducted research to explore the effectiveness of integrating a social network site into foreign language lessons. The study involved PhD students divided into two groups; the experimental group used Facebook for language learning and the control group attended face-to-face lessons for language learning. The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) based on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2011) and the Competence Questionnaire developed by the researcher was utilized to collect the data. Moreover, Facebook records indicating students' activities to measure engagement were collected, and a questionnaire measuring the level of students' acceptance of technology and interviews involving open and closed questions were the other data collection tools to be utilized in the study. The findings demonstrated that Facebook in language lessons promoted a high degree of student learning, motivation and engagement. It was also found that students' attitudes toward the use of a social site changed in a positive way which in turn maintains student engagement in an online setting.

In a small-scale case study related to the online delivery of tertiary language courses, Nakazawa et al. (2009) investigated student engagement in online language learning. The study lasted for a 13-week semester at a university in Japan. The participants were ten students from the upper-beginner level and intermediate level. The data were collected through student surveys and student performances in the lessons. Online delivery tools – discussion boards, voice recording tools, online quizzes, and the recording of face-to-face classes on campus were examined in terms of their effectiveness in engaging and motivating students and creating a sense of belonging to the learning community. It was found that collaborative activities increased student interaction and a sense of belonging. The findings also indicated that students had positive attitudes toward timely feedback from their teachers and guided them to pace their learning. The study also investigated learner autonomy in

developing metacognitive strategies in online education. It was found that constant guidance and feedback had a negative effect on students' use of those strategies.

In a recent study, Agustin (2019) aimed to explore student engagement in blended learning instruction. It also aimed to find out the dimensions of student engagement observed in a foreign language setting. The participants were selected from senior students taking an Integrated English course at a university in Indonesia. The researcher used various data collection tools (i.e., semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documents). It was found that blended learning instructions engaged students behaviorally, cognitively and emotionally. The results also indicated that clear instructions promoted student engagement in both face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments. The study also presented context-specific indicators of student engagement: positive body language, consistent focus, verbal participation, students' confidence, fun and excitement in face-to-face lessons and investment of time and energy to participate in online lessons.

2.7. Related Research Studies Conducted on Student Engagement and In-class Practices to Engage Students in Turkey

Engagement is considerably essential in learning environments as it contributes to student learning and progress, the skills student improve and the academic scores they get (Jang et al., 2010). The importance of student engagement is greater in the second language (L2) classroom than in other subject matters (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). However, there is a lack of research investigating student engagement from teachers' perspectives and experiences in a foreign language classroom in a blended learning setting. Currently, there are two master's theses, two PhD dissertations investigating student engagement in Turkey. One of the PhD dissertations is related to the mediating role of student engagement in the relationship between foreign language anxiety and English language achievement (Oruç, 2020). The other one is about the relationship of social and personal facilitators with student performance in English and students' opinions about the effectiveness of teacher practices and school practices in fostering student engagement in an EFL context (Ocaklı, 2019). One of the master's theses is an investigation into the influence of SmartBoard technology on student engagement in tasks and perception of classroom activities (Aitkuzhinova-Arslan, 2014). The other one is an examining the relationship between perceived instructional environment, student engagement and English achievement (Bodur, 2021). Also, few studies

have examined the effectiveness of blended learning on student engagement in an EFL context (Kara, 2018; Şahin-Kızıl, 2014). However, there are no studies that extend the scope to examine student engagement based on teachers' perceptions and their in-class practices to foster student engagement in blended learning, as well as the problems they encounter for student engagement and the solutions they recommend to the existing problems concerning the different teaching and learning contexts in blended learning.

Bodur (2021) examined the relationship between perceived instructional environment, student engagement and English achievement. Moreover, the study aimed to identify the effects of some socio-demographic variables on course achievement. Predictive correlational and casual comparative research designs were used to collect data in the study. The participants were 6th-grade students from a secondary school in Bandırma, Balıkesir. The data were collected using various data collection tools. According to the findings, teachers using multiple teaching styles can increase student achievement by considering individual differences. In addition, when students' past experiences, interests, and needs are considered in teachers' instructional delivery, a positive learning environment can be sustained, which can contribute to student achievement. The findings also indicate that explicit instruction, making connections to prior learning and providing a wide range of examples for a better understanding of complicated topics can increase student satisfaction and desire for learning, contributing to their achievement and engagement.

In her dissertation, Oruç (2020) aimed to find out the mediating role of student engagement in the relationship between foreign language anxiety and English language achievement. Using Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and Language Engagement Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), she collected the data from 605 English preparatory class students studying at a Turkish university. The results demonstrated that foreign language anxiety negatively influenced students' behavioral, cognitive and social engagement and achievement in a foreign language classroom, as students were less willing to participate and use the target language in the lessons. The findings also indicated that student engagement positively correlates with English language achievement.

Ocaklı (2019) investigated personal and social facilitators of student engagement in foreign language education, applying a multi-method concurrent approach. The study investigated whether the personal facilitators (students' sense of belongingness, self-efficacy, language learning strategies use, and language learning autonomy) influenced

English language performance in the TOEFL ITP exam. In addition, the social facilitators, such as students' opinions about teacher practices and school practices were examined to see if they might foster student engagement. A descriptive survey collected the data from 165 prep students at a private university. For the data analysis, the descriptive analysis method was used. According to the study results, need-supportive teacher practices and school activities were found to contribute to student engagement in foreign language education environments. Moreover, the findings demonstrated a significant relationship between social and personal facilitators with their performance in the specific parts of the TOEFL ITP exam.

In another study, Kara (2018) examined the effectiveness of blended learning on reading engagement in reading class. In the study, the survey items in data collection tools referred to behavioral and emotional dimensions of reading engagement. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 was implemented for the behavioral engagement. The researcher utilized The Achievement Emotions Questionnaire-Mathematics (AEQ-M) developed by Pekrun, Goetz, and Perry (2005) to measure emotional engagement. The surveys were administered to 62 first-year students from English Language Teaching Department at a Turkish University. There were two groups in the study; the control and experimental groups. The experimental group received blended instruction with the integration of Edmodo and did the reading activities on Edmodo; however, the control group did not use Edmodo for the reading activities assigned by their teacher. In addition to the surveys, the students were asked to write about their experiences in terms of their behaviors, emotions, and thinking processes. Students' grades and answers in the reading assignments were analyzed to assess reading comprehension. The findings revealed that blended learning has a positive relationship with reading engagement. Moreover, the use of Edmodo reduced students' feelings of boredom and promoted positive emotions toward reading assignments. Regarding the comprehension findings, it was found that increased engagement in the reading class furthered student comprehension.

Aitkuzhinova-Arslan (2014) conducted a study to investigate the influence of SmartBoard technology on student engagement in tasks and perception of classroom activities. The study aimed to find out the differences between two groups of students from different grades' on-task and off-task behaviors in English language lessons with and without SmartBoard. Questionnaires, video records, and field notes were used to measure student perceptions of the use of Smart Boards in English lessons. Also, the researcher filled the

form of a momentary time-sampling procedure when the observations were completed. According to the results of this study, Smart Boards increased student engagement in tasks and their participation in foreign language classrooms.

In another study conducted in a blended learning setting, Şahin-Kızıl (2014) investigated students' perceptions of a blended language course through Moodle in an EFL context. She applied a survey to 68 engineering students having English courses in two-hour weekly sessions in the first year of university education. Following the course design and the selection of the content of the activities placed on Moodle, grammar topics and the related skill-based activities and vocabulary activities were presented weekly for students to revise the topic of the week at any time and place. Moreover, the quiz module was activated for vocabulary exercises, and the activities were supplemented with pictures and videos. Students were provided with the teacher and peer feedback for their writing tasks. The researcher implemented a post-instruction perception questionnaire with 25 statements on a five-point Likert scale. The statements were categorized under engagement, learning, and course satisfaction, ending with an open-ended question for students to write their additional comments. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. According to the findings, the blended course design in the study created a learning environment where students were more engaged in language learning and increased their learning when interacting with peers, and teachers and the content were promoted.

The scope of the studies presented here demonstrates that research related to student engagement within the Turkish context has specifically focused on measuring the level of student engagement, the relationship of student engagement with concepts related to foreign language learning involving learners, and the influence of technology and blended learning on student engagement. There are no studies investigating EFL teachers' perceptions of student engagement, in-class practices they employ to engage students, and context-specific problems and solutions EFL instructors have in a foreign language classroom in blended learning. The studies presented here demonstrate that student engagement has a close relationship with positive teacher behaviors and the use of technology in foreign language learning settings. In addition, it is directly linked with specific concepts in foreign language learning (i.e., foreign language anxiety and achievement in foreign language). However, teachers have an essential role in facilitating student engagement; therefore, there is a need to acknowledge their experiences in engaging students in different learning and teaching settings to better language teaching and learning from a broader perspective.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, context, participants, data collection and analysis procedures, and pilot studies. It also explains the stages for constructing the data collection instrument (i.e., semi-structured interviews).

3.2. Research Design

This thesis has been designed as a narrative case study. Narrative research is an approach to human experiences as a source of knowledge and understanding (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative research on teaching originated from the view that teachers' knowledge is formed by their interaction with students, teaching materials and themselves; therefore, narrative research on teaching first focuses on individual teachers and their personal understandings (Luwisch, 2007). Moreover, in order to the understand the individual experiences, context should be taken into consideration as teachers are the embedded in a school, school system, ideologies, and pedagogical trends (Luwisch, 2007). For this reason, it is important to pay attention to teachers and listen to their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Taking all this consideration, narrative case study was conducted to learn about individual experiences of the participants teaching in a blended course in a preparatory school.

Qualitative research was chosen for this study given its value in drawing on participants' different perspectives to provide a detailed understanding of the issue with essential details (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, it also considers individual differences contrary to quantitative measures and statistical analyses that have specific considerations to generalize the findings (Creswell, 2007). It may put forward new theories when existing theories are insufficient to explain the nature of the problem under examination (Creswell, 2007).

This thesis investigated an in-depth knowledge of how ten EFL instructors conceptualize and perceive the concept of student engagement and student engagement strategies and identify the student engagement strategies they implement in a blended learning context. Moreover, it seeks to determine how they decide on specific strategies to increase engagement in the classroom when the channel of teaching and learning changes (i.e., online and face-to-face teaching contexts). In addition to these, the study identified the problems and challenges that EFL instructors encounter for student engagement and the suggested solutions to the mentioned problems. In a case study, a research design should include five components which are (1) research questions, (2) its propositions (if any), (3) selection data collection tools, (4) determining the type of data analysis, (5) developing a detailed analysis of the case or cases (Yin, 2009).

The first step to establishing the logic of a case study is to form research questions in terms of "what," "how," and "why," etc. (Yin, 2009). Following the decision on what to study, the researcher found the potential research questions. Then, to form good questions to achieve the purpose of the study, the related literature was reviewed. The questions in the studies on the same topic were analyzed to check if they conclude with new questions or make suggestions for future studies. The research questions were formulated based on the analyses in the final stage.

According to Yin (2009), a proposition enables the researcher to examine the information within the scope of the study. Specific research questions should be formulated (Stake, 1995). The propositions of the study were grounded on the definition of student engagement proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004) and the engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching contexts (Benson et al., 2005; Frisby & Meyers, 2008; Good & Brophy, 2003; Granitz et al., 2009; Harbour et al., 2015; Krause, 2007; McDuff, 2012; Newmann, 1991; Rosenshine, 1995). The discussions on the exact definition of the construct have not still been concluded because of its multidimensional nature (Reschly & Christenson, 2012) as well as the studies investigating engagement strategies in blended learning contexts still need further investigation (Graham, 2019; Raes et al., 2020; Siemens et al., 2015). The definition adopted for the study and the scarcity of studies about engagement strategies made up the propositions because they provided the researcher with to establish the research questions within the scope of the study.

The unit of analysis can be one thing, or a group of items is related to the case (Patton, 2002). A group of Turkish EFL instructors having different backgrounds was chosen as the unit of analysis since instructors' perceptions and conceptualization of student engagement and the engagement strategies they employed in a preparatory school are within the scope of the study. Moreover, the research questions aimed to understand how different EFL instructors interpret the construct and reveal their opinions, attitudes, and ideas regarding the student engagement strategies they use in blended learning and teaching context and their recommendations for the problems they encounter in implementing the strategies.

For data analysis, the researcher could focus on analyzing themes better to understand the case (Creswell, 2007). The first step for analytic strategy is to determine the issues of each case and identify common themes to extend the cases (Yin, 2009). The detailed explanations are given through the articles found after processing codes within the issue and presenting the data in a discussion (Creswell, 2007). Interpretation in qualitative research offers a broad meaning of the data by developing the codes, determining themes followed by processing codes, and elaborating on the themes to justify the data and connect with previous literature studies. (Creswell, 2007). The last two components are related to data analysis. The researcher needs to choose analytic techniques that suit the case study best to provide a solid foundation for data analysis (Yin, 2009). The first step is to identify a rational strategy to determine the needed data to answer the research questions, examine data properly, generate compelling analytical conclusions, test alternative explanations, and efficiently use the data collection tools (Yin, 2009).

In this study, the analytic strategy was applied based on the theoretical propositions proposed by Yin (2009). This strategy guides the researcher in establishing the research questions, objectives, and research design, managing data collection procedures, and reviewing the related literature (Yin, 2009). The literature review indicates that student engagement is a multidimensional construct; as a result, there is a proliferation of definitions. On the other hand, the studies concerning engagement strategies in blended learning environments are found to be insufficient.

The second step of the fourth and fifth components is to determine the analytic technique (Yin, 2009). Content analysis was used for the data analysis procedure (Creswell, 2013). Content analysis requires "systematic coding of qualitative or quantitative data based

on specific themes or categories" (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, the researcher systematically categorized and coded the data obtained from semi-structured interviews reduced codes to the themes, and reported them by comparing and contrasting.

3.3. Research Setting

The current research was conducted in a preparatory school at a private university in Ankara, Turkey. The preparatory school made a transition to blended learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and delivered two days of face-to-face and three days of online lessons. One academic year consisted of four course periods, which lasted for months. General English was the core of the course, and the weekly program consisted of between 20 and 25 class hours, depending on the course level. The number of students (about 12) was reduced in face-to-face classes to keep the social distance at the desired level. However, in online lessons, two classrooms from the same group were combined, and the number of students went up by 24. One instructor delivered the online lessons of the united classes and taught face-to-face lessons with a peer teacher.

3.4. Participants

Qualitative research aims to find participants who provide rich data and multiple perspectives about the inquiry under investigation and thus maximize what we can obtain from experience (Dörnyei, 2007). Purposeful sampling, in this sense, is needed to achieve this goal (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, the sampling size should be a relatively small number of participants to generate saturated and rich data to understand even small details of the phenomenon under investigation to employ maximum variation (Creswell, 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). This is because the number of participants should offer an opportunity to identify themes within the cases and conduct a cross-case theme analysis (Creswell, 2007). For this reason, the participants were selected based on three criteria. The first was that the instructors should teach blended for one academic year. Moreover, they should teach at different levels in each period. The last criterion was that the participants' educational background and years of experience in teaching should vary to achieve data collection from multiple perspectives and experiences.

The data for this study were collected from ten EFL instructors who worked in a preparatory school at a private university and taught a blended course for one academic year at different levels in each period (4 periods in total). In addition, they differed from each other in terms of educational background and teaching experiences. Therefore, they met the criteria to achieve the purpose of the study. Table 3.1 shows demographic information, educational background, and years of experience in teaching in a foreign language and teaching in blended education for each participant.

Table 3.1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Years of experience	BA	MA	PhD	Previous experience in BL	Experience in teaching in a blended course
Participant 1	Female	20 years	2001 ELL	ELL* 2001	No	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 2	Female	20 years	2000 ELL	No	No	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 3	Female	9 years	2011 ELT	ELT* 2014	ELL ongoing	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 4	Female	16 years	2004 ELL	No	No	Online for 2 months	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 5	Female	20 years	2001 ELT	ELL	No	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 6	Male	8 years	2011 ACL	ELL 2020	ELL ongoing	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 7	Female	7 years	2003 ELT	ELL 2020	ELL ongoing	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 8	Male	4.5 years	2016 ACL*	AH* 2020	No	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 9	Female	4 years	2015 ELT	ELT ongoing	No	No	September 2019-June 2020
Participant 10	Female	17 years	2002 ELT	IR* 2006	ELL 2020	No	September 2019-June 2020

All the instructors were phoned in person to request an appointment for an interview. Each interview lasted about 60 minutes at most and was conducted on Zoom. Of 10 EFL instructors, eight were female and two were male. The years of experience in teaching vary from four years to twenty years. They are graduates of ELT, ACL, ELL, and EL departments from different universities in Turkey. Three of them were doing Ph.D. in ELL when the study was being conducted and one instructor holds a Ph.D. in ELL. All the EFL instructors did not teach in blended learning before.

3.5. Data Collection Tool Construction Process

As a first step to develop the interview questions, the interview questions in Culbertson and Smith (2018) were analyzed. In line with the research questions, specific questions were added, and some changes were made to the wording of the questions of Culbertson and Smith (2018). However, the majority of the questions were formulated for this thesis specifically. Moreover, specific categories were created. The related questions were listed under those categories to fully respond to the research questions and understand how student engagement is conceptualized by the EFL instructors teaching in a blended course, and identify their in-class activities based on the conceptualizations. The categories were (A) Educational Background, (B) Conceptualization of Student Engagement, (C) Student Engagement Strategies Used in Face-to-Face Education, (D) Student Engagement Strategies Used in Online Education, (E) EFL Instructors' Perception of Student Engagement Level in Face-to-Face and Online Teaching**,** (F) The Problems and Challenges Encountered for Student Engagement in Face-to-Face and Online Teaching and (G) Recommendations and Solutions. The tentative (See Appendix 2), revised (See Appendix 3), and final version (See Appendix 1) of the semi-structured interview questions for the EFL instructors are shown in Appendices.

As a second step, an expert opinion was taken from an academician specialized in ELT and qualitative research with a Ph.D. degree with 15 years of teaching experience as a teacher educator at Department of Foreign Language Education, Faculty of Education at a private university. She was asked to comment on the wording and the clarity of the questions, the relevancy of the research questions to the categories under which they were listed, and if there was a missed question to ask under each category to ensure content and construct validity (Brown, 2001). Based on the feedback, some changes to the wording were made. The term "instructional strategies" was changed to "student engagement strategies" (e.g., "What instructional strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face education?" was changed to "What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face education?"). Moreover, in Category E, changes related to the wording of one question were made ("Do you see any change in engagement during the implementation of instructional strategies in face-to-face and online education? If yes, could you explain? was

revised as “Do you see any changes in your students’ face-to-face and online teaching engagement? If yes, how and why?”).

New questions were added to some categories to increase comprehensibility. A further question was added to Category B (e.g., “Are there any differences between the indicators of student engagement concerning the context?”) to understand better and provide new insights into how the EFL instructors conceptualize student engagement. Three questions were added to Category E (e.g., “What are the students’ reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in face-to-face teaching?”; “What are the students’ reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in online teaching?” and “Are there any differences between the student engagement strategies if you use the same strategy in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, what are they?”) to explore the instructors’ perceptions of student engagement levels in face-to-face and online teaching contexts separately. Upon the expert opinion, one question was added to Category G (e.g., “What do you think is necessary for developing the effectiveness of student engagement strategies used in an online teaching environment?”).

One of the questions was omitted from Category E (e.g., “What do you do when the student engagement is at a minimum level?”) as it was in the wrong category, and another question that served the same purpose was already formulated for Category D and E (e.g., “What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face teaching? Explain with your reasons?” and “What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in online teaching? Explain your reasons.”).

Some of the questions were revised, and follow-up questions were added, such as “Why?”, “Why not?” and “Explain with your reasons.” for the instructors to further their responses and to prevent yes/no answers (e.g., “What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face teaching? Explain your reasons.”; “Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why?”). (See Appendix 3 for the final version of the semi-structured interview questions for the EFL instructors).

The instrument was piloted to validate the interview questions in the final step. The critical rationale for conducting a pilot study is to prepare for a full-scale investigation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Kvale (2007) argues that it can be administered to address potential problems in the following stages of the study and the questions and deal with any interview design issues. The primary research consisted of instructors from a wide range of educational backgrounds; for this reason, the pilot studies were conducted with three EFL instructors teaching in a blended course context to identify any issues related to the wording of the questions, the order of the questions, and other practical difficulties that could arise during the interview. The second interview in the pilot test was made in Turkish to address any issues related to the same concerns. After the second pilot test, the instructor raised a concern about whether one of the questions in Category C repeated the preceding one; however, it was not omitted from the category in the interview protocol because the latter could enable the instructors to expand their ideas (e.g., the question C2 “What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face teaching? Explain with your reasons.” and the question C3 “Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why?” in the student engagement strategies used in the face-to-face teaching category.)

3.5.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Benefitting from the qualitative case research design's illuminating nature, the researcher gathered using semi-structured interviews in this study to gather data. In this study, Culbertson's (2018) and Smith's (2018) interview questions were taken as a springboard, and specific questions were added in line with the research questions. Some changes were made to the wording of the interview questions of Culbertson and Smith to allow the instructors to elaborate on their answers and reflect on their opinions to increase the quality of the data (Dörnyei, 2007).

The semi-structured interview questions were grouped into seven categories:

1. Educational background of the EFL instructors
2. Conceptualization of student engagement and the factors that affect engagement
3. The student engagement strategies the EFL instructors used in face-to-face teaching
4. The student engagement strategies they use in online teaching
5. The EFL instructors' perception of student engagement level in face-to-face and online teaching
6. The problems and challenges encountered in student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching
7. Recommendations and solutions

The interview questions were open-ended, neutral, sure, and expansive to create an optimal environment for the participants (Rubin & Rubin 2005; Seidman, 2006). The interviews were done either in Turkish or English, depending on the participants' preferences. They took about 60 minutes at most and were conducted on Zoom because the participants worked in a new shift system, and therefore they were at school at different times. The instructors were asked questions about their educational background, their conceptualization and perception of student engagement, the engagement strategies they use in face-to-face and online teaching, and last, the solutions to the mentioned problems and suggestions for effective use of the engagement strategies in face-to-face and online learning and teaching contexts (see Table 3.2. for the interview questions).

Table 3.2. Semi-structured Interview Questions for the EFL Instructors

CATEGORIES / THEMES	**QUESTIONS**
A. Educational Background	A1. Name and surname. A2. Gender. A3. How long have you been teaching? A4. Which department did you graduate from? And when? A5. Do you hold an MA or Ph.D. degree? If yes, which departments did you graduate from? And when? A6. Have you ever taught in a blended course before? When and what purposes? A7. How long have you been teaching in the blended course in your institution?

Table 3.2. (continued) Semi-structured Interview Questions for the EFL Instructors

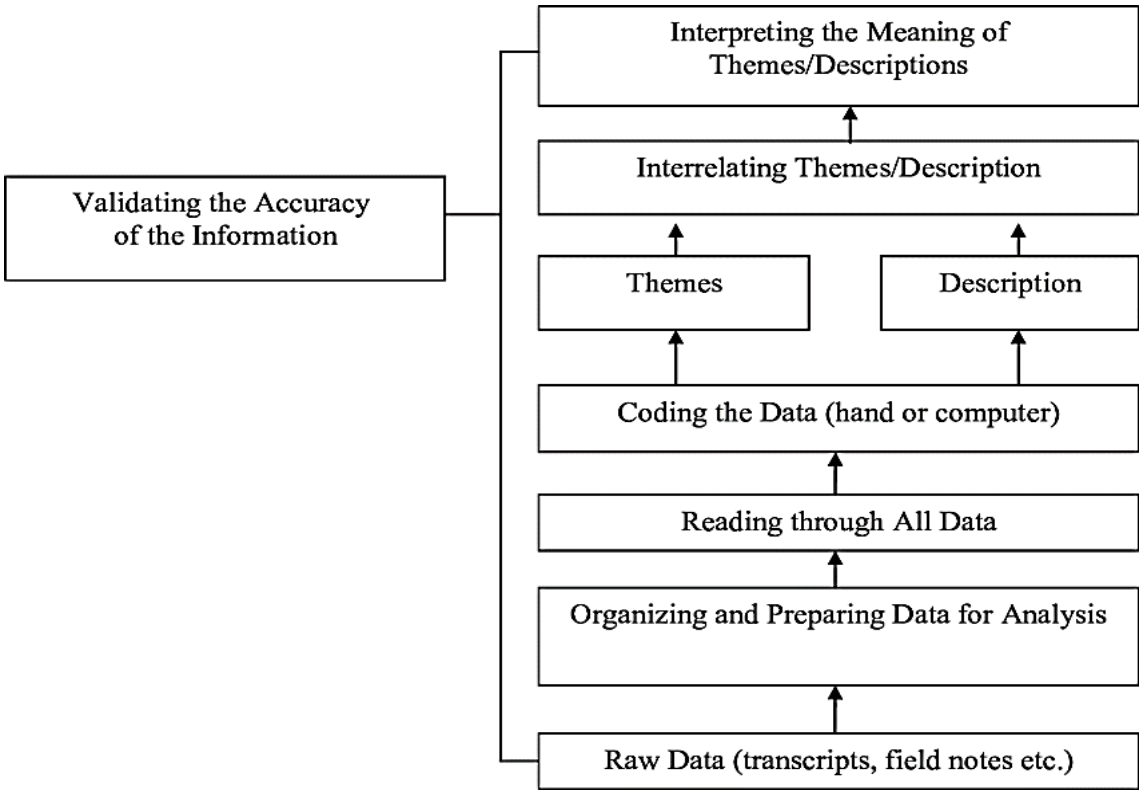
CATEGORIES / THEMES	QUESTIONS
B. Conceptualization of student engagement	B1. How do you define student engagement in the classroom? B1.1 What are the indicators of student engagement in a learning context? B1.2 What might be the factors decreasing student engagement in the classroom? B1.3 What might be the factors increasing student engagement in the classroom? B1.4 Are there any differences between the indicators of student engagement concerning the context?
C. Student engagement strategies used in face-to-face education	C1. What are the student engagement strategies you use in face-to-face teaching? C2. What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face teaching? Explain with your reasons? C3. Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why?
D. Student engagement strategies used in online education	D1. What are the student engagement strategies you use in online teaching? D2. What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in online teaching? Explain with your reasons. D3. Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why? D4. When you reflect on the student engagement strategies you use in face-to-face and online teaching environments, do you see any differences? If yes, what are they? Please provide examples.
E. EFL instructors' perception of student engagement level in face-to-face and online teaching	E1. Do you see any changes in your students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, how and why? E2. Are there any differences between the student engagement strategies if you use the same strategy in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, what are they? E2.1 Are there any differences in students' reactions to the strategies if you use the same strategy in face-to-face and online teaching? E3. What are the students' reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in face-to-face teaching? E4. What are the students' reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in online teaching?
F. The problems and challenges encountered for student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching	F1. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in face-to-face teaching? F2. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in online teaching? F3. Do you encounter any challenges in increasing student engagement concerning the student engagement strategies you use?
G. Recommendations and solutions	G1. What would be the solutions to the problems you encounter in increasing student engagement? G2. What do you think is necessary for developing the effectiveness of student engagement strategies used in an online teaching environment?

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

3.6.1. Semi-structured interview data analysis

Qualitative data analysis transforms the data through analytic procedures into clear, consistent, perceptive, and reliable evidence (Gibbs, 2007). In this study, qualitative data analysis of the semi-structured interviews was conducted using systematic qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is an interpretative analysis of the deeper meaning of the data and comprises four phases: (1) "organize and prepare the data for analysis," (2) "read and look at all the data," (3) "start coding all of the data" (4) "interpretation of the data and drawing conclusions" (Creswell, 2013, p. 197-200) as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research



Note. Adapted from "*Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th Edition)"* by Creswell, J. W., 2013, p. 197. SAGE Publications.

Organize and prepare the data for analysis

In the first step of the data analysis, the video-recorded interviews were transcribed immediately after each interview was done, and the responses were written verbatim.

Read and look at all the data

In this stage, the steps for data analysis from different resources integrated by Şahin (2019) were applied to make the data analysis reliable. After completing the transcription of the raw data, the researcher listened to each recording again to ensure that no data were lost in the transcription process. All the answers to the questions in each interview were read twice to get a sense of the whole dataset (Dörnyei, 2007; Vogt et al., 2014). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) suggest that selecting and highlighting the relevant parts of the texts while keeping the research questions in mind makes the further data analysis process more manageable. For this reason, in the third cycle of reading the responses to the interview questions, the researcher reviewed the texts, color-coded the relevant parts, and added marginal notes of the ideas and thoughts that came into the mind during the process (Creswell, 2007).

Start coding all of the data

In the first phase of the third step, the researcher underlined the words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs to list all the codes and labeled the words or phrases representing a category in the margin. When coding, the researcher used a combination of a general priori coding based on the interview questions and the emergent themes and codes from the qualitative data, as suggested by Creswell (2007). Following this step, the researcher created an Excel Spreadsheet (i.e., a qualitative codebook (Creswell, 2013) and entered the categories of the interview questions (i.e., “Definition of Student Engagement,” “Indicators of Student Engagement”) and recorded the extracts representing their categories. Having entered the extracts into the spreadsheet allowed the researcher to make the data more manageable for further steps in coding. At the end of this step, an expert (one academician specializing in ELT and qualitative research with a Ph.D. degree) was asked to assess the relevancy of the categories with the themes and codes.

In the second phase of the third stage, the researcher clustered similar categories under broad labels and checked whether the newly formed broader labels applied to all of them. In order to ensure validity, the researcher went back to related extracts to ensure their alignment with pre-existing coding categories and whether there was a need for recoding (Creswell, 2007, 2013; Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, the researcher moved back and forth between data analysis and the coding process as qualitative data analysis is an iterative process involving a "zigzag" pattern of analysis (Dörnyei, 2007). Following the data analysis, the researcher created another Excel Spreadsheet to record clustered categories that were similar under broader labels. At the end of this step, the expert was asked to check a randomly selected interview transcript and the coding matrix relevant to the interview questions and assess the relevancy of the themes and sub-themes and evaluate coherence among them. Upon the expert's agreement on a set of categories, themes, and sub-themes, the rest of the data were analyzed accordingly.

Interpretation of the data and drawing conclusions

In the fourth step, the researcher went through the second spreadsheet to revise and validate the relevancy and coherence between the themes and their sub-themes. When in need, the research moved back and forth between the spreadsheets and created the final Excel Spreadsheet, which shows a detailed discussion of the data with category names based on the interview questions, themes, and sub-themes as recommended by Creswell (2007). Last, verbatim quotations were used to interpret the data to provide clear examples for the findings for each category.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the content analysis findings of the qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study together with discussion are presented under each research question. Themes are written as the subtitles of this chapter, and the derived codes are presented in italics.

4.2. Results of Semi-Structured Interviews

The research questions and the relevant interview questions asked in the data collection tool utilized are given below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Research Questions and the related interview questions in the data collection tool

Research Questions	**Data Collection Tool**
1. How do the EFL instructors conceptualize student engagement?	Semi-structured interview (Questions B1, B1.1, B1.2, B1.3)
1.1. Do online teaching and face-to-face teaching make a difference in EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement?	Semi-structured interview (Question B 1.4)
2. What student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors use in face-to-face and online teaching to foster student engagement?	Semi-structured interview (Questions C1, D1)
2.1. Which of the student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors consider the most effective and the least effective in face-to-face and online learning and teaching?	Semi-structured interview (Questions C2, C3, D2, D3)
3. Are there any differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching If yes, what are they?	Semi-structured interview (Question D4)
3.1. Are there any changes in students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching?	Semi-structured interview (Question E1)
3.2. Are there any differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching?	Semi-structured interview (Questions E2.1., E3, E4)
4. What are the problems do the EFL instructors encounter in student engagement and the solutions they recommend to the mentioned problems?	Semi-structured interview (Questions F1, F2, F2.1, F3, G1, G2)

The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the participants were presented under the related research question.

4.3. Research Question 1: How do EFL instructors conceptualize student engagement?

To respond to the first research question, we asked the instructors how they define student engagement and a follow-up question to identify the factors that decrease and increase student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching.

4.3.1. Definition of student engagement

In the literature on educational psychology and second language acquisition, the importance of student engagement has been hotly debated; therefore, there has been little agreement on the definition of student engagement. For this reason, it is considered a multidimensional concept that encompasses behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions (Appleton et al., 2008). In this study, the definitions made by the EFL instructors pertaining to student engagement predominantly refer to behavioral engagement; in other words, the definitions descend into students' observable behaviors. Drawing on the results of the interview data analysis, the definitions centered around students' active participation. Active participation involves several dimensions including (1) *responding to teacher questions*, (2) *active listening*, (3) *working in cooperative learning activities*, and (4) *using paralinguistic features* and (5) *students' asking questions*. Table 4.2. demonstrates the definitions that the EFL instructors made for student engagement.

Table 4.2. EFL Instructors' Definition of Student Engagement

Categories	**Themes**
Active Participation *(Behavioral Engagement, Fredricks et al., 2004)*	• Responding to teacher questions • Working in cooperative learning activities • Active listening • Using paralinguistic features • Students' asking questions

One of the most stated definitions was *responding to teacher questions*. Out of ten, eight instructors associated student engagement with *responding to teacher questions* since

according to the instructors, when students answer teacher questions, it means that they actively engage in the lesson.

> Instructor 1: *"It is the students' responses to my questions. If they answer my questions, it means they are listening to me. I can clearly see that they are engaging when they are participating."*

Another most stated definition of student engagement was students' *working in cooperative learning activities.* Eight instructors defined the construct as students' involvement in group or pair work activities. In other words, it is their active participation in collaborative learning activities in class.

> Instructor 8: *"I think it is basically students' participation in group and pair work activities."*

> Instructor 9: *"Student engagement starts when students work in collaboration in the activities in the classroom."*

According to three instructors, student engagement involves students' *active listening* in the lesson.

> Instructor 6: *"I can describe student engagement as students who listen to the teacher and take notes in a lesson."*

In addition, two instructors described student engagement as students' use *of paralinguistic features*, which are making eye contact, use of facial expressions, hand gestures, and body posture.

> Instructor 5: *"It is students' participation in the classroom by showing that he understands and shows it to the teacher through his gestures, mimics, and body language."*

Out of ten, three instructors defined student engagement as students' own desire to participate in their learning process rather than being motivated or requested by the

instructor. They explained that it is "*students' asking questions to the teacher"* (Instructor 2).

In short, the results show that the responses of the EFL instructors pertaining to the definition and conceptualization of student engagement center around the dimensions of behavioral engagement. The components of active participation were mentioned in the responses to the interview questions. Firstly, *responding to teacher questions* that refer to students' full engagement with learning activities (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2006) is the recurrent dimension that was mentioned by the majority of the participants as it is an easy behavior to observe (Fredricks, 2014). The second dimension regarding the definition of student engagement is students' *working in cooperative learning activities.* This result is in line with the definition made by Coates (2007) who also referred to collaborative learning when defining the construct. Moreover, three instructors defined the construct by referring to *active listening*, which is also in agreement with the findings obtained by Nyman (2015) who found that active listening is the common observable behavior associated with student engagement by teachers. In addition, non-verbal cues, also known as *paralinguistic features*, were also mentioned by one instructor when giving the definition of student engagement. These non-verbal cues refer to making eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, and body posture. This also accords with the definitions made by the participants in the study by Barker (2015) who referred to paralinguistic features when they were asked to define the construct. Besides this, according to three instructors, student engagement refers to *students' questions* to the teacher, emphasizing students' own desire to participate in the lesson rather than participating on the teacher's requirement. This definition is in accordance with Newmann's definition of student engagement, stating that engaged learners become active in their learning (Newmann,1992) and have a desire to achieve their goals (Schlechty, 2001). Overall the findings suggest that the EFL instructors have a limited understanding of student engagement as their definitions descend into some of the behavioral aspects such as participation, involvement in academic activities and demonstrating on-task behaviors (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004; Skinner et al., 2009). However, student engagement is a multifaceted concept that entails both external and internal dimensions. The external dimensions concern the amount of actual learning behaviors that manifests itself through observable behaviors; that is behavioral engagement (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Internal dimensions involve "psychological quality and investment in learning" (Newmann, 1992, p. 12), which refers to cognitive engagement. Besides the

psychological aspect, emotions were also included in the definition of student engagement including anxiety, interest, boredom, happiness, and sadness (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

4.3.2. Factors that influence student engagement

Based on the instructors' responses, the factors that influence student engagement were divided into two categories. They are listed under classroom context-related factors, including *rapport building between the teacher and students, use of paralinguistic features in teaching, classroom instruction, teaching materials,* and *course design.* Table 4.3. demonstrates the factors that the EFL instructors consider influencing student engagement.

Table 4.3. Context-related factors that the EFL instructors consider influencing student engagement

Context-related factors	
Rapport building	• interpersonal relations with students • positive teacher attitudes
Paralinguistic features in teaching	• body language • tone of voice • eye contact
Classroom instruction	• lecture-based lessons
Teaching materials	• content of the materials • a wide range of materials • allow for personalization
Course design	• curriculum pacing • students' workload

The second category involve psychological factors, involving *speaking anxiety, feeling disconnected from the learning community,* and *lack of motivation to learn a foreign language* (See Table 4.4.).

Table 4.4. Psychological factors that the EFL instructors consider influencing student engagement

Psychological factors	
Speaking anxiety	• fear of making a mistake
Lack of self-motivation	• lack of motivation to learn a foreign language
Feeling disconnected from the learning environment	• avoiding participation in activities • avoiding interacting with others

Six instructors highlighted that rapport building significantly impacts student engagement in a learning and teaching context. The EFL instructors pointed to different aspects of rapport building. Firstly, five of them touched upon the importance of *building interpersonal relations with students* and added that lack of interaction creates an inconvenient environment for learning, and participation and engagement decrease as can be seen in the following quotations:

> Instructor 8: "*It is a lack of communication between the students and me and among the students. An unfriendly environment decreases their participation and engagement. If you don't build a strong bond or help create an environment where students feel comfortable, it turns into an ineffective learning environment."*

> Instructor 6: *"Having private conservations to get to know students' interests help us to engage them in classroom activities. (…) Knowing students and their lives make them feel a sense of belonging to the learning environment."*

In addition, this idea was echoed by two instructors who further explained that *positive teacher attitudes* improve interaction in a learning environment and thus more easily facilitate student engagement.

> Instructor 5: *"Positive attitudes towards students are also important. Being supportive and encouraging helps them to feel comfortable, and they start to ask questions about the lesson and become more engaged."*

Commenting on *positive teacher attitudes*, these instructors elaborate further that in an educational context where teachers who do not demonstrate positive attitudes towards their students fail to create and maintain a supportive learning environment. Therefore, a learning environment with a lack of positive teacher attitudes negatively impacts student participation and engagement as expressed in the quotation below:

> Instructor 3: *"I can say that a classroom atmosphere where there is a lack of support from the teacher and the peers turns into a place that students do not enjoy, participate, and engage in. Students do not feel comfortable enough to express their*

opinions or ask questions when they do not have a close relationship with their friends or teachers."

Concerning the factors that decrease student engagement mentioned above, Instructor 10 reported that *a lack of paralinguistic features in teaching* harms the efforts for student engagement in the classroom.

Instructor 10: *"The first thing is the voice/tone and the position of the teacher in the classroom. If the teacher stands still and does not use her voice or body effectively or make eye contact with each student, student engagement is affected negatively."*

Two instructors commented that *classroom instruction* directly impacts student engagement in the class. They added that lecture-based lessons limit student talking time and opportunities to ask questions. This type of instruction delivery causes a loss of attention and interest as clearly stated in the quotation below:

Instructor 1: *"If the lesson is lecture-based, their engagement is limited because when I ask a question, very few, maybe, one student gives a response because they lose their interest and attention when the teacher is more active and does most of the talking."*

Apart from these findings, three participants stated that a wide range of *teaching materials* positively affect student engagement. They promote a high level of student participation as stated by one of the instructors below:

Instructor 3: *"Teachers should prepare various materials to get their students' interest because they get bored easily, so different activities keep their engagement high. I can see that they become more active in the lesson when you use different materials."*

Additionally, they elaborated further on the ideas about *teaching materials* and added that using materials that *allow for personalization* contributes to increased student engagement as the quotation illustrates below:

Instructor 6: *"If the content is interesting or related to their interests, their participation increases. They are more eager to answer the questions or join the activities. They like to talk about their lives as well."*

However, talking about this issue, one of three instructors mentioned that if *teaching materials* do not attract students' interest or attention, it results in a decrease in engagement and participation that they do not take an active role in any class activities as explained in the quotation below.

> Instructor 2: *"If they find activities boring, they do not listen to or answer my questions. They do not do anything; they just sit in the classroom. If the content is interesting, they are more active and work with their partners."*

In addition to the factors regarding the classroom context above, Instructor 3 stated that *course design* can be one of the critical factors in decreasing student engagement when it is not learner-centered. She stated that *curriculum pacing and students' workload* are influential factors because students can feel overwhelmed by pacing and by the workload they have.

> Instructor 3: *"The pacing of the syllabus is another factor. Since the course program is loaded, we have to go fast, and we don't have enough time for revisions. Also, if you give too much homework, students feel tired, and when they come back to the lesson, they need a break because they have done too much homework the previous day."*

Commenting on the psychological factors, seven instructors reported four psychological factors to decrease student engagement in the class. They stated that *speaking anxiety* impedes student participation in speaking activities as can be seen in the quotation below:

> Instructor 7: *"Some students feel nervous about speaking in front of their peers and shy away from participating in speaking activities."*

In addition, Instructor 2 maintained that *fear of making a mistake* triggers speaking anxiety, decreasing student participation in class discussions.

> Instructor 2: *"Students at a lower level do not participate in oral discussions because they are afraid to make a mistake when they are speaking."*

Five of the instructors stated that *students' lack of self-motivation* inhibits their level of engagement. For example, Instructor 4 believed that *students' lack of self-motivation* negatively influences their learning and engagement in the class because their motivation is primarily extrinsic, involving external factors such as achieving success in the exams rather than learning a foreign language.

> Instructor 4: *"They are in the classroom because they have to. They do not care about it. They ask, 'Why am I here? When they come to prep school, they are generally beginners, and they do not want to learn English. They are not enthusiastic. (…), so, this also decreases their learning ability and engagement in the class. They just show interest when it is about their exams. They just listen or participate when they know that the exam will cover that topic. They just learn English to pass the exams. Otherwise, they are not active."*

The other response to this question regarding the psychological factors influencing student engagement was *feeling disconnected from the learning environment*. Instructor 7 explained that students who feel disconnected from their learning community avoid participating in activities. Consequently, their disconnectedness results in poor interaction with the teacher and peers and insufficient contribution to activities and discussions, leading to decreased engagement, as seen in the quotation below.

> Instructor 7: *"Some students are unwilling to connect with other students in the class, even with the teacher. They do not engage in any class activities or personal relationships with others. Those students do not respond to questions, join discussions or even listen to me."*

Previous studies have demonstrated that the factors regarding the relationship between student engagement and *context-related* and *psychological factors* could be obstacles to fostering student engagement (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Fredricks et al., 2004; Ogbu, 2003; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Wigfield & Waguer, 2005). Context-related factors include rapport *building between the teacher and students, use of paralinguistic features in teaching, teaching styles, teaching materials,* and *course design.* The responses to this particular question indicated that the EFL instructors referred to rapport building as one of the leading factors influencing student engagement. Most of the instructors discussed different aspects

of rapport building and their relationship with student engagement, including *interpersonal relations with students*, and *positive teacher attitudes.* Put it in another way, building a good rapport with students has a positive relationship with an effective learning environment where peer and teacher support is sustained, which leads to greater engagement. Reyes et al. (2012) suggest teacher behaviors that support a positive learning environment create more connected and engaging learners. They also state that the way teachers promote classroom interactions is a significant determinant factor for student engagement as positive relationships among the learning community members correspondingly increase engagement. Concerning the impact of *classroom instruction* on student engagement, two instructors proposed that lecture-based lessons rather than student-centered instruction affect student engagement negatively as it restricts students' active participation in the class, such as responding to teacher questions. This result reflects those of Bock and Erickson (2015). They also found that interactive and student-centered instruction positively correlates with a high level of engagement, attention, and interaction. The study also showed that teacher-centered lessons where the delivery of instruction is based on lectures lead to a decrease in student engagement conversely. Regarding *teaching materials*, two instructors commented upon their direct effect on student engagement. They explained that the learning activities that do not cater to students' expectations inhibit their engagement. This finding was also consistent with that of Fredricks et al. (2004), who found that students who consider that learning activities do not meet their expectations or are a waste of time and effort do not engage them entirely in response. About *using paralinguistic features*, one instructor emphasized their contribution to fostering engagement. She further explained that using those features is significant for the delivery of instruction and addresses students who differ in learning styles. Therefore, by *positioning themselves to establish eye contact* and *using more varied intonation* and *body gestures*, teachers could create learning environments where students feel more engaged and motivated for learning (O'Neill, 1993; Rahman, 2018). In the same vein, Rocca (2004) found that paralinguistic features positively correlate with student attendance and participation.

Another standard view among the instructors regarding the factors that affect student engagement is psychological factors. The psychological factors that were mentioned are *speaking anxiety, feeling disconnected from the learning community,* and *lack of self-motivation.* Five instructors suggested that there is a close connection between self-motivation and student engagement. They further explained that students who did not have

intrinsic motivation showed little participation or no participation in activities unless the goal was exam-oriented. A similar point about the relationship between motivation and engagement was presented in a study by Wigfield and Eccles (2002). They found that intrinsically motivated learners have a higher level of engagement and are enthusiastic about participating in the lesson as they think it is beneficial for their learning. Moreover, the result also indicated that students who lacked intrinsic motivation only showed minimum participation to avoid punishment or did not willingly participate in activities if they were not rewarded for their performance or the in activities did not contribute to their study or future careers. About another psychological factor, two instructors explained that *speaking anxiety* has a detrimental effect on student engagement because students have *a fear of making a mistake* and thus avoid speaking in communicative activities. The results are consistent with Liu and Jackson's (2008). They also found that a high level of speaking anxiety and fear of making mistakes leads to a decline in students' communication with others and classroom engagement. Lastly, regarding *disconnectedness from the learning community*, only one instructor commented on its negative influence on student engagement. The results further support the idea that students who have positive and constructive peer relationships develop strong social networks and engage in a learning community (Shernoff et al., 2003).

4.4. Research Question 1.1: Do online and face-to-face teaching make a difference in EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement?

To better understand how the context affects the EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement, we asked them to reflect on the differences between the indicators of student engagement in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments.

4.4.1. Differences between the indicators of student engagement concerning the context

The responses to the question regarding the differences between the indicators of student engagement concerning the context centered around only one theme; students' active participation in the lesson. The EFL instructors' responses demonstrate that students' active participation in the classroom manifested in different ways. In other words, they touched upon different aspects of active participation in explaining the differences between the

indicators, namely *responding to teacher questions, active listening,* and *participation in cooperative learning activities.*

Five instructors stated that there was a marked difference in the quantity and frequency of *students' responding to teacher questions*. They noted that the frequency and the number of student responses in face-to-face lessons were higher than in online classes as can be seen in the quotations below:

> Instructor 2: *"In face-to-face education, they give answers to teachers' questions more. But in online education, they do not do the same. (…) They avoid answering the questions. I get more responses in face-to-face lessons because it is where they have always been used to learning."*

> Instructor 9: *"From my personal experiences, I can say that students are more engaged in face-to-face lessons. They always say that they hate online lessons. Therefore, they do not answer questions in online lessons, but the same students are more engaged in face-to-face lessons, which I can see clearly. So definitely they prefer face-to-face education over online education."*

Four instructors stated a difference in students' *participation in cooperative learning activities*. They mentioned that participation in those activities was lower in online education compared to face-to-face teaching. They believed that environmental interruptions originated from students' study spaces such as their houses or dormitories, led to a decline in their participation. Moreover, the distance negatively influenced the implementation of those activities as clearly expressed in the quotation below:

> Instructor 10: *"In online lessons, they are in their houses or dormitories, and there are so many distractions, but in face-to-face education, even if not all the students are engaged, some feel the pressure of the teacher. But in online education, they think they are free to participate because there is a machine in front of them, not the real teacher, so they do not do the activities, so when I ask them to work with their partners or in groups, they just stay silent and do not interact with others."*

In addition, two instructors stated that there is also a difference in *students' active listening*. They asserted that students listened more attentively in face-to-face lessons contrary to online classes.

> Instructor 5: *"When we screen share and have a class discussion and try to monitor all the students during the task, we see students on small picture-like screens and cannot know if the students are listening to the lesson or watching a video on YouTube just pretending to listen to me by nodding his head, but in fact when this is not the case. I usually have to repeat my questions in online lessons because they do not follow or listen to me, but we do not have this situation in face-to-face classes."*

> Instructor 4: *"I think the main difference is in their listening to me. Same students do not listen to me in the online lessons, but they are more active and take notes in face-to-face ones. They just jumped into online education, but they are not used to it."*

What emerges from the results of the particular question reported here is that the EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement consists of three interrelated components of active participation: (1) *responding to teacher questions,* (2) *active listening*, and (3) *participation in cooperative learning activities.* According to the findings, the most striking difference can be seen in the frequency and the number of the students' responses available in a face-to-face context. The instructors noted that the best indication of student engagement was the fact that students were actively involved in responding to teacher questions. Secondly, four instructors stated that face-to-face lessons consist of more active students in *cooperative learning activities* than online lessons. They believed that students' study spaces in their houses were not convenient for participating in collaborative activities online lessons. In addition, absence of face-to-face interaction in the online context led to a decline in student participation and interaction. Lastly, two instructors stated that students listened to their teachers more actively in the classroom because they had total concentration. Based on the responses to the question, it can be inferred that students became more active participants in face-to-face lessons as the instructors highlighted in their responses that they were not familiar with the new online learning mode and their study spaces were not conducive to attend online lessons. This finding is in line with Yurdugül and Demir (2017), who also found that teachers believe that students' unpreparedness for online learning constitutes a factor in decreasing satisfaction, success, and engagement.

4.5. Research Question 2: What student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors use in face-to-face and online teaching to foster student engagement?

The second research question was asked to explore what student engagement strategies the EFL instructors implemented to engage students in face-to-face and online education. The results of the research question were presented under the related titles.

4.5.1. Student engagement strategies used in face-to-face teaching

The EFL instructors were asked to reflect on the strategies they implement to foster student engagement in face-to-face teaching. The findings revealed that the EFL instructors employed different strategies to promote student engagement (See Table 4.5.).

Table 4.5. Student engagement strategies used by the EFL instructors in face-to-face teaching

Category	Themes
Using a wide range of teaching materials or activities	• engaging lead-in activities • videos • personalization activities
Facilitating cooperative learning	• class discussions
Rapport building	• interpersonal relations with students • positive reinforcement • using humor in teaching and in-class interactions • telling personal anecdotes
Elicitation techniques	• open-ended questions • direct nomination
Use of paralinguistic features	• body gestures • the tone of voice
Modeling	• giving an example for complicated tasks • giving clear instructions
Giving feedback	• immediate feedback

Six out of ten instructors emphasized that when they were enriched in content, teaching materials drove a significant increase in engagement. Therefore, they used *a wide range of teaching materials* to enhance student engagement in face-to-face classes.

Instructor 3: *"I use a variety of materials that raise their interest because just sticking to the materials provided by the school may not be that effective always."*

Three instructors echoed this idea that they started their lessons with *engaging lead-in activities,* which helped direct students' attention to the lesson content at the beginning of the lesson. For example, Instructor 4 stated that she used *videos* to get students' attention, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> Instructor 10: *"Generally, I use videos related to the lesson's content. Because I get positive feedback from the students, I use film trailers most of the time. Sometimes I have used songs, especially for the grammar structures. They have helped me to create a discussion environment in the lesson. These are for the leads-in because I have extended the time allocated for these parts this year."*

In addition to the teaching materials and activities to engage students, one instructor explained that *personalization* increased student engagement because the content became relevant to students and made it easy for them to contribute to the lesson.

> Instructor 6: *"Firstly, I try to get to know my students better. I set a goal to learn as much as I can about my students in the first week. Whatever the topic of the lessons is, I use the information about the students in the lessons; for example, I use comparative and superlative to compare things about two students. They like when they are part of the lesson. Then they make sentences about each other."*

Five instructors reported that strategies that promoted active cooperative learning effectively foster student engagement in face-to-face lessons. They believed that *class discussions* got students more involved in their learning as they could articulate lesson content in their own words.

> Instructor 6: *"Sometimes, I ask students to explain the grammar structures by elicitation as I ask them to write two sentences on the board and get them to discuss their grammatical use (…) because giving responsibility to students makes them active in the lesson."*

> Instructor 10: *"I use songs, especially for grammar structures. They help me create a discussion environment because I ask some questions and get them to discuss in groups and then with the whole class. I also organize discussions for speaking activities. I*

give them a topic and talk to their peers or groups to express their ideas. Sometimes they come with interesting ideas. I like it."

Another strategy used by the EFL instructors is rapport building. Out of ten, five instructors reported that building rapport with students was effective for engaging students in the lessons. Four aspects of rapport building were identified in the responses of the instructors: (1) *interpersonal relations with students, (2) positive reinforcement, (3) using humor in teaching and class interactions,* and *(4) telling personal anecdotes*. According to Instructor 6, *interpersonal relations with students* at the beginning of a course period helped the instructors keep students engaged in the lessons, as explained in the quotation below:

Instructor 6: *"I try to make post-listening and writing activities more personal. I use these parts to get to know more about the students and they realize that the teacher wants to know more about them, and they show more interest."*

Commenting on the strategies for student engagement, Instructor 8 stated that *positive reinforcement* for their work and efforts positively affected student engagement.

Instructor 8: *"Building strong connections is the most important thing. I try to show a warm and friendly attitude to my students. I do it by making positive comments on their responses, written tasks, and efforts and giving constructive feedback on their incorrect answers. They feel relaxed in the lesson and do not hesitate to participate in the class activities."*

Two instructors reported that *using humor in teaching and class interactions* promotes communication in the classroom and engagement.

Instructor 4: *"I make jokes when I understand that they get bored and lose their focus on the lesson. (…) Sometimes I make jokes about them. It makes them feel comfortable in their relationship with me and the classroom. I can see that they start to feel relieved especially at the beginning of the course and gradually their engagement increases."*

Besides the aspects of rapport building abovementioned, Instructor 1 stated that she *told personal anecdotes* in the lessons, adding that students were generally attentive to anecdotes about their teachers.

Instructor 1: *"I tell some personal anecdotes to get the attention. (…) Students are curious about your life and listen to you carefully when you tell anecdotes from your life. I sometimes start the lesson with a piece of information about myself which is related to the topic."*

Elicitation techniques were also implemented as a strategy to increase student engagement by the EFL instructors. Five instructors highlighted that thought-provoking questions allowed a wide range of student responses and encourage genuine participation. For example, Instructor 7 stated that *asking open-ended questions* influenced student engagement positively.

Instructor 7: *"I do not ask yes-no questions to prevent short answers (…) I ask open-ended questions to increase participation. They think about the question and give long answers and share their opinions. They also exchange ideas (…) This is important because they listen to what others say. When you ask yes/ no questions, they just say yes or no. Then, there is limited interaction and exchange of ideas."*

In order to increase participation and engagement, two instructors used *direct nomination* instead of asking the question to the whole class.

Instructor 1: *"I nominate students when I ask a question or ask them to express their opinions on a topic. When you nominate a student, they do not keep silent and answer or join the discussion by sharing their ideas. Otherwise, when you ask a question to the whole class, even if they know the answer, they stay silent."*

Two instructors believed that *using paralinguistic features in teaching* was an effective strategy. They stated that using body language and regulating their voice helped them direct students' attention to the lesson.

Instructor 5: *"I am always energetic in the lessons, so I move a lot during the lessons. I use my body language a lot in all kinds of lessons. I even animate verbs in grammar lessons to get their attention. I also use my voice, like raising and lowering, to get their attention. Then they become more active and participate actively in the lesson."*

Two instructors pointed out that *modeling* served as an effective strategy for them to foster student engagement. For example, Instructor 8 mentioned that *modeling* guided students through the lesson when it was unclear to them by *giving an example for complicated tasks* and *clear instructions.*

> Instructor 8: *"Actually, I can say that when students come together for the first time, they can be a bit shy, and they don't want to participate in the class. In such cases, I usually lead them by asking some questions and expecting them to answer. Before asking students to talk about something, I lead them again if they don't want to answer or do not know how to answer before asking students to talk about something. First, I give my answer, and then I expect them to come up with their answers or for especially complicated tasks, I always show them how they will do it and explain with clear instructions."*

Only one instructor stated that *giving feedback* contributed to the efforts in engaging students and getting them more active in the classroom because students believed that the teacher provided them with correct answers when they made a mistake to prevent repetitive errors as expressed by one of the instructors below:

> Instructor 9: *"In face-to-face education, I think I try to give more feedback to my students. I try to give them promptly because I prefer immediate feedback. They like to receive it on their outcomes during the lesson because it helps increase the number of engaged students. They believe that if they participate and make a mistake, the teacher will correct them, and they won't make the same mistake again."*

The analyses of the interview responses of the EFL instructors revealed what student engagement strategies they frequently implemented to foster student engagement, specifically in the face-to-face learning environment. For the instructors, *using a wide range of teaching materials or activities* was an effective strategy to engage students in face-to-face lessons. The majority of the EFL instructors made some adjustments to the learning materials and activities by keeping them varied, interesting, and relevant as well as reinforcing them with online games, videos, and visuals. This can be due to the fact that designing a lesson integrated with interesting learning materials, activities, and online tools facilitates student engagement (Willms et al., 2009). This can be further supported by the

findings of Jansem (2019), who conducted a study with eight teachers who implemented their teaching practices based on the principles of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) in a foreign language teaching context. The findings confirm that all teachers managed to direct students' attention and their focus on activities and receive oral responses to the content of the lesson. In the same vein, the instructors used videos, and in turn, the students appreciated them. Since videos provide students with interesting and challenging content and allow them to experience communicative situations, they allow students to be active participants in the language learning process (Çakır, 2006).

Moreover, the EFL instructors consider rapport-building an effective strategy to increase student engagement. The responses indicated that the instructors benefitted from three aspects of rapport building, namely *positive reinforcement, using humor in teaching and in class interactions, interpersonal relations with students* and *telling personal anecdotes* to promote good quality of interaction and communication with students. The results showed that the positive relationships between the teacher and students had an impact on learning experiences and had better academic growth as rapport-building behaviors promoted student participation and engagement. Previous studies also show that student interactions with teachers in terms of building a positive relationship play an important in enhancing and maintaining student engagement in the classroom (Kelly & Turner, 2009; Martin & Dowson, 2009) as building a good relationship is vital in facilitating achievement, motivation, and engagement (Martin, 2006). Examining rapport, Frisby and Martin (2010) found that a positive relationship between the instructor-student and student-student enhances student participation. Moreover, the findings indicate that keeping interpersonal relationships in the learning environment influences student participation and engagement. Likewise, Park (2016) found that integrating humor into teaching and classroom interactions received positive reactions from students. For example, smiling and laughing and sharing personal information with students created an interest among students and helped to build a good relationship between the teacher and students and increased their engagement (Park, 2016).

The findings also revealed that five instructors used strategies based on active cooperative learning to engage students in face-to-face lessons. The instructors emphasized that *class discussions* facilitated an interactive language environment where students took active roles in language learning. It can be understood that the instructors had positive

experiences incorporating the strategies for active cooperative learning as they were able to shift the focus of the class to student-centered learning, promoting accountability of group members and supporting peer learning through interactive in-class activities. Thus, teachers that promote discussion in the classroom around academic tasks create substantive reciprocity among students and greater attention (Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). Likewise, Johnson and Johnson (2009) emphasized the importance of cooperative learning about making sense of belonging to the learning community. They explained that promoting interaction could encourage students to support each other's efforts to achieve their goals and contribute to group work. With an aim to explore the effects of interaction among students on achievement and satisfaction, Kurucay and Inan (2017) conducted a study with eighty-eight participants with a random selection. The participants collaborated to complete their academic assignments and gave feedback on their contributions and work. Like Johnson and Johnson (2009), the results showed that in a learning environment where students valued learner interaction and evaluation, their engagement and achievement related to course activities increased. In his research on cooperative learning, Delialioglu (2011) assessed student engagement in blended learning contexts where teaching involved Problem Based Learning course and a lecture-based course. The data collected from 89 students indicated that student engagement level was higher in PBL-based lessons, contrary in lecture-based ones. The relevance of group chats to student engagement is seen in the study of Chen et al. (2018). The findings of communicative tasks showed that student discussions effectively increased their overall participation and engagement accordingly.

To keep students engaged, three instructors stated that rather than asking yes/no questions, they ask *open-ended questions* to elicit extended responses from students. The instructors held the idea that open-ended questions, as they require extended student responses, keep students more engaged in interaction with others. This finding was also reported by Wright (2006) that open-ended questions employed in a communicative task engage students more in negotiation since they require extended and more complex responses.

Two instructors argued that guiding students through *modeling* for the expectations of in-class activities and tasks is an effective strategy for student engagement. Since desired actions can be abstract concepts, explicit examples provided by the teacher alleviate students' confusion and enhance the quality of modeling which increases engagement

(Harbour et al., 2015). In the same vein, Methe and Hintze (2003) stated that student engagement increases when teachers model explicit examples in the classroom. The study showed that positive teacher modeling directly links students' on-task reading behaviors. Pedersen and Liu (2003) investigated the impact of modeling on Problem-based learning (PBL). They reported that through teacher modeling, the students applied the strategies to a complex task they were given and increased their participation and engagement.

4.5.2. Student engagement strategies used in online teaching

The EFL instructors were asked to comment on the strategies they implement to foster student engagement in online teaching. The findings revealed that the EFL instructors employed different strategies to promote student engagement (See Table 4.6.).

Table 4.6. Student Engagement Strategies used by the EFL Instructors in Online Teaching

Category	Themes
Use of technology	• Online tools and applications • Online games • Online whiteboard • Videos
Rapport-building	• Non-academic conversations • Scaffolding
Facilitating cooperative learning	• Class discussions • breakout rooms
Use of paralinguistic features in teaching	• Body gestures • The tone of voice
Elicitation techniques	• Direct nomination • Asking for written responses

The results uncovered that the majority of the instructors benefitted from technology for an effective and engaging online learning environment. Seven out of ten instructors reported that they designed technology-integrated lessons to increase student participation and engagement in learning activities. *Online tools and applications* helped them understand whether students completed the tasks and joined the activities that were assigned on an application, which enabled the instructors to track students easily.

Instructor 4: *"I use some applications that work very well. To engage students or whether they were doing the exercise I gave them, I sometimes prepared tasks on*

Hyper say. I can see who is doing the tasks or writing an answer to my questions because participation is a problem in online lessons. (…), so, these kinds of apps worked well."

In addition to these, one instructor also used *online applications and tools* to give feedback to her students. She believes that feedback contributed to increased student engagement, especially in online teaching.

Instructor 9: *"I try to give immediate feedback with online tools because it contributes to students' learning and increases their participation in the lesson. When we are in school physically, they can come and ask for feedback anytime, but in online education we are apart, so giving constant feedback is important for their engagement. (…) There are many online tools that are available for giving feedback."*

Three of them stated that *online games* enriched the content of the lessons and made them more attractive for students.

Instructor 7: *"I also try to integrate technology into my lessons, such as games as a reward. (…) When I use games in the lessons, more students participate in the activities because it makes the lesson fun."*

Three instructors highlighted the effectiveness of technology in capturing students' attention and raising their interest in different lesson stages. For example, Instructor 3 stated that *videos* assisted them in increasing student participation as the following quotation illustrates:

Instructor 4: *"I try to integrate technology into my classes more. I can use videos in my lessons to raise my students' interest, especially in the beginning. Or when they feel bored at the end of the lesson. If I can find a video about the lesson content, we watch it and talk about it. It is a great lead-in activity to attract attention and also make them speak about the content. (…) I use videos for post-production activities or writing. Videos are useful for increasing student participation."*

In addition to the different ways of using online tools and applications, Instructor 5 reported that she used an *online whiteboard* to imitate a traditional face-to-face classroom setting.

> Instructor 5: *"I use online whiteboards to make it more understandable and easier for the students to understand the lessons. They are familiar with whiteboard from face-to-face lessons, so I think it works well in online education because it gives them a familiar feeling of learning something."*

Another strategy that the EFL instructors used in online teaching was rapport-building. Two of them stated that they frequently had *non-academic conversations* with students, adding that they tried to maximize their participation in the lesson by asking personal questions and showing interest in students as can be seen in the following quotation:

> Instructor 1: *"I ask different questions to get them involved in the lesson. For example, I ask questions such as "Where are you? What are you doing there?" if I see them in a different place rather than their rooms. Because I can see that they feel good when I ask such questions, you should show that you are interested in them and try to make them trust you. Otherwise, they do not participate in the lessons."*

Two instructors stated that *scaffolding* in the class and outside is a consistent influential factor in maintaining student engagement in online education. They pointed out that students needed guidance, especially in managing online education, since it was a new learning experience and the procedures differed from face-to-face education. One of the instructors stated that she assisted students in the first week of the course to manage successfully in the new learning environment. The other instructor stated that she continued her support outside the class by inviting and encouraging students to send an email in case they might have a problem and request help as the following quotations show:

> Instructor 9: *"I guess I do scaffold more in online lessons. This is a new platform for them, and they need more help in doing tasks online. (…) I help them initially, but they gradually become more independent and do the things themselves. Being there for them when things get started, complicated or difficult, makes them feel safe and comfortable in an unfamiliar learning environment at first."*

Instructor 3: *"I give my email address and encourage them to send me an email when they have a problem and do my best to help them. (…) Because they cannot see me as they do in face-to-face education, I give them freedom or an idea that they can still reach me whenever they need because it is not like a real classroom atmosphere."*

About the strategies implemented in online education, Instructor 9 stated that *paralinguistic features* helped the instructor improve instructional delivery in online teaching. She pointed to the impact of the nature of this particular learning setting on students' concentration; therefore, added that regulating the tone of voice and using non-verbal cues were important in capturing students' attention as expressed in the quotation below:

Instructor 9: *"Students have a very short attention span in online lessons, so I try to use my voice or use gestures because they see me through a small size screen. I change my tone of voice when explaining something, (…) for example trying to show that something is important when explaining a grammar structure. I can see that some students start to take notes (…)."*

Three instructors used strategies to facilitate cooperative learning to encourage interaction between students. For example, Instructor 10 stated that she promoted classroom interactions through *class discussions* mostly based on explanations and exchanging ideas about the use of grammatical structures by the students.

Instructor 10: *"I use a word document to record students' answers about grammar structures and share the screen for students to see all the answers. Then I lead them to class discussions about the grammar rules based on the sentences on the document."*

Moreover, two instructors mentioned that they used *breakout rooms* for interactive tasks to increase participation in speaking activities. They also added that breakout rooms allowed them to form small groups or pairs, which also offered an opportunity for those who hesitated to share their ideas in front of the class.

Instructor 6: *"I use breakout rooms to make the others at least speak with their partners. They feel more relaxed in the breakout room without the teacher's presence. I monitor them, of course, with my camera off, which is also quite a relief for them."*

Also, she furthered her response that she used *color-coding* when clarifying grammar structures on the screen shared document. She stated that "color-coding helps students to understand the grammar points better and increase their participation because when I ask them questions and get them to discuss the rules, they refer to the points they see on the screen."

In addition to these, four instructors stated that they *direct nomination* to elicit more responses to teacher questions as they believe that nominating a student offers an invitation for individual students participate. However, the instructors maintained that even if they frequently nominated a student to elicit an answer, the number of the responses was not sufficient.

Instructor 6: *"I try to increase student engagement by nominating students who seem to be listening to me with their cameras on. Otherwise, no one will answer your questions. When I call on students, it encourages them to speak, but still, I do not get enough answers (...) sometimes they do not give any answers even if I ask from a specific student."*

One of them also added that in case of the absence of oral responses, she asked students to deliver their responses on the chatbox, explaining "some students never answer your questions or share their ideas. I encourage them to use the chatbox (…)." (Instructor 10).

These results revealed that the EFL instructors used a variety of student engagement strategies in online education to engage students. The majority of the instructors designed technology-integrated lessons integrating *online tools and applications* for fostering student engagement. They stated that integration of technology yielded identifiable benefits to the instructors in enriching the content of online lessons with games and videos, increasing student participation in activities by allowing written responses through "anonymous classroom response systems" (Fies & Marshall, 2006, p. 102), and in using online whiteboards for the same purpose. In other words, the instructors adopted online tools and

applications to create interactive, informative, and engaging lessons as well as facilitate class discussions and pair/group work through breakout rooms. These results agree with those of Harmer (2007), who suggests that online language activities enhance cooperative learning among learners as the activities selected based on students' needs and benefits could considerably contribute to their learning.

Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms that in a language classroom, students become active participants in the learning process, which allows them to retain more information, more information exchange could occur in class discussions, their language learning skills improve and provides equal opportunities for student participation (Costley, 2014; Eaton, 2010; Tutkun, 2011). Baytak et al. (2011) investigated the role of technology in language learning. The results indicated that technology integration enriched students' language learning experience as it helped to design engaging, enjoyable, and interactive lessons. They also maintained that technology motivated students to improve their interactions and increased engagement. Likewise, in an attempt to understand the role of digital tools on student engagement in an online learning environment, Ma et al. (2014) examined the strategies to engage students actively (e.g., prompt feedback, instructors' assistance, and designing appropriate materials and activities) in a higher education institution. The findings showed that using a wide range of tools to promote students' learning and preparing appropriate course materials integrated with technology increased student participation and engagement in classroom activities. These recommendations echoed Heilporn et al. (2021), suggesting that various digital tools enhance student behavioral engagement synchronously and asynchronously, noting that students may disengage otherwise.

Another most mentioned strategy was direct nomination. Teacher elicitation is one of the aspects of classroom interaction that fosters student participation, produces information, and fosters student cognitive development (Nathan & Kim, 2007). Regarding elicitation, the findings revealed that most of the EFL instructors utilized *direct nomination (*Dallimore et al., 2004) to increase student participation by ensuring student responses instead of waiting for volunteers' answers. The responses to the interview questions indicate that due to the nature of the online learning context, eliciting student responses require consistent teacher efforts, especially in online lessons. Therefore, by nominating a specific student for elicitation rather than waiting for volunteers, the instructors tried to ensure their participation

in the lessons because direct nomination increases the number of students answering questions (Dallimore et al., 2012).

Rapport-building was also implemented as a strategy to increase engagement in online lessons. Some instructors highlighted the importance of having *non-academic conversations* with students to increase student engagement. Due to the absence of student participation in online classes, the instructors had discussions about off-topic issues to build a good rapport with students and improve communication and interaction rather than sticking only to academic conversations. These results reflect those of Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzaranes (2012), who tried to explain the importance of building rapport in distance education (DE). They interviewed DE teachers individually for two months and looked for thematically similar units related to the connection. They identified six categories based on the regularities in the text of the transcripts. The teachers mentioned non-academic conversations/interactions with students as one of the strategies they employ to promote rapport. Non-academic conversations/exchanges, as they define, involve focusing on monitoring students personally rather than solely academically.

The findings also supported those of Frisby and Martin (2010), who also found in their study that teachers emphasized the importance of rapport building due to the absence of face-to-face communication in online education. About the importance of *scaffolding* in engaging students in online education, two instructors stated that they scaffolded students for the orientation to the new learning context until they developed autonomous strategies and were accessible and responsive to provide help to students outside the class. The results are consistent with those of Murphy and Manzaranes (2008) who also found that communicating with students outside instructional time is a considerably influential factor in eliminating challenges and problems that they have related to the course and engaging them in online education. In addition to being available for providing solutions for the problems and challenges which students may have, guiding students through scaffolding for their needs with timely and appropriate instructional support is essential as it motivates students to construct their knowledge in online learning contexts and thus offers meaningful and engaging learning experiences (Oliver & Herrington, 2003).

4.6. Research Question 2.1.: Which of the student engagement strategies do the EFL instructors consider the most effective and the least effective in face-to-face and online teaching? And why?

To better understand the effectiveness of the student engagement strategies, the EFL instructors were also asked to identify the strategies they consider the most and the least effective strategies in online and face-to-face teaching.

4.6.1. The most and the least effective strategies in face-to-face and online teaching

A follow-up question was asked to find out which student engagement strategies were identified by the EFL instructors as the most and the least effective in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments. The results indicated that rapport building and cooperative learning activities were considered effective strategies for face-to-face teaching. Regarding rapport building, it was suggested that *positive reinforcement* and *the use of humor in teaching and in-class activities* had a positive effect on student engagement. Out of ten, six EFL instructors identified two aspects of rapport building as practical strategies to engage students: *positive reinforcement* and *using humor in teaching and in-class activities.* Three of them held the belief that effort-based praises had considerable positive influence on student engagement because they motivated students to involve in learning activities as expressed by Instructor 3, “Going near them and seeing their improvement while working on a task and giving them praise for their work increase their participation most”. They also maintained that positive reinforcement increased their participation as they felt valued by the teacher. In addition to positive reinforcement, three instructors highlighted the effectiveness of *humor in teaching and in-class activities* as it laid the foundation for building a positive relationship between the teacher and students.

The second mentioned effective strategy by the EFL instructors was *cooperative learning activities*. Four instructors stated that *cooperative learning activities* were an effective student engagement strategy since, as emphasized by the instructors, they made all students "responsible for the activities as a member of the group they worked in” (Instr. 6) and created an opportunity for especially introverted students to become active in small group tasks rather than whole-class activities where they may feel uncomfortable.

As for the least effective student engagement strategies, the EFL instructors identified two ineffective strategies. Six instructors mentioned that some elicitation techniques were ineffective in engaging students. They held the belief that *general nomination* was ineffective in eliciting answers. They considered that in order to produce a response from students, the question should be directed to a specific student (direct-nomination) as students usually tended to wait for others to respond to teacher questions. In addition, the second ineffective strategy to engage students in face-to-face lessons mentioned by the EFL instructors was *technology-integrated lessons*. They reported that rather than participating in online games or doing the task with an online tool, some students logged in to their social media accounts and spent the entire time there during the activity.

As for online teaching, the results indicated that designing *technology-integrated lessons* was the most effective strategy, as expressed by the EFL instructors, they benefited considerably in engaging students in the online lessons. All the instructors found *using online tools and applications* as the most effective student engagement strategy for the online learning and teaching context. They explained that *online tools and applications* enabled them to monitor their students during the activities as those tools and applications made it possible for the instructors to track student participation in case they did not participate orally as well as increased the number of student responses in written form when they did not give oral responses. Much in the same way, the instructors emphasized that technology became a source of a variety of teaching materials and in turn they could offer students an engaging and student-centered language learning experiences as the integration of different online tools and applications in a teaching environment makes lessons more effective than lecture-based classes (Raihan & Lock, 2012).

As for the least effective strategies, *direct nomination* for elicitation was one of the most mentioned strategy by the instructors. Five instructors stated that students did not respond to teacher questions or share their ideas on a topic when they were nominated individually by the teacher, instead they waited for the teacher to provide them with correct answers. For this reason, as the findings revealed, the instructors depended mostly on online tools and applications enabling students to deliver written answers. Besides *direct nomination*, five instructors reported that *using cooperative learning activities in breakout rooms* did not work efficiently in online lessons. They explained that the online learning context was different from the traditional face-to-face learning context in which students

were already familiar, leading to a decline in the amount, quality, and frequency of student interactions as "they jumped into a place they did not know and also they did not understand that it was a learning environment." (Instructor 3). The differences between the underlying principles of the modes of instruction in blended learning also influenced the effective implementation of cooperative learning activities as expressed by one of the instructors "we cannot monitor students effectively during pair or group work activities in break out rooms because we don't see all the students at the same time." (Instructor 5).

4.7. Research Question 3: Are there any differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, what are they?

The third research question was asked to understand if there were differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments and specify the differences.

4.7.1. Reflections on the differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching

To better understand the effectiveness of the student engagement strategies, the EFL instructors were also asked to reflect on the differences in the implementation of student engagement strategies regarding the learning and teaching contexts.

Five instructors explained that there were differences in the implementation of active cooperative learning strategies. They emphasized that it was difficult to administer *cooperative learning activities* in online lessons due to the nature of the learning context as they consider that they did not manage to monitor students during communicative tasks as effectively as they could do in face-to-face learning and teaching environment where they had more control over students and the proper implementation of the tasks.

> Instructor 2: *"In breakout rooms on Zoom, they do not do the communicative activities. They do it only during my monitoring. But in face-to-face lessons, they do pair or group work because they know that the teacher can hear them if they speak during a communicative activity. In general, it is easy to do communicative tasks successfully in face-to-face lessons because you can see their body language or facial expressions*

in real-time. They join the discussions and share their ideas more. In online lessons, they do not keep their cameras on, so you don't see them."

Five instructors reported that there were differences in the implementation of technology-integrated lessons. Instructors stated that *online tools and applications* received more positive reactions in online teaching. They also added that the tools and applications made it possible for teachers to elicit written responses to their questions when they failed to elicit oral responses.

Instructor 9: *"I also use technology in online lessons. I don't use technology that much in face-to-face lessons because they are physically there, and I get responses to my questions. But in online lessons students tend to avoid answering your questions, so online tools and applications help me to design communicative lessons. I can receive verbal responses even if they do not answer my questions orally."*

Two instructors highlighted the differences in the *use of paralinguistic features* concerning online and face-to-face contexts. They stated that they were more effective when they were used in face-to-face lessons.

Instructor 3: *"I can walk around, use my body language. Even my facial expressions and mimics are diverse because we are physically there."*

About *direct nomination*, two instructors stated that they got more responses from students in face-to-face lessons as distance in an online setting made it easy for students to ignore the teacher or avoid answering questions.

Instructor 5: *"In online lessons, I have to nominate students, but in face-to-face, I can point at the student. It is more effective to nominate face-to-face because students cannot ignore you as they do in online lessons. They keep silent and do not answer your questions because they think that it is easy to ignore the teacher."*

In addition to these, two instructors reflected on the differences in their efforts to build rapport with students in both contexts, especially in applying *positive reinforcement*. Instructor 5 raised an issue that due to the nature of the online learning context, positive

reinforcement was influenced negatively because the amount of student responding decreased resulting from the distance as the following quotation explains:

> Instructor 5: *"The use of praising expressions (rapport) has reduced in online lessons because we have to deal with other situations. For example, the students turn their camera or microphone on after being nominated to answer if that student is present, etc. (…) but still, the answers are short, not worth praising actually."*

Finally, Instructor 9 mentioned the difference in the amount of time to *give feedback* because in face-to-face classes the level of student participation and the amount of production was higher, and in turn, she spent more time providing feedback to students.

> Instructor 9: *"I spare more time for feedback in face-to-face lessons instead of giving online feedback because the participation is less compared to face-to-face lessons, giving feedback becomes meaningless. You don't have enough output to give feedback on."*

The EFL instructors reported that there were notable differences in the implementation of two strategies, namely *cooperative learning activities* and *technology-integrated lessons* concerning the learning and teaching context. Commenting on online *cooperative learning activities*, the instructors stated that the implementation of those activities in break-out rooms was not effective in increasing engagement because students did not actively participate. Moreover, the instructors were not fully in control of students' performances as they were not present in break-out rooms at the same time and so had difficulties in creating a learning environment where students actively involved in learning activities. In face-to-face settings, on the contrary, the instructors assigned the learning activities or tasks to the students seated in groups and monitored whether they participated and worked in collaboration with their peers. Similarly, investigating the quantity and quality of student interaction and communication Berglund (2009) found that students' interactions involve monologues in cooperative learning activities. In addition to Berglund (2009), Carl and Horton (2000) highlighted that computer technologies may fail to develop a two-way interaction at the implementational level of cooperative learning activities as when students are left alone, they may have problems in maintaining interactions with peers and benefit from collaborative learning. The second most mentioned difference occurred in the

implementation of technology-integrated lessons. With regard to the responses, it can be understood that the EFL instructors favored the use of *online tools and applications* in online lessons. This is because of the fact that they increased the number of students' responses to questions and their participation in discussions as they were able to deliver written answers contrary to face-to-face classroom settings where they are mostly expected to raise their hands to answer questions. Giving responses through digital tools and applications provide students anonymity and positively influenced their participation. Much in the same way, Fies and Marshall (2006) found similar results indicating that student engagement is improved in connection with digital tools and applications in online learning and teaching environments.

4.8. Research Question 3.1.: Are there any changes in students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching?

To respond to the third research question, we asked the EFL instructors whether there were differences in students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching environments.

4.8.1. Changes in students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching

To respond to the third research question, the EFL instructors were asked to reflect on the changes in students' engagement in face-to-face and online learning and teaching settings. The findings indicated that the changes were observed primarily in students' active participation. The EFL instructors pointed out the difference in the amount of *responding to teacher questions, participation in cooperative learning activities* and *technology-integrated lessons*. For example, they highlighted the fact that students did not respond to teacher questions in online lessons unless the instructors nominated a specific student for elicitation as can be seen in the following quotations:

> Instructor 8: *"Students are more active in face-to-face lessons. For example, some students do not answer my questions in online lessons but they do in face-to-face lessons. They wait for others to respond or I have to push them to do so. In face-to-face lessons, I rarely have to push them."*

Instructor 7: *"It is a real challenge to receive students' responses in online lessons. It is like talking to a wall. I always have to nominate a student to answer my questions. In face-to-face lessons, it is quite the opposite. I don't have to say a name. Someone always answers my questions."*

Besides *responding to teacher questions*, four instructors raised an issue related to participation in learning activities that require collaborative work among students in online lessons. They stated that students were more active in *cooperative learning activities* in face-to-face lessons as they like to interact with their peers face-to-face which made them feel more comfortable. However, online learning created a physical separation as explained in the quotation below:

Instructor 1: *"It is easy to organize students for pair or group work in face-to-face lessons. They like talking and working with their friends. I think this is because it is a real classroom environment for them. (…) They do not like online lessons because they are not used to them. They have to communicate with their friends from a distance, so they tend to skip away from those activities or do not participate and just stay silent."*

Another reported view as to the changes in students' engagement resulted from the essential requirement of use of technology in online education. While the majority of the instructors considered integration of technology as an effective strategy in online teaching, some students had to deal with *technical problems* and also *lacked access to technological devices.* Four out of ten instructors emphasized that those issues consistently influenced students' participation and engagement in online lessons negatively as the following quotations illustrate:

Instructor 5: *"Some students have to deal with connection problems and they frequently disconnect during the lessons and it causes a breakdown in communication. They don't hear you and you have to repeat what you say all the time. It interrupts the flow of the lesson. Some students use tablets that they bought from the university but consistent battery problems occur and the screen size is small, so they are not useful for joining online classes."*

Instructor 3*: "Some students need personal computers and rooms to join the online sessions. They have to share computers with their siblings or there are others who cannot afford to buy a new computer and cannot join the lessons. Or even some of them use their neighbor's internet. So, they cannot join a lesson when they do not have a personal computer and their own internet. When they come to online classes, they stay in a limited time because they take turns with their siblings."*

Drawing on the results of the interview data analyses, it can be concluded that the changes in student engagement center around active participation. The EFL instructors undermined the fact that while students were more active in *responding to teacher questions* and *participating in cooperative learning activities* in face-to-face lessons, their participation reduces in online lessons conversely. The instructors held the opinion that this was because of the fact that students were familiar with traditional face-to-face learning, conversely, online learning was a new learning platform that they had no experience with; therefore, they were not ready for the new mode of learning since universities as other educational institutions worldwide had to take an immediate transition to blended learning. Recent studies (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Bailey et al, 2020; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Huang et al, 2021; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020; Shaaban, 2020) support this finding as students were not used to learning with technological devices, consequently, they needed time to adjust to online education. One of the instructors elaborated on this issue that they had to take immediate action and started teaching online without any preparation. In much the same vein, students started learning in a new learning environment which was completely different from how they were taught until this period. In accordance with this, Rice and McKendree (2014) assert that it is essential to do planning to provide effective online education as a fully distant learning course or as a component of a blended course. In addition to this, it is essential for higher education institutions to support students in preparation for online education and instructors for providing students with instructional activities that help students to control and evaluate their preparedness and readiness and to obtain the skills to learn online (Joosten & Cusatis, 2020).

Another issue related to changes in students' engagement concerning the context is the necessity of using technology in online education. The instructors considered that connection problems comprised a large part of the drawbacks of online education and hindered effective implementation, which was an obstacle to fostering student engagement. These results are

in accordance with those of O'Neill & Sai (2014) who asserted that technological barriers such as technical problems create unwillingness among students to engage in online learning activities. The instructors encountered challenges in conducting engaging online lessons due to consistent technical problems that some students had to deal with. In addition to these, the instructors highlighted the fact that students who came from different socio-economic backgrounds did not have conducive learning environments where they were comfortable attending online classes. This result corroborates with that of Mishra et al. (2020) who asserted that environmental factors can turn into being a major challenge for teachers to ensure engagement in online classes when students do not have a conducive learning environment.

4.9. Research Question 3.2.: Are there any differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching?

The second follow-up question was asked to understand students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies that the EFL instructors used in face-to-face and online teaching environments and find out if there were differences in their reactions concerning the context.

4.9.1. Differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching

To be able to answer the third research question and present enriching data obtained from the EFL instructors, we asked about the differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments. The questions regarding each educational context were asked separately and the results were presented under five themes. The differences in students' reactions were observed in four strategies: *students' responses to teacher questions, designing technology-integrated lessons, use of cooperative learning activities,* and *direct nomination*.

Out of ten, seven instructors stated that when they asked questions to increase their participation in online lessons, *students' responses to teacher questions* were fewer compared to face-to-face classes and the responses lacked quality as explained in the quotation below:

Instructor 2: *"They give immediate responses and reactions, so their engagement is higher when it is compared to online lessons. In face-to-face education, they are more active and excited. Even their tone of voices changes depending on the learning context. In online education, you have to call on each student and you can feel that students respond to your questions in a sleepy tone with short answers like yes or no, but in face-to-face lessons, they are more energetic and give more detailed answers and explain their ideas."*

Six instructors highlighted the fact that students gave more positive reactions to the use of technology and thus enhancing their engagement in online lessons. By designing *technology-integrated lessons* for online education, the instructors could create more interactive and rich content and thereby facilitating engagement in the lessons.

Instructor 10: *"The students are generally positive about them. Sometimes one or two students sometimes ask, "What is the point?" For example, when I want to show trailers, I ask that student if she can suggest a film trailer for me. I always get a suggestion, and this also helps me to keep also the students' engaged in the lesson. Or I use love songs for grammar structures and they love them a lot. Again, I ask for their favorites and use those songs in online lessons."*

Instructor 4: *"In online education, it is easy for me to integrate online tools such as Vocera or do pair or group work with them. They love to use online applications because those who shy away from sharing their ideas become more active on online platforms. They also help me to make online lessons more interesting and interactive. It increases their participation."*

With regard to *designing technology-integrated lessons* for face-to-face education, the reactions of students were not positive. Four instructors elaborated on this issue that students were in a learning environment where they felt comfortable participating in in-class activities; therefore, they did not need encouragement with online tools or applications. On the other hand, the internet connection and learning devices sometimes failed to live up to common standards of effective implementation of technology-integrated lessons as can be seen in the following quotations:

Instructor 4: *"When I try to use online applications for some in-class discussions, they do not want to do them online because they may have internet connection problems in the building or battery problems that cause them to go offline and lose interest in the lesson easily. Also, they are in a physical environment where they can see each other and communicate easily. I think they do not need any encouragement to participate in discussions. They can easily share their ideas."*

Instructor 6: *"Online tools help me a lot in online lessons. The lessons become more interactive, and students have fun. Some students hesitate to talk in front of the cameras for many reasons. But I can see that they write their answers and ideas through digital tools. When I try to use them in the classroom, we have connection problems, or their tablets do not work or freeze in the middle of the activity. This is a real problem for their engagement."*

Concerning the reactions to the same student engagement strategy employed in face-to-face and online lessons, three instructors underscored the differences in *using cooperative learning activities* and added that the nature of the educational settings influenced the implementation of those learning activities as can be seen in the following quotation:

Instructor 3: *"They know that I am there and are aware that I can hear them speak in pair and group work in face-to-face lessons. Because it is a classroom, the number of the groups is 3 to 4. When I monitor one group, I can eavesdrop on the other one. The students know that they are observed, which cannot happen in online classes. However, they do nothing when I send them to breakout rooms for group and pair work. When I visit the rooms, all I see are black screens. They just wait for me to finish the activity. Face-to-face classes offer real classroom experiences, and students feel they are the group members, but in online education, they are separated and alone."*

Commenting on the difference in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategy, Instructor 5 stated that students had positive attitudes toward *using paralinguistic features* to increase engagement in face-to-face lessons, as the following quotation indicates:

Instructor 5: *"Use of body language attracts their attention in face-to-face lessons because they think something is going on and try to understand. They listen to you*

carefully and give reactions through gestures and mimics. You can see that. Or make comments on what is being presented or answer the questions."

The primary result about the differences in students' reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments indicates that *students' responses to teacher questions* were higher in face-to-face lessons. Interaction between the teacher and students based on reciprocity is essential in teaching and learning (Dillon, 1998). In parallel with this information, in the current study, the majority of the EFL instructors aimed to have an ongoing response cycle to increase student engagement by asking questions to allow students to make contributions. However, this strategy, when used in online lessons, did not yield positive results because the instructors were not satisfied with the quality of student responses. Even if asking a question offers engagement to some extent, there are still concerns about the frequency and depth of student contributions in online contexts (Picciano, 2002).

Another most mentioned difference occurs in the use of *cooperative learning activities*. *Cooperative learning activities* offer a better flow of interaction and communication and encourage a greater range of exchange of ideas (Wentzel & Watkins, 2002), as most students believe that face-to-face interactions give a sense of community with their teachers and peers, which is contrary to online interactions (Conole et al., 2008). Following this result, the EFL instructors integrated *cooperative learning activities* in online lessons to increase engagement; however, it did not generate effective outcomes because students preferred in-person interactions in a physical classroom environment and kept their cameras off in online lessons.

Online tools and applications promote motivation and create interactive lessons (Dörnyei, 2001). In accordance with this assertion, some instructors incorporated *online tools and applications* into their face-to-face and online classes to foster student engagement. The result suggests that digital tools can effectively ensure interaction and the participation of students, especially those who shy away from speaking in front of their peers in online classes. In line with this result, Hobbs (2002) also found that digital tools encourage the contributions of students who hesitate to have face-to-face interactions. On the other hand, the results also indicate that technical problems impeded the effectiveness of digital tools in facilitating engagement in face-to-face lessons. The instructors mentioned that poor quality

of connection and the issues related to tablets prevented the successful implementation of digital tools in face-to-face classes, and besides, students lost interest in the lesson, which in turn affected their engagement. This result agrees with O'Neill and Sai (2014), who argue that the lack of infrastructure in educational institutions impedes the proper use of digital tools and presents an obstacle to an engaging learning environment.

4.10. Research Question 4: What are the problems that the EFL instructors encounter in student engagement and the solutions they recommend to the mentioned problems?

To respond to the fifth research question, the EFL instructors were asked to state the problems and challenges they encountered in student engagement and recommend solutions to the mentioned problems.

4.10.1. Problems and challenges encountered in student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching

To better identify the problems and challenges that the EFL instructors encountered in face-to-face and online teaching, we asked the questions for each context separately. Table 4.7. demonstrates the problems the EFL instructors encountered in student engagement and the solutions they recommended to mentioned problems in face-to-face teaching. The overall results indicate that most EFL instructors held the belief that the main reason behind the difficulties in facilitating student engagement is *students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language.* For example, six EFL instructors complained that their *lack-of self-motivation* affected their efforts in keeping them engaged during the lesson. They maintained that students were extrinsically motivated to pass their exams and move on to their departments.

> Instructor 9: *"I guess it is hard for me to motivate students. Some students have questions like, "Why am I learning English?" It is hard to change this state of mind. Sometimes I feel tired, and I do not even try. (…) Motivating them is hard. If they are motivated, keeping them engaged is easy. If they are not, there is not much I can do."*

Instructor 7: *"They are here just to pass the exams and go to their departments. They don't want to learn English. They keep asking, "What's the purpose of doing this and that?". It is challenging to work with students who are not motivated."*

Another problem that the EFL instructors listed was *mixed-level classrooms* in terms of language proficiency. Six instructors held the opinion that students did not benefit from learning experiences equally as there were differences in students' language proficiency levels.

Instructor 3: *"The common problem is language level of the students. They are not at the same level. For example, when I give them a task, even if I explain or use ICQs, those students are already lost. I have to try something else to engage them. If I spend too much time supporting lower-level students, I can lose other students who are higher level. I feel whatever I do for engagement in those classes does not work, so putting the students in the wrong level is a real challenge in engaging them."*

Four instructors maintained that *mixed-level classrooms* also constituted a problem in creating a learning environment where all students were engaged in the classroom activities. More specifically, the classrooms where repeat students made up the learning community with mainstream students could be an obstacle for the instructors to manage the lesson effectively and thus use engagement strategies in the same way as clearly stated in the following quotation:

Instructor 7*: "When there are repeat students in the class, they cannot keep up with the new students at that level. They also know the book, the activities. (…) everything about the course. When you try to do a pair or a group work or play a game, they do not want to join. They do not answer your questions. This is not only because they are familiar with the course; they are also not competent. They cannot achieve what the course requires. It is really tough to teach in a class like that."*

Two EFL instructors reported problems that are related to the curriculum design. They furthered their explanation that the content of the coursebook, the learning materials, and the activities was not rich; therefore, they wanted to integrate extra materials. However, *lack of*

sufficient time to use extra materials was an obstacle to their efforts in enriching the lesson content.

> Instructor 6: *"Some topics in the coursebook are not interesting for the students. They are outdated or out of their interest. In such situations, I need to add extra materials or skip some parts of the coursebook, but I cannot do that all the time because I need to cover the objectives for the exams. (…) The syllabus is intense. There is no time to use extra material unfortunately."*

Lastly, regarding the problems with the curriculum design, Instructor 5 raised an issue related to *insufficient time to build interpersonal relations* in the course syllabus, preventing them from collecting information about students at the beginning of course period. They held the idea that using student data could improve their instruction and in turn increase engagement.

> Instructor 5: *"Knowing students is really important (…), so the very first lesson is important to get to know the students, but it is not enough to collect information about each student like finding out their expectations and as well as informing them about my expectations. There should be time for teachers to get to know the students to create an interactive environment because those things help student engagement and participation increase afterward."*

The analysis of the responses of the EFL instructors related to the problems they encountered in engaging students in face-to-face teaching shows us that student engagement strategies were not of great use in *mixed-level classes* as differences in students' language proficiency remains a barrier to the instructors for effective management of the classroom and consequently result in a learning environment where students mostly do not engage in the learning process. As Gustani (2018) claims students with a high level of language proficiency in mixed-level classrooms may have difficulties in focusing on their learning while waiting for their instructor to assist those who have low-level proficiency in classroom activities. Dimova and Kling (2018) also agree that in a mixed-level classroom, instructors are not able to assist low-performing students as well as challenge high-level students, which in turn reduces sufficient motivation for learners to participate and engage in the lesson.

Another important result of the study revealed that *students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language* influenced their engagement negatively. Motivation is considered a prerequisite and an important element for student engagement in learning (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). Therefore, it is easy for the instructors to stimulate engagement in a classroom consisting of motivated learners as it was expressed by one of the instructors "In some classes, students participate in all the stages in the lesson because they want to learn English." (Instructor 4). It shows that motivation for learning has a close relationship with engagement. Engaged students become active in their language learning process (Newmann, 1992). Similarly, as Schlechty (2001) highlighted, an engaging individual learner has a desire to accomplish goals despite problems and obstacles.

As for online education, the instructors mentioned context-specific problems. Six out of ten EFL instructors emphasized that problems originated from distance in online teaching were a major barrier to student engagement in online lessons. They maintained that students took the advantage of being distant and made excuses for keeping their cameras turned off. Therefore, the instructors had to deal with the problems related to student participation such as *responding to teacher questions* or *participating in cooperative learning activities* in online lessons as they stated they were not sure which students were present and available to respond to teacher questions or join in-class activities, which in turn affected the overall effectiveness of instructional delivery.

> Instructor 6: *"I am not sure if the students are in front of their computers. I do sound check or ask them to thumb up to understand if they are listening to me. Sometimes I get private messages from the students during the lesson such as "Teacher I am somewhere else. Is it OK not to turn my camera on? Or I am in the supermarket. I cannot turn my camera on." It is difficult to keep track of students' excuses and remember when I nominate who is available to respond or share ideas for discussion. In the end, it turns out to be a lecture-based lesson and at the end of the day I do not feel satisfied with what I have done."*

In addition to students' excuses mentioned above, the other problem that affected student engagement was an *unconducive learning environment* at home. Two EFL instructors highlighted that with partly transmission to online education, different spaces in

their houses turned into a new learning environment which was not convenient for effective learning due to the reasons explained by one of the instructors below:

> Instructor 7: *"Their rooms are their new classroom. It is quite difficult to keep them alert and focused on the lesson when they are in their rooms. There are a lot of distractors for them like noise coming from outside or from the guests in the other room or sharing the room with a sibling. It is not a formal place to learn something like a classroom instead it is a place where they do many different things."*

Another problem related to student engagement in online education was related to technological barriers. Five instructors stated that most of the time they had *technical problems* such as poor internet connection, which led to a breakdown in communication and interaction.

> Instructor 2: *"Students usually have technical problems. When I ask a question, due to the internet connection problems I cannot hear students and they write their answers in the chatbox. This influences the flow of the lessons negatively. We cannot have proper oral communication most of the time. In such situations, I cannot use any online tools, play a game or online worksheet to increase their engagement."*

Lastly, five instructors complained about the *limited monitoring*. They stated that online teaching settings limited close monitoring of students during the lesson as explained below:

> Instructor 3: *"Monitoring is another problem. I do not sit in my face-to-face classes. You need to walk around and observe them during pair or group work activities if they need help or have a question about the task etc., but I cannot do it in online lessons. I cannot observe or monitor them as I want because the learning context does not allow me to. I cannot be in the rooms at the same time during those activities."*

As the results showed that the EFL instructors faced several problems with engaging students in online lessons. The underlying principles of online education turned out to be serious drawbacks for the instructors to build a learning environment with engaging students. As expressed by one of the instructors "You are never sure what you are doing is really

working in online lessons because you do not see them real-time and interact enough." (Instructor 10). The problems center around two main issues: active participation: *responding to teacher questions, participating in cooperative learning activities* and *technical problems.* The instructors raised an issue that the quality and quantity of interactions with the students were limited and according to Russel and Curtis (2013), the lack of interaction prevents teachers building an efficient language learning environment with active participants. Moreover, students' active participation in terms of *responding to teacher questions* and *participating in cooperative learning activities* was low due to the fact that they kept their cameras off during the online lessons which created an obstacle for the instructors to nominating students for elicitation or for sharing their ideas in class discussions which in turn negatively impacted the instructional delivery. The result is consistent with those of O'Conaill et al. (1993) who found that instructors have negative experiences when students keep their cameras off as they get a feeling of "talking into a void" (p. 419).

Besides, online education can also create *technical problems* (Juhary, 2012). In accordance with this, the EFL instructors had to deal with issues such as a breakdown in communication and lack of interaction with students due to connection problems. Similarly, the results of an increasing number of studies conducted after rapid transmission to fully and partly online education due to the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that lack of technical equipment is one of the major problems encountered in online education and affected student engagement negatively (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Fu & Zhou, 2020; Heng & Sol, 2020; König et al., 2020; Mahmood, 2020; Noor et al., 2020; Tanhan, 2020).

4.10.2. Solutions to the mentioned problems in increasing student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching

As a sub-research question of the fifth research question, the EFL instructors were also asked to recommend solutions to the mentioned problems about increasing student engagement in face-to-face and online learning and teaching contexts. They listed several solutions for the problems and challenges they encountered in student engagement (See Table 4.7. & 4.8.)

Table 4.7. Problems encountered by EFL instructors regarding student engagement and suggested solutions for face-to-face teaching

Problems	Solutions
Students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language	• orientation program with senior students • interpersonal relations with students with relevant activities
Mixed-level classrooms	• proper assessment of students' performances in speaking tests • make-up tests for profiling students' proficiency level • cooperative learning activities
Lack of sufficient time to use extra materials	• adjustments in the course syllabus
Lack of sufficient time to build interpersonal relations	• adjustments in the course syllabus

Table 4.8. Problems encountered by EFL instructors regarding student engagement and suggested solutions for online teaching

Problems	Solutions
Responding to teacher questions Participation in class discussions	• adjustments in the course syllabi for online learning • integrating a range of different tools and applications
Technical problems	• technical support for teachers and students to use digital tools
Limited monitoring	
Unconducive learning environment	

As mentioned beforehand, the problems in relation to the face-to-face context were teaching in *mixed-level classes, lack of sufficient time to use extra materials, lack of sufficient time to get to know students* and *students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language*. In response to increasing students' motivation for learning in the face-to-face context, two EFL instructors recommended an *orientation program with senior students* for preparatory school students to create awareness about the importance of English. They maintained that students in the preparatory school should come together with senior students to get familiar with the departmental courses beforehand and as well as understand the purpose of learning a second language.

Instructor 5: *"I believe that students should recognize the importance of English for their education in their departments and as well as for their jobs. Instead of organizing*

orientation programs with the professors in the departments, prep school students should come together with senior students in their departments to understand if they do not learn English in the prep school, what challenges they will encounter. It is better to hear it from the students in the same departments. Or what the advantages or benefits it will bring if they achieve learning in the prep school because our students keep asking "Why am I learning English or what is the purpose?". When they understand the purpose in learning English, they will participate in the lessons more."

Three instructors came up with a solution to the motivational problems to learn a foreign language that the instructors should build *interpersonal relations with students* at the beginning of the term to activate their interest and get their attention to the lessons through relevant activities to their life. She also added that there should be allocated time in the course syllabus.

Instructor 3: *"Knowing students is the key factor. After knowing students' learning styles, appropriate activities can be designed and enable them to engage in the lessons. Getting to know students also enables teachers to use their common shares in lead-in stages, which makes it easy to get their attention to the lessons. I think we should have a lesson for this (...) maybe the first lesson of the course period."*

Two instructors recommended a solution to the mentioned problem of insufficient time to use extra materials to enrich the lesson content. They suggested *adjustments in the course syllabi* accordingly as explained in the quotation below:

Instructor 6: *"The course syllabi should be redesigned and we should be provided time to use extra materials. It is always useful to use different materials other than the coursebook to increase engagement."*

To overcome the challenges that arose in *mixed-level classes*, four instructors strongly recommended that *proper assessment of students' performances in speaking tests* so that they can be placed at the correct level.

Instructor 3*: "Some students do not pass to higher levels with sufficient English proficiency. This usually happens after achievement exams and speaking tests. I think some students need to repeat their classes. That's the only solution."*

One of them stated that at the beginning of the term, some students might not take the placement test for several reasons, and consequently, it creates a problem in profiling the language level of those students. Besides, the procedure for this situation is to register those students for elementary classes. As a solution to this problem, Instructor 2 suggests that "There can be *make-up tests* for those students to find out their actual proficiency level." The instructors also maintained that they found some solutions to overcome this problem and increase student engagement in the lessons. They incorporated *cooperative-learning activities* into the class to get all students with different proficiency levels in those activities as "In pair or group work they are more active rather than individualized activities. Students with a higher level of English proficiency help repeat students." expressed by Instructor 7. Hernandez (2012) also found that cooperative learning activities facilitate interaction. Consequently, students become more eager to help each other in mixed-level classes since cooperative learning activities create a learning environment where each participant helps each other and benefits from the learning process (Davis, 1993) and become more engaged (Chen, 2017). Last, to overcome the problems in relation to the use of extra materials in the lesson, the instructors also suggested that the course syllabi should be redesigned accordingly so that it could allow them to integrate different materials rather than depending solely on the coursebook.

The majority of the EFL instructors had to deal with the problems regarding students' active participation in online teaching. The instructors recommended different solutions to these problems, namely *adjusting in the course syllabi in accordance with online education* and *technical support for teachers and students to use digital tools* to increase participation. Five out of ten EFL instructors suggested that there should be *changes in the syllabi for online teaching* to make them appropriate for online learning and teaching. They further explained that curriculum design needed some revising for better implementation of online lessons rather than applying the same syllabi designed for the face-to-face lessons.

Instructor 3: *"The work we expect students to do in online education cannot be completed because many things consume time. We needed to adapt the book,*

materials, and teaching styles because we were not ready for blended teaching. We just teach in the same way in online lessons as face-to-face lessons before the pandemic. Online education is different than face-to-face education and so needs adjustments."

In addition to the suggestion above, another instructor added, "A group of professionals can work on the changes in the syllabi and adapt them to the online education." (Instructor 6). The pandemic forced higher educational institutions to move the traditional face-to-face context into an online setting without any preparation, leaving teachers in a challenging situation (Hadianti & Arisandi, 2020). However, online learning requires preparation for better and more effective implementation (Green, 2016). Moreover, instructors should be provided with institutional support, especially those with little knowledge of instructing an online course (Cuellar, 2002). The adjustments should include pedagogies with technologies, designing interactive materials, and the strategies to overcome technology problems (Son, 2018).

For better use of technology to increase student participation, three instructors believed that rather than depending solely on the online version of the coursebook, *integrating a range of different tools and applications* can yield positive results in student engagement.

Instructor 10: "*Using the tools of the course books may have reduced their engagement because some students told me that I could work by myself and did not need to come to the lessons. We can use different tools and apps together with the coursebook because they can make a difference in the lessons and make the content more interesting and interactive."*

Besides, two instructors also furthered the recommendation that they should be provided with *digital tools and applications* as they cannot get access to many of them free of charge, but "The university can get the premium version of the most recommended ones because just using the coursebook only doesn't work at all." (Instructor 8). Having digital tools and applications merely does not help teachers engage students because they may need in-service training. For this, "The management should ask what the teachers need and provide them with training for the use of technology. The content should be decided by the teachers, not by the administration. Need analysis can be conducted before the training." was

suggested by Instructor 3. The result is also corroborated with Mishra et al. (2020), who found that the instructors found the training for teaching-learning tools useful. Also, DePietro (2010) investigated 16 online instructors' teaching practices for student engagement and found that they incorporated various technologies, including collaborative tools and videos.

When asked to suggest solutions for *limited monitoring* and students' *unconducive learning environment* in their houses, the EFL instructors did not mention any specific solutions due to the reasons explained in the quotations below:

> Instructor 3: *"Monitoring will always be difficult as online setting is not like a physical classroom where you can easily move around and have control over the students."*

> Instructor 7: *"We cannot do anything for this. Students come from different socio-economic backgrounds. This is a reality that we cannot change."*

Lastly, one of the EFL instructors raised an issue in relation to students who felt compelled to adopt online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She pointed out that students faced many problems in their educational and personal lives. Therefore, she recommended that higher education institutions should provide students with counseling for their well-being. She also added, "Engagement is not just related to the things in the classroom. Students, especially this year, should be supported for their needs and concerns." (Instructor 3). Similarly, Sahu (2020) urged proper counseling for the sound mental health of students as the isolation period created several problems, including socio-emotional imbalance, the need for adjustments in daily life activities at home as well as financial issues (UNESCO IESALC, 2020).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This research has investigated EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement, their use of in-class practices to engage students in blended learning and explored the problems they encountered in engaging students and the solutions they recommended to the existing problems. First, it has examined their definitions of student engagement as well as the indicators and influencing factors that the EFL instructors stated. Second, it has explored the most and the least effective strategies identified by the instructors in face-to-face and online learning and teaching environments. In order to gain a deep understanding, the study also examined how the context influenced the effectiveness of the implemented strategies. Last, the study explored the problems that the EFL instructors encountered in engaging students in blended learning and the possible solutions to the mentioned problems for effective course design. This study has been designed as a narrative case study. The qualitative data obtained from the responses from the semi-structured interviews of ten EFL instructors were analyzed using content analysis that integrated steps of Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), Creswell (2014) and Vogt et al. (2014).

The first research question of this thesis was "How do EFL instructors conceptualize "student engagement"? and supported by a follow-up question, "Do online teaching, and face-to-face teaching make a difference in EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement?". The results revealed that the EFL instructors tend to have narrowed down the definition of student engagement to one of the dimensions of the construct: behavioral engagement. This might indicate that the instructors are not familiar with the other two fundamental dimensions of the construct: emotional and cognitive, or they predominantly see behavioral engagement as the indicators of increased student engagement. Out of ten, eight instructors defined student engagement as *(1) students' responding to teacher's questions, (2) active listening, (3) working in cooperative learning activities, (4) using paralinguistic features* and *(5) students' asking questions.* In other words, the EFL instructors based their definitions solely on students' active participation, implying simple assessment through their observable behaviors. This might indicate the fact that observable behaviors can easily be detected by teachers (Fredricks, 2014), yet emotional and cognitive engagement indicators might escape the instructors' attention, which mistakenly results in

misinterpreting the level of student engagement for some individual learners. In other words, the EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement reflects their lack of theoretical knowledge, suggesting a behaviouralist-based definition and portraying it as a one-dimensional construct. Therefore, their narrow understanding results in a poor evaluation of student engagement at the individual level and a deficit in accurately identifying the indicators of each dimension. For this reason, this might be a call for expanding instructors' conceptualization of the student engagement to have a good grasp of the dimensions of engagement for better teaching and proper selection of the strategies that can cater to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions separately.

Besides EFL instructors' definitions based on a marked lack of theoretical knowledge of the multidimensionality of the construct, their interpretations of students' observable behaviors in a classroom context narrow down to engagement or disengagement. What counts as student engagement in the instructors' definitions primarily considers students' participation in teacher-initiated actions. However, "participation is a consideration not only of student action but also of how such actions are oriented by teachers" (Jacknick, 2021, p. 23). Students may participate in an activity at the wrong time as they may not have been engaged; they have misinterpreted the interactional and pedagogical context, asking their peers what is going on or talking about the topic instead (Lemke, 1990; Jacknick, 2021). In addition, when students are asked to make verbal contributions such as responding to teacher questions and participating in class discussions or collaborative activities, they may be unwilling to do so but still continue to be engaging, demonstrating through other embodied actions. Those embodied actions could be non-verbal cues such as gaze, gestures, mimics, and posture; therefore, it is essential to examine the body in context to understand students' ways of displaying engagement and participation (Goodwin, 2000). For example, the lack of mutual gaze between two parties in a conversation may be considered a sign of disengagement (Goodwin, 1980); on the other hand, it is not necessarily an indicator of engagement and participation. Students can also withdraw their gaze to demonstrate their unwillingness to participate, but still they engage in the lesson (Jacknick, 2021). In brief, in re-conceptualizing engagement and participation, Jacknick (2021) highlights that research on classroom interaction in a foreign language has focused mainly on students' verbal participation, ignoring multi-modality in students' actions displaying participation and engagement. Thus, the misalignment with the teacher pedagogically in a classroom can be misinterpreted as disengagement by teachers, which implies that student engagement and

participation are complex because of students' different ways of displaying them in their actions, influencing how they conceptualize the construct and decide on the in-class practices for student engagement.

The sub-question aimed to seek a deeper understanding of how student engagement is conceptualized by the EFL instructors in two different teaching contexts: face-to-face and online language education. When specifically asked to find out if the context (i.e., the channel of teaching) caused a difference in the conceptualization of student engagement, the instructors reported that the amount and frequency of students' *responding to teacher questions*, *active listening*, and *participation in cooperative learning activities* in face-to-face lessons was higher than in online lessons. A possible explanation for this might be the higher tendency for students to prefer traditional face-to-face education over online education (Johnson et al., 2000). As mentioned by the instructors, students were forced to continue their face-to-face education with an integrated online component which brought a novel learning experience for them. Therefore, their participation was comparatively lower in online lessons; however, the success of online education relies on students' willingness and acceptance of this new learning environment (Almaiah, et al., 2020). In summary, it can be concluded that student behavioral acts of participation in face-to-face and online lessons determined how the EFL instructors defined student engagement.

The second research question aimed to explore the student engagement strategies that the EFL instructors use in face-to-face and online teaching. The findings revealed that the instructors used different engagement strategies in these two different teaching environments. It was found out that the most implemented engagement strategies in face-to-face teaching were *providing a wide range of teaching materials and activities* such as enjoyable lead-in activities to activate students' schemata and cooperative learning activities with challenging content to increase participation. Another highly effective strategy in increasing student engagement in face-to-face teaching as perceived by the instructors was rapport-building. The instructors were found to utilize *positive reinforcement, using humor in teaching* and *in-class interactions, telling personal anecdotes, designing technology-integrated lessons* and *interpersonal relations with the students* create and maintain rapport to increase student engagement. It can be concluded that for the EFL instructors, building a harmonious relationship with students helped them create a warm and friendly learning environment to lead to an increased engagement. Besides, in face-to-face teaching,

cooperative learning activities facilitated an interactive learning environment where students took full responsibility for their contribution to collaborative tasks and their learning as it gives them a sense of belonging to the learning community (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) and encouraged students' participation, which in turn increased their engagement. In addition to these, the instructors reported that *modeling* and asking *open-ended questions* fostered student engagement. The main aim of the instructors to model was to get in-class activities done correctly by the students and, as a result, fuel student engagement by modeling with clear examples. Moreover, some of the instructors focused on eliciting extended responses through open-ended questions, increasing the amount of peer interaction and teacher-student interaction because such questions require students elaborate on their answers and interacting with others, therefore, keep the students more engaged.

The results also uncovered that there are some engagement strategies perceived as ineffective strategies in fostering student engagement in face-to-face teaching. The EFL instructors found *general nomination* and *designing technology-integrated lessons* ineffective to increase student engagement. Most of the instructors stated that when they asked a question without calling on a specific student, they barely elicited answers as students generally waited for others to give an answer. In other words, to increase participation and thus student engagement, they used direct nomination technique to increase the number of respondents. Moreover, when they used online applications and tools in face-to-face lessons, they did not yield positive results in terms of creating an interactive lesson because students tended to avoid participating in the online activities.

In online teaching, the EFL instructors implemented several strategies, including *designing technology-integrated lessons, rapport-building through non-academic conversations* and *scaffolding, use of paralinguistic features, cooperative learning activities such as cooperative learning activities in break out rooms* and *class discussions,* and *elicitations techniques such as direct nomination* and *asking for written responses.* It was found that the most implemented strategies in online teaching were designing technology-integrated lessons and rapport-building. The instructors engaged students with online tools, applications, and games by increasing students' responses to teacher questions as well as contributions to class discussions and cooperative learning activities. Through non-academic conversations, the instructors tried to build a relationship not solely on talks about academic issues but also by exchanging opinions about daily topics. Moreover, they used scaffolding

to show students how they could solve the problems they faced using online platforms and offered support to overcome them.

A sub-question was asked to explore the student engagement strategies perceived as effective strategies in fostering student engagement in online teaching. It was revealed that the most effective strategy in online teaching was *designing technology-integrated lessons* for student engagement since the learning and teaching setting was convenient for the integration and utilization of digital tools. The EFL instructors stated that they benefitted considerably from online tools and applications to enhance students' learning experiences. They made the lessons more interactive and engaging, boosted cooperative learning, and kept students behaviorally engaged in synchronous lessons.

Among the least effective strategies in engaging students in online teaching, *direct nomination* was the most mentioned strategy by the instructors. They explained that students tended to avoid answering the questions and waited for the instructor to give the correct answer. This might be due to the fact that while having control over students through monitoring and eye contact in face-to-face lessons, the instructors had difficulties in using those classroom management techniques in online teaching. In addition to limited monitoring, the online setting also constrained the instructors' from making eye contact to invite and encourage students to respond to questions or join the class discussions. Eye contact is an effective communication tool, but it is lost in video calls as the user cannot establish eye contact with others simultaneously and other users are not aware if they are the target (Greer & Dubnov, 2021). Therefore, to increase interaction and participation, the instructors used breakout rooms for *cooperative learning activities*; however, from the responses obtained, it can be seen that this strategy was found to be ineffective as the instructor were not able to monitor students at the same time to ensure the implementation of the activities as they could in the face-to-face teaching context and also students were not comfortable in participating those tasks in online classes. The reason behind those behaviors might be that students prefer face-to-face interactions in a natural classroom environment, which they are accustomed to, over online communication in a virtual setting (Conole et al., 2008).

The third research question aimed to explore the differences between student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching. There were also two sub-

questions asked to the participants to allow them to further clarify their responses. The findings revealed that the main difference was implementing *cooperative learning activities* in face-to-face and online teaching. When implemented in online classes, student participation did not increase, and the instructors were not able to monitor students closely and carefully as they needed to work in different breakout rooms. They also highlighted that students' interactions were, to a large extent, based on monologues. Conversely, the instructors said they could make effective use of cooperative learning activities in face-to-face teaching, where they constantly monitored students who were also comfortable interacting with others. The other difference could be seen in implementing *technology-integrated lessons*. The majority of the instructors agreed on the effectiveness of digital tools in online teaching. They explained that online tools and applications were effective in increasing the number of responses to teacher questions, especially in class discussions, as students could deliver their responses in written form. However, as the instructors expressed, integrating online tools and applications into face-to-face classes did not yield the same results. This might indicate that distance became a problem for student participation and interaction in online education, so they needed encouragement to become more active (Berge, 2002).

The second sub-question aimed to explore students' different reactions to the same student engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online teaching. Drawing on the interviewees' responses, it was concluded that changes in students' reactions to engagement strategies used in face-to-face and online instruction centered around three particular strategies: *responding to teacher questions*, *participation in cooperative learning activities*, and *technology-integrated lessons*. The instructors stressed that students were more active in responding to teacher questions and participating in cooperative learning activities in face-to-face teaching, contrary to online education. As mentioned before, this might have been the result of students' unpreparedness for learning in a blended course (Huang et al., 2021), student interactions based on monolingual turns during communicative tasks (Berglund, 2009), and limited teacher monitoring in online lessons (Horton, 2000). The second conclusion drawn based on the responses of the interviewees was that even if designing technology-integrated lessons was effective in engaging students and received positive reactions from the majority of the students, the instructors reported that some students who did not have a good quality of internet connection did not favor the use of online tools and

applications during the lesson or in the games or activities requiring them to turn their cameras on as they were not comfortable in showing their personal space to others.

The fourth research question aimed to explore the problems encountered by the EFL instructors related to increasing or sustaining student engagement and the possible solutions they suggested. The results revealed that the instructors faced different problems in face-to-face and online teaching. They mostly had to deal with the problems that arose from *mixed-level classes*, *students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language*, and *lack of active participation*. Based on the responses of the instructors, it can be understood that *mixed-level classes* presented a significant obstacle in making effective use of student engagement strategies in both teaching and learning contexts, as students with high and low levels of proficiency showed different performance in their learning process, which resulted in a decrease in engagement for one party (Dimova & Kling, 2018). This might indicate that in using student engagement strategies, the context, whether face-to-face or online, is not an influential factor all the time. Conversely, students' proficiency highly impacts the effectiveness of the implemented strategies as students' strengths and weaknesses vary and consequently they progress at different rates (Ireson & Hallam, 2001).

Another critical problem the instructor faced in engaging students in face-to-face and online contexts was their *lack of student motivation to learn a foreign language*. The instructors emphasized that students who were not motivated for learning considerably affected the instructors' efforts in fostering and sustaining student engagement. Moreover, even though they favored and successfully integrated digital tools into online lessons, they still dealt with *technical problems* that caused communication breakdowns in the lessons.

Lastly, the instructors were also found to have context-specific difficulties. Namely, they faced some problems in using engagement strategies to increase students' *participation in cooperative learning activities* and the number of *students' responses to teacher questions* in online lessons. From the responses of the instructors, it could be understood that environmental factors such as students' study spaces where they attended their online lessons presented an obstacle for them to be active during the lessons because the online and face-to-face learning settings do not share commonalities. As highlighted by the instructors, when students did not turn their cameras on since they were not comfortable in sharing their personal spaces, it became difficult for them to understand whether students were available

to respond to questions and to monitor them during collaborative tasks. In addition to context-specific difficulties, as expressed by the instructors, students were not prepared for online learning; therefore, their unpreparedness decreased their participation in online cooperative learning activities and negatively affected making effective use of the strategies for student engagement. It can be concluded that environmental factors and students' unpreparedness for learning mode could become a major problem for instructors to foster student engagement in online teaching (Mishra, 2020; Yurdugül & Demir, 2017).

The fourth research question also aimed to explore the solutions that EFL instructors recommended to the stated problems, namely *mixed-level classes*, *students' lack of motivation to learn a foreign language, technical problems* and *lack of active participation*. Firstly, to overcome the challenges and problems resulting from mixed-level classes, the instructors strongly recommended that students' performance in speaking tests that are part of achievement exams should be analyzed carefully to decide which students pass to a higher level. Another solution to the mentioned problem was that make-up placement exams should be administered for those who do not take them at the beginning of the courses. Secondly, for students who lack motivation to learn a foreign language, an orientation program with senior students for preparatory students should be organized for them to meet senior students with useful experience. Thirdly, the instructors came up with a neat solution to increase student participation in online lessons. The majority of them strongly suggested that there should be adjustments in the syllabi for online teaching as it is different from face-to-face teaching in the delivery of instruction. It can be concluded that the solutions that the EFL instructors recommended to the existing problems require the administration to take the necessary steps for effective implementation and sustainability of course program and as a result this will support instructors to create an engaging learning experience for students.

As stated earlier, student engagement is a critical factor in learning; however, due to the lack of sufficient research on the construct, especially in the second language acquisition field (Dörnyei & Mercer, 2020), it has become a significant issue to be addressed. On the other hand, due to the pandemic, the higher education institutions had to adjust in their instruction delivery modes without any prior experience or planning and adopt fully or partly online teaching. Therefore, the use of blended learning, as the mixed method of face-to-face and online learning, has increased due to those changes. However, promoting student engagement with effective in-class practices in this new mode of teaching and learning

environment became a challenge for instructors. Hence, this study is believed to have made theoretical and practical contributions to the field as it has conducted a deep investigation into how EFL instructors conceptualize student engagement and their use of in-class strategies to engage students in blended learning.

In order to gain a deep understanding of student engagement from multiple perspectives and what student engagement strategies that the EFL instructors implemented, and how they identified their effectiveness concerning the context and what problems that EFL instructors encountered in promoting student engagement and what solutions they found to overcome those problems, we conducted the study with participants with different educational and teaching backgrounds. From the instructors' responses, it could be concluded that the definition of student engagement narrows down to behavioral engagement, which necessitates expanding EFL instructors' conceptualization of the construct to use appropriate strategies to maximize all the dimensions of student engagement. In addition, this study informs curriculum designers, teacher trainers and English language program administrators about the dimensions of student engagement and what student engagement strategies to implement in blended learning. Last, this study provides new insight into the problems that the EFL instructors encountered for student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching and the solutions to enhance student engagement and in turn effective language education.

5.1. Implications & Suggestions for Further Research

This research has investigated student engagement from multiple perspectives; that is, EFL instructors having different educational and teaching backgrounds teaching in a blended course at a preparatory school. Moreover, the study examined their use of in-class practices to increase student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching separately. There have been no studies investigating EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement and the strategies to foster student engagement in a blended learning context. To this end, this research was designed to contribute to an improved foundation of student engagement from instructors' perspectives and their use of engagement strategies in a blended learning and teaching environment. Hence, this research presents practical suggestions and implications for foreign language instructors, teacher trainers, and English language program administrators in higher education institutions to create an engaging learning environment.

The first implication drawn from these results is how the EFL instructors' conceptualization of student engagement reflects a narrow understanding of what it actually refers to as a multi-dimensional construct. Based on this finding, it can be suggested that in-service training should be designed to focus on its all dimensions and relevant in-class practices serve each dimension individually. Blended learning is a different educational context, combining traditional face-to-face and online teaching; therefore, the training should also be provided to equip instructors about the fundamental differences between the contexts, and the students' needs might stem from those differences influencing their engagement. Moreover, student engagement could be integrated into relevant courses in language teacher education programs to inform the candidate teachers about the importance of student engagement in learning and the effective in-class practices to promote it in different teaching contexts.

The second implication is related to the challenges and problems with student engagement strategies that EFL instructors use in face-to-face and online teaching. Based on the results, it can be suggested that universities should provide practical and relevant training programs to develop language instructors' technology proficiency to ensure student engagement in online education (Kessler, 2006). Otherwise, instructors cannot transfer what they learn into their teaching if training program is irrelevant in content (Tanış & Dikilitaş, 2018). To this end, the needs analysis should be carried out to make the content of those training relevant to the needs of the instructors. More specifically, universities should develop practical solutions based on the effective implementation of online tools and applications for instructors to ensure student engagement, especially in online teaching. Due to the emergency caused by COVID-19, the EFL instructors, with little or no experience in online teaching, were challenged by the need for the integration of an online component overnight. The new option was to transport the face-to-face activities they had developed for their students and simply turn them into digital. With regard to this, the alterations to online courses should be done by the administration in close cooperation with curriculum designers rather than on-the-spot adaptations. In addition, curriculum designers should organize meetings with instructors to make a proper selection for relevant teaching materials as well as online tools and applications that can cater to students' needs and increase their engagement in online lessons.

The third implication is that language program administrators should provide students with support for online learning environments. The results demonstrated that students' unpreparedness for online learning mode decreased their participation in online lessons as it was different from face-to-face learning context which was the only context they were experienced. Therefore, at the beginning of an academic term, students should receive introductory sessions on the use of online learning platforms in order to mitigate problems beforehand. Besides support for online learning, counseling for students who have psychological problems is also recommended considering the results indicating that online education created psychological and physical distance between instructors and students resulting in a feeling of disconnectedness and consequently affecting student engagement in a negative way. In addition to counseling for students, the language school administrators should establish a unit to talk to students lacking motivation to learn a foreign language, guide them to acquire study skills and organize events with senior students to emphasize importance of learning English. Moreover, Güneş and Alagözlü (2020) suggested that instructors can ask challenging questions or share posts that arise curiosity among students. This can be implemented for the online component of blended where students might feel isolated from the learning community. In addition to motivating students in the online component of blended learning, challenging questions can also be used in face-to-face education to promote student motivation for learning as suggested.

This study also offers practical implications for increased participation in online education in addition to technical and psychological support. One of the challenges expressed by the instructors in online teaching was to teach in a classroom with passive participants keeping their cameras off. To overcome the problems regarding camera use in lessons, informing students about classroom expectations and procedures is of primary importance. Instructors and school administrators need to set consistent standards of online education and inform students in advance to prepare themselves for learning in a new educational context and achieve desired goals (Reeve, 2008).

The study also revealed that student status (new vs repeat) is a consistent influential factor in the effective implementation of student engagement strategies in face-to-face and online teaching, requiring an urgent adaptation in the curriculum for repeat students. Academic and psychological support should be provided for those students by professionals. In addition, an investigation should be conducted on whether it is suitable to group repeat

students and newcomers in the same context and teach repeat students with the same course materials. Repeat students might have negative attitudes resulting from repeating a year; therefore, school administrators in collaboration with teacher trainers should organize teacher training sessions on how to approach these students and deal with negative attitudes of repeat students towards language learning and environment. As feeling a sense of belonging to the learning community is the essential element of student engagement, repeat students should also be treated as part of the learning community and be provided continuous support by instructors and psychological counselor. Regarding course materials, new materials should be prepared for repeat groups in order to contribute to the efforts in changing their negative attitudes toward language learning. For example, for a course program that includes four periods lasting two months in one academic year, two different course content should be prepared to prevent repeat students from exposing to same materials for two consecutive periods.

In brief, it is imperative that language school administrators and designers of teacher training programs need to take steps to address the problems, ensuring that instructors are equipped with the necessary pedagogical and theoretical knowledge of student engagement and different modes of teaching, and skills required to deliver high-quality education in English. Moreover, proven impact of student engagement on an effective learning environment and student academic success indicates that EFL instructors should fully understand the construct with its dimensions to carry out a proper evaluation of students' performance and use efficient in-class practices. Like instructors, students also had little or no experience in online learning; therefore, they need support for adapting to the new conditions. The support should not be solely based on increasing instructors' pedagogical and theoretical knowledge and technical support for students because the pandemic created many problems that affected both parties psychologically. Considering the results of this thesis, the university needs to alter to fit the needs of the instructors and students in terms of online educational resources and training programs to provide effective and successful learning on a long-term basis. Moreover, psychological counseling should be provided, considering its importance for keeping students engaged in academic work. Taking all of these into consideration, we aimed to create awareness for the English language program administrators to make careful planning, and evidence-based approaches to establish convenient learning environments for new possible crises and emergencies in the future as

well as guide instructors and providers of teacher training programs through those times of crisis that impact teaching practices.

5.1.1. Suggestions for Further Research

The current research focused on student engagement with its three main dimensions (behavioral, cognitive and emotional). However, student engagement has a dynamic nature, and the interaction with the context and self consistently reshapes its nature (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). Therefore, a longitudinal investigation could give a valuable insight into the multidimensional nature of the construct.

This study was conducted in a blended course, so further research should also be conducted in different teaching and learning environments to understand the impact of the context on student engagement. Since blended learning combines face-to-face and online teaching, an investigation into student engagement in fully online or face-to-face education might yield important results.

Based on the findings obtained from the interviews with EFL instructors, the findings could be enriched with interviews with students to gain more detailed information about student engagement and explore effective in-class practices concerning their expectations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE EFL INSTRUCTORS

CATEGORIES / THEMES	QUESTIONS
A. Educational Background	A1. Name and surname. A2. Gender. A3. How long have you been teaching? A4. Which department did you graduate from? And when? A5. Do you hold an MA or Ph.D. degree? If yes, which departments did you graduate from? And when? A6. Have you ever taught in a blended course before? When and what purposes? A7. How long have you been teaching in the blended course in your institution?
B. Conceptualization of student engagement	B1. How do you define student engagement in the classroom? B1.1 What are the indicators of student engagement in a learning context? B1.2 What might be the factors decreasing student engagement in the classroom? B1.3 What might be the factors increasing student engagement in the classroom? B1.4 Are there any differences between the indicators of student engagement concerning the context?
C. Student engagement strategies used in face-to-face teaching	C1. What are the student engagement strategies you use in face-to-face teaching? C2. What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face teaching? Explain with your reasons? C3. Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why?
D. Student engagement strategies used in online teaching	D1. What are the student engagement strategies you use in online education? D2. What student engagement strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in online teaching? Explain with your reasons. D3. Which student engagement strategies do you believe increase student engagement? Why? D4. When you reflect on the student engagement strategies you use in face-to-face and online teaching environments, do you see any differences? If yes, what are they? Please provide examples.

E. EFL instructors' perception of student engagement level in face-to-face and online teaching	E1. Do you see any changes in your students' engagement in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, how and why? E2. Are there any differences between the student engagement strategies if you use the same strategy in face-to-face and online teaching? If yes, what are they? E2.1 Are there any differences in students' reactions to the strategies if you use the same strategy in face-to-face and online teaching? E3. What are the students' reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in face-to-face teaching? E4. What are the students' reactions to the student engagement strategies you implement in online teaching?
F. The problems and challenges encountered for student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching	F1. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in face-to-face teaching? F2. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in online teaching? F3. Do you encounter any challenges in increasing student engagement concerning the student engagement strategies you use?
G. Recommendations and solutions	G1. What would be the solutions to the problems you encounter in increasing student engagement? G2. What do you think is necessary for developing the effectiveness of student engagement strategies used in an online teaching environment?

APPENDIX 2: THE EFL INSTRUCTORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: TENTATIVE

1. How does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect blended learning contexts?
2. What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive to affect students' performance in a blended learning context?
3. How are teachers engaging students in face-to-face and online teaching?
4. Are they specific methods/techniques used to get students engaged in face-to-face and online teaching separately?
5. Which strategies are effective in engaging students in face-to-face and online teaching contexts?
6. Which strategies are ineffective in engaging students in face-to-face and online teaching contexts?
7. What are the indicators of student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching contexts?
8. What has changed between the student engagement level during face-to-face education and online education?
9. What are the factors that influence student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching contexts?
10. What are the problems that the EFL instructors encounter in using engagement strategies?

APPENDIX 3: THE EFL INSTRUCTORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: REVISED

CATEGORIES / THEMES	QUESTIONS
Conceptualization of student engagement	1. How do you define student engagement in the classroom? 1.1 What might be the factors increasing student engagement in the classroom? 1.2 What might be the factors decreasing student engagement in the classroom? 1.3 What are the indicators of active student participation in in-class tasks?
Student engagement strategies used in face-to-face teaching	2. What are the student engagement strategies you use in face-to-face education? 3. What instructional strategies do you identify as the most effective and the least effective to engage students in face-to-face education? 4. Which instructional strategies do you believe increase student engagement? 5. What are the students' reactions to the instructional strategies you implement in face-to-face education?
Student engagement strategies used in online teaching	6. What are the student engagement strategies you use in online education? 7. What instructional strategies do you identify as most effective and least effective to engage students in online education? 8. Which instructional strategies do you believe increase student engagement? 9. What are the students' reactions to the instructional strategies you implement in online education?
E. EFL instructors' perception of student engagement level in face-to-face and online teaching	10. Do you see any change in engagement during the implementation of instructional strategies in face-to-face and online education? If yes, could you explain? 11. What do you do when the student engagement is at minimum level? 12. Are there any differences between the instructional strategies with respect to the context they are implemented? If yes, what are they? 12.1 Are there any differences in their reactions to the strategies with respect to the educational context?
F. The problems and challenges encountered for student engagement in face-to-face and online teaching	13. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in face-to-face teaching? 14. What are the problems and challenges you encounter in engaging students in the classroom in online teaching?
G. Recommendations and solutions	15. What would be the solutions to the problems you encounter in increasing student engagement?

APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This study was conducted by Gülcay KARAKOYUN, a graduate student of Başkent University Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Foreign Language Education, with the advisory of Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevgi ŞAHİN. The present study aims to determine the ELF Instructors' Perceptions of Student Engagement and in-class Practices in Blended Learning. Your participation in the study is voluntary. The interview takes about 60 minutes. The data collected within the scope of the research will be used only for scientific purposes and will not be used outside the purpose of the study. Your answers will be used anonymously and will be greatly valuable for this study.

For this reason, it is essential for the reliability of the research that you answer the questions in a way that best reflects you and honestly. If you feel uncomfortable during your participation, you will be able to leave the study at any time. If you leave the study, the data collected from you will be removed from the study and destroyed.

Thank you for taking the time to read and evaluate the volunteer participation form. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevgi ŞAHİN in Başkent University Institute of Educational Sciences Department of Foreign Languages, or graduate student Gülcay KARAKOYUN.

Email: …….

…….

I accept using the information I have given to this study with my own will, knowing that I can quit the study if I want to for scientific purposes.

(Please fill in this form and give it to the data collector after signing it.)

Email:

Signature:

APPENDIX 5: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

1993
BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Akademik Değerlendirme Koordinatörlüğü

Sayı : E-62310886-302.14.03-38892
Konu : Tez Önerisi (Gülcay Karakoyun)

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi : 24.05.2021 tarih ve 34520 sayılı yazınız

Enstitünüz İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Gülcay Karakoyun'un, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Sevgi Şahin danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı "İngilizce Öğretim Görevlilerinin Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf İçi Katılımı ile İlgili Algıları" başlıklı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve bilgilerinize ekte sunulmuştur.

Ek: Değerlendirme Formu

Sayı : 17162298.600-146 1 HAZİRAN 2021
Konu : Tez Önerisi

İlgili Makama

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Gülcay Karakoyun'un, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Sevgi Şahin danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı "İngilizce Öğretim Görevlilerinin Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf İçi Katılımı ile İlgili Algıları" başlıklı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve yapılmasında bir sakınca olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.
Bilgilerinize saygılarımızla sunarız.

Başkent Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler ve Sanat Araştırma Kurulu

Ad, Soyad	Değerlendirme	İmza
Prof. Dr. M. Abdülkadir Varoğlu	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Kudret Güven	Olumlu/Olumsuz	
Prof. Ali Sevgi	Olumlu/Olumsuz	
Prof. Dr. Işıl Bulut	Olumlu/Olumsuz	
Prof. Dr. Sadegül Akbaba Altun	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Can Mehmet Hersek	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Özcan Yağcı	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	

Prof. Dr. Sadegül Akbaba Altun, Başkent Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Gülcay Karakoyun'un, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Sevgi Şahin danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı "İngilizce Öğretim Görevlilerinin Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf İçi Katılımı İle İlgili Algıları" başlıklı tezin yapılabileceğini; ancak, araştırma yapılacak kurumdan ve araştırmaya katılacak katılımcılardan onama formu aracılığı ile izin alınması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir.

Prof. Dr. Özcan Yağcı, Gülcay Karakoyun'un, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Sevgi Şahin danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı "İngilizce Öğretim Görevlilerinin Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf İçi Katılımı İle İlgili Algıları" başlıklı tez önerisinin uygun olduğu görüşlerini paylaşmışlardır.

APPENDIX 6: RESEARCH APPROVAL (ATILIM UNIVERSITY)

T.C.

Atılım Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu Müdürlüğüne

İngilizce Öğretim Görevlilerinin Karma Eğitim ve Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Sınıf içi Katılımı ile İlgili Algıları ve Uygulamaları başlıklı çalışmam için Kurumunuzun Temel İngilizce Bölümünde çalışan İngilizce öğretim görevlilerinden veri toplamak istiyorum. Uygulama sonucunda elde edeceğim verilerden Atılım Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okuluyla ilgili olanlarını (veriler diğer verilerden ayrıştırılabiliyorsa) /elde edeceğim verileri bir rapor olarak sadece arşivleme ve araştırma konusuna bağlı olarak Kurumsal gelişim amacıyla kullanılması için sunacağımı taahhüt ederim.

Gereğinin yapılmasını arz ederim.