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Teacher Clarity and EFL Learners' Engagement: The Mediating Role of Boredom

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ABSTRACT

In the process of foreign language learning, environmental variables—particularly the instructor's behavior and teaching approach—play a significant role in shaping learners' classroom engagement. In addition to these external factors, emotional aspects such as academic boredom also influence student interactions, motivation, and level of participation in class activities. Although several studies have investigated the connections between teaching-related factors and student outcomes, further research is still needed to deepen our understanding of these complex relationships. In line with this need, the present study aimed to explore the relationships among teacher clarity, academic boredom, and academic engagement among undergraduate students majoring in English in Iran. Furthermore, the potential mediating role of boredom in the relationship between teacher clarity and student engagement was also examined. To this end, 291 English language learners were selected through convenience sampling and invited to complete a set of questionnaires. The reliability and validity of the instruments were carefully assessed. Structural equation modeling results revealed that teacher clarity was positively associated with students' academic engagement and negatively associated with their academic boredom. In addition, boredom significantly and negatively predicted students' engagement levels. The findings also confirmed that academic boredom mediates the relationship between teacher clarity and academic engagement. The study concludes with a discussion of theoretical and practical implications and offers directions for future research.

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1. Introduction

Classroom engagement represents a core component of students' academic success, particularly within the context of foreign language learning. This is because language acquisition is an inherently interactive and dynamic process, one that hinges on learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in classroom activities (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Pekrun, 2006). Among the various contributing factors, a combination of environmental and individual variables can significantly influence the level of classroom engagement among language learners. One of the most impactful environmental factors in this regard is the language teacher's characteristics, which directly shape students' learning experiences. Among these characteristics, teacher clarity holds particular importance. This concept refers to the instructor's ability to convey instructional goals, course content, and classroom expectations in a clear, comprehensible, and well-organized manner for students (Bolkan, 2017; Titsworth et al., 2015). Teacher clarity has the potential to enhance comprehension, reduce confusion, increase learners' sense of control, and ultimately promote more active classroom engagement (Zheng, 2021). It can also help alleviate students' anxiety and frustration associated with learning a new language. When instructional directions are clear and accessible, students tend to develop greater confidence and motivation in their language learning journey. Moreover, teacher clarity can foster a positive psychological classroom environment, contributing to a sense of well-being and encouraging effective interaction (Derakhshan et al., 2023).

Despite substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of teacher clarity in general educational contexts, its role in foreign language learning environments has remained relatively underexplored. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting—often marked by challenges such as cultural diversity, language learning anxiety, and varying proficiency levels (Fallah, 2014)—teacher clarity may play an even more pivotal role. Under such conditions, investigating teacher clarity as a key environmental variable in explaining language learners' classroom engagement becomes increasingly essential.

On the other hand, the role of emotions in the learning process and classroom engagement is undeniable. One key negative emotion that has received relatively little attention in the context of language education is academic boredom. This emotion encompasses feelings of exhaustion, lack of motivation, disinterest, and sometimes a sense of meaninglessness toward educational activities, and it can significantly undermine learners' engagement and interaction (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Pekrun, 2006;). Pekrun's (2006) control–value theory highlights that academic emotions act as mediating variables, playing a crucial role in the relationship between environmental factors (such as teaching

practices) and educational outcomes (such as engagement). Within this framework, it can be expected that teacher clarity—by fostering a sense of control, transparency, and effective communication—may help reduce academic boredom and thereby enhance classroom engagement among language learners.

Nevertheless, despite the theoretical and practical significance of the two key variables—teacher clarity and academic boredom—their relationship with classroom engagement in foreign language education has rarely been examined in an integrated manner. This research gap underscores the need for simultaneous investigation of these variables to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms influencing classroom engagement in language learning contexts. In response to this gap, the present study examines the direct effects of teacher clarity and academic boredom on classroom engagement. Furthermore, drawing on the control–value theory, this research is among the first to explore the mediating role of academic boredom in the relationship between teacher clarity and learners' engagement, aiming to uncover the underlying psychological processes. A deeper understanding of these interrelationships may have important implications for teacher training programs, instructional quality, and the enhancement of learning experiences in language education settings. The findings of this study can support language instructors and educational policymakers in developing more effective strategies to reduce academic boredom and promote active classroom engagement.

Overall, the aim of this study is to contribute to the ongoing academic discourse and existing literature on teacher effectiveness and classroom engagement within the context of foreign language learning. By examining the impact of teacher clarity and academic boredom, the study seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations for fostering positive learning experiences and improving academic outcomes among English language learners. Accordingly, the present research addresses the following four research questions:

1. Can teacher clarity significantly predict classroom engagement among English language learners?
2. Can teacher clarity significantly predict academic boredom among English language learners?
3. Can academic boredom significantly predict classroom engagement among English language learners?
4. Does academic boredom mediate the relationship between teacher clarity and classroom engagement among English language learners?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Academic Engagement

Student engagement has increasingly become a critical topic in higher education because of its strong and lasting impact on academic success. The construct encompasses both the quality and quantity of students' active involvement in learning

activities—inside and outside the classroom—and the amount of time and energy they devote to academic tasks (Hiver et al., 2021; Kuh, 2009). Academic engagement is typically examined across three dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012; Reeve & Tseng, 2011;). Behavioral engagement refers to attendance and active participation in academic and social activities; emotional engagement captures students' affective reactions toward peers, instructors, and the learning environment; and cognitive engagement concerns the mental effort students invest to achieve deeper understanding of course content and to develop their academic knowledge and skills. These dimensions are highly interdependent, and their combined effect can strongly predict overall academic engagement and, consequently, significant academic progress (Oga-Baldwin, 2019).

Student engagement has been widely studied across various domains and learner populations (Bear et al., 2018; Fazlali et al., 2018; Haghighi et al., 2022; Oga-Baldwin, 2019; Rezaeifard et al., 2022). Research has consistently shown that engagement is not only a desirable educational outcome but also a key indicator and strong predictor of several other important variables—such as academic performance, achievement, and graduation rates (Ladd & Dinella, 2009; Hosseinzadeh et al., 2017; Houshyar et al., 2023; Reeve & Lee, 2014;).

Nevertheless, the predictors of academic engagement in foreign language learning contexts have received relatively limited empirical attention. The importance of student engagement in foreign language education is at least as significant as in other academic domains—if not greater (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). In fact, language learners are required to participate continuously over an extended period in order to develop the ability to perform language skills automatically. Moreover, active student involvement is particularly desirable in communicative and task-based language instruction, as it enhances engagement in purposeful interactions. Therefore, given the critical role of engagement in foreign language classrooms and the scarcity of empirical research in this area (Fallah et al., 2024; Mercer, 2019), the present study seeks to address this gap by focusing on two important predictors: teacher clarity and academic boredom.

2.2. Academic Boredom

Academic boredom, as a negative and maladaptive emotion, is explained within Pekrun's (2006) control–value theory as an emotional response to academic situations perceived as low in value or lacking in control. This theory posits that the experience of academic emotions arises from students' cognitive appraisals along two dimensions: perceived control and perceived value of learning activities. According to this perspective, when learners feel they lack control over the learning process or perceive educational tasks as meaningless, the likelihood of experiencing negative emotions such as

boredom increases (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2002).

Boredom, viewed as a deactivating and achievement-disruptive emotion, is a strong yet often short-lived psychophysiological reaction to an educational experience that may appear important on the surface (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2002). It involves a mix of dissatisfaction, inattentiveness, frustration, annoyance, reduced energy, and a lack of motivation to pursue pre-set goals (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018). This emotion is especially likely to emerge when students perceive learning activities as overly difficult, insufficiently challenging, or lacking personal relevance. Within the control–value framework, such perceptions are linked to a decline in perceived value and weakened sense of control, which ultimately give rise to the experience of boredom.

It is widely believed that boredom, by diminishing interest and motivation, depleting cognitive resources, and promoting surface-level learning approaches, can negatively affect students' academic performance and progress (Pekrun et al., 2002). Within the framework of the control–value theory, boredom differs from related emotions such as apathy or disinterest, as it directly stems from the interaction between learners' cognitive appraisal of their ability (control) and the meaningfulness of the task (value).

Boredom is common in educational settings and has far-reaching consequences across multiple aspects of learning, including student engagement, self-regulation, cognition, learning strategies, study habits, and academic achievement (Daniels et al., 2015). It undermines the enjoyment of learning activities for both students and teachers, leading to frustration, disengagement, and ultimately, poor academic performance (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021; Hemmati & Sadeghi, 2019; Li et al., 2024; Li et al., 2021; Poorghaz et al., 2011; Shafaei et al., 2024; Solhi et al., 2023).

Likewise, previous research has shown that students who experience boredom frequently avoid academic tasks, minimize their effort in learning activities, exhibit lower self-regulation, and report reduced motivation (Hashemi et al., 2025; Li et al., 2024; Schwartze et al., 2020). These behaviors, as interpreted through the control–value theory, reflect students' low perceived control or lack of perceived value in academic tasks.

In a qualitative study on factors contributing to academic boredom, Kruk and Zawodniak (2018) identified several antecedents of boredom among Polish foreign language learners: (1) monotonous and repetitive tasks; (2) low usefulness of assigned tasks; (3) activities that were either insufficiently challenging or overly difficult; (4) lack of interest caused by excessive teacher control; and (5) absence of feedback from the instructor. From the perspective of control–value theory, all these factors either reduce learners' sense of control (e.g., excessive teacher control, lack of feedback) or diminish the perceived value of the tasks (e.g., low utility, task

repetitiveness), thereby contributing to the experience of boredom.

Findings from Li (2021) also revealed that EFL learners in China were more likely to feel bored when confronted with tasks that were either too difficult or insufficiently challenging and engaging. Moreover, the study by Li et al. (2021) indicated that boredom in second language learning is the result of both personal antecedents (e.g., trait boredom) and external sources, such as peer performance, task difficulty, and perceptions of teacher-related features—including teaching methods, instructional motivation, and personality. The findings also suggested that learners were more prone to boredom in classrooms where teachers were perceived as uninterested and unmotivated.

Despite its significance in second language education, boredom has received relatively limited attention compared to other academic emotions (Dewaele & Li, 2021). From a methodological standpoint, the predominant focus on qualitative approaches and the lack of large-scale quantitative research have created a gap in understanding the causes, consequences, and coping strategies for boredom in language learning contexts. Furthermore, the potential roles of important factors such as teacher clarity and teacher–student interaction in reducing boredom and enhancing engagement warrant more thorough investigation within the control–value theoretical framework.

2.3. Teacher Clarity

Teacher clarity, as an essential interpersonal communication skill, refers to students' perceptions of their instructor's use of verbal and non-verbal communication cues to make instruction more transparent and to facilitate the understanding and learning of course content and processes (Violanti et al., 2018). Indicators of teacher clarity include repeating key points, using visual aids, reviewing and previewing material, highlighting main ideas, providing examples, and rephrasing concepts (Limperos et al., 2015; Zheng, 2021). By employing such strategies, instructors make the content more comprehensible for students and deliver clearer instructions (Segabutla & Evans, 2019). Thus, teacher clarity is conceptualized as a collaborative process in which both learners and instructors contribute to the construction of understanding and learning (Titsworth et al., 2015).

The concept of teacher clarity is grounded in information processing theory and adapted instruction theory. According to information processing theory, learners are considered information processors, while instructors function as information providers (Segabutla & Evans, 2019; Violanti et al., 2018). Learners transfer incoming information to short-term memory, where mental operations are performed to prepare it for storage in long-term memory (Bolkan, 2017). Teacher clarity supports learners in efficiently navigating the stages of processing, storing, and retrieving information (Titsworth et al.,

2015). The second theoretical foundation, adapted instruction theory, emphasizes that instructors must continuously adjust their teaching methods while conveying information to students (Titsworth & Mazer, 2009). Clarity occurs in the classroom when learners and instructors negotiate meaning during instructional communication. In this interactive process, teachers present and structure information, while learners respond, express opinions, ask questions, and receive feedback as needed to enhance understanding (Bolkan, 2017).

Research has shown that teacher clarity, as a form of rhetorical instructional behavior, can reduce learners' cognitive load, thereby facilitating the learning process (Bolkan, 2015). It positively influences a range of student outcomes, including learning (Titsworth et al., 2015; Violanti et al., 2018), interest in the course and instructor (Bolkan et al., 2015), student empowerment (Finn & Schrodt, 2012), and academic engagement (BrckaLorenz et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is believed that instructional clarity is positively correlated with learners' cognitive learning outcomes (Fendick, 1990; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971). Teacher clarity may also mitigate the effects of negative emotions such as boredom, as it contributes to better comprehension, positive communication, instructor credibility, and academic interest. Therefore, when instructors teach clearly and actively involve students in the learning process and content, learners are less likely to experience boredom or disengagement in the classroom (Zheng, 2021).

In the context of second language learning—which has increasingly adopted communicative and interaction-based approaches in many countries—both instructors and language learners actively and continuously influence and regulate the learning process through negotiation and collaborative instruction (Bolkan, 2017; Roksa et al., 2017). As such, instructors' interpersonal communication skills, particularly teacher clarity, play a vital role in shaping and enhancing learners' cognitive development, academic achievement, engagement, interest, agency, and motivation (Bolkan, 2017; Titsworth et al., 2015; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021; Zheng, 2021). This clarity may manifest in various instructional elements such as organization, explanations, examples, and assessment methods.

An example of teacher clarity in a language classroom is the provision of explicit written instructions and expectations. This might include clearly outlining assignment requirements, providing models of well-written essays, and offering detailed guidance on grammar, structure, and vocabulary use. By setting clear and transparent expectations and giving learners a concrete understanding of what is expected of them, instructors can effectively support the development of learners' writing skills. However, a review of the related literature reveals that this important construct has rarely been

examined within the context of foreign language learning.

3. The Hypothetical Model

Based on the theoretical and empirical studies reviewed above, a structural model is proposed. This model integrates three variables: teacher clarity, academic boredom, and classroom engagement. In this model, teacher clarity is hypothesized to be positively associated with higher levels of engagement and negatively associated with levels of boredom. It is also expected that boredom negatively predicts engagement. Finally, boredom is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between teacher clarity and engagement. The hypothesized relationships among these variables are illustrated in Figure 1.

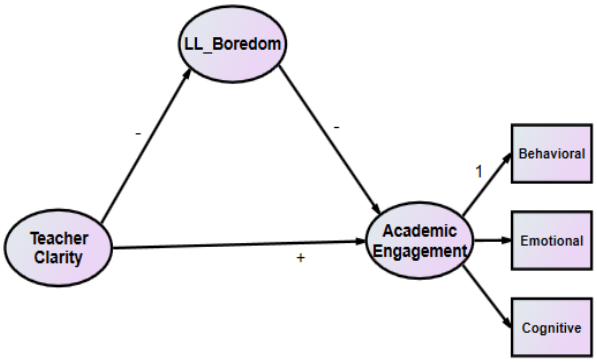

Fig. 1 The hypothesized model

4.Method4.1. Participants

The participants of this study were selected through convenience sampling from among undergraduate students majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Iranian universities. Data collection took place during in-person classroom sessions. A total of 291 students participated in the study, of whom 77.7% (n = 226) were female and 22.3% (n = 65) were male. The mean age of the participants was 20.81 years (SD = 2.26). All participants were enrolled in conversation courses, were native Persian speakers, and had no prior experience living or studying in English-speaking countries.

These students were taught by fourteen English instructors (6 female, 8 male), aged between 33 and 48 years, all holding PhDs in English Language Teaching. Participants were asked to consider one of the instructors with whom they had the most class experience (at least two months), and evaluate that instructor's teaching clarity, as well as their own level of engagement and academic boredom in that instructor's class. Given the participants' age and English proficiency level, along with their experience in classroom settings, it can be assumed that they were capable of evaluating the degree of teacher clarity in a reliable manner.

The responses to the questionnaire reflected the participants' subjective perceptions of teacher clarity and were considered a key variable in the current study. This evaluation approach enabled a better understanding of how teaching quality influences students' engagement and academic boredom, and helped to explore various dimensions of language learners' classroom experiences.

Prior to distributing the questionnaires, permission was obtained from the English departments involved. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the estimated time required to complete the survey. They were also assured that participation was voluntary, responses

would remain anonymous, and their participation would have no effect on their academic evaluation.

4.2. Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using adapted self-report questionnaires. The original questionnaires were in English; however, for this study, translated Persian versions were used to improve the response rate among participants. The Persian versions were prepared through a process of forward and backward translation. Moreover, to tailor the questionnaires for the foreign language learning context, some content adjustments were made based on consultations with two applied linguistics experts and a focus group of English learners. The internal consistency and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the questionnaires were also evaluated. All questionnaire items were scored on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (6).

4.2.1. Teacher Clarity

Teacher clarity was measured using the Teacher Clarity Short Inventory (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998). This questionnaire assesses students' perceptions of their instructor's clarity regarding instructions, expectations, and course objectives. It consists of 10 items (e.g., "My language instructor's course objectives are clear," and "The language instructor speaks clearly"). Total scores range from 10 to 60, with higher scores (above 45) indicating a strong perception of teacher clarity, and lower scores (below 30) suggesting poor clarity. The instrument demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

4.2.2. Academic Boredom

Students' perceived boredom was measured using the scale developed by Dewaele and Li (2021). This questionnaire is a modified version of the boredom component from the Academic Emotions Questionnaire (Pekrun et al., 2011). Participants rated their level of boredom based on their language learning experiences using a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). A sample item is: "I feel bored in my English class." Total scores range from 3 to 18, with higher scores (e.g., above 14) indicating severe academic boredom and lower scores (e.g., below 7) reflecting little or no boredom or high energy in class. The scale's reliability was Cronbach's alpha = 0.85.

4.2.3. Academic Engagement

Student engagement in English classes was measured using an adapted version of the scale by Reeve and Tseng (2011). The questionnaire comprises three components: behavioral engagement (5 items; e.g., "I try very hard in my English class"), cognitive engagement (6 items; e.g., "When I study English, I try to relate what I learn to my own experiences"), and emotional engagement (4 items; e.g., "I enjoy learning new material in my English class"). Score ranges for each component are as follows: Behavioral engagement: 5 to 30; scores above 24 indicate high behavioral engagement, while scores below 15 indicate low engagement. Cognitive

engagement: 6 to 36; scores above 28 indicate strong cognitive engagement, scores below 18 indicate weak engagement. Emotional engagement: 4 to 24; scores above 20 indicate high emotional engagement, and scores below 12 suggest low engagement or lack of enjoyment. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for these subscales were 0.76, 0.83, and 0.89, respectively.

Various descriptive and inferential analyses were performed. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the data's primary characteristics, including means, minima, maxima, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to evaluate the inter-item correlations within the questionnaires. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of the instruments. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was then employed to investigate the relationships among the study variables. Goodness-of-fit indices including the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to assess model fit. Finally, PROCESS Macro was utilized to test mediation models.

5. Result

5.1. Descriptive Analyses and Validation

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the data were examined for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, outliers, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices. All indices were found to be within acceptable limits (Table 1). The skewness and kurtosis values for the subscales ranged from -0.19 to -0.97 for skewness and from -0.07 to -0.86 for kurtosis, indicating that deviations from normality were statistically negligible (Table 2).

Table 1. Results of linearity and homogeneity of variance-covariance tests

Index	Value	Interpretation
Linearity	VIF < 10	Linearity
Multilinearity	p > 0.05	Lack of Multilinearity
Lack of outliers	Z-scores < 3	No significant outliers identified
Homogeneity of Variance-Covariance	Levene's Test p = 0.12	Homogeneity of variances is established

Table2. Descriptive characteristics

Variables	α	M / SD	Skewness / Kurtosis
1. Clarity	0.88	47.64 – 8.69	–0.75 / 0.20
2. Boredom	0.85	8.25 – 3.70	–0.42 / 0.43
3. Behavioral Engagement	0.76	24.55 – 3.60	–0.64 / 0.44
4. Cognitive Engagement	0.83	31.05 – 3.93	–0.85 / 0.70
5. Affective Engagement	0.89	20.25 – 3.51	1.28 / 1.31

In addition, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the validity of the measurement models.

According to Tseng and Schmitt (2008), an acceptable model fit is indicated by RMSEA values below 0.08, χ^2/df less than 3, and TLI and CFI values above 0.90.

The measurement models for teacher clarity, academic boredom, and engagement were assessed. The findings indicated that all models demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data (see Table 3). For factor loadings, refer to Figure 2.

Table 3. Measurement models for the latent variables.

	χ2 /df	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Clarity	2.67	.93	.92	.91	.07
Boredom	2.44	.95	.91	.92	.07
Engagement	2.23	.97	.95	.95	.06

The descriptive results are presented in Table 3. The skewness and kurtosis indices indicate that there is no violation of normality. Table 4 displays the intercorrelations among the variables. All variables were found to be significantly correlated with one another.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix (n=291)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Clarity	-				
2. Boredom	-.34**	-			
3. Behv_Eng	.31**	-.52**	-		
4. Cog_Eng	.25**	-.32**	.59**	-	
5. Emo_Eng	.41**	-.40**	.60**	.64**	-

5.2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

To address Research Questions 1–3, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 24. This analysis assessed the total, direct, and indirect effects among the variables. The initial hypothesized model was tested and yielded satisfactory fit indices:

TLI = .93, CFI = .94, NFI = .92, RMSEA = .07, and χ^2/df = 2.55, indicating an acceptable model fit (see Table 4).

The SEM results revealed that both teacher clarity (β = .33, p < .01) and boredom (β = –.42, p < .01) significantly predicted student engagement. Furthermore, teacher clarity was found to be a significant predictor of boredom (β = –.32, p < .01).

Table 5. Model Fit Indices

	χ^2 / df	TLI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Recommended threshold values	< 3	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08
Tested model	2.55	0.93	0.94	0.92	0.07

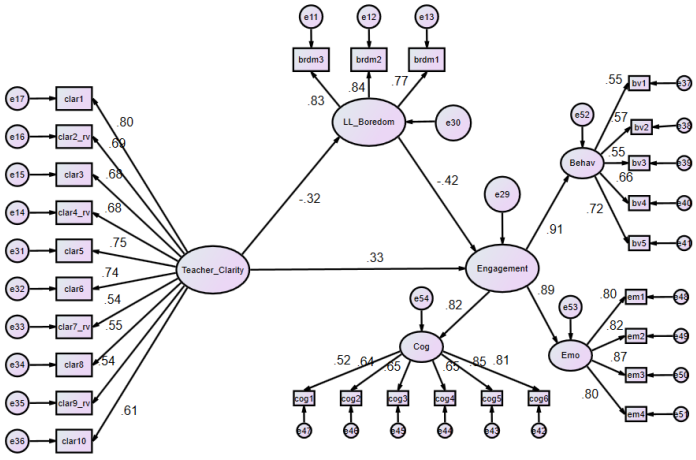

Fig. 2 The final model

5.3. Mediation Analyses

To address Research Question 4 and to examine the mediating role of boredom in the relationship between teacher clarity and student engagement, the PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013) was employed. This computational tool provides bootstrapped confidence intervals for assessing the indirect effects of predictor variables on dependent variables through mediators.

The results indicated that boredom significantly mediated the relationship between teacher clarity and student engagement (b = .13, SE = .02, 95% CI [.08, .19]); as the confidence interval does not include zero, the mediation effect was statistically significant (see Table 6).

Table 6. Mediation Analysis Results

Indirect Path: Clarity → Boredom → Engagement	
B	0.13
BootSE	0.02
BootLLCI	0.081
BootULCI	0.19

6. Discussion

This study explored the relationships among teacher clarity, academic boredom, and student engagement in the context of English language learning. Furthermore, it examined the mediating role of boredom in the relationship between clarity and engagement. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to investigate these variables and their interrelated mechanisms within a single model.

Firstly, the findings revealed that teacher clarity significantly predicts classroom engagement among EFL learners. This result aligns with previous studies (Bolkan, 2017; Titsworth et al., 2015; Roksa et al., 2017; Zheng, 2021), which demonstrate the positive influence of instructional clarity on various learning outcomes, including student engagement. Clear and coherent communication by teachers, grounded in information processing theory, facilitates more effective cognitive processing by presenting content in ways that are easy for learners to comprehend and retain (Bolkan, 2017). This idea is also supported within the framework of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. According to Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, providing comprehensible input is one of the foundational principles for successful language learning. Instructional clarity helps make linguistic input more accessible by simplifying complex concepts, organizing information logically, and reducing ambiguity. It also supports learners emotionally and motivationally, by reducing anxiety, increasing interest, and encouraging active participation. When instructors deliver directions and explanations with clarity and structure, language learners are better able to focus on and understand the material, which ultimately leads to deeper interaction with content and enhanced classroom engagement.

Moreover, adaptive teaching and learning theories emphasize the importance of personalized and responsive

instructional strategies that address learners' individual needs and preferences (Titsworth & Mazer, 2009). In the context of foreign language learning, teacher clarity plays a crucial role in tailoring instruction to meet the diverse linguistic and cognitive needs of language learners. From the perspective of the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983), instructional clarity can also enhance meaningful interaction between learners and the target language content. By clearly articulating language concepts, providing concrete examples, and offering timely feedback, instructors can foster a supportive learning environment that accommodates varying levels of language proficiency and comprehension. This promotes more effective engagement and enables learners to actively negotiate meaning, which is a key mechanism in language acquisition.

It was also found that teacher clarity is negatively associated with boredom. This finding aligns with the results of Zheng (2021). When instructors communicate clearly and provide explicit instructions and explanations, language learners are better able to comprehend the material and actively engage in the learning process. Such clarity helps sustain learners' attention and interest, thereby preventing the onset of boredom. This is particularly crucial in second language learning, which is often accompanied by a high cognitive load. Clear instruction can mitigate both cognitive and emotional fatigue, making it easier for learners to stay focused. Furthermore, clear communication from instructors can boost learners' motivation and confidence in their language learning abilities. When learners feel that they understand the content and can interact successfully with it, they are more likely to become absorbed and interested in the learning process. This, in turn, helps prevent feelings of frustration or disengagement that often lead to boredom.

Additionally, from the perspective of Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006), teacher clarity functions as an external source of control that can enhance learners' sense of competence and understanding. This, in turn, helps prevent the emergence of negative, low-arousal emotions such as boredom. When language learners perceive instruction as clear and coherent, they experience less confusion, frustration, or disinterest because they feel capable of managing learning tasks effectively.

Another important finding of the study was that boredom negatively predicts engagement. When learners feel bored, they are less likely to actively participate in language learning activities, engage with the material, or absorb new information. This can lead to a reduction in overall engagement and learning effectiveness (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Moreover, academic boredom—especially in challenging language learning environments—can result in decreased attention span, reduced concentration, and withdrawal from the learning process (Falah et al., 2024). Under such conditions, learners become easily distracted, discouraged, and lose their

motivation to interact with language concepts (Tabatabaei nejad et al., 2012).

From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with the Control-Value Theory of academic emotions (Pekrun, 1992; Pekrun et al., 2002). According to this theory, boredom is characterized as a negative, low-arousal emotion that can adversely affect motivation, concentration, and academic engagement. Language learners who experience boredom often lack the necessary motivation and enthusiasm to persist in their academic efforts and may feel helpless or perceive learning as meaningless. This leads to withdrawal from class activities and reduced participation.

Ultimately, the findings showed that boredom significantly mediates the effect of teacher clarity on learners' engagement. This indicates that when clarity in teaching is low, boredom increases, which in turn decreases academic engagement. In other words, teacher clarity indirectly enhances engagement by reducing boredom. This chain of relationships highlights the importance of recognizing mediating factors such as boredom in explaining how teaching characteristics influence learners' academic behaviors. Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher clarity is not only a crucial feature in designing and delivering effective second language instruction but also plays a determining role in preventing negative emotions like boredom, thereby increasing academic engagement. These findings implicitly suggest that course design should ensure instruction is clear, structured, and tailored to the learners' proficiency level and needs.

7. Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that teacher clarity has a positive effect on learner engagement and that boredom can weaken this relationship. These findings confirm that teacher clarity plays a significant role not only as an independent factor but also by reducing boredom to enhance engagement. The importance of these results lies in demonstrating that the impact of teacher clarity goes beyond facilitating comprehension; it also affects learners' emotional experiences. When instruction is clear, learners experience less confusion and pressure, which directly leads to reduced boredom and increased active participation.

These findings offer valuable insights for English language classrooms. Given the significant role of boredom as a disengaging and negative emotion, teachers should strive to reduce it by creating a calm and enjoyable atmosphere between themselves and the learners. For instance, effectively incorporating multimedia resources and designing unique and engaging classroom activities can be powerful strategies to alleviate boredom. Additionally, using technology and digital tools can help create interactive and stimulating learning experiences. Integrating online platforms and educational applications may increase learners' interest and enhance the language acquisition process.

Teachers should also work to foster a positive and enjoyable classroom environment by incorporating real-life topics and content into classroom tasks and assignments, using humor, and offering motivation and encouragement. These practical approaches can lead to engaging speaking tasks that make learning more enjoyable and promote active classroom engagement, as they connect language learning with learners' daily experiences (Dewaele & Li, 2021).

Moreover, the fundamental role of instructional clarity in enhancing English language learners' engagement should be acknowledged by higher education professionals and researchers. For example, teacher educators can emphasize the importance of clarity in teaching within teacher training programs. They should also highlight various strategies to demonstrate instructional clarity. These strategies can yield practical benefits by improving learners' participation and willingness to engage in classroom discussions. Several strategies for enhancing instructional clarity include: (1) using clear and simple language when giving instructions and initially avoiding complex terms or structures; (2) demonstrating language use in real-life contexts through role-playing, dialogues, and examples; (3) involving learners in pair or group activities to promote communication and active engagement; (4) providing constructive and positive feedback and gently correcting errors; (5) integrating cultural elements to make language learning more relatable and engaging; (6) adapting instruction based on learners' proficiency levels and learning styles; (7) incorporating diverse teaching methods (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) to cater to different learners; and (8) using quick formative assessments (such as polls and quizzes) to check learners' understanding.

Additionally, language instructors can collaborate with their colleagues and share best practices for fostering positive emotions and motivation in the classroom. By exchanging resources and ideas, teachers can learn from one another and implement effective strategies to enhance student engagement. Language departments and institutions may also implement learner feedback mechanisms to evaluate instructional clarity and the degree of enjoyment students experience in class. Such feedback can assist English language instructors in identifying areas for improvement and adjusting their teaching approaches to better meet learners' needs and preferences.

Although this study represents an initial attempt to assess the potential impact of various factors—including instructional clarity and boredom—on classroom engagement, it is not without limitations. First, the participants were university-level English language learners in Iran. As such, any generalization of the findings to other groups or educational contexts should be approached with caution. Further research is needed to replicate the examination of the relationships among these variables across diverse populations and settings. The

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second limitation is that all variables were measured through self-report data, which may be susceptible to self-assessment bias and may not fully reflect actual behaviors or experiences. Future studies may consider using a variety of sources, measurement tools, and data collection techniques to minimize the influence of subjective biases.

Third, future research may explore the role of other potential mediators—such as self-efficacy and motivation—in the relationship between instructional clarity and classroom engagement. Lastly, further research could investigate the impact of teacher education and professional development on improving instructional clarity and learner engagement in English language classrooms.

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