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EFL Teacher's Perception On Using Self-Regulated Learning Strategies by Senior Grade Students

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Abstract

Shift to autonomous learning changed roles of class actors in EFL classes. Students have learning responsibilities on their own, whereas teachers' role is considered to be as a consulter. Thus, students need to identify their own learning goals and regulate learning process themselves. All these and other strategies are included to the self-regulation strategies. Zimmerman (1990) found out 14 SRL strategies which influence on academic achievement. However, teachers also need to promote these strategies during and out of classes and encourage EFL learners to use them in different contexts. The qualitative research investigates to what extent EFL teachers of senior grade students encourage their learners to use SRL strategies. In results, the study presents teachers' more preferable SRL strategies for senior students to achieve academic achievement.

Keywords: EFL teachers, self-regulated learning strategies, senior grade EFL students, classroom activities.

EFL Teacher's Perception On Using Self-Regulated Learning Strategies by Senior Grade Students

From the end of the 20th century, psychology started to be considered as a science. Therefore, topics concerning relationship between psychology and education discussed and investigated progressively. E.L. Thorndike, J. Dewey, M. Montessori were diverse supporters who suggested different ways to change the curriculum considering the individual differences of students. The differences were related to their age and ability, perceptual-motor tasks, etc. Later reformers matched instructional treatments to students' aptitude or attitude scores on standardized tests (Cronbach, 1967). Student's individual differences started to shift to research on metacognition and social cognition in the late 1970s and 1980s. Learners needed to set goals for themselves to complete their home tasks and self-monitor their performances in order to see the effectiveness of the strategies in achieving these goals.

Literature review

Self-regulation is transformation of learner's mental abilities into academic skills. It can be considered as a self-directive process. Learning, from the beginning, is referred to the activity that students proactively do for themselves. It cannot indicate the events that happened as a reaction to the teaching.

Zimmerman and Pons in their interview study presents 14 categories of self-regulated learning strategies (SRL) used in high school during the class and related to learner's academic achievement. Strategies contains 1) goal setting and planning, 2) organizing and transforming, 3) self-evaluation, 4) keeping records and self-monitoring, 5) seeking information, 6) self-consequences, 7) environmental structuring, 8) seeking peer assistance, 9) rehearsing and memorizing, 10) seeking adult assistance, 11) seeking teacher assistance, 12) reviewing tests, 13) reviewing notes, 14) reviewing text books (Zimmerman & Pons,, 1986). (Table 1)

Learners of language demand accurate practice through elective and non-elective courses and active participation in and out of the classroom. Autonomous and self-regulated learning culminate in learning how to make learning objectives, planning, monitoring, setting

goals, assessment and evaluation during the learning process. Using these strategies regularly may result in higher performance in reading comprehension, speaking, vocabulary and writing.

From the literature given above it is clear that SRL strategies are beneficial in learning. However, it should be supported and encouraged to be used by students. Therefore, learning activities which have three actors (student, teacher and course book) should be interrelated. The aim of the study is to identify teacher's perception on using SRL strategies by senior students in EFL classes.

Data collection. Semi-structured interview was conducted with 7 EFL teachers aged from 25 to 34 from 2 primary schools in Almaty. They teach senior grade students of their institutions. They were asked 1) whether they were familiar with SRL strategies before, 2) whether they integrate tasks and activities with these strategies to encourage them to be a self-regulated learner, 3) whether the content of textbook they use helps them to use certain SRL strategies to learn language. Each interview lasted 20-30 minutes.

The EFL teachers were asked to describe a successful learner. The aim of the question was to identify whether EFL teachers consider students using SRL strategies as high achievers. We have hypothesized from the results of high achievers that frequent use of SRL strategies are positively related with success in learning English. According to the interview, overall eight qualities a successful student should have are the followings:

1. Prioritizing learning (f=5)
2. Practice language persistently with patient (f=7)
3. Self-developer (f=6)
4. Goal setter (f=6)
5. Share with ideas (f=3)
6. Challenger (f=4)
7. Creativity (f=5)
8. Questioning (f=1)

All EFL teachers defined success in learning as constantly working with language. Almost all English instructors described a successful students as self-developer, goal-setter, creative, challenger and who prefer learning. Sharing ideas with other students was mentioned by

a half of EFL teachers as a quality of successful English learner. Only one of them identified success in term of question-response relation. If a student asks questions he/she may probably be interested in the topic or English which drives the student to succeed in English learning.

All interviewees agreed that they were familiar with some of SRL strategies. The teachers claimed that these strategies help students to learn better and develop themselves.

“...It is identified as an attempt to take a responsibility to do steps into the learning atmosphere...” (T3).

“...These strategies are not only for learning something, but also for daily life activities...” (T4).

Four of them indicated SRL strategies as an instrument to the university preparation.

“...at universities they will learn themselves. Nobody will support them to do tasks...” (T1).

“It is obligatory to use SRL strategies...” (T6).

The interviewees stated the importance of integration between SRL and lesson activities. They mentioned that students would be able to acquire better and faster (n=7), develop new skills such as critical thinking, thinking globally (n=3), motivate themselves to learn (n=7) and prepare to intercultural communication (n=1).

“...I think that students use more ‘seeking information’ strategy because of world of technology. They use different online sources such as Youtube, Instagram, Google Translate to get information about a certain topic better and more clear. I think there is no harm...” (T7).

“...I agree with the statement that self-regulated learners are more capable to interact with the representatives of other cultures...” (T4).

The next question considered activities integrated with self-regulated learning strategies during and out of the EFL classroom. Each of interviewees mentioned several activities which they often use during the class to encourage students to use SRL strategies. The Table below

shows each mentioned activity with its strategies in depth. Some of these activities were asked to perform by coursebook the use (Table 2).

According to the data, the coursebook is a primary tool of supporting students to use SRL strategies. The textbooks help students to set goals to gain new knowledge, give additional sources to understand the topic or grammar better, give an opportunity to evaluate their own work themselves.

“...A textbook itself is organized to develop these strategies.” (T2).

“...For example, each unit has its test. Students can keep results of the tests and monitor their own achievement...” (T5).

Conclusion.

Self-regulated learning is being responsible for your own learning in and out of the class. The research identified that teachers support senior grade school students in using SRL strategies to regulate their study and achieve better results in language learning. They also appreciate the help of course books to implement classroom activities which require self-regulated learning strategies.

References

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Tables

Table 1

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies developed by Zimmerman

	Categories of strategies	Definitions
1	Self-evaluation	It involves student's evaluation of own work progress. It is initiated by students. Example of this category is to check own work to be sure.
2	Organizing and transforming	It indicates overt or covert rearrangement of instructional materials to improve learning. Student plans his work beforehand to have an organized paper.
3	Goal-setting and planning	It indicates set of sub-goals and goals and plan of time, progression and activity completions.
4	Seeking information	It indicates efforts of student during the completing an assignment to obtain information for given tasks from other educational and non-educational sources .
5	Keeping records and monitoring	The structure points out student's effort to keep records of results.

6	Environmental structuring	The structure points out student's effort to organize an environment for better learning.
7	Self-consequences	The structure indicates that a student awards or punishes himself / herself for learning success and failure.
8	Rehearsing and memorizing	The following structure indicates that students attempt to memorize materials by practicing.
9-11	Seeking social assistance	<p>The structure involves student's effort to seek any social assistance from:</p> <p>(9) peers;</p> <p>(10) teachers;</p> <p>(11) adults;</p>
12-14	Reviewing records	<p>The structure points out student's effort to review:</p> <p>(12) tests,</p> <p>(13) taken notes,</p> <p>(14) course books while preparing for the lessons or exams.</p>
15	Other	The structure indicates that the learning effort and initiation are made by other people (e.g. parents, teachers), but not by a student.

Table 2

Classroom activities integrated with SRL strategies

		What do the students do?	SRLS the use during these activities
1	“I can ...”	This activity is used at the end of each unit. The coursebook gives a list of acquired materials in a box and students need to tick what they have acquired from this unit and evaluate their own progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-evaluation ● Keeping records & monitoring
2	Internet research	Students are given a task to search some information on Internet related to the unit topic. For example, if the topic is “Festivals”, students will be divided into different groups and given a certain festival to explore or create a new festival. At the end of the task, they present their festival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizing and transforming ● Seeking information ● Goal-setting and planning ● Seeking social assistance (peers)

3	Checking works	This activity relates with a certain task (writing an essay, memo, etc). After finishing the work, the coursebook helps students to check whether the main criteria (parts of essay, coherence, cohesion, etc) are used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizing and transforming ● Goal-setting and planning ● Environmental structuring
4	Role-playing	Students may play multiple scenes from films, videos, theatre performances or shows, etc. This activity helps students to make the lessons more interesting and enjoyable, also encourage students to use different SRL strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking social assistance (peers) ● Organizing and transforming ● Environmental structuring ● Goal-setting and planning
5	Making posters	EFL teacher can give different topics to groups of students to present a poster and make speeches for 5-10 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking social assistance (peers) ● Organizing and transforming ● Environmental structuring ● Goal-setting and planning ● Seeking information

6	Making presentations	EFL teacher can give different topics to groups of students to present a presentation and make speeches for 5-10 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking social assistance (peers) ● Organizing and transforming ● Environmental structuring ● Goal-setting and planning ● Seeking information
7	discussions (debates)	Different topics can be given by EFL teachers or coursebooks to discuss benefits and drawback of a certain thing or situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking information ● Seeking social assistance (peers) ● Organizing and transforming
8	peer-checking	Students' works can be checked by other students in class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-evaluation ● Organizing and transforming ● Seeking social assistance (adults) ● Reviewing records (tests) ● Reviewing records (notes) ● Reviewing records (coursebook)