



LONG-TERM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN PRIVATE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TUTORING

Aida Montenegroⁱ

University of Bonn,

Germany

Abstract:

What motivates a teenage girl to begin and continue having private language tutoring? This qualitative study presents a detailed examination of the motivations and experience of a German female teen in language tutoring. After three years of private tutoring, data were gathered by the tutor-researcher through scenarios, an interview, and a collage. Analysis of the transcribed responses revealed that having well-defined goals and clear thoughts about the connection between the school subject and its value (e.g., intrinsic and utility) help the tutee achieve her goals, (re)establish them, and make more conscious and strategic decisions. Specifically, the tutee's mastery goals, school culture, and proactive interaction were conducive to improving the flow of tutoring (agentic engagement) and facilitating long-term engagement. Results also show that student engagement may be prolonged when these conditions are consistently encouraged by the tutor. This study builds on Achievement Goal Theory and the concepts of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement.

Keywords: achievement goals, tutoring, autonomy, agentic engagement, foreign language

1. Introduction

A German female teen received Spanish language tutoring, structured based on her own interests, for three consecutive years. She did not have bad grades, learning difficulties, extrinsic rewards, or Spanish as a mandatory subject for her final examinations to finish secondary school. This article presents a detailed examination of the motivations of this experienced tutee and her engagement in language tutoring.

This qualitative study has two aims. The first is to elaborate on aspects of motivation and student engagement that require clarification in foreign language learning literature. In particular, this aim involves investigating the emerging aspects related to motivation in language tutoring. The second aim of the study is to better

ⁱ Correspondence: email aida.montenegro@uni-bonn.de

understand the conditions of long-term student engagement in this particular learning setting. These aims are addressed by answering two broad research questions: What motivates a German teenage girl to begin and continue having private language tutoring? and What conditions may contribute to her long-term student engagement? Data were gathered by the tutor-researcher through scenarios, an interview, and a collage.

To assist with answering the first research question, this study builds on Achievement Goal Theory. This theory differentiates mastery goals from performance goals. Mastery goals refer to “*the desire to learn, that is, to acquire new knowledge and skills,*” and performance goals to “*the desire to attain competence in comparison with others*” (Dompnier et al., 2015, p. 722). In this case, the tutee’s achievement goals were initially connected to self-improvement (mastery goal), considering her aim to learn and improve her language skills, and the lack of competitiveness among peers in one-on-one tutoring.

To explore the second question, the concepts of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement are used to capture the extent to which the tutee becomes active in her learning process. Investigating student motivation and engagement may support tutors and tutees in (re)shaping the way they perceive tutoring. This study also encourages educators to explore their learners’ achievement goals and school culture to develop a repertoire of motivational strategies and conditions that support long-term student engagement.

2. Literature Review

The literature on student engagement and achievement goals provides a number of key strategies which can be used to address the challenges faced and learning opportunities needed in upper secondary school and tutoring. This section defines these two concepts and presents key aspects of private tutoring.

2.1 Student Engagement and Achievement Goals

Student engagement is defined as a “*relatively public, objective, and observable classroom event*” (Reeve, 2012, p. 167). Four dimensions have been identified in relevant literature – namely behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement. Diverse combinations of dimensions of engagement may be identified in private tutoring. In this respect, little is known about why long-term student engagement occurs in private tutoring.

Behavioral engagement is described as a student’s conduct in accordance with classroom norms, attendance, and effort towards task completion (Fredricks et al., 2011). Emotional engagement refers to the expression of interest, belonging, and affective reactions such as anger, happiness, anxiety, and boredom (Fredricks et al., 2011). Cognitive engagement denotes the ability to self-regulate by understanding and mastering skills (Fredricks et al., 2011), and agentic engagement is a proactive dimension involving the learner having a sense of agency by contributing to the learning process and instruction (Reeve, 2012).

Studies have shown that goal orientation is a significant predictor of engagement for learning (Grant & Dweck, 2003). Achievement Goal Theory contributes to identifying

the goals that lead to a student's involvement in learning. Achievement goals are self-regulatory commitments that provide direction to students as they interpret and respond to competence-relevant situations (Sommet & Elliot, 2016). An earlier conceptualization of goals delineates mastery and performance goals (Elliot et al., 2011). Both types of goals are influenced by features of the environment or by framing interventions (Belenky & Nokes-Malach, 2013).

Mastery goals aim to increase one's abilities, whereas performance goals focus on the demonstration of abilities at an interpersonal level (Wirthwein & Steinmayr, 2020). Research on learner motivation has confirmed that mastery goals contribute significantly to students' motivation because they are related to personal satisfaction and especially intrapersonal standards. When teachers offer choices and involve students in decision-making, students benefit from a sense of greater control and the ability to develop learning goals (Montenegro, 2017).

Learners with a mastery goal orientation are characterized by their belief that intelligence and ability can increase or improve through learning (Cook & Artino, 2016). They also tend to persist when facing difficulty, find their classes interesting, and use deep learning strategies (Keus & Haave, 2020). Contrary to mastery goals, research on performance goals has shown both positive and negative effects for learning (for a review, see Harackiewicz et al., 1998). Performance goals are also associated with challenge avoidance and decreased effort in the face of difficulty (Keus & Haave, 2020).

Goal-oriented behavior is demanded during secondary school, particularly for those who strive for higher-level qualifications. Research in foreign language motivation has provided evidence that learner autonomy and self-regulation go hand in hand (Dörnyei, 1998). Self-regulation requires effort and is always a choice (Keus & Haave, 2020). In a foreign language learning process, Nakata (2014) argues that successful language learning may occur if *"the learner as an active agent endeavors to take charge of his/her own foreign language learning throughout his/her life"* (p. 348). This perspective attributes certain values (e.g., utility) to learning a foreign language and helps the students to find relationships among the school subject, their skills, and professional development (Montenegro, 2012).

Supporting student autonomy provides students with a positive learning context, enhancing their engagement (Olivier et al., 2020). When educators employ an autonomy-supportive teaching style, they aim to facilitate autonomous internalization of educational activities and content (Guay et al., 2008) as well as encourage students to seek out *"information and learning activities that are relevant to their interests and personal goals"* (Reeve & Shin, 2020, p. 153).

Students who are motivated will engage in self-regulatory activities that help them to achieve their goals (Kemp et al., 2019). Progressively, students develop the ability to implement strategies to attain their goals and identify relevant resources in relation to their values (Aliponga et al., 2011). In this respect, the Expectancy-Value Theory is based on the notion that an individual's motivation to perform a behavior is the product of his/her expectations to perform the task and the perceived value of that goal (Eccles, 2005).

The concept of value, central to the Expectancy-Value Theory, refers to the extent to which learners perceive their goals as worthwhile (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). According to expectancy-value theorists, a motivated learner has a conviction that he/she can succeed and gain some immediate or a future personal value (Cook & Artino, 2016). Three types of values are described: intrinsic values (linked to the affective component of enjoyment), attainment values (perceived personal importance), and utility values (perceived usefulness of a given domain) (for reviews, see Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

To explore perceptions of achievement goals, Dompnier et al. (2015) tested the impact of the transformation of the social value of mastery goals. Their research design included the manipulation of reasons behind mastery goals by presenting scenarios related to the participant. In their study, the transformation process consisted of asking the participants to put themselves in the shoes of their university teacher, as well as to judge a student who displayed mastery goals. Thus, the participant had to score their level of self-identification with a situation, behavior, and personality traits referring to mastery goals. Among the findings, the authors highlighted that the experimental manipulations *“effectively influenced the participants’ beliefs about the social utility and social desirability of mastery goals”* (Dompnier et al., 2015, p.731). In a second study with university students, the same authors confirmed the effectiveness of the experimental induction of goals for self-improvement (mastery goals).

2.2 Private Tutoring

Private tutoring refers to supplementary and individualized lessons that support students in overcoming performance deficits, acquiring knowledge, and developing cognitive skills (Wittwer, 2008). In international research, tutoring is referred to as *“shadow education”*, since it mimics the formal curriculum (Bray, 2013). It is generally positively seen as a way students can extend their learning and gain additional human capital (Bray, 2013).

Many students who are doing well in school are nevertheless engaged in shadow education to ensure that they will continue to perform well. A study conducted by Cayubit et al. (2014) found that tutoring affects academic achievement (mostly associated with goals of skill demonstration), and learning attitude (mostly associated with goals of self-improvement) of high school students. Generally, students who are most engaged at both a curricular and co-curricular level will have more successful outcomes as students (Faroa, 2017).

Private tutoring is often seen as a source of assistance for students to navigate through secondary school. However, how this is achieved is likely to vary across countries depending on factors such as the economy and educational system (Silova & Bray, 2006). From this perspective, tutors need to be able to adjust the level of instruction to the tutees’ idiosyncratic needs and potential knowledge deficits (Person et al., 1994), as well as to adapt the instruction in concordance with the school culture in which she or he provides tutoring. This suggests that any teaching, including private tutoring, requires an understanding of both the country’s educational system and the goals learners set and adjust through time.

As suggested by past research, the closer secondary school students are to a standardized high-stakes assessment, the more likely they are to use private tutoring (Buchmann et al., 2010). Drawing upon PISA 2003 data, Southgate (2009) described variations in private tutoring between 36 nations, including Germany. The author found that the vast majority of countries employ a remediation strategy, implying that the primary use of private tutoring of 15-year-old school students is to assist failing students. Lastly, the study found that the higher the income of a household and the fewer children there are in the family, the more likely a household is to hire a private tutor.

Agentic engagement is the most recently identified dimension of student engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Montenegro, 2019). The concept provides research paths to understand engagement in specific learning scenarios (e.g., teaching a third/additional language in a university context, see Bello-Rodzeń & Montenegro, 2019). To this respect, research has shown that an initial level of agentic engagement at the beginning of an academic year may predict a high level of autonomy support perceived by students later in a course (Matos et al., 2018). The current study aims to identify the conditions of long-term student engagement, including proactive actions (agentic engagement) in language learning tutoring.

3. Method

This study adopts a constructivist perspective to consider individuals as active agents *“gaining knowledge about social context through their reflections and interactions with their environment”* (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012, p. 739). The participant of this study was an 18-year-old German female tutee attending one-on-one tutoring of Spanish language with the author for three years. Data collection was implemented in the last year of tutoring. The tutoring sessions occurred once a week for 90 minutes over the course of three years with occasional pauses (approximately 40 sessions).

To explore perceptions of goals and underlying motivations, research elements of two studies are borrowed: a research strategy adapted from Dompnier et al. (2015) that uses scenarios narrated by peers of the school subject (i.e., sharing the same age and role as learners), and four research mechanisms – construction, differentiation, reorganization, and refinement – taken from Lesh and Kelly (1997). The word ‘mechanism’ describes a process that has been set up to accomplish a particular goal (here, to describe the participant’s motivations to begin and continue having private Spanish language tutoring for three years). According to these authors, all four mechanisms permit individuals to develop preliminary ideas (construction), make comparisons between thoughts and experiences (differentiation), revise or extend interpretations (reorganization), and consolidate beliefs (refinement).

The participant of this study was Tania (pseudonym), an 18-year-old German female student. When tutoring in Spanish started, Tania was 14 years old and attended a school to prepare her for university in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Tania’s father was German and her native language was German, but she

learned some Arabic and French from her mother and maternal grandparents who were originally from Tunisia. Parental ethical approval was obtained for this study.

Tania considered herself a good language learner/user who loved Spanish. At the time tutoring began, she had more than eight years of tutoring experience in subjects such as math, French, and German and could already filter specific information, narrate key aspects, identify communicative strategies, and ask for specific help and information in Spanish.

Over the course of three years, Tania experienced three academic transitions: from ninth to tenth, from tenth to eleventh, and from eleventh to twelfth grade (her final grade of secondary school). Her upper secondary school levels were divided into a one-year introductory phase and a two-year qualification phase. In those years, she had to make decisions on academic subjects and assessment formats.

From a constructivist perspective, the tutor-researcher (also the author of this article) was considered a participant based on her role as tutor and her dynamic relationship with Tania during the data collection process and data analysis. She is a native Spanish speaker and university teacher of English who moved to Germany in October 2013. Her tutoring service was grounded on the idea that learners' understanding-oriented activities play an important role for the success of her tutees.

Data were collected by the tutor-researcher using the aforementioned mechanisms (Table 1), designed to explore the participant's motivations and engagement for learning Spanish in tutoring. This process included the use of scenarios, an interview, and the explanation of a visual task (a collage).

Table 1: Mechanisms for data collection, in chronological order (left to right)

Construction	Differentiation	Reorganization	Refinement
Three scenarios and scenario-based questions	Three scenarios and respective comments	An interview (two questions)	A collage (two questions)

The mechanism of construction aims to explore the participant's preliminary ideas on the research topic. Three scenarios were presented as reading comprehension tasks in Spanish with the following instructions: (1) read and interpret each situation, and (2) make a comment. The participant was allowed to ask questions about vocabulary and meaning, and she was given the option to answer in Spanish, English or German. All the participant's comments were given in German, her mother tongue.

Following Lesh and Kelly's (1997) mechanisms, the scenarios presented thoughts or dilemmas expressed by a peer, a learner with a similar profile to the participant (i.e., a German female teen). They sought to generate initial perspectives on one-to-one tutoring and develop familiarity with the voice recording process. The topics mentioned in these scenarios were: (a) interest in tutoring and grades, (b) the process of working alone as a learning strategy, and (c) the idea of having a native speaker as a tutor.

The mechanism of differentiation is implemented as a research tool to 'influence' or 'transform' ideas and analyze previous and new concepts. The scenarios from mechanism 1 were expanded in more detail and shared with the participant who

contrasted her ideas with an additional comment made by a fictitious peer. This step of confronting ideas aims to generate more thoughts and (dis)confirm previous beliefs. These scenarios with the peer's comments were voice recorded in Spanish by a German ninth-grade student. For example, the first question was "Should I have a tutor for improving my abilities in math (the subject of my interest) or for learning more Spanish?" After recording Tania's answer, she listened to the comment of the peer:

"She should improve her abilities in math. A grade of 3.0 in Spanish is not bad, so she has the chance to improve or at least not to get worse. Improving her abilities in math gives her not only better grades and an idea about her professional future, but she will also have fun."

Tania was also confronted with other ideas in this mechanism. This process was not only significant to generate more thoughts but also to confirm or change them. To the scenario, Tania answered:

"I think the same. And I think that it does not necessarily mean that she would have fun even if she learns Spanish. So, she may also have fun anyway when she learns math because she already likes it. But she can also have fun with Spanish when she learns Spanish with a tutor and learns math as well. This is just so that she can have Spanish tutoring and she can do math alone."

Researcher: *"Why did you change your answer?"*

I thought about it like that, because it just made me think that she will have fun learning with her math tutor either way because she likes math. But with a tutor she may have fun learning things she does not like, but with a tutor it can be fun."

Researcher: *"And what is your final decision?"*

Tania: *"She should decide in which areas she wants to be better. Which is more important, math or Spanish? Does she want a good grade in Spanish or math?"*

The mechanism of reorganization permits the participant to make use of new ideas and revise previous thoughts gathered during the previous mechanisms. In this part of the study, two questions were asked in an eight-minute interview: "In which situations should a student of a foreign language take private tutoring sessions?" and "If you took private tutoring sessions of a foreign language from next week, what specifications in terms of time, place, and strategies would you suggest to your tutor before starting the sessions?"

To finish the data collection process, the mechanism of refinement aimed to give the participant time to reflect and consolidate ideas. Tania was asked to make a collage to answer the following two questions: "What makes one-to-one tutoring successful?" and "Now that you have gone through a process of discussing your experiences and thoughts in one-to-one tutoring sessions, how do you feel?" Using the collage technique provides non-verbal narratives and the possibility to reveal a greater depth of the participant's thoughts. As advised by Lijadi (2015), the analysis of the collage and the

transcription of the micro-narrative included a categorization of the images to the research topic.

At the end of this study, student checking (feedback) was requested by the researcher to confirm that data were analyzed in a way that was consistent with the participant's experience. The data-collection material (responses to scenarios and questions) implemented in each mechanism was created by the tutor-researcher. English-translated transcriptions were created from the original German recordings.

After implementing the four mechanisms and transcribing Tania's responses, the next step for data analysis was to divide the transcribed data and extract information regarding motivation (research question 1) and student engagement (research question 2). The data analysis included organization and interpretation of responses in each mechanism and visualizing them in a diagram.

4. Results

Student engagement in private tutoring included behavioral engagement (i.e., attention, distraction avoidance), cognitive engagement (i.e., an effort to comprehend and make connections and reflections among topics), emotional engagement (i.e., a desire to learn, feeling a positive attribution of positioning as an active learner and language user), and agentic engagement (i.e., asking questions that allow a topic to expand and the consideration of alternatives). The four dimensions emerged with different frequencies, with agentic engagement as the most observed dimension due to the characteristics of the teaching format. In line with this, Montenegro (2022) points out that proactive actions are associated with specific teaching approaches, formats, and school cultures. In Tania's case, tutoring promoted autonomous learning in harmony with her previous and current learning environment at school.

Tania's responses of three scenarios with questions (mechanism 1), three scenarios with comments (mechanism 2), an interview (mechanism 3), and a collage (mechanism 4) were analyzed individually and then as a whole (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of phrases/words found in Tania's responses

Construction	Differentiation	Reorganization	Refinement
Preliminary steps: Self-reflection, self-diagnosis on academic skills, self-study	To consider: Importance, difficulty, and interest in relation to the school subject (Spanish), values attributed to the school subject	Ideas: Tutoring when (1) a student cannot cope alone, (2) the foreign language is more complex compared with the learner's mother tongue, and (3) the student is lacking strategies to understand the subject	Relevant aspects: Communication, goals, didactics, decision making, positive relationship with her/his tutor

As an example of this analysis process, to the scenario "My father thinks I need private Spanish tutoring sessions because I got a 3.0 out of 6.0 in my first exam" (mechanism 1), the following phrases were underlined:

"(...) But with this grade, which is exactly in the middle, 3.0 is not a bad grade and it isn't a super grade, I would leave the decision up to the student. I, personally, would want to improve myself, as long as I were having fun and if I could use it in the future, such as languages or something similar. But if it is a subject like chemistry or physics, and I got a 3.0 and would not have to use these skills later on, it would be fine with me, as long as it remains a 3.0 and it does not get any worse. (Pause) I would say that it depends on the person, if the person likes the subject, if they have difficulties or because they just need to make more of an effort. A 3.0 is not bad and it is also not good. So, I would say that it depends on the case."

Results of this study indicate that Tania's comments in mechanisms 1 and 2 were related to self-reflection and self-diagnosis on academic skills and the importance, difficulty, and interest in relation to the school subject. Additionally, self-questioning (as a key theme in Tania's comments) allows her to seek connections between the subject and its relevance to her personal and professional future.

Tania's comments in mechanism 3 highlighted the need for tutoring (goals and interests) when (1) a student cannot cope alone, (2) the foreign language is more complex compared to the learner's native language, and (3) the student is lacking strategies to understand the subject. Regarding her suggestions for tutoring, Tania mentioned three key aspects, which were reflected in how she perceived her tutoring sessions of Spanish: (1) Students' needs determine the type of intensive help (e.g., twice a week) or preferably 60 or 90 minutes once a week (no more than 90 minutes in order to keep concentration, as she clarified), (2) the tutor-tutee relationship should be positive and allow for small talk about personal life and identification of possible difficulties in learning, and (3) learning material can be made during the sessions for self-study (e.g., self-made grammar books/guidelines).

In the interview, Tania stated that the research process was interesting for her because she recalled some experiences as a learner (e.g., her goals and interests) and specifically as a language learner of French and Spanish. She mentioned that listening to other peers and voices (scenarios recorded by a student with a similar profile to her) made her reflect on her own ideas. Tania also identified herself as being highly engaged in learning languages. This self-identification permitted her also to identify stories and experiences where she felt successful in learning another language.

In Tania's collage (mechanism 4), key aspects were highlighted verbally and visually in the following order of decreasing importance: communication (e.g., a good relationship with the tutor); rapport (including laughter and funny moments with the tutor); strategies (e.g., repetition, listening to how the tutor pronounces words); skill development and goals (e.g., she wrote "I want to learn"); learning for the right amount of time; didactics (e.g., active learning, interesting stories); a step-by-step approach to learning; motivation as a process (she wrote: "Nobody forces me"); and autonomous decision making (e.g., decisions about what to do in each tutoring session and when/why she has tutoring). Specifically, she included images such as role-playing ('acting'), a

mountain to represent a road and a goal, and a brain with a bulb to represent new knowledge. For example, she responded:

“I, personally, would want to improve myself, as long as I were having fun and if I could use it in the future”

and,

“If one has problems with pronunciation and is in need of intensive support for this reason, then I think that’s good to have a tutor.”

In her collage explanation, Tania included words such as ‘fun’, ‘future’, and ‘improvement’. This can be directly related to teaching strategies, achievement goals, and values attributed to language learning, respectively. Based on Tania’s comments, not only intrinsic values but also attainment and utility values seemed to play an important role in her desire to receive language tutoring. For Tania, having fun, achieving goals (connected to the personal future), and improving were very important in deciding whether to have tutoring sessions. Based on her experience, a tutor should consider these aspects to increase learner motivation.

Tania’s responses of the mechanisms were analyzed as a whole to identify motivational contributors of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement (Table 3).

Table 3: Motivational contributors of student engagement

Behavioral	Emotional	Cognitive	Agentic
Attention and effort towards task completion	A positive tutor-tutee relationship, enjoyment, a positive connection with the language	Self-regulation to cope with difficulties and master skills	Initiatives that contribute to the flow of tutoring

When sharing the analysis with Tania, she emphasized the complexity of the German educational system (e.g., educational policies depend on each federal state), but she also recognized that there were many learning opportunities and professional options in Germany. The variety of educational choices during secondary school was an element she highlighted consistently during the data collection process. This is a motivating component for making a free/unrestricted decision, which is related to autonomy development (goal setting and achievement).

In addition to emphasizing that every federal state has its own school system and therefore different curriculums and educational choices, she added that the final exams and grades differ from state to state. Therefore, the final grades are sometimes difficult to compare since their range varies from 0–15 points. According to Tania, achieving 14 points in some states would be much easier (e.g., Bremen) than in other states such as Bavaria. She also wondered why her 12th grade class was structured only for seven months and why the 11th grade class was more demanding than the 12th. This reiterates

(1) the complexity of German secondary school to be explained in national and international contexts, and 2) the importance of student performance based on educational choices (e.g., subject to be evaluated), grades (e.g., specific requirements to enter university), and self-regulation.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted in a unique setting, following a three-year period of language tutoring. This represented a gap in the literature, with no prior studies conducted based on the author's knowledge. Considering the importance of student engagement in tutoring, this study contributes to prior research by applying an elicitation technique to explore learner's perceptions of language learning tutoring and decisions to continue with these lessons.

To the question, What motivates a German teenage girl to begin and continue having private language tutoring?, Tania's self-reflection highlights the relevance of the school subject for her future (the utility value). Understanding the connection between the school subject and its value helps tutees to achieve their goals, (re)establish them, and make more conscious and strategic decisions. In this respect, intrinsic values are key predictors of students' long-term engagement (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

This process of reflecting upon the connection between the school subject and its value is possible through self-identification. According to Bryant (2014), students *"who self-identify as being highly engaged in learning can also identify stories and experiences where they felt successful in the learning environment"* (p. 75). Based on this identification, the learner may establish achievement goals and improve his or her own learning strategies and develop learning materials more strategically, which facilitates long-term engagement in learning.

Mastery goals are related to a 'growth' mindset and agency development (Cook & Artino, 2016), two characteristics evident in Tania's responses: Self-improvement (mastery goals) and the importance of the interaction aimed to improve the flow of tutoring (agentic engagement). As the center of experience and as the initiator and regulator of behavior, the Self encompasses an active being in the world (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Considering the results of this study, successful experiences in private tutoring require self-reflection (e.g., What do I need?), which may lead to proactive behaviors (e.g., initiatives) and the creation of self-made material (e.g., How do I track my progress?) and self-study (e.g., How can I continue studying by myself?).

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) argue that self-regulated learners engage in three processes: self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. Through questioning, tutees take an active role in self-regulating their knowledge (Person et al., 1994). This process is more difficult in large or traditional classrooms in which students may be reluctant to report what they do not understand (Person et al., 1994). This difference illustrates that learners in a tutoring context may have better opportunities to be active and self-directed to resolve their comprehension difficulties (Wittwer, 2008).

A change of thought was also evident in this study. After listening to a comment by another ninth-grade student (mechanism 2), Tania previously concluded that a student can have fun even if s/he does not like the subject. As she argued, a student can learn 'boring' subjects if the tutor presents them in a fun way (teaching strategy). She thought she could practice math on her own because she did not like that subject. She connected fun with interest in the subject, but then she read the comment from a peer and realized that having fun is also possible in tutoring sessions on subjects that are not interesting at all. This change of thought confirms the effectiveness of including fictitious voices in scenarios (see Dompnier et al., 2015).

Regarding the second question, What conditions may contribute to Tania's long-term student engagement in tutoring?, this study highlights three conditions: the tutee's mastery goals, school culture, and tutor-tutee interaction during tutoring. As tutoring was Tania's decision, goals for self-improvement (mastery goals) were an expected result connected with long-term student engagement. It does not mean that performance goals were absent. However, based on the characteristics of this study (e.g., one-on-one tutoring, private tutoring, interest in the school subject, and previous experiences in tutoring), mastery goals were highlighted by the participant during her self-reflection process.

Tania faced difficulties in learning other languages when she was younger but made the most of tutoring during secondary school by learning strategies and making good decisions as a tutee. By making the free decision to receive support (e.g., through tutoring), students feel autonomous and are able to perceive such growth over time (Henri et al., 2018), as in Tania's case. This fact supports literature on mastery goals showing that students who are predisposed to setting mastery goals persist when facing difficulty, engage in renewed efforts in the face of errors, use deep learning strategies (Keus & Haave, 2020), and tend to seek help (Gunawardena, 2014).

Student engagement and tutor-tutee interaction are also interconnected. It is established that with improved interaction comes improved student engagement, and with improved engagement comes improved learning (Trowler, 2010). In Tania's responses, communication, rapport, support in learning strategies, didactics, and giving opportunities for decision-making were central to tutor-tutee interaction. For her, tutor-tutee interaction plays an important role in having fun, defining achievement goals, and improving performance. This supports the idea that tutor-tutee interaction seems to be more effective than interaction in traditional classroom instruction, in part due to its collaborative nature (Wittwer, 2008). In this respect, to create autonomous learning environments, teachers need to maintain the desire to learn in their students, which "*occurs through the development of relationships*" (Hogan, 2012, p. 1). Developing a good tutor-tutee relationship is important, so tutors can encourage their tutees to examine their communication skills, progress, and goals for improvement.

Learning extends well beyond didactic techniques and includes a social and human element as well. This stresses the importance of student engagement by building rapport with students and understanding that learning occurs in a social context (Buskist et al., 2018). With these elements, engagement from both sides (tutor and tutee) allows

for the development of communicative and interpersonal skills. Even though private tutoring is most often used by those students who intend to go on to pursue higher education in Germany, it can be an opportunity to increase intercultural awareness and go beyond the need to obtain high grades or pass exams, as in Tania's case.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, a motivated and experienced tutee like Tania undergoes a process of constant self-reflection, self-diagnosis, and self-action. This leads to autonomy development and can be highly relevant for maintaining motivation. This means that a motivated student reflects upon his/her skills and goals, questions how to improve (e.g., through self-study or tutoring), and takes actions based on such reflection (e.g., creating his/her study material or seeking a tutor).

Reflection of the values attributed to the school subject, achievement goals, and the interaction with the tutor influences learner motivation. According to the data analysis, Tania's self-reflection and mastery goals were linked to intrinsic values as well as to attainment and utility values attributed to the foreign language. These findings also support the high potential of students' reflections on the Self (e.g., skills, goals, and interests) for autonomous learning and agentic engagement during learning activities. An agentially-engaged student like Tania demonstrates a sense of agency during tutoring through initiatives, suggestions, clear objectives, and interest in tutee-tutor interaction.

Key conditions grouped into each dimension of student engagement were identified: Attention and effort towards language tasks (behavioral engagement); a positive connection with the tutor and the school subject (emotional engagement); self-regulation to cope with difficulties and master communicative skills (cognitive engagement); and proactive actions to improve the flow of instruction and learning (agentic engagement). Tania's case shows that when these conditions of engagement are consistently promoted by the tutor, student engagement may be prolonged.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Aida Montenegro is a PhD candidate at the University of Bonn, Germany. Her research has focused on alternative pedagogies, student motivation, foreign language learning/teaching, and how student engagement is conceptualized and measured in one-to-one tutoring and large classes.

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