



The Impact Of Self-Efficacy, Learner Autonomy And Motivation On Pakistani Universities Second Language Learners

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to find any correlation between self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. It was also undertaken to check whether there is any impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation on the learning of a second language which in our case is English language. A concurrent triangulation mixed methods research approach was used. The data was collected from the undergraduate students of purposively selected Pakistani public and private sector universities through an adapted questionnaire. An achievement test based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Mark, 2011) was also used to check the impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. This test was duly piloted tested, verified and validated by the experts of the field. 15 semi-structured interviews of English language university teachers were also conducted to know their perceptions and importance of these constructs. This study used Bandura's self-efficacy (1977, 1986, 1997), Little's learner autonomy (2007) and Dornyei's motivational L2 self-system theories as the framework of the study. The collected data was analyzed by using S.P.S.S software. Cronbach Alpha test was used to check the reliability of the adapted questionnaire. Other different tests like independent separate T-test, ANOVA, Chi-square and descriptive statistics were used to check the correlation and impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning on the undergraduate students of Pakistani universities. The results of the study indicated that there is a strong correlation between self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. Among these three variables, motivation remained at the top in its effect in learning English as a second language.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Learner Autonomy, Motivation, concurrent triangulation mixed methods

INTRODUCTION

This research is going to work on three levels. It has chosen three different but inter-related concepts (Self-efficacy, Learner autonomy and Motivation) and is going to find out any link among themselves and also in strengthening the students' personalities and their impact on second language learning as well. Language has been used as a means of conversation, but more importantly, it helps human beings in the process of recognizing themselves and their relations to the other world as well (Norton, 2000). English language in our case is the second language. The Subcontinent before partition and Pakistan after partition have been studying this language. The status of English language in Pakistan is very high. This can be proved by the fact that the first inaugural speech of our founder Quaid Azam was in English (Mahboob, 2009). English language is so deeply rooted in our entire system that it is ruling the people by carrying the official status in Pakistani society (Mahboob, 2009; Rehman, 1996).

Pakistan comes in Kachru's (1985) outer circle where English has been ruling since colonial period but even after being the integral part of our national curriculum at all standards, English language has remained a nightmare for majority of the students and still is. The ratio of English failure in our examinations is high comparatively to other subjects (Shahzada, Ghazi, & Khan 2012). Many factors are the reasons. Sometimes, a teacher's attitude, insistence and interruption over wrong pronunciation and grammar make a student reluctant (Carnine, 2010) and he cannot express himself in a confident way. Tariq et al, (2013; 110) are of the view that for a better learning of English language a suitable environment is very important and Fareh (2010:3604) suggests that a teacher's role in creating a positive learning environment is much necessary because a teacher is the primary motivator for a student as he/she is the role model for him in many ways, so, the motivation a student gets from his/her teacher directly motivates him, strengthens his self-efficacy powers, sparks his interest in studies and if the student is carefully given leaning autonomy that he can set his learning goals himself, plan his studies and other relevant schedules himself, then his learning momentum may be accelerated. Recent studies have shown that vocabulary building of any language can be increased by the use of learner autonomy (Dogan and Mirici, 2017; Hu and Zhang, 2017; Kameli et al., 2012; Kristmanson et al., 2013; Li, 2015; Phan and Hamid, 2017; Tuan, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-efficacy has been defined as a perceived ability to exhibit a particular behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997, 2004). It is an important indicator of many medical behaviors (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Godin & Kok, 1996) which include any bodily activity (Bauman et al., 2012), healthful diet (AbuSabha & Achterberg, 1997), non-smoking behavior (Gwaltney, Metrik,

Kahler, & Shiffman, 2009), being non-alcoholic (Adamson, Sellman, & Frampton, 2009), and many other common health benefits (Holden, 1991). It is the most important concept in Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. This theoretical frame has widely been used in health behavior theories (Glanz & Bishop, 2010). In addition to this, perceived behavioral control has a major role in planned behavior theory which resembles to self-efficacy in many ways. So, it can be said that the idea of self-efficacy is also prevalent in behavior medical science.

Although, a lot of debate had been on learner autonomy and self-efficacy individually over the last two decades but there is a wide gap when it comes to get a combined study of these two or the connection between learner autonomy and self-efficacy. Lai did a research to create awareness among the learners for their learning procedure and the effects of this on the capacity of learners (Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999). Results of the research showed that increased self-efficacy rate increased the learners' autonomous capabilities and this study proved very helpful in creating new ways to empower students and to let them arrange and organize their studies and knowledge (Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999). There are many reported studies reporting that when people talk about their capabilities of doing or not doing anything, they are actually talking about the general concept of motivation and not that of self-efficacy, especially in case of the behaviors in which people are already sure of their capabilities of acting them (Borkovec, 1978; Corcoran, 1991, 1995; Eastman & Marzillier, 1984; Kazdin, 1978; Kirsch, 1985, 1995; Maddux, 1999; Wolpe, 1978).

Self-efficacy ratings related to education-related behaviors may particularly be related to motivation somewhat than the imagined competence because different reactions are related to the functions of various factors in various contexts which the respondents will perform or not. (Williams, 2010). For example, in the background of an workout self-efficacy scale questionnaire a person's assessments of whether he can or cannot exercise are a result of the various possibilities which may be present when doing exercise in every of the given background when there is snowing, when he is not experiencing good, is within duty burden and cannot do exercise, or other is severe weather outside.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a mixed methods research design which means that both qualitative and quantitative research tools were used to collect data. One qualitative and two quantitative tools had been used for this study. Concurrent triangulation mixed methods design was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data approximately at the same time and on the same topic by using different methods to collect it. Mixed methods research means that at least one component of both qualitative and quantitative has been used in this research. The objective of selecting a mixed methods research was to magnify and strengthen the results

and conclusions of the study and thus to make its contributions in the already available literature. Greene et al. (1989, p. 259) introduced a arrangement of the objectives of using mixed methods research which remained very popular for some time and is still used widely (Greene, 2007). They distinguished five purposes for using a mixed methods research which are; triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. Later on Bryman (2006) established a more comprehensive and concrete list of rationales for using mixed methods research. It narrows many of Greene et al.'s (1989) purposes further and adds some more to add clarity to the subject and are as followings;

- a) Credibility- tells us about the suggestions that by employing both qualitative and quantitative combined will increase the integrity and validity of the research.
- b) Context- refers to both contexts of the research in which on one hand the qualitative end is providing a thorough understanding of the contextual background and settings along with quantitative one by either using a survey or another quantitative research tool for collecting the data.
- c) Illustration- it adds beauty to the dry bones of quantitative findings by adding qualitative meat of details of the events.
- d) Improving the quality of findings- it refers to a suggestion that likely have come in many a researches that by combing these two approaches can actually improve the quality and results of the study.
- e) Confirm and discover- this include the use of qualitative design to develop a hypothesis(s) and a quantitative one to validate and verify them.
- f) Diversity of views- it includes the collections of participants' views and perceptions about a project from two different dimensions which ultimately strengthens the results and conclusions of the project/research by defining the relationship of different variables through quantitative research and adding meanings to those variables by a qualitative one.

Sample Selection

The researcher has selected 8 (4 public, 4 private) universities from 6 administrative divisions (out of 9) of the Punjab, Pakistan, in order to get a representation of almost every possible division. There was a total sample of one thousand (1000) students from these universities. The below table gives the detail of the sample selection.

The details of the sample from different universities

Background Details		Frequency	Percentage
Total Size		700	100
Gender	Male	326	46.57

	Female	374	53.43
Year of study	1 st	180	25.71
	2 nd	195	27.86
	3 rd	203	29.00
	4 th	122	17.42
Medium of Instruction at Previous Schools			
	Urdu Medium	215	30.71
	English Medium	298	42.57
	Both English & Urdu	187	26.72
Place of residence during the last 10 years			
	Metropolitan	196	28
	Town	225	32.14
	Village	279	39.86

Data collection Instruments

This study used an adapted structured questionnaire, a self-structured achievement test which was verified and validated by the experts of the field was also used. These were the quantitative tools of the research. Semi-structured interviews of English language teachers were taken as the qualitative part of the research.

Analysis and Discussion

The objective of this research was to discover the effect of self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation on second language learning in the perspective of Pakistani universities. So, the present chapter deals with investigation, arrangement, and explanation of data.

Cronbach Alpha Reliability of the Research Tool

The following table disclosed that the computed Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire is .92 which was calculated by using Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This result signifies that questionnaire items were highly reliable and interrelated. Cronbach's Alpha analysis for the analysis to find out the inter items reliability of the research tool

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	No. of Respondents
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Academic Year Wise Description of the Respondents (Students)

Frequency and percentage of the academic year wise respondents

Academic Year	Frequency	%age
4th Year	122	17.4
3rd Year	203	29.0
2nd Year	195	27.9
1st Year	180	25.7
Total	700	100.0

The aim of the present study was to explore the effect of self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation on second language learning in the perspective of Pakistani universities. It was a case study research. Data was collected from 1000 students of undergraduate programs of different universities via adapted questionnaire. Some of these students were studying in BS English program and some of them were from other disciplines and were studying English as their allied subject. These students were selected through convenient sampling, and 15 university English teachers were purposively selected from the selected universities for conducting semi-structured interviews. The collected data was arranged, coded, and entered into computer and was analyzed by applying inferential and descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. After analysis, the weak relationship between learner autonomy and learning English, moderate relationship between self-efficacy and learning English, and strong relationship between students' motivation and language learning was found. Moreover, motivation had strong effect, self-efficacy had moderate, and learner autonomy had weak effect on English language learning. It was also found that teachers also perceived that these factors may improve students' English language learning accordingly.

To explore the effect of self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation on learning a second language in the perspective of Pakistani universities was the purpose of the present study. By this study, it came to surface that there are lots of factors that force students on second language learning. The present study was only to explore the impact self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation factors which can have its effects in second language

learning. So, in the light of the analysis done of the collected data, it is concluded that these factors do have their impact on learning English as a second language.

So, the concern that whether self-efficacy is important for the students and if there is any involvement of the university category or the impact of context from which the students belong, it was found that there is significant difference among university wise students' self-efficacy in second language learning as the female students of 3rd year of the University of Central Punjab had more self-efficacy in learning second language as compared to students of other universities. There is a moderate relationship between self-efficacy of students in second language learning and their performance. The students who had low level of self-efficacy in second language learning, majority of them performed average, the students who had medium level, majority of them performed "good", and the students who had high level of self-efficacy in second language learning performed "Very Good" in language test. The notable thing is that even the students who were enjoying high level of their self-efficacy in second language learning performed up-to "every good" in English test.

Regarding students' autonomy, university wise significant difference in the students' autonomy in second language learning was found. The male students of the fourth year of private university, institute of southern Punjab were enjoying more autonomy in second language learning as compared to students of other universities. Moreover, positive weak relationship between students' autonomy in second language learning and their performance in English test was found. The students who had low level of autonomy in second language learning, majority of them performed below average, the students who had medium level, performed average in English test, and the students who had high level of self-efficacy in second language learning performed just "Good" in language test. The noteworthy point in this is that the students who had low level of autonomy in second language learning, performed "below average", and the students who had high level of autonomy in second language learning they just performed up-to "good" in English test.

Motivation plays an important role to perform any task. University wise significant difference in the students' motivation in second language learning was found. The female students of the 1st and 2nd year of public university, the University of the Punjab possessed higher level of motivation in second language learning as compared to students of other universities. The strong relationship between students' motivation in second language learning and their performance in English test was found. Moreover, it was also found that the students who had low level of motivation in second language learning, majority of them performed "good" on English test. The students who had medium level of motivation in second language learning, majority of them performed "very good", and the students who had high level of motivation in second language learning, majority of them performed "excellent" in language test. The remarkable point in this is that the students who had even low level of motivation in second language learning performed "good", and the students who

had high level of motivation in second language learning, majority of them performed “excellent” in English test. It means motivation is only the factor which enforced individual for keeping up their energy to perform any task and motivation also determines the easiness or hardness of any task.

Shortly, majority of the teachers had perceived that self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation variable are the most important for the improvement of English language learning at university. Majority of them said that Self-efficacy has strong impact on the learning of students, especially when they themselves are committed and well aware of their capabilities or it can have good impact on the learning of the students as it enables them to see their potentials through life experiences. They also perceived that students’ autonomy in learning plays an important role. According to them, autonomous students show extra interest in their studies and perform extra learning tasks as well and the results of such students have also been better. Majority of them also believe that motivation is very important for everything and when it comes to learning, the importance becomes higher. According to them motivation remains at the core of everything. If a student is not motivated, he/she losses the battle and they as teachers have strong responsibility in making the futures of the students, so they have strong belief in it and carry it on always.

Recommendations

After getting the results from the collected data, the study suggested a few recommendations which may be helpful in improving the impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning in Pakistani universities’ context:

1. Since self-efficacy has impact in English language learning when students themselves are committed and well aware of their capabilities and potentials but at university level mostly language learners are un-aware of their capabilities as, they are kept ignorant of their strengths and substantial role is not played by the teachers and parents to waken up their self-efficacy beliefs. Thus, it is highly recommended that for productive learning teachers should create awareness in students to understand their abilities and awake students’ mastery experience. They students should be made keen observers, so that they could see the world not from one angle which may be subjective but from many other objective angles that will definitely be helpful for them in realizing their self-efficacy beliefs and this would also be the reinforcement of Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) where he first of all highlights the four tenants of self-efficacy theory and their role in making a person/student capable of looking into his/her personality. The teachers and parents should keep pushing the students in the positive direction by verbal persuasion as it being an important factor of self-efficacy theory. The positive feedback of the teachers on the assignments and results of the students would carry important effects on students learning. The parents and

teachers should realize their responsibilities in this and they can get good results from the students. The students should also keep monitoring themselves because now due to technological advancements everything has become so easy to access. Now, the students can get help from anywhere of the world.

2. Keeping in view the importance of self-efficacy for university students, teachers should also use verbal motivational strategies to pursue the learner in such a way, that they begin to understand themselves that they are good learner and begin to admire themselves for their language skills. Once, a student starts recognizing his/her capabilities, they start utilizing it in the right direction and then academic and social results of this change are visible which may be satisfactory. The first thing is the realization and this is the job of the teachers, parents and society.
3. It was found in the present research that university teachers mostly do not utilize good learning strategies nor they give students motivation to work more. The teachers are mostly using the old orthodox system of teaching. They are not realizing the importance of changing educational scenario. The world is moving too fast in moving students from dependent to independent students. There are many innovative and creative gadgets for improving the education. So, teachers should educate themselves first of all, know all these new things and transfer them to their students as well. They must know that how they can enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs and move them to use the beliefs. To boost self-efficacy in students, teachers should generate somatic and emotional states in students by appreciating their learning when they are working and studying.
4. It was also found that in learning English learner autonomy is very important. According to the teachers, students are not given any autonomy from their start at their homes. The autonomous learners show extra interest in their studies and perform extra learning tasks as well and the results of such students have also been better. At university level students are not autonomous to do their task. So, for positive language learning teachers should train students in such a way that they would be able to start work autonomously. The parents at the homes should involve students in decision making practices and should give them liberty to do things but such liberty should be monitored and be given in phases starting from basic to advanced level. Thus, a stage comes when the students think themselves mature enough and start utilizing this autonomy in their studies and results become excellent from average.
5. It was also found that learners do not like to receive feedback from the teachers about how they are progressing or and they never enjoy getting feedback from the teachers. Moreover, even they do not like when the teacher points out their mistakes. So,

teacher should emphasize on learner' reflection, a sub concept of learner autonomy theory in which the student reflects on his/her learning, gauges it and plans a counter strategy to cope the shortcomings, only then it will be possible that they begin to accept feedback from their teachers and start using target language.

6. It was also found that majority of the learners never spent at least half an hour on listening to some useful English material to improve their listening comprehension every day and do not read certain amount of English material every day. This may be one of the reasons of their dull performance in the target language. Teacher should make their language material and lesson colorful so that students can find these materials interesting which may spark their attention in the studies and they can be good learners. Teachers should also encourage them to expose them directly to the target English which in our case in English language because the more the practice, the more they learn. Watching English movies, listening to the English podcasts, talking to native speakers can enhance our students learning and could make them better students.

It was also found in the present research that that motivation is very important for learning or doing everything and when it comes to learning, its importance become more. English language has its own craze as being the international language and being the gate to many opportunities, so students mostly remain active and motivated in learning it but wherever they see any problem, they guide and instruct them and things become good. But, at university level it was proved by the data that most of the students do not like to travel abroad to English speaking countries. The students said that they would like to stay in their own country with their families and friends. This thinking is good in a while but students should also be motivated to think about travelling internationally to improve their learning exposure as travelling and meeting new people gives one knowledge and experience of the world which ultimately will affect the studies and overall personality of the students.

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