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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

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Abstract. *Learning English as a foreign language is a complex and challenging endeavour for many students worldwide, requiring the acquisition of multiple language skills. Moreover, success in language learning is determined by several factors, including the learners' learning motivations and perceptions of their competence. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between language learning motivation and perceived English language skills competence among tertiary students learning English. For this purpose, the English Language Learning Motivation and English Language Skills Usage Scales were administered to 229 students enrolled in the English preparatory class at a state university in Türkiye. The sample was selected via quota sampling. The research findings indicate that while gender and prior failure experience do not significantly affect language learning motivation and language skills, language proficiency levels and the medium of instruction do lead to notable differences in motivation and perceived competence in language skills. While the language levels of students are not directly related to motivation and perceived competence, it has been shown that both types of motivation, with intrinsic motivation being more effective, are significant predictors of self-efficacy perceptions regarding the use of English language skills. In conclusion, universities should implement programs that foster intrinsic motivation and highlight the importance of the English language. The study's findings are expected to provide guidance for English language instructors and administrators in English preparatory programs in similar settings to enhance language learners' efficacy beliefs and learning motivations.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is both a promising and demanding experience for students at all levels worldwide. Among the many factors influencing this challenging process, affective factors play a vital role and cannot be ignored. The existing literature clearly emphasises the importance of learning motivation and self-efficacy perceptions in language learners' ability to overcome difficulties. However, despite extensive research exploring these constructs using various methods, a need remains for context-specific studies that investigate causal relationships while accounting for multiple independent variables. This study fills this gap by simultaneously examining the predictive power of two different types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) on perceived competence across the four main language skills within a single, complex regression model.

Speaking a foreign language, especially English, is recognised as a crucial attribute for having a successful career in Türkiye (Genç, 2012). For this reason, English-medium departments in universities are in higher demand (Erkuş et al., 2020). Many countries have been implementing English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes to attract international students, enhance global university rankings, and prepare graduates for the international job market (Chang, 2025; Galloway et al., 2020; Simie & McKinley, 2024). These initiatives, often driven and supported by policymakers (Aizawa & Rose, 2018; Zheng & Choi, 2024), are primarily influenced by neoliberal market ideologies that stress economic growth and modernisation (Qiu et al., 2022; Sahan et al., 2022). In terms of educational outcomes, longitudinal and meta-analytical studies demonstrate that EMI results in statistically significant gains in students' overall English proficiency over time (Aizawa et al., 2020; Tai & Zhao, 2022; Yuksel et al., 2023). In this context, EMI environments support the development of academic vocabulary, particularly for students with initially low vocabulary levels (Malmström et al., 2025). However, while language improvements are more evident in receptive skills such as listening and reading, less progress may be observed in productive skills like speaking and writing, as well as in advanced grammar structures, if specific targeted support is not provided (Del Mar Sánchez-Pérez, 2023; Hoang, 2025; Lee et al., 2023). While individuals graduating from the Turkish secondary education system are expected to have an above-intermediate level of proficiency in English (Ağcam & Babanoğlu, 2020), this goal is often not achieved (Şahin et al., 2023; Tunç & Kozikoğlu, 2022). Consequently, universities offer preparatory English classes during the first year after registration. Given the strong influence of motivation on the language learning process, numerous studies have focused on students' motivation in language learning classes (Aydın, 2021; Karakış, 2020).

Motivation helps students maintain their efforts throughout the long, often challenging language-learning journey. It provides the motivation to begin learning and the determination to persevere despite difficulties (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). It also manages the relationship between learners' attitudes towards language, their enjoyment of the learning process, and their language proficiency (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011; Zhang et al., 2020). High levels of both

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively linked to improved language proficiency. In other words, motivated learners tend to perform better on language tasks and reach higher levels of language proficiency (Yang & Wu, 2022; Zhang et al., 2020; Zhong, 2024). Similarly, motivation influences learners' ability to use language practically (Yang & Wu, 2022), and highly motivated learners are more likely to demonstrate the skills they have learnt at a higher rate.

Despite the consensus on the importance of the relationship between motivation in foreign language learning and language skills, studies investigating this link in Türkiye are limited. Among the few, Aydın (2021) concluded that language learning motivation is closely tied to achievement orientation, while Doğan (2023) found that students' proficiency beliefs in an English preparatory class were at a medium level. Karagöl (2015) identified a positive relationship between attitudes towards English and self-efficacy, but only regarding speaking skills. Şanlı (2016) stated that achievement in English language learning is directly connected to motivation, personality, anxiety, and self-efficacy. It appears that the connection between self-efficacy beliefs and motivation in using various language skills has not been examined, particularly within the context of specific variables such as failure experience (e.g., repetition levels) and medium of instruction, which are unique and highly relevant to the Turkish preparatory school system.

From this perspective, this study aims to explore the relationship between students' motivation to learn English and their proficiency in language skills. Students' perceived competence in applying these skills is assessed across four different areas, and the influences of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on these processes are analysed. It is believed that this study will address a gap in the literature by examining how students' motivation affects their perceptions of competence in language skills and exploring the connection between these two phenomena. Moreover, instead of examining factors individually, this research evaluates all key influences simultaneously within a single model, investigating how a student's inner drive and external institutional factors (such as failure experience, programme type, and language level) interact to predict their sense of competence in English.

To better showcase the novelty of this research and clarify the relationships among variables, a conceptual framework was developed based on gaps in existing literature. Unlike studies that analyse motivation and skills in isolation, this study introduces a directional mechanism. As depicted in Figure 1, the model indicates that contextual factors, such as the medium of instruction, initially affect the learner's motivational profile (intrinsic and extrinsic). These motivations then act as the main drivers of 'Perceived Self-Efficacy', the learner's confidence in their abilities. This self-efficacy is regarded not just as a secondary outcome but as a direct mediator affecting competence in four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This broad perspective enables an exploration of how internal motivation converts into tangible language abilities through the framework of self-efficacy.

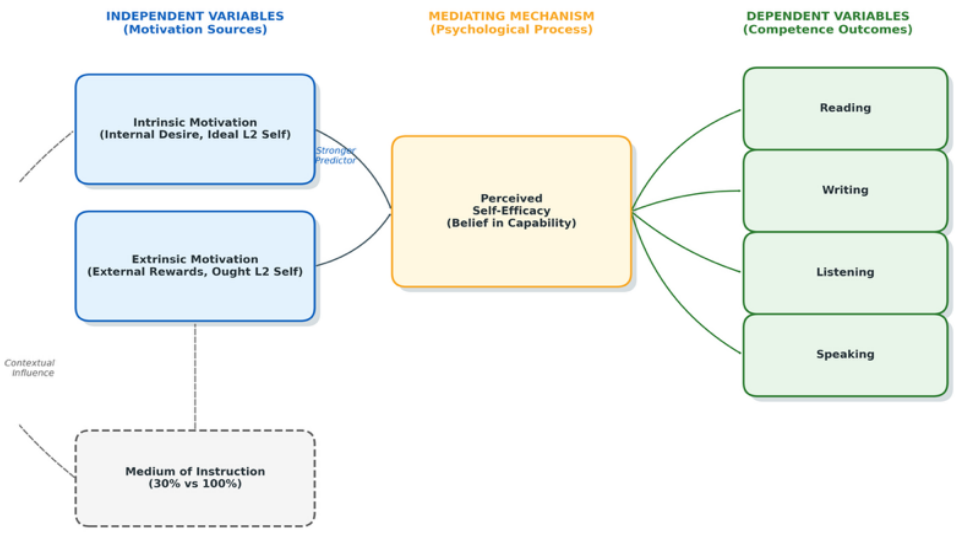

Figure 1. The conceptual model of the study illustrating the mediating role of self-efficacy between motivation sources and language skills competence.

The problem statement of this study is formulated as 'What is the causal relationship between language learning motivation and the English language skills competence of university preparatory class students?'. To this end, answers to the following questions will be sought.

1. Do students' motivation to learn English and their competence in using language skills differ significantly according to their gender, language level, type of learning, English language level, and failure experiences?

2. What is the relationship between students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning a language and their competence in using English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills?

3. To what extent do students' motivation to learn a foreign language, their failure experiences, program types, and languages of instruction predict their competence in using language skills?

Literature Review

In this section, the concepts of motivation and language skills competencies will be explained, and the role of motivation on language skills will be examined within the frame of Self-Determination Theory.

Motivation

Motivation is the internal force that enables an individual to engage in language learning (Woodrow, 2012). It is considered one of the most important factors in successful language acquisition, affecting the effectiveness of learning (Hamimed, 2024; Lasagabaster, 2011; Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2004; Zhong, 2024). In the context of foreign language learning, motivation is defined as the internal drive that drives individuals to achieve specific goals, such as mastering a new language. It is a complex structure influenced by factors such as

gender, personality, cultural background, social environment, and personal experiences (Alizadeh, 2016; Lăpădat & Lăpădat, 2024; Li et al., 2023; Thohir, 2017). Motivation significantly accounts for individual differences in language learning outcomes, alongside ability and learning style (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2004).

Effective teaching strategies that incorporate motivational elements significantly enhance language learning success (Lăpădat & Lăpădat, 2024; Lasagabaster, 2011). Setting clear goals for individuals and understanding the reasons behind language learning increases motivation (Lee & Bong, 2019; Woodrow, 2012). The classroom environment and teaching methods have a significant impact on students' motivation (Lasagabaster, 2011; Liu, 2012). Techniques such as Digital Storytelling (DST) and Community Language Learning (CLL), which extend beyond the classical EFL classroom (Roy, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023), as well as translanguaging practices, are believed to be associated with motivation for language learning (Zhang et al., 2025).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desire to learn a language for personal satisfaction and interest and has a strong effect on language success. In contrast, extrinsic motivation encompasses external factors such as rewards or recognition (Thohir, 2017). The dimension of motivation related to the desire to integrate into the culture of the language being learned is called integrative motivation. In contrast, the dimensions related to career development and academic requirements are referred to as instrumental motivation (Cao et al., 2023). In the EFL context, students typically exhibit a combination of extrinsic motivation (external rewards) and intrinsic motivation (internal satisfaction) (Setiyadi et al., 2016). Various theories have been developed regarding motivation, and their effects in the context of language teaching have been examined from many perspectives. Among these theories, Self-Determination Theory and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) Theory can be considered.

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) aims to understand better and predict the motivation underlying the learning of a second language. Within the framework of this theory, the Ideal L2 personality refers to the language-related qualities that a learner would like to have in the future. This concept is directly related to how an individual evaluates himself/herself as an ideal language learner, and this perspective serves as a powerful source of motivation in the learning process (Azizi et al., 2020; Garcia Pinar, 2019; Véliz-Campos, 2020). Since learners are driven by the desire to achieve this ideal state, it becomes an important determinant of motivation (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Dunn & Iwaniec, 2021). On the other hand, the Ought Self includes the qualities that the learner believes he/she should have in order to meet expectations and avoid adverse outcomes, and is affected by external pressures and obligations (Alshahrani, 2016; Andrade-Molina et al., 2022; Zhe et al., 2019).

While the ideal L2 personality is associated with intrinsic motivation, the Ought L2 Self is associated with extrinsic motivation. Although extrinsic motivation sources are secondary, according to Dörnyei's theory, teachers, peers, and the learning context have an impact on language proficiency (Yung & Wong, 2024). A positive learning environment

increases motivation and serves as the strongest determinant of learning effort (Yang & Liang-Itsara, 2024).

Self Determination Theory (SDT)

Another significant theory in the field of language teaching concerning motivation is Self-Determination Theory. This theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation, personality development, and well-being, while examining the effects of various types of motivation and the social and environmental factors that influence them. According to the theory, three core psychological needs shape individuals' lives. These are the need for autonomy, which refers to the person's sense of control over their own behaviour and goals (Davis, 2022; Dincer et al., 2019; Lanvers & Graham, 2022), the need for competence, which involves having control over relevant activities (Mulyadi et al., 2024; Walenta, 2018), and the need for relatedness, which pertains to feeling connected to others and experiencing a sense of belonging (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2015; Martela, 2020; Ryan, 2023).

Similar to the motivational self-system, this theory also explores motivation under two primary categories. Intrinsic motivation, which involves engaging in an activity for internal satisfaction, and integrated extrinsic motivations, which encompass external motivations that the individual accepts, are the classifications of this theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2015). In the context of goal content theory, intrinsic motivations are regarded as internal goals such as the desire to communicate effectively in another language, understand, and interact with different cultures (Khusainova & Valeev, 2018; Nyman & Kaikkonen, 2013), whereas extrinsic motivation is linked to performance-related goals such as passing an exam and achieving high grades (Zhang, 2014).

Understanding the effects of these theories on the language learning process and planning language teaching accordingly are important in terms of determining goals that are compatible with the basic psychological needs of students and increase their competence (Khusainova & Valeev, 2018; Nyman & Kaikkonen, 2013), supporting students' autonomy by offering them the right to choose in the learning process and increasing their sense of ownership (Davis, 2022; Dincer et al., 2019; Lanvers & Graham, 2022), and ensuring that students feel capable and successful by presenting them with a gradual content to support their language skills gradually (Mulyadi et al., 2024; Walenta, 2018).

2. METHODS

Research Design

This study was designed as a causal comparison study. Also known as ex-post-facto research, the causal-comparison design is a research design that aims to determine cause-and-effect relationships by comparing groups that differ in terms of certain variables, without involving any intervention in the process (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). This approach was suitable for evaluating the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on students' perceived language skills competence by comparing pre-existing groups (e.g., high vs. low language level, different percentages of EMI) and analyzing relationships between variables using statistical methods. The data collection relied solely on standardized, scaled instruments to measure the constructs, thereby confirming the study's exclusively quantitative nature.

Sample

The study's operational universe includes all students enrolled in tertiary-level English preparatory classes in the Aegean region of Türkiye. The accessible population consisted of students in the English preparatory class of a large state university in this region during the 2024–2025 academic year. Using non-probability quota sampling, we first established quotas for two stratification variables determined beforehand: (a) proficiency level (A2, B1, B2, based on the institutional placement test administered at the start of the semester) and (b) medium of instruction in the students' degree programmes (30% English vs. 100% English, as specified in catalogues). Target quotas were set to reflect the distribution of these strata within the accessible population, with data collection continuing until each quota was fulfilled. Inclusion criteria were: (i) current enrolment in the preparatory class, (ii) aged 18 or over, and (iii) provision of informed consent. Students on leave or with incomplete placement data were excluded from the analysis. Recruitment was conducted in intact classes after obtaining programme-level permission; all eligible students present were invited to participate, with participation being voluntary and no incentives offered. A total of 247 responses were received; after excluding cases that failed an attention-check item and statistical outliers ($|z| > 3$ on scale totals), the final analytic sample comprised 229 students. This method ensured that the minimum cell sizes within each quota (A2, B1, B2; 30% vs. 100% English) were met for the planned subgroup analyses. Demographic characteristics of the final sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Sample

Gender	**Female**	**Male**	
	101	128	
Medium of Instruction	**30 % English**	**100 % English**	
	138	91	
Program Type	**Daytime Education**	**Evening Education**	
	132	97	
Proficiency Level	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**
	34	93	102
Repeating the Same Level	**Yes**	**No**	
	36	193	

Data Collection

The research data were collected using two different scales. The first is the "English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale", which includes four sub-dimensions and 20 items, developed by Ocak et al. (2022). Since this scale was designed for middle school students, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess its suitability for the research sample. Results indicated that the scale maintained the same structure in this sample ($\chi^2/df = 2.38$, CFI = .91, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .07). The second measure is the "A Motivation Scale Intended for Learning English", developed by Karayazgan and Saracaloğlu (2021), which comprises two factors and 32 items. Its confirmatory factor analysis results were acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 3.11$, CFI: .74, SRMR= .09, RMSEA= .09). The total Cronbach's α coefficient for the English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale was .92, while its sub-dimensions showed acceptable reliability (Reading= .87; Listening= .88; Speaking= .80; Writing= .87). The

Cronbach's α for "A Motivation Scale Intended for Learning English" was also .92, with sub-dimensions demonstrating internal consistency (Intrinsic Motivation= .91; Extrinsic Motivation= .88). The data were collected in 2025 at a tertiary English preparatory program in a Turkish state university after obtaining the institutional and ethical permissions and personal approvals. The data were collected face-to-face through printed survey materials. After verifying responses to the control question and removing outliers, the final sample comprised 229 university students.

Data Analysis

The research data were analysed using the R-based JAMOVI statistical package. Prior to hypothesis testing, we assessed assumptions as follows: normality with the Shapiro–Wilk test and Q–Q plots, homogeneity of variances with Levene's test, and internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha. Subscale scores (four language-skill subdimensions and two motivation subdimensions) showed significant departures from normality (Shapiro–Wilk $p < .05$) and noticeable skewness/kurtosis in small-to-moderate subgroup cell sizes (e.g., A2 $n = 34$), which makes t-tests/ANOVA less robust despite acceptable variance homogeneity in most comparisons. Therefore, for group comparisons at the subscale level, we used distribution-free methods: Mann–Whitney U for two-group contrasts (e.g., gender; medium of instruction) and the Kruskal–Wallis test (i.e., a non-parametric analogue of one-way ANOVA) for three-level comparisons (e.g., proficiency A2/B1/B2). When the Kruskal–Wallis test was significant, we conducted adjusted rank-based post hoc tests controlling for familywise error (Dunn's tests with Bonferroni/Holm correction).

In contrast, total scores (motivation total; language skills self-efficacy total) aggregated across multiple items displayed roughly symmetrical distributions, with acceptable skewness and kurtosis ($|skew| < 1$, $|kurtosis| < 1$). Notably, these scores benefited significantly from the Central Limit Theorem, owing to the large overall sample size ($N = 229$) and well-balanced groups. Consequently, we used Pearson correlations to examine associations between total scores; Spearman correlations were also conducted as sensitivity checks and yielded identical results. For predictive analyses, multiple linear regression was chosen because the standardised residuals were approximately normally distributed, variance inflation factors were below 2, indicating no problematic multicollinearity; residuals showed homoscedasticity (Breusch–Pagan $p > .05$); and residuals versus fitted plots confirmed linearity. When appropriate, robust (HC3) standard errors were reported as a sensitivity analysis; results and conclusions remained stable. This mixed-analytical approach ensures that the choice of parametric versus nonparametric tests aligns with the data characteristics and sample size considerations.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Motivation and self-efficacy results by gender

In the pairwise comparison test (Table 2) conducted to determine whether students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and their competence beliefs in four basic language skills differed by gender, no significant differences were observed in the two scales or their sub-factors ($p > .05$).

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U results by gender (n=229)

Scale	Factor	Gender	n	Median	Statistics (U)	p
English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale	Reading	Female	101	18.1	6441	.96
		Male	128	17.9		
	Listening	Female	101	17.7	6233	.64
		Male	128	17.8		
	Speaking	Female	101	15.2	6442	.96
		Male	128	15.4		
	Writing	Female	101	14.8	5850	.21
		Male	128	15.4		
	Total	Female	101	64.0	6120	.49
		Male	128	64.5		
Motivation Scale Intended for Learning English	Intrinsic Motivation	Female	101	39.3	6228	.63
		Male	128	36.7		
	Extrinsic Motivation	Female	101	62.0	5816	.19
		Male	128	61.8		
	Total	Female	101	100.0	6057	.41
		Male	128	97.0		

3.2. Motivation and self-efficacy results by medium of instruction

According to the results of the Mann Whitney-U test, which was conducted under the assumption that the effect of students' English proficiency on their success in education varies depending on whether the programme they attended was 30% or 100% English, the students' intrinsic motivation scores (U = 5132) and total motivation scores (U = 5074) showed significant differences ($p < .05$). As shown in Table 3, the median scores favour the group receiving 100% English education in terms of motivation scale scores.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U results by the medium of instruction (n=229)

Scale	Factor	Language (English)	n	Median	Statistics (U)	p
English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale	Reading	%30	138	18	5752	.28
		%100	91	18		
	Listening	%30	138	18	6207	.88
		%100	91	18		
	Speaking	%30	138	15	5948	.49
		%100	91	15		
	Writing	%30	138	16	6262	.97
		%100	91	16		
	Total	%30	138	64	6117	.74
		%100	91	66		
Motivation Scale Intended for Learning English	Intrinsic Motivation	%30	138	59	5132	.01
		%100	91	64		
	Extrinsic Motivation	%30	138	38	5490	.10
		%100	91	39		
	Total	%30	138	96	5074	.01
		%100	91	103		

3.3. Motivation and self-efficacy results from failure experience

Students were asked whether they had experienced a failure that would require them to retake language education at their current level, and their responses were analysed accordingly. It was observed that level repetition did not result in a significant difference in any of the scale scores. Mann-Whitney U results are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U results by the failure experience in language learning (n=229)

Scale	Factor	Repeating Level	n	Median	Statistics (U)	p
English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale	Reading	Yes	125	18.0	5770	.14
		No	104	17.0		
	Listening	Yes	125	18.0	6256	.62
		No	104	17.5		
	Speaking	Yes	125	15.0	6182	.52
		No	104	15.0		
	Writing	Yes	125	15.0	6347	.75
		No	104	16.0		
	Total	Yes	125	65.0	6481	.97
		No	104	64.0		
Motivation Scale Intended for Learning English	Intrinsic Motivation	Yes	125	63.0	5736	.12
		No	104	59.0		
	Extrinsic Motivation	Yes	125	38.0	6187	.53
		No	104	38.0		
	Total	Yes	125	98.0	6173	.51
		No	104	98.0		

3.4. Motivation and self-efficacy results by proficiency level

When the differences in students' proficiency beliefs based on their language levels were analysed, it was found that, apart from reading competency, the scores differed significantly ($p < .05$). Table 5 displays the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis H Results of language usage competencies by the proficiency level

Scale Factor		Proficiency Level	n	Mean	SD	Df1	Df2	Statistic (F)	p
English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale	Reading	A2	34	18.4	4.26	2	226	0.193	.82
		B1	93	17.9	2.97				
		B2	102	17.9	3.96				
	Listening	A2	34	18.4	5.27	2	226	4.842	.00
		B1	93	16.6	4.16				
		B2	102	18.5	4.59				
	Speaking	A2	34	15.1	4.50	2	226	9.412	.00
		B1	93	14.1	3.49				
		B2	102	16.5	4.08				
	Writing	A2	34	13.9	3.76	2	226	4.413	.00

Scale Factor		Proficiency Level	n	Mean	SD	Df1	Df2	Statistic (F)	p
		B1	93	14.8	3.52				
		B2	102	15.9	3.46				
	Total	A2	34	65.8	15.96	2	226	4.394	.00
		B1	93	63.5	10.56				
		B2	102	68.9	13.33				

The results of the Tukey paired comparison test, used as a post-hoc analysis, show that only the B2 level's listening skills usage competencies are significantly higher compared to other levels ($t = -1.92$, $p < .05$). Similarly, speaking skills usage competencies follow this pattern ($t = -2.43$, $p < .05$). When looking at writing skills, a significant difference favours the B2 level over the A2 level ($t = -1.91$, $p < .05$). Overall, B2 level students score significantly higher in total competency usage scores compared to B1 level students ($t = -5.40$, $p < .05$).

The Kruskal-Wallis H test results indicated that motivation scores do not vary significantly across different student language levels ($p > .05$). The findings of the paired comparison test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis H results of motivation by the proficiency level

Scale Factor		Proficiency Level	n	Mean	SD	Df1	Df2	Statistic (F)	p
Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation	A2	34	61	16.6	2	226	2.599	.07
		B1	93	59.7	13.3				
		B2	102	64.2	13.4				
	Extrinsic Motivation	A2	34	41	14	2	226	1.745	.17
		B1	93	37.9	10.9				
		B2	102	36.8	10.7				
	Total	A2	34	102	27.7	2	226	.766	.46
		B1	93	97.6	20				
		B2	102	100.9	21.3				

3.5. The Relationship Between Scales and Their Predictive Role

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among scale scores and between language proficiency and these scores. As shown in Table 7, language level did not significantly correlate with English language skills proficiency; however, it had a significant, though weak, association with motivation. The scores of the two scales demonstrated statistically significant relationships. Notably, a strong and significant correlation was found between the total motivation score and the overall score on the Language Skills Proficiency Scale. Additionally, intrinsic motivation was found to be more strongly related to language skills competencies than extrinsic motivation.

Table 7. Correlations between scales

			Motivation			Competences of Using Language Skills				
			Intristic	Extristic	Total	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Total
Motivation	Extrinsic	Pearson's r	.47							
		p	.00							
	Total	Pearson's r	.88	.82						
		p	.00	.00						
Competences of Using Language Skills	Reading	Pearson's r	.42	.27	.41					
		p	.00	.00	.00					
	Listening	Pearson's r	.37	.25	.37	.54				
		p	.00	.00	.00	.00				
	Speaking	Pearson's r	.41	.27	.41	.50	.64			
		p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00			
	Writing	Pearson's r	.34	.23	.34	.52	.43	.61		
		p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		
	Total	Pearson's r	.47	.31	.47	.78	.83	.85	.77	
		p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
	Language Proficiency	Pearson's r	.14	.11	.15	.06	.00	.00	-.01	.01
		p	.02	.08	.02	.36	.95	.88	.79	.80

Linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which motivation and language proficiency levels predict English language skills. As shown in Table 8, motivation is a significant predictor of language skills proficiency.

Table 8. Linear regression test results on the predictive power of motivation, failure experience and language proficiency level on language skills use competence

	Overall Model Test					
Model	R	R^2	F	df1	df2	p
1	.515	.26	16.1	5	223	.00

According to the results of the regression analysis in Tables 8 and 9, the model was found to be generally significant ($F(5, 223) = 16.1$, $p < .05$) and explained 26.6% ($R^2 = .266$) of the total variance in the dependent variable, English language skills proficiency. Among the independent variables considered in the analysis, only the effect of the "intrinsic motivation" variable was statistically significant ($\beta = .37$, $p < .05$). Although the value for extrinsic motivation was borderline, it was also a significant predictor ($\beta = .151$, $p < .05$). This indicates that as individuals' motivation levels increase, their proficiency in English language skills also significantly improves. Conversely, the effects of the "failure" ($\beta = 2.109$, $p > .05$) and "level" (Niveau) variables were not statistically significant. Notably, although the

difference between the "B2 - A2" levels showed a positive trend (β = 2.92), it did not reach significance (p = .199). In this context, it is suggested that the model's explanatory power regarding the dependent variable is moderate, and exploring additional variables or alternative models could help achieve higher explanatory power.

Table 9. Model Coefficients

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	35.695	4.13	8.66	.00
Failure				
No-Yes	2.109	1.51	1.39	.16
Extrinsic Motivation	.151	.07	1.98	.04
Intrinsic Motivation	.37	.06	5.95	.00
Proficiency Level				
B1-A2	-1.15	2.25	.51	.61
B2-A2	2.92	2.27	1.28	.19

4. DISCUSSION

Motivation plays a vital role in the language learning process and can help explain variations in language proficiency. However, this relationship remains complex, as different motivation profiles can result in varying levels of proficiency (Dunn & Iwaniec, 2021). Intrinsic motivation, which involves engaging in language learning for its own sake and personal interest, is often linked to higher language proficiency. This is because intrinsic motivation is rooted in autonomy-supporting practices in modern language-learning approaches, which encourage learners to feel autonomous, competent, and actively involved in their language-learning journey (Noels et al., 2008; Noels et al., 2019). In this study, internal motivation proved to be a stronger predictor of students' perceived competence. Consistent with self-determination theory, internal motivation is a key factor in the domains of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied, students tend to participate more consistently and with greater dedication, organising strategies to develop their language skills independently. External motivations (such as completing the preparatory year), while important at the outset, may result in insufficient language use over time.

In the study, no significant differences were found in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation or efficacy beliefs concerning the four basic language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) based on gender. This indicates that both female and male students display similar levels of motivation and self-efficacy in language learning. It is important to note that this finding does not align with previous research. Studies suggest that women generally show higher motivation in the language learning process compared to men. Women tend to demonstrate greater resilience when coping with challenging situations encountered during language learning (Iwaniec, 2019; Martinović & Sorić, 2018). In terms of extrinsic motivation, it appears that men tend to exhibit higher levels, whereas women often display higher intrinsic motivation (Samir & Krishnasamy, 2019). This implies that women are more inclined towards autonomy in language learning, while men are more motivated in environments with high control. An OECD study conducted in 21 countries on language proficiency by gender

reveals a difference favouring men in the use of language skills (Corbella et al., 2021). Nevertheless, many studies indicate that women tend to use language learning strategies more effectively than men (Vitta & Woollock, 2019; Zeynali, 2012). Regarding skills, it is observed that girls perform better in demonstrating writing abilities (Denies et al., 2022). The absence of gender differences in this study suggests that preparatory class practices might eliminate the disparities noted in other research concerning language teaching and access to education.

Students' relationship with English throughout their university education also significantly influences their language skills and motivation to use it. Students enrolled in 100% English programmes scored higher than those in 30% English programmes. It can be concluded that the drive to master the language of instruction boosts academic success (Paetsch & Heppt, 2021). It is well established that implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches, which involve presenting content in the target language, positively affects language skills (Lasagabaster, 2011; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2024; Pladevall-Ballester, 2019). Similarly, motivation is higher among students studying in English-intensive programmes (Hennebry & Gao, 2021; Pladevall-Ballester, 2019). This study aligns with the idea that internal motivation to use the language frequently and purposefully is strengthened. When students see English as a means to achieve their goals, the obstacles to language learning become easier to overcome (Kaw & Kálmán, 2025).

Significant differences in competence beliefs were observed across proficiency levels, especially in listening and speaking, with students at the B2 level outperforming those at the A2 level. Bagherzadeh and Azizi (2012) and Kim and Shin (2021) suggest that higher proficiency levels are associated with greater motivation. For instance, more proficient learners tend to have stronger beliefs and higher expectations about their ability to succeed, which boosts their motivation. Conversely, Kim (2023) suggests that students' motivation may decrease as they reach higher proficiency levels, since the gains from additional effort required to approach native-level abilities diminish compared to the early stages of learning. The model developed in this study shows that proficiency level alone does not serve as a significant predictor. This implies that variations in perceived competence partly stem from the quality of motivation; students with stronger intrinsic motivation tend to use language more consciously. Such learners prefer activities that involve more language use and enable them to achieve meaningful outcomes, thereby enhancing both their perceived and actual skills.

It is well established that motivation is a crucial factor in determining success or failure in the language learning process (Binalet & Guerra, 2014; Dörnyei & Hadfield, 2014; Hamzaoui-Elachachi & Graia, 2014; Xu & Hong, 2025). Failure in language learning is often linked to low and extrinsic motivation, which can originate from various sources, such as insufficient course content, an unfavourable classroom environment, and inadequate teacher interaction (Hamzaoui-Elachachi & Graia, 2014). Students' beliefs about their abilities also influence their outcomes; those with a fixed mindset are more likely to experience failure compared to those with a growth mindset (Lou & Noels, 2019). However, this study demonstrated that students who repeated a language level did not show significant differences in motivation or competence beliefs compared to those who did not.

This resilience might suggest that institutional support prevents motivational collapse; nonetheless, it also highlights the importance of fostering higher-quality motivation rather than relying solely on repetition to improve results.

Research within the scope of SDT has shown that intrinsic motivation, stemming from personal interest and pleasure, is closely linked to positive outcomes such as student achievement and well-being. In contrast, motivation driven by external rewards or pressures can lead to reduced well-being and poorer outcomes (Howard et al., 2021). This study revealed that motivation is a significant predictor of language proficiency, explaining a substantial portion of the variance in language skills. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations significantly predicted language proficiency, but inherent motivation had a more substantial effect. Numerous studies support this finding (Aprianto et al., 2024; Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Harrison & Rodriguez, 2023). In this study, a strong positive correlation was found between motivation scores and the total scores of the Language Skills Proficiency Scale. It was observed that intrinsic motivation was more closely related to language skills proficiency than extrinsic motivation; this was interpreted as indicating that personal satisfaction and interest in learning are crucial for language proficiency.

The findings of this study emphasise several implications for language teaching. First and foremost, students need support in setting goals that are meaningful to them and aimed at developing their language proficiency while learning. Students' goals should go beyond simply achieving a grade in English class. They should involve tasks that enhance their autonomy and competence, such as “making a short film in English.” Project-based learning approaches like this are effective in increasing students' intrinsic curiosity and motivation.

The language-teaching process should be designed to promote learner autonomy. It is essential to satisfy students' fundamental needs by enabling them to make meaningful choices during learning, offering process-oriented and application-focused feedback, and recognizing their efforts. In the assessment and evaluation stage, employing evaluation methods that reduce students' dependence on external rewards, are based on clear criteria, and include tools such as peer assessment, play a vital role in strengthening intrinsic motivation. When these methods are implemented, and English learning takes place in a voluntary, meaningful setting that enhances competence, language education can become a process that leverages intrinsic motivation to achieve lasting improvements in reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills.

The study's findings support the connection between language science and higher education policy. In particular, they demonstrate that macro-level decisions about the extent of English-medium instruction directly affect students' motivation and language skills. Policymakers and practitioners will see positive outcomes from expanding preparatory classes and creating ecosystems that help students attain language proficiency.

While this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between motivation and perceived language skills competence among university preparatory class students, certain limitations should also be acknowledged. Firstly, although examining a single research setting is useful, the use of a non-probability quota sampling technique from a single regional university restricts the generalisability of the results to the wider population of preparatory class students in Türkiye. Additionally, the study design did not rely on objective language proficiency scores (e.g., actual exam results) to verify participants' self-efficacy perceptions,

which may limit the ability to fully assess the link between motivation and genuine performance. To address these limitations, further research could be conducted on a larger scale, involving multiple institutions and a greater number of participants, and incorporating achievement test scores to validate self-reported efficacy perceptions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study, which aimed to examine the relationship between motivation to learn English and language skills among university preparatory class students, indicate that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing students' language proficiency and that intrinsic motivation is a robust predictor of success. According to the research results, while gender does not produce a significant difference in motivation and language proficiency, it was observed that using English as the language of instruction has an impact on both motivation and proficiency. The lack of significant differences in motivation and efficacy beliefs following failure experiences suggests that students possess a certain level of resilience, enabling them to sustain their motivation despite setbacks. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that university preparatory classes incorporate activities that enhance intrinsic motivation and promote extrinsic motivation among students by increasing the importance of English in later stages of their education.

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ВЗАЄМОЗВ'ЯЗОК МІЖ МОТИВАЦІЄЮ ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ТА СПРИЙНЯТОЮ МОВЛЕННЄВОЮ КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЮ

Вивчення англійської мови як іноземної є складним і багатоаспектним процесом для багатьох студентів у світі. Успішність оволодіння мовою визначається низкою чинників, серед яких важливими є мотивація до навчання та сприйняття власної мовленнєвої компетентності. Метою цього дослідження є вивчення взаємозв'язку між мотивацією до вивчення мови та сприйнятою англомовною мовленнєвою компетентністю серед студентів, які вивчають англійську на рівні вищої освіти. З цією метою 229 студентам підготовчого відділення англійської мови державного університету в Туреччині було запропоновано шкали «Мотивація до вивчення англійської мови» та «Використання англомовних умінь». Вибірку сформовано квотним методом відповідно до заданих пропорцій. Результати дослідження свідчать, що стать та досвід попередніх невдач не мають статистично значущого впливу на мотивацію до вивчення мови та мовленнєві вміння; натомість рівень володіння мовою та мова навчання зумовлюють суттєві відмінності в мотивації та сприйнятій компетентності. Хоча рівень володіння мовою не має прямого зв'язку з мотивацією та сприйнятою компетентністю, встановлено, що обидва типи мотивації — при цьому внутрішня мотивація є більш ефективною — виступають значущими предикторами самооцінки ефективності у формуванні англомовних умінь. У підсумку, університетам слід упроваджувати програми, спрямовані на розвиток внутрішньої мотивації та на важливості вивчення англійської мови. Очікується, що результати дослідження стануть корисними для викладачів англійської мови та адміністраторів підготовчих програм у подібних навчальних контекстах для підвищення віри студентів у власні можливості та їх мотивації до навчання.

Ключові слова: компетентність, англомовні вміння, вивчення мови, мотивація здобувачів, самооцінка ефективності.