

investigating the relationship between english-major students' learning autonomy and their self-evaluated motivation

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Investigating the Relationship between English-major Students' Learning Autonomy and their Self-Evaluated Motivation

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Abstract

This study investigated the possibility of using English-major students' learning autonomy as a predictor for their self-evaluated motivation. It also examined self-practice as a predictor for attitudes towards learning autonomy. The self-practice focused on the extent of employing mobile electronic devices in English learning. The necessary quantitative data were those from the questionnaire responses of 55 Vietnamese undergraduates. Cronbach's alpha scale analyses showed the whole questionnaire and its parts to reach acceptable reliabilities. Principal component analysis of students' attitudes towards learning autonomy led to two factors, and that of actual practice also resulted in two. Pearson coefficients demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between learners' self-evaluated motivation and their attitudes towards learning autonomy and self-practice. Regression analyses confirmed that students' self-evaluated motivation, some factors of their attitudes towards learning autonomy and self-practice were predictors for the other of these three constructs. The finding of this study was helpful for a further understanding of the intricate relationship between EFL learners' motivation and autonomy.

Keywords: Motivation, autonomy, English-major undergraduates, correlation, predictor

1. Introduction

The relationship between learners' motivation and autonomy in their English language learning as a foreign language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL) is far from a new topic. There have been many reports on the close link between these two constructs of learners (Dicinson, 1995; Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002; Kassaian & Ghadiri, 2011; Ma & Ma, 2012). These studies showed the direction of influence was from learner motivation to their learning autonomy (Gardner, 1990; Dörnyei, 2001; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004; Patrick Proctor, Daley, Louick, Leider, & Gardner, 2014). Research also indicated that motivation was not constant but changeable. In foreign language learning, researchers found that learners' motivation was changed from time to time and was affected by learning contexts (Sawyer, 2007; Pawlak, 2012; Waninge, Dörnyei, & de Bot, 2014, Dörnyei, Henry, & MacIntyre, 2015; Jodaei, Zareian, Reza Amirian, & Reza Adel, 2018; Kikuchi, 2019). Most of these reports, though, have not explored the use of English-major students' learning autonomy as predictors for motivation in their English learning.

On the other hand, the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic has forced Vietnamese universities to accept online courses for their education. In such a situation, the student would learn well with a high level of self-practice using mobile devices. The condition for an increasing introduction of such devices in language learning is quite good. In 2019, an estimated 66% of 97 million Vietnamese were Internet users; among that, 60% were users on mobile devices (“Vietnam Internet statistics”, 2019). This statistic number will facilitate English learning not only in web-based environments but also in traditional classrooms. Thus, it is reasonable for this work to focus on the student outside classroom practice employed mobile devices.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between English-major students’ learning autonomy and their self-evaluated motivation. A better understanding of these two students’ constructs might help concerned teachers to improve their future courses.

2. Literature review

Motivation and English learning

Motivation is crucial for language learning success. In a proposal, Gardner and Lambert (1959) demonstrated that second-language achievement was a dependent variable of the learners’ motivation to learn and their intending use of the target language. Their findings became the basis of a theory called the social-psychological theory of second-language learning that differentiated instrumental motivation and integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Over two decades, this theory attracted much attention, marked by a profound number of research articles on this field (Au, 1988). However, the study on integrative motivation led to somewhat confusion (Au, 1988), and researchers tried to employ other definitions of learner motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Self-determination theory distinguished intrinsic motivation from extrinsic motivation (Deci, & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000). After that, Noels and colleagues further divided intrinsic motivation into intrinsic knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000). As alternatives to instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, many researchers applied intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in their study on foreign language learning areas (Brown, 1994; Dickinson, 1995). Intrinsic motivation concerns learners’ enjoyment in learning a foreign language for its own sake or because of feeling interesting, while extrinsic motivation relates to something outside the learner her-/himself. Many researchers placed intrinsic motivation in higher importance than extrinsic one for its role in learning success and psychological satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). A previous study demonstrated that English language learning attainment holds a significant relationship with motivation closer than other elements such as integrative orientation (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Furthermore, the extent of success in English language learning depends on the students’ internal motivation and other factors (Gan, Humphreys, & Hamp-Lyons, 2004). Falout, Elwood and Hood (2009) indicated that demotivation could lead to undesired effects on English achievement. They also found that those less-proficient students encountered unfavourable attitudes to deal with demotivation in the learning processes (Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009). Not only pointed out the association between learning outcomes and motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, researchers also tried to find out how students’ motivation influenced English learning success (Cheng & Cheng, 2013).

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Autonomy and English learning

Ryan, Kuhl, and Deci (1997) referred autonomy to as “true self-regulation” and relate it to “the forms of regulation to the developmental processes of intrinsic motivation and internalization” (p. 701). In the field of language learning, their definition seems to lead to a little bit confused since here this concept has several different terms such as “learner autonomy”, “learner independence”, “self-direction”, “autonomous learning”, and “independent learning” (Ivanovska, 2015, p. 352).

As early as the 1980s, Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). Holec’s definition is probably the most frequently cited in language education research. Pennycook (1997) claimed that the concepts of a student-centred teaching-learning process and autonomy come from a particular cultural context. Thus, Littlewood (1999) flexibly applied the Western notion of learner autonomy in language learning to his study on student autonomy in the East Asia context. Many researchers viewed Vietnamese students as teacher-dependent to some extent in their studies (e. g., Tran, 2013; Canh, 2017). This prejudice is probably misused and against the warning of Littlewood (1999). Humphreys and Wyatt (2014) also claimed that considering all Vietnamese students the same might harm the effort of enhancing their motivation in learning English. Studies showed that appropriate approaches could improve Vietnamese students’ autonomy in language education (Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014; Roe & Perkin, 2020).

One remark about learners’ autonomy that closely concerns the current study is of Waite (1994). In his opinion, learners should take responsibility for their learning process by exploiting many available resources as they could, especially outside the classroom. Suitable settings could cultivate student autonomy which was an indispensable goal in self-access (Jone, 1995). At present, the Internet and mobile devices play a crucial role in language education by supporting personal learning. Kukulska-Hulme (2016) claimed that the employment of mobile technologies could enable a more personalized approach in the field of language learning. Thus, a natural question is: how frequent and for what purposes do the students use their mobile devices in their language learning process?

Relationship between motivation and autonomy in English learning

Neither the motivation-autonomy link nor autonomy-learning success association is a new subject in language education. In a review article on motivation, Dincinon (1995) indicated an intricate relationship between autonomy and several theoretical concepts of learner motivation. He also noted that “autonomous learners become more highly motivated and that autonomy leads to better, more effective work” (p. 165). Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) noted that motivation had a complicated link with autonomy. However, their study results showed that students’ motivation preceded autonomy and could cause an increase in their language learning autonomy. Other researchers demonstrated that a positive relationship existed between learners’ motivation and autonomy (Ma & Ma, 2012). Kassaian and Ghadiri (2011) also found a positive correlation between motivation and learning strategies in the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) considered motivation as a guide leading students “to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action” (p. 3).

The current study aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) How much do the English-major students self-evaluate their motivation in learning English as a foreign language?
- 2) Is there any correlation between the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning autonomy? Attitudes towards learning autonomy in English learning and self-practice?
- 3) Do the whole or part of these three constructs serve as a predictor for the other two?

3. Methodology

Participants

A total of 55 Vietnamese English-major undergraduates of 12 males (21.8%) and 43 females (71.2%) took place in this study. The students agreed to help answer a questionnaire for fifteen minutes in the classroom. Before doing that, they were informed of the study's purpose and explained every single item of the questionnaire. They also knew the assurance that their responses would not affect their assessment of any learning course and be confidentially used only for research purposes.

Instruments

This study used a quantitative approach by adapting a questionnaire developed by Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002). The author modified some statements in the questionnaire to fit the presently available mobile electronic devices among Vietnamese students and the purpose of this study and translated them into Vietnamese in advance. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section 1 contained only one item to ask the participants about their self-evaluation of motivation towards learning English. The students selected their answer among five options ranging from 1 (*not at all motivated*) to 5 (*highly motivated*). Section 2 comprised 11 items to measure the participants' attitudes towards English learning autonomy. Section 3 contained 19 items to evaluate the students' self-practice in their English learning. The self-practice focused on the use of mobile electronic devices. The current work used Yan and Xiaoqing (2009) modified version of some statements in Section 3. This study employed a Likert-type scale with five response options, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the items of the autonomous perceptions section. The same scale was used for the items of the self-practice, evaluating from 1 (rarely) to 5 (almost always). The Cronbach' alpha test for scale reliability of the whole 31 item resulted in $\alpha = 0.826$, for Section 2 $\alpha = 0.791$, and for Section 3 $\alpha = 0.721$.

Analyses

This study first used Cronbach's alpha analysis to check the scale reliability and descriptive statistics to describe the responses. The principal component analysis (PCA) was then performed to extract the main components of Sections 2 and 3. Pearson's test was also conducted to examine whether significant correlations existed between concerned parts. Finally, the study employed a stepwise regression analysis with Section 1, Section 2, Section 3 and their PCA factors as independents variables.

4. Results

Motivation

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Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the responses of the self-evaluated motivation.

Table 1: Participants' self-evaluation of motivation in English learning

Motivation ^a	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Motivated to learn English	5	9.1	9.1	9.1
Well-motivated to learn English	36	65.5	65.5	74.5
Highly motivated to learn English	14	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

^a $M = 4.16, SD = 0.57$

As shown, there was no respondent to express *not at all* and *slightly motivated* attitudes in their English learning. Furthermore, most of them self-evaluated at well and highly motivated levels in English learning ($M = 4.16$).

Attitudes towards English learning autonomy

Table 2 displays the responses of items for students' attitudes towards English learning autonomy.

Table 2: Attitudes towards English learning autonomy^a

Item ^b	Response ^c					Mean ^d	Description
	AA	SD	D	AS	A		
1	0	9	14	25	7	3.55	Agree
2	0	7	17	22	9	3.60	Agree
3	0	4	15	23	13	3.82	Agree
4	0	1	7	35	12	4.05	Agree
5	1	0	3	25	26	4.36	Agree
6	0	6	23	22	4	3.44	Agree somewhat
7	1	0	1	26	27	4.42	Agree
8	0	8	18	27	2	3.42	Agree somewhat
9	1	10	15	21	8	3.45	Agree
10	1	13	19	15	7	3.25	Agree somewhat
11	1	4	17	21	12	3.71	Agree

^aCronbach's alpha, $\alpha = 0.791$; $M = 3.73, SD = 0.49$.

^bAA = Attitudes towards autonomous learning.

^cSA = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, AS = Agree somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree.

^dScale: 1.0-1.4 = very low attitude, 1.5-2.4 = low attitude, 2.5-3.4 = moderate attitude, 3.5-4.4 = high attitude, 4.5-5.0 = very high attitude.

As shown, the whole section reached acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.791$. In general, the outcomes revealed that the respondents held a high attitude towards learning autonomy with the mean score $M = 3.73$ ($SD = 0.49$). The following 03 items received the highest mean scores:

- AA7, *I know that I must work harder*, $M = 4.42$.
- AA5, *I know my difficulties and challenges in learning English*, $M = 4.36$.
- AA4, *I am aware increasingly of my errors in listening, reading, speaking and writing*, $M = 4.05$.

Self-practice

Table 3 shows the result of the self-practice section. This section of the questionnaire also held acceptable reliability with $\alpha = 0.718$. As shown, the participants expressed a usually doing level of self-practice in their English learning using mobile electronic devices with $M = 3.65$ ($SD = 0.49$). The follows list 03 most frequent activities:

- AP7, *I look up new words in my smartphone or other electronic devices*, $M = 4.69$.
- AP8, *I listen to songs in English on my smartphone or other electronic devices*, $M = 4.60$.
- AP9, *I use my smartphone or other electronic devices to find the correct pronunciation of an English word*, $M = 4.53$.

Table 3: Participants' self-practice using mobile electronic devices^a

Item ^b	Response					Mean
	SP	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	
1	0.0	3.6	10.9	47.3	38.2	4.20
2	5.5	16.4	30.9	36.4	10.9	3.31
3	0.0	3.6	18.2	34.5	43.6	4.18
4	0.0	12.7	23.6	29.1	34.5	3.85
5	1.8	5.5	23.6	56.4	12.7	3.73
6	9.1	52.7	23.6	9.1	5.5	2.49
7	0.0	0.0	1.8	27.3	70.9	4.69
8	0.0	0.0	5.5	29.1	65.5	4.60
9	0.0	1.8	9.1	23.6	65.5	4.53
10	5.5	32.7	34.5	21.8	5.5	2.89
11	20.0	36.4	30.9	9.1	3.6	2.40
12	7.3	12.7	25.5	32.7	21.8	3.49
13	3.6	10.9	25.5	43.6	16.4	3.58
14	1.8	3.9	9.1	32.7	52.7	4.31
15	3.6	16.4	29.1	30.9	20.0	3.47
16	3.6	12.7	38.2	20.0	25.5	3.51
17	0.0	14.5	38.2	40.0	7.3	3.40
18	0.0	5.5	23.6	47.3	23.6	3.89
19	12.7	54.5	27.3	5.5	0.0	2.25

^aCronbach's alpha, $\alpha = 0.718$; $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.49$.

^bSP = Self-practice.

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Difference within gender

Table 4 presents the result of the one-way ANOVA test for gender factor. As shown, only attitudes towards autonomous English learning indicated a significant difference between males and females with a p -value of 0.032. Mean scores of males and females were 4.0000 and 3.6596, respectively. Thus male participants showed a higher positive attitude towards autonomous English learning than their female counterparts.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results for gender

Variables	p -value	Interpretation
Motivation	0.984	Not significant
Attitudes towards autonomous learning ^a	0.032	Significant
Autonomous practice	0.547	Not significant

^a Mean score for male = 4.0000, for female = 3.6596

PCA of attitudes towards learning autonomy section

Table 5 shows the PCA result of students' attitudes towards learning autonomy.

Table 5. Factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, mean score, and standard deviation for sub-scales of the Attitudes towards Autonomous learning (AA)

Item	Short statement	Factor loading
Factor 1: $\alpha = 0.807$, $M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.91$		
AA 1	To engage in outside class activities in English learning	0.921
AA 2	To have methodology that keeps me motivated	0.802
AA 3	To verify learning objectives for the four English skills	0.786
Factor 2: $\alpha = 0.437$, $M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.50$		
AA 4	To be aware increasingly my errors in listening, reading, speaking and writing	0.803
AA 5	To realize difficulties and challenges in English learning	0.671
AA 6	To assess my progress in English learning	0.550

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Combined two factors: $\alpha = 0.684$, $M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.51$; cumulative variance explained: 60.484%.

The analysis used varimax for the rotation method and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin to measure sampling adequacy that required a value bigger than 0.5. Under such settings, only 06 items remained and fell into 02 components. These two components counted for 60.484% of the total variance. Cronbach's alpha test resulted in $\alpha = 0.684$ for the whole 06 item scale, $\alpha = 0.807$ for components 1, and $\alpha = 0.437$ for component 2. The coefficient of component 2 was slightly low, but it was acceptable for a sub-scale. The mean scores of combined 06 items ($M = 3.80$), component 1 ($M = 3.77$), and

component 2 ($M = 3.95$) were in the range of 3.5-4.4 that described the positive attitude of the participants towards learning autonomy (Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

PCA of self-practice section

Table 6 displays the PCA result of the self-practice section. The running conditions for this section of the questionnaire were the same as those mentioned above. Four items in 02 dimensions stayed on at the end of the analytical process. These 04 items explained 72.191% of the total variance. The alpha coefficients of the 04 item scale and its 02 sub-scales are from 0.521 to 0.656, ranging slightly low but not poor (Taber, 2018). The mean scores of whole 04 items ($M = 3.89$), component 1 ($M = 3.76$), and 2 ($M = 4.02$) were in the range of 3.5-4.4 that described usually doing level.

Table 6. Factor loadings, Cronbach’s alpha, mean score, and standard deviation for sub-scales of the Self-Practice (SP)

Item	Short statement	Factor loading
Factor 1: $\alpha = 0.656$, $M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.80$		
SP 1	Using mobile electronic devices to improve my English	0.868
SP 2	Asking teachers or friends something in English learning	0.854
Factor 2: $\alpha = 0.521$, $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.79$		
SP 4	Watching a movie in English on mobile devices	0.853
SP 5	Watching TV programs in English on mobile devices	0.785
Note:	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Combined three factors: $\alpha = 0.549$, $M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.61$; cumulative variance explained: 72.191%.	

Correlation and stepwise regression

Table 7 presents the results of Pearson’s correlation test. For convenience, Table 7 only lists those used in the following regression analyses. All the Pearson coefficients were positive values, ranging from 0.273 to 0.537. As shown, attitudes towards learning autonomy had positive relationships with learner motivation and self-practice.

Table 7. Pearson’ correlation coefficients among motivation, attitudes towards autonomous learning, self-practice, and their sub-scales

	AA factor 1	AA factor 2	AA	SP factor 1	SP factor 2
Motivation	0.392**	_ ^a	0.273*	_ ^a	_ ^a
SP	_ ^a	0.303*	0.537**		
SP factor 1		0.340*	0.395**		

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

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**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

^aNo significant correlation because of p -value > 0.05.

AA = attitudes towards autonomous learning, SP = self-practice.

With the obtained Pearson's correlation, the study then entered the process of regression analysis. Using the rule of thumb for p -value > 0.05, the valid results of this process are shown in Table 8.

As shown, both attitudes towards learning autonomy and its AA factor 1 served as predictors for motivation. Furthermore, AA factor 1 was better since it had higher adjusted R square, equation constant, and β values (0.138, 4.164, and 0.392, respectively) than the correspondings of AA (0.057, 2.982, and 0.273).

In turn, attitudes towards learning autonomy were partly predicted by either the SP or its one component, the SP factor 2. The case of the SP predictor appeared to be better since it possessed a higher adjusted R square value, namely, 0.275 *versus* 0.140. However, the possible use of these two cases was a little bit complicated. The equation of the SP independent variable had a smaller constant (1.187) and a higher β coefficient (0.537), whereas the SP factor 2 possessed a higher constant (3.734) and a smaller β value (0.395).

Similarly, either AA or AA factor 2 could play a predictive role for self-practice. Predictor AA was better since its case got a higher adjusted R square value than that of the AA factor 2 case, 0.275 and 0.074, respectively. These two cases were also somewhat complicated considering the inverse magnitudes of their equation constants and β coefficients.

Table 8. Stepwise regression using attitudes towards autonomous learning, self-practice, and their sub-scales as predictors

Dependent variable		B	β	Adjusted R square	p -value	VIF
Motivation	Constant	2.982			0.000	
	AA	0.317	0.273	0.057	0.044	1.000
Motivation	Constant	4.164			0.000	
	AA factor 1	0.223	0.392	0.138	0.003	1.000
Attitudes towards Autonomous learning	Constant	1.187			0.036	
	SP	0.703	0.537	0.275	0.000	1.000
Attitudes towards Autonomous learning	Constant	3.734			0.000	
	SP factor 2	0.194	0.395	0.140	0.003	1.000
Self-practice	Constant	2.091			0.000	
	AA	0.410	0.537	0.275	0.000	1.000
Self-practice	Constant	3.620			0.000	
	AA factor 2	0.113	0.303	0.074	0.025	1.000

Note: AA = attitudes towards autonomous learning, SP = self-practice.

5. Discussion

Students' motivation

Since this study was to investigate the predictive role of learners' autonomy, it did not focus on the participants' learning motivation. Thus, the study used only one item for this construct developed by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002). The students chose one among five options to self-evaluate their English learning motivation regardless it was intrinsic, extrinsic or both. Having chosen the English language as their major, the students should hold either an intrinsic or extrinsic motivation or both. The possible extrinsic motivations seem to be an easiness to get a job or getting jobs with good-paying after their university graduation. Thus, it is not surprising that there was no response of *not at all* and *slightly motivated* self-evaluations in their English learning.

Attitudes towards learning autonomy

This study used 11 items to measure the participants' attitudes towards their English learning autonomy. The statements of these items were those developed by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002). They covered almost all aspects of the learner autonomy in English learning, including goal setting, task strategy, environment structuring, and self-evaluation. They quite fit the purpose of this study for their contents and shortness that met an easily computerized process. A principal component analysis further reduced the size of this section so that it could be more effective employment as predictors for learners' motivation.

Self-practice

The 19 items for this construct were those used in the works of Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) and Yan and Xiaoqing (2009). Their content reflected adequately 04 skills in language learning, namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Furthermore, they focused on the use of mobile electronic devices. Kukulska-Hulme (2016) claimed that the employment of mobile technologies could enable a more personalized approach in the field of language learning. In turn, this could improve language teaching and learning. A principal component analysis in this work has reduced the size of this section significantly. Thus, it might be more convenient in possible use.

The difference within gender towards autonomy

One-way ANOVA test indicated that there was no significant difference between males and females towards motivation. This result appears to contradict the finding of Aldosari (2014). Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) obtained a more complicated research outcome. They reported that females possessed a more integrative motivation, whereas males held a more instrumental one. Since this study used only one item to explore student motivation of both types, it might not differentiate between males and females towards learner motivation. Surprisingly, while there was no significant difference between males and females towards autonomous practice, one existed between attitudes towards learning autonomy. It might be that the mean difference between males and females towards their learning autonomy was not big enough ($df = 0.3404$) to cause a difference in their autonomous practice.

Correlation among motivation, attitudes towards autonomy, and self-practice

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The positive correlation between motivation and attitudes towards learning autonomy found in this study is consistent with the findings of reported works (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002; Kassaian & Ghadiri, 2011; Ma & Ma, 2012). At the same time, it satisfied the pre-condition for running a regression analysis. The positive relationship between attitudes towards learning autonomy and self-practice was also meaningful. It provided a possibility of autonomously activities to serve as a predictor for motivation *via* the interplay of attitudes towards learner autonomy.

Predictive functions of attitudes towards autonomy for motivation

Regression analysis of the current study showed that both attitudes towards learning autonomy and its AA factor 1 were predictors for motivation. This finding is consistent with the remark of Ryan and Deci (2000) that satisfaction with learning autonomy would enhance the student self-motivation. Reeve (2009) also claimed that when teachers backed the student autonomy in learning, the students would gain educational benefit. Sawyer (2007) found that Japanese students' motivation in English learning decreased after their university entrance. Even when there was no change in their goals and intentions, the students' motivation in English learning still varied over time (Pawlak, 2012). That means the language instructors should pay much attention to enhance their student motivation. In face-to-face classroom environments, the teacher can improve the students' motivation in language learning, for example, by a well-doing of the 5Ts framework that includes teacher (in a relationship with the students), teaching methodology, text, task, and test (Renandya, 2014). However, what works well in traditional classrooms may not go the same way in online learning settings.

Predictors of each other between attitudes towards autonomy and self-practice

Regression analysis results also demonstrated that attitudes towards autonomy and self-practice were predictive of each other. The model did not demonstrate that this relation was causal. However, it seemed reasonable that enhancing attitudes towards learning autonomy would result in a more frequency of self-practice and *vice versa*. And such improvement, in turn, might affect learner motivation. In face-to-face classrooms environments, Assor (2002) pointed out that "criticism-suppression" of teacher behaviours "was the best predictor of feelings and engagement" of the students (p. 261). The result of this study confirms Assor's remark. Furthermore, it might go well in both traditional and online courses.

Limitations

The present study has some limitations. First, it used a modified questionnaire taken from previous works of which the items did not group into separate sub-scales and validate by a principal component analysis. Thus, some responses may have a too low variance to contribute to the whole scale. Second, as the study focused on English-major students at one university, the sample size was somewhat small. It is also a weak spot that the number of male and female participants was not statistically equal for the ANOVA analysis to work well. Thus, the related result was questionable.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that English-major students' attitudes towards English learning autonomy and one main component of these attitudes were predictors for their motivation. With the interlaying role of students' self-regulation in English learning, student motivation also increased when enhancing

self-practice. Both attitudes towards English learning autonomy and self-practice could play dependent or independent variables in the regression relationship between these two constructs. Although this study still had some limitations, its findings may find their way in helping the endeavour to improve student motivation and autonomy in both traditional and online English learning courses.

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Appendix

Questionnaire Section 1. Motivation (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002)

Item	Statement
Mo 1	How would you describe yourself: (1) not at all motivated to learn English? (2) slightly motivated to learn English? (3) motivated to learn English? (4) well-motivated to learn English? (5) highly motivated to learn English?

Questionnaire Section 2. Attitudes of autonomous learning (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002)

Item	Statement
AA 1	I try my best to engage in outside class activities related to language learning.
AA 2	I have got a methodology that keeps me motivated to learn English outside class.
AA 3	I verify my learning objectives set out in the four English skills at the time of my university graduation.
AA 4	I am aware increasingly my errors in listening, reading, speaking and writing.
AA 5	I know my difficulties and challenges in learning English.
AA 6	For some time, I assess my progress in learning English.
AA 7	I know that I must work harder.
AA 8	I choose the focus and objectives of my English course.
AA 9	I try to create a learning environment that keeps me motivated to learn English.
AA 10	I try to find the opportunity to use English with a foreigner outside class.
AA 11	I stimulate my interest in using additional materials such as books, magazines.

Questionnaire Section 3. Autonomous practice in English learning (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002; Yan & Xiaoqing, 2009)

Item	Question
SP 1	I use my smartphone or other electronic devices to improve my English.
SP 2	I ask my teacher or my friends about something I would like to learn in English.
SP 3	I watch a movie in English on my smartphone or other electronic devices.
SP 4	I watch TV programs in English on my smartphone or other electronic devices.
SP 5	I listen to podcasts in English.
SP 6	I talk to a foreigner in English using my smartphone or other electronic devices.
SP 7	I look up new words in my smartphone or other electronic devices.

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- SP 8 I listen to songs in English on my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 9 I use my smartphone or other electronic devices to find the correct pronunciation of an English word.
- SP 10 I chat online with a foreigner in English.
- SP 11 Out of class, I enrol in an online course in English.
- SP 12 I note down convenient words or expressions in English when using my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 13 I share my knowledge of English with a friend using my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 14 I use soft-wares on electronic devices to improve my English skills.
- SP 15 I do online quizzes on my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 16 I do grammar exercises on my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 17 In addition to text materials, I also read academic or nonacademic material in English using my smartphone or other electronic devices.
- SP 18 I visit websites written in English for getting needed information and entertainment.
- SP 19 I use e-mails in English.
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