

Exploring Motivation, Self-concept and Engagement in an EAP Setting:

A Mixed Methods Study in Iraqi Kurdistan

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

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December 2019

Abstract

The aim of this mixed methods study is to explore EAP (English for Academic Purposes) classes at universities in Kurdistan, North Iraq. The relationship between teaching practices and ability grouping on students' academic motivation, academic self-concept, and classroom engagement is explored through both teachers' and students' opinions, beliefs and perspectives via a Complex Dynamic Systems theory framework (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). Employing an exploratory sequential research design, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies was used to analyse data from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations.

The quantitative findings, arrived at through descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests, revealed that self-efficacy was significantly higher in single ability groups than in mixed ability groups of EAP learners while values for classroom environment and peer-learning were significantly higher in mixed ability classrooms.

The qualitative findings showed that single ability grouping was preferred by students and teachers as they believed the students' academic motivation, self-concept and classroom engagement was higher when students studied in level specific classes amongst peers of a similar ability. Both data sets confirmed a correlation between teacher motivated behaviour (TMB) and learner motivated behaviour (LMB).

Overall, the complexity lens highlights the interrelatedness of the three constructs of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement in an educational setting as a complex dynamic system. These findings could serve to change education policy in the Kurdistan region of Iraq which could improve teaching and learning outcomes in Kurdish universities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many people in my life who have kindly helped me along the dissertation journey towards completing my doctoral studies. I am blessed to be surrounded by such loving, caring people.

I wish to thank, first and foremost, my supervisor, Dr Agneta Svalberg. Without her dedication, patience and expertise, this thesis would not have been possible.

This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for my loving grandparents who always believed in me, even when I did not believe in myself. Although no longer with us, I am forever thankful for their encouragement and praise which has made me become a better version of myself.

I would also like to thank my parents for their unwavering support and for always believing in me. I am indebted to my amazing family and friends whose love, patience and care during my doctoral studies motivated me to carry on even at difficult times.

I am indebted to my many fantastic colleagues who supported me during my research journey and inspired me to continue with my writing and research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank everyone who took part in the study and who made this research possible; the gatekeepers, teachers, and students in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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List of Abbreviations

(AMTB)	Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
(ASCS)	Academic Self-Concept Scale
(ASCQ)	Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire
(AMS)	Achievement Motivation Scale
(BALEAP)	British Association for Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes
(BFLPE)	Big Fish Little Pond Effect
(CASES)	The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale
(CDS)	Complex Dynamic Systems
(CDST)	Complex Dynamic Systems Theory
(CEFR)	Common European Framework of Reference
(CLIL)	Content and Language Integrated Learning
(CPD)	Continuing Professional Development
(CSEI)	Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory
(EAP)	English for Academic Purposes
(EOP)	English for Occupational Purposes
(ESL)	English as a second language
(ETIC)	English Teaching Information Centre
(ISIS)	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
(KRI)	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
(KS)	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality

- (L1) Second language (language 2)
- (L2) Second language (language 2)
- (LMB) Learner Motivated Behaviour
- (L2MSS) L2 Motivational Self System
- (MHESR) Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Kurdistan)
- (MOLT) Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching
- (MSLQ) Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire
- (NUR) National University Ranking
- (PML2M) Process Model of L2 Motivation
- (RQM) Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling.'
- (SES) Self-efficacy scale
- (SELMOUS) Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students
- (SDT) Self-Determination Theory
- (SDQ) Self-description Questionnaire
- (SEAT) Science Elementary Achievement Test
- (SFP) Self-fulfilling prophecy
- (SLA) Second language acquisition
- (TMP) Teacher Motivational Practices

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the past few decades, there have been momentous changes within the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), particularly in the area of Education. The increasing demand for English language lessons is being fuelled by the recent boom in industry and international trade links between Iraqi Kurdistan and the world. Similarly, the increase in American and European business franchises in the region has brought with it increasing employment opportunities for those who speak English well. For many of the younger Iraqi Kurds, English proficiency is seen as a crucial asset to help boost personal employability and advancement prospects, whether that is studying abroad at postgraduate level or working in large international companies in the region.

Consequently, many Iraqi Kurds are eager to embrace English as a Lingua Franca in the region for business, education and government administration. In some cases, English is beginning to replace their second language, Arabic, seen by some as the language of the oppressors. Due to political and sociological reasons, English is considered a means for the Kurds to establish their place in the world outside of the Arabic-speaking Middle East (Salisbury, 2004). This, in turn, means there is a considerable language barrier between the Kurds and Arabs, which appears to be in retaliation against the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime (Dunlop, 2014).

Within the KRI, several measures have been put in place to improve the level of English amongst the population. These include the opening of several new international schools, introducing English into primary schools at a younger age and introducing English Medium Instruction (EMI) at some universities. This has brought about a demand for more qualified English teachers and lecturers and a review of the current curriculum and resources, in order to embrace this phenomenon of English potentially becoming the new second language of the region (Barbarani, 2013).

1.1.1 English as a Global Language

English has become a global language which is recognised and used as a medium for teaching and learning a variety of subjects around the world (Graddol, 2007). Many university-level courses are now in English and quite often the textbooks, particularly for science and technology, are also written in English. Consequently, the demand for university level English lessons is increasing.

Over the past few decades, English has become the lingua franca in many countries for communication in areas such as education, the Internet, business, science, technology and entertainment (Nunan, 2003). This demand has impacted the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and ESL (English for speakers of other languages) market tremendously as the ability to communicate with other English speakers has driven people to enrol on more English courses to become part of the globalised world. This is also referred to as ‘Global Capitalism’ (Warschauer, 2000, p. 512). Warschauer predicted that with global capitalism or ‘informationalism,’ there would be consequences such as the proliferation of global English, technology and fluctuating employment trends. His prediction made almost two decades ago, has materialised in all three areas. Modern society is now more globalised and connected due to significant advances in technology and social media, which in turn has seen the rise of ‘Global English,’ therefore sparking a further demand for TESOL / ESL teachers across the globe. It is estimated that English is taught in schools in over 200 countries (Crystal, 1997).

Certainly, more people are aware that English competency may lead to better employment and it is argued that if a country is to integrate into the global economy, the only way it can ensure both social and economic development is if a good proportion of its citizens are competent in English (McCormick, 2013; Richards, 2008). This trend is also present in the KRI as the new generation are increasingly encouraged to advance in the business world and contribute to the larger economy (Abdullah and Al-Mofti, 2017).

This supports the argument that ESL and English teachers may be more in demand than ever in the near future. More recent predictions, however, state the opposite. Some argue that as English is being taught to ever-younger students and is considered more of

a generic skill. This could mean that English teachers may become marginalised and we may see a global shift towards Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), usually taught at primary and secondary level, rather than EMI (English medium instruction) which is usually at Higher Education (HE) level. This shift has recently been introduced in the KRI as the region has increased its number of private EMI primary and secondary schools to meet the recognised demand for citizens who are more competent English speakers (see 1.4.4). The new generation in the KRI is keen to achieve a more competent status in society, especially in the business world.

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore the students' and teachers' perspectives of motivation, self-concept and engagement in four EAP settings in the KRI, both private and public. The study is framed through the conceptual framework lens of Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST; Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

The research adds to the body of knowledge regarding EAP classrooms, academic motivation in EAP classes, academic self-concept of EAP university students and classroom engagement in EAP classes, of which there is currently a dearth of research in Iraqi Kurdistan and the Middle East in general. It also contributes to the wider body of literature on CDST in language teaching and learning through re-contextualisation in the KRI. This study applies CDST in practice and discusses the limitations. The overall findings from the study may be used to provide Kurdish educational leaders with an insight into current issues within EAP classrooms in the KRI and could be used to inform future educational policies and curricula in the region.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions and sub-questions that guide this study were derived from the gaps in existing literature and my own experiences of teaching English at universities in the KRI. All of the questions are based on the context of EAP teaching and learning in Iraqi Kurdistan.

According to the teacher and student participants,

RQ1: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and academic motivation?
- b. ability grouping and academic motivation?
- c. Are there any other emerging factors affecting the students' academic motivation?

RQ2: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and academic self-concept?
- b. ability grouping and academic self-concept?
- c. Are there any other emerging factors affecting the students' academic self-concept?

RQ3: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and classroom engagement?
- b. ability grouping and classroom engagement?
- c. Are there any other emerging factors affecting the students' classroom engagement?

RQ4: Are there any observable differences in:

- a. how the students in the single ability and mixed ability classes engage?
- b. the teaching practices in the single ability and mixed ability classes?

The first three questions all seek to find the relationship between the three main constructs and teaching practices/ ability grouping.

For each of the three research questions, sub question (a) looks at which teaching practices the EAP teachers use in their classes and how this affects the students' motivation, self-concept, and engagement respectively. Engagement refers to attention and volunteering (participation in class activities and tasks). It usually indicates a level of motivation while demotivated learners are likely to be less engaged. Therefore, the students' engagement was examined by means of classroom observations (see 3.4).

Sub question (b) was added to the research questions after the results of the pilot study showed that some classes in Kurdish universities were streamed by ability. In the four participating universities, three universities claimed to segregate their EAP classes by

single ability (SA), whereas one did not administer any form of diagnostic exam and students were all placed in mixed ability groups (MA).

Sub question (c) was added to ensure that any other factors mentioned or observed in the study would not be discarded. As this was an exploratory study, the aim was not to prove an already existing theory but to explore emerging concepts and theories where possible.

The fourth question focuses specifically on the classroom observations using the term ‘observable differences’ which relates to differences in engagement in SA and MA classes and teaching practices.

1.4 Research Context

1.4.1 About Iraqi Kurdistan

The context for this research is Iraqi Kurdistan (KRI) in Northern Iraq. The autonomous KRI is located between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria covering an area of approximately 80,000km². The Kurds refer to this area of Northern Iraq as ‘Southern Kurdistan,’ as they consider it to be one of the four parts of ‘Kurdistan: Southeast Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), Northern Syria (Western Kurdistan) and North-western Iran (Eastern Kurdistan). The capital of the region is Erbil, known to the locals as Hewler. The population of the KRI is approximately 5.5 million and is ever increasing due to an influx of around 1.8 million Iraqi and Syrian refugees who have settled in the safe haven of the KRI to escape ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), otherwise known as the Islamic state (Lake, 2015).

Although the KRI is currently surrounded by conflict, it is deemed relatively safe by its citizens and the expanding English-speaking expatriate population. However, due to the number of terrorist attacks and the proximity of ISIS to the KRI border (approximately 80km) at the time of the field work, several governments (including the UK) had advised their citizens against all but essential travel to the KRI (FCO, 2017). It should be noted that Erbil is around 80km from Mosul city; an ISIS stronghold at the time of the study. The ISIS invasion left a devastating impact on the political and economic landscape of the KRI and has had a long-lasting effect on public services such as schools and hospitals and even government salaries, even after its eradication in 2017.

Most Kurds in Northern Iraq identify themselves as Sunni Muslim, with a small percentage of Shia Muslim. It is also home to large populations of Christian, Jewish and Yezidi people as well as other minority religions including Judaism, Babaism, Yazdanism, Yarsanism and Alevism (Bruinessen, 2000). This religious diversity makes the region unique in the Middle East. The linguistic landscape of the region is also very diverse. The Kurds are an Indo-European ethno-linguistic group who speak various forms of Kurdish (an Indo-Iranian language) depending on where they are geographically located. Indigenous Kurds from the KRI speak the main language of the region, which is Sorani Kurdish. Written in Arabic script, it is the official language in government buildings and paperwork. Another main dialect in the region is Bahdini, spoken mainly by Kurds from Duhok and the surrounding areas. Due to the increased usage of both dialects in the media and the resettlement of Kurds in various cities, most people in the region can converse or at least understand both dialects. Another increasingly common dialect is Kirmanji Kurdish, which is written in Latin script. This is mainly spoken by the Turkish and Syrian Kurds who have migrated to the region. As many Syrian refugees are employed in the region (usually in large shopping malls or as labourers on construction sites), Kirmanji can increasingly be heard in the three main cities. Alongside Kurds, there are also smaller ethnolinguistic communities of Arabs, Turkomans, Assyrian-Chaldeans and Armenians (O'Leary, 2002; Van Bruinessen, 1992). Arabic, a Semitic language, is the second language in the KRI. Some of the older, educated Kurds speak Arabic well as their university courses would have been taught in Arabic under the previous Ba'ath regime (1963-2003). The KRI is also home to many Arab families from South Iraq who see Kurdistan as a safe haven from the troubled areas around it, and now call it home, making them the second largest ethnic group in the region. Some Arabs who have grown up in the region speak Kurdish well, but others may have not learned the language as they feel they can converse in Arabic within their communities. The third largest ethnic group in the region are the Turkmen. They are a Turkic ethnic group who are the descendants of several waves of migration to the region. They speak a form of Turkish as their first language. As well as speaking Kurdish, the Turkmen also speak Arabic as they were forbidden to speak their own language under Saddam's regime, meaning that most Turkmen are trilingual. The Christian Kurds and Arabs speak Chaldean or Assyrian Neo-Aramaic at home, a Semitic language thought to have been spoken by Jesus Christ. Due to discrimination and persecution from the previous regimes, the Christian population is in decline and

many have emigrated abroad. All of these languages are offered in schools around the region, depending on the demographics. For example, if the schools are in the Christian populated areas, Assyrian or Chaldean can be offered as a second language (Cabinet.gov.krd, 2019).

1.4.2 The Culture of Iraqi Kurdistan

As the Kurdish culture is unique to the region of the Middle East, it is crucial to give an overview of it to further understand the context. Firstly, ‘culture’ will be defined in relation to Holliday’s (1999) ‘small’ and ‘large’ cultures and in terms of Collectivist/ Individualist cultures (Hofstede, 1980) which ‘can be regarded as one of the many significant components of the complex concept of “culture”’ (Goodall, 2014, p. 603). Following these definitions, some personal cultural observations of living in the KRI are discussed.

In the field of Applied Linguistics, Holliday (1999) divides the traditional definition of culture into large cultures and small cultures. The large culture paradigm is often used to refer to ‘ethnic,’ ‘national’ or ‘international’ differences (Holliday, 1999, p. 237) whereas a small culture paradigm could refer to any small social grouping where similar, cohesive behaviour patterns occur, thus avoiding ethnic connotations and stereotyping. In the context of this study, the large culture would refer to the Kurdish, Middle Eastern culture whereas small culture differences may appear between classes, friendship groups and indeed between universities.

The Kurdish culture mainly displays traits of a collectivist culture (Hassan, 2015) which is defined as one that values ‘social responsibility, social harmony and cooperation, and (people from this culture) downplay competition, self-achievement, individuality, and ambition for personal gain’ (Cheung and Rudowicz, 2003, p. 242). An individualistic culture, on the other hand, is one where individuals are more likely to seek self-fulfilment and demonstrate freedom of choice even at the risk of creating a conflict of interest (Littlewood, 2001). People from this type of culture are more likely to network in wider circles in comparison to their collectivist counterparts who are more likely to have closer, more familial social circles.

The concept of collectivist cultures vs individualistic cultures is similar to the concept of Interdependent vs Independent cultures (Somech, 2000; Markus and Kitayama,

1991). From this perspective, in the West, independent cultures are more prominent as individuality and uniqueness are traits which are often praised and have almost become cultural goals. Individuals are strongly encouraged to become independent from others, explore self-discovery and one's salient identities. On the other hand, authors posit that in interdependent cultures, such as some Asian cultures, an individual's behaviour is often influenced by the actions and thoughts of others around, which determines how members from that culture behave in a larger social unit (Hagger, Rentzelas and Chatzisarantis, 2014; Carpenter, 2000; Somech, 2000; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Inevitably, the categories of collectivist, individualistic, interdependent and independent cultures are not absolute and there could be degrees of interdependence and individuality in any culture. In addition, these characterisations may not accurately describe each individual within a particular type of culture.

The majority of families in Kurdistan are tribal in their traditions and they are usually very loyal to their immediate family members (the clans) who are usually part of a larger tribe. They selflessly dedicate a large part of their lives to helping the clan – 'the cornerstone of the social system' and then their tribes when necessary (Meho and Maglaughlin, 2001, p. 4), thus meaning there may be little emphasis on the self or individuality. As the KRI is home to more than 150 tribes and clans, each having varied cultural practices, it is also difficult to determine how valid any tribal related research is due to the individual differences between clans and tribes (Van Wilgenburg, 2011). From empirical and personal observations of tribes and tribal people in the KRI, I have noted that they are very private people who do not easily share personal information with outsiders (people outside the clan/ tribe). In reference to Holliday's (1999) definitions of culture, the Kurdish culture of the KRI could be described as a 'large culture' and the tribal cultures could be described as a 'small culture.'

As the region is developing and expanding at an immense rate, ideologies and trends are also changing. For example, the traditions and 'culture' of the parents of the students involved in the study (usually more traditional and often with little education), are likely to be very different to those of the students themselves (well educated, urbanized Kurds), even though they are essentially from the same 'large culture.' This means that the 'small cultures' of the university and the classrooms described in this study are likely to be very different from the small cultures of the students' parents of the students who grew up in a different era in Kurdistan. The actual culture of learning (general

expectations of all aspects of learning and teaching) and cultural synergy (ideas, expectations and practices of cultures of learning) of the students and their parents would also differ due to the generation gap and the vast changes in this region (Cortazzi and Jin, 2013).

A study by Hofstede (2009) which ranked countries on how collectivist they are on a cline, placed Iraq (including the KRI) at 38 whereas the UK is ranked at 89 suggesting that the Kurdish culture is more collectivist than the UK but still retains some elements of individualism. As the KRI is not an independent country, often there is a lack of data from this area which is still referred to as 'Northern Iraq.' In comparison to the Arab culture, the Kurdish culture was found to be more individualistic (Rarick et al., 2014) which contrasts with the findings of Meho and Maglaughlin (2001).

The research regarding cultures and tribes provoked me to reflect on my own classes and other university classes in the KRI. Most classes host a mixture of tribes, clans, students from both Kurdish and Arab descent, as well as Yezidi and Chaldean (Christian) Kurds who often prefer to identify themselves as Iraqi. This is something that needs to be considered in my study as the groups may not be as homogeneous as I expected. As mentioned previously, the small cultures of the region will also need to be considered as they may vary greatly within the same classroom. However, differentiation of these small cultures is difficult due to the political situation in Iraq causing people to be more reluctant to disclose personal information for fear of persecution.

1.4.3 Education in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Within the KRI education system, schools and universities do not typically include or actively encourage the enhancement of students' self-esteem as an explicit goal in their educational missions or policies. This may be due to its collectivist culture. Such a goal would not typically be included in the school curriculum, just as they are not in the Chinese curriculum, another collectivist culture (Cheung and Rudowicz, 2003, p. 242). Instead, Kurdish children are taught to be conscientious citizens, be loyal to their kin and 'do well' for the sake of their country. For example, children in nursery are taught the Kurdish national anthem 'Ey Reqîb' (which translates as 'Hey Enemy') and are obligated to recite it every morning in the school playground, up until they graduate from high school in grade 12. The anthem is also sung on national holidays and at the

beginning of any major public events such as conferences and exhibitions. The song includes references such as: 'The Kurds are alive and our flag will never fall, the Kurdish youth are ever-ready and always prepared to sacrifice their lives' and 'our homeland is our faith and religion' (KRG website, 2017). Having to sing such an anthem every day of their school lives may instil a sense of togetherness and nationalism in students; both of which are traits of a collectivist culture.

Notably, in the UK, an individualistic culture, the idea of self-concept/self-esteem went unnoticed in schools until the 1960's and did not become a goal in UK / EU educational policy until around the 1970s (Baumeister, 2009). It was during the following decades that a lot of research was taking place in this subject and these results were cascaded into more mainstream educational policy and 'self-esteem' became a buzzword in education (Baumeister, 2009). Academic self-concept is discussed further in section 2.2.

Over the past few decades, the higher education system in the KRI has witnessed a radical reform. In the 1960s and 1970s, some Iraqi universities held an impressive reputation both in the Middle East and globally for their high quality and standards (Harb, 2008). However, the rise of the former Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein and the dominating Ba'athist regime meant that universities gradually became highly politicized and were manipulated into becoming venues for dispersing the regime's policies and ideologies (Dilani, Baban and Heshmati, 2013; Harb, 2008). Since then, numerous wars, conflicts and political tensions in the country, particularly within the KRI, meant that plans for rebuilding and improving the education system were neglected due to the lack of finances. However, the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 1992, and the ousting of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath party in 2003, meant that the KRI could break away from the Iraqi Education system even further, and more concrete plans for reform began. A positive example was the increase of private and public universities within the KRI from 3 in 2003 to 18 by 2009 (The World Bank, 2015, p. 58; Rarick et al., 2014).

Despite significant improvements, multiple challenges in the Kurdish education system remained including issues of teaching quality, educational standards, institutional capacity, facilities and infrastructure (Garner, 2013). As well as these challenges, the region is arguably still a post-conflict society. In such a society, there are five areas which often need reconstructing: establishing a culture of learning, language rights,

relationships, curriculum and textbooks and governance (Davies, 2003, p. 169). Recognising that the curriculum, resources and governance were in urgent need of reform, a report released by the central Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) highlighted the urgent need for changes:

In the new Iraq, reformation of higher education is now urgently required in order to harmonise the heretofore antiquated system to the needs of the Region for highly skilled professionals. The KRG has long been conscious of this fact and worked to reform the higher education system accordingly (2010, p. 11).

Consequently, in 2009, the KRG published the 'Road map for Reformation of the Education system' in collaboration with the MHESR. This report marked the beginning of a new education system in the KRI which saw an increase in the number of private schools and universities.

The aim of the reform included improving the Kurdish HE provisions to international standards. However, universities within the KRI were not officially ranked until 2015 with the introduction of the National University ranking (NUR) system (Saeed, 2016). This was an initiative by the KRG in partnership with the MHESR. A total of 26 public and private universities are invited annually to submit data on several performance indicators in order to produce a ranking. These include scientific research, teaching quality and international activities. The system has been criticised as data submitted to the online portal is not necessarily verified by external agents; therefore, it essentially allows universities to submit any data they feel is beneficial to aid their ranking position.

1.4.4 English Medium Instruction in the Kurdistan region of Iraq

In order to boost the English levels of Kurdish university graduates, there has been some interest in HE teaching and learning research in the region. Many private language institutions and universities, in an attempt to follow a communicative approach, tried to implement an EMI policy and employ native English speakers (NES). This was done so that 1/ students should be taught in the L2, 2/ ideally by a native speaker, and with the view that 3/ maximum exposure to the L2 is essential for proficiency. These represent just three of the five English language teaching 'Fallacies' pointed out by Phillipson (1992, p. 185). These fallacies have been fostered by

influential figures in the SLA field such as Krashen (1985), who argued that access to students' L1 in the classroom could even hinder SLA. On the other hand, proponents of a bilingual approach to teaching EAP, including Phillipson, refer to research showing that a monolingual approach to ELT may create a barrier between the teacher and students and may lead to students feeling alienated from the learning process (Pachler and Field, 2001). Other research suggests that the usage of L1 in the classroom may even be beneficial to the students' motivation and may reduce the students' fears and anxieties (Carless, 2008; Auerbach, 1993; Harbord, 1992).

As a result of the 2009 MHESR report, mainstream universities within the region adopted EMI for the majority of their modules, as opposed to Arabic or Kurdish. This was beneficial for Kurds returning from abroad, and those who studied in private schools who often have a native-like level of English. The private school students usually have a better level of English than public school students as the former have already studied through EMI. In Kurdish universities, any 'advanced' or 'native' speaking students are automatically placed in the 'advanced' level classes (if the university applies streaming) as there is no separate provision for them. However, for those who have graduated from Kurdish public (state) schools, this is problematic as they are only exposed to approximately 3-5 hours of English lessons a week for 12 years (from grade 1 to grade 12) (Iraqi Curriculum Framework, 2012, p. 61) and usually have little conversation practice outside of the classroom. Table 1.1 shows the number of hours of English taught in each grade. Prior to 2012, English was taught much later than grade 1 but is now introduced earlier as part of the reform.

Table 1.1: Language Curriculum Units, KRI (Grades 1-12, from the Iraqi Curriculum Framework, 2012, p. 61)

	Grades											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Weekly hours											
Kurdish (mother tongue)	10	10	10	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Arabic	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
English	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Noticeably, from grade 4, English is allocated as much lesson time as their native Kurdish and exceeds it from grade 7 to 12. It is also introduced to students 3 years earlier than Arabic. However, in general, the students' entrance level of English at UG1 is still inadequate, despite being allocated more curriculum time than Kurdish and Arabic after grade 7.

There has been an increased demand for academic English due to new standard requirements at both private and state universities. MHESR policy now states that all first-year students at public universities must study English for at least two hours a week (Borg, 2016). At private universities, they are usually exposed to more than two hours a week due to the recent introduction of EMI policies.

It might be assumed that the English level of the Kurdish students would have increased due to recent changes. However, this may not be the case. Borg (2016) highlighted the frustrations that some university lecturers in the KRI feel regarding the new policy. Approximately 45% of lecturers stated that the EMI policy created several challenges for the students and staff and that most staff still used their language of choice (Arabic or Kurdish) whilst delivering their lectures as they felt the students' level of English was inadequate to access the content. Although the EMI policy was introduced in an attempt to raise university students' level of English, it is thought to have had the opposite effect (Borg 2016).

In order to gain entry to any university in the KRI, students sit the Kurdistan National Exam in grade 12 of high school. As the majority of these students enter university with minimal English levels, some universities have introduced foundation English courses or pre/in-session EAP classes which are often grouped by ability (see definitions in section 1.6) to improve the standard and quality of English lessons and personalise content for those with lower English proficiency. Ability grouping or 'streaming' by ability seems to support and assist lower level students who would otherwise be studying with higher ability students such as direct entries from EMI international schools or from abroad. During the study, empirical observations of attempted streaming in Kurdish universities often revealed serious weaknesses in its application and as a result, I was not fully confident of it in several institutions. For example, in some cases, diagnostic tests were not administered, and the streaming criteria were therefore questionable. This could be one of the reasons why streaming is a highly

controversial subject amongst educators and has been at the centre of more research studies than most other educational practices (George and Alexander, 2003). It is a practice usually seen at a primary or secondary school level and rarely in a university context (Bahar, 2015; Bahar, 2012; Matovu, 2012; Hallam, Ireson, and Davies, 2004; Trautwein et al., 2006; Ward, 2005). This raised the question of whether streamed (SA) or non-streamed (MA) groups were more effective in an EAP university setting. Having taught Kurdish EAP students for 4 years in Iraqi Kurdistan, remarks from my own students (post-streaming) led me to believe that some were opposed to streaming, despite their weakness in English. Some students claimed they felt stigmatised, uncomfortable and embarrassed to be in a lower set whilst their peers were placed in a higher set. I felt these were likely to have an impact on students' motivation, self-concept and engagement and it was one of the main reasons for wanting to conduct the study.

In summary, since breaking away from the Iraqi federal system, the KRI (particularly the education sector) has been experiencing a transition period. Kurdish students entering the job market are now recognising the demand for better English proficiency, and the number of EMI universities has increased in line with this growing trend. The newly implemented EMI policies have been controversial according to some educators but overall, there have been many positive changes within regional universities which is helping students see the benefits of learning academic English. Whether the students who enter these institutions should be grouped by ability in their English classes is an ongoing debate.

1.4.5 Case Study University Profiles

This sub section describes the cases within the study in more detail. This study was conducted at 4 universities across the province of Erbil and the surrounding areas. Two of the universities were private and two were government funded. To protect anonymity, the universities have not been named in the study. A brief profile of the universities is detailed below.

Table 1.2: University Profiles

	University A	University B	University C	University D
Students	950	26,000	2300	3000
Staff	80	1700	250	300
Established	2006	1968	2008	2009
Location	City centre	City centre/Urban	Urban	Rural
Ranking (Iraq)	25	14	16	20
Diagnostic test?	Yes, PTE test	No	Yes, Oxford placement test	Yes – in house

University A (Uni A)

Situated in Erbil (the region's capital), this private independent university was opened in 2006. Funded by the KRG, it was the first public EMI university, employing mainly English L1 speakers from a variety of English-speaking countries. As the university is going through international accreditation processes, it attracts many Kurds who have returned from being outside of the region and the wider Kurdish diaspora. This often means that English L1 and very fluent English speakers are in classes with students from the local area who have a relatively lower English ability.

In 2016, Uni A was ranked as the top university in the KRI region and second in Iraq. Entry into this university is considered by the locals to be the most difficult due to the high standard of English required at initial interview and testing. The minimum entry requirements are relatively higher than to the other universities in the region. A minimum score of IELTS band 5 or 39 on the PTE test (recognised international English language tests) is required to gain entry to a foundation course. Some preparation is done by some students in advance and summer preparation courses are available for them to do so. A one-year obligatory foundation course is similar to a pre-sessional style course in the UK. It gives students the opportunity to study Academic English in an English-speaking environment whilst preparing them for study at undergraduate level. Due to this relatively stringent selective process, class sizes at University A are smaller than those of other local universities, which students see as an advantage. With 4 faculties (science and engineering, social science, management and economics and medicine), the EAP students derive from mixed fields and the majority progress to their prospective faculties.

The students in this study began the semester in MA classes. Mid-semester assessments were then used to separate students by ability to provide personalised instruction

specific to their English level. The results of these assessments, combined with feedback from the lecturers determined which ability group they studied in (lower, intermediate or higher). Apart from the general preparation for mid-terms, there was no extra preparation from the students to try and be placed in a higher group as the streaming process was not explained to the students in advance. Not only did this potentially introduce teacher bias, but the in-house tests were not analysed for reliability nor were they taken under exam conditions, which puts the reliability of the streaming process into question.

University A was renowned throughout the KRI for producing high-quality graduates who, upon graduation, become employed within larger, international companies or continue their postgraduate studies abroad. In 2016, the university introduced tuition fees on the undergraduate and foundation courses. This limited the type of student who could apply to this institute, especially given the current socio-economic situation in the KRI. There are, however, some scholarships available for gifted students who perform well on the Kurdistan National Exam (their high school leaving exam which allows entry to university).

University B (Uni B)

Uni B, established in 1968, boasts of being the oldest and largest public university in the KRI with over 26,000 students enrolled, around 1700 academic staff and 3,500 non-academic employees. The university is home to 12 colleges which are spread across the city of Erbil. Within these colleges, there are 80 departments which offer students a choice of 84 programs. This means the students in the foundation English courses could progress to study any major within these colleges. The faculty are mostly local Kurds, some of whom may have studied abroad. It is currently rated as the sixth best university in the whole of Iraq. At Uni B, there is no initial diagnostic test and all students, regardless of their English level, are admitted directly onto their undergraduate courses. All students are placed into the same English classes regardless of English level. This often means a wide variety of levels in one MA class. This was a government funded university, which meant there were no tuition fees and class sizes could reach up to 60 students. Despite being near the city centre, this university attracted students of a lower socio-economic status than the others and students here were more likely to be from rural homes with poor electricity and internet access.

University C (Uni C)

Also situated in the capital of Erbil, this private university opened in 2008. With a total of six faculties including dentistry, nursing, education and science, it boasted a large, modern campus and attracted students from all over the KRI. Despite these impressive amenities, this university only ranked at number 16 on the Iraqi University ranking tables. Tuition fees were payable, which usually ensured that class sizes were lower than public universities. All students were assigned to their SA English classes using an online Oxford diagnostic test for which the students cannot prepare. The students within the EAP courses were from mixed departments and progressed to study courses such as law, teaching and dentistry. The faculty here consisted of both local and international lecturers, which usually appeals to Kurdish students when choosing a university.

University D (Uni D)

This public university was located outside of the main cities, in a small rural town within the Erbil governorate. Established in 2009, it was home to over 3000 students and 300 lecturers within five faculties (arts, education, law, science and engineering). According to the latest ranking, Uni D came in at number 11 in the Iraqi rankings. Tuition here was free and the faculty were mostly local Kurds. The majority of the students here were from the surrounding towns and villages, which were usually of a lower socio-economic status and in this region, this usually meant poor electricity and less likelihood of internet access. All students were obliged to study one year of English classes before they entered their department. Upon entry, all students were given an in-house diagnostic test designed by the head of department which mainly tested ESL based items (non-EAP items such as the alphabet, verb tenses and general vocabulary). There was no preparation for this test; it merely tested the students' general ESL knowledge. Students were then separated into classes by ability. The test did not appear to be mapped to any framework or exam band. Overall, some streaming by ability had been attempted but there are serious weaknesses in its application which did not inspire confidence in its efficacy.

1.5 Research Rationale and Contributions

To date, no research has been conducted on motivation, self-concept or engagement in EAP classes in the KRI. However, Borg (2016) surveyed EMI in Iraqi Kurdistan in state universities in response to the MHESR's reform of teaching and the use of EMI in the KRG state universities. Eleven key findings from Borg's study are discussed in chapter 2, but certain challenges for EMI in this context require further research. One of the key challenges discussed in the study was 'lack of student motivation' and this was also an empirical observation of mine whilst working at universities in the region. Two areas linked to motivation which have not yet been researched in this context are academic self-concept and classroom engagement. In addition, empirical observations of living and working in the KRI found that streaming in EAP classes was becoming more common and thus became an area of interest in the study. Therefore, this study aims to examine the EAP classroom environment and the teachers' motivational teaching practices and ability grouping and their relationship with student academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement. Similarly, whereas Borg's research only focused on EMI in state universities, this study also gathered data from private universities, which may allow an interesting comparison.

In summary, this multi-site research of four different universities aims to make an original and worthwhile contribution to the existing literature of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement and also provide data that may enable educators to better understand these issues within the KRI university system.

1.6 Overview of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the dissertation, described the background and context, its purpose and rationale, and defined the key terms used in the study. Chapter 2 examines existing research pertaining to academic motivation, academic self-concept, classroom engagement and other interrelated areas such as culture, classroom learning environments and the impact of instructional practices on students' motivation. Chapter 3 expounds the research methodology employed in this study, including samples, data collection procedures, and research measures. Chapter 4 presents the quantitative findings of the study, while Chapter 5 describes the qualitative findings from the classroom observations. Chapter 6

presents and analyses the student and teacher interview data and chapter 7 provides a comprehensive discussion of both quantitative and qualitative findings in terms of the research questions of the study. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a summary of the key findings, implications for educational practice in other EAP contexts, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The preceding chapter identified the need for further study in the areas of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement as well as the need to further investigate the potential impact of ability grouping on adult students in a university setting. The overall goals of this chapter are first to establish the significance of the general field of study, then identify where new contributions could be made to these areas. The bulk of the chapter critically evaluates the different studies and methodologies used in this field to identify the appropriate approach for investigating the research questions. It also describes the main conceptual framework which emerges from the literature as pertinent to this study: Complex Dynamic Systems (CDS, Larsen-Freeman 2007). CDST is a lens used in this study to explain the interrelated orientations of classroom motivation, self-concept and classroom engagement in a complex EAP classroom

2.1 Academic Motivation

2.1.1 Definitions of motivation

Deriving from the Latin word *moveo*, meaning to move, stir, agitate, provoke, or affect, motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain behaviour, actions, needs and desires. An influential stimulus, motivation 'is responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it' (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 520). Few will disagree that motivation is one of the main determining factors of L2 learning achievement, but researchers seldom agree on definitions or components. The disagreements between researchers is often worded in terms of comparing motivation to things such as a 'dustbin' which contains very 'distinct components' (McDonough, 1981 p. 143) and as Dörnyei highlights, an 'obsolete umbrella that hosts a wide range of concepts that do not have much in common' (Dörnyei, 2001, p.7). One thing that L2 researchers can agree on is that motivation is one of the central driving forces for learning a language. Motivation 'provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process' (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998, p. 203). More recently, the CDST perspective emphasizes that motivation is dynamic and ever-

changing. Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006) state: 'Motivation is less a trait than a fluid play, an ever-changing one that emerges from the process of interaction of many agents, internal and external, in the ever-changing complex world of the learner' (p. 563).

Academic motivation can be defined as students' desire to engage in learning activities. It is the desire, persistence and willingness to perform in an academic context. It can be defined as 'an individual's judgments of his or her capabilities to perform given actions,' (Schunk, 1991, p. 207). This current study focuses on academic motivation rather than general motivation.

2.1.2 A Historical Overview

Over the past few decades, there has been a considerable amount of research on the nature and role of motivation in the second language classroom (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012; Dörnyei, 2010; Dörnyei, 1994). Theories on this subject have differed greatly during this time and are continuously revisited. 'Put simply, L2 motivation is currently in the process of being radically reconceptualised and re-theorised in the context of contemporary notions of self and identity' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009, p. 1). However, modern-day research still takes its inspiration from earlier psychologists and educators such as the pioneering work of Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, 2009c; Dörnyei, 2005). By establishing scientific research procedures and standardising assessment techniques, Gardner and Lambert raised the standards of L2 motivation research thus bringing it to maturity (Dörnyei, 1994). They are renowned for their research in second language acquisition (SLA) and motivation and stated that motivation was a significant cause of variability in SLA, and that its effect was autonomous of ability or aptitude (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Their pioneering research in French-speaking Canada showed that SLA had important social and psychological dimensions which distinguished SLA motivation from other types of learning motivation. They highlighted that learners are not only expected to acquire knowledge of the target language but also have to identify with the target language community and adopt their speech behaviours and styles. Thus, it was found that learners' attitudes toward the target language community and ethnocentric orientation had a direct influence on their L2 acquisition (Dörnyei, 1994). However, as their study was aimed at second language learners in a L2 context, this may not apply to the current study as Kurdish students are more likely to be learning English as a foreign language.

Outside the university, English speakers are not commonly found so interaction with the target language community in the KRI could be difficult.

Theories of L2 motivation such as those by Gardner and Lambert, as well as others during the last five decades, have been classified into four discrete stages: (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2005).

1. The Social Psychological Period (1959 – 1990)
2. The Cognitive- Situated Period (During the 1990s)
3. The Process-Orientated Period (the turn of the century)
4. The Socio-Dynamic Period (the 2010s to the present, the current period)

The next 4 subsections present and discuss some of the pivotal studies from these periods in relation to the current study.

The Social Psychological Period

Gardner and Lambert (1972) saw L2s as mediators between ethnolinguistic communities. They asserted that the drive to learn new languages to integrate with other communities can often be the motivation needed for affiliation and communication and in some cases, the inhibitor depending on the learners' attitudes towards the community in question (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 40). Thus, the social psychological perspective highlighted the importance of the social learning context as well as attitudes and relations between linguistic communities (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009). Since Gardner and Lambert's early work, several changes have taken place such as the increased use of English as a second language, increased use of English as a lingua franca and not to mention the increase of internet usage in English, which has meant that the precise meaning of "the L2 community" has become more ambiguous.

Integrative and Instrumental motivation: Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed two types of motivational orientation in language learning: an integrative orientation 'reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group' and an instrumental orientation 'reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language' (p. 132). These orientations (goals) are perhaps the most widely known concepts associated with Gardner's work and also the most widely studied motivation constructs.

Integrative motivation, a very influential construct during the social-psychological period, consists of three sub-components which refer to attitudes at three levels; towards the L2 community, towards the learning environment, and toward the learning itself. It affects not only language choice, but also the level of effort a student intends on investing in learning the L2 (Dörnyei and Clément, 2001). Integrativeness is one of the most powerful 'core' components of the learners' attitudinal/motivational disposition, which subsumes, or mediates most other variables (Dörnyei and Clément, 2001). Described as the 'Integrativeness Enigma' (Dörnyei, 2005), the model was criticised after problems with precise conceptual definition, terminological confusion and applicability to English learning in a globalized world were identified (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, 2009b; Dörnyei, 1994b, Dörnyei, 1990). Therefore, it was proposed that the 'Integrativeness' component should be reconceptualised beyond the original definition of actual integration into an L2 community and extended to 'identification' with the L2 community (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). This term would be more suited to the present study as Kurdish students do not usually have contact with any L2 community other than the English speaking (expat) community who have settled in the KRI, but this may be minimal. Instrumental motivation is more likely to be relevant to this study as the students are likely to be motivated by pragmatic and utilitarian influences such as the prospect of getting a better job and thus better salaries in the future as a result of their English ability (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Other studies in Asian contexts (China and Taiwan) have found that L2 learning motivation is more related to instrumental or 'required motives' (a third motivation category according to some researchers) rather than integrative motives which were insignificant in some studies (Chen, Warden and Chang, 2005; Warden and Lin, 2000). These findings also highlight the cultural implications of motivation and cultural influences on EFL settings may change the dynamics of the classroom.

Other pivotal work by Gardner was the development of the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (AMTB, 1985a); a 130-item motivation questionnaire which measured participants' responses using Likert scale items. The AMTB was the accumulation of over 20 years of L2 motivation research. Although several items focus more on the social milieu rather than the foreign language learning classroom, there is a section on the AMTB, for example, in which students' attitudes toward their language teachers and their courses are tested. The model has been criticized, however, on the grounds that

although it may be appropriate for the measuring motivation on a simple, superficial level, data from this section would not provide a meticulous enough description of the classroom dimension to be helpful in producing useful guidelines for improving motivation (Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 1985a). In addition, in this long and considerably complicated test, instrumental motivation is discussed far less than integrative motivation which is a key construct in the AMTB model. Gardner's research, along with the other research during the social- psychological period was not rejected but rather used to characterize learning communities, examine issues such as intercultural communication and affiliation and also language globalization (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Dörnyei, 2005).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

The two terms discussed in the previous paragraph coined by Gardner and Lambert (integrative and instrumental motivation) have often been likened to two other types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, distinguished in and beyond a plethora of L2 studies (Kreishan and Al-Dhaimat, 2013; Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000; Oxford, 1996). Intrinsically motivated individuals tend to engage in activities out of genuine interest and enjoyment. This could include being interested in a particular type of task, for example, problem-solving or competitive tasks. They may not be interested in fully learning the L2 but may want to learn enough to be able to compete in such tasks because they enjoy activities such as puzzles and problem-solving. Extrinsically motivated people, on the other hand, engage in activities for instrumental or other reasons, such as receiving a reward or a prize (Soureshjani and Naseri, 2011, p. 663; Eccles and Wigfield, 2002).

Due to their similar definitions, intrinsic motivation is often compared with integrative motivation and extrinsic motivation to instrumental motivation. However, the differences are clearly distinguished by Bailey (1996) in the table below (see table 2.1). It shows the motivation dichotomies and posits that there are four types of discrete motivation which often overlap. It illustrates the differences between integrative and instrumental motivation according to whether or not that motivation derives from intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Brown (2000) gives the example of a person who is motivated to learn a second language because of a deep intrinsic wish to advance in

their career, thus having intrinsic motivation which does not lead to or even correlate with integrative motivation.

Table 2.1: Intrinsic/ Extrinsic and Integrative/ Instrumental Continuum (Bailey, 1986, cited in Brown, 2000, p. 166)

	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Integrative	L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g. for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g. Japanese parents send children to Japanese language school)
Instrumental	L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e.g. for a career)	External power wants the learner to learn L2 (e.g. corporation sends Japanese businessman to the UK for language training)

Self-concept, which is the students' personal self-evaluation (discussed in section 2.2 in more depth), is assumed to influence motivation. Cokley et al. (2001) advocated a positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and academic self-concept whereas there was an insignificant link between extrinsic motivation and academic self-concept. In terms of L2 learning, promoting a high self-concept would be beneficial as students who consider themselves to be good language learners are more likely to participate in further language learning behaviours.

Therefore, it could be said that the higher the positive intrinsic motivation, the higher the self-concept and vice versa (Csizér and Magid, 2014; Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). In other words, a good language learner may be motivated because they are successful, and the reverse may also be true. In an attempt to increase the students' success, UG1 students in the KRI are often subjected to ability grouping in their classes. This raises the question of whether there are differences in their motivation and whether students who are grouped by ability are more or less intrinsically motivated. Section 2.1.3 explores the relationship between ability grouping and academic motivation. The following sub-section will discuss the next chronological period of L2 motivation: Cognitive-situated.

The Cognitive Situated Period

During the 1970s and 1980s, the bulk of L2 research had been influenced and shaped by Gardner's social psychological research in L2 language learning, such as the attitudes towards the target language community and its speakers (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the need for a new and revised perspective was identified in order to revitalize and invigorate the L2 motivation field (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Around this time, several influential articles were appearing such as the pertinently titled 'Motivation: Re-opening the Research Agenda' (Crooke and Schmidt, 1991).

According to Dörnyei (2005), there were two main reasons for this agenda. The first was a recognized need to review advances in motivational psychology as cognitive psychologists had argued that the way one thinks about abilities, possibilities, goals, limitations and past performance was a key part in motivation. The second was a need to narrow down the macro-perspective of L2 motivation into a more micro perspective; a focus on motivation in actual learning situations rather than whole communities (p. 74).

During the cognitive situated period, three core cognitive theories emerged amongst others: Expectancy-Value theory, Self-Determination theory and Dörnyei's Three-Level Framework of L2 Motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2005). A small body of literature also emerged around Autonomy theory during this period when a link was identified between autonomy and motivation. Both constructs were found to be related to the students' active engagement and involvement in the learning process (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Cognitive motivation studies from this period have also shown motivation and learning outcomes can be enhanced when students take more responsibility for their own learning and when they perceive their successes are attributed to their own efforts (Dickinson, 1995).

Throughout this period, more interest was raised in the temporal and dynamic aspects of motivation which saw the development of more process-oriented approaches. These are discussed in the following sub-section.

Dörnyei's Three level Framework of L2 Motivation

Given that the factors of L2 motivation constitute quite an extensive list, Dörnyei (1994a) attempted to further categorise them into a general framework in terms of three levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situated level (see figure 2.1 below).

Language Level	Integrative Motivational Subsystem Instrumental Motivational Subsystem
Learner Level	Need for Achievement Self-Confidence * Language Use Anxiety * Perceived L2 Competence * Causal Attributions * Self-Efficacy
Learning Situation Level	
<i>Course-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Interest Relevance Expectancy Satisfaction
<i>Teacher-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Affiliative Motive Authority Type Direct Socialisation of Motivation * Modelling * Task Presentation * Feedback
<i>Group-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Goal-orientedness Norm & Reward System Group Cohesion Classroom Goal Structure

Figure 2.1 Components of foreign language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 1994a, p. 280)

The language level comprises integrative and pragmatic motivational factors such as attitudes to the target language. The learner level encompasses individual motivational characteristics such as self-efficacy (see 2.2.3). Thirdly, the learning situation level entails the situation-specific motives relating to the course and social learning environment (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998, p. 3). The authors then postulate that ‘the learning situation’ can be further broken down into three discrete categories of motivational source: course-specific motivational components (interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction), teacher-specific motivational components (authority type, task presentation and feedback) and group-specific motivational components (goal-orientedness, norm and reward system, and group cohesion and classroom goal structure) (Dörnyei, 1994a, p. 280). The fact that the authors have highlighted ‘relevance,’ ‘group cohesion’ and ‘classroom goal structure’ (competitive, cooperative

or individualistic) indicates that the motivation of students in ability groups could be analysed using this L2 motivational model.

Within the Cognitive-Situated period, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) conducted a relevant study in a variety of Hungarian education institutes from primary school to university level. The study examined 200 English teachers' macro strategies of motivating students in the L2 classroom. One of two questionnaires were used with the participants; Perceived importance and frequency of use of the strategies. A total of 51 strategies were reduced to a comprehensive list of 'Ten Commandments for motivating language learners.' Three of the ten recommendations put forward as a result of this empirical study may advocate SA grouping; 'Promote learner autonomy, 'Personalise the learning process' and 'Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.' The third could presumably mean through developing common learning goals for each class; something which is difficult to achieve in heterogeneous classes. The results of this study in Hungary indicate that raising teachers' awareness about the importance of group dynamics in the learning process is essential. What these models lack is the recognition for the importance of educational technology in the classroom and the positive influence it can exert on a student's motivation. (Hussein, 2010; Ramachaudran, 2004; Soska, 1994).

Social, cultural and grouping procedures may also have a strong influence on student's motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). This highlights the significance of the contextual and psychological environment of a school. Maehr and Midgley (1991) summarise by saying 'Students can and do perceive classrooms as emphasizing task or ability goals, and this perception is associated with the quality of motivation they exhibit' (p403). This may be explained further by the theory discussed in the next section.

Self – Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT), a macro theory which provides a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality, was derived from research which proposed that intrinsic and extrinsic motives play a key role in motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2002). SDT is related to how people support their natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective ways. The theory assumes that humans have three

innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness. Competence refers to the feeling of being able to do something. Autonomy refers to the feeling of students being able to have ownership of their learning. Relatedness refers to how connected the students feel towards their curriculum environment or situation. If these three needs are satisfied in their education and social environments, they are more likely to be more self-determined and thus more motivated (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Niemiec and Ryan, 2009; Deci and Ryan, 2002).

The SDT has also helped to better delineate the instrumental and integrative orientations of Gardner and Lambert (1972) by showing that ‘Gardner’s integrative orientation was most strongly associated with the more self-determined forms of motivation... [while] instrumental orientation... correlated highly with external regulation’ (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 77).

Research conducted on environmental factors and their impact on self –determination provided several insights into things such as how students who perceived their teachers as more controlling were less likely to be intrinsically motivated (Dörnyei, 2005). The SDT highlights the importance of social context and the impact it can have on L2 motivation. According to this perspective, different social environments can ‘facilitate and enable growth’ or can ‘disrupt, forestall and fragment’ such processes (Deci and Ryan, 2002, p. 6).

The SDT theory, however, is not without criticism. Experiments by Deci concluded that extrinsic rewards may unintentionally undermine and decrease intrinsic motivation (Lepper and Greene, 1978; Deci, 1972). Despite a body of literature with experiments supporting this initial finding, some researchers state that it contradicted prevailing Behaviourist theories which suggest that rewards and reinforcements are the most effective approaches to motivation. In addition, the majority of studies conducted using SDT are quantitative using self-reporting surveys. This limits any empirical aspect which could potentially reveal new aspects of SDT.

Whilst there is currently no literature on SDT studies conducted in the KRI region, it may explain certain socio-cultural and environmental influences on students’ motivation in a university setting.

The Process-Oriented Period

During the progression of the Cognitive- situated period in the 1990s, it was felt that two aspects of L2 motivation, its dynamic character and temporal variation, had been neglected (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation is not static but ever-changing; it can change over the period of a month, week, day or even during a language class. The Process-oriented approach aims to account for the fact that motivation will go through many diverse stages and accounts for the daily ups and downs (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 83).

During the Process-oriented period, several researchers developed models which attempted to address the temporal aspect of motivation (Williams and Burden, 1997; Ushioda, 1996) but arguably the most elaborate attempt to model the process dimension of L2 motivation was developed by Dörnyei and Ottó in 1998 (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei 2001b; Dörnyei 2000). This model synthesises various lines of research in L2 motivation which form a unified, non-reductionist, comprehensive model which accounts for the complexity of L2 motivation with two main dimensions: Action Sequence and Motivational influences. Figure 2.2 gives an overview of the model. These two dimensions trail throughout the three main phases of the model which will be described below. In addition, the motivating factors observed in the classes and mentioned by the students and teachers in the study related highly to the executive motivational influences from the actional phase of the model.

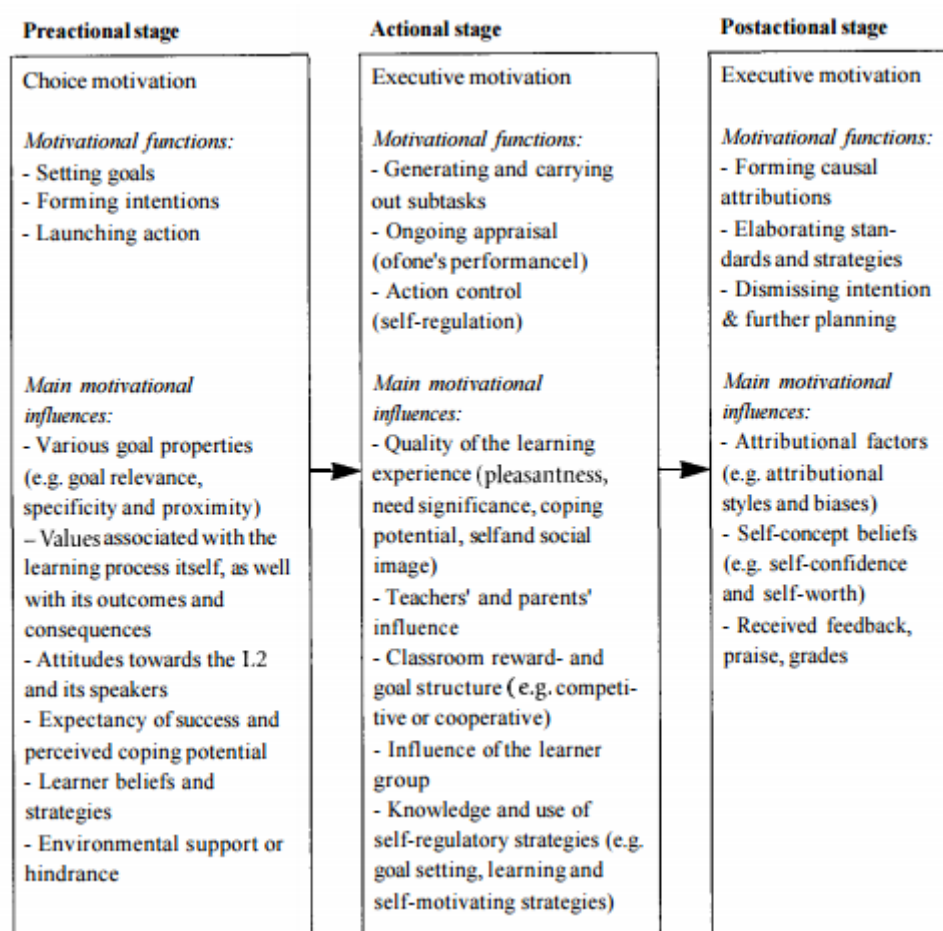


Figure 2.2 A process model of learning motivation in the L2 classroom (Dörnyei, 2002, p. 141)

Pre-Actional phase

This initial phase comprises three sequential sub-processes; goal setting, intention formation and the initiation of intention enactment, which could be likened to 'choice motivation,' since this generated motivation will lead to the choice of goal or task (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2005). In the case of L2 study, this would be the stage where the intention to join an L2 course is generated. Thus, there is a distinct link to the Social Psychological period. The pre-actional stage of motivation relates to Gardner's (1985b) social psychological conception of L2 motivation as they both target language beliefs, attitudes and values. These general and stable aspects of motivation help predict actors such as intention to enrol on courses or language choice. The pre-actional phase also includes two components which mirror two of Gardner's (1985b) in

the *Integrative motive*: ‘Attitudes towards L2’ and ‘Attitudes towards its speakers’ (see 2.1.2, Dörnyei and Skehan, 2005).

Actional Phase

In this phase, the shift from deliberation and decision-making turns to implementation and the action begins to take place (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Heckhausen’s theory (1991) titled ‘The Rubicon Model of Action Phases’ has been compared to this phase as it describes the step that one takes when they commit to a course of action; like a metaphorical crossing of the Rubicon river, (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

There are three basic processes that come into effect during the Actional Phase. The *Subtask generation and implementation* process are where actions are broken down into more manageable units and short-term goals. The ongoing *Appraisal* process is where progress towards the goal is monitored and the stimulus of the learning environment is evaluated. As agreed by Williams and Burden (1997), the stimulus needs to be relevant, meaningful and significant. The *Action Control* mechanisms or self-regulatory strategies in the phase - are applied to help enhance, sustain and protect motivation throughout the learning process. (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The main motivational influences that are likely to be present at this stage are the quality of the learning experience, sense of autonomy, social influences such as teachers, parents or peers, classrooms reward schemes and goal structure and knowledge, and implementation of self-regulatory strategies (Dörnyei, 2002).

It is recognized that when learning an L2, particularly in classroom settings, students will be exposed to several distractions and constraints, such as off-task thoughts, irrelevant interruptions from others, anxiety or any physical conditions that hinder the completion of the task (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2002). Hence this phase has also been referred to as ‘executive motivation’ as it is essentially where the action is implemented but at the same time, motivation needs to be maintained and protected from such distractions as mentioned above (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei 2005).

Post-Actional Phase

This third phase describes the stage when the action has been completed and the action is evaluated in order for any inferences to be drawn for future actions (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2001b). This phase has also been described as ‘motivational retrospection’ as it is during this time that causal attributions will be built based upon the outcomes of the action involved (Dörnyei, 2002). Motivational influences that are most likely to be present in this stage are attributional factors, self-concept beliefs and external feedback in terms of praise or achievement grades (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei, 2001a). This relates to the current study because of the focus on self-concept and external feedback which forms part of the MOLT checklist (see 2.1.3)

Several limitations of the Process Model of L2 Motivation such as the failure to account for the following aspects have been identified:

- *Unconscious/irrational motives*: how conscious or unconscious the motivational determinants are
- *Simultaneous actions*: whether there is interference from other ongoing tasks the student is involved in
- *Multiple goals and goal hierarchies and task-specific motivation*: such as whether the action requires compliance rather than commitment to a goal (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

The main criticism of the Process model was that it failed to address the dynamic and situated intricacy of the learning process or do justice to the multiple goals and agendas influencing learners' behaviour (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Secondly, it is a model that has been conceptualised within a process-oriented paradigm yet characterised by linear cause-effect relationships. The recognition of a need for review was realised after it was concluded that the ‘patchwork of interwoven cause-effect relationships’ does not serve the complexity of the motivation system justice (Dörnyei 2009c, p. 197). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also recognise the model's inability to define the actional process in a real classroom setting. In addition, it does not account for prior educational experiences, such as the effect of their high school on a student’s current motivation or learning experiences. In a study by Ashwin and Trigwell (2012), prior experiences of

learning were proved to be fundamental to present and future motivation, self-efficacy and conceptions of learning.

The Socio-dynamic period

By the end of the Process-Oriented period, a need was recognised for less linear and more relational perspectives of motivation. Thus, the turn of the millennium saw the Process-Oriented Period evolve into the Socio-Dynamic Period, which saw the emergence of dynamic systems and contextual interactions (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012). The Socio-Dynamic period, unlike previous periods, takes into account the complexities of language learning and language use in a globalized world by re-evaluating L2 motivation through the context of current theories of self and identity (Dörnyei, 2005). The main conceptual approaches in this period include ‘The L2 Motivational Self System’ (L2MSS) and the ‘CDS’ perspective (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

The L2 Motivational Self System The L2MSS grew out of dissatisfaction with the concept of integrative motivation which was controversial as it had been the centre of L2 motivation research for over 20 years (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The hugely influential L2MSS, which combines L2 research and mainstream psychology, consists of the following components: Ideal L2 self, Ought -to L2 self and L2 Learning Experience (Csizér and Magid, 2014; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2005). The main tenet of this model is that integrative motivation is equated with the ideal L2 self. The Ideal L2 Self is a combination of the aspirations of the L2 learner (hopes and desires). Therefore, if a learner’s ideal self is associated with being proficient in a L2, learning the L2 is a power motivator as it is seen as a step to becoming closer to our ideal selves. The Ought-to self is the collection of the attributes students believe they should possess, such as responsibilities and obligations, in order to evade negative outcomes (Dörnyei, 2005). The L2 learning experience component refers to ‘situation specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience’ (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106). It encompasses the students’ attitudes towards learning English. Whilst these three components are all relevant to any students learning a L2, this approach was not included in this study due to its lack of focus on dynamicity and

over emphasis on L2 learners as individuals rather than the classroom as a whole (a system).

A Complex Dynamic Systems approach Another conceptual approach that developed in the socio-dynamic period was the CDST approach (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). CDST is the world view with which to frame the current study and is discussed further in this section (see 2.4). It will attempt to address the dynamic and multifaceted nature of learners' behaviour in the EAP classroom. Complexity theory attempts to account for the dynamic and temporal dimension of motivation which had been lacking in previous approaches (Waninge, Dörnyei and De Bot, 2014; Dörnyei, 2009c; Larsen-Freeman, 1997). It has been applied to many fields in the past (science, business etc.) but a strand recently adopted by Applied Linguistics is CDST, which became known in this field in the late 1990's (Dörnyei, 2014; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008a; Van Geert, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 1997). Although there is an increasing amount of literature on CDST in SLA, there is a noticeable lack of empirical studies (Dörnyei, MacIntyre and Henry, 2014). There is no literature to my knowledge of CDST being applied to studies of motivation, self-concept or engagement of EAP students in the KRI.

A system is 'dynamic' if it meets two criteria: two or more of its elements are interconnected with each other and they also change over time (Dörnyei, 2014; Mercer, 2011c; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008a, 2008b). A CDS consists of multiple interconnected parts (components) which often interfere with each other thus resulting in a non-linear and emergent change in the overall system of behaviour in a given context (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 89). Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008b) give a clear definition: 'A complex system is one that emerges from the interactions of its components. The components can be agents or elements' (p. 200). Mercer (2011c) clarifies: 'The components of a system may themselves be processes or systems leading to complex systems nested within complex systems descending at various levels; all of which in turn contribute to larger complex systems (p. 429). A dynamic system has been compared to a double pendulum where the two arms represent the two components in a system. If the upper arm is moved, the lower arm will turn rapidly and wildly which, as a result, will disturb the movement of the whole system (Dörnyei, 2014; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

CDST is well suited to qualitative research because of the emergent nature of both data collection and analysis, the potential for longitudinal studies and the individual level analysis in which participants become agents/ components of a system or systems in their own right. CDST is also suited to mixed methods research because of the multi-analysis of complex issues as part of a whole system.

CDST is a very terminology-rich theory with several key characteristics of a CDS used in an attempt to describe a system. Some definitions by Larsen- Freeman and Cameron (2008) are listed below alongside an example relating to this study.

State: The dynamic behaviour or patterns of activity of elements or agents of a system at a point in time (motivated state, demotivated state etc).

State space: Collection of all possible states of a system (the system may be motivated, demotivated, positive self-concept etc).

Phase shift/bifurcation: When the behaviour of a system suddenly changes to a different mode (also known as a bifurcation, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). A system can self-organise into a new pattern of behaviour after a phase shift in the state space.

Attractor: A region of the systems' state in which the system tends to move. In the context of the classroom, states such as interest, boredom, neutral attention and anxiety; all of which frequent the educational psychology literature (Waninge, 2014).

Attractor basin: Causes/ influences the occurrence of attractors. For example, cognitive, affectual, motivational and contextual elements may influence student interest –an attractor.

Chaotic/strange attractors: When the system's behaviour becomes wild and unpredictable, easily disturbed by the smallest perturbation.

Emergence: The appearance of newly formed states in the complex system, usually at a higher level than the previous one. For example, when a student grasps an idea which leads to new knowledge and understanding or when a teacher offers extra exam preparation classes prior to a test. A new state is formed in which 'the emergent behaviour has some recognisable wholeness' (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008, p. 59)

System parameters: Rules or constraints which may influence the interactions between components and patterns of change (Bak, 1996). In terms of this study, these may be the classroom setup, student or teacher attributes or cultural context. When viewed as static and external entities, the relationship and interrelatedness of context and culture is at risk of being twisted and misinterpreted which may lead to over-generalisations (Mercer, 2016). Thus, in a CDS, context cannot be separated from the system but rather forms part of the system and its complexity as it changes over time (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008).

Nevertheless, it is this unpredictable / predictable and random / non-random continuum which underpins a CDS. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) famously quoted: 'The behaviour of a complex system is not completely random, but neither is it wholly predictable' (p. 75) as demonstrated through Bak's usage of the analogy of a pile of sand (1997). When sand is poured onto a sand pile from above, it will eventually collapse and cause a large avalanche. What is unpredictable is which grain of sand will cause this avalanche. Combined with knowledge of patterns of avalanches and distribution sizes, a higher-level explanation can be formulated; one would analyse the avalanche in terms of the structure and stability of the sand pile, rather than look at the behaviour of each individual grain of sand (Bak, 1997 in Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008b, p. 201). From this analogy, we understand that complex systems are dynamic, non-linear and therefore unpredictable in the normal sense. They are constantly changing over time and they can change suddenly and discontinuously as they are open to outside influences (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008a; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008b). Although Larsen Freeman's work has been criticized for misinterpreting complexity and not understanding this traditionally mathematical model (Gregg, 2008), I feel this world view accurately describes the complex relationships between academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement and the context in which the study was situated. Complexity approaches are also considered limited as they do not normally produce generalizable results. This was not an issue here, as this study explored multiple, unique sites and the aim was not to generalize. Instead, it was to study a contextualized complex case paying equal attention to the students, teachers, their environment, and the unique system parameters which consequently influence attractor and repeller states.

In relation to this study, there are various components which are predicted to interact with each other. The components themselves could also be seen as complex systems and 'sub-systems' of a bigger system. In relation to this study, motivation, is its own complex system, whilst self-concept and engagement are others. Other factors, or system parameters, would include the teachers' perceptions, the students' perceptions, the culture of the region and the classroom environment but to name a few. These components all interact and correspond with each other and are part of an overall CDS. The systems specific to this study are discussed further in section 2.4.

2.1.3 Ability grouping and academic motivation

Grouping students by ability, which takes place in many forms, is a commonly found practice in school systems around the world (Chmielewski, 2014). There is a vast body of research asserting that students' learning experiences (including motivation) will differ greatly depending on whether they are placed in MA or SA classes (Boaler, William and Brown, 2000; Gamoran, 1993; Sørensen and Hallinan, 1986). The term MA is used to refer to classes which are not organized into ability levels and are naturally heterogeneous (Daniel, 2007). It usually means there are a variety of levels in one class. The term SA refers to groups or classes of students who have been streamed into appropriate English classes by their English language ability (Francis et al., 2016). SA classes are usually based on one specific English level. In SA classes, the curriculum and instruction are adjusted according to the level of the students' abilities in a particular group (Ansalone, 2000; Mort, 1928). In this study, the term 'ability' refers to the students' language proficiency levels; usually low, medium and high ability.

Several comparison studies of SA and MA groupings have led to conflicting results (Ireson and Hallam, 1999; Slavin, 1987; Eder, 1981). Studies have often highlighted the students' opinions on ability grouping (Lee and Lin, 2013; Boaler, William and Brown, 2000; Hallinan and Sorensen, 1983). However, most tend to be focused on younger students in the primary and secondary sector. Even more scarce are studies highlighting students' voices (Tereshchenko et al., 2018) and student/ teacher perspectives on streaming within a L2 learning context (Joyce and McMillan, 2010).

Several studies analysing students in SA groups found a positive link between streaming and motivation, particularly for low ability students, who often perform better in lower ability groups (Saleh et al., 2005; Lou et al., 1996; Stipek, 1996). Despite this

positive link, the question of ethicality has also been raised in the literature. Hastings (1992), a strong opponent of ability grouping, stated that it is 'ethically unacceptable' in a democratic society (Hastings, 1992, p.14) and has been glorified through impressive statistics and quantitative data unfit for purpose; perhaps due to large samples which produced statistically significant results, but which may be meaningless. He added that individualism must be paramount in decision making in education and diversity should be celebrated not aggregated. However, streaming should not be considered unethical if it suits the purpose of the given context.

Harlen and Malcolm (1999) also highlighted similar findings from their review of research on homogeneous and heterogeneous groups in British and American Primary and Secondary schools, which found that students were very much aware of whether they were in the high or low ability groups. Those in the lower groups reported that they felt stigmatised and demotivated, thus highlighting the negative effects that ability grouping can have on motivation. Similarly, a study by Joyce and McMillan (2010) indicated that streamed students may feel demotivated due to the deleterious and stigmatising effects on lower-proficiency learners. With such studies proclaiming the negative effects of ability grouping, educators may be led to believe that mixed ability grouping is more likely to give lower ability students an equal chance in the L2 classroom without them feeling demotivated. The next subsection explores this further.

Motivation in mixed ability groups: Proponents of mixed ability groups often advocate that grouping students heterogeneously may positively affect not only students' academic achievement, but also their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Villa and Thousand, 2003; Slavin, 1990). However, researchers such as Curry (1997) claim that whilst mixed ability grouping can encourage low ability learners to persist at difficult tasks, high ability students may lose their incentive to learn. Researchers such as Bahar (2015) also found that university students who had previously been streamed by ability but then regrouped into heterogeneous groups expressed negative attitudes towards mixed ability grouping patterns. The high ability students complained that the courses were simplified by the teacher which brought about a loss of motivation for them. Research such as this indicates the lack of knowledge teachers may have on teaching in MA groups; hardly surprising as MA grouping is often referred to as 'problematic' and in addition, there has been little research on what is conducive to a good MA classroom (Francis et al. 2016).

Maddalena (2002) suggested that higher-level students within a MA class could be utilised as teaching assistants to help the lower ability students in the lessons, which may motivate those complaining of the simplified courses. While the majority of Maddalena's participants were in favour of the higher-level students being utilised as 'valuable and exploitable' resources, the small sample, consisting of an unidentified mix of levels, does not fully convince the reader that all opinions were taken into account. While the lower level students appeared to benefit from their peers helping them in the classroom, one questions the benefits a higher-level student would have from material that they already know and are familiar with.

The effect of ability grouping on motivation has traditionally been studied using quantitative methods such as motivation scales. Williams (1972) conducted a study on several elementary schools in the US to measure if grouping affected motivation and self-concept amongst school students. The study examined the students' academic motivation using a Motivation Scale (M-scale) adapted from Myers (1965) and Furst (1966) that they had previously used in a secondary school setting. Motivation scale questions had been adapted from Myers original Achievement Motivation Scale (AMS). The study concluded that motivation to achieve appeared to be consequential of a relationship between environmental factors and hereditary factors (as well as gender differences, the researchers also tested whether it was the youngest or the eldest children in the family who were more motivated). It was also found that the grouping style of the classes affected the classroom environment as well as the children's desire to achieve academically. Considering this study is over 30 years old and was based on students in a completely different context (elementary students in the US), whether a scale such as the 'M-scale' would be relevant to the context of students in a university is doubtful. Critics of the 'M-scale' noted that Myers had failed to measure reliability. However, in a later version adapted by Furst (1966), the internal reliability of the M scale was adequate at 0.77. The test also showed strong predictive validity, despite weaker reliability. Through the use of this scale, Williams's study concluded that grouping students according to their ability could potentially have adverse effects on their motivation.

Hallinan et al. (2003) also found similar results when analysing the attributes of low ability learners. Their longitudinal study took place in mid-west America in seven different high schools – six public high schools within close proximity and one Catholic high school. Students had been separated into ability groups mid-year (to ensure stable results were gained) for both mathematics and English classes. Teachers instructed according to the students' levels and had designed personalised curricula according to their needs. In the MA groups, the researchers pointed out that instruction was often aimed at the mean ability of the group. At the end of the year, the student's percentile score in English and mathematics was measured by means of a state-wide standardised test. It was found that although ability grouping should ideally maximise learning opportunities and motivation (due to more intense lessons aimed at the level of the students in question), this was only found for students in high ability groups. Teachers of low ability groups usually expressed lower expectations of their group and claimed to spend more time correcting disruptive behaviour, which led to less time spent on teaching. These factors would likely result in lower motivation levels for those in low ability classes and higher motivation for higher ability classes. The study concluded that while ability grouping has advantages for students in higher level ability groups, the disengagement and therefore demotivation of students in low ability groups could outweigh these effects. What this study did not investigate was the comparison between SA and MA groups and no control group was used to compare results.

Another popular scale which has been used to measure motivation is the MSLQ; Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al. 1999.) The MSLQ, an 81-item self-reporting questionnaire was designed using a social-cognitive lens. It measures students' motivational orientations and their use of different learning strategies. It consists of 15 sub-scales; six for motivation and nine for learning strategies. It was initially administered to over 300 undergraduate students in the USA. Its modular style means it is easy to adapt and has since been used in multiple studies across the world (Pintrich et al., 1993). However, the scale is quite lengthy at 81 items and for usage in a L2 classroom, it would need to be condensed into fewer items, and translated into the L1 of the students to make it easier to understand.

The Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) observation scheme is another example of a motivational scale which has been widely used in studies (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008). The MOLT combines two significant frameworks:

Spada and Fröhlich's (1995) Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) and Dörnyei's (2001) Process-Oriented Model of Motivational Teacher Practice. The MOLT consists of two sections; one for learner motivated behaviour (LMB) indicating observable willingness to engage, divided into three sub-categories (attention, participation and volunteering), and one for teacher motivated practice (TMP) subdivided into four categories (activity design, encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, participation structure, and teacher discourse). Every 60 seconds during the observations, both the learner motivated behaviours and teacher motivational practices are recorded. Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2011) conducted a similar study on L2 motivation using MOLT in an Iranian context; a setting more similar to my study. They also asked the teachers to complete the Post-Lesson Teacher Evaluation Scale' (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2007). This scale included 9 motivation specific descriptors such as level of enthusiasm, clarity of instructions and atmosphere. The teachers rated themselves on a scale of 1 to 6 (1= incompetent, 6= competent). The research helped to examine the relationship between the usage of teachers' motivational strategies and students' motivational behaviours and found a significant link. They also found that groups which were less motivated were found to have a stronger ought-to L2 self (see 2.1.2). While the post-lesson evaluation may be critiqued for being too subjective and open to teacher bias, the MOLT overall is robust and has good validity (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008).

Motivation in single ability groups: There are several studies which indicate the opposite effect on motivation and disagree with the above findings. Saleh et al. (2005) conducted a study of fourth-grade elementary school students in Kuwait. Although the participants were younger than my cohort of participants, Kuwait has a very similar culture to Kurdistan. A total of 104 male participants were organized into two experimental groups – homogeneous and heterogeneous - according to their scores in a science exam called the Science Elementary Achievement Test (SEAT). They were all assigned a plant biology course and subsequently given a questionnaire entitled "How I feel about working in groups at school" designed for and used in the McManus and Gettinger study (1996). The questionnaire consisted of 14 items which assessed students' motivational beliefs towards collaborative learning. It was reported that there were differences in motivation levels according to the level of ability of the students. Homogeneously grouped low ability students did not favour collaborative learning as

much as heterogeneously grouped low ability students, who felt more motivated in such a group. High and average ability students on the other hand, were indifferent to the composition of groups. Saleh et al. (2005) indicated that a reason for these findings could be that students who are of a higher ability may value helping less capable students as much as being able to work with equally capable peers, a view supported by Tereshchenko et al., (2018). Saleh et al. (2005) also investigated the link between grouping patterns and achievement, by giving a pre- and post- test on the subject matter, as well as studying the social interaction that takes place in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups by videotaping a series of biology lessons in the classroom. Briefly, the differences in social interaction between the two groups resulted in differences in achievement. The study found that social interaction amongst students in SA groups was more constructive to the learning environment due to the higher number of 'collaborative elaborations' (two or more people joined in an exchange or dialogue with the teacher) whereas those in MA groups produced more 'individual elaborations' (when individually answering a teacher's question or engaging with them). They also state that the peer-to-peer dialogue in such classrooms sometimes resemble that of teacher-learner conversations (Saleh et al., 2005, p. 116). Therefore, this supports their claim that in MA groups, the more able students often tend to assist the lower ability learners (peer scaffolding) as in a teacher-learner exchange. Although not the same context or subject as my study, it does highlight the potential difference that ability grouping can have on students regardless of the subject and that it is an important factor to consider when investigating classroom motivation.

In contrast to Saleh et al., (2005), Cheung and Rudowicz (2003) claimed that students who are grouped by ability in homogeneous groups had significantly higher academic achievement and higher self- esteem. Their study involved a survey on self-esteem, and other beliefs and attitudes over a range of seven school subjects including English, Chinese and Mathematics. Approximately 2,720 junior high school students from Hong Kong took part in this study. All participants took part in two sessions where they answered questions on an IQ test (based on the Chinese version of the Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices), and several scales including self-esteem, academic self-concept, self-efficacy of studying and test anxiety. Their findings revealed that students tended to have lower self-esteem and consequently, lower achievement in mixed ability classes. Consequently, the data from their study suggests that grouping students of similar

ability or achievement would engender better school performance and that differences in culture could influence whether certain cultural groups or nationalities respond well to ability grouping or not. Interestingly, Cheung and Rudowicz ascribed the findings of their study to the culture of the context in which it took place. They found that grouping students by ability in Hong Kong could potentially improve teaching and learning there as it better suits their collectivist culture. This would be supported by Frankel et al., (2005) whose four-country study of the role of individualism/ collectivism in university classroom encounters in China, New Zealand, Poland and the United States suggests that educational institutes should consider the degree of collectivism and individualism and adapt their materials to suit. Although the classes were not language classes but taken from students from a range of departments, these results could be applied to EAP classes and it is worth noting the effect of students' cultures on their classroom behaviour and outcomes.

2.1.4 Summary

This section began with various definitions of motivation in relation to L2 language learning, which highlight the complexity of the construct. Four types of motivation were presented in detail; integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic, followed by the literature on ability grouping and motivation. Most studies of academic motivation were quantitative in nature, predominantly using surveys and were mainly based in primary or secondary schools in generic subjects rather than in university-based language classes. In studies of ability grouping and motivation, lower level students are apparently more motivated and achieve better in MA groups whereas higher level students fare better in SA groups.

With very little research in the Kurdish context, this part of the review has highlighted the need for more studies in a Kurdish or indeed Middle Eastern setting as well as the need for more empirical and qualitative studies as opposed to the traditional scales and surveys. There is also a need to investigate the effects of ability grouping in the Kurdish context and whether there are cultural implications, as suggested by some researchers. Following on from the identified link between intrinsic motivation and self-concept, the following section will examine and discuss some key literature on self-concept.

2.2 Academic Self-Concept

Motivation and self-concept are theoretically interlinked; self-concept is thought to have motivational properties which may impact learning behaviours and thus learning outcomes (Byrne, 1984). Hence it is vital that these two constructs are studied through a framework which encompasses their interconnected effects on each other and any subsequent learning behaviours (Green et al., 2006). The following section explores several definitions of self-concept, the various aspects of academic self-concept and the interconnecting theories relating to this research.

2.2.1 Definitions of Self-Concept

‘Self’ and a learner’s sense of ‘self’ plays a crucial part in language learning (Mercer, 2011a). The definition of self-concept is a personal evaluation of oneself, including ideas of self-worth, self-knowledge and capabilities formed through experiences of the surrounding environment (Eccles, 2005; Marchargo, 1991; Marsh, 1984). Self-concept has also been described as a set of performance indicators which include sets of values, characteristics, attributes, qualities as well as deficiencies that the subject perceives to be a description of themselves (Marchargo, 1991).

Academic self-concept is defined as a person’s self-evaluation concerning particular academic domains (Matovu, 2012; Marsh, 1984; Byrne, 1984; Kulik and Kulik, 1982). These include how students conduct their schoolwork and how students feel about themselves as learners (Trautwein, et al. 2006; Guay, et al. 2003).

Self-concept is said to be grounded primarily in the self-worth theory (Peixoto, 2003; Covington, 1984, 1992). This theory suggests that all humans have a motivational “tendency to establish and maintain a positive self-image, or sense of self-worth” (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002, p. 122). It assumes that ‘one’s worth often comes to depend on the ability to achieve competitively’ (Covington, 1998, p.78). Ability is widely identified as a key cause of success which in turn reflects on the individual (Covington, 1984). As a result, students will do what is necessary to appear successful and circumvent failure, but this could have negative effects on their motivation. However, according to Covington (1984), effort is a ‘double-edged sword; students must exert some effort to avoid teacher punishment and personal feelings of guilt, but not so much effort as to risk incompetency-linked humiliation should they try hard and fail anyway,’

(p.10). Such measures are sometimes referred to as ‘Self-protective strategies’ and ‘failure avoiding strategies’ (Covington, 1984). These are measures adopted by some high-ability students who want to appear lower ability, so as not to be labelled as a ‘teacher’s pet’ and protect their perceived image by their peers. The majority of their peers in the class may not be of such a high ability and if they are perceived to be the one who knows all the answers, they may be viewed negatively by their classmates.

As our society tends to associate accomplishment with human value (i.e., we as individuals are only as worthy as our achievements), it is understandable that students often confuse ability with ‘worth’. The self-worth theory claims that psychologically speaking, academic achievement is best understood in terms of sustaining a positive self-image of one’s ability, particularly when risking competitive failure (Covington, 1998, p.78). It assumes that two main factors, *achievement* and *ability*, govern as the ultimate value in the minds of most students in an academic landscape. This theory, therefore, assumes that within achievement, it is the summative grade which is most valued. It does not, however, specify whether ongoing or formative learning/achievement is as valuable as summative. Consequently, the value Covington ascribes to achievement is questionable as there are other factors alongside achievement and ability that interact with each other such as motivation, classroom environment, encouragement from parents, etc. which are not taken into account in his study.

Early research on self-concept provided a theory-rich foundation (James (1890/1963; Rogers, 1951) but it was considered by some to be too unidimensional and often lacked cogent cognitive models, consistency and robustness (Marsh and Retali, 2010). A few decades later, a pioneering study by Shavelson et al. (1976) presented a multifaceted hierarchical model of self-concept which was a turning point in the self-concept literature. The model separated the term into academic and non- academic self-concepts; ‘... facets of self-concept may form a hierarchy from individual experiences in particular situations at the base of the hierarchy to general self-concept at the apex’ (p. 412). This model was later revised by Marsh and Shavelson (1985) where it shifted from multifaceted to multi-dimensional with the inclusion of The Internal/External (I/E) Frame of Reference Model. The model differentiated between general self-concept and academic self-concept as well as attempting to account for the relationship between academic self-concept and achievement (Marsh, Byrne and Shavelson, 1988). It was found that self-concept becomes differentiated with age and academic self-concept is

not a unidimensional construct but rather multifaceted and complex. According to the I/E model, students compare their achievements with their peers, known as the external frame of reference. Within an internal frame of reference, students compare their own achievements between subjects (Möller et al., 2009). What this model does not account for is why peer relationships have a bearing on non-academic self-concept but not academic self-concept.

This study and model were also replicated in the United Arab Emirates by Abu-Hilal and Bahri (2000) who conducted this self-concept research using the I/E frame of reference model in both elementary and high school students. Overall, a total of 276 elementary students and 293 junior high students completed the Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) in which they answered questions on their self-concept in relation to 3 academic and 4 non-academic areas. The results of their study showed that self-concept in several academic subjects became more differentiated with age. It also showed that the construct of self-concept was more distinct for high school students than for elementary students. Theoretically, this could mean that self-concept for university age students, such as in my study, would be more distinct. Ultimately, the results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted in the West (Marsh, 1988). Interestingly, it also highlighted some cultural issues such as the way the younger Arab students responded in comparison to the older ones and Western children. They seemed unable to evaluate their self-worth as much. The authors speculate that this may be an indicator of the typical autocratic parenting styles and education system of the Middle Eastern culture which does not encourage independence or responsibility (Abu-Hilal and Bahri, 2000; Sharabi, 1975). Some may argue that these are traits of a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1980, see 1.4.2), similar to that of the KRI.

Clearly, ability plays a major role in the formation of self-concept. How that ability is perceived by students will be discussed in more detail in the next sub-section.

2.2.2 Big Fish Little Pond Effect on Self-Concept

There has been a plethora of research into what is commonly known as the BFLPE; Big-Fish-Little-Pond Effect (Seaton, Marsh and Craven, 2009; Dai and Rinn, 2008; Marsh et al., 2007). Similar to the I/E model, the BFLPE is based on the multifaceted self-concept and social comparison theories. This theory, proposed by Marsh and Parker (1984), assumes that students use a 'frame of reference' to form their self-concepts. It

posits that students who attend high-ability classes/schools have lower academic self-concepts than their counterparts who have been educated in low and average-ability settings. Conversely, students who attend low and average ability classes/schools are assumed to have higher academic self-concept (Dai and Rinn, 2008). These findings correlate with other studies which suggest that the stronger the peer group (academically, as a frame of reference), the lower the students' academic self-concept (Dai and Rinn, 2008). The model assumes that students make social comparisons according to their environment – upward comparisons with stronger ability students for a focus on self-improvement and downward social comparisons with lower ability students for self-enhancement and making themselves feel better (Dai and Rinn, 2008; Foddy and Crundall, 1993). There will also be students who refrain from making any form of social comparison as a protection strategy (Dai and Rinn, 2008). Hence, metaphorically speaking, whether students deem themselves as a 'big fish' depends on the size of the other fish (more precisely, the average size of the other fish) in the pond.

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, there appears to be a positive correlation between academic self-concept and intrinsic motivation (see 2.1.2). This means that students who are intrinsically motivated may not suffer the regressions in self-concept associated with the BFLPE phenomenon. Intrinsically motivated students may find academic tasks gratifying; they may not deem the endeavours of others as threatening (Seaton, Marsh and Craven, 2009). This suggests two possible outcomes. Firstly, intrinsically motivated MA students could potentially be happier in such a group, provided they have a high self-concept. However, a high self-concept could depend on how they are grouped, therefore each case is individual, and it is important for teachers and educators to consider this when deciding on grouping patterns.

Alternatively, it could mean that according to the BFLPE, SA students (predominantly the low and average ability ones) may benefit from this grouping style as they are more likely to have a higher academic self-concept. The question remains whether those advantages for the lower students outweigh the disadvantages for the high ability ones. There are also suggestions that the BFLPE may not be present in students of a highly competitive nature. This may mean that students who are less competitive may suffer the BFLPE and may not thrive in competitive classrooms (Seaton, Marsh and Craven, 2009).

Marsh et al. (2007) studied the long-term effects of selective schooling (essentially students who were placed in ability groups/ classes) and found that the BFLPE was substantial at the end of high school and was still substantial up to 4 years later. Therefore, those students who felt they compared unfavourably with others in their groups may still suffer from a low self-concept even when they have graduated from university, although this could be said for both streamed and non-streamed students and is not necessarily an effect of streaming.

Another longitudinal study which looked at the BFLPE as a frame of reference was carried out by Schwarzer, Jerusalem, and Lange (1983). They evaluated the German high school settings where students are grouped deliberately heterogeneously until the age of 10. They are then transferred to one of three tracks on the basis of their academic ability and previous academic achievement. The researchers hypothesized that students entering high or low ability tracks would alter their academic self-concepts after the tracking. They found that immediately after transition, the academic self-concepts of high and low-level students varied substantially; consistent with the original predictions. However, several months after they had been tracked, the BFLPE came into effect. Low ability students who had previously compared themselves with their heterogeneous colleagues did have a low academic self-concept before tracking but when the transition was complete and they had settled into their new groups, they began to make new comparisons against other students in the low ability track and their academic self-concept was more positive. However, according to Joyce and McMillan (2010), the BFLPE effect is 'likely to be smaller for older students, as they are better able to assess their own skills in comparison with their classmates' (p. 216). However, the BFLPE is not without its limitations. Despite practical and methodological implications, the model has been the subject of criticism for over-emphasising a single aspect of social comparison and ignoring other social-contextual factors (Dai and Rinn, 2008) perhaps the culture and classroom environment.

Whilst most studies on BFLPE are conducted in schools and rarely in a university setting, Seaton et al., (2004) applied the model for 4th-year university students studying Psychology in selective Australian universities. However, their investigations into social comparison processes showed that the BFLPE phenomenon was not present in the classes. There may have been other underlying factors as to why but further research of this at a university level is warranted, particularly in the Middle Eastern context. The

BFLPE is mostly consistent cross-culturally (Marsh and Hau, 2003), but some studies in East-Asian countries such as Taiwan, Japan and South Korea showed inconsistencies (Seaton, Marsh and Craven, 2009).

Overall, these findings suggest that academic self-concept is potentially affected by ability grouping in a way that can be explained by the BFLPE frame of reference model. The assumption of BFLPE is that students compare themselves only to others in their immediate group. That may be a false assumption in many contexts where students will be aware of, and perhaps know, or even have friends in, groups that are either higher or lower than their own. It remains to be seen whether the BFLPE phenomenon exists between students in different groups.

This search of the literature has revealed that there are no studies within the KRI which utilize the BFLPE model and very few which explore self-concept in a university setting.

2.2.3 Self -efficacy

The highly analogous constructs of self-efficacy and self-concept are rarely recognized as discrete theories (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003; Bong and Clark, 1999). While some academic researchers focus on the similarities between the two constructs (Bong and Clark, 1999), others clearly distinguish the differences (Choi, 2005; Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). Self-efficacy is the feeling of being able to succeed (Zimmerman, 1995) and could be defined as perceived competence in terms of behavioural actions or cognitive skills necessary for performance. Self-concept, however, emphasises normative assessment of ability (Zimmerman, 1995) and is an individual's ideas and evaluation about themselves on a broader scale as opposed to more specific subjects (Byrne, 1984). For example, a student could have a low academic self- concept in mathematics but high self-efficacy in a particular task such as knowing their multiplication tables competently. Choi (2005, p. 202) differentiates further by stating that self-concept includes both cognitive and affective components whereas self-efficacy is predominantly focused on a cognitive component.

Self-efficacy is a term used and developed by Bandura as part of the larger 'Social Learning Theory,' which later became the 'Social Cognitive Theory' (Bandura, 1977). The author defines self-efficacy as 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute

the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (1977, p. 3). It is explained that those beliefs sway the course of action that learners wish to pursue, how much effort, time and resilience they demonstrate towards the task. Self-efficacy also relates to learners' way of thinking; whether their beliefs are self-aiding or self-hindering.

Over the past few decades, several researchers have devised various scales in order to try to measure self-efficacy. Choi (2005) used a variety of these scales to investigate whether self-efficacy and self-concept were predictors of university students' academic performance. To measure self-efficacy the study used the SES: Self-efficacy scale (Sherer et al., 1982) and the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES; Owen and Froman, 1988). Self-concept was also measured in two forms of specificity. Academic Self-Concept was measured using the Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS; Reynolds, 1988). Course-specific self-concept for individual academic subjects was measured using six items adapted from the Marsh (1992) study, such as 'I learn things quickly in this type of course.' Overall, the findings of the study indicated a high correlation between the degree of self-percepts (self-efficacy and self-concept) and academic achievement. It was recommended that teachers construct classroom activities that will aid in augmenting student self-concept and self-efficacy (p. 204).

The next sub-section will explore some studies on the effects of ability grouping on self-concept.

2.2.4 Ability grouping and self-concept

The findings from the section above indicate that ability grouping may affect self-concept positively or negatively. However, whilst there are a plethora of studies positing that self-esteem (an integral part of the self-concept, Cast and Burke, 2002) is often boosted when students are streamed into single ability groups (Suk Wai Wong and Watkins, 2001; Kulik and Kulik, 1992; Abadzi, 1985) there are fewer studies which discuss the wider issue of self-concept and ability grouping.

A meta-analysis by Kulik and Kulik (1982) suggested that students had more positive attitudes towards their subject in SA groups as opposed to MA groups. However, the overall findings were inconclusive and no significant effects of grouping on self-concept were found. The review was critiqued by Marsh (1984) who stated that self-concept is considerably impacted by ability grouping, but when averaged out across all

ability groups the effects are less severe. Marsh disagreed with Kulik and Kulik's interpretation of the data suggesting that the studies included were too disparate to be suitable for a meta-analysis. Conversely, a study by Shields (2002) found that expected differences in students' attitudes towards themselves and their school experiences were not present but there was a significant difference in students' perceptions towards the teachers' behaviours and attitudes.

Several studies proclaim that academic self-concept can be negatively impacted by ability grouping, particularly for lower ability students. This view is supported by Dyson (1967). His study used the 'Index of Adjustment and Values' (IAV) which was designed to yield an index of acceptance of self. Qualitative data from two different grade 7 classes was analysed; one MA and the other SA. The study found that regardless of grouping pattern, high achievers showed significantly more positive self-concept whereas it was significantly less positive for low achievers. Dyson concluded that grouping techniques do not significantly affect self-concept, but the academic self-concept is highly influenced by success in school irrespective of grouping procedure used. Whilst the findings from Dyson's study were still ambivalent, interviews carried out in Ogletree's study (1969) support the idea that there are negative effects of ability grouping. One interviewee stated: 'People who are not clever yet try hard are discouraged if they are put in the lower class, and the people in the top class become snobs' (p. 23). Esposito (1973, p. 166) also stated that homogeneous grouping was discouraging for some students but also mentioned that it was 'undemocratic' and negatively affected the students' self-concept. His analysis of several studies found that single ability grouping showed no consistent positive value for helping students either scholastically or in terms of affective development. Even the studies that were found to have significant effects only showed slight gains in favour of high ability groups. Esposito concluded that even though the practice of single ability grouping inflates the self-esteem of the students in high ability groups, this is offset by the evidence of stigmatizing effects on average and below average ability groups who often feel inferior and incompetent of learning. He also stated that 'adult life experiences do not occur in homogeneous settings, and students must learn to work with a wide range of people' (p. 166). Oakes (1985) also claimed that ability grouping is ineffective, unfair and that no students gain academically from being grouped. As with Esposito's study, Oakes also found that students in the lower streams often feel more alienated from their peers,

school and educational environment as well as having a lower self-concept and self-esteem after they leave school. Findings from a later study by Harlen and Malcolm (1999) echoed these results which found that students placed in low ability groups often felt 'stigmatised and unmotivated' and the effect was more substantial when students were very highly aware of their grouping placement; whether they were in a higher or lower band. However, Oakes, unlike Harlen and Malcolm, did find that students placed in higher ability groups often have more positive academic self-esteem than their peers in lower groups; refuting Kulik and Kulik's findings and contrary to the BFLPE's predictions (see 2.2.2).

With such an array of findings which claim that ability grouping is detrimental to a student's self-concept, one wonders why anyone would favour it. Ireson and Hallam (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of mainly British based research relating to the effects of ability grouping on both academic and non-academic outcomes such as self-esteem and alienation. They posit that proponents of ability grouping stress its effectiveness in terms of student achievement but those against grouping stress the inequality of the practice due to its severe social and presumably psychological implications. Such implications include alienation from school, polarisation, stereotyping and a negative attitude towards school. Such factors could have a detrimental impact on students' self-concept. The authors, however, concluded that it was uncertain if these negatives attitudes were a result of streaming or whether they were pre-existing.

Another study of self-concept and ability grouping which also resulted in findings contrary to the BFLPE was by Boaler, William and Brown (2000). They used questionnaires and interviews which explored students' feelings towards ability grouping. They found that even though a small percentage of students were in favour of ability grouping (they were all intermediate, middle set students), the majority of students stressed that they faced negative repercussions when moved from MA to SA groups. The interviews painted a negative picture of the ability grouped classes; a picture of polarization and disaffection. A similar study by Gillis-Furutaka and Sakurai (2002) found similar results as students expressed being somewhat uncomfortable with streaming under some circumstances such as when only a few are moved rather than the whole class. The students also mentioned feeling humiliated if they had to be moved down a set to a lower group and only a small minority said they preferred ability grouping.

The majority of research on self-concept appears to have been conducted using scales and inventories. Abadzi (1985) studied the impact of ability grouping on self-esteem and achievement. Fourth-grade student participants were given an adapted version of 'Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory' or CSEI (1981) periodically from when they began grade 4, then a month after being streamed until they entered grade 5. The CSEI is a self-reporting scale which assesses attitudes towards oneself in specific contexts. Overall, Abadzi found that only students who were branded as 'very high ability' or 'very low ability' were unaffected by grouping in terms of achievement and self-concept. However, this meant that students who were 'close to the cut-off point' were somewhat affected but not significantly (p. 40). Abadzi concluded that the 'winners' of ability grouping were the lower students in SA classes who were afforded more educational and social opportunities when grouped together (p. 40). However, these correlations are not robust enough to offer support for ability grouping. In addition, Abadzi's findings may not apply to university students (elementary school versus university students).

Liu, Wang, and Parkins (2005) devised an academic self-concept scale (ASCQ) which has been used repeatedly in various studies across the world. Their 3-year longitudinal study which examined students' self-concept immediately after streaming and then again after 3 years was conducted via ASC questionnaires to students in an ESL class in Singapore. They found that although low ability students reported a negative academic self-concept immediately after the streaming process had taken place, they had a more positive self-concept after 3 years. Their study concluded that students' feelings of being stigmatized for being in the lower ability groups were only temporary and that in the longer term being in the lower ability class is not detrimental for their academic self-concept (Liu et al., 2005).

Ireson and Hallam (1999) compiled a literature review of mainly British based research on ability grouping and its effects on both academic and non-academic outcomes such as self-esteem and alienation. Overall, they identified that studies favouring ability grouping tend to stress its effectiveness in terms of student achievement, while those against grouping stress the inequality of the practice due to its severe social implications. Such implications include alienation from school, polarisation, stereotyping and a negative attitude towards school. Such factors could have a

detrimental impact on students' self-concept. It is uncertain, however, if these negatives attitudes are a result of streaming or whether they were pre-existing.

Although some of the findings from the self-concept literature were not entirely relevant to my study due to the age range of participants (compulsory school age) or the context, the findings did raise the question of the effectiveness of grouping, the process of streaming and the potential deleterious effects on self-concept. It also highlighted the issue of students' reference groups and the teachers' emphasis on the groupings (reminding students which groups they are and of their abilities) can negatively impact self-concept.

2.2.5 Summary

In summary, the last few decades have seen a tremendous increase into research of the self, particularly self-efficacy and academic self-concept, which we now understand to be hierarchical and multidimensional in nature. Pivotal work such as the I/E model (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985; Shavelson, 1976) and the BFLPE model (Marsh and Parker, 1984) provide insights into the formation and development of academic self-concepts in school children. Furthermore, these models highlighted the effect of self-concept on learning behaviours and achievement (Marsh and Retali, 2010).

Research on academic self-concept has been mostly restricted to questionnaires in school settings, which highlights the need for more mixed methods, triangulated research in other educational settings, such as universities. In terms of ability grouping, there is still a shortage of studies which indicate whether ability grouping of adult learners has an impact on academic-self-concept. The existing studies mostly indicate that there are more negative than positive implications. However, the applicability of findings from general education to language learning contexts is difficult. There is also a lack of self-concept studies within the language classroom or even with language learners. Debatably, one's language (whether L2 or onwards) is more a part of one's identity than one's knowledge of general subjects such as geography, maths or history. It is highly likely that the L2 environment and learning experiences might have a greater impact on one's self-concept in language classes than in other subjects.

This raises the question of ethicality in homogeneous grouping patterns which should be revisited. In terms of the current study, due to the lack of literature in this context, it

was unknown whether the same alienation and social implications mentioned in the above studies would impact on the students in KRI and this will be explored in later chapters.

2.3 Classroom Engagement

2.3.1 Definitions of engagement

A plethora of research into motivation over the past two decades has prompted further attempts to understand engagement (Reschly and Christenson, 2012; Svalberg, 2009). The interconnected constructs of motivation and engagement are sometimes argued to be so similar that they are used interchangeably throughout various research papers (Martin, 2007; National Research Council and the Institute for Medicine, 2004) and that the two constructs are not orthogonal (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Others argue that the multifaceted nature of engagement warrants its own definition as a separate entity from motivation (Reeve, 2012). The main distinction is that motivation is mostly unobservable, biological, psychological and experienced subjectively, whereas engagement is relatively more public and can be objectively observed (Reeve, 2012). An exception to this is if a student is cognitively engaged without it being obvious as observable behaviour (Svalberg and Askham, 2015).

For the purpose of this study, only the definitions related to classroom engagement (student engagement), particularly students' classroom learning, will be discussed as other definitions are beyond the scope of this thesis. Student engagement is the time and effort devoted to activities which may result in desirable learning outcomes (Kuh et al., 2007, 2009). It is a student's willingness and desire to participate and be successful in the learning process. Hu and Kuh (2001, p. 3) define this type of engagement as 'the quality of effort the students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes.' Similarly, 'the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes' (Krause and Coates, 2008, p. 493). Learning outcomes appear to be the constant similarity between definitions. Despite this similarity, the concept of engagement remains a broad and complex field which differs by context and there remains a multitude of definitions as to what constitutes engagement (Davis et al., 2012; Svalberg, 2009; Glanville and Wildhagen, 2007). What has been recognised, is

the need for a multifaceted approach, encapsulating the multi-dimensional aspects of engagement, divided into behavioural and psychological elements (Bryson and Hand, 2007; Glanville and Wildhagen, 2007). While some educators define only two dimensions, such as behavioural and psychological (Horstmanshof and Zimitat, 2007; Finn and Voelkl, 1993; Skinner and Belmont, 1993), others defined 3 dimensions; Svalberg, (2009) as cognitive, affective and social engagement and Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, (2004) as cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement. However, as this study focuses on general classroom engagement, the latter framework will be discussed and utilised in the study.

Fredericks et al. (2004), influenced by Bloom (1956), synthesised a multitude of ideas and definitions surrounding engagement, identifying it as a meta-construct comprising of three components; behavioural, cognitive, and emotional. These are defined as follows:

Behavioural engagement: Defined as students' involvement in both academic and social activities, divided into positive conduct (adhering to class rules), involvement in learning (concentration, attention, effort, contributing to class discussions) and participation in school-related activities (extra-curricular clubs or teams), (Fredericks et al. 2004).

Cognitive engagement: Fredericks et al. (2004) further divide cognitive engagement into two elements: psychological and cognitive. The psychological element relates to motivational goals and self-regulated learning as these relate to investment, thoughtfulness, and willingness to comprehend and master complex ideas and skills. It stresses students' investment in learning and motivation to learn. The cognitive component involves self-regulated learning, metacognition, application of learning strategies, and being strategic in thinking and studying.

Emotional engagement: This term, known by some researchers as Relational engagement (Davis et al. 2010), comprises of three main components including students' affective reactions (interest, boredom, anxiety, sadness, and happiness), emotional reactions (positive or negative feelings toward the institution and instructors), and school identification (students' feelings of belonging and importance within the institution), (Fredericks et al. 2004). In comparison to the behavioural and cognitive subtypes, emotional engagement is less researched (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Whilst accepting that these three components of engagement are all interconnected, Reeve (2012) adds a fourth component which is ‘agentic engagement;’ when a student actively tries to enrich a learning activity rather than remain passive throughout it. Reeve believes that only the addition of agentic engagement to the three existing components can fully explain the motivation to achievement relation.

Fredericks et al. (2004) highlight several issues which inevitably arise when measuring these constructs of engagement. Firstly, they recognize that several theories overlap into two of the three constructs as well as the overlap of engagement and motivation theories. Secondly, measurement scales often fail to indicate qualitative differences in the level of engagement. For example, it is difficult to distinguish the intensity and/or quality of engagement. Thirdly, measures rarely relate to different tasks or situations which means that any information yielded is usually very general and often does not indicate a source of engagement.

2.3.2 Enhancing engagement in higher education

Since the 1980s, there have been multiple studies regarding engagement at both a primary and secondary level with a small but increasing body of literature on L2 engagement in higher education. More recently, ways of encouraging and fostering student engagement in the higher education classroom have been researched. This included strategies such as research into the optimal classroom layout and seating arrangements (Wannarka and Ruhl, 2008) and providing authentic and relevant materials (Guariento and Morley, 2001) which was found to promote positive academic and behavioural outcomes in the classroom. The influential works of Chickering and Gamson's (1987) ‘Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education’ and Chickering and Kuh's (2005) ‘Promoting Student Success: Creating Conditions so Every Student Can Learn’ have produced guidelines for universities to increase engagement to improve student learning outcomes. More studies have complemented and extended upon previous studies offering recommendations to improve teacher, student and institutional practices to increase student engagement (Lester, 2013; Davis et al., 2010; Zepke and Leach, 2010).

These recommendations include encouraging student engagement during formal and informal curricular activities as this may lead to increased positive academic outcomes (Lester, 2013, Zepke and Leach, 2010). Some educators and researchers even state that

students' actions within the classroom matter more than where they study or what they bring with them to higher education (Kuh et al., 2007; Kuh, 2003).

Zepke and Leach (2010) developed a conceptual organiser based on engagement research from all over the world; USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa China, Spain, South Korea, Israel and France. The organiser includes four main research perspectives identified in the literature: student motivation; transactions between teachers and students; institutional support; and engagement for active citizenship. These perspectives then offer ten propositions for improving student engagement. They are shown in table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2 A conceptual organiser for student engagement (from Zepke and Leach, 2010, p. 169)

Research perspectives	Proposals for action
<i>Motivation and agency</i> (Engaged students are intrinsically motivated and want to exercise their agency)	1. Enhance students' self-belief 2. Enable students to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others and feel they are competent to achieve their own objectives
<i>Transactional engagement</i> (Students and teachers engage with each other)	3. Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to engagement 4. Create learning that is active, collaborative and fosters learning relationships 5. Create educational experiences for students that are challenging, enriching and extend their academic abilities
<i>Institutional support</i> (Institutions provide an environment conducive to learning)	6. Ensure institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds 7. Invest in a variety of support services 8. Adapt to changing student expectations
<i>Active citizenship</i> (Students and institutions work together to enable challenges to social beliefs and practices)	9. Enable students to become active citizens 10. Enable students to develop their social and cultural capital

Proposals 1 to 5 (research perspective 1 and 2) are particularly relevant for this study as they focus on motivation and engagement in the classroom rather than at an institutional level. As per proposal 3, the majority of studies of student engagement predominantly recognise that teaching and teachers are fundamental to engagement (Zepke, 2010; Zepke and Leach, 2010, Hockings et al., 2008; Bryson and Hand, 2007; Kuh et al., 2006). Students are more likely to be engaged and work harder if their teachers are sensitive to student needs, approachable and well-prepared and foster welcoming institutional cultures (Zepke and Leach, 2010). Similarly, Bryson and Hand (2007) state that student engagement is higher when their teachers demand high standards, set challenges and create inviting learning environments. Being over-reliant on institutional influence, the model does not take into account non-institutional factors such as culture, the students' health, family expectations or other responsibilities. In

addition, the model does not consider the complex nature of engagement and the interaction of multiple actors (students, teachers, family, friends and even buildings, resources and location).

To the best of my knowledge, there is not yet any literature available regarding student engagement at university level in the KRI, nor is there any regarding engagement during severe political, social or economic crises. It remains to be seen how external influences such as the threat of war, political and economic issues affect student engagement in the classroom.

2.3.3 Measuring Engagement

Different strands of student engagement require different measurements as it is unlikely that one could accurately measure all 3 types. A review of the measurements utilised in various studies shows that behavioural engagement has been measured using a combination of self-reporting surveys for both teachers and students (Finn et al., 1995), analysis of teachers reports (Rudolph et al., 2001), and classroom observations (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Stipek, 2002; Lee and Anderson, 1993). For example, in a study by Stipek (2002), observers used scales ranging from ‘off-task’ to ‘deeply involved’ to note student attentiveness, completion of tasks and enthusiasm. Whilst such scales may give a general insight into perceived levels of engagement, they may provide limited information on its dynamic nature, the quality and depth of participation, effort and thinking.

Emotional (or relational) engagement has also been measured using self-reporting surveys (Skinner and Belmont, 1993) and interviews (Stipek, 2002) but Fredericks et al. (2004) noted that most scales attempting to measure engagement are too general and often combine both behavioural and emotional engagement which makes it difficult to analyse the discrete engagement causes and consequences.

Krause and Coates (2008) suggest that engagement studies be measured using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, but there is little evidence of this in the literature. For example, Greene (2015) compiled a meta-analysis and found that over the past 20 years, the majority of research which measured cognitive engagement was done via self-reporting scales. Although she commends the ground-breaking work of several researchers such as Pintrich et al., (1991) for the MSLQ

(Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire) and Weinstein and colleagues (Weinstein, Palmer and Schulte, 1987) for the LASSI scale (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory), she highlighted the lack of depth in such studies. She concluded that to gain a deeper understanding and better measurement of this complex construct, it is suggested that measures such as discourse analysis, interviews and classroom observations should be used, preferably in a mixed methods study, to provide richer data. More recently, studies measuring engagement have used more qualitative methods such as learner diaries, workshop interaction and interview data (Svalberg and Askham, 2016,) and these studies have provided a greater range of valuable data. However, as engagement is not easily observed and can be misinterpreted, it is important to triangulate the data whilst including the participants' subjective voices to emerge through methods such as stimulated recall, direct observations, focus groups, questionnaires or tests (Svalberg, 2018).

2.3.4 Ability grouping and Engagement

Whilst there is a plethora of studies on the effect of ability grouping on achievement, there is very little literature on the effect of ability grouping on engagement (Jean, 2016). From this small body of literature, only a few have focused on HE settings; the majority have taken place in primary or secondary settings, such as the study from Gamoran et al., (1995). From their mixed methods study of classrooms in American high schools, they found that ability grouping contributed to inequalities in learning behaviours, instruction and achievement to the detriment of the lower ability students. They concluded that in a high school setting, ability grouping needs to be reconsidered as it highlights both social and cognitive inequalities. A meta-analysis reviewing twelve studies on the effects of single versus mixed ability grouping revealed that the group composition has different effects on students at different ability levels (Lou et al., 1996). Ireson and Hallam (1999) also highlighted the body of research which exposes ability grouping as having negative effects on engagement and consequently achievement, particularly between different ability levels. Similarly, a more recent study by Higgins et al. (2015) found that lower ability students' confidence and engagement is undermined when streamed into lower ability groups. Equally, Jean (2016) found that academic achievement and engagement is hindered for those students assigned to lower ability groups. They also found that the higher the ability group the student is assigned

to, the higher the engagement and achievement will be. As Jean's study also took place within a high school setting, it remains to be seen whether these findings would be duplicated with adult learners in a HE setting. The reasons behind these findings are yet to be explored but it may be due to variances in teaching practices between the ability groups. For example, Boaler, William and Brown (2000) found through observations that teachers often employed less varied and more restricted teaching methods with SA classes when compared to MA groups, potentially affecting the students' classroom engagement.

The reasons for this remain unknown but other studies have attempted to investigate the link by assessing teachers' perceptions on ability grouping which produced varied responses (Gillis-Furutaka and Sakurai, 2002; Kerckhoff, 1986; Wilson and Schmits, 1978; Lincoln and Wadleigh, 1930). Notionally, it is assumed that teachers who are less experienced in classroom management prefer to teach SA groups as the students of a similar level because they are usually easier to manage and stay attentive (Hallinan and Sorensen, 1983). As a result, high ability students can move through material faster without having to slow down for their less competent classmates. Students of a lower ability can also benefit from this segregation as teachers can provide them with a relevant curriculum and pace of instruction according to their specific needs (Kerckhoff, 1986). Despite these advantages, it is impossible to ignore the potential effect on a students' self-concept (see 2.2.4) and this leaves some teachers with conflicting views. According to the Barker Lunnis (1970) NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research) survey of streaming in British primary schools, teachers were found to be practising ability grouping despite objecting to it on philosophical grounds. Shortly after the survey in the 1970s and 1980s, the practice of ability grouping was criticised, and in some cases, abandoned by some schools on the grounds of being non-inclusive. Despite this, Wilson and Schmits (1978) found that despite the lack of empirical support, teachers in Britain were generally in favour of ability grouping. Only a few of these studies were conducted at a university level. One of these was a study by Gillis-Furutaka and Sakurai (2002) who set out to discover the attitudes to streaming by teachers and students at a Japanese university via an electronic questionnaire. Most teachers were in favour of the practice in terms of lesson planning, preparation and teaching and voiced their concerns over mixed level classes due to the difficulty in planning and conducting two or more lessons within the same class to meet all the

students' needs. Other teachers mentioned that they preferred some variety of levels in the class to enable the stronger students to help the weaker ones, which some students found beneficial (Francis et al., 2018). Overall, they found that the teachers' attitudes towards streaming were varied.

Very little is currently known about the relationship between adult learners' classroom engagement and ability grouping. To date, there is no KRI based research investigating ability grouping or classroom engagement thus there is a clear gap in the field literature.

2.3.5 Summary

In sum, there is still an ongoing debate regarding the definitions of engagement. The majority of research categorises engagement into at least three strands, mainly Behavioural, Emotional and Cognitive. A multitude of studies present various ways of how student engagement can be enhanced and improved from a student, faculty and institutional level but they mainly posit that teachers and their teaching practices are crucial to positive engagement in the classroom. In terms of measurement, engagement is too complex to be measured with a single measure such as a simple scale or a self-reporting survey. Despite the several limitations attached to the various measures, this multifaceted meta-construct would ideally be measured via mixed methods with a combination of both qualitative and quantitative measures. As for ability grouping, while several studies highlight the social and cognitive inequalities between higher and lower ability groups, it remains to be seen whether there are further differences between SA and MA groups.

The three main constructs of the study are such broad areas that it is that it is incredibly difficult to do justice to them all. However, this thematic review attempted to discuss a snapshot of the literature on motivation, self-concept and engagement in relation to ability grouping. The following section discusses the conceptual framework of the study in more depth.

2.4 The Conceptual Framework

This section focuses on the conceptual framework which frames this study; CDST (Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

The literature review identified that the relationship between academic motivation, self-concept and engagement is dynamic, multidimensional and non-hierarchical. Such an intricate relationship can only be defined using a lens which recognises the complex interrelatedness of the components with the understanding that it is not always possible to explain their behaviour or the changes in behaviour; similar to a complex system (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008b).

For the purpose of this study, each classroom is seen as a system and each student is nested within that system. Each has their own unique characteristics and experiences which interact with the surrounding environment (internal and external) and other sub-systems, guided by system parameters and potentially disrupted by perturbations. The systems then self-organise towards certain learning (or non-learning) behaviour patterns or attractor states within a state space. This is complex as several components are seen holistically and are not reduced to individual members but rather the individual components interact as part of a larger entity which is in a constant state of change, thus dynamic, in response to changes both internally and in the environment interacting as part of a larger entity (Koopmans and Stamovlasis, 2006). The CDST will be used as a lens for framing the current study, guiding the analysis and discussing the findings.

2.5 Conclusion

Overall, the study explores the dynamic interplay between academic motivation, academic self-concept, classroom engagement and the impact of ability grouping in the EAP classroom through the lens of the Complex Dynamic Systems approach (Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

A thematic review of the literature revealed several key studies which suggest that single ability groupings tend to negatively impact students' motivation, self-concept and engagement (Joyce and McMillan 2010; Harlen and Malcolm, 1999; Oakes, 1985; Eder, 1981; Esposito, 1973; Ogletree, 1969). However, some researchers believe that there are some benefits to single ability groupings (Saleh et al., 2005; Cheung and Rudowicz, 2003; Villa and Thousand, 2003; Walqui, 2000; Lou et al., 1996; Stipek, 1996; Holmes and Ahr, 1994; Ireson and Hallam, 1991; Slavin, 1990; Abadzi, 1985). Nevertheless, it is questionable whether some of these research findings apply to my research questions since they are either contested by others, or the research has been conducted with

younger students of compulsory school age; therefore, it cannot necessarily be applied to a university context (Hallam, Ireson and Davies, 2004; Ansalone, 2000; Curry, 1997; Holmes and Ahr, 1994; Ireson and Hallam, 1991; Kerchkoff, 1986; Abadzi, 1985). This therefore presents a gap in the literature that my study will attempt to fill. The literature review also revealed that no published research has yet emerged regarding ability grouping in Kurdistan or with Kurdish learners in an EAP context, hence there is clearly a need for additional research on the effect of ability grouping on Kurdish EAP students in a university context.

The proposed study needs an interpretive lens which draws on students' self-perceptions and not only researchers' observations. It also needs a framework which accounts for the dynamic changes and relationships between the constructs of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement. Moreover, since several of these researchers and educators indicate that these constructs are often affected by the grouping patterns used in the classroom, more investigation needs to be carried out in order to better comprehend the relationship at a university level. Hence, it was reasonable to attempt to fill this gap through conducting this research which looked at ability grouping through the lens of CDS which stems from Complexity Theory (Larsen- Freeman 1997) (see section 2.4.2)

Therefore, it is the goal of my dissertation to focus on the perceptions and observable behaviours of Kurdish EAP students and their teachers to gain further insight on how ability grouping impacts academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement. The research questions (see 1.3) are guided on the aims of this study outlined in chapter 1.2 and the above-presented review. Due to the relative scarcity of research on the issues of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement in a university EAP setting, it is hoped that this research paper will become a valuable contribution to the existing literature on these three constructs as well as ability grouping.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research study design. Firstly, the methodology of the study is discussed followed by a detailed explanation of the samples and sampling methods used in the study. Secondly, an overview of each method is presented, describing details of the procedures and data analysis methods. Subsequently, the validity, reliability and ethical issues are discussed. Details of the pilot study are also presented. The conclusion then provides a summary, which highlights the key points included in the chapter.

Following a review of the literature in chapter two, it emerged that several motivation, self-concept and engagement studies had been investigated using questionnaires and interviews. Few studies used classroom observations, and even fewer combined them as part of a mixed methods design, particularly in this context. To further investigate these constructs, this mixed methods study uses an exploratory sequential design through an interpretivist paradigm to explore the motivation, self-concept and engagement of EAP students in the KRI. The rationale for using this approach and these paradigms are discussed further on in the chapter. The figure below illustrates the research methodology in this study and a cross reference to each section is given.

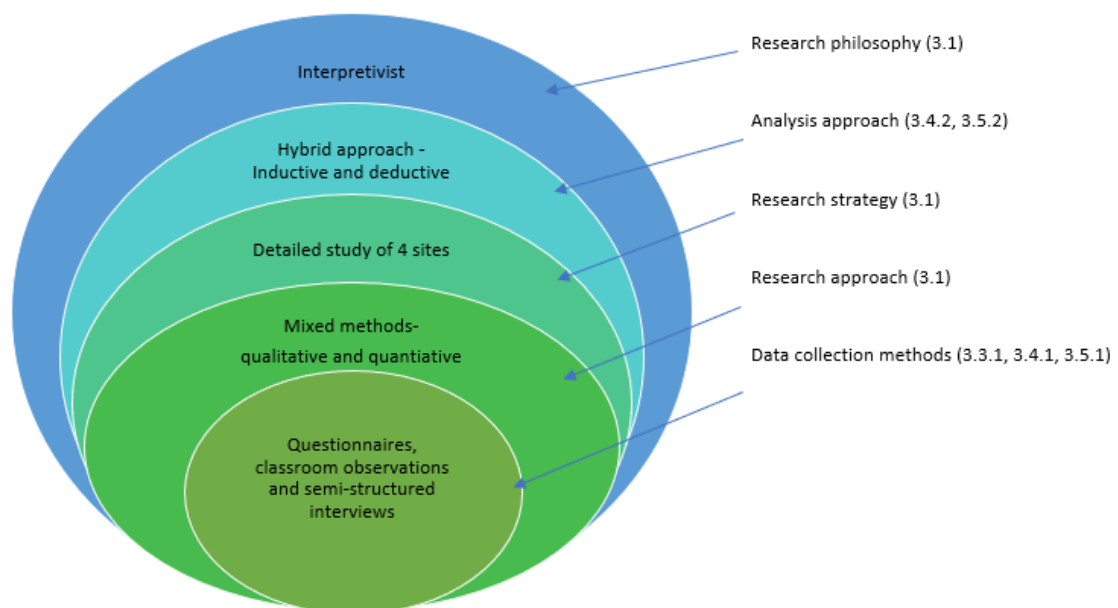


Figure 3.1 Research onion (adapted from Saunders et al., 2009)

3.1 Methodology

Three different methods were used to investigate motivation, self-concept and engagement through the lens of the CDST framework (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). This enabled me to explore the features and relationships between the students' and teachers' experiences in EAP classes in the KRI, an approach which 'suits the multi-level analysis of complex issues' (Dörnyei, 2009c, p. 109).

This detailed study consists of two distinct phases. Phase one begins with quantitative self-reporting questionnaires. Subsequently, phase two employs both qualitative classroom observations and interviews. Contrary to typical exploratory sequential studies (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), the methodology is thus predominantly qualitative with the quantitative findings complementing them. Dörnyei (2007, 2001) comments on the advantages of mixed methods for L2 motivation research and a growth in recognition for them as they 'might bring out the best of both approaches while neutralizing the shortcomings and biases inherent in each paradigm' (p. 242).

The complexity and interrelatedness of motivation, self-concept and engagement required a research design which would prioritise each method equally and where the strands would be kept independent during analysis and then mixed at the interpretation phase. This amounts to an exploratory sequential design which can bring together the varying strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Patton, 1990). It attempts to capture data which will closely mirror the reality of the phenomena under examination thus giving a more rounded, holistic view.

Traditionally, there has been a long-standing tradition of quantitative methods in motivation research, but more recently, researchers have stressed the need for a more qualitative approach (Ushioda, 2001) especially when attempting to understand phenomena such as 'how a particular student might think and feel about language learning' (Ushioda, 2009 p. 219). Quantitative measures may not have captured the complexity of an in-depth insight into the learner's perceptions, attitudes and actions which are difficult to measure using such methods. Ushioda's 'person-in-context relational view' of motivation highlights the study of individuals with their unique personality, identity and background, and their relationship with the 'complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which

the person is embedded.’ Ushioda views motivation as ‘an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations’ (p. 220).

In order to capture the complexity of this study, an interpretive approach was chosen. Interpretivism is the study of ‘meaningful social action’ where researchers subjectively ascribe meaning to observations made and measured by field research and observations (Neuman, 2006, p. 88). Such an approach assumes that reality is constructed through a complex interplay of behaviours, events and beliefs all of which can interact with each other and change their dynamics (Rowlands, 2005), similar to that of a complex system.

In order to explore the complex system through an interpretivist lens, a research design was chosen to allow for a ‘detailed, extensive study of a particular contextual and bounded phenomenon that is undertaken in real life situations’ (Luck et al. 2006, p. 104). Similar to a collective case study design or ‘study of the particular’ (Stake 1995, p. xi), this design was instrumental in nature as the sites (i.e. the universities) were studied to understand highly complex and contextualised phenomena with multiple variables (Yin 2003; Stake, 1995); in this case, motivation, self-concept and engagement in EAP classes. From a positivistic stance, case studies are criticised for being weak and imprecise (Yin, 2003) and for their lack of rigour and generalisability (Jensen and Rodgers, 2001). However, they offer a high level of contextualised, detailed analysis, which can illuminate specific issues in depth. In an attempt to maintain rigour and clarity, a schematic was developed which shows the visual map of a case study research design (Rosenberg and Yates, 2007, see figure 3.2). The schematic illustrates the current case study from the research questions to the final output of the data matrices.

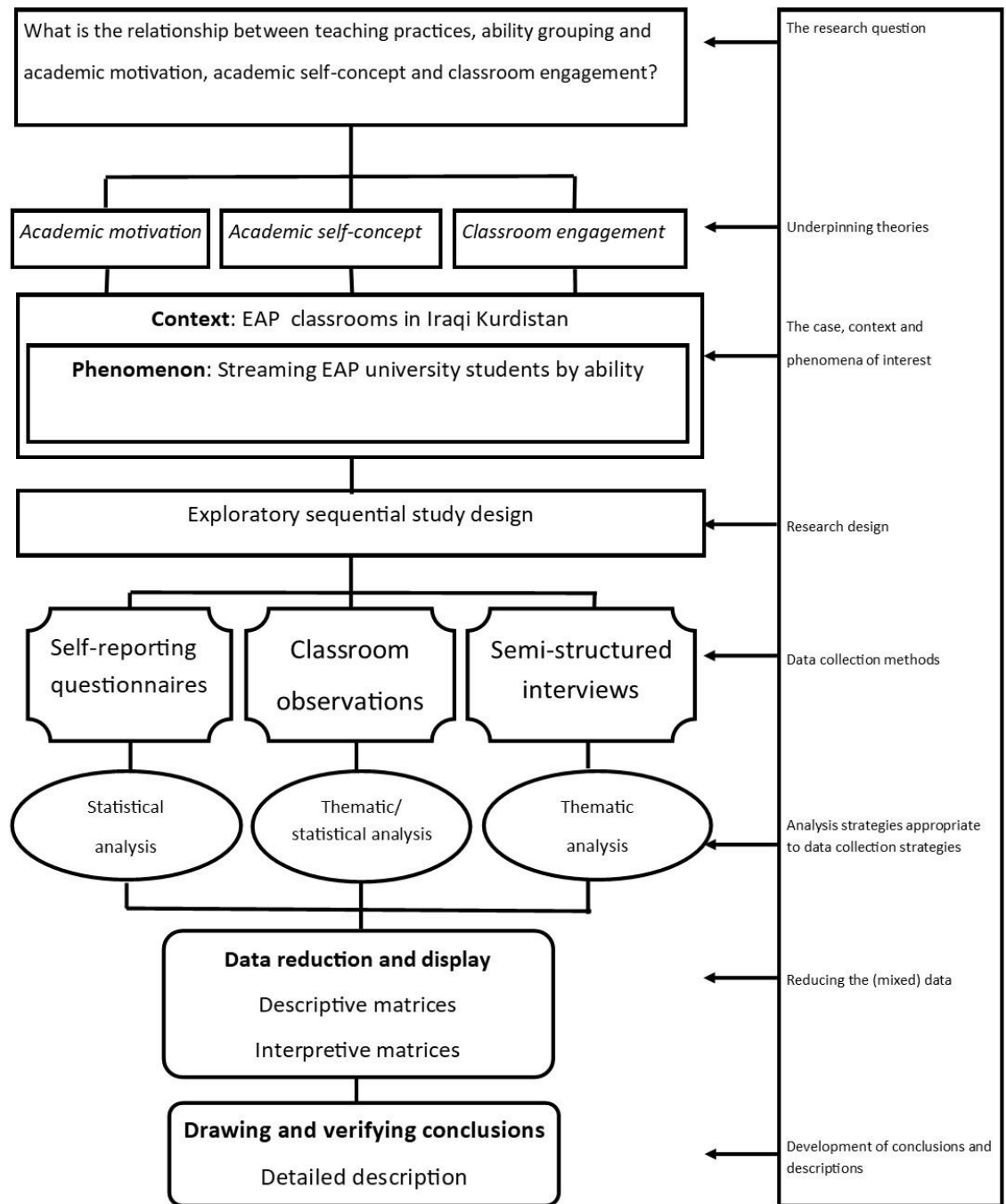


Figure 3.2 Research study schematic (adapted from Rosenberg and Yates, 2007)

To improve the validity of this study, three types of data collection were used, as recommended by Merriam (1998). By employing ‘data triangulation,’ the intention was to maximize the strengths of each method whilst minimizing the weaknesses (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). The following table shows the data collection methods, an overview of the participants and the institutions who were involved in the study, the dates of data collection and the relevant research questions (see 3.1).

Table 3.1 Overview of Data Collection methods and Schedules

Data collection method	Participants/ institutions	Date	Relevant Research Questions
Questionnaires	EAP students	March 2016	1,2,3
A self-reporting survey (40 items)	Uni A Uni B Uni C Uni D	– June 2017	
Classroom Observations (90 minutes each)	EAP Classrooms Observation 1,2,3 – Uni A Observation 4,5,6 – Uni B Observation 7,8,9,10 - Uni C Observation 11,12,13- Uni D	October 2016 – May 2017	1,2,3,4
Interviews (20 minutes each)	EAP students Participant 1,2,3,4 – Uni A Participant 5,6,7,8 – Uni B Participant 9,10,11,12,13 – Uni C Participant 14,15,16,17 – Uni D	October 2016 – June 2017	1,2,3
	EAP teachers Participant AFSATI1 Participant BMMATI1 Participant CFSATI1 Participant DMSATI1 Participant DMSATI2	October 2016 – June 2017	1,2,3

3.2 Population and Sample for this study

For this study, the target population was Kurdish university students studying either pre-sessional or in-sessional EAP at an EMI university in the KRI. Their teachers were also a target population. At the time of the study, there were approximately 94,700 students in higher education within the KRI (Ministry of Higher Education, 2016). As EAP was not a compulsory subject and not all universities in the region adopted EMI, identifying

eligible questionnaire participants proved difficult. However, after calculating the combination of first year students in each of the four universities, the estimated figure was approximately 1000 students. Due to the prevailing security and political tensions within the region since 2014, travelling to all the universities within the region to access this cohort was impracticable hence only the universities within the safer areas of the region were contacted as potential participants (Erbil, Duhok and Sulaimani provinces). For this study, stratified purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling (Bryman, 2012; Teddlie and Yu, 2007; Cohen et al., 2003), was used in order to target a particular group (Kurdish EAP students). Purposive sampling meant a specific cohort of respondents were chosen in a strategic way to ensure that the sample chosen was relevant to the research questions being asked (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2003). Convenience sampling (when a researcher uses a sample that is available and accessible to them at a particular time, Bryman, 2012, p201) is one of the most common types used in L2 research (Dörnyei, 2003). This method, although very convenient for me as a lecturer working in a Kurdish university where several EAP classes were available, was not used due to its lack of robustness. Stratified purposive sampling allowed me to approach other universities in the KRI with EAP courses to ensure a wider range of respondents whilst ensuring that the respondents would be EAP students and not students who were studying a different major/ course (a consequence of convenience sampling).

The figure below (figure 3.3) shows the sampling techniques used for each phase of the study.

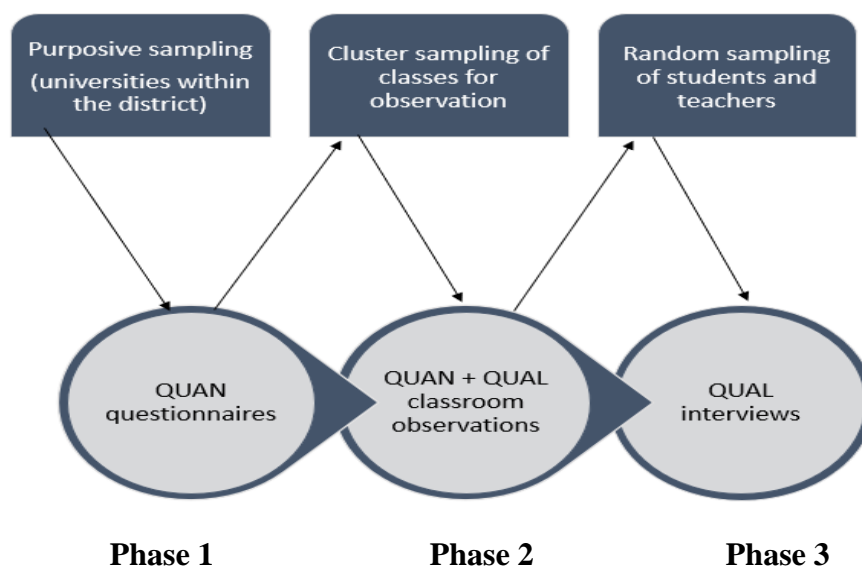


Figure 3.3 Sampling techniques used in the study

3.2.1 Sample for Questionnaires

For the questionnaires, purposive sampling was used to recruit a cohort of approximately 400 (predominantly) Kurdish students aged 18-25, from the four selected universities, University A, B, C and D who were studying either pre-sessional or in-session EAP classes at a university level. The results showed that 92% of respondents were Kurdish whilst 8% claimed Arabic was their first/ native language. To avoid data contamination and only include Kurdish students, the Arab respondents' data was not used leaving 367 questionnaires in total.

Initial access was established with the four universities which are within a 30-minute car journey from Erbil. At an educational conference in Erbil in 2015, I met teachers from local universities who gave me the contacts for their vice chancellors. After an exchange of emails with the vice chancellors, I sought permission to conduct the research. A document with all the information needed regarding the study was then emailed to the teachers who agreed to become participants. I was able to keep in contact with them (regarding my visits and timings etc) via the heads of departments who became my main contacts (gatekeepers) within the universities.

The gatekeepers in the respective institutes assisted me in contacting EAP students so that they could be informed of this voluntary study. I then met with the gatekeepers and gained access to several EAP classes (a mix of SA and MA groups). Once contact with the EAP teachers was made, the maximum number of classes for each institution were identified in order to gain maximum participants and 100 questionnaires were distributed to each university. The gatekeepers were informed that there were more questionnaires available on request. A surplus of classes was requested in the event that not all students completed the questionnaire but around 3 classes per university took part.

3.2.2 Sample for Classroom Observations

After establishing contact with the gatekeepers, I was able to contact them directly regarding observing the classes. The criteria for the observation classes given to the gatekeepers was as follows:

1. An EAP class (any subject within EAP is suitable)
2. A combination of male and female participants (some classes in Kurdistan are segregated by gender)

Both SA and MA groupings were included as it was initially thought to be an influential factor. Despite the lack of rigor in the streaming process in SA classes in Kurdistan, there were still significant differences between MA and SA classes, and this was something I wanted to investigate further. After the classes had been identified with the gatekeeper, permission from the relevant teachers to conduct the observations was sought. Within each class, three focus students (who were sitting in close proximity to me) were the main focus of the observation. Noteworthy events or features involving other students, or the teacher, were also noted during the 90 minutes. The idea was to make the observation manageable as some classes in Kurdish universities contain over 60 students and it would be impracticable to observe and listen to all the students. The students were not identified in any way and were unaware of this observation.

3.2.3 Sample for Interviews

Following the observations, the class teachers asked their students for volunteers to participate in my study. The students were reminded that they were under no obligation to participate and it was on a voluntary basis. The three focus students were the first to be asked if they would participate in interviews. If they declined, then other willing and available students were selected according to who volunteered first. This left around 5 or 6 students per class. In an attempt to protect anonymity and reduce bias, the names of the students were not noted down and a pseudonym was used in the transcripts where necessary.

Teacher selection of participants had advantages as it precluded researcher bias (see section 3.6). Teachers asking students to participate may have had some implications. For example, the teachers' selection may have been biased as they may have only chosen their best students or the most co-operative or talkative ones. To prevent this, the

teachers were asked to encourage the students to volunteer rather than be selected by the teacher. All of the teachers from the observed classes were approached and 5 out of 13 agreed to participate in an interview.

3.2.4 The Participants

The purposively selected student and teacher participants in the interviews were all fully informed of the study and had all read a translated copy of the rationale behind the study before giving consent. All approached consented to take part in the study and be recorded. All were informed that the data from the interviews would be kept confidential and all identities kept anonymous. The student and teacher participants had all been present during one of the classroom observations and interviewed immediately after.

Teacher participants

As with the student participants, purposive sampling was used to select each of the five teacher participants; Each one representing a different university and one head of department from university D. The teachers gave their consent before the interviews and observations took place and were interviewed immediately after their lessons had been observed. Below is a brief profile of the teacher participants. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘Native English speaker’ has been abbreviated to NES and refers to those teachers who were not of Kurdish origin and spoke English as their L1.

Table 3.2 Teacher participant profiles

Teacher	NES* / local teacher	Years teaching	Languages**
AFSATI1	NES	7	2
BMMATI1	Local, studied in the UK	8	2
CFSATI1	NES	12	1
DMSATI1***	NES	8	2
DMSATI2	Local	10	2

**Native English speaker **Languages spoken fluently other than English*

**** This teacher participant was also the head of department but co-taught the observed class.*

To protect anonymity, only basic details about the teachers were gathered and presented. Three teachers were NES and two were local Kurds, one of whom had studied a postgraduate degree in the UK. When selecting the teacher participants, it was important that they spoke other foreign languages and that they had learned an additional language in a formal classroom setting. This is so they could comment on their own experience of being a language student and had first-hand experience of SA/MA grouping in language classes to make informed comments on this subject.

Student Participants

A total of 17 students were interviewed following observations of their classes. The same students had also completed a questionnaire although the respondents were unidentifiable as the questionnaires were anonymous. Table 3.3 shows a profile of the student participants who were interviewed.

Table 3.3 Student participant profiles

Participant	Gender	Age	Additional Languages	High school	Self-reported English Level	Department
AFSASI1	F	19		Private/ public	Upper intermediate	Petroleum Engineering
AMSASI2	M	19		Public	Intermediate	Public Administration
AMSASI3	M	24	Farsi, Turkish	Public	Advanced	Business
AMSASI4	M	23	Farsi	Public	Upper intermediate	Business
BMMASI1	M	21	Arabic	Public	Intermediate / upper intermediate	English department
BFMASI2	F	21		Public	Upper intermediate	Primary school teaching
BMMASI3	M	18		Public	Intermediate	English department
BFMASI4	F	22	Arabic, Turkish	Private	Intermediate	Primary school teaching
CFSASI1	F	22	Arabic, Dutch	Private	Advanced / native	English department
CMSASI2	M	21	Arabic, Farsi, Turkish	Public	Intermediate	English department
CMSASI3	M	22	Arabic	Public	Intermediate	Biology
CMSASI4	M	21	Farsi, Turkish	Private	B2 – intermediate	Biology
CMSASI5	M	20	Arabic	Public	Pre-intermediate	English department
DFSASI1	F	19	Arabic, Turkish	Public	Intermediate	Sociology
DFSASI2	F	20	Arabic, Turkish	Public	Intermediate	Nursing
DFSASI3	F	21	Arabic, Turkish	Private	Intermediate	Nursing
DMSASI4	M	20	Arabic, Turkish	Private	Intermediate	Kurdish language

As all the students spoke Kurdish and English, these languages are not shown in the fourth column. The level of English in column six is self-reported and often the student participants were unsure and inaccurate. Only one student referred to the level he attained in his diagnostic test (CMSASI4); other students estimated their level, which was then confirmed by their teachers. The following sections will discuss the methods in more depth.

3.3 Questionnaires

The first phase of the study began with self-reporting questionnaires which were distributed to 400 students. In L2 motivation research, ‘...almost all motivation assessment uses some sort of self-report measure, that ... elicits the respondents’ own accounts from which to make inferences’ (Dörnyei, 2001b, p. 199). Furthermore, Dörnyei, (2001b) explains that ‘motivational data can be gathered in a number of ways...but by far the most common method has been the use of attitude/motivation questionnaires with primarily closed items...” (p. 189). Several studies discussed in the literature review in the previous chapter used questionnaires to gather data on both motivation and self-concept (Bahar, 2015; Lee and Lin, 2013; McManus and Gettinger 1996). Similarly, this research used closed-ended questionnaires to collect data on motivation, self-concept and engagement. A note was made of whether the classes were single or mixed ability in case a correlation was found between grouping style, and motivation, self-concept and engagement.

Despite being an advocate of using questionnaires in second language research, Dörnyei (2003) highlights the several disadvantages of using such instruments. He discusses the common misconception that anyone can design a questionnaire and points out that a poorly designed one could produce inadequate answers which could be unreliable. The superficiality and simplicity of the answers could also pose a problem; respondents are usually unwilling to spend long periods of time answering a questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher is obliged to make the questions sufficiently simple and straightforward to make them easy and quick to answer. Certain respondents could be unreliable or even unmotivated to complete questionnaires, which could in effect skew their answers. Then at the opposite end of the scale there could be respondents who are prone to giving inaccurate information in order to feel better about themselves (self-deception) or to ‘cushion failures, minimize faults, and maximize virtues so that we maintain a sense of self-worth’ (Hopkins et al., 1990, p. 312). Another issue is that some respondents may feel the need to ‘please’ the researchers by providing answers which they believe the researcher would be looking for. This is known as ‘prestige bias’ and is particularly common with questions relating to personal habits such as number of cigarettes smoked or frequency of bathing or even general questions related to age, race and income (Dörnyei, 2003). Similarly, the Halo effect is another disadvantage of using

questionnaires and stems from the human tendency to overgeneralize (Dörnyei, 2003; Brown, 1993). However, it could be argued that this is not unique to questionnaires but could also apply to other types of research methodologies such as interviewing and classroom observations. In addition, quantitative data is more replicable and generalisable which could be seen as more valid when using the study's recommendations in HE institutes.

3.3.1 Data Collection of Questionnaires

Each participant completed a 40-item questionnaire relating to the main constructs in the study as well as their opinions and attitudes towards being in single / mixed ability classes. Answers were given on a six-point scale. A higher score indicated stronger agreement with the statement. From the 40 questions, 12 questions were worded negatively, and these were scored in reverse. Seventeen of the items related to self-concept and were based on Liu, Wang, and Parkins' (2005) academic self-concept (ASCQ) scale (see 2.2.4). Although the original scale was designed for school age children, the wording of the selected questions was changed to make it suitable for the study (e.g., 'school' changed to 'university' and 'classwork' changed to 'coursework'). It was also adapted from the original four-point Likert scale to a six-point Likert scale which omitted the 'undecided' category usually present on odd numbered Likert scales (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010; Dörnyei, 2003). The responses ranged from 'strongly disagree' = 1 to 'strongly agree' = 6. The scale consisted of two subscales, the 9-item academic confidence (AC) and the 9-item academic effort (AE) subscales. The remaining 23 items that were interspersed into the questionnaire were adapted and revised from the MSLQ questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1991, see chapter 2.1.3, 2.3.3). These included question items on the areas of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (8 items), task value (4 items), peer learning (3 items), classroom environment (5 items) and self-efficacy (3 items). The table below gives an overall summary of the scales and measurements included in the questionnaire.

Table 3.4 Brief summary of measurements within this questionnaire

Student's perceptions of/ attitudes towards:	Number of items	Original scale
Self-concept (divided between academic effort and academic confidence)	17 (9) (8)	ASCQ (Liu, Wang and Parkins 2005)
Extrinsic motivation	4	MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1991)
Intrinsic motivation	4	
Classroom environment	5	
Peer-learning	3	
Task value	4	
Self-efficacy	3	

The two scales chosen as models for the questionnaire items in this study produced data relevant to my research questions and also showed a high level of validity and reliability. The ASCQ had a Cronbach's alpha ranging between 0.71 and 0.89 (Yorke, 2013, p. 3) and the reliability of the MSLQ scales were also proven to be robust and have 'reasonable predictive validity' (Pintrich et al., 1993, p. 811).

In order to improve reliability, all of the questions on the questionnaire were translated into Kurdish and back-translated to ensure that the students fully understood the questions. Although some researchers claim translators can threaten validity in research (due to the temptation to summarise responses), according to Hambleton (2005), back translation is a very essential part of the process of test adaptation. Following the International Test Commission Test Adaptation Guidelines (Hambleton, 1994) four stages of test adaptation that need to be followed in order to reach maximum similarity to the original questionnaire were implemented. They were:

1. '*Initial translation.*' When the original document is translated by a qualified and experienced translator who has knowledge of both languages and cultures in question. For this study, a Kurdish native translator was used who was born in the KRI and later grew up and was educated in America.
2. '*Independent reviews.*' During this stage, the translated documents are scrutinised by a panel of bilingual reviewers who have some background in the

subject. For this stage, a group of Kurdish/ English speaking colleagues read through the translations for inaccuracies. Any minor errors were amended, and the questionnaire was re-drafted.

3. *'Back translation.'* During this stage, a 'bilingual expert' should translate the translated version of the document back into the target language. In this case, a native Kurdish speaker who was independent from the study, translated the Kurdish version of the questionnaire back into English. Initially, the expert (second translator) was not allowed to see the original but after having back translated it, they then compared the two documents with the original translator and any adjustments were made.
4. *'Final check before initial administration.'* In this final stage, a native English speaker who has not seen any of the translated or original versions is required to respond to the questions and then any final adjustments can be made if necessary. For this final stage, a fellow British colleague completed the questionnaire and gave feedback on the questions.

The questionnaires were originally produced in two formats: online and paper. To reach a wider range of participants, an online questionnaire seemed the most appropriate format. A link was emailed to the gatekeepers of the 4 selected universities. The link was then forwarded to the students enrolled on either pre-sessional or in-sessional EAP courses. However, during the pilot study, the response rate was very low as it became apparent that the students preferred paper copies to the online versions. To avoid a low return rate affecting the reliability of the sample (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 77), it was decided the questionnaires would be posted out to the gatekeepers. However, the unreliability of the KRI postal system at the time of the study restricted the range of universities selected for sampling. In March 2016, 400 paper copies of the questionnaires including cover letter were hand-delivered to the 4 gatekeepers within the universities to be completed mid-semester (100 per university initially with the premise that more were available upon request). Gatekeepers were instructed to distribute the questionnaires to the EAP class teachers to complete with their classes (on average, this was around 3 classes per university). This allowed time for students to settle into their courses (see table 3.1) and time for respondents to reply before phase two (observations). The gatekeepers assured me that the questionnaires were given at the start of the day and those who agreed to participate were asked to complete the same day and return to the

gatekeepers. In this way, it enabled the gatekeepers to keep track of the questionnaires and ensure a good response rate. After a month, the gatekeepers were contacted so that I could arrange collection of the completed questionnaires to begin their analysis. Overall, there were no challenges with the gatekeepers as we were able to communicate regularly, and questionnaires were completed and returned in a timely manner.

3.3.2 Data Analysis of Questionnaires

Using SPSS software, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data from the questionnaires as they are often described as easier to organize and summarise than inferential statistics (Ary et al., 2014; Schumacher and McMillan, 1993). As a Likert scale was used for the questionnaires, the data produced was ordinal, non-parametric (Cohen et al., 2003; Dörnyei 2003). The computation for statistics of such tests are less complicated in nature but some argue that this could also mean that non-parametric tests are less powerful than their parametric counterparts (Cohen et al., 2003; Sheskin, 2003, p. 97). The statistical analysis tests used in this study were the tests for normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), Pearson correlation test, Cronbach's alpha and the Mann-Whitney U test.

3.4 Classroom Observations

In phase two of the study, classroom observations were carried out in order to gain a deeper insight into the EAP classroom. Both visual and aural information were collected in order to describe a context in detail and understand the situation (Menter et al., 2011). It gave me the chance to see what was occurring *in situ* rather than on a second-hand basis (Patton, 1990). Observations in the classroom allow researchers to monitor and observe things in the heart of the action so that they can closely observe situations which they would not normally be exposed to in data gathering via a questionnaire or interviews (Strauss and Corbin, 2008, p. 30). Observations not only capture the setting but also the atmosphere by using all the senses such as what has been heard, seen, smelled, tasted or touched (Neuman, 2006, p. 396). Although smells, tastes and touches may not be applicable to my study, the notion that Neuman is trying to portray is of an all-round picture that an observation can help to depict. Observations move beyond perception-based data (as in data from interviews) and expose behaviours and occurrences that could be unconsciously missed in other methodologies (Cohen et

al., 2003). Therefore, observations were used in this study to strengthen the data gathered from questionnaires and interviews and thus ‘triangulate’ the findings (Menter et al., 2011; Wragg, 1999).

Classroom observations, whilst having many strengths, also have several weaknesses. For example, a researcher may interpret an action or an interaction incorrectly and may not check the meaning with the participants post-observation. In order to mitigate this, I discussed my field notes with the teachers and gave them the chance to comment on them. The coding of transcripts is also more time consuming when compared to the analysis of statistical data (Bryman, 2010). In addition, unexpected occurrences which may happen during observations can be difficult to deal with and analyse. There may also be ethical considerations (see 3.6).

3.4.1 Data Collection of Classroom Observations

In order to get an in-depth view of EAP classrooms in the region, a series of 13 observations took place (3/4 per institution per month, in four different institutions) in the EAP classroom from October 2016 to May 2017. This meant that 13 different teachers were observed. Whilst the validity of such ‘one off observations’ may be brought into question, I ensured that the teachers and students who were participating in the observations were fully informed of the study prior to me entering the classroom. Prior to every observation, I introduced myself to the class (I had met the teachers before the observations) and tried to strike up a rapport with them so that they would not see me as a total stranger in their classroom. I do not feel that any students in any classroom were behaving any differently to how they would normally behave in a classroom setting. This was evidenced when the students continued to use their mobile devices and have ‘off-topic’ conversations with their peers. Upon speaking to the teachers and gatekeepers, I discovered that the students were used to observers in their classrooms such as heads of departments conducting teacher observations and other researchers. My role in the observations was as a non-participant observer. Each observation lasted the length of the class which was approximately 90 minutes; 25 minutes using a quantitative checklist and the remaining 65 minutes with qualitative field notes. Permission to video record some classes was sought but when students or teachers did not give permission, a digital voice recorder was taken into the classrooms to record the lessons. A total of 5 classes were video recorded and the remaining 8 were

only audio recorded. Despite ethical implications, using a video recorder was useful for replaying the video to explore the body language and silent interactions between the students. However, the style of recording did not impact the data collected as the information needed was gathered at the time of data collection.

Observations as a form of research can be highly structured (with pre-determined categories), semi-structured (has an agenda but still less systematic) or unstructured (non-systematic, usually undecided on agenda until after the observations have taken place). On the continuum of observations, the more structured the observation is, the easier it is to analyse the data. In a structured observation, the hypothesis is confirmed or rejected. In semi-structured or unstructured observations, the hypothesis is generated rather than be tested (Cohen et al., 2003). For the purpose of this study, the observations were semi-structured to preserve some flexibility whilst maintaining some uniformity between the different observations. The MOLT classroom observation scheme (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008) was used as a loose guide for the observation. It provided a descriptive account of the teachers' motivated practices (TMP), and the students' motivated behaviours (LMB) and actions, in the style of a checklist. The MOLT combines two frameworks: Spada and Fröhlich's (1995) classroom observation scheme (the COLT) and Dörnyei's (2001) system of motivational teaching practice (see 2.1.3, appendix 1). The MOLT highlighted observable students and teacher behaviours easily with a checklist. Every measure was taken to stay as discreet as possible while completing the checklist, in order not to alarm the students in the class or make them feel self-conscious.

Field notes were also taken after each observation. These 'direct observation notes' (Neuman, 2006) were written on site immediately after the observations took place. The reason for writing direct observation notes afterwards was that, completing the MOLT checklist during the observations left insufficient time for me to perform both tasks at once. After each observation, any notes taken were reviewed and direct observation notes were written up as a formal record. As observations were done prior to the interviews, any points or discoveries such as a certain action or comment could be followed up on in the interviews and cross-validated; a useful technique in research according to Merriam, (1998). Likewise, Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p. 2) state the "best known representatives of qualitative research studies...are those that employ the

techniques of participant observation and in-depth interviewing” confirming that these two methods go hand in hand.

3.4.2 Data Analysis of Classroom Observations

The quantitative (structured) part of the observation was analysed using descriptive statistics, tests for normality and the Mann Whitney U test on SPSS (see section 4.2). The observation field notes were coded using the NVIVO 11 software package. Reading of the relevant field notes and initial descriptive coding was undertaken using a hybrid thematic data analysis approach; a combination of both inductive and deductive analysis (Swain, 2018; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This approach incorporated both a top-down, deductive approach which produced a set of *a priori* (pre-empirical) codes deriving from the research questions and literature, and a bottom-up, inductive, data-driven process which produced *a posteriori* (post-empirical) codes deriving from the analysed data. The *a priori* codes derived from Dörnyei and Ottó’s Process model of motivation (1998) and others derived from Dörnyei’s suggested motivational strategies for the language classroom (2001a). Relevant codes were clustered and re-labelled as appropriate, and the themes were then refined for analysis. I felt the hybrid approach was congruent with the conceptual frameworks and methodology of the study as it allowed me to begin the coding process with a pre-determined coding system, and subsequently update that coding system as I content emerged during the coding process.

3.5 Interviews

The third and final phase of the research was the interview phase. The use of interviews in a study represents a move away from seeing human subjects as manipulable data but rather as a way to generate knowledge from humans, often via conversations (Kvale, 1996, p. 11). Interviews enable participants to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions and interpretations of the world from their own point of view. Unlike questionnaires, interviews enable further information to be extracted from participants and any information not gathered through questionnaires could be gathered via interview. Some of the main advantages of interviews as being able to ask further questions, probe participants for information, gain a better return rate, and being able to personalize questions (Powney and Watts, 2018; Tuckerman, 1972) Focus groups were initially considered for this study. However, it was later decided that this method may not have

suited students of a collectivist culture as they may have felt uncomfortable speaking in front of their peers. It is for this reason that individual interviews were conducted instead of focus groups.

3.5.1 Data Collection of Interviews

A total of 16 student participants and 5 teachers were interviewed about their experiences and feelings towards motivation, self-concept and engagement in EAP classes. The participants were interviewed following the classroom observations between October 2016 and May 2017.

For the purposes of this research, semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the participants. The interview schedules (see appendices 2 and 3), which included prompts to encourage participants to speak, allowed the same questions to be asked to all, but being open-ended, still allowed adequate flexibility for exploring uncharted paths (Rubin and Rubin 1995, p. 145). This style of interview enhanced the comparability and reliability of the data whilst reducing interviewer bias and subjectivity (Cohen et al., 2003; Patton, 1990). During all interviews, I ensured that the tone was neither overly friendly nor too abrupt but strived to maintain a neutral and professional tone with all participants.

The interviews lasted between 15 and 25 minutes for each participant to allow for the relevant information to be gathered. Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder after seeking permission from each candidate. Notes were written following the interviews to avoid making the interviewee feel self-conscious. This enabled me to listen more attentively to the participants and make the interview more informal and conversational in style.

3.5.2 Data Analysis of Interviews

After initial transcription of the interviews using the voice recordings and Microsoft Word, the transcripts were uploaded to the NVIVO software and coded using a hybrid approach to thematic analysis. The analysis of all qualitative data began with a reading of the transcript and then initial descriptive coding was done using the NVIVO software package. Common themes, including participants' attitudes towards streaming, personal

views on motivation and indicators of self-concept etc were identified and categorised. Relevant codes were clustered and re-labelled as appropriate. The themes were then refined for analysis. All sub-themes were inductive and emerged from the data.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

For this research project, every reasonable measure was taken to ensure maximum validity and reliability for each research collection method. Validity is defined by Bryman (2012) as ‘whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept’ (p. 171). It is a term usually used by researchers to prove their research is credible and that it could be repeated in other settings and at later times in other contexts.

Reliability is how consistent the measure of a concept is (Bryman, 2012). When considering whether a measure is reliable, there are three main factors: stability (whether it is stable over time), internal reliability (whether the scores from one indicator is equal to the scores on other indicators) and inter-observer consistency (if the opinions or decisions of one or more observers are consistent), (Bryman, 2012, p. 169). The latter does not apply to this study as I was the sole researcher conducting the observations.

There are several drawbacks to using just one observer such as the possibility of increased bias. However, Madill et al. (2000) oppose this notion and argue that the human brain, by nature, filters new experiences, expectations and beliefs thus the subjective nature of all observations and analysis (including quantitative) should be addressed and data collection and analysis methods adapted (Altheide and Johnson, 1998; Leininger, 1994). To reduce any bias or misrepresentation, observation notes were checked with the teachers for accuracy. In an attempt to improve stability and internal reliability, in the pilot and the main study, the Cronbach’s alpha of the questionnaire items was tested to measure internal consistency (DeVellis, 2003).

Some researchers, however, believe that the terms reliability and validity are misleading (Bryman, 2012). Others believe that they correlate more to quantitative research as they have too many ‘quantitative implications,’ and the terms validity and reliability are often linked to a more positivist approach (Guba, 1981). Therefore, the term

‘credibility’ has been used in relation to qualitative research, which indicates how believable and trustworthy the findings of a study are (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 301-302). In this interpretive study, numerous measures have been taken to ensure maximum credibility and trustworthiness as well as reliability and validity. For example, triangulation has been used, which according to Guba (1981), increases credibility. Other strategies such as peer scrutiny and in-depth analysis of previous related research have been carried out (Guba 1981).

My positionality as a white, British female who was recognised by students as a ‘teacher,’ would have influenced the interactions and conversations with the students and how they see me as a researcher in their classrooms. During the study, I was mindful that as a teacher who had worked and lived in the region for 6 years when the data collection took place, some of my interpretation of the observations would be influenced by my knowledge of the region, the students and their culture. I was also aware that my own biases may have influenced the participants’ responses, the observations and the very nature of the study. However, it is naïve to assume that a researcher can be fully objective, and all studies will be somewhat subjective despite a researcher’s best intentions. Therefore, what I aimed to research was the students’ and teachers’ personal views on their EAP classes and the different factors surrounding these to the best of my ability whilst maintaining maximum objectivity.

3.7 Ethics

In order to fulfil the ethical requirements for this study, several measures were taken by the researcher. After gaining ethical approval from the University of Leicester, the necessary steps were followed to get approval from the University provost and Vice Chancellors of each of the four universities involved. All participants were informed both verbally and in writing, about the study and all participants were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix 9). This applied to both the student and teacher participants. This consent form was translated into Kurdish to ensure that the participants had fully understood the instructions and the implications of being involved in this research (see appendix 4). No parental permission needed to be sought as no participants were under the age of 18. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants who completed the questionnaires in the study were not included. Participants who took part in the

interviews were asked to use a pseudonym for any names mentioned and similarly the students recorded in classroom observations did not have their true names revealed. Participant names were changed to codes. In the case of the observations, the classes were numbered for each university. The codes indicate whether the class was SA or MA, taught by a male or female teacher and which type of data it is. For example, AMSAOBS1 indicates that the recording and transcript are from University A (A), the teacher was male (M), teaching a single ability class (SA) and it was observation one of three (OBS1). The interviews are labelled as SI (student interview) and TI (teacher interview). The codes also indicate the gender of the participants, the grouping style of their class and the number of the interview from each university.

At all times, participants were aware that they had access to their questionnaires, their personal interview transcripts, and the recordings of the classroom observations. Moreover, participants were fully informed of the right to withdraw at any point within the research and were told that they had the choice not to respond to any questions asked by the researcher. Finally, all participants were informed that their notes, transcripts and any other data were to be kept in a locked office on a password protected computer that only the researcher had access to.

3.8 Pilot Study and Modifications

After gaining consent from the ethics committee at the University of Leicester, a pilot study was carried out at University A and University B in order to test all the research instruments and to check for any errors or lack of understanding of the questions. The pilot study classes were not reused in the main study. The test-retest method was also used to test for stability; the same 20 students who took the pilot questionnaires also answered them again a week later in order to check if their answers were consistent over time.

Results showed that the answers were all similar apart from 2 questions, which were consequently removed from the questionnaire. University A and B were chosen as the setting for the pilot test as A was my place of work and B was a university within a close radius to the town centre. Twenty questionnaires were completed by EAP students who were selected purposively from the 10 available EAP classes. Although an online questionnaire was devised in order to reach a larger sample of participants, liaison with

the gatekeepers showed that the majority of students preferred paper copies meaning that the online version was abandoned. The pilot study also revealed that some questions were found to be too similar and/ or confusing and were thus removed, leaving only 40 questions from the original 50. Some of the translation points were also contested by participants and were amended in preparation for the main study.

A student and a teacher were interviewed to check the interview schedule. The questions on the teacher interview schedule were suitable but the student interview schedule was amended from the original as it felt too scripted and did not allow for conversational flow. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were coded inductively. Overall, both participants claimed to be more motivated in SA classes and actively supported the fundamentals of streaming EAP classes.

Two classroom observations were carried out to test the MOLT observation scheme (appendix 1). The checklist was useful to see which motivational strategies were being implemented by the teachers. However, it was somewhat difficult to follow everyone in large class sizes which is why I focused on 3 students during the observations. Also, after 25 minutes of using the MOLT, I began to write some free notes to supplement the checklist. I also decided that the 3 students who had taken part in the lesson should be questioned immediately after the class to see how they felt, using some questions adapted from a 'post lesson teacher evaluation' scale (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008). However, for the main study, this evaluation was eliminated from the post observation interviews as it may have been unethical to ask students to criticize their teachers, particularly in a culture where the teacher is seen as the 'font of all knowledge.'

3.9 Overview

As discussed, in order to explore the motivation, self-concept and engagement of EAP students, this research employed a mixed-method design using quantitative questionnaires, qualitative and quantitative classroom observations and interviews. The strengths and weaknesses of each method were considered and the most appropriate sampling method for this type of research was selected. The rationale for 'triangulating' was that by using a variety of methods, the data would help produce in-depth findings into the self-concept and motivation of EAP students in the KRI. The following three

chapters present the findings of this mixed methods study. Chapter 4 presents the findings from phase one of the study; the quantitative self-reporting questionnaires and part of phase two; the quantitative classroom observation scheme. Chapter 5 presents the qualitative findings from phase two of the study, the EAP classroom observations, and chapter 6 presents the qualitative data from the final phase of the research; the student and teacher interviews.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Findings

This chapter presents the quantitative findings of the study collected through self-reporting questionnaires (section 4.1) and the MOLT section of the classroom observations (section 4.2). The findings in this chapter relate to the four main research questions. The table below gives a brief overview of the research questions addressed in this chapter and the corresponding hypotheses.

Table 4.1 Overview of research questions, methods and hypothesis

Research Question	Research Method	Hypothesis
RQ1: What is the relationship between: b. ability grouping and academic motivation?	Questionnaires	Hypothesis 1 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between ability grouping and academic motivation
RQ2: What is the relationship between: b. ability grouping and academic self-concept?	Questionnaires	Hypothesis 2 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between ability grouping and academic self-concept
RQ3: What is the relationship between: b. ability grouping and classroom engagement?	Questionnaires	Hypothesis 3 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between ability grouping and classroom engagement
RQ4: Are there any observable differences in: a. how the students in the single ability and mixed ability classes engage? b. the teaching practices in the single ability and mixed ability classes?	MOLT Observation scheme	Hypothesis 4 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between ability grouping and LMB Hypothesis 5 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between ability grouping and TMP Hypothesis 6 H ₀ : There is no statistically significant relation between TMP and LMB

The research questions were written with a mixed methods methodology in mind. For the quantitative part of the study, research questions 1 and 3 were designed to be answered partly by questionnaire data. Question 3 is best answered by the MOLT section of the classroom observations. The remaining questions and sub-research questions are answered using qualitative data in the following chapter.

The remainder of the chapter presents a systematic report of the data analysis process conducted through SPSS. Firstly, the descriptive statistics are presented for the questionnaire data, followed by the tests for normality and then the results of the corresponding Mann Whitney U test. Secondly, the descriptive statistics for the MOLT classroom observation data are presented, followed by the tests for normality and the relative Mann Whitney U test. The chapter concludes with a summary of the quantitative findings. A detailed discussion of the qualitative findings can be found in chapter 5.

4.1 Questionnaire findings

The following section presents the data and findings relating to the self-reporting questionnaires. Firstly, the descriptive statistics, normality testing and Mann Whitney U tests are discussed. Then for each construct, the descriptive statistics are presented followed by the results of the Mann Whitney U tests. These findings attempt to answer research questions 1,2 and 3 (see table 4.1).

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire items

The mean and median values for all the questionnaire items were computed for the whole sample and separated by university to identify any significant differences (see Table 4.2). As discussed in chapter 3, the questionnaire was adapted from both the MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1991) and the ASCQ scale (Liu, Wang, and Parkins, 2005). The MSLQ scale included questions related to self-concept, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, peer learning, classroom environment, self-efficacy and task value. The ASCQ items are further divided by academic effort and academic confidence. Descriptive statistics have been calculated for each of these constructs and are presented further on in the chapter. The scale's reliability (internal consistency) was measured as a whole and for each construct using the Cronbach's alpha (DeVellis, 2003). This scale showed a good level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.756.

As data from Likert scales is ordinal, by definition it is skewed (not normally distributed). In the case of uneven distribution, the median offers a better representation of the data than the mean (Antonius, 2004). The median value for each of the

universities in this study is 4, which does not indicate that there are vast differences between the participating universities

However, when each question is discretely analysed, more noteworthy results begin to emerge and there appeared to be a difference between universities that use SA grouping and MA grouping. This prompted an investigation into the relationship between students in the MA settings and how their data differed from the SA students. The mean and median for each questionnaire item corresponding with the MSLQ items (self-concept, intrinsic motivation etc.) was calculated per construct and the descriptive statistics are presented below (see tables 4.3 to 4.11). The significance threshold was set at .05 for this study and statistically significant results are highlighted in bold.

4.1.2 Testing for Normality – Questionnaires

To decide on a suitable test for comparing the students' questionnaire results between the two groups (MA and SA classes) the assumption of normality was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (see table 4.2 below). The Shapiro-Wilk test, assumed to be more powerful (Field, 2016), was rejected for use with the questionnaire data as it is more suited for studies with sample sizes of <50 (Yazici and Yolacan, 2007). This data in this study meets both assumptions required for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. It is measured with an ordinal scale and the observations in the two samples are completely independent of each other (Sheskin, 2003). The test hypothesis is *H₀: The sample population is not normally distributed*

Table 4.2 Tests of normality for the whole sample by MSLQ construct

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	
	Statistic	Sig.
Df=347		
Self-concept	.073	.000
Extrinsic motivation	.093	.000
Intrinsic motivation	.084	.000
Peer learning	.118	.000
Task value	.082	.000
Classroom environment	.096	.000
Self-efficacy	.092	.000

In a normal distribution, the significance value on a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (KS test) must be greater than 0.05 (sig.> .05). In table 4.2, the *P* value for all of the constructs

are < 0.05 thus these non-significant results indicate that the samples were not normally distributed, and the null hypothesis is accepted. As a result, the independent T-test could not be used therefore the non-parametric equivalent, the Mann-Whitney U Test, was used to compare the differences between the SA group and MA group data.

4.1.3 Mann Whitney U Test for questionnaires

The data produced by the questionnaires was unevenly distributed, ordinal data which consisted of two independent groups; thus, it met the assumptions of a Mann Whitney U test. This was conducted to evaluate the two different data populations and test whether the two population means (MA and SA ability groups) were equal or not. As well as testing for significance, the mean rank between the two groups (SA and MA) was calculated for each construct from the MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1991), as seen in the results section. The mean rank indicates the highest mean for each construct.

4.1.4 Results

Table 4.3 below shows the mean values for self-concept, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation were higher in the SA groups than in the MA groups. The other five constructs (task value, extrinsic motivation, peer learning and classroom environment) showed a higher mean in MA classes. The median value was higher for the MA university for both classroom environment and task value, but all other median values were identical between the two groups for all other constructs.

Table 4.3 Sum of means by ability grouping per construct

	MA			SA		
Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Self-concept	3.75	0.7110	4	3.84	0.7507	4
Self-efficacy	3.74	0.2351	4	3.99	0.4244	4
Intrinsic motivation	3.63	0.6028	3.5	3.72	0.8825	3.5
Extrinsic motivation	4.06	0.3965	4	3.89	0.5371	4
Classroom environment	3.69	0.9073	4	3.5	0.7490	3
Peer learning	4.51	0.61	5	4.2	0.84	5
Task value	3.88	0.4869	4.5	3.79	0.6349	4

However, as each construct contained varying items, the following tables show the mean, standard deviation and median for individual items.

Self-concept

Table 4.4 shows the mean for each questionnaire item related to self-concept. The Cronbach's alpha for this construct was excellent at 0.922. On these 18 items, the students from the SA universities scored higher than their MA counterparts. According to these results, the self-concept of the SA grouped students is higher than those who are in the MA groups. Further investigation was needed to see whether the grouping style is a contributing factor to this as that claim could not be made on the basis of this data alone; the qualitative data was also needed to support this assumption (see chapter 5).

Table 4.4 Self-concept by ability grouping

Items	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q1. I can follow the lectures easily.	3.81	4	4.28	5
Q4. I daydream a lot in lectures.	3.35	3	3.7	4
Q6. I am able to help my classmates in their classwork.	4.24	5	4.43	5
Q8. If I work hard, I think I can get better grades.	4.86	5	5.05	6
Q9. I pay attention to the teachers during lectures.	4.71	5	4.68	5
Q11. Most of my classmates are smarter than I am.	3.35	3	3.1	3
Q14. I study hard for my tests.	4.5	5	4.05	4
Q21. I am usually interested in my university work.	4.2	5	4.54	5
Q24. I will do my best to pass all the subjects.	4.53	5	4.57	5
Q26. I get frightened when I am asked a question by the lecturers.	2.96	3	2.82	2
Q28. I often feel like quitting university.	3.09	3	3.22	3
Q29. I am doing well in most of my modules	3.58	4	4.1	4
Q31. I am always waiting for the lectures to end.	2.9	3	3.01	3
Q33. I always do poorly in tests.	2.29	2	2.53	2
Q39. I do not give up easily when I am faced with a difficult question in my university work.	4.29	5	4.31	5
Q42. I am not willing to put in more effort in my university work.	3.44	3	3.74	4
Q43. I am able to do better than my friends in most modules.	4.07	5	4.25	5

Table 4.5 Mann Whitney U test for self-concept construct

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-concept	MA	162.54	13096.500	-1.903	0.057
	SA	183.14			

Table 4.5 shows the results of the Mann Whitney U test for self-concept. Although the SA group shows a higher mean rank than the MA group, the P value was not quite significant at 0.057. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was accepted as no statistically significant relationship was found between ability grouping and self-concept.

Extrinsic Motivation

Table 4.6 below shows the means for all extrinsic motivation questionnaire items. The sum of means for students in MA groups was higher (4.06) than those of students in the SA groups (3.89) indicating that the MA grouped students were more extrinsically motivated than the SA grouped students. There was moderate reliability on the Cronbach's alpha test (0.58).

Table 4.6 Extrinsic motivation by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q5. Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.	4.64	5	4.5	5
Q15. I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.	3.94	4	4.18	4
Q23. I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students.	3.95	4	3.58	4
Q25. The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade.	3.73	4	3.33	3

Table 4.7 presents the Mann Whitney U test result for extrinsic motivation showing that the P value is not significant at 0.198.

Table 4.7 Mann Whitney U test for extrinsic motivation

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Extrinsic motivation	MA	181.73	13670.000	-1.286	0.198
	SA	167.83			

Intrinsic Motivation

Table 4.8 displays the results for intrinsic motivation by ability grouping. Clearly, the sum of means for SA grouped students is higher (3.72) when compared with MA

grouped students (3.63). This may indicate that the SA group are more intrinsically motivated. The internal consistency was moderate at 0.511.

Table 4.8 Intrinsic motivation by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q2. In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.	4.01	4	4.75	5
Q10. The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.	2.91	3	3.08	3
Q20. In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.	4.23	5	4.16	4
Q32. When possible, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade	3.37	3	2.9	3

The Mann Whitney U test result (Table 4.9) seemed to indicate that SA had a higher mean rank than the MA, but the difference was not statistically significant at 0.325. The non-significant results of the non-parametric tests for both extrinsic and extrinsic motivation mean that hypothesis 1 is accepted as there was no statistically significant relationship between ability grouping and academic motivation (for the purpose of this questionnaire, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation).

Table 4.9 Mann Whitney U test for intrinsic motivation

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Intrinsic motivation	MA	168.08	13950.000	-0.985	0.325
	SA	178.72			

Classroom Environment

For this construct, the items collectively represent the classroom environment. However, the nature of the varying questions demanded that the items were individually analysed, and a total mean score was futile in this case. When broken down by question, Q3 (see table 4.10) gives an indication as to which students prefer MA classes whereas Q15 and Q18 are questions which would indicate that students prefer a SA class as they learn better and feel more confident in such groups. Interestingly, students who are already in MA groups have shown a preference for SA groupings according to this questionnaire. For Q24 and Q37 the SA grouped students have ranked higher. This could mean that the SA students are more self-conscious in SA groups as both items were related to self-consciousness. Overall, the MA students report that despite feeling better amongst students of varying levels, they learn better and feel more confident amongst SA grouped students. It was also found that the SA students felt more self-conscious in their groups. The Cronbach's alpha was good at 0.65.

Table 4.10 Classroom environment by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q3. I learn better when I am with people who are different levels than me.	4.53	5	4.3	5
Q14. I feel more confident amongst my peers who are the same English level as me	4.69	5	4.3	5
Q17. I learn better when I am with people who are the same English level as me.	3.48	4	2.87	3
Q24. I feel self-conscious when I speak out in the class with my peers.	2.54	2	2.74	2
Q37. I feel conscious of my English level in this group.	3.22	3	3.58	3

As can be seen in table 4.11, the mean rank for the aggregated classroom environment items was higher in MA groups and the P value showed significance at 0.011.

Table 4.11 Mann Whitney U test for classroom environment

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Classroom environment	MA	189.23	12515.000	-2.539	0.011
	SA	161.84			

Peer Learning

Overall, for the peer learning construct, students in MA groups produced a higher mean than those in SA groups. Like the Classroom environment construct above, the questions need to be analysed individually to extract any meaning. For example, a higher score on Q12 may indicate that the SA grouped students were more independent in their learning as they preferred to complete their work without peer help. Questions 21 and 35 indicated that MA students were more likely to ask for help from others. However, the Cronbach's alpha was not as strong as the other constructs at 0.379.

Table 4.12 Peer learning by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q12. Even if I have trouble learning the material in this class, I try to do the work on my own, without help from anyone.	4.51	5	4.56	5
Q21. I try to work with other students from this class to complete the course assignments.	5.12	6	4.8	5
Q35. When I can't understand the material in this course, I ask another student in this class for help.	3.9	4	3.24	3

As shown in the table below (4.13), the significant P value for the Mann Whitney U test indicated that the students in MA groups preferred peer learning and working with others.

Table 4.13 Mann Whitney U test for peer learning

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer learning	MA	188.75	12589.000	-2.459	0.014
	SA	162.23			

Task Value

The table below shows the results of the task value construct. The sum of means for the MA grouped students was higher (3.88) than those who were grouped by ability (3.79) which could indicate that students who have not been streamed value their courses and assignments more. For question 38, students were asked whether they thought the course material was useful to learn. For this particular question, the SA grouped students agreed more than the MA grouped students. The Cronbach's alpha for this construct was good at 0.61.

Table 4.14 Task value by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q16. I am very interested in the content area of this course.	4.14	5	3.96	4
Q27. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.	3.17	3	2.96	2
Q34. Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.	4.24	5	3.75	4
Q38. I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.	3.98	4	4.49	5

The table below (4.15) shows the result for the Mann Whitney U test for Task Value. Despite a higher mean rank for the MA group, the P value was not significant at 0.236.

Table 4.15 Mann Whitney U test for task value

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Task value	MA	181.11	13765.500	-1.184	0.236
	SA	168.32			

Self-efficacy

The table above shows that overall, the SA grouped students had a higher self-efficacy than those in MA groups, which is supported by literature indicating differences in self-efficacy according to ability (Oakes, 1985; Slavin, 1995; Cheung and Rudowicz, 2003). When analysing questions individually, students in the MA group claimed to understand ‘even the most difficult material’ presented on their course. It was the SA grouped students, however, that believed they would get excellent grades in the class and expected to do well (Q 7 and Q18) giving an overall mean of 3.99. The internal consistency was weak at 0.384.

Table 4.16 Self-efficacy by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q7. I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.	3.47	3.5	4.19	4
Q18. I expect to do well in this class.	3.85	4	4.29	5
Q30. I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in this course.	3.9	4	3.51	3

As per the table below (4.17), the results of the Mann Whitney U test showed a significant value of 0.026 indicating that the self-efficacy of the SA students was higher than the MA students.

Table 4.17 Mann Whitney U test for self-efficacy

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-efficacy	MA	160.63	12802.500	-2.229	0.026
	SA	184.67			

Academic Confidence and Academic Effort

Table 4.18 shows the means for the questionnaire items related to academic confidence for both MA and SA grouped students. The sum of means for SA grouped students is higher (3.66) than those who are MA (3.55) indicating that the SA students have a slightly higher academic confidence than their counterparts. The 2 questions that produced a higher mean for the MA students were related to feeling academically inferior (not as smart as others and get frightened when asked a question by the lecturer). These three questions are all negatively worded and were thus reverse coded. This could indicate that being in an MA class makes students feel less confident amongst their peers and frightened to ask questions to the lecturer.

Table 4.18 Academic confidence by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q1. I can follow the lectures easily.	3.81	4	4.28	5
Q6. I am able to help my classmates in their classwork.	4.24	5	4.43	5
Q8. If I work hard, I think I can get better grades.	4.86	5	5.05	6
Q12. Most of my classmates are smarter than I am.	3.35	3	3.1	3
Q28. I get frightened when I am asked a question by the lecturers.	2.96	3	2.82	2
Q32. I am good in most of my modules	3.58	4	4.1	4
Q33. I always do poorly in tests.	2.29	2	2.53	2
Q40. I am able to do better than my friends in most modules.	4.07	2	4.25	2

Interestingly, table 4.19 shows that SA grouped students portray a higher academic effort than those in MA groups. For questions 10 and 13, the MA students scored a higher sum of means. This may mean that the MA students studied harder for tests and paid more attention to the lecturers during lessons. Answers to these, as well as other items, provide an insight into the students' perceptions of classroom engagement. As academic effort is often defined as a component of classroom engagement (Kuh, 2009), it may be said that overall, the SA students were more engaged than the MA students in the classroom.

Table 4.20 provides a summary for the sum of means for academic confidence and academic effort, both of which were slightly higher amongst the SA students.

Table 4.19 Academic effort by ability grouping

	MA (n=154)		SA (n=193)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Q4. I day-dream a lot in lectures.	3.35	3	3.70	4
Q10. I pay attention to the teachers during lectures.	4.71	5	4.68	5
Q13. I study hard for my tests.	4.5	5	4.05	4
Q19. I am usually interested in my university work.	4.2	5	4.54	5
Q22. I will do my best to pass all the subjects.	4.53	5	4.57	5
Q28. I often feel like quitting university.	3.09	3	3.22	3
Q31. I am always waiting for the lectures to end.	2.9	3	3.01	3
Q36. I do not give up easily when I am faced with a difficult question in my university work.	4.29	5	4.31	5
Q39. I am not willing to put in more effort in my university work.	3.44	3	3.74	4

Table 4.20 Academic confidence and academic effort by ability grouping

	Academic Confidence		Academic Effort	
	MA	SA	MA	SA
Mean	3.55	3.66	3.89	3.98
SD	0.796	0.957	0.691	0.604
Median	3	3	5	4

Table 4.21 shows the results for the Mann Whitney U test for academic confidence and academic effort (the ASCQ items) split by grouping pattern. The P values did not show statistical significance but the mean rank for the SA groups for academic confidence (182.70) was higher than the MA groups (163.09). Similarly, the SA group scored a higher mean rank (181.42) than the mean rank for MA groups (164.70) concerning academic effort. This means that the SA groups scored a higher mean rank than the MA groups for both variables. However, as the P value for academic effort was not significant, null hypothesis 3 was accepted (see table 4.1).

Table 4.21 Mann Whitney U test for academic confidence and academic effort

MA (n=154) SA (n=193) Total (n=347)		Mean Rank	Mann- Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2- tailed)
Academic confidence	MA	163.09	13181.000	0.069
	SA	182.70		
Academic Effort	MA	164.70	13428.500	0.122
	SA	181.42		

4.2 Classroom observation findings

The following section presents the data and findings relating to the MOLT observation scheme. The MOLT scale used in the classroom observations had a good level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.859.

Firstly, normality test results are presented followed by the MOLT descriptive statistics and the corresponding Mann Whitney U test results. Finally, a Pearson's correlation was conducted to test for any associations between the LMB and the TMP (the aggregated variables from the MOLT observation scheme, see chapter 2.1.3). These findings attempt to partially answer research question 4 (see table 4.1).

4.2.1 Testing for normality – MOLT classroom observations

Volunteering and engagement scores were normally distributed for MA groups but not for SA groups, as assessed by Shapiro -Wilk's test ($p < .05$). Attention scores were normally distributed for both MA and SA groups, as assessed by Shapiro Wilk's test ($p < .05$).

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics for MOLT Classroom Observations

The following table (4.22) presents the descriptive statistics (mean, range and standard deviation) for the MOLT observation scheme. The LMB and TMP are presented separately.

Table 4.22 Observed frequencies for MOLT variables organised by ability grouping

Group	Statistic	Attention	Engagement	Volunteering
MA	Mean	5	5	5
	Range	5	5	2
	Std. Dev	2.64575	2.64575	1
SA	Mean	4.2222	6.2222	5.6667
	Range	9	7	9
	Std. Dev	2.94863	2.10819	2.5

The table above shows the descriptive statistics for the MOLT observation scheme for LMB between the two variables – SA and MA groups. According to the means, the SA groups showed more frequent engagement and volunteering, but the MA group showed a higher frequency of attention.

4.2.3 Mann Whitney U test for MOLT observations

A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in volunteering, attention and engagement scores between SA and MA groups (see 4.23) Median volunteering scores for SA groups (6) and MA groups (5) were not statistically significantly different, $U=8$, $z= -1.045$, $p=0.296$. Median engagement scores for SA groups (5) and MA groups (4) were not statistically significantly different, $U=8.5$, $z= -.950$, $p=0.342$. Median attention scores for SA groups (4) and MA groups (4) were not statistically significantly different, $U=12$, $z= -.281$, $p= 0.779$. This means the null hypothesis was retained as there were not any statistically significant differences between ability grouping and LMB (see hypothesis 4, table 4.1).

Table 4.23 Mann Whitney U results for LMB

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]
Volunteering	8	-1.045	0.296	.373 ^b
Engagement	8.5	-0.95	0.342	.373 ^b
Attention	12	-0.281	0.779	.864 ^b

A second Mann Whitney U test looked at the TMP but again, the null hypothesis was retained as there were no statistically significant differences between the SA and MA groups (see hypothesis 5, table 4.1).

Table 4.24 Mann Whitney U test for TMP

TMP	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]
Class applause	10.5	-0.856	0.392	.600 ^b
Effective praise	8.5	-1.106	0.269	.373 ^b
Self or peer correction	11	-0.487	0.626	.727 ^b
Process feedback	4	-1.871	0.061	.100 ^b
Neutral feedback	12.5	-0.208	0.835	.864 ^b
Team competition	6	-1.581	0.114	.209 ^b
Individual competition	13.5	0	1	1.000 ^b
Tangible task product	9.5	-0.807	0.419	.482 ^b
Intellectual challenge	9.5	-0.974	0.33	.482 ^b
Creative interesting fantasy	5.5	-1.54	0.124	.145 ^b
Personalisation	5.5	-1.54	0.124	.145 ^b
Tangible reward	13.5	0	1	1.000 ^b
Groupwork	0	-2.569	0.01	.009 ^b
Pair work	5.5	-1.52	0.129	.145 ^b
Referential questions	4	-1.849	0.064	.100 ^b
Promoting autonomy	13	-0.1	0.921	1.000 ^b
Promoting cooperation	6.5	-1.34	0.18	.209 ^b
Scaffolding	13	-0.097	0.923	1.000 ^b
Arousing curiosity	5.5	-1.514	0.13	.145 ^b
Promoting instrumental integrative values	3	-2.052	0.04	.064 ^b
Establishing relevance	11	-0.483	0.629	.727 ^b
Signposting	10	-0.72	0.471	.600 ^b
Social chat	8.5	-1.029	0.304	.373 ^b
Individual seat work	13.5	0	1	1.000 ^b
Individual students speaking	2.5	-2.193	0.028	.036 ^b
Display questions	7	-1.258	0.208	.282 ^b
Choral work	10.5	-0.853	0.394	.600 ^b
Ss listen passively Ss	12.5	-0.196	0.845	.864 ^b

4.3.4 Pearson's Correlation test

A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between LMB and TMP in 12 different EAP classes. These were the computed variables of all MOLT items LMB and TMP which are aggregates of several variables. The results are shown in table 4.25.

Table 4.25 Pearson's correlation test results

		TMP
LMB	Pearson Correlation	.690*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	12

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was a statistically significant, positive correlation between TMP and LMB across the four universities, $r(10) = .690$, $p = (< .005)$. This meant that teaching practices had a positive effect on the students' motivated behaviour. Therefore, the null hypothesis (hypothesis 6) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

4.3 Summary

This chapter presented the quantitative findings from both the self-reporting questionnaires and the quantitative MOLT checklist from the classroom observations. Using both descriptive statistics and data from non-parametric tests, the results were arranged according to the relevant research questions for this chapter.

From visual inspection of the results of the descriptive statistics for the self-reporting questionnaires, the SA groups had higher means than the MA groups on three constructs; self-concept, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. The descriptive statistics for the aggregated self-concept items also showed higher academic confidence and academic effort means for students in SA groups. MA groups scored higher on the remaining constructs of extrinsic motivation, classroom environment, peer-learning and task value items. The Mann Whitney U test results mirror these findings and confirm them. The P value was significant for 3 of these constructs; classroom environment, self-efficacy and peer learning. The classroom environment items indicated that the MA students preferred ability grouping but felt more confident and learned better amongst peers of the same level as them (SA group). The SA students reported that they felt more self-conscious speaking in class amongst their peers and felt more self-conscious of their English level in their groups. The positive self-efficacy result indicates that the SA students felt more confident about their potential achievements in their respective classes. The peer learning items indicated the MA students were more likely to ask for help and work with others whereas the SA students preferred to work alone even if they

struggled to understand. This may relate to their self-concept and could mean that the SA students were embarrassed to ask for help as they were supposedly in a level-appropriate group. However, the other constructs did not result in significant P values.

The descriptive statistics from the MOLT analysis showed that the mean ranks for attention were higher in the MA classes but engagement and volunteering were higher in the SA classes. The results of the Mann Whitney U test for the MOLT scheme also mirrored these findings, except for attention scores which were the same for both groups. However, the P values were not significant.

Overall, 5 of the 6 null hypotheses were accepted and only hypothesis 6 was rejected. This means there was no statistically significant relationship between ability grouping and academic motivation, academic self-concept, classroom engagement, LMB or TMP. Only hypothesis 6 was rejected which meant that there was a statistically significant relationship between TMP and LMB on the Pearson's correlation test. The next two chapters will present the qualitative data and findings for the study.

Chapter 5: Qualitative findings - Classroom Observations

The following chapter presents a description of the classrooms and the qualitative findings from the 13 classroom observations with the 13 different teachers. As motivation and self-concept are considered unobservable, the observations focused on the visible signs of engagement. This chapter specifically addresses the following research questions:

RQ4: Are there any observable differences in:

- a. how the students in the SA and MA classes engage?
- b. the teaching practices in the SA and MA classes?

This chapter begins by discussing some general information about the classrooms used in the observations. The further sections present the data organised by themes and then sub-divided by the relevant research questions. The themes are also presented in a table format. Some additional emerging themes are presented at the end of each section. The discussion is then illustrated with relevant extracts from the observation field notes.

5.1 Description of the classrooms

The classes in university B were all MA classes as the university does not adopt a streamed classes approach. As seen below in table 5.1, MA students ranged from beginners to intermediate level English. The rest of the classes in the study claimed to be SA classes, which ranged from elementary to intermediate. The SA universities all described different methods of separating their students by ability. University A used the PTE academic test – an externally recognised online exam which gives the students a level which aligns with the CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference. There are six CEFR levels ranging from A1 to C2. These levels indicate whether the students are a basic, independent or proficient user of English (Council of Europe, 2018). Similarly, University C use the Oxford online placement test which also gives the students a CEFR level. University D, on the other hand, used an in-house test designed by their head of department, which gave the students a level of beginner, intermediate or advanced.

Students in the MA classrooms worked more individually on tasks, which may have been due to the large classroom sizes and low ability levels. The classroom layout in all the MA classes meant students were sitting in rows of desks facing the front, which may have impeded group work. The teachers of these classes may have assumed that low ability students would not be able to learn collaboratively with their peers, and thus avoided group work. The structure seen in SA classes was mainly collaborative where the students worked in small groups or in pairs at their desks. Some of the layouts in SA classrooms saw students grouped around tables and in some cases, tables were moved to accommodate group work (For an example of the layouts see appendix 8).

Table 5.1 shows basic information about each classroom observation. The codes in the 'observation' column all refer to the teacher and observation (see chapter 3, section 3.7). The third column indicates whether the teacher was a NES or a local Kurdish teacher (local). The other columns present seating arrangements, class size, student gender and English level of the students. The key to these levels is shown in table 5.1.

Certain classrooms had obvious discrepancies in gender ratio. University B and C had a much higher percentage of females in the class. In university B, 61% of students in the observed classes were female. At university A, there were equal numbers of males and females overall. University D, a public university in a very rural area, was the only one where more males attended than females. This may be due to the location of the university which is surrounded by villages where there is a higher number of illiterate citizens compared to the cities. It is common in these areas for girls to finish going to school around age 14 when they stay at home with their mothers to learn how to carry out household chores etc.

Table.5.1 Classroom observation basic data

Observation	Seating arrangements	NES/ Local teacher	Public (PB) / private (PR)	Class size	Gender		Level*
					M	F	
AFSAOBS1	On triple desks and one quad in rows facing the front	NES	PR	9	5	4	B1 INT
AFSAOBS2	Double desks in 4 rows all facing the front but 4 sitting alone	NES	PR	14	9	5	B1 INT
AMSAOBS3	Double desks in rows facing front	NES	PR	11	3	8	B1 INT
BFMAOBS1	Triple desks in 3 rows all facing the front	Local	PB	44	11	33	INT
BMMAOBS2	Triple desks in 3 rows all facing the front.	Local	PB	52	28	24	INT
BMMAOBS3	Double desks in rows facing the front	Local	PB	37	12	25	BEG
CFSAOBS1	3 long oblong tables in parallel, students all facing each other across desks.	NES	PR	18	9	9	INT
CFSAOBS2	Double and triple desks facing the front	NES	PR	18	9	9	ELM / BEG
CFSAOBS3	Double desks in rows facing front	NES	PR	19	4	15	P-INT / INT
CMSAOBS4	In groups seated around tables across the room	NES	PR	14	3	11	P-INT
DFSAOBS1	Gathered around 4 round tables, all in the centre of the room.	Local	PB	20	13	7	ELM/ BEG
DFSAOBS2	Double desks in 4 rows facing the front	Local	PB	46	27	19	P-INT
DMSAOBS3	No desks all sitting around the room in a horseshoe shape facing the front	Local	PB	23	13	10	BEG/ P-INT

**ELM=Elementary, BEG= Beginners, P-INT = Pre-intermediate, INT – Intermediate*

In most classes, the students sat in gender groups and rarely mixed; this reflects the Kurdish culture where males and females usually dine and socialise separately, even within the familial home. In several classes, when teachers called for group or pair work if numbers were disproportionate, there was an immediate, visible discomfort amongst the students who would try to be within single gender groups. One exception to this was in university A where interestingly, in AMSA OBS3, genders mixed on double desks and in AFSA OBS2, the students worked in mixed gender groups when working on tasks. This is unusual given the culture in the KRI.

In University A, a private university, each air-conditioned classroom had more modern furniture, but the building was more dated and there were no smart boards, only whiteboards. All books were provided for the students from the university library on a semester loan.

University B, a public university just outside of the city centre, did not have air-conditioned classrooms as they had large, noisy air coolers at the windows which echoed around the large classrooms. The buildings and the classroom furniture were very dated. All books were provided by the university as part of their course.

University C, private and the newest campus in the study, had whiteboards in each room. Each air-conditioned classroom was bright with lots of windows. All textbooks were provided by the university free of charge (included in the tuition fees) and students kept these books at the end of their course.

University D, an older public university in a very rural area, also did not have air-conditioning in the classrooms. During one of my visits in the summer, the classrooms were very basic and stuffy, and it was difficult to concentrate in the extreme summer heat. There were no smartboards in this university and not all classrooms had whiteboards; some still had chalkboards. This may have been due to the lack of government funding for universities -particularly in rural areas, which often get neglected. I did not see any books, but students had been given photocopies of the relevant pages they were studying by their teachers.

The infrastructure in the four universities differed in terms of electricity depending on whether it was private or public. For example, in public universities, daily electricity

cuts were common due to a lack of generators and inadequate electricity across the region. Privately owned and funded universities had generators to prevent the projector and computers going off. Nevertheless, during an observation at university C (private), there was a power cut just as the teacher was checking the work. Only the smart board stayed on because it was connected to a special generator. The students, who would be used to regular power cuts at home, did not seem concerned by the cuts and continued to work in the darkness until the lights came back on.

5.2 Engagement in SA and MA classes

The following section analyses the findings in relation to RQ4a: Are there any observable differences in how the students in SA and MA classes engage?

Students' classroom engagement, particularly the social aspect, can be facilitated or impeded by other students in the class (Svalberg, 2009). This means that the grouping style of the classroom, SA or MA, may have an impact on classroom engagement. The purpose of these classroom observations was to explore EAP classes empirically for any relationship between teaching practices, ability grouping and engagement. Two main themes which emerged were: Influence of the learner group and Task conflict. Table 5.2 shows the sub-themes for this section.

Table 5.2 Engagement and sub-themes

Main themes	Sub-themes
Influence of learner group	Classroom engagement
	Cohesiveness (of the learner group)
	University environment
Task Conflict	Classroom layout
	Available resources
	Distracting influences

5.2.1 Classroom Engagement

Engagement can be difficult to measure and observe. For the purposes of these classroom observations, a note was made every 60 seconds to see whether the majority of students appeared engaged. In addition to this, 3 focus students were observed in the classes (see chapter 3.4.1). The types of engagement observed were either cognitive, behavioural or emotional (see 2.3.1), (Fredericks et al., 2004). There was a total of 18 references to positive engagement in the observation notes, only one of which referred to university B, the MA university:

Overall, although it was a large class and a lot of social chat was going on, the students appeared to enjoy the class and around half were engaged and actively participating by giving examples and volunteering to answer questions.

[BMMAOBS2]

The SA classes often appeared more engaged and focused on their tasks than the MA classes. University A classes appeared the most cognitively, behaviourally and emotionally engaged, as shown by their attentiveness, visible enjoyment, and task completion, followed by university C.

The students were all listening carefully and focusing on the task in the book. The tasks appeared very engaging and the students appeared to enjoy their time in the class. They completed all the tasks set for them. [AMSAOBS3]

The students are all engaged and appear to be paying attention at this point, most offering answers to the teacher's questions. [CFSAOBS3]

Both universities were private and consequently had smaller class sizes (11 students and 19 students respectively) which enabled more frequent group/ pair work. This, in turn, may have facilitated better behavioural and emotional engagement.

Not all the classes in the study showed such positive indicators of engagement. Eleven out of 17 references to disengagement came from MA classes. The large class sizes (minimum of 40 students in each class) in large rooms meant that students at the back of the room were completely cognitively disengaged from the task and the teacher. Sitting at the back myself, visibility and audibility of the teacher were often impaired which would also impede any form of engagement with the teacher.

The students at the back of the classroom appeared to be sitting passively and didn't engage with the teacher at all during the lesson. They had no books in front of them and some didn't have desks either as they sat cramped around a few tables. [BFMAOBS1]

In the extract above, the students demonstrated little evidence of being cognitively engaged and appeared to make very little effort to interact with the teacher in the lessons. They may have had a lower level of English or may not have understood the lessons. In some cases there were around 5 students cramped around small desks with no writing space which may have also impacted on their engagement.

Signs of cognitive disengagement from SA classes included students using mobile phones and chatting in Kurdish (about non-related topics) for a length of time. The difference in the SA classes, however, was that social conversations and device usage did not last as long as in the MA classes and pertained to one or two individuals rather than large groups.

Overall, the empirical observations showed varying levels of engagement between the SA and MA groups. The SA groups, particularly in university A, appeared the most willing to engage and interact in the lessons. This may have been due to the smaller class sizes, which allowed the students more focused class time as they were not competing with poor visibility and audibility as in the MA classes.

5.2.2 Cohesiveness (of learner group)

For motivational strategies to be effectively employed, certain preconditions must exist, one of the three most important being 'group cohesiveness' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). In this thesis, group cohesiveness relates to group dynamics and includes elements such as how the group co-operate, interact and collaborate with each other on group tasks. During the observations, there were several examples of cohesiveness in the different classes (students working harmoniously and in collaboration without animosity). In total, there were 9 references to group cohesiveness in the field notes, 1 from an MA class and 8 from SA classes, from which some examples are below:

All are following the text apart from one female student who is daydreaming until the teacher asks '(name) are you with me?' She clearly wasn't following

the text but was prompted by others to find the place in the text and read.

[AFSAOBS1]

The teacher then jokes that the make-up video would be interesting for a male student (he names him). The class laughs at the joke including the named student who doesn't seem embarrassed by this. [AMSAOBS3]

Above, the first extract demonstrates that most students are cognitively engaged as they are focused on the task and hence their end goal. The students actively encouraged peers to stay focused in the class to be able to reach that goal. This indicated that the students were mostly collectively goal oriented and cared enough to encourage their peers to do well; a sign of cohesiveness and social engagement. The second extract indicated that the students all had a good rapport with each other and the teacher. As the student showed no sign of being offended and laughed with his classmates at the joke, this indicated he was comfortable and relaxed in his group where they collectively felt that they could joke with each other; a facilitator of affective engagement (Svalberg, 2009) which indicates the students are emotionally engaged (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Pleasant social chat between students can be another indicator of group cohesiveness. Generally, there was more social chat in the MA classes than the SA classes, but in most cases, it was not connected to the classroom activity and the off-topic conversations were not in aid of a shared common goal. The most obvious example of group cohesiveness could be seen when students would work in pairs or as a group. The students in the MA classes would often turn and talk to the people around them for help if they did not understand the task, which could be seen as an indicator of cohesiveness. However, this may have been because they did not understand the teachers' instructions in English as the MA students showed few signs of being either cognitively or emotionally engaged with the teacher or the tasks.

The SA students readily worked on tasks in pairs unless otherwise instructed by their teachers. The MA students did not do this and preferred to work individually. This may have been due to a lack of confidence or being generally less proficient than the SA students.

5.2.3 University environment

In this section, the term ‘University environment’ is used to include anything related to classroom ecology, the demographics within the university and the socio-economic area. Certain things occur in universities in Iraqi Kurdistan which may seem odd or unacceptable to outsiders, such as blocks of absence and differential treatment between groups.

Across the universities, it seemed to be accepted by the teachers that students would be absent during the first and last weeks of term. For this lesson in university D, only 20 from 26 attended. I asked a teacher at the end if all of her students were present for the lesson and was informed that some students felt they *‘didn’t need to come’* because it was the beginning of the second half term and *‘they don’t learn much in the first week back anyway.’* [DFSAOBS1] The teacher was not concerned by this.

Compared to the other universities, University A has a reputation for being very strict with their students. An example of this was seen in AMSAOBS3 when a teacher told his class (group A) that the other foundation course group (group B) would be having 4 weeks holiday but group A would only be getting a week or two at most because they *‘need to work harder.’* The students appeared to agree, but during the next task, small groups of students were discussing this decision and were obviously disgruntled at it, which in turn affected their emotional and cognitive engagement. Agreeing to attend the extra two weeks of lessons may indicate the students’ level of respect for the teacher and his authority, especially considering how unlikely it was that the students’ absence would result in any sanctions. It is not known, however, how many actually attended.

In summary, where the students were aware of discrepancies in the treatment of different groups, the university environment may have affected the students’ cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement and potentially motivation.

5.2.4 Classroom layout

The classroom layout, particularly seating arrangements, can promote positive academic and behavioural outcomes in the classroom (Wannarka and Ruhl, 2008). Each classroom varied in layout and style, but most students sat at double desks facing the front of the class where the teacher was standing. This was the layout in all of the MA

classes except University B. Their classrooms and classes were very large, and it was almost impossible for the students at the back to hear what the teacher was saying. Most of the SA classrooms were laid out in preparation for group work. In two classrooms, the desks were laid out in clustered groups (CMSAOBS4, DFSAOBS1) which helped promote interactive group work and thus task engagement as seen in the observations.

In one of the classes, DMSAOBS3, the teacher chose to position the chairs in a horseshoe shape facing the teacher who was sitting casually on top of a desk. There were no tables for the students. This made the class seem less formal and the task engagement in that class was particularly high. The teacher in question aimed to increase task engagement by seating the students in this way to prevent students playing with their phone and for increased visibility. This layout, however, may not suit all types of classes as students may feel exposed if unable to hide behind a desk.

Overall, the classroom layout may have influenced the quality of the learning experiences and consequently student engagement. When students were unable to hear and were seated in large, cramped classrooms, their task engagement tended to be lower. This was evident in the larger MA classes and the one SA class which had a particularly high number of students in it.

5.2.5 Available resources

The resources available in each classroom varied between the universities. During the observations, it was usual to see students with no equipment in front of them (pens, paper etc) and this was similar in all four universities, particularly universities B and D, which were especially resource poor. For example, in DFSAOBS1, a class of 20 students, there were only 4 worksheets which meant only one per table; 5 students sharing one sheet. The students took it in turns to answer some questions each, meaning some were sitting idle until the teacher announced: '*Change who is writing!*' every few minutes. The students who had been relieved, then turned to have other conversations and became disengaged from the task until it was their turn to write again. I later discovered that this technique was used because of the lack of resources. The teacher had been told to 'be careful' with paper and supplies by her line manager so she planned to re-use these worksheets with another class. Notably, many of the EAP classrooms, including one that was observed, were in portacabins outside the main building. Apparently, there was no money in the budget to extend the buildings, which were

becoming increasingly overcrowded with UG1 students. Despite the attempt at providing more space, it was still inadequate in some cases.

There appeared to be too many chairs but not enough desk space, which meant some students were leaning [papers/books] on their legs or on folders instead of having space at the desk. [DFSAOBS1]

The students without desks became quite restless and often began chatting to their nearby peers, which negatively impacted their concentration and engagement.

The negative effect of the lack of resources on the students' engagement was visible in certain classrooms. These were mainly in the public universities which were suffering from a lack of government funding. As expected, the private universities appeared to have better facilities than the public ones. Even in the private universities, however, those students who did not have the correct books and equipment with them soon became restless and were less likely to be focused on the task. The classrooms where all had access to books and resources, such as in university C, were the ones where the highest level of student engagement was observed.

5.2.6 Distracting influences

Distracting influences range from students using mobiles, socially chatting in Kurdish and visitors to the classroom (a researcher observing their class). During the observations, there were several examples of the above. For example, in 7 of the 13 classes, students were openly playing on their phones and scrolling through social media. In University B, all classes showed evidence of this, but it was mainly when students did not have a desk, book or a task in front of them so naturally became distracted by their devices (see previous section 'Classroom layout'). These actions may go unnoticed in large classes, as the following extracts demonstrate:

One student was discreetly scrolling through social media on his phone but the rest of the 36 students were all listening attentively. [BMMAOBS3]

I noticed 4 students with no book in front of them. This was for the duration of the lesson, but the teacher didn't notice or come around to check during the lesson. A few other students that I could see were checking Facebook on their phones and discussing different social media posts from friends. [BFMAOBS1]

This was also true in CFSAOBS3 where a student who was a latecomer to the class had to sit leaning her work on her knee due to the lack of desk space. This may have been the reason why she became distracted by her device. Within the same class, students often began chatting instead of working on the set task and when they did not know the answers, began to talk in Kurdish to their peers about other topics, or began scrolling on their mobile phones. This indicated that they had become bored with the activity or they may not have known the answer. During CFSAOBS3, a teacher approaches some students who are not on task:

After a few minutes, the teacher notices some students who haven't written anything. When asked why, they respond 'we already know this' to which the teacher replies 'Yes, but I need you to write it down so I can also check your writing.' It is not clear whether the students actually knew the material or whether they were just tired of the activity. [CFSAOBS3]

During an observation, it is difficult to tell whether a student is bored with an activity and whether this boredom is due to the task. However, in this case, the students claimed to 'already know' everything about the task, they took out their devices and chatted to each other.

AFSAOBS1 was the only classroom where there appeared to be strict rules on the usage of devices. The teacher challenged the students about the usage of their mobile phones whereas in the other 12 classes, there did not appear to be any rules in place regarding this.

My presence as a researcher in the classroom may have been a distracting influence, as shown below.

Halfway through the lecture, a few students approached me as the teacher was talking to the class. They asked me if they could add me on Facebook and take selfies with me, to which I politely refused and asked them to take their seats and focus on the lecture. [BFMAOBS1]

There were not many native English-speaking people or foreigners living and working in the area where this university is based so it was possible that these students had never seen or communicated with one. Some students also became distracted by others

speaking off topic in Kurdish which may have been due to boredom or being disengaged.

In sum, students appeared less engaged in classrooms where the majority of students had become distracted by their mobile phones. These classrooms were mainly the MA classes and CFSAOBS3. Device usage often led to chatting in Kurdish and this would then negatively affect student engagement. In all other classes, particularly in university A, the teachers were stricter on device usage. This may be one of the reasons for a higher level of engagement in university A.

5.2.7 Summary

The students' engagement varied across universities and classrooms. Mostly, the classrooms all fostered pleasant and supportive environments. University A and C, the private universities, had more cohesive learner groups and the learners appeared more behaviourally, cognitively and emotionally engaged in their lessons than in university B and D. The students in the two private universities appeared more emotionally and behaviourally engaged, perhaps as they had better resources. Their smaller classrooms also allowed for more efficient classroom layouts with better visibility and audibility. In university B and C, mobile phones and other devices became a distracting influence for several students and in some cases affected the cognitive engagement of entire groups within the class. Thus, boredom appeared to be the first impediment to engagement and then electronic devices were a further hindrance.

5.3 Motivational teaching practices in SA and MA classes

In every classroom, the teacher plays a key role in creating conditions which are conducive to cognitive engagement. Through appropriate task presentation, modelling, feedback and praise, teachers can have a direct motivational influence on their students (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). These influences, along with others listed below, form the following sub-themes.

Table 5.3 Learning experience and teachers' motivational influence and sub-themes

Main Themes	Sub-themes
Quality of learning experience	Coping potential
	Pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere
	Peer-role modelling
	Self and social image
Teachers motivational influence	Classroom goal structure
	Classroom management
	Relevance of teaching materials
	Task presentation
	Feedback
	Praise
	Promoting student autonomy
	Teacher-student rapport
	Speaking Kurdish or another language

This section presents

and analyses the findings for RQ4b: *Are there any observable differences in the teaching practices in SA and MA classes?* ‘Motivational teaching practices’ is divided into two main themes in this section: ‘Quality of learning experience’ and ‘Teachers motivational influence.’ These derive from ‘Creating the basic motivational conditions,’ (Dörnyei 2001a) and ‘Executive motivational influences,’ (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). ‘Quality of learning experience’ covers any observable effort to increase the students’ academic motivation and/or engagement such as the provision of a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere and coping potential. ‘Teachers’ motivational influence’ refers to any observable effort from the teacher to promote, maintain and protect the students’ motivation in the classroom, including modelling, praise and classroom goal structure.

5.3.1 Coping potential

There were several occurrences within the lessons where teachers demonstrated ‘scaffolding’ to aid the students’ coping potential (ability to cope with a task); a factor which can increase the likelihood of goal accomplishment and consequently an individuals’ positive motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). As it was a relatively small class, the teacher in AFSAOBS1 was able to monitor her students closely and make a decision on whether they were coping with the tasks.

The teacher says 'Ok, I gave you 15 minutes, you should be reading the text now' and increases their time limit for another 5 minutes. Seeing that some struggle with the text and seeing some wavering off task, she asks 'Shall we read the text together?'

In AFSAOBS2, the teacher recognised that she was teaching a challenging lesson (transition signals in writing) thus to aid student understanding she spoke and enunciated each word very clearly. She also arranged the activities so students had a simple introduction into the task. When choosing a volunteer to read aloud, she approached the students to check they were comfortable with reading aloud to avoid embarrassing them. She also reassured students that having errors in first drafts of writing is both normal and perfectly acceptable at this level and that they would produce a good piece of work if they followed the writing process. Following each activity, she checked understanding by inviting questions from the students.

In AMSAOBS3, recognising that some students were shy and uncomfortable answering questions about unknown vocabulary, the teacher asked them to underline 'difficult' words from the text, then requested they write them on the whiteboard. In this way, the new vocabulary was highlighted, but no student had to admit to not knowing the words.

Similarly, in CFSAOBS1, which was a low ability group, the teacher had carefully planned the activities so that the end-product was a written paragraph. This was through model sentences, group elicitation of vocabulary and simple gap-fill sentences. The students themselves were surprised by how much they had produced by the end of the lesson and it seemed to boost their confidence. By carefully structuring and scaffolding the activities, the teacher ensured the students were able to reach their potential in the lessons.

5.3.2 Pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere

Students are more likely to be engaged and motivated if their teachers are approachable and establish an inviting learning environment (Bryson and Hand, 2007). There were several classrooms demonstrating strong teacher-student rapport, which helped foster a very pleasant, supportive atmosphere.

In University A, the teachers used different ways of making their students feel comfortable such as walking around and checking all are on task and understand the

activity. They shared jokes with the students over her 'bad drawing' on the board and demonstrated body language that showed they were caring and supportive such as leaning down to talk to students rather than talking while standing straight. The teacher ensured the students felt supported and relaxed in their classrooms by using humour and giving individual one-to-one attention.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to large class sizes, this was not observable in any University B classrooms. The teacher remained 'fixed' at the front of the class for most of the time as the focal point for all students. This gives the 'font of all knowledge' impression and is traditional and typical of Kurdish classrooms. However, it made the atmosphere less relaxed and more formal.

In University C, the teachers also created a pleasant and supportive environment by welcoming their students into the class individually and smiling a lot. They walked around to check understanding and appeared to know their students well.

University D class teachers also had a unique way of making their students feel relaxed, but one classroom in particular was unique in its atmosphere. In DFSA OBS1, the teacher had managed to create a familial environment through the way the teacher interacted with his students and verbally emphasised his role as a big brother to younger siblings rather than a teacher/ student relationship.

5.3.3 Peer role modelling

Peer role modelling is considered to be one of the 'Executive motivational influences' from the actional phase of the Process Model of Motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). There was a total of 9 mentions of peer role modelling in the classroom observation notes, all from SA classes. In one case, AFSA OBS1, a student attempted to leave the class early to study for his impending exam, but the teacher prevented this by telling him he could consult with other students who had done the exam to help him revise. By doing so, the teacher actively encouraged students to seek help from their classmates, in other words, peer role modelling. This was also demonstrated in a few classrooms where selected 'fluent' students gave the answers using good pronunciation and may have encouraged others in the class, which appeared to be the teacher's intention. In DFSA OBS2, the teacher set a group task and asked for a spokesperson from each group to present their findings. The more capable students were deliberately chosen to

demonstrate good practice. Whilst encouraging to some, it may have intimidated others and did not give everyone a chance to speak out in class.

5.3.4 Self and social image

‘Self and social image’ is one of the dimensions of ‘Executive motivational influences.’ It looks at whether something is compatible with social norms and /or an individual’s self-concept (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). Despite its importance, this was not observed in the classrooms apart from on the following occasion:

A female student reminds the teacher of a joke she told ‘You can’t find a man in Kurdistan who pushes in a chair like you can’t find a man in Kurdistan who doesn’t smoke.’ She says, ‘it’s very bad.’ The teacher agrees and says ‘yeah, but you can teach your children to not do those things,’ and she agrees.

[AMSAOBS3]

The student mentioned how many males do not push their chair back under the table after class and began to joke about it, but the teacher here promoted critical thinking by redirecting the comment round to the student and encouraged her to think about how she could help change any situations.

Etiquette and showing respect to others is a very important part of Kurdish culture. In university B and D, there were occasions where the teachers addressed the students differently according to their gender. In the Kurdish language, ‘*Kak*’ is used before a male forename to mean ‘brother’ and is used as a sign of respect. The equivalent for females is ‘*Khan*’ or ‘*Khanim*’ which loosely translates as ‘lady’ or ‘Miss’ but is used less frequently.

At that point, a male student was chatting at the back with his friends and the teacher called out his name as ‘*Kak* (name).’ However, when he called on the female students, he simply addressed them by their first name and didn’t add the ‘*Khan*’ which is the equivalent of ‘*Kak*’ for females. He did this every time he called on a male student for the answers. [BMMAOBS3]

This was similar to a DFSAOBS2 where a female teacher also addressed the men more respectfully. As university B and D are public universities, they seemed to adopt a more traditional approach to etiquette and teachers and students addressed each other

more formally, particularly the men. In the private universities, there are more NES teachers, therefore, such terms were not observed. In this case, self and social image are less related to the SA/ MA divide and more related to the public / private university divide.

5.3.5 Classroom goal structure and need significance

Setting class goals can directly affect performance by encouraging students to persist with tasks and direct their attention and effort to the activities (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). This focuses their attention and may help them to engage with tasks more effectively. From the 13 observed classes, 11 of them started with the teachers introducing the aims/ objectives of the lesson; some orally and some projected on the board. AFSAOBS2 even had her students copy the objectives into their notebooks so they had a visual reminder of the writing process (the subject of her lesson). The two classes which did not have any clear aims or objectives were MA classes from university B.

Classroom structures are either individualistic, competitive or cooperative (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). Although the students had a strong sense of competition (see 6.4.1), this was only encouraged by two teachers in different universities. In CMSAOBS4, the teacher asks the students: *'Read the text and write two questions for your friends. Let's see who writes the better questions.'* Similarly, in DFSAOBS2, the teacher claps her hands loudly and says *'Ok, we will see who is the better group.'*

Encouraging students to work collaboratively can increase group cohesion. AMSAOBS3, in particular, showed excellent examples of how a cohesive group can work together towards common goals. They demonstrated great determination in achieving the objectives of the lesson in a fun and interactive way such as shared translation and taking it in turns to 'be the teacher,' as the extract shows:

The teacher then called up a female student and said, 'You're the teacher now.'
The students are obviously used to this and the chosen student says 'take a paper and write 1 – 10... Everyone ready?' She then dictates some sentences to the students. [AMSAOBS3]

This activity was in preparation for the 'Write from dictation' part of the PTE test (an external English exam that the students were required to take). During this activity, the students all sat and listened carefully as they transcribed the sentences.

Some teachers highlighted the significance of activities to their students to help them focus on their learning goals. In AFSAOBS2, the teacher frequently referred to the objectives of the lesson and their relevance for their future writing. She also related most of the classroom activities back to the PTE academic test. With difficult vocabulary, she persevered even when the students had trouble understanding. It was also apparent that she had trained her students to categorise difficult vocabulary according to the CEFR levels.

She asked if anyone was familiar with the word 'coherence'; some shook their heads. The teacher tells them this is something they will be marked on in their IELTS and PTE exams and is very important. She asks whether it is an A2 or a C2 word and reminds the students of the CEFR levels. She acknowledged that this is a difficult word, but they need to be aware of it.' [AFSAOBS2]

Both classes discussed used techniques to relate their activities back to external exams so that students understood the relevance of the tasks. This is something that did not occur in other classes.

5.3.6 Relevance of teaching materials

Making the materials relevant to the students can help generate and maintain classroom motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Niemiec and Ryan, 2009; Deci and Ryan, 2002; Dörnyei, 2001b). University A demonstrated this on several occasions by not only making their materials relevant for the impending external exams but also relating materials and discussions back to topics the students would be familiar with, such as social media. When talking about epidemics, the teacher asked:

'Do you think we can have social epidemics?' which was a way to bring the students attention to the topic of the Tipping Point. The students initially wondered how an epidemic could be social until a student said 'yes, like Snapchat and social media.' Other examples were elicited and the official definition of 'Epidemic' was shown on the projector. [AFSAOBS1]

In AMSAOBS3, the teacher recognised the low levels of English within his class and asked the students to speak about topics which were familiar and relevant to them, such as cooking Dolma (a national dish), and local Kurdish history. The NES teacher's knowledge of local culture and traditions (knowledge of local dishes and some words in the language/ knowledge of the local area) seemed to impress the students as he mentioned some and the students appeared to have a good rapport with him as a result.

In CFSAOBS1, the materials were presented in the style of a social media post (Facebook style) in an attempt to make the materials relevant to what the students do outside of the classroom. The students were asked to talk and write about what activities they do in their spare time. Despite their Elementary level of English, they managed to write 'status updates' about their hobbies and activities and evidently the appropriate task presentation, which was related to the students' interests and hobbies, helped them do this.

Two classes from university B and C used an interesting technique of learning through role play, which is uncommon with this age range. Below is an extract from a teacher training class. To engage and motivate the students, the teacher set a task which saw the students become teachers for 10 minutes.

After the class had settled, the teacher introduced a 'marking' activity. He distributed some small slips of paper and said 'you are the teachers now, you have to imagine this is your student's work and you have to mark it. You will be the scorer, give a mark from 10.' The students looked quite enthusiastic about this and began work on the slips as soon as they received them. [BMMAOBS3]

The students responded well to the task and all were focused on the task. CMSAOBS4 used a similar technique but instead of becoming teachers, the students were told 'you are all primary school students now!' The group, also trainee teachers, were presented tasks as if they were primary school students in order to evaluate them for 'engagement' and 'level of challenge.' This brought about a new way of conceptualising the work which made them think differently about the type of tasks suitable for a primary school lesson. The students seemed to enjoy this 'learning by doing' activity. When students are given tasks which they perceive to be relevant and purposeful, they are more likely to be interested and engaged (Svalberg, 2017; Guariento and Morley, 2001) which is also consistent with SDT (see 2.1.2).

Other teachers used different, subtler techniques to establish relevance such as using the students' names in grammatical examples. The students smiled and appeared to enjoy having their name mentioned, for example, '*Ali is more intelligent than Shad.*' This makes the task seem authentic which may contribute to affective, emotional student engagement with tasks (Svalberg, 2017; Fredericks et al., 2004).

There were other classrooms where materials were used and discussed which were not relevant to their studies or their lives. Some worksheets and activities contained vast amounts of Eurocentric material that the students found difficult relating to. For example:

The teacher then goes on to talk about multiple adjectives in sentences like 'A beautiful, sandy beach.' She asks for a translation. They struggle to translate 'sandy beach' and I wonder whether it is because they are a landlocked region and have no beaches, and given the socio-economic status of the local area, they are unlikely to ever visit a beach [DFSAOBS2]

Other examples of Eurocentric materials were in AFSAOBS1 when she used an article about Hushpuppy shoes:

The students were instructed to look at pictures and the changes in the pictures. One picture was of the old Hush Puppies advert of a dog and a shoe. The students had difficulty establishing the connection and suggested things like '*the dog ate the shoes? The shoes are made of dog skin?*' This could have been because Hush puppies is not a well-known brand in Kurdistan, and it became apparent that the book is both outdated and Eurocentric. The students began speaking in Kurdish at this point and it became obvious that they couldn't relate to the pictures at all. The teacher then said, '*I think we need new books, this was before you were even born!*'

The Hush Puppy brand relied on Western concepts of dogs being domestic pets and considered by some as part of the family. However, in the KRI and surrounding areas of the Middle East, dogs are rarely kept as pets as Muslims perceive them to be unclean. Hence this type of material is not only outdated but may be deemed culturally inappropriate by some.

Overall, the materials in the majority of classes were appropriately suited to the students and their levels but there were some exceptions including outdated and ethnocentric

materials. Such tasks may not have stimulated affective engagement which relies on tasks being authentic and challenging (Fredericks et al., 2004) and purposeful and meaningful (Svalberg, 2017).

5.3.7 Classroom management

Classroom management is important as teachers play a big role in maintaining and protecting student motivation and engagement. A poorly managed class is unlikely to be a productive learning environment. In the observations, the classroom management styles varied by teacher and university. In university A, the teachers were stricter than the others in university B, C and D and were consistent in their expectations of the class. All teachers in university A challenged students' device usage (when they noticed it) and enforced a rule stating students must use paper dictionaries over electronic versions.

The teacher stopped the lesson and said 'Mr (name)! The one thing I asked you not to do in my lesson was use a phone as a dictionary!' The teacher confiscated his phone and placed it on the front desk with some other students' phones.

[AFSAOBS1]

In university B, device usage went unnoticed and unchallenged. When classes became too noisy from social chatting, the teachers handled it in different ways. In BFMAOBS1, the teacher banged a pen on the table and shouted, 'be quiet.' In BMMAOBS2 the teacher quietly said 'stop chatting please' when the noise became too much. In BMMAOBS3 the teacher stood silently at the front of the class and waited for his class to stop talking, which did take a while on occasions. When that did not work, he said 'guys, attention' and the noise would cease. Similarly, in university C, when the classroom noise became too much, the teachers would either bang on the whiteboard with a marker or just says 'Guys!' until the noise stopped. One teacher had an interesting technique of threatening to sing if the students did not do their work!

After a few minutes, he checks progress and says 'did you write?' He approaches the front table who appear to be off topic. He begins to clap his hands and says 'time is pressing, time is pressing! If you don't finish in one or two minutes I will sing! If I sing, you will go deaf! Work harder! Faster!' to urge the students to work a bit faster. The students giggle a little. [CMSAOBS4]

In university D, the teachers used similar techniques to university B and C by raising their voices, clapping and saying, *‘quiet please!’* or *‘be silent please!’*

The variance in techniques seemed to work for the individual teachers. Not all behaviour issues were dealt with in each class and as a researcher sitting at the back of a classroom, I was able to notice many more cases than the teacher. The differences in technique may have been due to the individual teacher’s experience of teaching, training differences and/or cultural differences. The NES teachers seemed comfortable with confiscating phones and setting out classroom rules but did allow some social chat if it was in English. The local teachers expected silence in the class and when this was not achieved, they shouted and banged pens on tables and boards. They did not address individual behaviour issues but addressed them as a class whereas the opposite was true for the NES teachers.

5.3.8 Task presentation

It is essential that tasks and activities are presented in an interesting and interactive way, as task presentation can be used to exert a direct motivational influence on the students. (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). Effective task presentation was present in 4 observations in total where teachers used engaging icebreakers/ warm-up activities to start the lesson. Interestingly, it was in those lessons that the students appeared more engaged and on task (university A and university C, see section 5.4.1). In relation to the conceptual framework, such interactive activities would cause the system (students within the classrooms) to move into an attractor state of engagement, as evidenced below in the examples.

In university A, the warm-up activities were interactive and engaging as the teachers presented tasks through various scaffolding techniques (presenting the new topic through modelling and adjusting the guidance depending on the student’s ability). Each task seemed to lead to another and through good signposting in the lesson, or a ‘cool-down’ activity, the lessons did not end abruptly like in other classes, but rather ‘flowed’ from one activity to the next with good structure and cohesion between activities:

The teacher then introduced a warm-up activity ‘and we do this as you know to build on our schemata.’ The task was to work in pairs and discuss the meaning of ‘epidemic.’ This then turned into a group discussion temporarily but the

teacher soon repeated instructions: 'Work in pairs, list 3 epidemics.' Answers elicited included Ebola, AIDS/ HIV, Malaria (dismissed by the teacher as not being an epidemic as it is not something contagious) and Zika virus.

[AFSAOBS1]

By having such a structured warm-up activity, the students appeared to be more emotionally and cognitively engaged which in turn may have influenced their motivation in the classroom.

In AFSAOBS2, the teacher spoke very slowly and pitched her language at the appropriate level for the class. She presented each task carefully and with short activities to ensure the learner was ready for the next step.

In university B, there did not appear to be the same level of scaffolding and apart from BMMAOBS3, the majority of the tasks involved exercises from a textbook.

Noticeably, there was no warm-up activity but rather the teacher went straight into the first textbook activity and instructed the students to turn to the page in the book. [BFMAOBS1]

In CFSAOBS2, the teacher began the lesson by showing some realia – an elaborate necklace.

The teacher tried to elicit questions from the students about the owner of the necklace. Some students asked, 'Was she from?' which then led to 'Where she from?' and 'How much has she sister or brother?' [CFSAOBS2]

This not only intrigued the students' interest but also related to the next activity about 'questions.' The activity seemed to be enjoyed by all. Other teachers in university C used pair and group discussion to introduce tasks as well as projecting colourful pictures onto the smart board and getting the students to ask questions about it. In a writing lesson, the teacher in CFSAOBS3 used an acronym 'PEEL' (point, example, explanation, link) to help her students remember the parts of a paragraph and the students were able to remember this as they engaged with the task.

In university D, task presentation was punctuated by Kurdish as the teachers thought this would ensure the students understood the task. Unlike in other classrooms, there was not any realia or colourful pictures but in DFSAOBS2, the teacher did project a

colourful grammar formula on the board whilst she was explaining the future tense. The students all focused on this and it may have helped the students' retention of the information.

Overall, the teachers presented tasks in a variety of ways. The local Kurdish teachers were more likely to go straight to the activity with little explanation or chose to explain in Kurdish. The NES teachers appeared to use more visual aids in their teaching such as pictures, realia, warm-up activities and acronyms to aid memory. As the NES teachers were based in SA universities, it could be argued that the observable differences in teaching practices between SA and MA groups could be related to the background of the teacher (NES/ Local) rather than the grouping style.

5.3.9 Feedback

Encouraging positive retrospective evaluation is an important part of the motivational teaching practice framework (Dörnyei, 2001). According to Brophy and Good (1986), there are two main forms of feedback; informational and controlling, the former being more motivational and the latter being more detrimental to intrinsic motivation. Not giving feedback is considered to be just as detrimental to student motivation as having it, which was unfortunately the case in many of the classes observed. From the 13 observations, 10 teachers demonstrated some form of informational feedback but much of this was simply giving the answers to tasks without any motivational element or praise to accompany it.

One observable example of valuable feedback occurred in AFSAOBS3 where the teacher set a writing task and slowly walked around the room giving individual feedback to each student on their writing. It was relevant, personalised and tailored to each student and the teacher clearly knew her students as she gave detailed feedback according to their individual abilities.

5.3.10 Praise

Praise, when used correctly, can boost a student's self-esteem and be a motivational tool (Brophy, 1981). In total there were 17 references to praise in the observations, from 8 different classrooms. Fifteen references of praise were from the SA universities whereas there were only 2 references to praise from the MA university, both from the same

classroom. The ways in which the teachers praised the students varied; mainly it was given orally but in one classroom the teacher announced that he would be posting about the class and their progress on social media. The students reacted well to this and wanted to do well in order to see a post about their class on social media. The other references to praise included when a teacher said things such as ‘excellent work’ or ‘well done.’

Overall, the SA classrooms were where the most praise was given to students and the most praise was in University A- a total of 6 occurrences. This may have been because the NES teachers were more used to giving praise to their students, compared to the local Kurdish teachers, as they believed it would motivate their students. This does not, however, explain the lack of praise in university C where other NES teachers taught.

5.3.11 Promoting student autonomy

Research on the interrelatedness between autonomy and motivation assumes a positive impact of autonomy on learning, which may positively affect students’ academic motivation (Barfield and Brown, 2007) and satisfies their innate psychological need of autonomy (SDT, Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2002). When students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, they become more independent and are more likely to be motivated in the classroom. There were some observable examples of teachers encouraging student autonomy. In university A, which had 10 references to promoting autonomy, the teachers used activities which encouraged the students to work independently.

As the teacher walks around the classroom, he passes some whiteboard markers to several students and asks them ‘write up any word you don’t know.’ The students, without hesitation, walk to the whiteboard and write any words they didn’t know the meaning of. [AMSAOBS3]

The same teacher gave the students access to online learning portals where they could complete and submit homework. He frequently directed them towards this page for extra self-study outside of the class time. The teacher also had access to these portals so could check the students’ progress and activities on these sites.

In another class at university A, the teacher had a double lesson with the students. Seeing they were tired, she allowed them to negotiate a break in between lessons. Some

opted to have a shorter break to enable them to finish earlier while some argued that they needed a longer lunchtime. They eventually agreed on a shorter break and an earlier finish. This gave the students a chance to take control of their timetable and be more independent. In university B, there were only two references for promoting student autonomy. One teacher asked the students to self-correct their answers and another teacher in a different class gave their students a list of online resources to access outside of the class. Between university C and D, there were very similar practices such as that the teachers directed the students to websites relating to the topics and that they expected the students to self-correct their answers.

Overall, both the NES and local teachers in the SA classes were seen to actively promote student autonomy by allowing negotiation and directing students towards structured self-study resources. It should be noted that the Heads of departments in all SA universities were NES which may explain why the strategies used in the SA classroom were similar across all 3 universities, even with local teachers. In the MA university, whilst the students were also informed of self-study websites, these were unstructured and did not allow for any feedback from the teacher. Other strategies to encourage student autonomy were not as visible in the MA classes.

5.3.12 Teacher-student rapport

There were many examples of teachers having a good rapport with the students in most of the universities. In university A, the students seemed to have a better rapport with the NES teachers rather than the local teachers. In university B, there were no positive references for good rapport. In university A, there were 11 references to good rapport from a total of 33. The extract below shows how close the rapport was in one particular class:

At this point, a female student from the front of the class called the teacher over to show her a funny picture on her phone. It appears that she had saved the picture to show the teacher. [AFSAOBS1]

The local teachers seemed much stricter with the students and seemed to have more social distance. In another class, an NES teacher (Uni A) was happy to discuss his personal life and reveal details such as his age and interests. This made the students more interested in him and they were eager to find out more about their teacher by

asking him personal questions. The students in this university all called their teachers by their first names while in university B and D, they called them ‘teacher’ or ‘mamosta’ which means teacher in Kurdish. In University C, the teachers also showed good rapport by using the students’ names in their fun grammar examples. The most interesting example of student rapport was in university D where the local teacher referred to the students as family.

I have told you before – we are like a family. Not like a teacher-student. So, as I am like a big brother to you, if you think the same, you have to listen to my lessons so that you learn more and get better grades. [DMSAOBS3]

Here the teacher is trying to make the students think more about their studies and request, like ‘a big brother’, that they listen to him. In Kurdish culture, a big brother would be a respected member of the family and the younger siblings are expected to obey him.

Overall, it appeared that the students had a better rapport with the NES teachers in the private SA universities (A and C). Even in the private universities, the local teachers seemed to keep a more professional teacher-student relationship which corresponds with the findings from university C and D; teacher-student rapport was less observable in university D and almost non-existent in university B.

5.3.13 Speaking Kurdish

Speaking in Kurdish (the students’ L1) in the lessons emerged as a theme from both the classroom observations and interviews. Teachers in university B and D (local teachers) used Kurdish frequently in their lessons to explain concepts to the students. The students then asked and clarified certain things in Kurdish with their teachers. Many students also used Kurdish in the classroom, mainly in university D. This appeared to frustrate the higher ability students in the class (see 6.2.1) who expected the EMI policies to be adhered to.

In universities B and D, the two public universities, the local teachers spoke some Kurdish in the lessons to check understanding, especially with the low-ability students to ensure they understood the concepts of the lesson. Students’ use of L1 was only challenged by the NES teachers in university A and C who encouraged their students, regardless of level, to speak English at all times.

The teachers' usage of Kurdish in the classroom was more prominent in the MA university, followed by the SA classes in university D. The issue here cannot be related to the SA/MA divide but rather the public/ private university one. Teachers in the public universities, where the English language levels were significantly lower, were found to speak more Kurdish in the class to aid the student to understand and consequently engage.

5.3.14 Summary

The teachers in SA classes appeared to demonstrate more motivational teaching practices from the following two frameworks: 'Creating the basic motivational conditions' (Dörnyei 2001b) and 'Executive motivational influences' (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). Such practices include scaffolding techniques to encourage coping potential, structured lessons which began with clear aims and objectives and use of feedback and praise. The SA classes were also more likely to promote student autonomy.

5.4 Chapter Summary

The classroom observations provided rich insights through empirical exploration of some of the themes from the student clarifying the differences between the public, private, SA and MA universities. There were vast differences in engagement, teaching styles and motivational strategies between the four universities. In terms of engagement, the SA universities overall showed more evidence of cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement, with university A and C demonstrating good evidence of engaged, on-task students. There may be a correlation between engagement and the fact that both universities had good facilities, abundant resources and more NES teachers with whom the students had good rapport. The materials they used, although somewhat Eurocentric at times, were student needs-focused and, in many cases, were designed in the style of external exam materials thus making them very relevant for the students. The NES teachers also used more motivational teaching practices (such as praise and promoted student autonomy) than the local teachers, which could explain the increased motivation and engagement in private universities where the NES teachers worked.

In university D, the students had very low levels of English and needed a lot of help in Kurdish from their teachers. Ability grouping gave affordances to the students to interact more with peers but due to a lack of resources and large class sizes, this affected the students' cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement. The teachers had a good rapport with the students and being from the same locality, followed traditional cultural observances such as addressing the male students as 'Kak' (brother).

In university B, several students stayed on-task, but these classrooms were prone to more social chat in Kurdish and students becoming distracted by their mobile phones than in the others. There were other issues such as the large class sizes and lack of resources which may have caused the students to become disengaged. The teachers taught mainly from textbooks and did not use as many motivational strategies as teachers at the other three universities.

On the surface, it appeared that the SA classes showed higher levels of engagement and that their teachers employed a more diverse range of motivational teaching practices than in the MA classes. It is important to note that these differences could be due to a range of interacting factors, including the socio-economic areas of the universities, the background and teaching style of the teachers, or the type of university (public or private).

The next chapter presents the final set of qualitative data in the form of student and teacher interviews.

Chapter 6: Qualitative findings – Interviews

This chapter presents the findings based on the transcripts from the 17 student interviews and 5 teacher interview transcripts. The interviews were conducted during the last phase of data collection following the classroom observations and the self-reporting questionnaires. The data presented is organised around the relevant research questions and key themes are highlighted. This chapter specifically addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and students' *academic motivation*?
- b. ability grouping and students' *academic motivation*?
- c. any other emerging factors and the students' *academic motivation*?

RQ2: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and students' *academic self-concept*?
- b. ability grouping and students' *academic self-concept*?
- c. any other emerging factors affecting the students' *academic self-concept*?

RQ3: What is the relationship between:

- a. teaching practices and students' *classroom engagement*?
- b. ability grouping and students' *classroom engagement*?
- c. any other emerging factors affecting the students' *classroom engagement*?

Below, the coding procedure is described, and participant information is provided. The findings are then organised according to the data collection methods. Firstly, the findings of the student interviews are presented followed by the teacher interviews. From a CDST perspective, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) highlight that 'variability in data is not noise to be discarded when averaging across events or individuals' (p.204). Hence, major emerging themes are discussed for each data set. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary. Chapter 7 will then discuss the combined findings of this mixed methods study in more depth.

6.1 Student Participant Interviews

The students' responses were classified into three main themes which correlated with the research questions. These were academic motivation, academic self-concept and engagement. The responses were transcribed verbatim and were not corrected in any way. Being L2 speakers, clearly their grammar was imperfect, but it was decided that their responses would not be altered, and their interview responses were transcribed using naturalism as opposed to denaturalism (Oliver et al., 2005). As the students all had an intermediate level of English, it was not difficult to interpret their uncorrected language. Any ambiguous phrases were immediately questioned and clarified during interviews. In sections of dialogue between myself and the participant, the following codes apply: P= participant and I= interviewer (myself). Any explanations appear in brackets and any Kurdish words are in quotation marks.

6.1.1 Academic Motivation

The first main theme concerns academic motivation and relates to RQ1. It explores various aspects of motivation and demotivation related to the students' EAP classes at the universities. Below is a table outlining the theme and its sub-themes. The first six sub-themes are related to factors inside the classroom. The remaining sub-themes relate to cultural and external factors which affect the students' academic motivation.

Table 6.1 Student interviews- first main theme and sub-themes

Main Theme	Sub-themes
Academic Motivation	Teachers
	Course materials
	Other students
	Grouping style
	Higher/ lower ability students
	Competition with others
	Helping others
	Cultural factors
	External influences
	Self-motivation

Teachers

During the student interviews, teachers were mentioned most frequently as the main motivator for the students. Despite several students complaining about the quality of

their university English teachers, many of them still mentioned teachers as a motivating factor.

BFMASI2 said that during her first year, they helped her to overcome her nervousness and asked her to participate in an English-speaking competition because they recognised her high ability. She went on to gain first place in the competition, which boosted her confidence tremendously. CFSASI1 also mentioned how her teachers ‘pushed’ her which encouraged her to work harder. A budding writer, she claimed her teacher had helped her improve her writing through competitions and challenges.

Others mentioned that their teachers motivated them by posting students’ victories and successes on Facebook ‘*in order to motivate and mention their name into the post*’ [BMMASI1]. Similarly, AMSASI4 talks about how his teachers ‘*do things that motivate and encourage.*’ These include using applications, social media and smartphones in class, as well as directing them to online extra-curricular work and related ‘*videos on YouTube to improve pronunciation and vocabulary*’ [BFMASI4]

Trainee teachers on a foundation EAP course in university C talked about the teachers as inspiring role models. The following student expands on this:

What makes me motivated? I think the first motivation it is the teachers. They taught us very good. It’s a motivation for us. Because as you know our department is the education department – we will be teachers. So, when we look at them, we say we are going to be like this teacher or like this teacher or that teacher. [CMSASI4]

This extract reveals that the student not only sees his teachers as a source for inspiration, but also that he would like to ‘be like’ the teachers, who are obviously positive role models for the students. All of the students spoke highly about their class teachers and described them in a positive light, including DFSASI1 who described his as ‘*brilliant!*’ BFMASI2 mentioned that her teachers inspire her because they ‘*push*’ her, ‘*have faith*’ in her, and she felt that they wanted her to succeed.

The teachers’ encouraging words were a very important motivating factor for the students from university C and D who said that it is the ‘nice way’ the teachers talk to them, praise and challenge them which motivates them. Two trainee nurse students from Health sciences in university D spoke about how their teachers encouraged them

by acknowledging the importance of their roles as nurses in Kurdistan. Their teachers told them *'the job is about humans so you have to take responsibility and not make mistakes'* [DFSASI2] and that their course is important because they *'can get jobs in many private hospitals'* as well as *'heal many people and save many lives'* [DFSASI3]. With the soaring rates of unemployment for graduates in the KRI, such words would be very comforting to students hoping to go into work upon graduation.

Course materials

Seven students discussed being motivated by their course materials, five of whom mentioned that they are motivated when the teachers set them 'creative' and 'challenging' assignments.

Actually - I have two or three teachers who are creative and giving us some ideas to help our English become better - and they are telling us to read - to listen to things - they are telling us to listen to videos on Youtube - they are giving us the links also. [BFMASI4]

Here, the student relates creativity to using technology in the classroom, which is a relatively underused concept in Kurdish classrooms due to poor electricity, internet connectivity and economy. DMSASI4 recognised that his teachers were doing the best they could with the resources available. He recognised that the classroom resources and exercises *'are maybe not new but they are good for students.'* However, despite poor resources, he said his teachers *'motivate me to do my best and be more active in class.'* DFSASI2 also mentioned that when teachers use technology such as projectors in their lessons, it engages and motivates them in their lessons.

Despite the advancement in technology, DFSASI1 claimed that her classrooms' resources were *'not good'* and were ineffective and demotivating. Similarly, BFMASI4 complained of having to study from black and white photocopies because of not having access to actual books:

You know, the books are not even interesting. They are all black and white. The books are not motivating you. I have an exam and I don't even have a book. I am studying from a pamphlet. [BFMASI4]

The students' opinions on course materials and how they motivated them varied between universities. The students from universities A and C spoke positively about their course materials. There were no complaints of boring or demotivating materials like the comments from universities B and D. This was probably due to the fact that both campuses boast newer facilities and materials.

Other students

The impact of other students on the participants' motivation varied between positive and negative. Some students, such as AMSASI3, stated that just being in an English-speaking environment (an EMI university) made her '*feel very motivated*' because '*everybody was speaking English.*' After years of being in a Kurdish speaking environment, this was a major motivational factor for many students.

Student AMSASI4, who claimed he was '*one of the top in the class,*' said his classmates were '*very helpful like a family*' and such a strong group rapport often encouraged him to complete work that was above and beyond the assignment requirements. This motivated him to study more to improve his grades. Likewise, six students mentioned that their friends had a positive impact on their motivation and encouraged them to do better. They spurred each other on with motivational words; '*they are saying me all the time you are very successful person and you can be successful*' [DFSASI1].

Eight students mentioned that the presence of higher-level students in their classes affected their motivation positively. The response from CMSASI4 explained clearly what motivated the students when he replied, '*The first one is the teachers and the second one is the clever students.*' He claimed that the presence of higher-level students in the class motivated him to try harder and study more.

The student below recognised the potential of more intelligent students to motivate others but complained that her classmates were not 'active' enough to do this for her.

P: Generally, I am not kinda not motivated actually. If you got an intelligent student in your environment, you are gonna be motivated, study hard, read more but if you see students, they don't even study or not even know the language, they are beginners, we have only 2 or 3 students they are active you know? And not even motivated so you say 'Ahh ok, I am better than them so I'm not doing

anything else, 'you know? They are not even intelligent students who motivate you.

I: So, what would make you more motivated in this group?

P: Intelligent students. If the students are active, also, of course, I will study hard, but they are not doing so... One of them can speak English well, but not that intelligent. Only they are memorising the book, you know. They don't have creative ideas. [BFMASI4]

She believed her classmates could have played an important part in her motivation, but she did not rely on them because they were not intelligent.

Students from university B and D disapproved of other students speaking Kurdish amongst themselves in class. It was not mentioned in university C and was only mentioned once in university A by AMSASI3 who said it '*demotivates*' her when she sees students who '*try to speak Kurdish among themselves.*'

As well as students speaking in Kurdish, the general behaviour of other students negatively affected the motivation of others. Student AMSASI4 gave some examples such as when '*students interrupt teachers or they use their phones, they come into class late, 10 minutes late, interrupts us... that's very demotivating for us.*' Students cheating, either in classwork or in tests and exams, was another source of annoyance to several students. Four participants mentioned what they would like to be different within their classrooms and in summary, they would like to '*separate the lazy students*' and not see any '*cheating*' in the exams. They admitted to feeling pressure to '*help*' others by giving them the answers to tests and homework. BFMASI2 even claims he has been called '*selfish*' because he refused to '*help*' others with answers to tests or classwork, which would count as cheating.

Actually, there is something which really pisses me off, which is like cheating in class... because some students are really low so when they cheat, they would get higher marks than me and that really demotivates me... It's better to have zero than cheating! They would be like 'You're so selfish, why don't you just speak or tell us something in class?' I mean, I'm not selfish but I worked hard for it, so I don't wanna cheat, you know? And, if you don't wanna study, that's your problem. [BFMASI2]

He claimed to be a very competitive, hardworking student and had strong opinions on this issue, as did several others, particularly from the MA university. BMMASI3 described how he often became anxious when other students tried to cheat or expected help from him in both class time and during exams. Being a higher-level student in an MA class, his lower-level friends saw him as an opportunity to 'cheat' in the exam by looking at his answers. He felt compelled, as a friend, to allow this but explained that he felt relieved when the teachers became suspicious and moved him to another table. He said he lacked the confidence needed to decline their request, felt it was unethical and was causing him stress and anxiety.

Another student was bothered by the behaviour of his classmates. He kept referring to a particular group of female students in his class who were 'making things difficult for him' and even bullying him.

Their behaviour is very demotivating for us. I think I can't achieve my goals in this class, unfortunately. I don't think this group will help me achieve my goals. Demotivating things, you tell yourself, 'Yeah I'm like this, they know me better.' My group, I think, is a little bit like this. But for next year, I won't be like the first one. I won't care about them. [CMSASI4]

From the excerpt above, it seems that the group dynamics may have affected his self-confidence and possibly his academic self-concept. His mention of 'Yeah, I'm like this, they know me better' indicated a self-fulfilling prophecy. The behaviour of others in his group led him to believe that he was not a competent student and could not get high marks. His final remark indicated that he was aware of this effect on his confidence and he was trying to address this for the next academic year.

Other demotivating factors mentioned included other students not taking lessons seriously, which interrupts the class, and students being reluctant to share information in class. This is probably due to the intense competition and not wanting anyone to be ahead of them.

Overall, the majority of the student participants said that the other students in the class, particularly friends, can motivate them to be better in their studies. Some higher-level students claimed that their classmates, especially lower level students, can have a negative impact on their motivation. The most common complaint was when others

spoke Kurdish in an English class; also observed during the classroom observations (see section 5.4.2).

Grouping style

The students were all asked which grouping style they were in, their opinion on the homogeneity of SA and MA classes, and which grouping style they preferred. Four students in SA classes (CMSASI4, DFSASI2, DMSASI4, AMSASI2) recognised different levels within their SA classes despite their University's concerted attempts at streaming.

I: Are you all the same level of English in your class or are you mixed?

P: Erm, no. There are some students whose English is very good. For example, my English is not bad and there are two-three students their English is very good. They came from private schools and from kindergarten they were in English schools. That's why their English is good. But the others are not good. Because they came from public schools and they didn't study English very well. As you know the public schools in Iraq are not good. That's why our level is not the same... Because from 17 students I think 10 students came from private schools. [CMSASI4]

They mentioned that having students from private schools and 'native' speakers in the class (Kurds returning from the diaspora) resulted in a great range of levels (see 1.4.4). One student claimed that the range of levels in her class was so vast that some relied heavily on translation to understand the lessons. She was placed in a SA 'intermediate' class.

We are not in the same level. Some students know English very well and others just tell the teachers to translate. And they write all the lectures in Kurdish. They don't know English so they must translate. [DFSASI2]

This raises the issue of the extent of homogeneity in SA groups. Despite concerted efforts to stream students by ability, it appears that many of the classes were still heterogeneous.

All students were asked which style of grouping they preferred, regardless of their current grouping style and 13 from the 17 said that they preferred SA mainly because they felt it would motivate them to succeed.

CMSASI2, a proponent of SA grouping, was motivated by seeing his friends moving to higher level classes as it helped him reflect on his own efforts *‘Why am I not? Why just my friends? What’s the difference between me and them?’* Others claimed that SA groups gave them the opportunity to talk to others of a similar level knowing they would understand each other.

Two students in MA classes both mentioned that they preferred SA groupings because they felt more motivated and the materials were level appropriate. The following intermediate level student explained:

Actually, I prefer that type of groups (SA) because you know it feels like you’re motivated. ‘Oh my God, I have to be better than them’ so you’re motivated, and you are trying your best. You want to be better than them. But in our groups, the levels are very low. You say ‘Oh I’m better than them, I don’t have to study. I don’t do anything because I’m already better than them’ you know? [BFMASI4]

He claimed that as the students in his class were already below his level, he felt no need to study further as he was already ‘ahead’ of them. Clearly, he relied on extrinsic motivation and his competitiveness was fed by feeling behind others, rather than studying for intrinsic purposes.

Two students, DFSASI1 and AFSASI1, preferred SA grouping because they felt ‘bored’ in MA classes. This student, from a SA intermediate class, explained:

I think it’s better to be like single ability not all students mixed together. Because when we are together, the best students are getting bored with the lessons, with the lower students. I mean the students that are not good. Two groups are better for us because we can learn better English language and we can get benefit from things. [DFSASI1]

The remaining 4 out of 17 students expressed a preference for MA groups for reasons such as being able to share information, motivate and help each other. Notably, 3 of those 4 were in SA classes. AMSASI4, for example, said MA groups ‘energise and

motivate' her. AFSASI1, also a SA student, felt more motivated in MA groups because everyone could '*help each other and learn from each other.*'

Naturally, MA groups, by definition, would usually mean a combination of both higher and lower ability students. However, this is not always possible. DMSASI4, from a SA group, described the perfect MA group as having an equal mix of '*high level, some of them medium, some of them beginning*' so that they can help each other. He believed that if all students were of one ability level, they would be unable to help each other. He also talked about his previous experience of being moved from a MA class where he felt he could help others, to a high-level SA class where he could not because '*what I know they know, what they know I know, that's why we cannot help each other.*' Notably, he did not focus on his own learning but focused on the fact that he would be unable to help others in a SA class.

Similarly, CFSASI2 claimed that a previous MA class enabled her to improve her grades but only because the teacher saw a difference in her and pushed her harder than the others. She mentioned that her current SA class did not allow her these chances and she was '*stuck with everyone at the same level at the same time.*' She also talked about the presence of a native speaking student in her class who had previously lived in the UK. She claimed that many students were motivated by speaking to her and her presence made them want to improve their own English and that everyone 'paid attention to her' for this.

In brief, the majority of the students preferred SA groupings because they felt more motivated, the materials were more level-appropriate and they could 'help each other.' The few students who preferred MA classes said they were beneficial because they provided opportunities to share ideas and opinions and learn from each other.

Higher / lower ability students

As discussed in the previous sub-section, no classroom can be truly homogeneous and there will inevitably be students of varying levels, regardless of grouping style.

Proponents of MA classes find a mix of levels within one class to be advantageous.

BMMASI3 mentioned that while being among lower level students sometimes frustrated him, it also motivated him to study more because he saw himself as a higher level than the others.

Five students (from university B and D) expressed frustration at having lower level students in their classes. They felt that the lower ability students often ‘drifted’ through class and were doing the bare minimum to get by in lessons. BFMASI4 felt frustrated because her fellow classmates would be qualified teachers after one year, so she rhetorically asked ‘*Can a beginner be a teacher? I don’t think so. It’s difficult!*’ She claimed that they had not worked hard enough in the past three years and that their level was not sufficient for them to be teachers.

Another source of frustration was when fellow classmates had a particularly low level of English and were unable to contribute to class discussions. This was particularly common in the MA classes and was demotivating for some, such as BMMASI1. DFSASI2 thought the teachers felt obliged to translate everything to Kurdish for the lower ability students, which annoyed the more competent ones like herself and made her feel ‘*fed up.*’

The following student perceived lower level students in class very negatively and said ‘*there is nothing positive about my class because all of them are beginners. Only my motivation points about that, I can be first or second one*’ [BFMASI4]. Being amongst lower level students gave this student a chance to become first or second in the class so this situation had one positive outcome. CFSASI1, a high ability SA student, mentioned that she would be ‘fine with [lower level peers],’ but felt ‘*a little bit intimidated*’ by higher level students and she often felt ‘*a weird aura from them.*’

As the extracts above show, the students were somewhat divided in their opinions on mixed level students in the class. Most were enthusiastic about having higher level students in the class as it was ‘beneficial’ and ‘motivating’ and many felt that having lower level students could provide them with an opportunity to help others. A minority were frustrated at having lower level students in the class because they relied heavily on the teacher or Kurdish translation to pass the course but overall, most students were not opposed to mixed levels within a class.

Competition with others

‘Competitiveness’ and ‘competition’ between the students were a recurring theme throughout the student interviews. Nine students from a total of 17 talked at length about competition with other students. They perceived it as integral to classroom life

and it apparently motivated them to learn more. During the interviews, class rankings was a prominent topic of discussion for both teachers and students. (see 1.4.5) and getting good grades was mentioned frequently both directly and indirectly. Clearly, the majority of students were competitive, claiming that grades were ‘a sort of motivation’ for them [CFSASI1] and that their *‘purpose is for studying and get the highest average and grades.’* [CFSASI2]

Not all students were as positive about the competitiveness in the classes. Despite *‘motivation being higher,’* some noted that it also caused some tension and *‘a bit of heat’* in the classes when *‘everyone just wants to be better than the other’* [CFSASI1]. Competitiveness, in some cases, caused the classroom to become hostile, as explained below:

It motivates you and it demotivates you because when there is too much competition, you just get a headache. And you’re like what is going on here? Why is everyone trying to get at my throat, you know? That’s both the good and bad side. [CFSASI1]

Intense competitions in some classrooms caused jealousy amongst students and was mentioned by 4 of the 16 SA and MA participants. BFMASI2 claimed that his classmates *‘tend to hate students who are good or smart.’* CFSASI1 claimed that when classmates called her *‘nerd,’* it both motivated and demotivated her because although it sometimes upset her, *‘jealousy sometimes brings motivation’* and she hoped that they would strive to do better because of their jealousy towards her. AMSASI2 believed his friends were jealous of his English ability after he was moved into a high-level SA class enabling him to improve significantly faster than his lower level friends.

To some extent, competitiveness caused some anxiety between students as highlighted in the following dialogue with a student who believed others in his class were ‘over-concerned’ by his academic skills.

P: The students tell me, ‘We are afraid of you because you study very hard and you will be...how can I say... they will fight with you... not fight...yani ‘munafiz’ do you understand?’

I: Competition?

P: Yeah, competition yeah, 'We will have a competition these 4 years because we will study like you' and I told myself 'Oh, am I like this? I will study more than them... I will study, they will study, and it will be a competition, and it will be a very good motivation for me.' [CMSASI4]

Apart from this one mention of anxiety, other mentions of competition seemed positive and the students enjoyed creating challenges for each other, as explained by CMSASI5:

Every day we find a reason to motivate ourselves to beat each other from an academic aspect. So, I feel like our motivation is very high since we are challenging each other a lot. Through making videos, making debate conferences, or just simply getting higher grades of marks from each other. I think we are always highly motivated in that class.

While most students spoke about their competitive streak, they recognised that not all students in the class were as competitive and that some 'don't care' and 'just want to have the certificate' [DFSASI3]

More than half of the SA students mentioned competitiveness in the classroom. None of the MA students mentioned competition, but as discussed in the sub- section above, they felt their motivation had decreased due to a lack of higher-level students in their classes.

Helping others

A recurring theme throughout many interviews is the students' sense of responsibility to help others in their classes; a trait typical of a collectivist culture (see 1.4.2). Eight of the student interviewees claimed they enjoyed helping others and received a lot of satisfaction from doing so. Some students recognised that helping others could also improve their own English while some expressed their patriotism and felt it was their responsibility to help others in a region whose people have a reputation for not knowing English well:

Most of the people who live in Kurdistan don't really know English so when I see someone who doesn't know how to speak English, I feel really sad for them. I would like to teach them or tell them that's how it's done so that gives me inspiration to speak and represent my country. [BFMASI2]

The extract below indicates that she would like to raise the profile of English speakers in Kurdistan and understood that by helping others, she would be part of this initiative.

It gives me motivation to be like them when they are better than me or to teach them more when they are bad. I really feel bad about them when they don't know anything about English or their grammar is bad. People in Kurdistan always have bad grammar so I would like to teach them that and tell them to do better in English so that they will be like 'I'm from Kurdistan and my English is good.'[BFMASI2]

DMSASI4 recognised that his English level was 'better than everyone' (his peers) and found himself to be the big fish in the little pond, which positively impacted his academic-self-concept. He sometimes felt frustrated at that and did not 'fully benefit' from the class because he sacrificed his 'time' helping lower ability students but claimed this helped his motivation and engagement. His somewhat contradictory comments indicated that he helped others for intrinsic reasons, to motivate himself.

Four students claimed that they actively tried to motivate others in their classes, as detailed below:

You know, I just tell them 'try to motivate yourself because no one can motivate you if you don't want to motivate yourself.' [BMMASI1]

Although several students found helping others motivational, I asked whether the students worried that by dedicating so much time to helping others impacted their own learning time. CFSASI1, from a SA group, said that in MA groups (of which she had prior experience) that this was not always the case and that there were several advantages to MA groups, one of which being that she could 'help' the lower level students and learn other skills such as improving their 'ability to communicate with others' and 'learn how to co-operate with people not as good.' She stressed that 'you don't learn everything in a class!' and that 'helping each other is a very important thing to do' [CFSASI1]. Similarly, AFSASI1 agreed and said that it taught her 'other things' such as 'how to deal with people'.

Overall, students in classes with varying levels (not necessarily SA groups), claimed that as well as English, they also learned other transferable skills such as teamwork and helping others. One might expect that this would be more prevalent in an MA class

where there may be a greater need for peer help but according to the student participants, it is more predominant in SA groups. The MA students spoke more about helping others in the wider community because they felt it was their duty as Kurds. However, unlike the SA students, they did not mention helping fellow classmates, apart from encouraging self-motivation strategies

Cultural factors

Some students revealed that certain cultural issues that frustrate them. For example, BMMASI1 described Kurdish students as always looking for the easier alternative in the classroom because they *'don't want to learn harsh, just want to learn easily.'* He believed that English is difficult for Kurdish learners so many resort to speaking Kurdish in the classroom. He told the teachers to *'not let them use native inside the class'* because they were in the English department.

In the Kurdish culture, unrelated females and males are discouraged from mixing with each other socially as their culture is *'very restricted'* and *'some families never accept their girls to talk to a boy and vice-versa is true as well.'* [CMSASI5]. Interestingly, some students at University C reported strong group cohesion including both male and female class members; something which is perceived as unusual. They discussed how mixed gender groups of students fraternised outside of the classroom and even ate together in each other's homes. Traditionally, unrelated males and females eat in separate rooms in the family home, but they claimed they had *'met the classroom's families'* and have *'even been on the same table as them.'* CMSASI5 even claimed that the family of his close female friend approached him to ask if he could motivate her to be more like him academically.

Interestingly, CMSASI4 from the same university (in a different class), complained that the culture of the region affected even basic decisions in the classroom such as who he was able to work with within the class. After wanting to do a presentation with two girls, he was advised by his teacher and fellow students that *'they are girls, you can't do this because there are some situations in Kurdistan it's not allowed to do.'* Initially being annoyed, he later understood that it was to protect him from gossip after similar situations in the university had caused controversy in the past. The two accounts of 'Kurdish culture' are from the same university but differ greatly thus supporting Holliday's perspective of 'small' and 'large' cultures (1999). The tension between the

different ‘small cultures’ within the same university and in this case, the same classroom may be having a positive or a negative influence on the students’ academic motivation.

There are several mentions of cultural differences between regions in the KRI. Within the KRI, there appears to be an unwritten rule that citizens of Erbil (known as ‘Hewler’ by the Kurds) have an ongoing dislike of people from Sulaimani and surrounding provinces and vice versa. For example, CMSASI5 from Ranya (a town 70 miles away from Erbil) felt intimidated by a particular group of classmates because of his background. He claimed there was a difference between the ‘*level of society*’ and that these classmates have a ‘*higher economic level*’ than those from Rayna which makes his culture ‘*very different*’ to the culture of Erbil. He said that when discussing ‘*academic topics*’, despite the cultural and socio-economic differences between cities, these personal differences are set aside, and they worked well as a group.

Overall, culture plays a significant part in the students' education and small cultures within classrooms may have impacted the students' academic motivation. Notably, no students from the public or MA universities mentioned culture. This may be because the students from the private SA universities were amongst a more diverse range of students, including native speakers and those Kurds who have returned from the diaspora. Returning Kurds, in particular, may be able to compare their Kurdish identity with that of another country and thus be able to reflect and question whether or not grouping styles, education policies and classroom practices are suitable for them

External influences

Most of the student participants claimed that ongoing political, economic and security issues affected their overall motivation to attend university and learn English. During the interviews (between 2016 and 2017), ISIS had occupied neighbouring Mosul and Syria. This severely impacted the KRI and many of the students’ relatives and friends fought with the Kurdish forces to help liberate ISIS occupied areas. Others spoke of friends and family members fleeing the region and how it affected their hopes of a secure future. Student AMSASI4 mentioned that corruption, politics and a poor economy were ‘*all interrelated*’ and were ‘*affecting education very negatively*’ [AMSASI4].

Other students mentioned their anxiety over the region's rise in unemployment and their futures after graduation. One student wondered:

'Ok I'm gonna finish my college, but are we gonna be teachers actually? Because they are not even giving jobs to anyone actually. Even to the ones they have finished in medicine and engineering college' [BMSASI4].

She mentioned that she and many others were considering leaving the KRI to go abroad, away from Iraq and the threat of ISIS to a safer place. They would not be alone in doing so; since 2014, due to the crises affecting the region, hundreds of students reportedly left the KRI to study and live abroad (Ekurd.net, 2018).

Students such as BMSASI4 felt *'disappointed with the situation'* and likewise DFSASI3 said that students were *'always nervous and worry about everything,'* because of the teachers' salary cuts, and the lack of civil servant salaries released from the government due to the poor economy. She claimed that *'Nothing is good'* and because of the war, many of her classmates abandoned their studies saying, *'We can't get anything, why we are studying?'* She spoke of feeling *'hopeless'* about the situation and felt that students had *'no future.'* When asked what her plans were, she replied *'Right now, we cannot do anything. Just we have to pray'* [DFSASI3]. Many students had noticed a huge difference in the provision both before after the occupation of ISIS as universities' academic and pastoral programs had to be revised due to the lack of funds. CFSASI1 commented that due to the budget crisis in the region, her class was unable to enjoy anything above and beyond their lessons such as extra-curricular activities.

At the time of these interviews, ISIS had not been fully eradicated from Iraq and still occupied neighbouring Mosul, although they had been pushed back by the Kurdish forces. As well as the diminished sense of security, the effect of ISIS undoubtedly still had repercussions for the economy and a cumulative effect in other areas of life in the Kurdish region. In the words of one student, *'The ISIS issue has affected the economy, and our economy has affected us. We don't have enough money to do everything now because of economic problems'* [CMSASI4]. Students from both the private and public universities spoke of the need to work part-time in order to help their families financially. In some cases, this was overwhelming for the students and their grades had begun to suffer as a result, but the students felt they were obliged to prioritise employment over education.

Naturally, students experiencing economic and safety issues in the region may not prioritise the completion of their education. Ultimately, these factors could affect the students' motivation to learn English as they might be less interested in fulfilling self-actualisation and more concerned with fulfilling their safety and physiological needs (Maslow, 1943). This was illustrated by some students talking about the need to focus on 'needs before goals' and that self-improvement was no longer a priority. They spoke about how their thinking had changed since being in such dire circumstances and that they now prioritised different things. Other students mentioned more psychological effects of external influences on their education, such as how, as a nation, they felt in a constant state of mourning for their fallen soldiers:

The war is affecting anything that you are doing. For example, I am trying to study my education but there is many news the Peshmergas (Kurdish soldiers) are killed by Daesh (ISIS) and this makes me sad and I cannot be continuing my studying. [DFSASI1]

Having been surrounded by conflict for many years, some students said they also felt disappointed about their lack of educational opportunities when compared to other countries. CMSASI3 felt that he had 'wasted 14 years' of his life in education and still did not feel he had achieved his goals in university. He felt that if he had been born abroad, he could have achieved more than what he had done. All students knew others who had left the region to study or work abroad.

During times of conflict, students struggle to focus on their education, particularly when they see no hope for the future. However, while some students felt that the political and economic crises negatively affected their motivation, other students spoke proudly that it was a motivating factor for the following reasons:

The Kurdistan situation I think is motivating me, yes of course. For example, our cousins, our friends, I can say 'Peshmergas' are now fighting against ISIS so it's motivating me to do my best. Our Peshmergas fight against Daesh (ISIS) to save us... we have to do our best to save our language, our society, like them. I think it motivates anyone. [DMSASI4]

Some students showed determination to succeed in the face of adversity, economic and political crises in the KRI, where others were unable to. The following student spoke

about her peers leaving the region to seek asylum but rather than feeling encouraged to follow suit, she felt the '*stronger*' people were those who remained and continued with their goals in order to make a difference and '*be the example*' so that she could '*make a change to the world*' and '*show them that they can have a future*' [DFSASI3]

In sum, external influences such as conflict, economy and politics clearly affected the students' motivation to continue their studies. Learning English was not a priority for everyone that time and many seemed affected by the external circumstances either psychologically, emotionally or financially, varying between universities. University A and C students appeared to be more concerned with the political situation and its long-term effects on the region, as well as the economic impact on lessons and extra-curricular activities. Being from private universities, their parents may have worked in high-paying government jobs and they were less likely to have to suspend their studies due to financial hardship. On the other hand, university B and D students complained more about the economy's impact on their education, their families' financial situation and felt obliged to work to help them financially. They also expressed concern at the number of friends and family members who had either left the region to seek asylum or were planning to do so for economic reasons. Students from university B and D were more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds and may have struggled financially to help their families, hence their concerns differed to those from university A and C.

Self-motivation

Whilst discussing what motivated and demotivated them, it was apparent that some students were very self-motivated; mostly intrinsically. In some cases, the students felt that they had to be self-motivated in order to succeed in English. Students from rural areas which see very few foreign visitors and where very few people speak English discussed seeking opportunities to speak English, such as '*in the bazaar, the library, in the dormitories, everywhere not only the classroom*' [AMSASI3]. Two said that they had enrolled in summer courses or evening courses alongside their high school classes in order to improve as they had felt that their high school English lessons were inefficient. Even in university, they were unhappy with the number of English lessons within some departments and joined other language courses in order to maintain oral fluency in English and to '*not forget the language*' [DMSASI4].

Student CMSASI5 gave some clear examples of how he encouraged himself through positive thinking and small reminders in the form of notes. He added '*I always tell myself if I do something, I will do it very well. I keep my goals clear and I will try my best to do them and achieve them*' [CMSASI5]. Demonstrating both competence and autonomy, he also mentioned that independent study enabled him to improve his level to the point where he had learned all of the class material and often asked permission to study other materials quietly at the back of the class. He may have done this because he felt that the level of the class was inadequate for his needs and there was no other alternative available.

Student participants on vocational courses claimed to be self-motivated simply for the love of their subject or department. The following student, who was studying to be a nurse, felt motivated by her future job to study English. She added '*I like to be a nurse, so I love my job. If you love something, you will try harder. You will be better than the others*' [DFSASI3].

Clearly, there are several ways in which the students motivate themselves, such as by thinking about future career options and encouraging positive thoughts. No MA students mentioned any self-motivating strategies; perhaps because they were more affected by the external influences (as detailed in the previous section) or they may have been unaware of such strategies.

Summary

The data indicated that academic motivation in the four universities was multifaceted. The students discussed at length what motivated and demotivated them both inside and outside their classroom. '*Competitiveness*' and '*the teachers*' were the biggest motivators amongst the participants. The main demotivator was '*other students in the classes*', particularly lower ability students who they thought disrupted the class. One major finding was that many SA grouped students felt the varying levels in their classes resembled an MA class. Despite questionable streaming procedures, SA grouping seemed to encourage competitiveness and boost motivation. The impact of external influences such as conflict and related economic issues were unanticipated and emerged from the data.

6.1.2 Academic Self-Concept

In the interviews, academic self-concept was discussed more implicitly than explicitly, and some students were unaware of the meaning of self-concept. The table below shows the sub-themes for academic self-concept which all emerged from the data.

Table 6.2 Student interviews - second main theme and sub-themes

Main Theme	Sub-themes
Academic self-concept	Effect of high school
	Jealousy
	Others' opinions
	Recognises own ability
	Self-effacing
	SA groups

Effect of high school

Several students spoke at length about their high school experience and it is clear that they may have shaped their academic self-concept. The effectiveness of Kurdish high schools was a prominent topic and was mentioned in 8 of the 17 student interviews. The majority of comments were highly negative apart from two. AMSASI3 said that despite the schools following '*an old system*', he felt the intensive grammar focus of his high school English lessons benefited him. CMSASI4, who attended a private EMI school, claimed his high school lessons were 'effective.' Notably, both of these students showed high levels of self-motivation and claimed to have studied independently a lot during high school, indicating that they were partly self-taught. CMSASI4, may have thought that his high school was effective because the quality of education is higher in private schools in the KRI in terms of the quality of lessons, student outcomes and facilities.

BFMASI4 claimed that even when the classes had teachers, the lessons were '*not very motivating*.' She states that this is a problem '*in primary school, high school and university*' and claims therefore Kurdish students are not very creative and '*lack creative ideas*.' Interestingly, this student attended one of the most prestigious private high schools for girls in the KRI, so it was surprising to hear that even her high school lessons lacked creativity in her view.

AMSASI4 mentioned that he felt some stress and/ or anxiety in the classroom, especially when presenting, due to *'not having a good foundation'* and *'not having a good high school.'* He claimed that all of his knowledge was entirely his *'own efforts'* and that his classes were not motivational. This was a recurring theme throughout his interview and the lack of teachers in his high school clearly had a long-term effect on his academic self-concept; something he believed was ubiquitous across the region. CMSASI2 agreed by stating that students *'don't really learn anything'* in high school and that the *'process of learning English started when entering university.'* Similarly, BMMASI1 claimed that *'most of the students are not able to speak English because of their curriculum.'*

When CMSASI3 was asked whether his high school English lessons had prepared him for university study he replied:

Absolutely not. Because when I was in high school, I just knew that English is just like 'subject plus verb plus complement.' I mean it's just like another mathematic lesson. Because of that, we weren't interested in studying English. We had just these sources; our books and whatever teacher said about English ... we just accepted it like another subject and we just studied for grades not for learning, I mean. [CMSASI3]

Clearly, the rote style of grammar learning lacked creativity and as a result, the students treated English as another content lesson rather than a set of skills or a beneficial additional language. CMSASI5 stated that as the school day is very compact, with each lesson being 30 minutes, *'it's very hard for students to work like that'* and *'if someone's background wasn't very good in primary school, they will face a lot of issues.'* He himself had had to repeat two years of high school due to finding the curriculum difficult. The students also commented on their high school English teachers' competence, claiming that they *'had very bad English pronunciation'* [AMSASI3] or were unable to teach in ways which motivated them and felt that their low English ability was a result of this.

With all of the above issues, many students reportedly resorted to self-study in order to aid their learning. One student was able to gain 8th place in his high school ranking due to self-study but did not feel his high school teachers contributed to this achievement and claimed he learned the majority of his English from *'watching movies and using the*

language with other people' [AMSASI3]. CMSASI5 said he felt compelled to self-study as his high school education was inadequate due to the crises affecting the region. He also reported that attempts to self-study were not always supported by his teachers and he was even told he should '*stick to his level.*' He elaborated:

I was asking my teachers you know 'is that correct? I got that from there, that from there...' But they were saying 'This is very advanced, and your level is pre-intermediate or lower elementary. You should not really listen to those and you know try to follow the (grammar) rules one by one. [CMSASI5]

Such comments may have been detrimental for a students' academic self-concept. This comment also reiterates the local teachers' dependency on grammar rules to teach the students. It may also highlight the teachers' own inadequacies to deal with advanced level English students such as the one above.

As well as uninspiring teachers, several students also complained of being made to feel like they were 'showing off' if they spoke English well in high school. BMMASI1 recalls how he was scorned by peers who said '*You're just trying to show off, why are you speaking English? You are the only one*' [AMSASI3].

According to the majority of participants, English lessons in high school were often '*taught in Kurdish*' which they claimed '*was not very effective*' [AMSASI3]. They would reportedly '*use Kurdish inside the class*' which BMMASI1 believes was because they were not able to speak English well enough. When questioning his teacher on this, he was told '*I know you love English. but the rest don't.*' CMSASI3 says that he and his classmates '*just forgot English*' in high school because the teachers taught the English lessons in Arabic and Kurdish.

While some student participants complained about the quality of teachers in their high schools, AMSASI4 was one of many students in the region who did not have any teachers for a few years of his high school education. He claimed he '*didn't even have teachers for Maths or English.*' He spoke about not having an English teacher '*even for the last grade of high school*' which would have been crucial for his university entrance exams. His lessons were taught by '*some other teachers which were not English teachers they just were able to speak English*' but he thought '*they were not helpful.*' [AMSASI4]. The lack of teachers was due to political and internal issues within the

school which he claims seriously affected him and his career choice as his low grades prevented him from applying for a computer science degree; a course which only allows top ranking students. Instead, he studied a Business Management degree which did not require such high grades (see 1.4.3).

The negative attitudes towards high school were mainly from students who attended public schools. Reasons included an outdated system, incompetent teachers, a lack of teachers, lack of creative lessons and having to self-study in order to progress. Those who attended private high schools complained of '*boring, uncreative*' lessons which they felt hindered their motivation. Clearly, the students blamed their lack of English ability on past high school experiences.

Others' opinions

Each participant was asked how they would describe themselves as a student and how their friends would describe them. Most of the descriptions were similar and indicated that they held their classmates' opinions in high regard; a possible indication of their collectivist culture;

I want everyone to look at me and say 'Ok, she is an active student she is doing her best, she deserves to be the first or second' you know? [BFMASI4]

One student believed that he had several nicknames according to how he behaves, such as '*the serious guy*, '*the lawyer*,' '*The Joker*,' and '*The Police*' [CMSASI5]. He spoke proudly of these nicknames and recognised how he lives up to each of these nicknames in his classroom.

Not all students spoke so confidently about the opinions of others and both SA and MA students claimed that they were worried about other students' and teachers' opinions of them.

I feel really worried about what other students think about me and teachers also actually. They are looking to me in a different way not like other students actually so yeah, so I'm thinking about it. I am taking a look at myself 'Ok what are they looking at? When I speak to the teachers after that they are all looking at me, 'Ok, why are they looking, did I say something? Or was my ideas wrong or something?' [BFMASI4]

Some students, such as CMSASI4, were bothered by the ‘*culture of the university*’ which restricts them from working in mixed gender groups. He claimed that it provoked gossip which, in a collectivist culture, could be detrimental for both the family and tribal reputation. He described cultural restrictions which forced him to consider his classmate partnerships carefully. He explained:

In our country we have to think about this. We have to be careful about the others. If we do something bad, they don't forget it, they always talking about this. They always talk about this ‘they did this, they did this...’ so they don't forget it. For example, when you talk with a girl, you have to think about the others what they think about us, in case they think wrong. [CMSASI4]

This appears to be a reflection of the culture outside of the classroom as in Kurdish culture, it is still frowned upon for unrelated members of the opposite sex to fraternise (see 1.4.2).

There were a few students who confidently claimed that they were indifferent to their peers’ opinions, such as CMSASI5 who said that ‘*it's in the nature of the humanity to try and lower the confidence of his challengers*’ and that he will not let his peers’ opinions hamper his academic success.

Overall, the majority of students said that they were very concerned about the opinions of their peers in the classroom and as shown in the extracts above, this often had an impact on their self-concept. They appeared very self-conscious of both themselves and their academic ability therefore they take great care over their actions in the classroom in order to thwart gossip and people talking about them.

Downplayed own ability

Clearly, the participants who were interviewed were able to speak English fluently enough to communicate with me during the interviews. However, many of them displayed a low self-efficacy when describing their abilities.

AMSASI3 mentioned that his lack of confidence in English had led him to say ‘*I know English but I'm not very good*’ despite being assigned to an upper level class. He admitted having equated knowledge of English with understanding Hollywood movies

but then realised that this was not an accurate measure as his English teachers also struggled to understand them.

Others recognised that their English abilities differed according to the four skills.

I can be higher. In writing, maybe. But when I speak, I feel that this is the correct level of my English. But my writing is much better. From my skills, I think writing is the best one. Then listening, then speaking. Reading as well. Like reading and writing are good. [AMSASI4]

When students were asked their level, several seemed unsure and claimed they were ‘intermediate’ which, judging by their oral fluency and grammatical accuracy, seemed inaccurate; they were more like an advanced level. These discrepancies indicate that the teachers either did not inform the students of their levels, or the students may have been too shy, embarrassed, lacking in confidence or self-effacing to admit their real levels.

Eight of the students described themselves as ‘hardworking.’ The remaining students despite being very fluent in English, still felt uncomfortable discussing their English ability. For example, AMSASI4, despite being labelled as ‘best writer’ in his class, claimed this made him uncomfortable and said, ‘*I never use ‘best’ or things like that.*’ BMMASI1’s mantra of telling himself ‘*I am beneath zero*’ in order to motivate himself seems extreme, but he claimed that it helped him ‘*to learn more.*’

I always tell my friends I am beneath zero and they told me you are not... so that means I am great! (laughs). [BMMASI1]

Other students, such as DFSASI1, claimed they were never asked what their perceived English level and strengths were, thus had difficulty in answering this question.

I: How would you describe yourself in the classroom? What kind of student are you?

P: I haven’t described myself really anytime. Because I don’t want to describe myself. I need others to describe me. [DFSASI1]

The students struggled to clarify their English levels and most had difficulty in describing their strengths indicating that they were underestimating their abilities.

The streaming process

The process of streaming, according to the literature, can be distressing for some and the responses from the participants in this study reflected this notion. AMSASI2 amongst others discussed how he eventually became comfortable within his new class but when he was initially assigned a new group, he '*felt uncomfortable*' and '*didn't like it.*' BFMASI2, from a MA group but who had previously been streamed, expressed her dislike of the practice because she found it '*offensive.*' She believed that high-level students incorrectly placed in lower ability groups may question their ability and believed this could be detrimental to their academic self-concept. CFSASI1 believed that depending on the mindset of the class, streaming may cause bullying amongst friendship groups who ostracise the lower ability students. She later added that she believed this to mainly be in high school and less likely among university students.

As anticipated, many of the student participants who had been streamed themselves were aware of their abilities more than the MA students. Interestingly, none of the MA students made any social comparisons. The SA students appeared to negatively self-compare with others when making social comparisons and it appeared to result from being streamed. For example, AMSASI2 felt he was placed in the middle (intermediate) group because of his inadequate level of English which he described as '*rubbish.*'. He would have preferred to be in a class which was a slightly higher level than his own so that he could be surrounded by more advanced students (upward social comparisons) which he perceived more beneficial.

Proponents of SA grouping were more likely to recall positive experiences of streaming. CFSASI1 felt that because she was '*always in the higher group when it came to English*' she would be capable of pursuing a career using her language skills and was a trainee English teacher at the time of the interview. She claims that being streamed into a high ability group reassured her of her capabilities. This may have been due to the BFLPE or due to having improved confidence in a smaller group with more focused lessons suited to her English level. When describing her memories of the diagnostic exam, she simply explained the process without much subjectivity:

We had an Oxford test online that would grade our level in English, you know like A1 A2 B1 B2... those tests. I got a C1. And some of the people... They put the C1 and the B's together and the 'As' were in a different class. [CFSASI1]

Her lack of emotion whilst describing, unlike others who were more vocal about the process of streaming, indicated that she, among others, may not have been affected by the process and may view it as a necessary part of the enrolment process. She seemed knowledgeable about the process itself and recalled class names and levels etc. Another student from the same university also recalled in such detail and even went on to explain that every semester, another exam is taken to ‘differentiate between groups.’ He explained how he ‘*went to E, which means my level became high.*’ He summarised by saying:

Any semester if you are getting a good mark, you will be going to a higher level. If you get a low mark, you will go to a low class. [CMSASI2]

Interestingly, some students were very aware of the teachers’ feelings towards the SA classes; a controversial point in the literature on streaming (see 2.2.4). CFSASI1 recalls her teachers being ‘glad to teach the upper level classes because they are *‘easy to talk to’* but in the lower class they *‘have to keep repeating themselves.*’ AFSASI1 believes that after her negative experience with streaming, that teachers should try and *‘not compare students or mention anything that makes them feel negative.’* She also believes that teachers should not explicitly discuss the students’ levels to preserve a positive academic self-concept. She says that these teacher tactics will *‘play a good role in keeping students motivated.’*

Two students who were previously in a MA class in semester 1, claimed that being streamed into a SA group had improved their confidence and ability. Prior to streaming, they felt unable to express themselves confidently because other students were *‘better,’* and *‘spoke faster’* [AMSASI2]. They had also felt *‘afraid and not very confident’* [AMSASI3]. Both now claimed to *‘feel motivated’* because being in a SA class had *‘improved ability and confidence.’* [AMSASI2]. Conversely, a student in university B admitted to being *‘really not that confident to speak up or say the answer to the teachers.’* She asked herself *‘what if I have made a mistake?’* and felt that she would be *‘really ashamed!’* if that were the case [BFMASI2].

In summary, proponents of streaming (from both MA and SA groups) mainly discussed positive streaming experiences but only after the initial shock of being separated from their friendship groups. They claimed streaming into SA groups boosted their confidence and inspired them to do better in their classes, after they were placed into

classes of their expected level. However, among the interviewees, none were classed as 'lower level' thus their views are only representative of the higher ability students. Those who had negative opinions on streaming felt this way due to the threat of bullying, negative effects on self-concept and a dislike of the process. From this aspect, the students seemed very well informed of the entire streaming process including the teachers' perceptions.

Summary

Most students seemed comfortable discussing their feelings about themselves and appeared to speak honestly. Some interviews indicated their either low or high academic self-concepts such as how they saw themselves when making either upward or downward social comparisons to other students. Most were able to recognise their English level, but many self-effacing students placed themselves at a lower level than they were. Other students' and teachers' opinions proved very important for students of both SA and MA groups. The students in SA groups were very much aware of the streaming process and not all were comfortable with it. Some described it as offensive, stressful and unfair. However, despite initial upsets, several students claim that they eventually gained more confidence in SA classes. From the seven sub-themes, only two seemed to differ according to grouping style: the confidence of SA students seemed higher, yet the data indicates that the streaming process may have negatively impacted their academic self-concept. The other sub-themes for self-concept were unaffected by grouping style.

6.1.3 Classroom Engagement

The following section details both emerging sub-themes related to classroom engagement, as outlined in the table below.

Table 6.3 Student interviews - third main theme and sub-themes

Main Theme	Sub-themes
Classroom engagement	Streaming
	Teachers

Streaming

In the MA groups, the English levels varied greatly between the students and some believed that this was a contributing factor to decreasing classroom engagement. With such varied levels within one EAP class, as described below, it is not surprising that students perceive this to be true.

They are not the same level! We have students actually they are beginners. We have students who even they don't understand what the teacher says. And students who can speak great like great English you know? We've got students who can only memorise everything. And they are doing well in the exam, but they can't even say some words in English. [BFMASI4]

When questioned on their perceptions of MA classes and engagement, boredom in MA classes was mentioned several times throughout the interviews. Some, such as DFSASI1, who was previously in a MA group, felt that higher level students got bored in MA classes because they are amongst *'lower level students and their English was not good.'* In addition, they *'already know the information'* and then may lose focus.

Others mention that it was both frustrating and boring when working alone in a MA group, as the teacher is giving more attention to the lower level students, and students such as BFMASI4 complained that their English is *'not getting better'* and *'not getting anywhere'* because they were not learning much in MA classes. BMMASI3 in particular commented that the materials were too rigid, did not allow for speaking opportunities and were *'taught to the middle'* thus not challenging them or giving them affordances to learn more. He claims this was a regional belief that *'college can't teach language.'*

Students in MA groups did not indicate any positive classroom engagement. They complained of being bored and not learning much. The higher- level students complained of having to work alone while the teachers focused more attention to the lower level students. Meanwhile, others mentioned how the lessons were taught to the middle. This may have enabled the teachers' lessons easier to plan but this appears to have negatively impacted the students' cognitive and emotional engagement.

All participants, regardless of grouping style, were asked about their perceptions of SA grouping and engagement. The majority agreed that they were able to learn more (from the lessons and class peers) and were more interested in the SA group lessons. Even

MA students claim to prefer being in SA groups because it made them more productive and able to work at a quicker pace. Speed of completion does not necessarily equate to engagement and this is something the students had difficulty differentiating.

Overall, the students perceived themselves to be more engaged in the SA classes rather than the MA classes because the materials were more suited to their needs and subsequently were more interested in them. This is in contrast to the findings from the previous sub-section where MA students complained of being bored in the classes and feeling ‘stuck’ in their levels as if they were not advancing.

Teachers

The students spoke at length about different ways that the teachers attempted to make them engage them. Predominantly SA students said they enjoyed challenges set by the teachers and seemed to respond well when the lessons allowed some student autonomy. For example, CMSASI5, when asked how the teachers motivate and engage them in the class, recalled they ‘*always had a lot of challenges*’ and they were encouraged to ‘*compete with each other*’ in presentations and seminars. Such activities were on topics relevant for future study and this could be why he felt more engaged in those classes. Discussing current affairs, such as ISIS, the Economic crisis in the KRI and Politics helped him and others to become engaged in the classroom due to the relevance of the materials.

6.1.4 Summary

The students’ perceptions of the relationship between teaching practices and their classroom engagement appeared to differ slightly depending on the ability group. MA students claim to be bored amongst students of varying levels. They felt their grouping style did not allow them to engage with the ‘*rigid*’ materials that were ‘*taught to the middle*’ which could lead to diminished cognitive and emotional engagement. Contrarily, SA students feel they are more engaged as their lessons are more challenging and promote autonomy.

The students appeared to have difficulty differentiating between the teachers’ role in engagement and the materials used in the class. They perceive the teachers to be ‘*better*’ if they set challenges, presentations and debates on current affair topics and the

quality of the teacher seems to depend on this. However, with such low English levels present in most EAP classes, a structured curriculum with clear objectives may aid their English more than the presentations and seminars currently set by teachers. Their accuracy and fluency were key points for improvement, but these are unlikely to be ameliorated by such teaching practices.

6.2 Teacher Participant Interviews

The following section presents the findings from the teacher participant interviews which took place after the classroom observations. The teachers' responses were classified into three main themes which correlate with the research questions; academic motivation, academic self-concept and engagement. As per the research questions (see section 6.1), the three main themes have been divided into two parts (teaching practices and ability grouping) and each part divided into relevant sub themes.

6.2.1 Academic motivation

Table 6.4 Teacher interviews - first main theme and sub-themes

Academic Motivation	Sub-themes
Teaching practices	Carrot and stick (reward and punishment)
	Competition with others
	Encouragement
	The High school effect
	Promoting autonomy
	Student centered lessons
Ability grouping	Grouping style

The teacher participants were all asked which motivational strategies they utilised with their classes and their perceptions of ability grouping and the students' academic motivation. The sub-themes emerged from their responses.

Carrot and stick (reward and punishment)

In perhaps one of the harshest responses, DMSATI1 explained how he used 'carrot and stick' style motivation techniques to motivate his students to do well. These techniques

included keeping students after class as a ‘detention’ if they did not perform well on a test, not ‘helping’ them (by changing their grades) and giving the failing students ‘remedial classes.’ He understood that they would ‘hate’ him for it but felt a parental responsibility towards them, as he explained in the following analogy:

I’m very happy to carrot and stick motivate them. Even if they hate me for it, I see it as a parent taking the kid to the dentist when they were small. They will cry, scream and hate the parent for it, but the parent knows best, and the kid will get the best out of it in the end, right? [DMSATI1]

This teacher, who was also the head of the department, had several years’ experience of working with Kurdish students. Often, students in the region would approach their teacher to ask for a higher grade but as a British NES, he was very opposed to this practice and this extract demonstrates his feelings. He appeared to have adopted a parent- child relationship and claimed to be harsh with them so that he could help them reach their potential. In the carrot and stick analogy, the stick was a metaphor for his harsh teaching practices and the carrot was the students improved English levels. These harsh tactics may not work for all students and may even be the source of demotivation for some. However, with students from a collectivist culture in such a patriarchal society, the students may revere their teacher for employing such tactics and would certainly be more inclined to obey him for fear of disrespecting an elder male.

Competition with others

Similar to the student participant interviews, competitiveness was also a key sub theme which emerged from the teacher participant interviews. The teachers seemed very aware of the competition between students and their peers. DMSATI2 believed when students become jealous of each other’s’ abilities, it encourages them to study harder. He also related this to his personal experience of learning English.

So, I put them into levels, and I was noticing if that was OK for them. And suddenly they were progressing, developing. That’s because of the motivation and encouragement. [DMSAT12]

This Kurdish teacher had been driven to study harder by peers who ridiculed his English. He believed his parent culture explained Kurdish students’ preference for ability grouping and that they did not respond well to working with students at a higher

level than them. He noted that ‘very few of them’ saw higher level students as role models. He admitted disliking the competitive aspect of his ‘community’, who did not want anyone to be ‘cleverer than them.’ As a teacher he preferred streaming, perhaps due to his own experience of being streamed as a student. In his view, Kurdish students were more motivated to learn in SA classes, where they were less competitive, and less likely to be discouraged by higher level peers.

The following NES teacher considered, on the contrary, that her middle group SA students were quite competitive.

I do actually think streaming made some of the students in the middle groups wanting to go to the stronger students’ groups and not wanting to fall into the lower...groups [AFSATI1]

In summary, the teachers recognised the potential competitiveness of their students and felt that streaming was popular amongst them because it motivated them to work harder. Most of the teachers believed that mixing with higher level students could lead to feelings of frustration.

Encouragement

Three of the participants, BMMATI1, CFSATI1 and DMSATI2, explained that they felt encouragement was an important motivational strategy in the classroom. They claimed to ask questions to students who did not readily volunteer in an attempt to involve them more. They tried to create a positive learning environment by making them feel comfortable, build trust and also by reminding them that making errors can be a positive part of the learning process. As CFSATI1 explains:

Yeah, I want them to know that I like them and that mistakes are OK, and it’s good to make mistakes, that’s how we get better!

She also explained that something as simple as smiling and keeping all student- teacher interactions positive in the classroom can encourage and motivate her students.

Praise was not something common between the teachers’ interviews. From the five teacher participants, only one specifically mentioned praise. It was demonstrated in some of the classroom observations (section 5.5), but only mentioned by AFSATI1,

who believed that *'it can affect their motivation, and of course a positive attitude. And praise is definitely a strategy for me.'*

High school effect

Without prompting, all teacher participants mentioned Kurdish high schools and how displeased they were with the system. The NES teachers had stronger opinions on this subject than the local Kurdish teachers, whereas the local teachers were able to give personal examples of studying and working in high schools in the KRI. The teachers believed students were not motivated enough in high school thus upon starting university, they had a low English level and low motivation to learn. In large mixed ability classes (high school classes in the KRI are not typically streamed and can be in excess of 50 students per class), teachers struggled to differentiate the work. DMSAT12 said they *'don't know what to do'* and that they tended to focus on writing and grammar and ignore other skills.

Promoting autonomy

Encouraging student autonomy is one of the most important motivational strategies according to Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) and is listed as one of their 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners.' However, in the teacher interviews, it was only mentioned once in the sense of giving the students responsibility for their own learning. One local teacher explained how he allows his students to be 'free' to study as they see fit. This was also demonstrated when observing his class (see section 5.4, DMSA OBS3). Unlike several classes, he described allowing students to bring hot drinks and snacks so that they felt comfortable in the class. He told his students *'you are not a student you are a kind of family. We are two people together we are learning something.'* He believed this created *'a special learning environment.'* He spoke at length about how he believes teachers should give students responsibilities and create opportunities to develop autonomy. He believed this was a way of motivating the students to learn more because they were taking responsibility for their learning.

[DMSAT12]

Student centered lessons

An increasing body of research indicates that making lessons more student centered increases students' intrinsic motivation. Despite its importance, it was only mentioned

by one participant, and was only observed on two occasions. DMSATI2 described his student centered lessons involved seating them in a semi-circle to increase engagement and monitoring it throughout the lesson, changing approach if necessary. He felt that some Kurdish teachers were too ‘dictator like’ in their methods whereas he strived to create an egalitarian and trusting environment. He believed this method, in turn, increased academic motivation.

Grouping style

All of the teacher participants agreed that the grouping style of a class affects the students’ motivation. The teacher who taught MA classes, BMMATI1, believed that his lower ability students were demotivated when amongst higher ability students, especially when amongst fluent ones. AFSATI1 agreed that MA groups negatively affected the students’ motivation and believed that students in SA classes progressed more. In order to create a positive impact on students’ academic motivation, the teachers recommended that classes be separated by ability wherever possible, even if only in class grouping.

DMSATI1 felt that the motivation of a student depended on their ability and that higher-level students were ‘*far more motivated*’ than the lower level students. He recognised the difference in levels despite his class being classified as SA but states that if his students were in MA groups, the same rules would apply; the higher ability students would be more motivated than their lower ability counterparts. He believed that the lower ability students were less motivated because they did not have to put effort into their classes as the ‘*higher ability students answer every question and the teacher will just go ‘yep yep yep.’*’ He believed that teachers allowed this because ‘*it’s easier to do that for a teacher*’ [DMSATI1].

Summary

Overall, most of the teacher participants had similar views on academic motivation. They described several common motivational teaching practices which they felt motivated their students but did not demonstrate all of them in their lessons according to the classroom observations. Their perceptions of the relationship between academic motivation and ability grouping were also similar and all agreed that grouping

positively impacts students' academic motivation. They all preferred SA grouping over MA grouping, including the teacher who taught MA classes.

6.2.2 Academic self-concept

Table 6.5 Teacher interviews - second main theme and sub-themes

Academic self-concept	Sub-themes
Teaching practice	Grouping style effect
Ability grouping	BFLPE
	Improved students' confidence
	Discrimination, marginalisation, stigmatisation
	Status

During the interviews, there was very little mention of academic self-concept. This could indicate its' lack of importance and presence when compared with academic motivation. The two local Kurdish teachers appeared somewhat unsure of the term and needed clarification. One NES teacher, whilst being aware of the impact that her teaching practices could have on a student's self-concept, did question herself as to whether this is something she should be promoting in her classroom.

Grouping style effect

Despite all teachers being proponents of ability grouping, they all shared the common opinion that there is a strong correlation between ability grouping (including in-class grouping) and a negative academic self-concept. Most believed that the process of streaming itself and being aware of their given levels may have the most negative impact. For example, teacher CFSATI1 expressed that streamed students may develop a negative self-concept if they are aware of their rank in the grouping system, but after the class settle into their new groups, their self-concept becomes more positive. DMSATI1 on the other hand, believed that despite the students being aware of their levels, they did not feel it negatively impacted their self-concept.

They are straight forward with the fact... if they are rubbish in English, they know they are rubbish in English. They are happy to tell you 'mamosta, bash niya ingilizi' they are happy, they are very realistic about their own abilities*

more so than the European students that I teach. [DMSATI1] (teacher, I am not good in English).*

This NES teacher may not have been aware of the students' true feelings due to not being fluent in Kurdish to discuss such issues with them. This may be why he believed his students' self-concept was not affected by streaming. He did, however, believe that teachers should refrain from informing the students of their levels and that they would gradually discover them by themselves.

DMSATI1 described their simplistic method of streaming by ability and mentioned that some students were curious to know their level results. However, in order to preserve the students' positive self-concept, they were not informed of their levels and the classes were not labelled in any way that the students could find out their order on the scale of beginner to advanced.

I make sure they have a level test on the first day that they come here to put them in a group and the kids were very interested to know 'Am I in a high group or a low group?' And I wouldn't tell them. They were saying, 'Can I see my test?' 'No, you can't see your test, that's for us to know.' ... but as soon as one of them found out, 'Oh, I'm in the high group,' he was going to the other group 'Oh, I'm in the high group, you're in the low group, you're rubbish!' So, I number the classes, I don't tell them that 'You're beginner, you're elementary,' it's on a need to know basis. It's irrelevant. Like I said, a spade is a spade. This person is this level, that person is that level. Let's get on with it. [DMSATI1]

He believed that when students know their levels, they may use this information to tease others which may cause a negative self-concept. His indifferent comments such as '*a spade is a spade*' and commenting how students, despite being upset, have to 'get on with it,' may indicate that he believed students should not dwell on their given levels and that they needed to continue working even if they felt disheartened by their described English levels, even if they were classified as lower than expected.

BMMATI1, from a MA university, believed his classes were heterogeneous due to a lack of diagnostic exam and because all UG1 (first year undergraduate) students were placed into the same classes regardless of level. After personal observation of the class in question, it was clearly a very MA group in terms of English level. However, he

believed that by not labelling students into groups, students were less competitive and did not push themselves to be better as they may have been unaware of their actual level. This may mean that students in MA classes may conceal any inhibitions they had about their English levels which may be better for their self-concept.

The following teacher agreed by stating that the process of streaming means the students usually become aware of their levels and strive to move up a level. She mentioned *'it made some of the students in the middle groups wanting to go to the stronger students' groups and not wanting to fall into the lower groups* [AFSATI1].

This teacher believed that students being aware of their levels would be more encouraging rather than demotivating. Another teacher witnessed several students being very upset with the streaming process after having to re-group the classes. However, she also saw that after the initial upheaval, they began to progress more.

This particular class was actually split with another class which was beginner and so they were pulled out of beginner classes that were actually too fast for them because there were some stronger beginners in there and they were really upset the first day, it was a fight to get them out of the classrooms. [CFSATI1]

When asked if she remembered any comments from students, she recalled the lower level students being particularly upset post-streaming and as they *'did not have the language ability,'* and not being a Kurdish speaker, she felt unable to accurately judge their feelings towards this. Notably, she did not mention the higher-level students being upset over the process. The MA teacher explained that streaming itself may have a negative effect on self-concept, but honesty is important when discussing rationale with the students. He believed a teacher could convince the students *'This is better for you'* and persuade them that they will see *'more improvement in learning languages'* when streamed [BMMATI1].

When asked if the teachers noticed any changes with their students post-streaming, all SA class teachers agreed that after a *'settling in period,'* the students' confidence improved. Teacher AFSATI1 in particular recalls how the higher ability students in particular were proud that they had been promoted to the top groups.

I think the students in the stronger groups were pretty proud of themselves. And then one of the weaker students suddenly felt OK! He suddenly got the

confidence because he felt he was a lot better than the other students, but still one of the weaker students in general. [AFSATI1]

CFSATI1 in particular worried that those in MA groups were at risk of *'falling behind everyone else and feeling stupid.'* She added that after the initial upset of being grouped by ability, students *'flourish more'* and *'progress faster'* so they were *'not feeling stupid.'*

In sum, all teachers agreed that the process of streaming can have a negative impact on students' academic self-concept. One teacher believes that because of the potential stigma of being in a lower level, students should not be informed of their hierarchy within the groups as it could be detrimental for their academic self-concept. Instead, classes should be labelled ambiguously to prevent upset amongst students. When students become aware of their own levels after finding their place within the groups, there may be unrest, but the teachers believed that this initial upset usually settled when the students adjusted to their classroom environment.

BFLPE

Two of the five teacher participants mentioned the BFLPE effect (see section 2.1.12) in their classes. Participant DMSATI1 spoke specifically how he thought the self-concept of lower ability learners in particular improved when they were grouped by ability. He explained:

Being the top fish in your small pond, so even the best students of the lower ability group may be more motivated and feel better about themselves because they have been the worst in the class their whole life, all of a sudden, now they are the best in the class! Maybe this will motivate them even more! So, who knows...[DMSATI1]

All the teachers believed that the students in their classes often compared themselves to each other and this could be affecting the students' self-concept. The following teacher describes the BFLPE as unavoidable from empirical observations in her classroom:

I think the weaker students, or any students, they compare themselves with each other. So, a strong student in a MA class will look at the weak students and always think 'Oh I'm so great, right? I am so good I don't need to learn as

much... But in a group of strong students they might realise 'Oh, I'm not the strongest any longer' I think that would be motivational. [AFSATI1]

Competitiveness is a prominent theme mentioned in several sections by all teachers. Notably only NES teachers mentioned the BFLPE. This may mean that local teachers were not aware of this issue and if so, more awareness is needed in order to protect their students' self-concepts.

Discrimination, marginalisation and stigmatisation

All of the teacher participants were read some statements which were extracted from previous research on ability grouping and self-concept. I explained to the participants that these were not my own views and were selected from a range of articles. The statements were merely used as conversation starters for the interviews and they served their purpose well. Although they may be considered as leading/ biased, I presented the statements as neutrally as possible but am aware that they may appear as one sided. When asked whether they believed ability grouping is discriminatory, their responses were all quite similar. For AFSATI1, an avid proponent of ability grouping, she had not considered this to be the case until questioned on it. She laughed as she replied:

Well, yes, it's basically discrimination! But at the same time, you know, my instinct says yes, you are dividing people into groups according to a criteria. [AFSATI1]

BMMATI1 argued that although ability grouping can be discriminatory, it is a form of 'positive discrimination' which benefits the students. CFSATI1 was not as positive and recalls some negativity from the students who were streamed:

It is discriminatory and it can separate friends. We have had some of that at the university. They didn't like that.

DMSATI1 and DMSATI2 on the other hand, disagreed completely that streaming was a form of discrimination as student groups were heterogeneous by nature due to their varied abilities.

The subject of marginalisation was discussed by two NES teachers. AFSATI1 recalled her and her colleague's initial reactions wondered whether the streaming process would marginalise the students.

As far as I remember we also asked the students whether they were interested in being streamed, as I think one of the issues we were worried about would of course be to marginalise the worst students in one group. It was also the result of streaming then, that some students didn't want to be in one of these groups. However, I sort of saw that the weaker students they... blossomed more when they were not together with the stronger students.

Both teachers agreed that although there may be some initial effect on the students' self-concept, once the students had settled, they progressed and developed a more positive self-concept.

The teachers were also asked their opinions on a statement which read 'Students who are in the lowest band of an ability group are more likely to feel stigmatised.' This was taken from a body of research on streaming and stigmatisation (Harlen and Malcolm, 1999; Joyce and McMillan, 2010). All agreed that streamed students may '*feel more stigmatised*' [CFSATI1] but that '*they will learn more*' [AFSATI1] and they '*will progress faster*' [CFSATI1] as a result of the streaming. The teachers may believe the feeling of stigmatisation is offset by the students' potential progress in English in their respective ability groups.

DMSATI1 was rather forthright on this topic and although he believed students may feel stigmatised but was inevitable and '*necessary*.'

A spade is a spade (laughs). Like if you can't speak English, or you can't do maths or whatever it is, then you're in the bottom group. A spade is a spade. Yeah.

His colleague, DMSATI2, again considered the cultural implications of streaming when he described how Kurdish students try to remain in a lower level to avoid disappointment. He added that students who were unhappy in a chosen level may threaten to leave the class if they feel uncomfortable.

Actually, it happens in Kurdistan a lot... when you tell a student 'You are a low level' they say 'Oh no, I'm clever, I'm good' so you will face that kind of expression. But I think I'm very optimistic that this kind of, let's say, thinking, now is going to be changed in Kurdistan because most students feel that they are from a low level. So, they say 'Please teacher, please keep us in a low level.'

Even the higher ones, they want to stay in a low level. When you put a student in a class and they don't know how to assess themselves, they try to assess themselves so in this case they will be disappointed and sometimes they say 'Yeah, I will leave the class.'

He believed that the students' mindset was changing gradually, and they eventually accept their given levels but as many students were unaware of their levels and had no frame of reference, upon discovering themselves in a lower class, they often threaten to leave university.

Status

Two of the teachers mentioned that Kurdish students in particular worried about their status in the classroom. This teacher recalled the students wanting to change their groups, possibly because of the status that being in a higher group would portray.

But as I remember, they always wanted to be moved into a different group. Whether it's because of...sharing the same taxi or whether it's because of... You know because of the status it would give you to be in a stronger group.

[AFSATI1]

Summary

In summary, academic self-concept is not something that was discussed in great detail as many of the teachers were unsure of the term. Some questioned how their role as a teacher fit with the promotion of a positive self-concept which indicated that they did not see the importance of this construct and / or were unsure of how to implement it. Most teachers agreed that the process of streaming was likely to upset some students, particularly lower level ones, and could initially have a negative impact on their self-concept but they would eventually get used to the idea and their self-concept would become more positive. However, there was very little evidence to demonstrate that they considered the impact on students' self-concept when implementing ability grouping.

6.2.3 Classroom engagement

Table 6.6 Teacher interviews - third main theme and sub-themes

Classroom engagement	Sub-themes
Teaching practices	Level of difficulty
	Teach to the middle
	Lack of differentiation training
	Lack of involvement from some students
Ability grouping	Lack of involvement from some students
	No benefits

Ability grouping for better lessons and progression

All the teacher participants agreed that ability grouping enabled the teachers to plan and deliver better lessons, but mainly focused on the teachers' role rather than the students' learning. DMSATI1 believed that SA classes were '*simply more efficient*' because the teachers were not '*constantly pitching in the middle, having to appease to someone else or having to give extra work.*' He explained that '*you can be one teacher to essentially teaching one student instead of having loads of different things to do*' [DMSATI1]. His colleague believed that SA classes were more student centered because teachers could '*practice more*' with students and teachers could choose more level-specific materials for their students [DMSATI2]. While these two participants highlighted the benefits for teachers, the benefits for students were not mentioned.

All of the teacher participants agreed that streaming classes by ability enhanced the students' learning and allowed them to progress faster in the class. Again, their responses were more teacher-centered than student-centered as they all highlighted the advantage of being able to deliver the material at a quicker pace. AFSATI1 was asked whether she thought ability grouping impacted students' learning and achievement. She replied:

I feel that I am able to deliver the classes faster, so I will see the class progress faster. Yeah, I think in a streamed class they learn more...it makes a difference and I think it has an impact on motivation... even for the weaker students if they are placed together. Maybe they will not reach the same level as the stronger

students, but they will still progress more. You know...according to the level where they start.

In her response, she recognised that the students may progress quicker and be more motivated in a SA group, but engagement was not mentioned or taken into consideration. BMMATI1 believed that being able to select more level-appropriate materials for the group allowed the students to cope better and thus be better engaged. Despite teaching in a MA class, he believed it was more SA than MA as they were approximately the same level. In this case, he usually selected ‘intermediate level’ materials for his students to suit their level, suggesting that he also ‘taught to the middle,’ as the literature suggests (see ‘teach to the middle,’ below) but it was clear from the observations that not all were intermediate level.

BMMATI1 and CFSATI1 both agreed that SA students progress and achieve better than their peers in MA groups, because it gives them more affordances for success. DMSATI2 had doubts about ability grouping when he first started his job. Being Kurdish, he thought the students would not like ‘*losing face*’ in front of others. However, his opinions on ability grouping changed as he saw that the students were motivated, keen to work and progressing in SA groups.

Two of the teacher participants mentioned that SA grouping allows them to have more control over the groups. DMSATI2 explains ‘*If (students) are in the same level, of course, you can have more control*’ but he later goes on to say: ‘*The teachers shouldn’t be like dictators to control everything*’ [DMSATI2].

In sum, the teachers’ responses were mostly teacher-centered and seldom referred to the students’ engagement in the class. However, all teachers commented that the students progressed faster and hence learned more in SA groups.

Level of difficulty

All of the teacher participants agreed that SA lessons were easier to teach and for this reason, the teachers preferred this method of grouping. Teacher AFSATI1 started to teach at university A before the introduction of streaming and eventually worked together with management to implement this grouping style:

Well, when I came to the university the students were not streamed according to their ability, so myself and other teachers, we wanted the students to be streamed. And it made a huge difference. It was a lot easier to teach them when they were streamed. [AFSATI1]

As well as ease for the teacher, she noticed that the streamed students found certain tasks easier too, such as peer reviews. She felt that *'the stronger student doesn't get a lot out of a weak student's feedback, but the weak student will get a lot out of the stronger student looking at his paper.'* She clearly acknowledges that there was still a range of abilities in a SA group but that the range was smaller than a MA group which was less stressful for her to manage. She described how she often felt 'pressured' in a MA class but rarely felt this in a SA class. By not feeling the pressure as much, she felt she could assist the students more.

I don't feel pressured by students that are a little higher and want to go faster. I don't have to juggle them getting bored versus getting the students to understand. So, I can help them more. [CFSATI1]

DMSATI1 also explained that in SA classes, which he claims are 'easier for the teacher,' teachers can focus more on the students instead of 'juggling' lots of tasks. He also stated that in SA classes, teachers *'don't have to be aware'* of the various levels within one class but can simply *'give the same material to all'*.

Some teachers believed that if a class is difficult to teach, the students were less likely to be engaged. Whilst all five teachers discussed how 'difficult' MA classes were, three teachers even described them as being *'a nightmare to teach'* [BMMATI1, CFSATI1, DMSATI1]. BMMATI1 believed that students became bored in lessons when the teacher struggled to teach a group with diverse English levels. Although he had taught MA classes for most of his teaching career, he stated that it was not easy, and he struggled teaching very low ability students mixed with the higher ability ones as they could not even understand *'very basic words.'* [BMMATI1].

Both teacher participants from University C and D also admitted that MA groups can be difficult to teach. DMSATI2 described MA groups as *'problematic'* as well as *'difficult'* because of the students' *'different backgrounds in English.'* He described how some students were *'speaking fluently'* while some are *'zero'* and *'don't know even ABCD.'*

He believed that such students *'cannot benefit from the lecture'* and were less likely to be engaged [DMSATI2]. The teacher from university C also mentioned that MA classes can be difficult and require more energy from the teacher. However, she later said that MA groups can also be rewarding once the different in-class groups are *'working together more autonomously'* [CFSATI1].

Lack of engagement from some students

Due to the variation of levels, all teacher participants believed that not all students could engage in a MA group and that the stronger students usually did most of the work thus were noticed more by the teacher. The other students would usually remain unengaged.

If it's a MA group, the person who knows English will do everything. Will have the pen, will write everything, will not consult anyone else, and the 90% that aren't holding the pen will just be sat there doing nothing and playing on their phone. [DMSATI1]

The teacher participants felt that some students are often neglected in MA classes as the teachers often *'teach to the middle'* in order to deliver the lessons. They felt this was not beneficial to students of varying levels as the lessons *'never really reach the weaker students.'* They felt that *'the stronger students are bored'* [AFSATI1] and they *'have done it all before and know it all'* [DMSATI1]. The teachers admitted that this strategy could lead to confusion and boredom amongst students and was not beneficial to anyone.

Summary

Classroom engagement was not explicitly discussed by all teachers and in some cases not considered by some interviewees. Those who discussed it used it synonymously with *'progress'* and they appeared to use *'boredom'* synonymously with disengagement. All the teachers believed that SA progressed faster than their MA counterparts. They claimed that SA groups were easier to teach which meant that the teachers could deliver lessons tailored to the needs of the students. They all believed that MA groups were difficult to teach, and often left groups of students confused and bored as not all were able to engage in the lesson.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the qualitative research methods employed in this study. Firstly, the empirical classroom observation data was presented and discussed in accordance with the research questions. Then the students and teachers shared their perceptions and observations on a wide variety of topics related to the research questions and discussed their opinions on academic motivation, academic self-concept and engagement in relation to teaching practices and ability grouping.

The main findings were that the student and teacher participants believed that academic motivation was more present in SA classes. Both sets of participants recognised competitiveness at the biggest motivator for EAP students in the KRI and that the main demotivator was other students in the class. Academic self-concept was not discussed at length despite being prompted during interviews participants seemed unaware of its importance in the classroom. Both teachers and students recognised that streaming caused upset and stress to students when initially introduced and may have had an initial negative impact on their academic self-concept. However, they agreed that after this temporary upset, the students eventually gained more academic confidence. Both teachers and students believed that SA groups provided more affordances for engagement due to the challenging lessons being more suited to the students' level thus providing lessons which were easier to teach. This contrasted with MA groups which students claimed were 'boring' and did not allow all students to engage and what teachers claimed to be 'difficult' classes to teach. The theme of competitiveness also emerged from this section as students discussed the teaching practices that teachers used in an attempt to engage them. Teachers mentioned several motivational practices that they claimed to employ in the class, not all of which corresponded with what the students mentioned. The next chapter discusses the combined findings of the quantitative and qualitative data and conclusions will be drawn in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This penultimate chapter discusses the key findings of the three preceding chapters in relation to the research questions presented in chapter 1, the previous research in the field from chapter 2 and the CDST conceptual framework. The headings and sub-headings in this chapter relate to the main themes of the research questions:

- 1) Academic motivation, 2) Academic self-concept, and 3) Classroom engagement.

7.1. Academic Motivation

The research questions relating to academic motivation were answered through a combination of interviews and questionnaires. Eight of the 40 questionnaire items referred directly to academic motivation.

7.1.1 RQ1a Teaching practices and academic motivation

In the research context, motivational strategies can be seen as negative feedback, which regulates the stability of a system to keep a class in a motivated attractor state. During the interviews, the participating teachers discussed strategies they used to motivate their students, including using encouraging words, delivering student-centred lessons, posting on social media, creating competitions within the class, promoting autonomy and, in one extreme case, academic punishments (e.g., keeping the students behind after a class if they do not perform well on a test). The students only highlighted two of these motivational strategies; ‘encouraging words’ from university D and ‘creating competitions and challenges’ in university C. At university D, strategies such as promoting autonomy, group work and pair work, were observed but not mentioned by the students. University C and D were very different in context (see 1.4.5 and 5.3) but both streamed their EAP classes by ability, which may explain the similarity in motivational strategies used and thus presence of negative feedback.

The MOLT observation checklist showed that all the strategies listed were observed in the classes, although some more than others. The most common strategies in observed MA groups was social chat and the least observed was groupwork. Interestingly, these are the exact opposite of the SA class which saw groupwork as the most commonly

observed strategy and social chat as the least observed. This indicates that the dynamics of the classrooms were at opposing ends of the scale in terms of strategies perhaps due to streaming, the teachers' teaching style or experience. Clearly, the system parameters (teaching style, grouping style) were affecting the classroom causing a shift in the dynamics.

In CDST terms, positive feedback could push the system of class engagement into a motivated attractor state. However, certain system parameters (socio-economic background of the university etc) determine the viability of this motivation. For example, teaching resources, in particular teachers' use of classroom technology, was mentioned by both teachers and students as both a motivator and demotivator for EAP students. Access to such resources was reflected by the socio-economic backgrounds of the universities; the more rural universities had less access to classroom technology and thus was not mentioned as a motivator. In universities A and C, the students discussed how teachers used different types of technology in the classrooms which they found interesting and motivating. These included apps and websites which they could use both in and out of the classroom whilst being connected virtually to their teacher. Being from the private sector, these universities annually provided all students with new books and classrooms equipped with the latest classroom technology such as smartboards and I-pads for use; affordances rarely seen in the public universities. As a result, students claimed to enjoy their lessons more when their teachers used these technologies in the lessons. As technology advances rapidly, the technology mentioned by the students (YouTube videos, projectors and some website links) may be considered out of date in comparison to some schools, but what needs to be considered is the students' idea of technology and that it is enough to motivate them. These findings correspond with those of Hussein, (2010) Ramachaudran (2004) and Soska, (1994) who posit that educational technology can motivate L2 students and stimulate their learning. Likewise, from a PML2M perspective, the use of technology in the classroom may be considered an executive motivational influence which ensures motivation is sustained during the class.

In university B and D, on the other hand, the students complained about 'demotivating' and 'poor quality' resources. Being government universities, they suffered extreme budget cuts due to the economic situation of the region and this system parameter directly affected the classroom as a system. In addition, the rural location of the universities (with poor electricity, weak internet signal and a weaker economy than the

city areas, see chapter 1.4.5), may indicate why students from B and D did not comment much on technology in the classroom because they may have restricted access to it. The interview comments were supported by the classroom observations as both university A and C used more technology in the classroom (projectors, smartboards etc) and were able to provide colourful textbooks to their students. This contrasts with university B and D which used photocopied pamphlets and textbooks were shared, if available. As a result, the lack of use of motivational teaching practices combined with a lack of resources may drive a system into a demotivated attractor state.

As seen in chapter 4, the MOLT observation scheme data revealed that there is a positive correlation between the TMP and the LMB in the classrooms. This may mean that the wider the variety of TMP utilised by the teachers, the more motivated the students will be, as was found in previous studies such as Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2011), Bernaus and Gardner (2008) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, (2007). This important finding was also echoed in the student interviews as it emerged that in university B, students were less motivated in their lessons due to limited availability of resources and TMP. These factors are likely to interact and contribute towards demotivation.

In summary, both teachers and students mentioned similar TMPs and with only a few exceptions, they were also observed in the classrooms. The triangulated data all report a similar finding that there is a positive correlation between TMP and LMB consistent with the literature in this area. Through a complexity lens, the TMP become the positive feedback which can cause a system's behaviour to change randomly thus pushing it into a different attractor state – in this case, a motivated one. It is important to note that the system parameters determine the level of that motivation/ intensity of the attractor state within different systems. The differences in what was observed and what teachers said relates to literature by Bernaus and Gardner (2008) who also found some discrepancy when comparing teachers' reported use and students' perceptions of motivational strategies used. Teachers also claimed to use more strategies than they actually do which may have been due to the observer effect.

7.1.2 RQ1b Ability grouping and academic motivation

According to all teachers and the majority of students, the process of streaming started a phase shift resulting in the classroom shifting into a motivated attractor state. The

teacher participants believed that ability grouping positively impacted students' academic motivation, including the MA class teacher who spoke of his past experiences. Two of the 5 teachers expressed specifically that MA groups could negatively affect students' academic motivation as lower level students become demoralised and demotivated by being amongst more fluent speakers. This kind of linear cause-effect relationship is not consistent with CDST even if the teachers perceive it that way but for some students, being in a MA group could be a contributing factor to their perceived demotivation of students. This may have been from the teachers' empirical observations but could be a valid observation due to the self-claimed competitive nature of the students. Both students and teachers discussed how they struggled to cope in MA classes due to the difficulty of large, multi-level classes.

The participating students had analogous perceptions of the relationship between ability grouping and academic motivation. When interviewed, 13 out of 17 of the students preferred SA grouping predominantly because they felt it motivated them to succeed; findings which are broadly in line with the literature of Kulik and Kulik (1982) and Bahar (2015) who both found that students showed more positive attitudes towards learning in SA classes and preferred them to MA classes. This may be due to several reasons. For example, it may be related to their self-concept (see next section), or familiarity; they are used to this style. The latter is less likely as public high school English lessons in the KRI are MA classes. The streaming process itself can, however, motivate those who expected to do better but did not perform as well to try harder to progress to the next level. This may be due to the competitive nature of the students as found during interviews. It may also be because ability grouping provided them with lessons tailored to their needs amongst peers of the same English level.

The remaining 4 SA students and one MA student said they felt more motivated and energised by the dynamics of multi-level classes. These findings are also compatible with Saleh et al., (2005) who found that students felt they benefitted from helping others with their English and sharing ideas and opinions. Interestingly, Salah's students were classified as intermediate and upper-intermediate, as were the majority of student participants in this study (see chapter 6.3). However, when a student is frequently expected to help their classmates, the student's own learning may suffer as a result, as noted during an interview (see 6.1.1). Further research would be needed in this area to confirm this.

The findings indicate a tension between the students' competitiveness and wanting to help others. This may stem from the collectivist nature of the Kurdish culture (see 1.4.2), specifically the tension between the large culture of the Kurds versus the small culture of the classroom. Alternatively, the findings may reflect individual personality traits and a larger sample of participants is recommended to explore this tension further.

One major finding of the current study is that despite concerted efforts to stream students by ability, interestingly, all the participating teachers and 3 SA students highlighted the range of levels within their classes. The SA students felt that many of the classes were more heterogeneous than homogeneous and described their classes as if they were MA classes. This would not be surprising as L2 students generally have varied educational backgrounds which may result in a spiky profile (mixed proficiency of writing, listening, speaking and reading abilities) perhaps due to varying cognitive and affective factors including individual differences, L1 and motivation to learn English (Kormos and Trebits 2012). These findings reflect what was found in the KRI context as the students were from very diverse backgrounds with very mixed English abilities; some were very fluent speakers but were unable to write in English etc). Moreover, in this context, the most advanced level offered in SA universities was less advanced than the level of some of the students. This meant native speakers of English and advanced level students were often placed alongside beginner level students. This indicates that in the current research context, the process of streaming may not be robust enough to label classes as SA, but the range of levels in the MA classes was likely greater than the SA classes.

Self-motivating strategies were mentioned by all SA students but not the MA students in university B; perhaps because the MA students were more extrinsically motivated (see below). While some SA students claimed it was due to their passion for learning, some felt self-motivating strategies were essential due to the inadequate English provision within their university. One student from university D openly expressed his aversion to his current university English classes and felt he needed to supplement his learning with an external English course. They claimed to seek affordances to use the language such as speaking to foreigners in the town centres or online, watching movies in English and listening to English radio stations as well as studying extra English lessons at home. This finding was corroborated by student questionnaires in which the single ability groups scored relatively higher on the intrinsic motivation scale (178.72)

than the MA groups (168.08). The MA students, on the other hand, appeared to be more extrinsically motivated as they scored higher on this scale (181.73) when compared to their SA counterparts (167.83). This may mean that the SA grouped students were more intrinsically motivated and the MA grouped students were more extrinsically motivated. This may be due to several factors such as SA students having more focused goals set in their classes as theoretically the materials are designed for one ability level rather than a variety of levels in one class. Alternatively, the findings from the questionnaire responses indicate that the streamed students may have been more intrinsically motivated to begin with than the MA students, which would be consistent with the SDT literature (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Niemiec and Ryan, 2009; Deci and Ryan, 2002, see 2.1.2). In addition, as the MOLT findings showed, the social environment of the SA classes supported the students' fundamental needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2002) better than that of the MA classes. In CDS terms, the systems parameters differ according to whether they are SA or MA classes.

Higher-level students in the MA groups felt that their classes were not beneficial as they did not learn anything new, which resulted in a lack of motivation. Combined with similar comments from the teacher participants, this supports the theory that MA classes are 'class taught' or 'taught to the middle' thus not very well differentiated (Sukhnandan and Lee, 1998). According to SDT (see 2.1.2), such students may lose their motivation to learn if the materials are irrelevant or overly difficult/ easy which may make them feel incompetent. These findings are also in line with the motivational models of Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) and Williams and Burden (1997) who posited that a loss of motivation may occur if materials are not relevant, meaningful or significant to the student.

The level of the student may determine whether students benefit and enjoy streaming. From the questionnaire findings, it emerged that students preferred being in SA classes, claiming in the interviews that they were 'bored' 'demotivated' and 'frustrated' in the MA lessons. However, the questionnaires were generic and did not specify the level of the students. From the students' perceptions of ability grouping and academic motivation, findings emerged from both the interviews and questionnaires that many students disliked being in the same class as lower level students. They felt the teacher usually gave more attention to the lower level students which caused the higher-level students to feel neglected. However, the lower level students felt more motivated and

encouraged to do better by being amongst higher level students. This coincides in particular with the work of Bahar (2015), Saleh et al. (2004), and McManus and Gettinger (1996), who also posit that lower level students are more motivated in MA classes and higher ability students are more motivated in SA classes. BMMA3I3 discussed how being among lower level students both frustrated him yet motivated him to study more because he saw himself as a higher level than the others. This phenomenon might be explained by the BFLPE (see 2.1.12) as being amongst lower level students clearly had positive effect on his self-concept.

This frustration of the higher-level students was further fuelled by some ‘beginners in English’ who were about to graduate and become English teachers. Their strong dismay at these future teachers in the Kurdish education system hinted that they took an active interest in the future of their country. Given the collectivist-type culture (Triandis, 1988, see chapter 1.4.2), students may have been concerned that such students were not contributing to their education system and society appropriately. Other students expressed their belief that Kurds can often be lazy and reluctant to learn; yet when streamed by ability, due to the stigma, they tended to refuse to be labelled lower level students and this somehow motivated them to work harder. This is in line with the findings from Cheung and Rudowicz (2003) when it emerged that ability grouping may be more suited to students of a collectivist culture. Perhaps, as Frankel et al. (2005) suggested, educational institutes in collectivist settings should adapt their methods to suit. From CDST point of view, the system parameters of a collectivist culture combined with the streaming process encouraged the emergence of a new attractor state of motivation through a phase shift. While there appears to be tension whether streaming is a process accepted in the Kurdish culture, further investigation is needed to clarify this.

7.1.3 RQ1c Emerging factors affecting students’ motivation.

During interviews, several contextual factors emerged which appeared to affect the students’ academic motivation. The first major factor was the ISIS invasion of Mosul between 2014 and 2017 (see 1.4.1 and 1.4.5). Most students mentioned ‘external influences’ as a cause of demotivation, apart from one student who optimistically saw this crisis as a motivating factor as it encouraged him to ‘do better’ and not let the Kurdish soldiers’ /martyrs’ struggle be in vain; some of which were family and friends

of the students, it was discovered. Students mentioned that they struggled to focus and felt 'hopeless' and 'disappointed' with such an ongoing crisis. This subsequently fuelled talk of moving abroad to look for better prospects, joining friends and family members who had also left the region after envisaging bleak employment prospects in a near-failed economy. Others spoke of financial difficulties which may have meant they could no longer afford a university education. Within 12 months of the ISIS invasion, HE students had already begun to leave university for financial reasons as the MHESR reported a 40% drop in enrolment of students in private universities between 2015 and 2017 (Rudaw.net, 2017). Such intense system parameters would undoubtedly affect some students, or 'components' in the system differently; their responses to positive feedback would vary because systems are non-linear and unpredictable.

With cuts to teachers' salaries, the already inadequate education system had taken an even further blow as teachers' timetables were cut to reduce salaries, which may have affected teachers' motivation to teach. When a teacher's motivation is suffering, this is likely to impact on their students' motivation too as education no longer maintains its status as a priority, but other needs become more important. This issue was discussed by Davies (2003) who also found that in post-conflict areas such as the KRI, education is rarely the priority and as a result, motivation to learn often wavers. Similar to other post-conflict regions, a culture of learning needs to be re-established following major disruption to schooling, not forgetting that the teachers may have also 'spent their entire lives in disrupted schools' (p. 171). Through a CDST lens, in order for this to happen, continuous negative feedback would be required to encourage a phase shift (when a system self-organises into a new pattern of behaviour) into an attractor state which resembles an established school system where students are motivated to learn and ready to engage. Several bifurcations (sudden, perhaps unexpected, shifts in the system, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008) would have to happen in order for this phase shift, such as an injection of school funding, teacher training and possibly building restorations. Only then could the system stabilise into a preferred attractor state again.

The influence of culture also emerged as a factor from both the teachers' and students' interviews. The teachers perceived that Kurdish students may respond well to ability grouping because they usually disliked working with those of a higher ability than themselves (such as in an MA class). On the other hand, some teachers also speculated that Kurdish students may disapprove of streaming as it may expose them as being a

low ability student. This may be because loss of face is a serious concern in Kurdish culture. They claimed that keeping the 'status' of being in a higher group would be seen as more important than progressing in the classroom, which would reflect the tribal context of the KRI (see 1.4.2). This contradiction is similar to that of Goodall (2014) who also found that while some students feared 'losing face' in front of their peers, some students genuinely were interested in how they could improve and were eager to listen to feedback. These findings are also compatible with Cheung and Rudowicz's study (2003) who also found that differences in culture could have an effect on whether particular cultural groups or nationalities respond well to ability grouping. They are also compatible with Williams and Burden (1997) who agreed that the cultural background of the learners influences their learning. Some may argue that this protective strategy may not be culturally related but that all humans have the tendency to maintain a positive-self-image (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002; Peixoto, 2003; Covington, 1984, 1992).

In addition, the students perceived that their culture restricted them from fully participating in university life and affected even the simplest of activities such as choosing partners for pair/ group presentations. Mixed gender friendships in the KRI are considered taboo and can bring a students' reputation and thus the reputation of their family and tribe into ill repute. Even sharing a table with a member of the opposite sex and or choosing to work in mixed gender groups in the classroom would be frowned upon. Cultural differences between cities in the KRI appeared to cause mutual discrimination of students which some claim demotivated them from doing well in their studies. This unanticipated finding illustrates the presence of multiple small cultures within the university (Holliday, 1999) and that culture, for these students, becomes a strong system parameter of the classroom as a CDS.

The negative effect of high school experiences on students' current motivation was discussed by half of the student participants and all the teacher participants. Public high school students held the most negative attitudes towards high school, their reasons being an outdated system, incompetent teachers/ lack of teachers, lack of creative lessons and needing to self-study to progress which they felt hindered their motivation. This was not mentioned by the private school attendees, perhaps because the teachers employed in private high schools usually have access to more CPD and training than their public-school counterparts. Clearly, the students blamed their lack of English ability on past high school experiences.

Both students and teachers agreed that the negative experiences in school had prevented the students from building the knowledge or ‘foundation’ they needed to study at undergraduate level. It seems likely that such learning experiences may result in poor academic motivation in high school first, which might then continue throughout their university study. This confirms the findings by Ashwin and Trigwell (2012), who found that past educational experiences can affect undergraduates’ learning, motivation, conceptions of learning and self-efficacy. When looking through a CDST lens, high school experiences construct part of the initial conditions of a system which can determine the subsequent states of a system, in this case, demotivation.

Teachers also mentioned that high school teachers struggled with their large classes. Many factors are likely to affect teachers’ abilities to deal with large classes which may indicate a lack of differentiation training for teachers in the KRI; something which the local teachers hinted at during interviews.

7.1.4 RQ1 Summary

To summarise, the main findings from the combined perspectives of the student and teacher participants regarding teaching practices, ability grouping, and academic motivation were as follows:

RQ1a What is the relationship between teaching practices and academic motivation?

- The TMPs varied between universities and grouping style.
- Though many strategies were observed, there was not a precise match between observations mentioned and observed. However, there did not appear to be a pattern to this, and this may have been random.
- Teaching resources, the use of which was the main TMP, varied between public and private universities, which may be due to the socio-economic area and/or the funding status of the university.
- Observations showed a positive correlation between TMP and LMB
- All the teachers were in favour of streaming and SA groupings which they believed were motivational, and most of the students agreed with this statement.
- Two of the 5 teachers believed that MA classes could negatively impact students’ academic motivation

- Seven students (mix of intermediate and upper-intermediate levels) claimed to be more motivated in MA classes due to the varying levels and because they could help the lower ability students.
- Despite a concerted effort to stream classes by ability, all teachers and students agreed that there was still a wide range of abilities in their SA classrooms.
- All SA students claimed to use self-motivating strategies but none of the MA students (university B) mentioned this.
- SA students appeared more intrinsically motivated and MA students were found to be more extrinsically motivated which may be related to why they use more self-motivating strategies thus proving the SDT.
- It emerged that external influences such as the ISIS invasion and severe economic and political crises contributed to demotivation for students in the classroom.
- It also emerged that two teachers and 2 students suggested streaming may not be suited to the Kurdish culture.
- In addition, students and their teachers revealed that students' high school experiences were still affecting their motivation negatively.
- Finally, all teachers admitted to struggling to cope with large multi-level classes.

7.2 Academic self-concept

7.2.1 RQ2a Teaching practices and students' academic self-concept

Self-concept was not explicitly discussed by teachers and most seemed unaware of its importance for their students. They were unsure of the meaning and how to encourage a positive self-concept. Similarly, the students were unaware of the construct and did not discuss any teaching practices which had any impact on their self-concept. This may be through being unaware of the concept or they may not have realised any connection between teaching practices and self-concept.

7.2.2 RQ2b Ability grouping and students' academic self-concept

In some classrooms, streaming caused a phase shift in the system. All the teachers agreed that the process of streaming was likely to upset some students, particularly lower level ones, and could initially have a negative impact on their self-concept. They

felt that streaming may be perceived as a form of discrimination and recognised that some of their students may have felt marginalised and stigmatised by the process. This also accords with the students' perceptions of being stigmatised and that ability grouping can be stressful, unfair and offensive in some cases. These findings follow closely on from Gillis-Furutaka and Sakurai (2002) Boaler, William and Brown (2000) and Hastings (1992) with the notion of streaming being stressful, unfair and upsetting and who also found that streaming may negatively impact the students' self-concept.

The majority of students also discussed feeling initial upset at the prospect of being labelled as lower than their actual level. As the universities show a cross-section from the KRI (public and private, rural and urban) the results indicate that this is a persistent problem amongst Kurdish students. Again, this could relate to the concept within Kurdish culture of 'losing face' in front of their peers, hence the negative reaction to streaming. In an attempt to lessen the negative impact, the teachers believed that students should not be informed of hierarchy or class labels when streaming as such information should be ambiguous wherever possible.

Following the initial distress immediately after streaming, the attitudes expressed by teachers and students show some similarity regarding the gradual development of a positive self-concept as the system re-organises into a new state. Regardless of the negative effects, all the teachers were adamant that they still preferred SA to MA classes as the benefits to their teaching (easier to teach, more level-specific resources etc) outweighed the drawbacks. These findings are consistent with previous research by Lincoln and Wadleigh (1930) and Barker Lunn (1970) who found that teachers often objected to ability grouping on philosophical grounds. They also acknowledged that it may inhibit their low-level students but were still proponents of the practice for the benefits mentioned above.

The findings of the student interviews, observations and questionnaires also indicated that the system had settled into a state of equilibrium through self-organisation (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). Due to sensitivity to initial conditions, (possibly a demotivated attractor state due to previous high-school effects) the students may have been relatively motivated as they prepared to start university. Then, when streaming occurred in SA groups, this feedback or perturbator would have pushed the system into a chaotic state and into a demotivated attractor state once more. This caused feelings of

distress and upset amongst the students for some time. However, as the students' confidence grew, they gradually became more motivated so the system once again self-organised into a motivated attractor state with claims of having a more positive self-concept when streamed by ability. These findings reflect those of Kulik and Kulik (1982) who found that SA students eventually develop positive attitudes towards themselves and school. There are similarities between the attitudes expressed by the students during interviews and the results of the student questionnaires which found that on 13 of the 18 self-concept items, the SA students scored higher than their MA counterparts. These findings also suggest that the academic self-concept of the SA students was higher than in the MA groups. When those self-concept related questionnaire items were divided between Academic Confidence and Academic Effort (see chapter 3), both totals were higher amongst the SA grouped students which indicates that streaming has the potential to boost academic self-concept. The questionnaire results also showed that the SA students had higher mean ranks than MA students in self-efficacy, a branch of self-concept. This increased self-efficacy may be the result of being streamed as SA students are usually informed of their diagnosed level thus more aware of their abilities. By definition, SA classes are tailored to the appropriate level for the students and given tasks and activities suited accordingly hence they would be more likely to achieve the expected outcomes.

NES teachers noticed strong evidence of BFLPE and perceived there to be a stigma attached to lower level students in MA classes. Interestingly this was only mentioned by NES teachers and not by local teachers. This may have been because local teacher training courses rarely focus on learner identity or the construct of the self.

Although many students were unaware of the construct of self-concept, certain excerpts of the student interviews were indicators of either high or low academic self-concept. Examples of these include perceptions of how they see themselves in comparison to others and of their academic progress, which also indicates the BFLPE effect (see 2.2.2). The students discussed wanting to be placed amongst higher level students so that they could 'emulate' them and feel better about their English abilities- upward social comparison. This model may also explain why many of the students disliked being placed amongst lower level students as according to the BFLPE, it may lower academic self-concept. In addition, students are more likely to use upward comparison or compare with peers of a similar ability because downward comparison, despite being

self-enhancing, is less beneficial for their performance evaluation (Foddy and Crundall, 1993). Some were able to recognise their correct English level, but many placed themselves lower than their diagnostic level, indicating they were rather self-effacing or unable to accurately gauge their ability.

One of the parameters which influences the system and patterns of change within it is culture. Other students' and teachers' opinions proved very important for students of both SA and MA groups, which may be related to their collectivist culture (Cheung and Rudowicz, 2003; Carpenter, 2000; Somech, 2000). Students often discussed how others perceived them and how they altered their behaviour to please others or for fear that others may talk about them etc.

7.2.3 RQ2c Any other emerging factors affecting the students' academic self-concept

The questionnaire also measured classroom environment, task value and peer learning as it was initially thought that these constructs may reveal interesting findings that may affect the students' self-concept/ motivation. The mean values for all three were higher for MA students but the nature of the questions meant that a collective mean rank could not be collated in the same way as the other constructs as all have different meanings. For classroom environment, it was found that the MA students perceived they learnt better when in MA groups but felt more confident and learnt better amongst peers of similar abilities. This may be because they were already in MA groups and may have felt that they were progressing in their learning but believed they would be more confident in MA groups. There is, however, a contradictory finding as two similar questions both scored higher ranks amongst MA groups: *Q3. I learn better when I am with people who are different levels than me* and *Q17. I learn better when I am with people who are the same English level as me*. These contradictory findings may have been due to confusion over the question or the student becoming bored with answering too many items consecutively.

The findings also revealed that SA students claimed to be more self-conscious when speaking aloud in the class amongst peers and feel more conscious of their English level in their groups. For task value, the MA students claimed to be more interested in their course and saw more value in their learning, but a higher number of SA students thought their course material was useful to them. In terms of peer learning, the SA

students were more likely to work independently without asking for help whereas the MA students were more likely to work with others and ask for help from their peers. These findings, however, are contradictory to the MOLT observation results which showed that the SA students were the ones more likely to work in pairs/ small groups. The reason for this may be because the MOLT measured which actions actually took place whereas the questionnaire measured perceptions which in this case, were conflicting. In addition, the MOLT measured the TMP which is obviously instructed by the teachers and not always the preference of the students.

7.2.4 RQ2 Summary

The main findings from this research question were:

- Both teachers and students perceived streaming to be upsetting, stigmatising and discriminatory for some students, particularly lower level ones.
- After the initial upset, students and teachers believed that students develop a positive self-concept.
- All teachers and most students preferred SA over MA grouping. Teachers perceived classes to be easier to teach and students felt more confident and had a higher academic self-concept and self-efficacy in SA groups.
- Strong evidence of BFLPE noticed by NES teachers of low-level MA students.
- The questionnaire data, contrary to MOLT findings, SA students were more likely to work independently without asking for help whereas MA students were more likely to ask for help and work with others.

7.3 Classroom Engagement

7.3.1 RQ3a Teaching practices and students' classroom engagement

Negative feedback (through a CDST framework) in the form of motivational teaching practices form a pivotal part of the students' classroom engagement and are strong enough to push the system into an engaged attractor state when executed. However, the teachers appeared to have rather skewed views on what they perceived engagement to be. All of them mentioned that SA classes were easier to control, which may be an indication of the teaching practices used within the class. Rather than aiming for

classroom engagement (which was scarcely mentioned during the interviews) they aimed for classroom control.

Four of the five teachers mentioned very little about their style of teaching or the teaching practices they used but one teacher did talk at length about his student-centred rather than teacher-centred approach. This local SA class teacher from a public university explained how he often changed the activity according to the dynamics of the class on a particular day and how the students respond to the task. This was confirmed by the classroom observations where he demonstrated this approach; something which was lacking from most other class observations. During interview, he openly criticized other local teachers in the region for being too rigid and strict with their students comparing them to dictators. He preferred a more relaxed style of teaching and learning which gives the students more autonomy; crucial for behavioural and emotional engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Similar to the teachers' interviews, the students also struggled to identify the teaching practices used in their classes and differentiate between the teachers' influence on their engagement and the materials used in the class. Students mentioned that teachers used 'data shows' (images projected onto the whiteboard) which helped them engage with the topics. Many mentioned that they preferred challenges, presentations and debates on current affair topics and said the 'better' teachers were ones who set such tasks. They perceived the quality of the teacher to be dependent on the quality of the resources and activities or 'executive motivational influences' (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998)

7.3.2 RQ3b Ability grouping and students' classroom engagement

In the research context, streaming can be seen as a perturbation capable of causing a phase shift into a motivated, engaged attractor state in SA classes and a less motivated, less engaged attractor state in MA classes. Despite their awareness of the potentially negative effects, all teacher participants still preferred to stream by ability because they perceived teaching to be easier. They also believed that SA students benefited from more tailored lessons rather than being 'taught to the middle' in an MA class where students of lower and higher ability were disadvantaged while the average ability students were accessing level appropriate resources. The teachers also believed that the

SA students were more engaged than the MA students because they had activities which are more suited to their level; findings which are broadly in harmony with Gillis-Furutaka and Sakurai (2002), Kerckhoff (1986) Hallinan and Sorensen, (1983) and Wilson and Schmits (1978).

The teacher participants considered MA classes ‘a nightmare to teach,’ ‘difficult,’ ‘not beneficial for the students’ and admitted to ‘teaching to the middle’ despite perceiving that students at both extremes (higher and lower ability) were less engaged. They also believed that engagement in MA classes was lower for this reason and that the higher-level students usually did all the work while the lower ability students sat passively. This may explain why the MA students interviewed claimed they were bored in class and felt their grouping style thwarted engagement. Correspondingly, the SA students felt more engaged as their lessons were more challenging, provided affordances to communicate with their peers and promoted more learner autonomy; results which align with the questionnaires. The aggregated results of ‘Academic Effort’ (see table 4.13) saw the SA students rank higher mean than the MA students. As academic effort is a factor of classroom engagement, this means that the SA students report a higher level of classroom engagement than the MA students; a result which was also supported by the Mann Whitney U results (see table 4.17). These findings, whilst generally compatible with that of other researchers, opposes Jean’s (2016) findings that high ability students showed a higher level of engagement and lower ability students showed a lower level of engagement.

The discrepancy in engagement between SA and MA groups again suggests that the local teachers may have had little, if any, differentiation training; a crucial requirement when teaching a diverse range of ability levels within the same classroom. This training could promote more inclusivity and engagement amongst students.

7.3.3 RQ3c. Other emerging factors affecting the students’ classroom engagement

There were no other emergent themes related to engagement.

7.3.4 RQ3 Summary

The main findings from this research question were:

- Teachers seldom mentioned engagement and had vague perceptions of it, often confusing it for classroom control.
- Students perceived the ‘better teachers’ to be the ones who used more technology in the classroom and set challenges for them.
- Teachers preferred to stream by ability because they perceived the classes as easier to teach and claimed MA classes were problematic.
- Teachers believed SA students were more engaged due to the tailored instruction rather than being taught to the middle in a MA class.

7.3.5 RQ4a: How the students in the single ability and mixed ability classes engage

The engagement attractor states varied across universities and classrooms. In observations, the classrooms all fostered pleasant and supportive environments and the private universities (A, C), appeared to be in more behaviourally, cognitively, and emotionally engaged attractor states. The MOLT data confirmed that engagement and volunteering were higher amongst SA students and this was further confirmed by the results of the Mann Whitney U test. This may have been due to better resources and smaller classrooms which allowed for better classroom layouts where all the students could see and hear the teacher. They also showed evidence of more cohesive learner groups than university B and D which is also another influence from the PML2M. This may have been related to the presence of NES teachers in these universities who appeared to have a better rapport and fostered more positive learning environments than the local teachers; evidence which supports the PML2M literature as ‘teachers’ motivational influence’ is also from the model. Positive student-teacher relationships are also an indicator for emotional engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004).

The streaming process was also more reliable in A and C as they used external online placement tests (Oxford placements tests/ Pearson English tests) rather than an in-house test compiled by teachers who may not have had experience of writing diagnostic tests. This observation was reflected in the research as the classes in these universities were more organised in terms of homogeneity and the materials used were related to the

individual students' English levels (according to the diagnostic test results), all of which may have been a reason why the groups were more cohesive as they were working towards common goals (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The rapport between students and local teachers was still positive in university B and D but appeared bound by system parameters of cultural traditions and still very formal and professional as opposed to informal and friendly, for example in how the students and teachers addressed each other. In these classrooms, the system parameters may have had a stronger influence on the systems; hence why the students were more formal towards their teachers.

Positive feedback in terms of barriers to engagement amplified small variations in the lower-order interactions and created system instability, in this case, a shift from engaged to non-engaged attractor states. In university B and C, mobile phones and devices were a distraction for several students and in some cases affected the engagement of entire groups within the class. Device usage was ubiquitous across the universities, possibly due to boredom or over-simplified tasks but appeared to be a barrier to engagement in many cases. Other barriers to engagement included large class sizes, inadequately air-conditioned classrooms, and a distinct lack of resources but this was more apparent in university B and D; the public universities in lower socio-economic areas of the KRI. The literature shows that through the PML2M model, the barriers would be seen as executive motivational influences from the actional phase of the model which could influence the extent of the motivation displayed by students in the classroom.

Overall, the field notes from the classroom observations indicate that SA classrooms were in more engaged attractor states than MA classrooms. However, there may be alternative reasons for these differences, such as the teaching style, the background of the teachers or the type of university (public or private). The qualitative findings from the classroom observations were validated by the quantitative descriptive statistics from the MOLT data which confirmed that participation (engagement) and volunteering were higher amongst SA students. The MA students, however, scored higher mean ranks for attention. These results were then further confirmed by the results of the Mann Whitney U test except for attention scores which were the same for both groups.

7.3.6 RQ4b. The teaching practices in single ability and mixed ability classes

In addition to the SA/MA divide, the teaching practices and style amongst different universities was another system parameter which influenced classroom engagement within the system. From observations, the teachers in SA classes appeared to demonstrate more motivational teaching practices than the MA classes, such as scaffolding techniques to encourage coping potential and student autonomy, which according to the literature, improves learning outcomes and motivation (Dickenson, 1995). SA lessons appeared more structured (they began with clear aims and objectives and often ended with a recap) and there was more usage of feedback and praise. Consequently, the SA classroom systems were more often in behaviourally engaged attractor states (see 7.3.5). The MOLT findings further confirmed this, and a Pearson correlation test showed a strong positive correlation between TMP and LMB across the SA and MA groups. This corresponds with the literature of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) whose frameworks of motivational teaching practices were found to promote motivation and engagement in the language classroom.

Teachers in universities B and D, where there were more local faculty (non-NES), often initiated interactions in Kurdish rather than English which appeared to be a barrier to engagement with the task in some cases. The students in university B and D whose English levels were very low may have been less engaged due to alienation by the usage of L2 (Pachler and Field, 2001) and this may explain the increased usage of Kurdish in these classrooms. Despite some students disapproving of the use of Kurdish in the classroom, using the L1 in such cases may aid the students' L2 learning (Carless, 2008; Auerbach, 1993; Harbord, 1992). However, as a student highlighted during interview, there were few affordances for speaking English outside the classroom in the KRI which may be why they disapproved of L1 usage.

The system parameters of teachers' attributes influence the attractor states of a system just as how executive motivational influences affect the students' motivation in the class. For example, in University B, teaching practices involved textbook-centred lessons and there was less evidence of motivational strategies than the other 3 universities. These differences observed may have been due to the background of the teacher (NES/local), rather than the grouping style. For example, it was noticed that the NES teachers used more creative teaching strategies such as realia, pictures, fun warm-

up activities and acronyms in their lessons. The local teachers did not demonstrate such practices but were more likely to go straight to the activity with little explanation or they explained in Kurdish. This may explain the differences in student-teacher rapport; the NES teachers appeared to have a better rapport with the students and called each other by first names while the relationship between local teachers and students was more of a professional one where they address each other using formal greetings.

Despite there being a range of levels in the classes, there was no differentiation observed and whole class teaching approach was used in every class observed. However, the materials did seem suited to the level of the students, albeit outdated and Eurocentric in some cases. Such tasks may not have stimulated emotional (affective) engagement which relies on authentic, purposeful and meaningful tasks (Svalberg, 2017; Fredericks et al., 2004).

7.3.7 RQ4 Summary

- Both observation data sets confirmed that engagement and volunteering were higher in SA groups. The MOLT results for attention proved the same for both.
- Students in university A and C appeared to have a better rapport with the teachers and there was more evidence of cohesive learner groups.
- Barriers to engagement were mobile devices, inadequate classrooms, use of L1 and a lack of resources.
- Teachers in SA classes demonstrated more motivational teaching practices, which may explain the strong correlation between TMP and LMB in SA groups.

7.4 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter triangulated the findings from the student and teacher interviews, the questionnaires and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the classroom observations according to the four research questions of the study. The qualitative approach allowed an insight into the learning context and the teachers' and students' perspectives that would otherwise have been unavailable to the researcher, and as frequently complemented by the quantitative results.

Each finding was discussed in relation to conceptual framework of the study (CDST) and then compared with other studies in the literature. Most findings were corroborated

with a few exceptions which may have been due to contextual differences as most of the motivation, self-concept and engagement literature are based in elementary or high schools. The main findings from a meta-analysis of 5 different data sets were that despite awareness that ability grouping can have initial negative effects on students' self-concept, Kurdish university students and their teachers prefer ability grouping in EAP classes. The main reasons is that it eventually improves their academic effort, confidence, self-concept and learning behaviours which may positively impact their classroom engagement. Another finding was the strong relationship between TMP and LMB. This finding inevitably has implications for policy, practice, theory and subsequent research both within the KRI and the wider EAP field. These will be discussed further in chapter 8. These factors, amongst others, are included in the figure below. Figure 7.1 shows the three main constructs of the study (motivation, self-concept and engagement) as attractor states in a CDS.

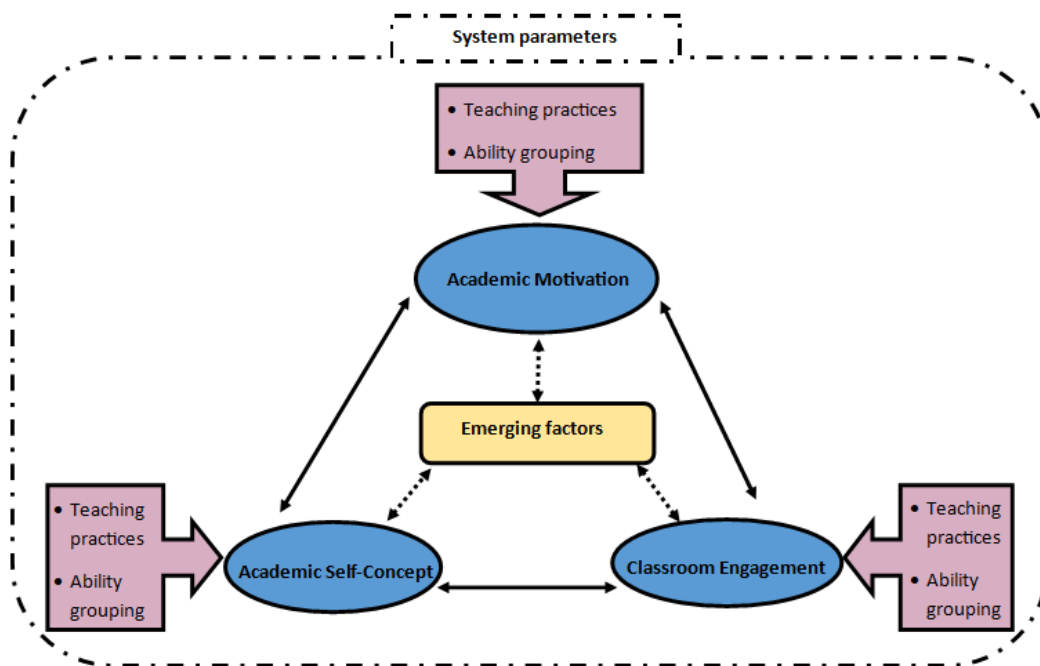


Figure 7.1 The study constructs as a CDS

As discussed in the chapter, according to observations, questionnaires and interviews, the 3 main constructs (in this case, attractor states) are interrelated, and feedback is reciprocal. Teaching practices and ability grouping affect academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement as well as the several emerging factors which were discussed (external influences such as current economic situation, security situation with ISIS etc). These are all constrained by the system parameters

such as the culture of the classroom, the parent culture of the region, teacher attributes (NES/ local) and for some students, their negative associations with their high school experiences. The influencing factors (system parameters and emerging factors) may or may not affect the system at all times. As the system is complex and dynamic, it is in a constant state of flux and it is thus difficult to predict which factor has the most influence on the system. Whilst this model (figure 7.1) has been designed with the EAP classrooms of the KRI in mind, it could be applied to other classrooms and educational settings around the world. Undoubtedly, other classrooms will have varying system parameters and emerging factors. The results of this study have important implications for both teacher education and future research in addition to classroom pedagogy. The following chapter will conclude the thesis by presenting these implications, recommendations, and contributions to knowledge.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Implications

8.1 Key findings and implications

From the combined quantitative and qualitative research methods applied in this study, the following findings and implications have emerged:

Implications for the Teaching/Learning Environment

As EAP is still a relatively new subject which is being taught in the KRI, further teacher training is needed to encourage teachers to adopt and use more motivational strategies. The positive correlation found between TMP and LMB during classroom observations indicates that the more motivational strategies used in the EAP classroom, the more likely the students will be motivated. Whilst traditional EAP classrooms may be quite serious, formal and writing-focused by nature, educators should consider what strategies they might implement to keep the students motivated and engaged.

The grouping style of EAP classrooms also needs to be taken into consideration. The results of the current study showed that there was strong evidence of BFLPE noticed by NES teachers of low-level MA students. In order to reduce the effect, lower level students could be assigned a ‘mentor’ in the class (possibly a higher-level student) to help combat the BFLPE and to give them more confidence. Alternatively, where possible, MA classes could be separated by lower and pre-intermediate students in one class, and intermediate and advanced in another. This could be in or out of class grouping. Albeit not eliminating MA classes entirely, the perceived gap between the levels would be narrowed.

Implications for Curriculum and Syllabus

Educators should be aware of the detrimental effect that poor-quality resources have on academic motivation. The results of the current study found that teaching resources, which were the main motivator and demotivator in some cases, varied between public and private universities. For example, some students remarked on the photocopies used in the class and having to study with one book between two or three students or from

photocopied pamphlets. This should be avoided wherever possible as it is apparent that the quality of the resources can have an impact on the students' academic motivation.

Educators need to be aware that regardless of ability level, students' abilities should be challenged, and teachers need to use motivating methods to engage them. Where available, this needs to incorporate the latest teaching technology. Students perceived the 'better teachers' to be the ones who used more technology in the classroom and set challenges for them which they felt helped their engagement.

Study skills sessions need to be implemented into the EAP programs to create more awareness of strategies to improve students' educational outcomes. All SA students claimed to use self-motivating strategies but none of the MA students (university B) mentioned this; perhaps because the SA students were more intrinsically motivated, and the MA students were more extrinsically motivated. This finding emphasises the importance of self-motivating strategies as a part of students' meta-cognitive knowledge. In addition, online study resources should be introduced in the classroom which would enable students to continue their studies outside of the classroom. Although there would involve initial setup costs, such resources would enable those who have difficulty accessing external training courses; ideal for those living and working in areas with a struggling economy. This would obviously have financial implications and may not be a priority for a post-conflict education system but should be considered in the future.

Teachers in post-conflict settings should refrain from using classroom resources related to the conflict as students may become disturbed with constant exposure to such news articles. It emerged from the study that external influences such as the ISIS invasion, economic and political crises severely demotivated the students in the classroom. It is important to take these into consideration, especially when conflict and war is involved. Students may perceive their classrooms to be a safe haven as well as a learning hub and may not wish to be reminded of the conflict in their lessons. Teachers, particularly visiting NES, should be informed via training/ awareness workshops that several students may have lost family and friends to the conflict or may be missing loved ones who have fled abroad to escape the conflict. In addition, the conflict's economic impact may mean more students are working part-time alongside their studies; potentially to

fund their families who may be struggling financially in a near failed economy. This may in turn effect their studies therefore teachers should be sensitive to such issues.

Implications for Teacher Training and CPD

The findings of this study indicate that there are implications not only for classroom pedagogy, but also for teacher education and future research. An example is that students should be given the option of group work/ individual work and not be forced to form groups in EAP classes as it may affect their motivation. The questionnaire responses suggested that the SA students were more self-motivated and more likely to work independently. This may explain why they were less likely to work in pairs/ in groups., unlike their MA counterparts who were more interdependent and were more likely to consult their classmates for help. This could be related to the competitiveness (see 8.2.1) as the SA students may prefer to work individually rather than share their classwork with others, indicating that there is tension between helpfulness and competitiveness that teachers need to be aware when streaming students.

In addition, a quarter of the teachers and students interviewed suggested streaming may not be suited to the Kurdish culture. Therefore, it is important that educators visiting from abroad are made aware of the host cultural practices (system parameters) and integrate the individualist values of their home culture while adopting the collectivist values of the host country (Goodall, 2014). In terms of streaming, teachers in this context should be aware that SA students assigned to lower level groups may feel like they have ‘lost face’ and suffer from a drop-in self-confidence. Both teachers and students felt that streaming caused stigmatisation and discrimination for some students, particularly lower level ones. However, after the initial upset, all participants believed that students develop a positive self-concept. In order to combat this, teachers could implement strategies to help reduce the effects of streaming including breaking the stigma that it is ‘discriminatory’ and that lower level students have lost face. This could include a briefing to all students involved about the benefits of the streamed classes such as level appropriate resources and lessons and research about progression in ability groups. It also emerged that students felt more confident and had a higher academic self-concept and self-efficacy in SA groups. This finding could be used to reassure the students that they are likely to have a higher self-concept and improved self-efficacy after being streamed which may further offset the initial negative feelings towards

streaming. In addition, classes should have ambiguous labels which do not identify students as 'lower level' and 'higher level.' The self-concept findings unequivocally demonstrated that more consideration needs to be given when streaming students into ability groups as both the teachers and students admitted that there could be detrimental effects on academic self-concept. It is unknown for how long this initial upset period lasts but as it was mentioned by the majority of the students and teachers, it appears to be a valid issue which needs further consideration. As the interviews took place mid-semester (fall semester), I estimate that this period lasts around 6 weeks. However, further research would be needed to clarify this.

The finding above may explain why some students felt more motivated in MA classrooms as they claimed they enjoyed the varying levels of English in each class and the opportunity to help the lower ability students. Teachers should therefore be provided with teacher training and CPD which encourages teachers to utilise more groupwork. This gives affordances for students of all abilities to help each other with classroom tasks and may fulfil their desire to assist others (group leader activities, peer review etc).

In terms of improving engagement, the teachers and students firstly need to be aware of the concept and how it can improve student learning outcomes as the study found that teachers rarely mentioned engagement and confused it for classroom control. The interview and observation data showed that teachers perceived SA students to be more engaged due to the tailored instruction rather than being taught to the middle. EAP Teachers in the KRI would benefit from engagement strategies training which may help them create better affordances for it. This would be particularly useful for teachers of large MA classes in which the observations showed students to be less engaged.

This finding could be interpreted in favour of streaming against MA groups, especially as teachers openly admitted that SA classes were easier to teach than MA classes. But it should be noted that MA groups should not be 'taught to the middle' for ease, as teachers suggested during interviews. All classes, regardless of grouping style, should incorporate differentiation strategies which challenge and support students of varying levels within a class to ensure learning outcomes are met. This, again, could be achieved by increased teacher training and CPD opportunities for educators. Teachers need to

develop their knowledge and strategies of how to ‘cope’ with large MA classes to ensure learning outcomes are met by students of varying abilities.

Implications for Education Policy

The findings from this study may support education policymakers with making the relevant decisions in modifying university foundation courses, particularly EAP courses. As mentioned in the section above, streaming was found to have an initial detrimental effect on students’ self-concept which needs addressing on a micro-level by the class teachers but should also be reviewed on a macro level by policy makers. If streaming is to continue in Kurdish university classrooms, policy makers need to be aware of the impact of streaming on students and its potential impact on learning.

As shown in the study, the teachers were mostly unaware of the self-concept structure, therefore, it is recommended that teachers have access to training on self-concept in order to learn how it affects their students’ academic outcomes. In addition, this training should include ethical streaming procedures so that educators are aware of the potential negative impact on the student’s self-concept that streaming may have, despite streaming being preferred by the students. This is particularly important during the settling-in period (post-streaming). Despite the perceived negative impact on self-concept, teachers and (most) students in the study preferred SA grouping and believed them to be more motivational than MA classes.

Certainly, if streaming is to be utilised in Kurdish universities, more robust streaming measures should be adopted.

Findings of the current study revealed that the teachers and SA students agreed that there was still a wide range of abilities in their classrooms despite efforts to stream the classes. To ensure more reliable results, universities are advised to adopt a verified external placement test approved by international agencies such as TOEFL, PTE or IELTS. This would give an internationally recognised level to the students and they could then be placed accordingly. The observations showed a wide range of abilities within each SA class which coincided with the teachers’ and students’ comments during interviews. In addition, due to the increase of Kurdish students returning from the diaspora, measures need to be put in place to accommodate those who are at an

advanced / near native level of English fluency as this was an issue in the universities in the study.

Another policy which needs addressing is the current high school provision for English lessons in the KRI. More focus is needed in this area to ensure that public Kurdish schools produce high school leavers with better English in order to access university courses. This is a crucial step to improve the high school provision for the future cohorts of UG students in the KRI. The current study found that students' (and their teachers') high school experiences were continuing to negatively impact their academic motivation. Whilst it is impossible to rectify the current cohort of students' high school experiences, the KRI appear to be aware of the issues and have drawn up reports such as the Roadmap to Quality (MHESR, 2010) to improve the education provision.

Efforts should be made to reduce class sizes where possible to allow the teacher to access each student during the class. Some teachers believed that MA classes negatively impacted students' academic motivation and admitted that students and teachers struggled to cope in such classes. Observations showed that the class sizes in public universities often exceeded 50 students. Such conditions may cause even the strongest students to feel frustrated which may result in demotivation and disengagement. It is difficult to address the issue of large MA classes, particularly in public universities, due to funding and availability of teachers. Educational institutions need to be aware that such conditions as mentioned in the study may not be conducive to learning.

Overall, the combined findings of this study indicate that ability grouping, and teaching practices ('perturbations' in CDST terms), strongly impact the three main constructs of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement. These discrete entities are interrelated parts of a complex system and desired attractor states; the ideal would be a motivated class of students, students with positive self-concepts and an engaged classroom. The data showed that feedback (teacher attributes, praise, motivational teaching practices etc), and in some cases perturbations (stigma from being streamed, external influences such as the ISIS invasion etc), were often strong enough to push the self-organising system (the classroom) into a negative attractor state (Hiver, 2014; Manson, 2001).

The intricacy of these findings suggests that Larsen-Freeman's (2007) CDST was an effective framework for an analysis of EAP classrooms, the affecting system parameters

and the interrelatedness of academic motivation, self-concept and classroom engagement. The motivational influences (seen in the observations and mentioned by the students) can be equated to the perturbations of CDST, as they both actively motivate / demotivate the students in the class. The intensity of the students' motivation depends on the cumulative force of the motivational influences found in the classroom environment. The students' academic motivation then influenced their classroom engagement. Engaged, motivated students were more likely to have a higher academic-self-concept and vice versa confirming that the classroom is a CDS with multiple interrelated components which are constantly influencing each other.

8.2 Limitations of the research

The main limitation of the quantitative part of the study was the small sample sizes. Although the aim of this study was never to generalise results, a larger sample size may have generated more accurate mean values, identified outliers and provided a smaller margin of error. It may have also provided more significant results. For the qualitative aspect of the study, a larger sample size of interview participants and classroom observations may have revealed more robust findings. The type of sampling used may also be perceived as a limitation. Although purposive sampling allowed me to select students, teachers and classes which suited the criteria of the study, a wide range of ability levels was lacking in the sample. This only became apparent when speaking to the interview participants who appeared very confident and articulate; not the typical traits of a lower ability student. This was a source of weakness because it may have affected the measurements of self-concept which may differ depending on the students' ability level.

Social trends at the time the study was conducted brought about their own limitations. As the study took place at a time of extreme economic and political tension within the KRI, the results for motivation and self-concept and to some extent engagement may have been skewed due to the power of multiple external influences. The security situation in the KRI at the time of data collection also meant that certain universities who had originally agreed to participate were outside of the recommended zone of travel. Whilst this was a situation which was beyond my control, extra consideration should be given to this when interpreting the results of the study.

Finally, as the student interviews were conducted in English, this may have prevented the participants from fully articulating their message. In an attempt to prevent this, participants were informed that they could speak in Kurdish at any time throughout the interview but perhaps due to observer effect, they chose not to.

8.3 Problems arising during the research

Two features of the research design may have affected the quality of the findings. The first was the distribution of questionnaires to participants. Initially, the questionnaires were designed using an online survey generator. However, after sending the link to the gatekeepers, it was found that not all students in the universities had access to the internet or desktops and the form appeared too small on a smartphone which resulted in a very low response rate. The decision was then made to print and deliver paper copies of the questionnaires to the universities involved in the study. It was hoped that the sample would have been larger than the current 347 but access to the students and teachers proved difficult due to adverse circumstances already mentioned (see 8.3 Limitations).

The second was the decision to record the interview participants using audio rather than video. As most participants were non-native speakers of English, their non-verbal communication when communicating their point such as eye contact, body language and gestures may have proved informative.

8.4 Recommendations for future research and policy

Based on this the results of this study, educators in the KRI need to be aware of the challenges facing English language learners in Kurdish universities and the findings from this study highlight several possible areas for further research. One avenue would be research into classroom engagement through a longitudinal study with MA groups, focusing particularly on lower and higher ability students in the same groups. Another suggestion for further research would be whether using higher-level students in this context as teaching assistants in MA classes is beneficial for their achievement and engagement or whether this assistance jeopardises their own personal achievement, as suggested by Maddalena (2002). Whilst this study showed that many students were happy to help lower level students, the extent of the effect on their own learning

remains unknown. As this study uncovered a tension between a student's competitiveness and their desire to help others, such research could be insightful into the Kurdish students' perspectives could be useful.

In addition, it would not be possible to combat the perceived gap between the English proficiency required for undergraduate study, and the students' current levels of English without further research reviewing EMI policies in the KRI. This is similar to a recommendation by Borg (2016) who also advocated further research of this sort. As the UG students had a relatively low English ability, one might wonder if a structured curriculum with clear objectives would aid lower level English learners more than the presentations and seminars currently set by teachers, even though students claimed these were motivating strategies. From observing their classes and talking to their teachers, the students' grammar, accuracy and fluency are key points for improvement which are unlikely to be ameliorated by such teaching practices. In addition to motivational teaching strategies training, the data indicate that differentiation training (training to meet individual learner needs) is necessary for the region particularly when public university class sizes often reach up to 60 students. This would enable more students access to the curriculum regardless of ability. None of the teacher participants mentioned differentiation and none claimed to implement it in their lessons when teaching MA classes and admitted to 'teaching to the middle.'

Finally, this research highlighted the impact of external influences (such as political and economic problems) on students' motivation. What it did not cover was the impact on the teachers' motivation which is crucial if they are to be enthusiastic and competent classroom teachers. Salary cuts and economic crises could mean that education no longer maintains its high priority status, but other needs become more important, which could demotivate the teachers and then the students. This would especially be the case in a post-conflict region such as the KRI and more research is needed on academic motivation for students and teachers in such areas.

8.5 Contribution to research

In addition to directions for future research, my study has made four contributions to the literature on academic motivation, academic self-concept, classroom engagement and

EAP through the CDST lens, since research in this area is relatively new and the related literature is still rather limited.

Firstly, the participants were either students or teachers in EAP classes. Among the different branches of English language learning, EAP is a branch which unlike ESL/EAL, has a small body of literature. The existing literature is also based mainly within EMI and in British or European universities. The current research was carried out at a time of critical reform in the KRI and amidst a major conflict which indirectly affected the education system so profoundly that the KRI is still recovering. This study should contribute to the understanding of the EAP learner in an emerging educational setting such as the KRI.

Secondly, there has been very little literature relating the impact of ability grouping on the academic self-concept of adult EAP learners in a university setting. As a result, my findings should enhance our knowledge of the impact in this regard of streaming/ability grouping on undergraduate students in an EMI context.

Thirdly, these findings partially satisfy some of Borg's recommendations (2016) for further research in the KRI within Kurdish universities. He recommended further research into the students' and teachers' perspectives alongside empirical observations into the Kurdish university classrooms, preferably via case studies. This study has not only followed these recommendations but has also made a further recommendation (see 7.5) that would help towards the goals of the 'Road to Reform' document released by the MHESR in the KRI (2009) which encourages further research and improvement of the English language provision at UG level.

Finally, my investigation of academic motivation, academic self-concept and classroom engagement in an EAP setting through the Complex Dynamic Systems lens in a mixed methods study is unique. Most studies utilising CDST as a theoretical framework have used only interviews or focus groups whereas this study has triangulated both qualitative and quantitative data sets and used a combination of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations.

8.6 Concluding Remarks

Undertaking the research for this thesis has been an invaluable educational experience. I am continually grateful and honoured to have been allowed access to the EAP classrooms by gatekeepers and colleagues who have continued to support my endeavours in order to improve the EAP provision within the KRI. It is hoped that the participants have benefited from taking part in the research as much as I have. Both the student and teacher participants have impressed me with their determination and resilience during such a difficult time in the KRI with many facing severe hardship, loss and instability, particularly during the ISIS invasion after 2014.

Completing this study has allowed me to gain some understanding of the nature of research and of the cyclical, interrelated and somewhat frustrating nature of the research process. I have learned, for example, that themes often overlap, participants do not always cooperate, and data is not always statistically significant. This often meant the research was tedious and exasperating, at other times it was also immensely rewarding and satisfying.

This research study has also encouraged me to examine my own professional values, and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice as an EAP teacher. As well as adopting the recommendations above for streaming and differentiation training, I intend to further explore the impact of my own motivational teaching practices, since I now have a growing awareness of their effect on learner motivated behaviour. I have also begun to pay more attention to my students' academic self-concept and the role that affective factors might play in relation to participants' classroom engagement in my English classes. The research process has also encouraged me to critically assess my own EAP context within the wider educational field and has provided a wealth of resources from which we can learn in order to improve the quality of EAP teacher education and development. Viewing classrooms as autonomous, interconnected and interdependent components in a complex system has enriched my knowledge about education and I am now able to view other systems through a complexity lens, such as students, teachers and education systems. It is hoped that the results of the present study may encourage educators to consider CDST to further understand their own classrooms to improve their knowledge of the teaching and learning process.

Appendices

Appendix 1: MOLT observation schedule – original

APPENDIX 1 : Extract from the Motivational Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) Observation Schedule

School:		Teacher:		Learner group:		Date:	
Activities		Common Practice	Teacher's Motivational Practice	Learners' Motivated Behavior			
				Attention	Participant		
		Encouraging Positive Retrospective Self-Evaluation	Activity Design	Volunteering			
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	S/Ss volunteer readily				
			S/Ss need encouragement to volunteer				
		Generating, Maintaining, and Protecting Situation-Specific Task Motivation	S/Ss are called on by T				
			2/3 or more				
		Activity Design	1/3 to 1/2				
			Few				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	S/Ss are called on by T				
			2/3 or more				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	1/3 to 1/2				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Class applause				
			Effective praise				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Elicitation of self/peer correction session				
			Process feedback session				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Neutral feedback session				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	+ team competition				
			+ individual competition				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	+ tangible task product				
			+ intellectual challenge				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	+ creative/ interesting/ fantasy/				
			+ personalization				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	+ tangible reward				
			GROUP work/ presentation				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	PAIR work/ presentation				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Referential questions				
			Promoting autonomy				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Promoting cooperation				
			Scaffolding				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Arousing curiosity or attention				
			Promoting instrumental values				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Promoting integrative values				
			Establishing relevance				
		Motivational Teacher Discourse	Signposting				
			Social chat				
		Common Practice	INDIVIDUAL seat work				
			INDIVIDUAL student speaking				
		Common Practice	Display questions				
			Choral work				
		Common Practice	Ss must listen passively to one or a few persons				
Minutes							

Appendix 2: Students' Interview Schedule

Warmer questions: Could you please tell me about yourself?

- Country of origin
- Language and culture
- Previous education
- EAP education
- English level

<i>Issue/topic</i>	Possible questions	Possible follow-up questions	Probes
<i>Feelings towards current group</i>	<p>How do you feel about your current group?</p> <p>Which grouping style do you prefer?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p><i>Do you think you have been placed correctly according to your level?</i></p> <p><i>How did that make you feel?</i></p> <p><i>Can you tell me of any examples in the past when you had a good/ bad experience being in a mixed / single ability group?</i></p>	<p>Why?</p> <p>And...?</p> <p>Tell me more about that...</p>
<i>Motivation</i>	<p>How motivated do you feel in this current group?</p> <p>How do you feel having students of higher/ lower levels in your class?</p> <p>How does this impact your motivation?</p> <p>When you think of your EAP classroom, what is it about the class that makes you feel the most motivated to learn? (Peers? Teachers? Course material?)</p> <p>When you think of your EAP classroom, what is it about the class that makes you feel the least motivated to learn? (Teacher? Peers? You? Activities?)</p>	<p><i>Compare how you feel now to how you felt in other types of groups.</i></p> <p><i>How did you feel when you were moved to this group?</i></p>	<p>Can you expand on that?</p> <p>Why?</p>

<p><i>Self-concept</i></p>	<p>Do you feel worried or bothered about what other people think of you? (inside or outside the group?)</p> <p>Do you think you get what you deserve based on your hard work and efforts?</p> <p>How would you describe yourself in the classroom? (e.g., confident? Shy?)</p> <p>How would you describe yourself to friends at this university? Is that how your friends would describe you?</p>	<p><i>What would make you happier in your group?</i></p> <p><i>Why/ why not?</i></p>	<p>Really?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>
<p><i>Engagement and Achievement</i></p>	<p>How do you think this grouping style will affect your engagement/ achievement?</p> <p>Overall, how do you think students achieve in such groups. Which grouping style would promote better engagement in your opinion?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p><i>Can you tell me any examples from previous learning experiences? Which were successful? Was that a mixed group or a single ability group?</i></p>	<p>And then?</p> <p>Please tell me more about that...</p>

Appendix 3: Teachers' Interview Schedule

Warm up questions -Please tell me about yourself

- How long have you been teaching?
- How long have you been teaching EAP?
- How long have you worked here?
- How many languages do you speak?

Issue/topic	Possible questions	Possible follow-up questions	Probes
Feelings about this class	<p>What do you enjoy about teaching this class?</p> <p>Do you have any difficulties when teaching this class?</p> <p>How are your classes grouped? (single ability/ mixed ability?)</p> <p>How is this decided?</p>	<p>Tell me what you like about this class</p> <p>Can you share an experience you have had with teaching this group?</p> <p>How do you feel about this? Which style do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Please tell me how the students have been placed into this group (randomly? Via a diagnostic test?)</p>	<p>Why?</p> <p>And...?</p> <p>Tell me more about that...</p>
Motivation	<p>What do you think motivates your students in your class?</p> <p>Which strategies do you use in your class to keep your students motivated?</p>	<p>Please share your opinion on this matter.</p> <p>Can you share any examples of these?</p>	
Self-concept	<p>How important do you think self-concept is in the EAP classroom?</p> <p>Which strategies do you use in your class to encourage a positive self-concept?</p> <p>In your opinion, how do you think motivational teaching practices have an effect on self-concept?</p>	<p>Is it something you have thought about for your lessons or is it a new concept for you?</p> <p>Have you ever noticed any students who were affected by this?</p>	<p>Please expand on this.</p>

Engagement / Achievement	What are the main factors affecting student engagement / achievement in EAP classes in Kurdistan?	Can you tell me any examples from previous teaching experiences?	And then? Please tell me more about that...
Personal experiences	Can you share any learning/ teaching experiences related to motivation/ self-concept?	Can you recall how you felt at the time?	

Appendix 4: Questionnaire with Kurdish translation

Dear student,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Stacey Johnson, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student titled 'Exploring academic self-concept and academic motivation in streamed and non-streamed EAP classes in Iraqi Kurdistan; An Ethnographic Study at the University of Leicester, UK.

Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, University of Leicester. The supervisor overseeing this research is Dr. Agneta Svalberg, a lecturer at the University of Leicester. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve answering a self-reporting questionnaire which will take approximately 20 minutes. The time should not exceed 30 minutes. You may decline to answer any of the questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. As you are probably aware, I have also asked for some students to take part in some interviews as part of this research. Please note that voluntary participation for the interview session is independent from the questionnaire session.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at the University of Kurdistan or by e-mail at sax1@le.ac.uk Alternatively, you can contact my PhD supervisor, amls2@le.ac.uk.

I look forward to speaking with you thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, please place your signature on the dotted line below as confirmation of your consent.

Yours sincerely,

Stacey Johnson

Please sign here as confirmation of your consent: _____

Date: _____

من (سته یسی جۆنسن) بۆ مه به سستی توێژنه وه ی خویندنی دکتوراکه م به ناو نیشانی (لیکۆلینه وه له چه مکی خودی ئەکادیمی و هه سستی پالنه رایه تی ئەکادیمی له کورسی خویندنی زمانی ئینگلیزی بۆ مه به سستی ئەکادیمی له هه ردوو کورسی جیاکراوه و له سه ر بنه مانی تواناو کورسی ئاسایی له هه ریمی کوردستان) توێژنه وه یه کی ئینتوگراف) له زانکۆی لیسته ر له به ریتانیا، ئەم نوسراوه وه کو بانگه ێشتنامه یه ک پێشکه ش ده که م بۆ به شداری کردن له توێژنه وه ی خویندنی دکتوراکه م.

ره زامه ندی بۆ خویندنه که م کراوه له لایه ن لیژنه یه ک له به شی په روه رده و فێرکردنی زانکۆی لیسته ر، د. ئەگنیتا سفالبیرگ سه ر په رشتیاری توێژنه وه که م ده کات له زانکۆی ناو براو مامۆستایه، بۆیه به رێژتان دیاریکراون له م به شداریکردنه دا به هۆی ئەوه ی شاره زاییتان له و بواره دا هه یه.

به شداریکردن له م توێژنه وه یه دا خۆ به خشانه یه، چاویکه و تنه که ت نژیکی 10 خوله ک ده خایه نیت و له و کات و شوێنه ی که واگوجاوه بۆ به رێژتان، ده توانیت هه ر په رسیاریک ده ده ته ویت و هه لامي نه ده یته وه بان هه رکاته ک ده ته ویت له به شداریکردن بکشیته وه، له گه ل ره زامه ندی به رێژتان چاویکه و تنه که به ده نگ تۆمار ده کردیت بۆ ئەوه ی به وردی داتا کان هه لگه ریت و راستگویی زیاتری له توێژنه وه که دا هه ییت، به خێرای دای کۆتایی هاتن به وه رگرتن زانیاریه کان کۆیه ک له و زانیاریانه ت بۆ ده گه ریته وه تاکو بۆجونی خۆتی له سه ر بلێیت، هه ر داتا و زانیاریه ک له تۆ وه رده گرییت به نه یین ده مێتته وه، ناوه که ت له هه یج فۆرمێک ده رناکه ویت و به ناشکرای نابییریت، هه روه ها زانیاریه کانت به ره زامه ندی خۆت بلۆده کردیتته وه، ئەو داتا یانه ی له تۆ وه رده گرییت له کۆمپیوته ریک ده پارێزیت که ژماره ی نه یین له سه ره و تاماوه ی دووسال له تۆفیسێکی داخراودا ده ییت، هه یج ترسێک له جوته ده ره وه ی زانیاریه کان نه ی.

ئه گه ر هه ر په رسیاریکته سه باره ت به توێژنه وه که هه یه بان هه ر بۆجۆن و تێبینیه که ت له سه ر فۆرمی به شداری کردن هه یه

تکایه له رێگه ی ئەم نه مه یله وه له زانکۆی کوردستان هه ولێر- په یوه ندیم پێوه یکه. (sax1@le.ac.uk)

زۆر دله وشم به گفتوگۆکردن له گه ل تۆدا بۆ ئەم توێژنه وه یه و له وشم به هاوکاریکردنه کانت، ئەگه ر بانگه ێشتانه مه که م قبول ده که یه داوات لێده که م

نهمزایه که یه ت له لایه ی دواتر.

له گه ل ریزی زۆرم

هه رتێبین و بۆجۆنیکته هه یه تکایه په یوه ندی به خۆمه وه (sax1@le.ac.uk) بان د. ئەگنیتا سفالبیرگ) بکه به م نه مه یله

(amls2@le.ac.uk)

Thank You for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is very valuable!
Please circle the numbers in the columns to indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements
(1 =Strongly Disagree, 6=Strongly Agree)

سوچايس بۇ نەو كاتەي تەرخاتان كىرد تاكو نەو پىرسىيانامىيە تەواو بىكەن ، وە لائەمەكانتان لاي ئىيمە زۆر پەنرخن!
فەتكايە پازنە بىكىشە پە دەورى يەكەك نە ژمارەكانى ناو ستوونەكە كە دەرى دەخات تا چ رادەپەك نەكەل نەم رىستانەي خوارەووى.

Q	Statements پىرسىيانامىيە	Strongly disagree بە توندى نەكەلەيدا نىم	Disagree نەكەلە دا	Slightly disagree كەمىك نەكەلە دا نىم	Slightly agree كەمىك نەكەلە دا	Agree نەكەلە دا	Strongly agree بە توندى نەكەلە دا
1	I can follow the lectures easily. نەتوانم بە ناسانى نە وانەكان تىيگەم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things. نەم وانەيەدا ، نەو پىكىكەتەي بابەتەم لاپەسەندە كە ها نەمدەدات بابەتەي ئوئۇ فېرىم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I learn better when I am with people who are different levels than me. كاتەك نەكەل كە سائىكى ناست جىياوازدام باشتر فېردەپم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I day-dream a lot in lectures. نە كەلەي وانەكان زۆر خەيالىم دەروات	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now. پە دەستپىنانى نەمەي ياش نەم وانە دلخوشكەرتىن شەتە بۇ مەن نەم كەتەدا.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I am able to help my classmates in their classwork. نەتوانم يارمەتەي هاو پۇلانم بىدەم نە كار و چالاكىيەكانى ناو پۇل.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class. باوهرم واپە نەمىيىكى ئايپاپ بە دەست دىنم نەم پۇلەدا.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	If I work hard, I think I can get better grades. نەكەل زىياتر ھەول بىدەم ، پىم واپە نەتوانم نەمىيىكى باشتر بە دەست دىنم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I pay attention to the teachers during lectures. گوئى نە مامۇستايان رادەگرم نە كەلەي وانەكان .	1	2	3	4	5	6

10	The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible. دۇخۇشكەرتىن شۇ بۇ مەن ئەم خولەدا ھەولەندەنە بۇ تېگەشتىنى ئاۋەزۈكى خولەكە بە شىۋەيىكى تەۋاۋ بە پىيى تۈۋان.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Most of my classmates are smarter than I am. زۈرەي ھاۋ پۇلانم ئەمەن ژىرتىرن.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	Even if I have trouble learning the material in this class, I try to do the work on my own, without help from anyone. ئەگەر ھاتتو بەرەستىشم ھەبۈۋ ئە قىربوۋى پىكەتەي بابەتتى خويندىن ئە پۇلەكەدا ھەول دەدەم خۇم ئەركەكان جىيەجى يەكەم دوۋر ئە يارمەتتى كەسانى تە.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I study hard for my tests. ھەۋى زۇر دەدەم بۇ خويندىن بۇ تەلىكەردەنەۋەكان.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I feel more confident amongst my peers who are the same English level as me بەبەراۋەد ئەگەل قوتايىپەكانى تە كە ئەھەمان ئاستى مەن زىاتىر يادەم بە خۇم ھەيە.						
15	I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others. ئەمەۋى ئەم پۇلەدا دەرنە نجامى باش بە دەست بىنەم چۈنكە لام گرىنگە كە تۈۋاننى خۇم پىشاشنى خىزان و خەۋەن كار و ئەۋاننى تە بىدەم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I am very interested in the content area of this course. ئەم بابەتەم زۇر لاپەسەندە ئەم خولەدا.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I learn better when I am with people who are the same English level as me زىاتىر قىردەم كاتىك ئەگەل كەسانىكەم كە ئەھەمان ئاستى خۇمدا						
18	I expect to do well in this class. پىشېيى دەكەم كە سەركەۋتوۋىم ئەۋ پۇلەدا.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	I am usually interested in my university work. زۈرەي كات ئەركەكانى زانكۇم لاپەسەندە.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	<p>ئە پۇلىكى ئاۋادا ئەۋ بابەتەم لا پەسەندە كە جەزى فۇربوونم زىياد دەكات تەننەت ئەگەر بابەتەكە سەختىش يىت.</p>						
21	<p>I try to work with other students from this class to complete the course assignments. ھەۋن دودەم ئەگەن ھە پۇلانم كار بىكەم پۇ بە جى گە يىاندنى ئەركەكە كەنى خول.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	<p>I will do my best to pass all the subjects. ھەموو ھەۋنى خۇم دودەم تاكو ئە ھەموو وانەكان دەرىچەم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	<p>I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students. ئەگەر ئە تۈانام دايت دەمەۋىت ئەم پۇلە باشتەن نەمرە بەدەست يىنم يە بەراۋرد ئەگەن قوتايپايى تىر.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	<p>I feel self-conscious when I speak out in the class with my peers. ھەست بە وشيارىنىكى يىزاركەر دەكەم تىيىنى: يە ھۇ سەير كەردنى كە سەنى دەۋرۈيەرم (كاتىك ئەگەن ھاۋ پۇلانم قسە دەكەم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	<p>The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade. گەرىنگەرتىن شت پۇم ئەم كاتەدا ئەۋەيە كە پەرە بە نەمرە گشتى خۇم بىدەم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	<p>I get frightened when I am asked a question by the lecturers. ھەست بە ترس دەكەم كاتىك پىرسىرم لى دەكرىت ئە لايەن مامۇستايپانم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	<p>I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses. ئەم بىروايەدام. ئەۋ بابەتەۋى ئەم خولە فۇر دەبەم دەتۈانم ئە خولەكەنى تىر بەكارىيىنم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	<p>I often feel like quitting university. زۇر كات وا ئارەزۈۋ دەكەم زانكۇ بە جى يەيىلم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	<p>I am doing well in most of my modules من ئە زۇرەۋى وانەكان ياشم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	<p>I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in this course. من دىنىيەم دەتۈانم ئە ھەموو بابەتە گرانەكان تىيىگەم كە پىشكەش كراۋە.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	<p>I am always waiting for the lectures to end. ھەموو كات چاۋەرۋانى تەۋاۋىۋونى وانەكان دەكەم.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6

32	When possible, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade. له کاتی گو نچاو، نه رکیک هه لده بئیرم که وانه یه کی لئ فیریم ته نانه ت نه گهر نه رکیکی باشیش به ده ست بینم.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I always do poorly in tests. هه موو کات خراپ وه لاهمه ده موو له تافیکردنه ووه کان.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me. تیگه یشتی بابیه ته کان لاهم خوله گرینگترین شته یو من.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	When I can't understand the material in this course, I ask another student in this class for help. له کاتی تیگه یشتی بابیه ته کان لاهم خوله، پرسیار له قوتابییانی تر ده که م، یو نه ووی یارمه تییم بدهن.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	I do not give up easily when I am faced with a difficult question in my university work. به ناسانی ده ست هه لئاگرم له کاتی روو به روو بوئه ووی پرسیاره سه خته کان له زانکو.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	I feel conscious of my English level in this group زیاتر به ناگام له نینگلزیه که م کاتی که له ناو گرو په که مدام	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn. لاه پروایه دام وانه کانی لاهم خوله به سوودن یو من.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	I am not willing to put in more effort in my university work. من نامه وی زور له خوم بکه م له کاتی نه رکه کانی زانکو تاگو ناستم به رزیت. نه نجامدانی	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	I am able to do better than my friends in most modules. له توانامدا هه یه باشتر نه نجام بدهم له وانه کانم به به راورد له گه ل هاوریکانم.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Demographics:

Which university do you attend?	
What is your native language?	
How old are you?	
Male/ female?	

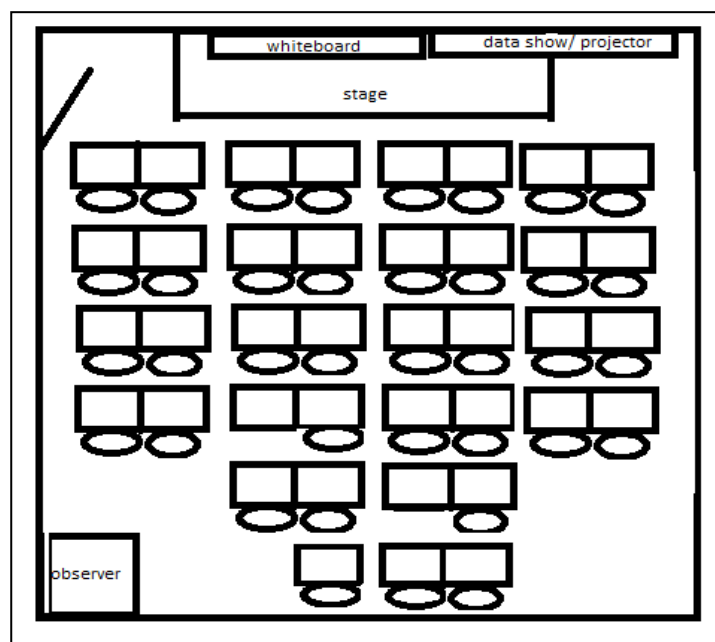
Single ability class (all same level)	
Mixed ability class (mixed levels)	

**Appendix 5: Adaptation of the MOLT classroom observation scheme –
(Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2007).**

Teachers motivational practice	Learners motivated behaviour	Eager volunteering					
		Participation					
		Attention					
	Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation	Class applause					
		Effective praise					
		Self- peer correction					
		Process feedback session					
		Neutral feedback session					
	Activity design	Team competition					
		Individual competition					
		Tangible task product					
		Intellectual challenge					
		Creative / interesting / fantasy element					
		Personalization					
		Tangible reward					
	P.S	Group work					
		Pair work					
	Teacher discourse	Referential questions					
		Promoting autonomy					
		Scaffolding					
		Arousing curiosity or attention					
		Promoting instrumental values					
		Establishing relevance					
		Signposting					
		Social chat (off topic)					
		Individual seat work					
		Individual students speaking					
		Display questions					
		Choral work					
		Ss listen passively Ss					
		Minutes	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 6: Classroom observation Field Notes

Venue:	Uni B
Date:	22.5.17 AM class
Number of students:	37 12 male, 25 female
Teacher:	Male, Kurdish
Mixed / single ability:	Mixed Ability
Level:	Low, Beginners



The classroom, upon entering, was bright and airy and seemed crammed with students, mostly female. The students were all sat facing the front, all on a double desk apart from one male at the very back sat on a single desk. The teacher, a local male Kurd, stands at the front and waits for his students to settle down which does not take as long as some other classes. All are quiet and await the teacher to introduce the class. The projector is projecting a PowerPoint slide show titled 'How to give a score.' The teacher then gave the aims of the lesson orally:

- 'What should be considered when giving students their grades'
- 'How to score a paper objectively and effectively'

The students' attention was then drawn to the PowerPoint presentation. Interestingly, all the students were paying close attention to the teacher and the PPT, but none were taking notes. One student was discreetly scrolling through social media on his phone but the rest of the 36 students were all listening attentively.

The teacher then began lecturing on some practical tips when giving grades. 'Check and return papers to the students as quick as possible.' The students were nodding along in agreement at times but none of them questioned or disagreed with any points. For example, what is 'possible?' What constraints could a teacher face? The teacher said

‘we need to give them the criteria. What are criteria?’ One student said ‘The way you...’ but was unable to express her answer. She tried enthusiastically with body language when the teacher said, ‘assess them?’ To which she replied ‘yes.’ The teacher then said, ‘and you must tell them when?’ (class in harmony) ‘at the beginning of the course.’ He then went on to discuss the culture of blame in Kurdistan which is a common problem in the region. ‘If you don’t tell the students at the beginning (of the course), they will blame you. You need to tell them how they will be assessed. Even minor assignments, quizzes, homework and even minor tasks. They will blame and criticize you.’ This is clearly an issue that has affected this teacher before and he continues to stress the case for explaining the criteria to students at the beginning of the course and to stick to it.’ After each point, he summarised the gist in Kurdish. The teacher continued to ask questions in an attempt to interact with the class but there was very minimal participation and it always appeared to be from the same 4 students.

When a phone rang from a student’s bag or pocket, it was not addressed and although the students did not answer any calls in class or leave the classroom to do so, they did sit and message the callers afterwards and were thus still distracted from the lesson. Generally, the class was very quiet and minimal conversation between students was happening at this point but as it was a large room, often the sound of the teacher was drowned out and I wondered how the students at the back of the class could hear properly. The students were sitting passively in the class and were still not taking any notes, but they were listening.

The next point was how important it is to keep grades private. At that point, a male student was chatting at the back with his friends and the teacher called out his name as ‘Kak (name)’ which means ‘brother’ in Kurdish. However, when he called on the female students, he addressed them simply by their first name and didn’t add the ‘Khan’ (Ms) which is the equivalent of ‘Kak’ for females. The teacher discussed how he always posts their progress and activities on Facebook as a way to motivate the students, but he said he never posts grades publicly. The then said I will often send you a message privately through messenger but would never post for others to see as they may be uncomfortable. This sparked some discussion amongst students, mostly in Kurdish, and the classroom became noisy at this point. To gain their attention again he said ‘Guys, attention’ and they began to quieten down. He asked if anyone had any questions about the points he had discussed and received 2 questions, which I was

surprised to hear, were in English. Again, after this point, he gave a short recap in Kurdish and the students asked a few questions or clarified minor points in Kurdish.

After the class had settled, the teacher introduced a ‘marking’ activity. He distributed some small slips of paper and said ‘you are the teachers now, you have to imagine this is your students work and you have to mark it. You will be the scorer, give a mark from 10.’ The students looked quite enthusiastic about this and began work on the slips as soon as they received them. After a few minutes of working on the task, realising he hadn’t given many instructions, the teacher began to specify: ‘There are spelling, grammar and vocabulary mistakes, some with words missing etc.’ The teacher walked around to monitor the students as they did the task. He soon added ‘you can use mobiles to check the spelling of the words by the way.’ He then wrote a sentence on the board but didn’t say anything about it until later in the lesson. The sentence read ‘I as a teacher would have some comments in this regard.’

As the students were working on the task, a student asked the teacher for a pen. He gave the student a pen from his own pocket. I wondered why students at this level were still coming to university without the basic stationery. Some other students began to chat off topic in Kurdish at this point while others turned to classmates for help. Many of the students addressed the teacher as ‘teacher’ apart from one or two when they asked questions in Kurdish called him ‘*mamosta*’ (teacher in Kurdish). One of the students queries a sentence on the sheet which read ‘my sister and I’ and believed it was incorrect. Some other students at this point looked as if they also didn’t know which was correct so began to listen in on the conversation at which point, he stopped the class to explain about ‘my sister and I’ being grammatically correct. However, he didn’t give a grammatical explanation but rather gave more examples ‘my brother and I, my family and I...’

The teacher reminds the students to get back on task and give the paper that they are marking a score out of 15 which prompts discussion in Kurdish between students. The teacher is called over again by a student as ‘*mamosta*.’ He answers the students query before he reminds the students that they have 1 minute left to finish the task; ‘Ok guy, minute!’

Now the teacher is ready to give feedback and begins reading the passage starting with: ‘The title is My family’ emphasising the F. ‘F should be capital because it is...’ ‘A

title?’ asked a student? ‘Yes’ he confirmed. ‘I am 10-year-old...’ he read. A few students said ‘yearS’ emphasising the plural. One male student was chatting again (the same one as before) so the teacher singled him out to highlight the next mistake on the paper. Another student asked if the hypothetical student whose paper they were marking should know all the answers. This prompted another discussion when the teacher mentioned ‘if a student hasn’t studied a concept with you, you cannot mark it as a mistake.’ Again, putting myself in a student teachers’ position, this would be hazy to me. The next mistake he emphasised was ‘IN Sunday’ to which the students chimed ‘ON Sunday.’ He then said, ‘it should have a comma after the day, but it depends on the level of the students, *basha?*’ ‘*Basha*’ is a tag word which translates as ‘ok?’ So, he explained in English, with a Kurdish tag question. He then read ‘However’ to which the students chimed ‘capital’, but the answer was in fact comma after however. Then he went back to the example he had written earlier on the board ‘I as a teacher...’ and mentioned how it could have a comma in the sentence. Unsure of how this sentence fit with the task, I continued watching the students who seemed to be following but I was unsure of they were just sitting passively or whether they actually understood the sentence.

Some grammar points were explained, such as the difference between using present continuous for a future intention and the simple future tense. The teacher explained that if something is planned, the present continuous would be used. For example, ‘Tomorrow we are going to....’ Is already planned. The students seemed content with his explanation, but one student was still unclear why she couldn’t use ‘we will’ instead (this is still grammatically correct). The teacher had moved on by that point to asking ‘what do we need here?’ (at the end of the sentence). One student answered: ‘a full stop’ to which the teacher said ‘a full stop, excellent. ’This was the only time a student was praised in the class, not at any other time did the teacher actively praise anyone else.

At the end of the feedback, the teacher said: ‘guys look at the screen’ where he had projected a picture of a student’s exam with red pen all over it, it had a ‘F’ grade. He asked the class: ‘What colour should we use to grade exam papers?’ to which most of the class said in chorus ‘red.’ He explained that traditionally, this has always been the colour teachers have marked in, but it can have a negative impact on the students. He said ‘imagine you are a student and you see this paper all written on in red, you would feel as though you haven’t done anything good. This is the traditional way.’ He advised

students that when they are teachers, they shouldn't write all over the page. He said that any writing should be minimal but at the same time write corrections. He then quotes Scrivener (2011) who said you should reduce your number of words on a page. The students listened attentively and read the PowerPoint projected on the screen.

The lesson then came to an end and it was clear that the students had not finished all the tasks. I later asked the teacher what they had to complete. The following tasks were part of the lesson plan but as the time finished, they were to be completed next lesson:

- 1. In class grouping and students to assess different students writing and give a score*
- 2. After students score it, group discussion on how they can reduce the amount of the teachers' pen on the paper in order to reduce the negative impact on students*
- 3. Introduce the Scriveners' and Harmers' correction codes and samples and a rubric to decide on the mark to avoid subjectivity*
- 4. Students would get a new unmarked piece of writing and assess it with using the introduced codes and rubric*
- 5. After they restore the same piece of writing, their attention would be drawn to compare both marking styles, namely traditional and modern in terms of the amount of scorers' correction and feedback on both papers, and the differences between the marks that they gave (i.e. with and without using the rubric).*

Appendix 7: Participant Consent sheet
PhD study on Motivation, Self-concept and engagement

By signing this sheet, you are consenting to being involved in the research and you have been briefed on the confidentiality procedures for this study.

Signature	Participated in (please circle)	Signature	Participated in (please circle)
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview
	Observation/ interview		Observation/ interview

Researcher: Stacey Johnson, PhD student at the University of Leicester, United Kingdom

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