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FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO TRANSFER LEARNING FROM EAP COURSES TO DISCIPLINARY COURSES IN A US UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Abstract

With English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) teaching, it is expected that the skills students develop in an EAP course will transfer to the students' disciplinary courses. For this transfer to be maximized, it is important that students are motivated to transfer EAP learning. However, transfer motivation has received little attention in research on EAP education, so there is limited information regarding influential factors. To address this gap, this study investigated whether EAP students' transfer motivation was influenced by factors linked to transfer motivation in previous research in and outside EAP education: students' transfer-related expectations and beliefs, perceptions of learning, and perceptions of EAP course design. The participants were 313 first-year undergraduate students at a US university; these students were non-native English speakers and were enrolled in EAP courses. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey, and statistical analyses revealed that the students' transfer motivation was influenced primarily by their transfer-related beliefs and expectations and to a lesser degree by their perceptions that the EAP course was similar to target contexts. A practical implication is that to promote EAP students' transfer motivation, instructors should help students develop transfer-conducive beliefs and expectations and raise their awareness of similarities between their EAP course and disciplinary courses.

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Key words

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1. INTRODUCTION

To be successful, English-for-specific-purposes (ESP) teaching must promote students' learning transfer. Learning transfer occurs when "learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with another set of materials" (Perkins & Salomon, 1994, p. 6452), and it is an expected outcome of education in general. Such expectations underlie ESP teaching too: for example, with English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) teaching, which is a major branch of ESP and which is the focus of this article, it is expected that the academic English listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills that students develop in an EAP course (e.g., how to recognize key points in an English lecture or research article, how to organize an English oral presentation or essay) will transfer to the English-medium discipline courses the students take during their academic studies. If students in an EAP course have difficulty transferring what they learn, as Hyland (2022) suggests is often the case, the value of the EAP course is questionable. This is why learning transfer has received substantial attention in scholarly work related to EAP education (e.g., Green, 2015; Hill et al., 2020; Jeon, 2022, 2024; Jwa, 2019; Kang, 2022; Law & Fong, 2020; Shooshtari et al., 2023; Shrestha, 2017; Tsou & Chen, 2014; Wubalem, 2021) and second language (L2) education more broadly (e.g., Benson, 2016; Brown, 2014; Brown & Lee, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2013; Lightbown, 2008; Spada et al., 2014).

A key concern with learning transfer is transfer motivation. Transfer motivation has been defined as involving one or more of the following: an *effort* to transfer learning (Bates et al., 2007; Devos et al., 2007; James, 2012; Yaghi et al., 2008), a *desire* to transfer learning (Gegenfurtner, 2013; Hutchins et al., 2013; James, 2012; Massenberg et al., 2017; Noe, 1986), an *intention* to transfer learning (Foxon, 1993; Gegenfurtner, 2013; Seyler et al., 1998), and a *positive attitude* towards transfer (James, 2012). All of these perspectives are applicable to EAP education: while taking an EAP course, a student may or may not *try* to transfer learning to other courses (i.e., effort), and looking ahead, the student may or may not *want* to transfer learning to future courses (i.e., desire), *plan* to do so (i.e., intention), and *expect to enjoy* it (i.e., positive attitude). Therefore, transfer motivation is defined here as a combination of effort to transfer, desire to transfer, intention to transfer, and positive attitude towards transfer.

Scholarly work points to a relationship between transfer motivation and transfer. This has been demonstrated empirically in a variety of education and training contexts (Axtell et al., 1997; Blume et al., 2010; Chiaburu & Lindsay, 2008; Kiwanuka et al., 2020; Liebermann & Hoffmann, 2008; Machin & Fogarty, 1997; Muthoni & Miiro, 2017; Nijman et al., 2006; Pugh & Bergin, 2006; Twase et al., 2022). For example, in a study of 69 individuals from various industries who had completed a two-year leadership-development training program, Franke and Felfe (2012) assessed participants' transfer motivation and transfer one month after training and assessed participants' transfer again one year after training; results showed that

transfer motivation was a statistically significant predictor of transfer at both times. This relationship is reflected in Haskell's (2001) general theory of transfer, where motivation is a central component: Motivation is part of a *spirit* of transfer, and Haskell argues that "without the transfer 'spirit', there is precious little transfer" (p. 116).

Where learning is expected to transfer over large distances, transfer motivation may be particularly important. Perkins and Salomon (1988) explained that transfer occurs in two main ways: *low-road transfer*, which is automatic and occurs as a result of contextual similarity, and *high-road transfer*, which is deliberate and does not rely on contextual similarity. Because high-road transfer does not rely on contextual similarity, it can occur over large distances, for example, from an EAP course to courses with very different subject matters and types of tasks. Given the diverse situations EAP students may find themselves in after leaving an EAP course, such high-road transfer may be especially valuable. High-road transfer is by definition deliberate (Perkins & Salomon, 1988), which means it is intentional and planned (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) and therefore influenced by motivation (Pugh & Bergin, 2006).

Therefore, it would make sense in EAP education to try to promote students' transfer motivation; however, it is unclear how this might be done because transfer motivation has received little attention in scholarly work on EAP education. Only one empirical study has focused on transfer motivation in EAP education (James, 2012), and findings suggested that transfer motivation was influenced by a variety of factors, in particular by students' perceptions of whether they had learned anything in the EAP course, their expectations of whether there would be opportunities to transfer that learning in other courses, their expectations of whether transfer would have any impact in their other courses, and their beliefs about transfer. These findings point to practical steps that an EAP instructor might take to try to promote transfer motivation: raising students' awareness of learning, of opportunities for transfer, of the potential impact of transfer, and of transfer beliefs. However, because the study was qualitative, the strength of the factors' influence was unclear, and because the study was small and isolated, it is uncertain that these are the only factors that can influence EAP students' transfer motivation.

For example, outside EAP education, studies in higher education contexts and workplace training contexts have found that learners' motivation to transfer learning from a course can be influenced by their perceptions of the course's design. Machin and Fogarty (2003) found that transfer motivation was positively influenced by learners' perceptions that a course was similar to target contexts, had a focus on general principles rather than just specific knowledge and skills, and involved practice that was ample and varied. The first of these, learners' perceptions that a course is similar to target contexts, has been found to have an influence on transfer motivation in several other studies (Grohmann et al., 2014; Joo et al., 2014; Liebermann & Hoffmann, 2008; Peters at al., 2012; Ruona et al., 2002). These findings point to practical steps that an instructor could take to try to promote

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transfer motivation: creating similarities with target contexts, focusing on general principles, and providing ample, varied practice. These are aspects of a course's design that have been highlighted in discussions of transfer in L2 education in general and EAP education more specifically (Cheng, 2007; Currie, 1999; Green, 2015; James, 2018; Johns, 1988, 1997, 1999; Jwa, 2019; Yayli, 2011; Zarei & Rahimi, 2014). Furthermore, EAP learners' perceptions of some of these aspects of a course's design (i.e., that an EAP course is similar to target contexts and has a focus on general principles) have been found to influence learners' reported transfer (Green, 2015). However, whether learners' perceptions of these aspects of an EAP course's design have any influence on transfer motivation has not been investigated so is unknown.

To summarize, a fundamental purpose of EAP education is to promote learning transfer. To achieve this, it is important that EAP students are motivated to transfer learning; however, it is unclear what might be done to promote EAP students' transfer motivation. The limited research on transfer motivation in EAP education suggests that students' motivation to transfer EAP learning can be influenced by students' perceptions of EAP learning, expectations that there will be opportunities to transfer EAP learning, expectations that transfer of EAP learning will have an impact, and beliefs about transfer of EAP learning; however, it is unclear how strong this influence is and whether these are the only relevant factors. Research on transfer motivation outside EAP education points to the influence of learners' perceptions of a course's design (i.e., similarity to target contexts, focus on general principles, and ample and varied practice); however, the influence of such perceptions on transfer motivation in EAP education has not been investigated so is unclear.

To address this research gap, this study was designed to investigate the following research question: in first-year undergraduate EAP courses at a US university, to what degree is students' transfer motivation influenced by their transfer-related expectations and beliefs, their perceptions of learning, and their perceptions of the EAP course's design (i.e., similarity to target contexts, focus on general principles, and practice that is ample and varied)?

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. Research design

To answer the research question, a cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire survey of students in first-year undergraduate EAP courses at a US university was conducted. This approach was suitable given the research question's focus on measuring relationships between multiple variables. Also, questionnaire surveys have been used widely and successfully in applied linguistics research (Dörnyei, 2003; Wagner, 2015), and this has been the most common approach for investigating motivation in L2 learning contexts (Woodrow, 2015). Furthermore, for

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investigating transfer motivation outside EAP education (e.g., in workplace training contexts), it has been common to use quantitative cross-sectional survey designs that involved gathering data exclusively through questionnaire surveys (e.g., Kiwanuka et al., 2020; Massenberg et al., 2017; Muthoni & Miiro, 2017; Soerensen et al., 2017; Twase et al., 2022).

2.2. Participants

This study was carried out in fall 2020 at a large, urban, research-oriented university in the USA. Participants were enrolled in EAP107 or EAP108 (pseudonyms), two first-year undergraduate academic English writing courses. All undergraduate students at this university are required to take one or two first-year academic English writing courses, and EAP107 and EAP108 are intended specifically for students who are non-native speakers of English. EAP107 and EAP108 are taken by international students (i.e., students who are in the USA temporarily for the purpose of getting a degree) as well as domestic students (e.g., students who immigrated to the USA and may have spent some time in a US secondary school before entering the university). These students' level of English proficiency varies, although all have met the university's English proficiency requirements, which are a minimum score of 61 on TOEFL iBT, 6.0 on IELTS, or equivalent.

    EAP107 and EAP108 are both large multi-section courses. Regarding timing, these courses are intended to be taken during students' first year of undergraduate studies; however, some students take these courses during their second, third, or fourth year of undergraduate studies. Regarding structure, EAP107 and EAP108 are both 3-credit courses that meet for 3 hours per week for a 15-week semester; typically, students take EAP107 in a fall semester (i.e., from August to December), then EAP108 in a spring semester (i.e., from January to May). Regarding content, the main explicit goal of both courses is to help students to develop their academic English writing skills: EAP107 focuses on expository and persuasive writing, and EAP108 focuses on argumentative writing. Because the courses have required readings (i.e., textbooks about academic writing) and involve frequent group and class discussions, students can develop other language skills as well (e.g., academic and general English reading, speaking, listening skills), though these are not explicit goals of the courses. In each course, students are assessed primarily through three formal multi-draft writing assignments (e.g., an essay that analyzes a topic, an essay that proposes a solution for a problem), totaling approximately 5,000 words.

    In the middle of the fall 2020 semester, all 26 instructors of EAP107 and EAP108 were contacted by me and asked if I could send an email invitation to their students to participate in the study, and 24 agreed. The email invitation was then sent by me to all students in those instructors classes, and the result was that a total of 351 students agreed to participate and completed the questionnaire described below. Following recommendations from Hair et al. (2018), any questionnaire that

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was missing 10% or more of the data was removed; also, following recommendations from Meade and Craig (2012) for minimizing response bias, any questionnaire in which all responses were identical (e.g., all "agree") were removed. As a result of this screening process, the total number of students whose questionnaires were finally used in this study was 313.

These 313 participants provided the following demographic information:
- the age range was from 18 to 40 years, with an average of 19.8;
- 38.8% were female and 61.2% were male;
- 52.8% were in their first year of their undergraduate degree programs, 42.3% were in their second year, 4.2% were in their third year, and 0.7% were in their fourth year;
- they studied in 10 different major areas, most commonly business (40.4%), engineering (35.5%), and natural sciences (11.0%);
- they spoke 31 different first languages, most commonly Chinese (35.4%), Arabic (24.3%), and Hindi (8.2%).

2.3. Questionnaire

To gather data for this study, a new questionnaire was created. This involved reviewing questionnaires that had been used in previous studies (e.g., Gegenfurtner, 2013; Green, 2015; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; Muthoni & Miiro, 2017; Rangel et al., 2015; Tesluk et al., 1995; Twase et al., 2022; Xiao, 1996) and using their items as models. Those questionnaires and their items were not able to be used 'as is' because they typically referred explicitly to workplace training contexts. However, it was possible to model the current study's questionnaire items on items from those questionnaires. Furthermore, since this was a new questionnaire, feedback was solicited on drafts of the questionnaire from students in three sections of undergraduate EAP courses. Although quantitative analysis was not done at this stage because of the small numbers of students involved, qualitative feedback was gathered (e.g., the students' explanations about which items were unclear and why) and this was used to make revisions to the questionnaire. The result of this process was the final version of the questionnaire (see the Appendix) that was then completed by the study's participants.

This questionnaire contained 50 items. Of these, 6 were open-ended demographic questions (items 45-50) and the other 44 were statements followed by a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., *strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree*). Of these 44 Likert-scale items, 12 were intended to measure transfer motivation. Drawing on the definition of transfer motivation provided above, these items focused on effort (items 21-23), desire (items 33, 35, and 36), intention (items 27-29), and attitude (items 34, 43, and 44).

Furthermore, 19 of the Likert-scale items were intended to measure students' perceptions of their EAP course's design. Drawing on findings from research on

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transfer motivation in higher education and workplace training contexts (e.g., Joo et al., 2014; Machin & Fogarty, 2003) and research on transfer in L2 education in general and EAP education more specifically (e.g., Green, 2015; James, 2018), these items focused on four aspects of course design: similarity to target contexts (items 30-32), focus on general principles (items 14-16), ample practice (items 5-7 focused on ample reading practice and items 17-20 focused on ample writing practice), and varied practice (items 8-10 focused on varied reading practice and items 11-13 focused on varied writing practice).

Finally, the remaining 13 Likert-scale items were intended to measure students' perceptions of learning and transfer-related expectations and beliefs. Drawing on findings from previous research on EAP students' transfer motivation (James, 2012), these items were as follows: perceived learning (items 1-4), expected opportunities for transfer (items 24-26), expected impact of transfer (items 40-42), and beliefs about transfer (items 37-39).

These 50 items were put together in an online format using Google Forms that could be completed by participants anonymously. The items take a variety of perspectives (e.g., some items are about participants' current courses, some items are about participants' future courses), so they were not put in a random order, because that would have meant the perspective kept changing which would have made the questionnaire more difficult for participants. Instead, the questionnaire was divided into sections that contained items that shared a perspective (e.g., the first section had items about the current semester, the second section had items about future semesters).

2.4. Procedure

The invitation to participate in the study included a link to the online questionnaire, which was open for the final three weeks of the fall 2020 semester. After the data collection period, the data (see above) were screened and prepared for analysis: this involved reversing the scores of negatively-worded items and importing the data spreadsheet into statistics software (i.e., SPSS version 29) where descriptive statistics were generated and inferential statistical tests were conducted, as described below.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Preliminary analyses

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics from the questionnaire's administration, and because the questionnaire was new, preliminary analyses of its validity and reliability were conducted first to ensure it would be suitable to then conduct the main analyses (described below). To examine the questionnaire's validity, exploratory factor

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analyses (EFA) was conducted. Following a recommendation from Hair et al. (2018, p. 131) to separate variables that differ conceptually (e.g., separating dependent variables from independent variables), EFA was done in two stages.

Item	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness
ARP1	4.18	0.81	4	-0.85
ARP2	4.37	0.73	4	-1.40
ARP3	4.37	0.75	4	-1.40
ATT1	4.07	0.98	4	-1.37
ATT2	4.16	0.87	4	-0.75
ATT3	4.22	0.87	4	-0.95
AWP1	4.22	0.83	4	-1.06
AWP2	4.01	0.94	4	-0.87
AWP3	3.38	1.13	4	-0.16
AWP4	4.19	0.86	4	-1.21
BEL1	4.39	0.67	4	-1.10
BEL2	4.33	0.72	4	-1.05
BEL3	4.16	0.96	4	-1.42
DES1	4.44	0.66	5	-1.44
DES2	4.13	0.95	4	-1.39
DES3	4.38	0.67	4	-1.00
EFF1	4.13	0.84	4	-0.93
EFF2	4.28	0.73	4	-1.14
EFF3	3.75	1.17	4	-0.90
GEN1	4.15	0.79	4	-0.80
GEN2	4.33	0.71	4	-1.06
GEN3	4.36	0.68	4	-1.16
IMP1	4.26	0.83	4	-1.00
IMP2	4.15	0.91	4	-0.99

IMP3	4.27	0.82	4	-1.24
INT1	4.20	0.77	4	-0.87
INT2	4.01	1.08	4	-1.43
INT3	4.32	0.71	4	-1.04
OPP1	4.42	0.65	4	-1.11
OPP2	3.96	1.07	4	-1.21
OPP3	4.27	0.73	4	-1.03
PER1	4.30	0.72	4	-1.04
PER2	4.06	0.89	4	-0.91
PER3	3.82	1.34	4	-1.05
PER4	4.39	0.73	4	-1.52
SIM1	2.91	1.07	3	0.20
SIM2	2.97	1.10	3	0.14
SIM3	2.81	1.09	3	0.32
VRP1	2.98	1.19	3	0.18
VRP2	3.33	1.15	4	-0.27
VRP3	3.30	1.12	3	-0.13
VWP1	2.91	1.25	3	0.25
VWP2	3.27	1.20	4	-0.24
VWP3	3.27	1.16	4	-0.19

Note. ARP = ample reading practice. ATT = positive attitude toward transfer. AWP = ample writing practice. BEL = beliefs about transfer. DES = desire to transfer. EFF = effort to transfer. GEN = focus on general principles. IMP = expected impact of transfer. INT = intention to transfer. OPP = expected opportunities for transfer. PER = perceived learning. SIM = similarity to target contexts. VRP = varied reading practice. VWP = varied writing practice.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for all items

The first stage was with the 12 items that were meant to measure transfer motivation, which was the study's dependent variable. This began with the data being checked to ensure they met the main assumptions of EFA (i.e., intercorrelation of variables). With this assumption met, EFA was run using principal axis factoring for extraction and oblimin for rotation. Results showed two factors (see Table 2). The first factor accounted for 42.2% of the total variance, and the second factor accounted for 16.1% of the total variance. The first factor included all 8 of the items

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that were positively worded, and the second factor included all 4 of the items that were negatively worded. Such two-factor solutions that involve a separation of positively- and negatively-worded items can be the result of this wording rather than item content (i.e., a method effect) (DiStefano & Motl, 2006). The first factor was labeled *transfer motivation* and, given concern about factors consisting only of negatively-worded items (i.e., "method factors", Roszkowski & Soven, 2010), the second factor was excluded from further analyses.

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Intention 1 [a]	.818	
Attitude 3 [a]	.749	
Attitude 2 [a]	.731	
Intention 3 [a]	.731	
Effort 2 [a]	.720	
Effort 1 [a]	.693	
Desire 3 [a]	.643	
Desire 1 [a]	.568	
Desire 2 [b]		.940
Attitude 1 [b]		.830
Intention 2 [b]		.828
Effort 3 [b]		.653

Note. Loadings less than .35* are not shown. Items are sorted by highest loading.
* According to Hair et al (2018, p. 152), a significance level of .35 is suitable for a sample size of 250.
[a] positively-worded item
[b] negatively-worded item

Table 2. EFA for dependent variable (i.e., items meant to measure transfer motivation)

The second stage of the EFA focused on the study's independent variables. This was the 19 items intended to measure students' perceptions of their EAP course's design and the 13 items intended to measure students' perceptions of learning and transfer-related expectations and beliefs. After running the EFA, the four perceived learning items were removed because they did not load significantly on any factors and one of the expected opportunities for transfer items was removed because it cross-loaded on two factors. After removing these items, the EFA was run with the remaining 27 items. The assumption of intercorrelation of variables was met, and as in the first stage, the EFA was run using principal axis factoring for

extraction and oblimin for rotation. Results showed six factors (see Table 3). Of the total variance, these factors accounted for 25.4% (factor 1), 15.3% (factor 2), 5.9% (factor 3), 5.2%, (factor 4), 4.4% (factor 5), and 3.1% (factor 6). For subsequent analyses, these factors were labeled *transfer-related expectations and beliefs* (factor 1), *varied practice* (factor 2), *ample writing practice* (factor 3), *similarity to target contexts* (factor 4), *ample reading practice* (factor 5), and *focus on general principles* (factor 6).

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
IMP1	.844					
IMP3	.820					
BEL1	.747					
BEL2	.703					
IMP2	.636					
OPP3	.588					
OPP1	.478					
BEL3	.409					
VWP3		.763				
VRP3		.749				
VWP2		.741				
VRP2		.738				
VWP1		.730				
VRP1		.699				
AWP2			.826			
AWP1			.814			
AWP4			.601			
AWP3			.510			
SIM3				.842		
SIM1				.824		
SIM2				.776		

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ARP3	.987
ARP2	.779
ARP1	.596
GEN2	.918
GEN3	.892
GEN1	.497

Note. Loadings less than .35 are not shown. Items are sorted by highest loading. IMP = expected impact of transfer. BEL = beliefs about transfer. OPP = expected opportunities for transfer. VWP = varied writing practice. VRP = varied reading practice. ARP = ample reading practice. AWP = ample writing practice. SIM = similarity to target contexts. GEN = focus on general principles.

Table 3. EFA for independent variables (i.e., items meant to measure students' perceptions of their EAP course's design and students' perceptions of learning and transfer-related expectations and beliefs)

To examine the questionnaire's reliability, reliability coefficients were calculated for the scales that measured each of the factors. Table 4 shows the results of these analyses. All of the coefficients were above .7, a generally accepted lower limit (Hair et al., 2018, p. 161).

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Transfer motivation	8	.894
Transfer-related expectations and beliefs	8	.871
Varied practice	6	.875
Ample writing practice	4	.775
Similarity to target contexts	3	.859
Ample reading practice	3	.844
Focus on general principles	3	.856

Table 4. Reliability analyses for all scales

3.2. Main analyses

Because the preliminary analyses described above suggested that the questionnaire had sufficient validity and reliability, further analyses were then conducted to focus directly on answering the study's research question. First, descriptive statistics were generated (see Table 5), and these show that mean scores varied across the factors: scores were relatively high for *focus on general principles* (4.31), *ample*

reading practice (4.30), *transfer-related expectations and beliefs* (4.28), *transfer motivation* (4.26), and *ample writing practice* (3.95); scores were relatively low for *varied practice* (3.17) and *similarity to target contexts* (2.90).

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Transfer motivation	303	1	5	4.26	0.59
Transfer-related expectations and beliefs	308	1	5	4.28	0.58
Varied practice	310	1	5	3.17	0.93
Ample writing practice	311	1	5	3.95	0.73
Similarity to target contexts	310	1	5	2.90	0.96
Ample reading practice	313	1	5	4.30	0.67
Focus on general principles	308	1	5	4.31	0.60

Note. N = number. Min = minimum. Max = maximum. SD = standard deviation.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for all factors

To answer the research question, these data were used to conduct a multiple regression analysis (MRA). To conduct the MRA, a composite measure was created for each of the factors identified above, using a summated scale approach (i.e., calculating the mean of the items for each factor). Then, the data were checked to ensure they met the main assumptions of MRA (i.e., linearity, constant variance of the error term, normality of the error term distribution, and independence of the error terms). With these assumptions met, the MRA was run using the enter method. The dependent variable was *transfer motivation*, and the independent variables were *transfer-related expectations and beliefs*, *varied practice*, *ample writing practice*, *similarity to target contexts*, *ample reading practice*, and *focus on general principles*. Results showed that the model statistically significantly predicted *transfer motivation*, $F(6, 279) = 129.8$, $p < .001$. The R^2 value was .736, and the adjusted R^2 value was .731, indicating that the independent variables collectively explained 73.1% of the variability in *transfer motivation*. This effect size is large (Cohen, 1988). As Table 6 shows, the significant predictors were *transfer-related expectations and beliefs*, β = .78, $p < .001$, and *similarity to target contexts*, β = .08, $p = .019$.

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TMOT	B	95% CI for B		β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL			
Model						
Constant	.189	-.139	.516		.736	.731
EXBEL	.786**	.708	.865	.776**		
VP	.002	-.041	.045	.003		
AWP	.035	-.018	.087	.044		
SIM	.048*	.008	.088	.080*		
ARP	.058	-.006	.121	.066		
GEN	.040	-.034	.114	.045		

Note. TMOT = transfer motivation; Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; B = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2. EXBEL = transfer-related expectations and beliefs. VP = varied practice. AWP = ample writing practice. SIM = similarity to target contexts. ARP = ample reading practice. GEN = focus on general principles.
**$p<$.001.
*$p<$.05.

Table 6. Multiple regression analysis results

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4. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to answer the following research question: In first-year undergraduate EAP courses at a US university, to what degree is students' transfer motivation influenced by their transfer-related expectations and beliefs, their perceptions of learning, and their perceptions of the EAP course's design (i.e., similarity to target contexts, focus on general principles, and practice that is ample and varied)? The findings showed that these participants' transfer motivation was influenced primarily by their transfer-related expectations and beliefs, and to a lesser degree by their perceptions that their EAP course was similar to target contexts.

These findings are consistent with previous research on EAP students' transfer motivation, where James (2012) reported that particularly influential factors included the students' expectations of whether there would be opportunities to transfer that learning in other courses, their expectations of whether transfer would have any impact in their other courses, and their beliefs about transfer; the strength of this influence is evident in the current study, where transfer-related beliefs and expectations accounted for a large proportion of the variation in transfer motivation. The current study's findings are also consistent with previous research on transfer motivation outside EAP education, where learners' transfer motivation was

influenced by their perceptions that a course was similar to target contexts (Grohmann et al., 2014; Joo et al., 2014; Liebermann & Hoffmann, 2008; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; Peters at al., 2012; Ruona et al., 2002).

However, the current study's findings diverge from some findings in earlier research. Machin and Fogarty (2003) reported that transfer motivation was positively influenced by learners' perceptions that a course included a focus on general principles rather than just specific knowledge and skills and involved practice that was ample and varied. In the current study, learners' transfer motivation was not influenced by these perceptions of teaching.

Regarding practical implications, the current study's findings point in potentially useful directions. Since these students' transfer motivation was influenced primarily by their expectations for and beliefs about transfer, EAP instructors might look for practical ways to help students to develop expectations and beliefs that are conducive to transfer motivation (James, 2012). This could involve efforts first to simply raise students' awareness of expectations for and beliefs about transfer. For example, an instructor could have a class discussion around questions such as "Do you think learning in this course should transfer, and if so, how?", "What opportunities do you think you might have to transfer learning from this course?", and "What impact might that have?". If the expectations and beliefs that students express are not conducive to transfer motivation (e.g., beliefs that learning does not need to transfer or that transfer happens only automatically rather than with intention, and expectations that there will not be opportunities to transfer learning or that transfer would not have any impact or would have a negative impact), an instructor could address this in various ways. For example, an instructor could (a) point out that transfer is an important goal of an EAP course (and in education more broadly), (b) discuss basic principles of transfer (e.g., that transfer is sometimes automatic and sometimes intentional), and (c) show examples of assignments from other courses where EAP knowledge and skills can be applied and highlighting the positive impact that such application can have (e.g., increasing grades, saving time). If steps like these can be taken and have a positive impact on students' transfer-related expectations and beliefs, students' transfer motivation can be expected to benefit.

In addition, since these students' transfer motivation was also influenced by their perceptions that their EAP course had similarities to target contexts, EAP instructors might look for practical ways to help students to see such similarities. First, this might involve incorporating features of the target context in the EAP course, such as authentic or adapted materials from the target context. Authenticity of materials is a familiar topic in discussions of ESP teaching (e.g., Anthony, 2018; Elkasović & Jelčić Čolakovac, 2023) and L2 teaching more generally (e.g., Brown & Lee, 2015; Tomlinson, 2011), so EAP instructors may be well-prepared to make use of authentic or suitably adapted materials from target contexts. Second, this might involve raising students' awareness of the EAP course's similarities to target contexts. For example, an EAP instructor could have a class discussion around a

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question like "How does the material we use in this course compare to the material you use in other courses?". Such a discussion could help students to notice similarities, and these perceptions could benefit the students' transfer motivation.

One more practical implication is related to the finding that these students' transfer motivation was not influenced by their perceptions that their EAP course included a focus on general principles and involved practice that was ample and varied. Having students focus on general principles and participate in ample, varied practice are recommended ways of teaching for transfer (e.g., Fogarty et al., 1992; Haskell, 2001; McDowell, 2021) and have been highlighted in discussions of transfer in L2 education broadly and EAP education specifically (e.g., Green, 2015; James, 2018; Jwa, 2019; Yayli, 2011; Zarei & Rahimi, 2014). However, while these aspects of course design can help with learning transfer, the current study suggests that they will not help specifically with transfer motivation. Therefore, when aiming to promote EAP students' transfer motivation, instructors should avoid relying on these aspects of course design and should instead look for other steps that can be taken (such as the suggestions in the previous two paragraphs).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the relationships between EAP students' transfer motivation and factors that have been linked to transfer motivation in previous research. Results showed that in this context transfer motivation was influenced primarily by students' transfer-related expectations and beliefs and also by their perceptions of one aspect of EAP course design (i.e., the EAP course's similarity to target contexts), but not by other aspects of EAP course design (i.e., the EAP course's focus on abstract concepts, and the EAP course's inclusion of ample and varied practice). This points to practical steps EAP instructors can take to try to promote students' transfer motivation (i.e., raising students' awareness of transfer-related expectations and beliefs and of similarities between an EAP course and discipline courses) as well as practical steps that instructors should not rely on for promoting students' transfer motivation (i.e., having students focus on abstract concepts and engage in ample, varied practice). This is valuable because a fundamental purpose of EAP education is to promote learning transfer, and to achieve this, it is important that EAP students are motivated to transfer learning.

This study does have limitations to keep in mind and that can be addressed in future research on this topic. First, this study was conducted in a single EAP education context. Although there was substantial diversity in this context (i.e., participants came from a large number of different sections of the EAP courses, taught by a variety of instructors, and participants were from various cultural backgrounds and were in various major areas of study), it is uncertain if similar results would occur in other EAP education contexts (e.g., in other kinds of EAP courses and institutions, with students from other cultural backgrounds, and with

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students in other major areas of study). Future research might therefore examine the impact of teaching on transfer motivation in EAP education contexts that differ from the one investigated here.

Second, this study relied exclusively on a quantitative survey questionnaire. Such a cross-sectional survey design was justified in the sense that it has been common in studies of transfer motivation outside EAP education (e.g., Kiwanuka et al., 2020; Massenberg et al., 2017; Muthoni & Miiro, 2017; Soerensen et al., 2017; Twase et al., 2022); however, qualitative data from interviews or open-ended questionnaire items can add useful depth to quantitative findings, so future research on this topic might incorporate qualitative data, for example, by using mixed methods approaches. A related limitation is that because this study's data were collected through a survey questionnaire, all data were self-reported. This too is justified in that it is consistent with research on transfer motivation outside EAP education, for example, studies that involved examining the relationship between transfer motivation and students' perceptions of course design (Grohmann et al., 2014; Joo et al., 2014; Liebermann & Hoffmann, 2008; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; Peters at al., 2012; Ruona et al., 2002). However, students' perceptions may differ from a teacher's perceptions or a researcher's observations, so future research might examine EAP students' transfer motivation from these perspectives also.

Third, this study was designed to investigate the influence of students' perceptions of EAP learning on their transfer motivation; however, the questionnaire items that were intended to measure this were excluded from the main analysis because during the preliminary analysis they did not load significantly on any factors. Therefore, this study could not shed any light on this relationship. As a result, it would be worthwhile for future research to examine the relationship between EAP students' transfer motivation and their perceptions of EAP learning.

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Finally, this study investigated transfer motivation at a single point in time, when the participants were nearing the end of their EAP courses. Measuring transfer motivation at the end of training has been a common approach in studies of transfer motivation outside EAP education (e.g., Burke, 1997; Joo et al., 2014; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; Massenberg et al., 2017; Rangel et al., 2015; Ruona et al., 2002); also, this approach minimizes difficulties associated with doing transfer-related research after students have left a course (e.g., tracking down students, which might require support from an institution's administration) (Hutchins et al., 2013; Peters et al., 2012; Testers et al., 2019). However, it is possible that students' transfer motivation changes after they leave an EAP course and continue through their academic programs. As Foxon (1993) pointed out, after leaving a course, transfer motivation may decrease for various reasons (e.g., expectations of having to do large amounts of work, negative reactions from peers) and may increase for various reasons (e.g., greater confidence because of more practice, greater clarity regarding how to apply skills). Therefore, future research might investigate transfer motivation of students who have completed EAP courses and are in later stages of their academic programs.

Addressing these limitations will be a useful way to build on the current study and shed further light on this worthwhile research topic.

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Appendix
Questionnaire

Note: For all items, participants were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., *strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree*).

Section 1 (of 4): This semester …

Part 1: In this semester's writing course (EAP107 or EAP108) …
item 1: … I learned nothing new.
item 2: … I learned new ways to write (e.g., new techniques, new strategies).
item 3: … my writing became better.
item 4: … my writing became faster.

Part 2: In this semester's writing course, did you get to see lots of examples of writing?
item 5: … yes, the materials (e.g., textbook) had multiple examples of writing.
item 6: … yes, we looked at many examples of writing.
item 7: … yes, in lectures we saw multiple examples of writing.

Before doing part 3, please read this:
An example of writing has a *topic* (e.g., the topic is biology, or history, or a social issue), a *purpose* (e.g., the purpose is to provide information, or to entertain, or to make an argument), and an *intended audience* (e.g., the audience is the writing course professor, or other students, or someone outside the writing course). So, two examples of writing might have similar or different intended audiences, purposes, and topics.

Part 3: In this semester's writing course, how did examples of writing that you looked at compare to each other? (Were they all similar? Different?)
item 8: The examples all had a similar purpose.
item 9: The examples all had a similar topic.
item 10: The examples all had a similar intended audience.

Part 4: In this semester's writing course, how did the writing assignments compare to each other? (Were they all similar? Different?)
item 11: The assignments all had a similar intended audience.
item 12: The assignments all had a similar topic.
item 13: The assignments all had a similar purpose.

Before doing part 5, please read this:
Some courses teach general principles. For example, a biology course might teach students the general principle that "all living things are made of cells", and a geography course might teach students the general principle that "humans adapt to their environments". A writing course might teach students general principles of writing, like "You should think about your audience", and "You should use logical organization".

Part 5: Did this semester's writing course teach general principles of writing?
item 14: … yes, the lectures taught general principles of writing.
item 15: … yes, we discussed general principles of writing.
item 16: … yes, the materials (e.g., the textbook) taught general principles of writing.

Part 6: In this semester's writing course, did you get a lot of writing practice?
item 17: … yes, I had to write a lot for homework.
item 18: … yes, I had to write a lot in the lectures.
item 19: … yes, I had to write often.
item 20: … yes, I had to write a lot in the assignments.

Part 7: Outside the writing course …
item 21: … I made an effort to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in my other courses.
item 22: … I looked for opportunities to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in my other courses.
item 23: … I did not try to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in my other courses.

Section 2 (of 4): Next semester and beyond …
This section has 1 part with a few multiple-choice questions.

Part 1: In my [name of university] courses in the next few semesters …
item 24: … I think there will be opportunities to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.
item 25: … I think that I will not have to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.
item 26: … I think that assignments will require me to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.
item 27: … I will actively look for opportunities to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.
item 28: … I will not try to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.
item 29: … I will make an effort to use knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course.

Section 3 (of 4): What do you think?
This section has 4 parts, and each part has a few multiple-choice questions.

Part 1: How do you think this semester's writing course compares to other courses?
item 30: I think that the writing course lectures are similar to lectures in other courses.
item 31: I think that the writing course assignments are similar to assignments in other courses.
item 32: I think that the writing course materials (e.g., textbook) are similar to materials in other courses.

Part 2: What do you think about using knowledge and skills from this semester's writing course in other courses?
item 33: I wish to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.
item 34: I would not like using knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.
item 35: I hope that I will use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.
item 36: I do not want to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.

Part 3: Generally speaking, I think that students should ...
item 37: ... make an effort to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.
item 38: ... actively look for opportunities to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.
item 39: ... not try to use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses.

Part 4: If I use knowledge and skills from the writing course in other courses ...
item 40: ... I will finish my work in those courses faster.
item 41: ... I will get higher grades in those courses.
item 42: ... it will be easier to do my work in those courses.
item 43: ... I will be happy.
item 44: ... I will enjoy it.

Section 4 (of 4): Background information
This section has 6 open-ended questions.

item 45: What is your major?
item 46: What is your age?
item 47: What is your sex/gender?
item 48: What is your first language?
item 49: What year are you in at [name of university]? (e.g., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
item 50: Which writing course are you in this semester (EAP107? EAP108?) and what is your instructor's name?

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