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Exploring EFL Instructors' Self-Efficacy in Implementing Self-Regulation Strategies

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Abstract
The objective of this study was to investigate the self-efficacy of EFL teachers to self-regulate language learners. This study was conducted with 90 Iranian EFL teachers, including both males and females at the Iran University of Science and Technology. In this study teacher self-efficacy scale to implement self-regulated learning was administered in both paper and online formats to the participants of the study. Descriptive statistics were the main statistical analyses computing the most frequent responses to the items and categories of the questionnaire. The results of the data analysis revealed that teachers were found to be familiar with and reported to be moderately to certainly capable of implementing self-regulation learning strategies.
Key Words: EFL Instructor; Self-Regulation; Teacher Self-Efficacy

1. Introduction

Education is a lifelong process, and its purpose is to help learners to be able to cope in a changing world (Williams & Burden, 1997). During the current century, schools have to deal with the challenge of not only teaching the students the required subject matters but also the process of learning itself (James & McCormick, 2009). As Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) state, teaching students to use learning strategies can be done through self-regulated learning. According to Zimmerman (as cited in Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989), self-regulated learners are those who metacognitively, motivationaly, and behaviouraly participate in their own learning process. Boekaerts (1999) argues that the major goal of formal education should be to teach students self-regulation learning skills. Self-regulation learning skills are considered as vital, not only to help learners with their own learning during formal education, but also to add further knowledge and information after graduation (Boekaerts, 1999). Since self-regulation learning skills are essential for lifelong learning (e.g., Boekaerts, 1999; Cornford, 2002), the implementation of self-regulated learning should play a prominent role in classroom practice (Boekaerts, 1999). In this regard, the main purpose of the present study was to investigate the ability of EFL/ESL teachers to self-regulate learners and to help them use self-regulation learning strategies in the process of their learning. Although some studies have been carried out regarding the implementation of self-regulation learning, it seems there is no study investigating the self-regulatory strategy use by Iranian EFL teachers in language classes. In this study the following research question was formulated:

1. To what extent are EFL instructors efficacious to implement self-regulation learning strategies?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Self-Regulation Learning

In recent years, the concept of self-regulation learning has been the focus of attention in educational research and practice (Boekaerts, 1997; Bolhuis, 2003). Therefore, numerus studies (e.g., Aksan, 2009; Berger & Karabenick, 2010; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Breuer & Eugestre, 2006; Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2006; Liew & Mctigue, 2008; Ning & Downing, 2010; Perry, Hutchinson, & Thauberger, 2008; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Wolters, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000, 2001) have been recently conducted on self-regulation. Three key components of self-regulation learning are metacognition, motivation, and cognition (e.g., Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006; Vermunt & Verloop, 1999; Zimmerman, 1986, 2002). The metacognitive component is considered as

the awareness of and the knowledge about the process of learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). The metacognitive component has to do with some learning activities such as planning (i.e., using appropriate strategies), monitoring (i.e., testing one's comprehension), and evaluation (i.e., assessing the learning process and the ultimate learning outcomes) (Williams & Burden, 1997). Self-regulated learners, who are metacognitively engaged in their own learning process, are able to manage and to consciously decide to use the appropriate learning strategies under different circumstances (Williams & Burden, 1997). In other words, according to Williams and Burden (1997), metacognition is when learners look at their learning from outside.

The motivational component of self-regulation learning is an essential factor in successful language learning (Ur, 2012). Motivation can be defined as the attitudes, which influence the learners' learning process (Perry, 2013; Schraw et al., 2006). Self-efficacy, self-motivation, and volition are the three motivation strategies (Harris, Lindner, & Pina, 2011). According to Harris et al. (2011), self-efficacy is "students' confidence about their ability to perform a task" (p. 135). Self-motivation can be accomplished by students through reminding themselves of past successes and of internal or external rewards (Harris et al., 2011). Volition refers to "a learner's degree of resolving in accomplishing goals" (Harris et al., 2011, p. 136).

Finally, the cognitive component, as Cornford (2002) pointed out, refers to learning strategies that effectively help learners in processing, using, and manipulating information. Controlling the learning environment; organizational strategies, and elaboration strategies are three cognitive processing strategies (Harris et al., 2011). Self-regulated learners are able to control their learning environment; that is, they are capable of establishing an effective distraction-free study environment (Harris et al., 2011). Organizational strategies such as outlining and concept mapping are required to promote deeper understanding (Harris et al., 2011). Developing a graphic organizer is an example of the organizational strategies, which helps students with deeper understanding (Harris et al., 2011). Elaboration strategies, however, require learners to expand on the information presented in their materials (Harris et al., 2011).

The teachers' role in enhancing self-regulation learning is extremely important (Costa-Ferreira & Veiga-Simao, 2012) as self-regulation strategies cannot be automatically mastered in all students (De Smul, Heirweg, Van Keer, Devos, & Vandevelde, 2018), so teachers can provide the students with essential trainings (Boekaerts, 1997; Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Zimmerman, 2002). In this regard, researchers (e.g. Dignath-van Ewijk, Dickhauser, & Büttner, 2013; Kramarski, Desoete, Bannert, Narciss, & Perry, 2013; Zimmerman, 2002) have argued that the three key components of self-regulation learning should be integrated into teachers' instruction. Teachers can directly instruct learning strategies by means of implicit and explicit instruction (Kistner, Rakoczy, Otto, Klieme, & Büttner, 2015). Implicit instruction refers to addressing the strategic aspect of the behavior without informing the learners (Dignath-van Ewijk et al., 2013). Explicit instruction, on the other hand, is to explain or demonstrate why, how, and when to use strategies (Kistner et al., 2015, 2010; Paris & Newman, 1990).

Self-regulation is considered as a complex skill which takes time and practice to be acquired (Harris et al., 2011). According to Harris et al., self-regulation becomes normative for a learner when considerable practice is accompanied by supportive feedback. Therefore, teachers are required to pay attention to students' work in order to be able to give them different opportunities to develop self-regulation learning strategies (De Smul at al., 2018). Teachers seldom integrate the instruction of learning strategies into their classroom, mostly because they face the problem of implementing theory into practice (Kistner et al., 2010; Spruce & Bol, 2014). Bandura (1997) notes that teachers' feelings of competence are

connected to their performance, so lacking of the feeling of competence to effectively help students promote the self-regulation learning can be considered as a daunting challenge of EFL/ESL teachers (Peeters, De Backer, Reina, Kindekens, Buffel, & Lombaerts, 2014). Teachers' feeling of competence can be investigated through examining their self-efficacy beliefs (De Smul at al., 2018). Self-efficacy can be defined as belief in one's own capabilities to effectively perform an activity (Brown, 2014). Therefore, it can be noted that self-efficacy is the cognitive assessment of one's own ability to pursue an outcome (Choi, 2005). In this respect, the aim of this study was to gain insight into how capable teachers feel of implementing the self-regulation learning strategies.

2.2. Teacher Self-efficacy

Examining teachers' self-efficacy beliefs is a way of investigating their feeling of competence in implementing self-regulation learning strategies (De Smul at al., 2018). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs are those that individuals have about the skills and competencies in order to pursue a specific task. Teachers' self-efficacy, then, is defined as "teachers' individual beliefs about their own abilities to successfully perform specific teaching and learning tasks within the context of their own classrooms" (Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier, & Ellett, 2008, p. 751). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can influence their feeling about their job (De Smul at al., 2018). It is highly related to teacher behavior and their acceptance of new practices and experiences in classroom (Bandura, 1997; Berman & Mclaughlin, 1978; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Teachers' self-efficacy can also positively influence students' learning (Dellinger et al., 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 1998). The implementation of self-regulation learning strategies can be successfully done when teachers change their way of teaching (Bakkenes, Vermunt, & Wubbels, 2010). Providing teachers with opportunities to incorporate self-efficacy beliefs can be considered as a way to help them change their way of teaching (Ertmer, 2005). Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy is determined as a prominent variable in the implementation of self-regulation learning strategies (De Smul at al., 2018).

3. Method

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted with 90 Iranian EFL teachers at the Iran University of Science and Technology. The sample included both male and female teachers; however, the most frequent participants were female teachers. The average age was 31.28 years, ranging from 22 to 49 years. Teachers' average experience in teaching English was 5.26 years, ranging from 0 to 30 years. The participants' levels of teaching were mostly elementary and intermediate.

3.2. Instruments

Self-Efficacy Scale to implement Self-Regulated Learning (TSES-SRL) questionnaire developed by De Smul at al. (2018) was used in this study.

3.3. Procedure

The Persian version of the questionnaire was developed and then administered in both paper and online format to the participants of the study. Respondents were asked to rate 21 items on a five-point Likert scale (1 = cannot do at all, 2 = can do limitedly, 3 = can do moderately, 4 = can do certainly, 5 = highly certain can do)

3.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were run to compute the percentage of participants' frequent responses to the items of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was also used to calculate means and standard deviation for the categories of the teacher self-efficacy scale.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers' Belief to Implement Self-Regulated Learning

In order to investigate teachers' beliefs to implement self-regulated learning, a questionnaire developed by De Smul at al. (2018) was administered in this study. The percentage of participants' frequent responses to the items of the questionnaire are provided in Table 1. It is important to note that *"can do certainly"* and *"highly certain can do"* categories are considered as the positive responses and *"cannot do at all"* and *"can do limitedly"* categories are considered as the negative responses.

Table 1

Percentage of Participants' Responses to the Items of the Questionnaire

Items	Cannot do at all	Can do limitedly	Can do moderately	Can do certainly	Highly certain can do
1. How well can you demonstrate self-regulated learning strategies (i.e., without for example explicitly explaining the how and the why of the strategy)?	-	11.1	38.9	36.7	13.3
2. How well can you express your thought process aloud when demonstrating self-regulated learning strategies?	-	3.3	33.3	45.6	17.8
3. How well can you encourage your students to use self-regulated learning strategies (for instance by asking open-ended questions)?	-	2.2	22.2	52.2	23.3
4. How well can you teach your students which self-regulated learning strategies exist?	-	3.3	37.8	47.8	11.1
5. How well can you inform your students about the importance and usefulness of self-regulated learning strategies?	-	4.4	18.9	56.7	20.0
6. How well can you teach your students how to use and apply different self-regulated learning strategies?	-	6.7	37.8	41.1	14.4

7. How well can you teach your students when and in what situations they can use and apply self-regulated learning strategies?	1.1	4.4	46.7	37.8	10.0
8. How well can you make decisions with your students about what they learn?	1.1	10.0	25.6	45.6	17.8
9. How well can you allow your students to make their own choices about the goals and expectations they set for themselves?	1.1	8.9	23.3	50.0	16.7
10. How well can you make decisions with your students about with whom they learn?	1.1	8.9	20.0	52.2	17.8
11. How well can you make decisions with your students about where they learn?	1.1	16.7	30.0	34.4	17.8
12. How well can you make decisions with your students about when they learn?	2.2	14.4	30.0	34.4	18.9
13. How well can you provide your students just enough support so they can work independently?	1.1	4.4	35.6	45.6	13.3
14. How well can you challenge your students to achieve more than they initially thought (e.g., by determining with what additional help they can solve an exercise)?	-	4.4	24.4	47.8	23.3
15. How well can you adapt tasks and learning content so that they are sufficiently challenging for individual students?	-	8.9	27.8	42.2	21.1
16. How well can you present challenging exercises that can be solved in different ways?	-	7.8	36.7	32.2	23.3

17. How well can you apply new learning content in a meaningful, authentic context?	-	6.7	35.6	43.3	14.4
18. How well can you present new learning content in different contexts, so students can look at it from different angles?	-	12.2	36.7	35.6	15.6
19. How well can you let your students evaluate their own tasks?	-	4.4	28.9	50.0	16.7
20. How well can you let your students reflect on their own learning process?	-	1.1	30.0	50.0	18.9
21. How well can you let your students give feedback on the work of others?	1.1	5.6	25.6	48.9	18.9

As shown in Table 1, the highest capabilities were obtained by the following items: *"How well can you inform your students about the importance and usefulness of self-regulated learning strategies?"* (76.7%); *"How well can you encourage your students to use self-regulated learning strategies (for instance by asking open-ended questions)?"* (75.5%); *"How well can you challenge your students to achieve more than they initially thought (e.g., by determining with what additional help they can solve an exercise)?"* (71.1%); and *"How well can you make decisions with your students about with whom they learn?"* (70.0%).

Table 1 also indicates that the participants were mostly incapable of doing the following items: *"How well can you make decisions with your students about where they learn?"* (17.8%); *"How well can you make decisions with your students about when they learn?"* (16.6%); *"How well can you present new learning content in different contexts, so students can look at it from different angles?"* (12.2%); and *"How well can you demonstrate self-regulated learning strategies (i.e., without for example explicitly explaining the how and the why of the strategy)?"* (11.1%). As Table 1 shows, for all items except for items 7, 16, and 18, the most frequent option was *"can do certainly"*.

4.2. Teachers' belief in categories of implementing self-regulated learning

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale to implement Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire (N=90)

Categories	*M*	*SD*
Teacher self- efficacy for direct instruction	3.71	.53
Teacher self- efficacy for providing choices (indirect instruction)	3.64	.78
Teacher self-efficacy for providing challenges and complex tasks (indirect instruction)	3.70	.62
Teacher self-efficacy for building in evaluation (indirect instruction)	3.81	.56

As Table 2 shows, the forth category, *the teacher self-efficacy for building in evaluation (indirect instruction)* was more frequent than the others and received the highest mean score (*M* = 3.81), whereas the second category, *the teacher self- efficacy for providing choices (indirect instruction)* received the lowest mean score (*M* = 3.64). Table 2 also indicates that the participants' responses to the forth category, *the teacher self- efficacy for direct instruction,* were the most homogenous (*SD* = .53), while the responses to the second category, *teacher self- efficacy for providing choices (indirect instruction)* were the most heterogeneous (*SD* = .78).

Conclusion

The concept of self-regulation learning is determined as a prominent educational goal by researchers (De Smul at al., 2018). In this respect, the main purpose of the current study was to investigate the ability of EFL/ESL teachers to self-regulate learners and to help them use self-regulation learning strategies in the process of their learning. As to the objective, a self-reported questionnaire regarding the implementation of self-regulation learning was administered. This questionnaire measured the capability of teaching students how to learn, which is considered a new way of teaching (Oostdam et al., 2006). Given the responses to the questionnaire items, teachers were found to be familiar with and feel moderately to certainly capable of implementing self-regulation learning strategies. For further research, researchers can conduct an interview with teachers and ask them to explain the most frequent strategies they use in order to self-regulate their students. EFL teachers can receive instruction on the implementation of self-regulation learning strategies, and then future researchers can investigate the effect of the given treatment on the students' learning development.

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