

The Reciprocal Effects of Both Responsibility and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning Process: a Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the significance of personal responsibility and its positive benefits and also its relations with motivation in foreign language learning environment. Particularly, responsibility enhances motivation and benefits from values and capabilities, since they are considered as central to what it means to learn in the life. In accordance with it, each individual has freedom how to consider his/her choices, behaviors, and actions in the life as well. The study on personal responsibilities and motivation were taken into account to demonstrate how these two features of foreign language learning process can help students take control of their own learning in order to become self-regulated learners. In this regard, self-regulated learning/learner (SRL) model based on social cognitive, cyclical, triadic, and multi-level models by Zimmerman (2001, 2002, 2008, 2011 & 2013) shed lights to explain the details of this article in terms of foreign language learning and the benefits of those models were added in the conclusion. The features of personal responsibility, motivation, cognition, and individual differences (capabilities) were presented in details in order to find out their reciprocal relations, which cause positive outcomes in learning process. Instructional approach was used to compare both responsibility & motivation also their reciprocal relations. As limitation, the study does not include any questionnaire and interview, only the first data, secondary data and the researcher's individual views were used to explain the study. The study reveals that responsibility not only makes the ways for high level motivation also creates a positive atmosphere for both instructors and students in terms of fruitful outcomes. Actually, responsibilities cause the particular person to benefit from his/her available abilities through self-control and self-regulation.

Keywords: *responsibility, motivation, cognition, individual differences, reciprocal relation*

1. Introduction

With the aid of this study, the researcher would like to find out which rewards of motivation; intrinsic or extrinsic is more effective? How/how much capability (abilities) is influential on responsibility in order to motivate the particular person. Actually, how responsibility and motivation affect each other reciprocally? Do responsibilities make the ways to benefit from existing abilities of the respective learner? And why do the teachers prefer students who know their responsibilities in foreign language learning environment? Also, when the particular student thinks how enjoyable the result of success is, conversely he thinks how painful the result of failure is. Thus, can the responsibility overcome those problems in order to get positive outcomes? As a result, to what extent the responsibilities cause/contribute motivation in learning environment with the help of values/capabilities/satisfaction?

Through this study, the above-mentioned questions will be studied from unifying approaches, emphasizing the mutual effects of responsibilities and individual motivation in learning foreign language learning environment. To analyze these

features, the researcher considers here the importance of personal assessment, values and capability, since “students are already assessing their own work and generating their own” capability (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) and values with the aid of their responsibility.

But what makes learning more meaningful, so that the students are demonstrating better motivation for learning foreign language. More than that, what makes students engage their capabilities, values and assessment as the side effects of responsibilities? In addition to this, teachers always consider the “students’ willingness to assume personal responsibility for their academic learning and performance” (Zimmerman, 2013, p. 135). In this regard, self-regulated learning/learner (SRL) model by Zimmerman (2001, 2002, 2008, 2011 & 2013) illuminates this article to clarify the details.

Also, the more the teachers are responsible, the more they care about the learning process for the good of their particular students. A caring teacher creates an atmosphere for the students in order to make them use their capabilities well. Whenever the students use their capabilities, then they become satisfied by what they are doing. Therefore, the self-regulated approach might be a good option for answering above-mentioned questions regarding motivation and responsibilities in foreign language learning process. In this regard, the self-regulated model can also solve the problems of both teachers and students in foreign language learning as stated by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006, p. 202) “self-regulated learning is an active constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the environment”. This definition also expresses the purposes of the present article and supports the idea of self-regulation and also presents the positive contributions of responsibility in learning process.

2. Literature Review

The responsibilities and motivation and also their reciprocal effects are interpreted in various ways, which can help students how to demonstrate their capabilities & values in learning environment and how to engage in learning activities to satisfy their needs.

Having continuous responsibility and enhancing motivation involve individual differences, since the “individual differences (IDs) are characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other” and also “individual differences in psychology have been equated with personality and intelligence” (Dörnyei, 2005, pp. 1-7). Actually, individual differences and features of human cognition involve capabilities. Thus, respective teacher needs to consider “how to reconcile the motivated (“hot”) and rational (“cold”) features of human cognition, and could be used in any setting where a demand for motivated beliefs arises” (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002, p. 87).

Also, teachers “have wrestled with the presence of substantial differences in individual students’ backgrounds and modes of learning. Some students grasped important concepts easily and seemed highly motivated to study, whereas others” appeared disinterested. And a student’s failure to learn was widely attributed to personal limitations in intelligence” (Zimmerman, 2002, pp. 64-65).

For that reason, it is necessary “to accommodate students’ individual differences, such as grouping of students homogeneously according to age or ability, introducing perceptual-motor learning tasks, and broadening course work to include training in practical skills” (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 65).

Zimmerman (2002, p. 65) states that students’ individual differences are coming to light as metacognition and social cognition. The first is known “as the awareness of and knowledge about one’s own thinking. Students’ deficiencies in learning were attributed to a lack of metacognitive awareness of personal limitations and an inability to compensate”. The latter involves “in social influences on children’s development of self-regulation”, and “such as the effects of teacher modeling and instruction on students’ goal setting and self-monitoring”.

The present study focuses on metacognition and social cognition in order to clarify the issues of motivation and responsibilities and presents their reciprocal effects for obtaining positive outcomes in foreign language learning process.

Thereby “students’ metacognitive (i.e., self) awareness of particular aspects of their functioning could enhance their self-control. Of course, self-awareness is often insufficient when a learner lacks fundamental skills, but it can produce a readiness that is essential for personal change. Not only the teachers but also the students are in need of knowing “student’s strengths and limitations in learning”, and the respective teachers’ “goal should be to empower their students to become self-aware of these differences” (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 65).

Thus, the students are guided by metacognition that makes ways for self-control and they are guided by social cognition, which opens the ways for self-regulation. “Self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are oriented to attaining goals”. If the students have self-awareness and self-regulation, they can easily “monitor their behavior in terms of their goals and self-reflect on their increasing effectiveness, (and) this enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to continue to improve their methods of learning” (Zimmerman, 2002, pp. 65-66).

According to Zimmerman (2002, pp. 66-68), self-regulation makes ways not only for “detailed knowledge of a skill” but also “self-awareness, self-motivation, and behavioral skill to implement that knowledge appropriately” and self-regulated students’ self-motivation quality might stem from intrinsic interest. Therefore, “intrinsic interest refers to the students’ valuing of the task skill for its own merits, and learning goal orientation refers to valuing the process of learning for its own merits”. Moreover, “self-motivation stems from students’ beliefs about learning” and “having the personal capability to learn”.

In relation to self-regulated learning (SRL), Moos & Ringdal (2012, P. 2) express four assumptions regarding students; firstly, they have potential to “monitor and regulate their cognition, behavior, and motivation, processes that are dependent on a number of factors including individual differences and developmental constraints”. Secondly, they know how to “construct their own, idiosyncratic goals and meaning derived from both the learning context and their prior knowledge. Thus, students engage in a constructive process of learning”. Thirdly, they demonstrate a behavior of goal-direction and the process of self-regulation in order to obtain their goals. Fourthly, self-regulation appears as “the relationship between a student’s performance, contextual factors, and individual characteristics”.

On the contrary, if the students do not have “incentives to enhance or maintain their interest during the task” and if they do not consider self-consequences, which help them overcome difficulties while experiencing progress (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014, p. 456), they might face handicaps in the motivational process. Therefore, they need to take individual responsibility in order to manage the motivation not only while taking incentives for maintaining interests during the task but also for taking into account the consequences of progress. Actually, individual responsibility is necessary to control the success of the motivation when self-control, self-regulation and self-monitoring are considered together.

3. Method and Methodology

In the present study, a comparative approach was used to clarify responsibility and motivation in foreign language learning process. Through instructional approach, the researcher aimed to discuss responsibility, motivation, capabilities, metacognition, social cognition, and values in order to explain their effects on responsibility and motivation reciprocally.

4. Discussion

Responsibilities pave the ways for the students to show rational behaviors more than irrational behaviors, for responsibilities are likely to channelize the students to benefit from their capabilities for positive outcomes.

As a matter of fact, we are responsible for our choices (thinking), behaviors, and actions (motivation) in our lives. Responsibilities seem to appear as consequences of our choices, behaviors and actions. But students “are motivated when their responsibilities are meaningful and engage their abilities and values. The most motivating responsibilities are those that stretch and develop skills. Responsibilities are most meaningful when they fit a person’s values” (Maccoby, 2010, p. 1).

For that reason, with the aid of metacognition and social cognition, we can self-control and self-regulate the above-mentioned responsibilities for the good of us overall in life. If there is responsibility within the students, more or less they can consider consequences of what they do and will do with the aid of motivation.

As mentioned by the researcher, "motivation affects students' performance in language learning environment" (Coskun, 2014, p. 150). But what about the factors, that affect motivation? There are internal and external factors for students' motivation in learning process and they are mainly known as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The researcher focuses on which one is the more effective motivation when compared to another? And, what the positive contribution of the respective motivation is? Extrinsic motivation stems from rewards and intrinsic motivation is the result of individual interest and desire within the respective person.

In this regard, teachers need to be careful, because "rewards (extrinsic motivation) have a limited impact on current performance, and reduce the agent's motivation to undertake similar tasks in the future" (Benabou & Tirole, 2003). In relation to intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, "students are intrinsically motivated, when they seek personal success, competency, development, excitement and have fun. For example, they like to write a story for fun of learning, curiosity and sharing experience". In extrinsic motivation, students "like grades, money, medals, discount of school fee and trophies". For that reason, they are likely to "learn, behave and achieve as a result of highly regarded outcome" (Coşkun & Öztürk, 2012, P. 141). But, responsibility has potentials to develop intrinsic motivation considerably, which engage students in long-term learning.

On the other hand, "offering rewards for performance may signal low trust in the abilities of the agent (child, student, worker) or in his suitability to the task, such extrinsic motivators may have only a limited impact on his current performance, and undermine his intrinsic motivation for similar tasks in the future" (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002, p. 908). As a matter of fact, the management of responsibility can meet the needs of intrinsic motivation by dint of self-control and self-regulation.

In understanding the values, the researcher considers shortly the following components proposed by Dörnyei (1998). They are as follows; "attainment value (or importance), intrinsic value (or interest), extrinsic utility value, and cost". Attainment value involves doing well a task based on personal values and needs. Intrinsic interest value is related to the enjoyment or pleasure stemming from engaged task. Extrinsic value considers how useful the task is in order to obtain future goals. The first three components involve positive valence of the task. The last component, cost contains "the negative valence of a task, involving factors such as expended effort and time, and emotional costs (e.g. anxiety, fear of failure)" and all the values are "believed to determine the strength or intensity of the behavior" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 120).

The benefits of all models for the present study by Zimmerman and the others can be as follows; the more the students have responsibility for self-control and self-regulation in their foreign language learning, the more they are motivated intrinsically, which paves ways for long-term learning. Also, due to students' "superior motivation and adaptive learning methods, self-regulated students are not only more likely to succeed academically but to view their futures optimistically" (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 66), since individual responsibility paves the ways not only to control the success of the motivation but also to maintain the motivation in learning foreign language with the aid of self-control, self-regulation and self-monitoring. Cyclical self-regulation model by Zimmerman (2011) makes clear that students are influenced by their previous success in order to maintain the same success or to do better success than before. Also, Zimmerman (2013, p. 145) adds that the cyclical model gives a scope in order "to explain the results of repeated efforts to learn, such as when learning a new language" and "a cyclical phase model that depicts the interaction of metacognitive and motivational processes during efforts to learn" (Zimmerman, 2013, p. 135). So, overall the foreign language learning process, the managerial role in motivation is a requirement and which is in the hand of personal responsibility for successful outcomes. Actually "the core assumptions are active engagement in learning and learner responsibility for the management of learning" (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 200).

The "cognitive modeling was also found to increase observers' personal choice of the learning task, a key indicator of enhanced motivation" (Zimmerman (2013, p. 136). In social cognitive model, "each self-regulatory process or belief, such as goal setting, strategy use, and self-evaluation, can be learned from instruction and modeling by parents, teachers, coaches, and peers. Actually, self-regulated students seek out help from others to improve their learning" (Zimmerman, 2002, pp. 69-70). And, teachers never forget the role of responsibility, which is "most meaningful when they fit a person's values". Also, teachers need to put students "in roles with responsibilities that fit their values and stretch their capabilities". Thus, students are "satisfied when they felt that their capabilities were being fully engaged" (Maccoby, 2010, pp. 1-2).

5. Conclusion

With the help of both cognitive and social psychology, the present paper proposed a self-regulated approach of why students consider their responsibilities more valuable in order to motivate themselves in foreign language learning environment and how they tempt to show rational behaviors in this endeavor, since responsibilities prompt to consider awareness management and cause the capabilities to be used for beneficial outcomes.

Students regulate their own learning process through their capabilities and values, which engage them in learning activities well in order to benefit from their own features of human cognition. The self-regulated approach can provide some valuable directions. If the students are self-regulated learners, they generally actively get engaged in self-controlling and regulating their respective performance in order to obtain their desired goals.

The term responsibility is used in various ways by various researchers. In the present paper, the researcher makes clear that self-control and self-regulation entail more responsibility, which makes ways for motivation everywhere in learning process. Our main point is that the more students have responsibility the more they have motivation. We base our recommendation on evidence that "self-regulated students focus on how they activate, alter, and sustain specific learning practices in social as well as solitary contexts" (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 70). Therefore, it can be said that only responsible students devote their time for learning, wherever they are. Actually, responsibility crosses the border of learning environment and triggers motivation of students for better learning even beyond teachers'/parents' expectation and beyond formal learning environment.

Moreover, if the students have self-awareness and self-regulation, they can easily "monitor their behavior in terms of their goals and self-reflect on their increasing effectiveness, (and) this enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to continue to improve their methods of learning" (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 66). Also, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006, p. 199) express that "self-regulation refers to the degree to which students can regulate aspects of their thinking, motivation and behavior during learning".

In addition to this, the researcher adds that we are responsible for our choices (thinking), behaviors, and actions (motivation) in our lives. Responsibilities seem to appear as consequences of our choices, behaviors and actions. For that reason, with the aid of metacognition and social cognition, we can self-control and self-regulate the above-mentioned responsibilities for the good of us overall in life. Also, responsibility makes the way for student-centered learning, because in student-centered-learning, "the core assumptions are active engagement in learning and learner responsibility for the management of learning" (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 200). Thus, it can be said that responsibility has a role of management in learning; it can regulate & control motivation as well. In this regard, teachers should focus on how to strengthen the skills of responsibility in their instructional activities for their respective students.

The contribution of the present article is to clarify how personal responsibility can develop self-control and self-regulation for better motivation due to the managerial role of responsibility in learning. So, teachers can make beneficial changes in their instructional activities in order to give more responsibilities to the students to regulate and control their own learning, which channelize them to be more motivated in foreign language learning.

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