AN ABSTARCT OF THE THESIS OF

Mostafa Youssef Ahmed   for the   Master of Arts_____

in English_____presented on_____03/30/2018_____

Title: Students' Beliefs on the Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English Language Learning

Abstract approved: _____

This study investigates student's beliefs about the effectiveness of self-regulated learning in learning English as a second language. The study also examines the types of motivation that are likely to encourage English language learners to adopt self-regulated learning as a strategy for acquiring English as a second language. The study uses a mixed-research approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A group of 40 international students at Emporia State University in the US took a survey of 15 questions asking for information about a number of topics including language motivation, autonomy, types of self-regulated activities used by students, and evaluation of such activities. The survey was followed by interviews with three of the participants to further examine the topic. The study started with one main hypothesis which is: Students view self-regulated learning to be equal (or maybe even superior) to regular-classroom instruction in its effectiveness in language learning. The study also aims to identify which type of motivation is more influential in encouraging English language learners to use self-regulated activities. Finally, the study suggests a number of implications for both language learners and ESL teachers.

Keywords: *ESL, self-regulated learning, language motivation, demotivators, SRL*

Students' Beliefs on the Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English

Language Learning

Mostafa Youssef Ahmed

Master of Arts in English

Emporia State University

May 2018

_____

Approved by the Department Chair

_____

Committee Member

_____

Committee Member

_____

Committee Member

_____

Dean of Graduate School and Distance Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

List of Tables

"By teaching students to be more self-regulative, teachers may experience greater success in promoting academic achievement, motivation, and life-long learning."

(Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011, p. 18)

Introduction

Research in the field of teaching English as a second language (ESL) has mainly focused on learning that occurs inside the classroom. ESL research endeavors to answer questions related to pedagogical practices, teaching skills or other topics that are mainly concerned with in-class learning (Bagnall, 1973; Biglari & Farahian, 2017; Carrasquillo, 1994; Dacanay, 1967; Diller, 1978; Farhanez & Valeo, 2012; Gatbonton, 2008; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Myriad research papers have been written about teaching practices from designing a syllabus to feedback and assessment. However, investigation in learning that occurs outside the classroom has not been given as much attention. More research in what students do outside the classroom walls is needed. Among the out-of-class practices that need to be investigated is the concept of self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning (SRL) is defined as learning that occurs when students are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process (Zimmerman, 1989). The use of self-regulated learning and the encouragement of independent learning can lead to better results and major changes in the field of ESL teaching. Zimmerman (1990) explains the impact of self-regulated learning on pedagogical practices and the way students should learn highlighting that "A self-regulated learning perspective on student learning is not only distinctive, but it has profound implications on the way teachers should interact with students and the manner in which schools should be organized" (p. 4).

The investigation of ESL students' SRL cannot be carried out without first examining students' various motivations to adopt such a learning method, as "Self-regulated learning and motivation are interdependent and cannot be fully understood apart from each other" (Zimmerman, 1990, p. 6). In order to initiate self-learning outside the classroom, one needs to understand the preliminary motives students have to start and maintain a self-motivated and independent strategy to learn a second language. Psychologists and ESL scholars have identified several types of motivation that encourage people to learn a certain subject in general or encourage students to learn a second language in particular. Scholars have identified several types of motivation among which three main types seem to have the major influence on language learners. The three main types of motivation are: integrative motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation (Goodridge, 2017). These motivation types will be explained in further detail in the following section.

This research study aims to investigate students' beliefs about the effectiveness of self-regulated learning activities in learning English. In addition to that, the study examines the relationships between the types of motivation and the amount of effort made by students outside the classroom to acquire a second language. The research starts with the hypothesis that students view self-regulated learning equally as effective in learning a second language as the practice of classroom learning (or potentially more). The study also attempts to identify the types of motivation that have the highest impact on students' language learning outside the classroom.

In comparing self-regulated learning effectiveness to classroom learning, I discuss some pedagogical and psychological aspects of ESL learning.

In particular, I inquire into student's desire for autonomy in addition to demotivators that act as learning obstacles such as classroom anxiety, test anxiety, and peer pressure. By highlighting demotivators, teachers can understand what they need to avoid in order to maintain their students' motivation. The study also shows how self-regulated learning can offer an alternative and a solution to issues that arise in the ESL classroom.

The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods. I start with a survey of 15 questions tackling four main topics: motivation, demotivators, student autonomy, and self-regulated activities (types and effectiveness). The survey is then followed by an interview to further investigate into the topic and obtain a more determining result. I interviewed three of the students that took the survey. The three students belonged to different educational backgrounds which offered a more comprehensive view on the subject.

The results of the research have several implications for teaching ESL. Not only does the research test the effectiveness of self-regulated learning, but it also shares several self-regulated activities that surveyed English language learners have used and deemed effective. The research also identifies a number of demotivators that may slow down the progress of students learning English as a second language. Moreover, students may benefit from the learning practices listed in the study as self-regulated activities. Teachers may also incorporate such activities inside the classroom or provide their students with an independent study-guide for learning a second language. Ultimately, this study seeks to substantiate Zimmerman's idea that "When students are motivated to learn, they are more likely to invest the necessary time and energy needed to learn and apply appropriate SRL skills, and when students are able to

successfully employ self-regulation strategies, they are often more motivated to complete learning tasks" (as cited in Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011, p. 9).

Background

In order to investigate the effectiveness of self -regulated activities, it is important to start with a comprehensive definition of self-regulated learning. Zumbrunn, Tadlock, and Roberts (2011) define self-regulated learning as a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences. This process of self-regulated learning consists of three main phases:

1.   forethought and planning,

2.   performance monitoring, and

3.   reflections on performance.

Zimmerman (2002) clarifies that self-regulation is not a mental ability or an academic skill; rather it is the self-directive process by which learners turn their mental abilities into academic skills. "Learning is viewed as an activity that students do for themselves in a proactive way rather than as a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching" (p. 65). Self-regulated learners participate metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally in their own learning (Zimmerman,1990; Pintrinch & Degroot, 1990; Moos & Ringdal, 2012). Self-regulated leaners are therefore in charge of their learning experience. They plan, set goals, self-monitor, and self-evaluate their learning. They personally initiate and direct their own efforts to acquire knowledge and skill rather than relying on teachers, parents, or other agents of instruction

(Zimmerman, 2002). Self-regulated learners also create their own learning environment and structure it in the way that works best for them in order to achieve their goals (Zimmerman, 1990). Bramucci (2013) states that self-regulated learners not only control their learning behaviour, but they are also responsible for their own motivation: "Those students are self-regulating to the extent that they take an active part in their own learning processes not only in cognitive and metacognitive terms but also in motivational and behavioural terms" (p. 5). As scholars demonstrate, developing a self-regulated drive in ESL students and fostering it will lead to a more sustainable progress in language learning and consequently better final outcomes.

Thus, self-regulated learning (SRL) is an independent process of learning that involves a high level of motivation on the part of the student. Self-regulated learners are able to identify their objectives and work independently to achieve them. They aim at achieving such objectives with no or minimal guidance from teachers or other agents of instruction. They are also aware of their strengths and weaknesses and can adjust their learning accordingly. If students adopt a practice of self-regulated learning, they can achieve better results in their overall learning and guarantee a sustainable life-long learning attitude (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011). Furthermore, "research has found that active involvement in learning, including setting meaningful goals, selecting appropriate and task specific strategies, monitoring motivational levels, and adapting based on feedback are all positively related to learning outcomes" (Moos & Ringdal, 2012, p. 1). Schunk & Zimmerman point out that "recent research has also added that self-regulatory processes are teachable and can lead to increases in students' motivation and achievement" (as cited in

Zimmerman, 2002, p. 69). Thus, it is important to understand that SRL can be acquired; it is not an innate or inherited skill. Moreover, the acquisition of these skills is possible and all the self-regulatory processes can be learned through instruction and modelling by teachers, parents, coaches, or peers (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 69). Finally, it is important to note that even though SRL has several advantages and has proven to be a teachable practice, SRL has not yet been studied much in the specific context of language learning or ESL practices.

Researching the effectiveness of SRL is needed, but we may also need to know what it is that encourages language-learning students to adopt a self-regulated learning strategy. In discussing the relationship between SRL and motivation Bramucci (2013) states that "The *motivational sphere*, in fact, is recognized in all perspectives as the determinant element in self-regulation processes" (p. 6). In other words, motivation is essential to developing a self-regulated attitude. Whether one type of motivation will be more efficient in encouraging English language learners to use SRL is another question I aim to answer in this study.

Before research in language learning motivation emerged, it had been believed that people possessed a specific "ability for languages," which made them acquire other languages (Goodridge, 2017, p. 80). However, scholars questioned such long-lasting belief and tried to discover more specific reasons that motivate people to learn languages or to maintain learning it. Among those scholars were Gardner and Lambert who developed the integrativeness theory of motivation, which can be defined as integrative motivation. Integrative motivation is described as a positive attitude towards the second language (L2) community, and a desire to communicate with the members of that community,

and even the possibility of becoming similar to valued members of the L2 community. Such integrativeness implies respect for the L2 ways of life that might, at its extreme, turn into complete identification with the L2 community and abandoning the first language L1 group (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 5; Goodridge, 2017, p. 81). Integrative motivation is what makes the language learner open to other cultures with a desire to be a part of those cultures. Such openness or integrativeness, as Gardner puts it, will "influence his/her motivation to learn the language" (Gardner, 2005, p. 7).

Gardner and Lambert expanded further on the theory of integrative motivation and were able to identify a second kind of motivation: intrinsic motivation (Goodridge, 2017). Whereas integrative motivation identifies those who want to integrate into the L2 community and become active members in the L2 group, intrinsic motivation originally is referred to as an innate desire to learn (Goodridge, 2017, p. 80). An intrinsically-motivated language learner is likely to learn a language for the mere enjoyment of learning and the willingness to educate themselves. According to Gardner and Lambert, intrinsic motivation refers to a "natural drive" (Goodridge, 2003, p. 81) that motivates the individual to acquire a second language. Rhyan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as "one's inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges and to extend and exercise one's capacity to explore or learn" (as cited in in Bonney, Cortina, Smit-Darden & Fiori, 2008, p. 1). In the case of learning a language, intrinsic motivation is learning the language for the sake of the enjoyment of learning itself. Intrinsic learners like to challenge themselves with learning a language and try to explore the new culture to satisfy the natural drive they have for learning. Intrinsically-motivated behaviors are engaged in for their own sake—

for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from their performance. "When intrinsically motivated, people engage in activities that interest them, they do so freely with a full sense of volition and without the necessity of material rewards or constraints" (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991, p. 328).

Further research in language motivation resulted in the identification of a third type of motivation: extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to a more pragmatic desire to learn a language for a material return such as getting a job or passing a class (Goodridge, 2017; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991; Dörnyei, 2003). Extrinsic motivation (also known as instrumental motivation) is the type of motivation that is triggered by a reward. It is a materialistic, reward-reinforced type (Goodridge, 2017). Extrinsic behaviors are thus performed not out of interest but because they are instrumental to gaining a certain consequence (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991, p. 328). For example, an extrinsically motivated language learner will try to improve his/her language to get promoted at work or to have a better job.

This current study is mainly concerned with the three types of motivation identified above (integrative, intrinsic, and extrinsic) that characterize the differing motivations of language learners. This study aims to identify which types of motivation have the highest influence on encouraging language-learning students to employ self-regulated activities.

To summarize, researchers have identified three main types of motivation that all language learners can fall into:

1. Integrative Motivation: mainly characterized by one's willingness to integrate into the L2 community.

2. Intrinsic Motivation: mainly characterized by one's natural interest in learning, and

3. Extrinsic Motivation: mainly characterized by one's desire in earning a reward.

While there has been an adequate amount of research in self-regulated learning, not much has been related to the use of self-regulated learning in second language learning. This research is an attempt to initiate this didactic practice in learning English as a second language and its effectiveness according to students' learning experiences. Since motivation and self-regulated learning are interdependent, this study attempts to find the tangible correlation between them.

Methods

The study used a mixed-method approach of quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the topic. I started the research by sending out an email to students to take an online survey. The survey consisted of 15 questions about the topic of the research. The questions aimed at collecting students' opinions about several points mainly focusing on self-regulated learning in language learning, regular classroom instruction, and L2 learning motivation (See Appendix B for a full list of survey questions). First, students were asked to self-identify their English level and to estimate how long they have been studying English. After that the rest of the questions were divided into three main parts. In the first part, I tried to identify each student's type of motivation for learning English as a second language. In the following section, I collected student's opinions on four main demotivators that are normally associated with regular classroom instruction:

1. Tests

2. Peer pressure

3. Classroom anxiety

4. Textbooks

The third section of the survey focused on identifying self-regulated activities and the student's evaluation of such activities. Questions in this section were multiple choice and yes/no questions. The survey included a list of 14 self-regulated activities drawn from previous research (Huang, Tindall & Nisbet, 2011; Ismaili, 2013), from which students were asked to select what they deemed useful in learning English as a second language. Then students were asked to give percentages comparing the effectiveness of such activities to regular classroom instruction. The survey ended with giving students the option to voluntarily participate in a follow-up interview.

A follow-up interview was carried out to further investigate the results of the survey (see Appendix C). The interviewees were some of those who participated in the survey. The interview consisted of 11 questions. The questions were aimed at inquiring more deeply into some of the points from the survey questions and were based on the same sources used for the survey questions. The questions were mainly open-ended ones that concentrated on the students' experiences with self-regulated learning and regular classroom instruction. Students described their educational backgrounds and the types of pedagogical practices common in their ESL classrooms. They were also able to freely describe the kinds of language-learning activities they did outside the classroom that were most useful to them. Students were also asked to identify their motives for learning English as a second language. The interviews were

carried out individually and privately and recorded for further analysis. For the purpose of coherence and clarity of meaning, I chose to paraphrase the statements taken from the interviews. For future researchers or for further inquiry in the topic, recordings of the interviews are available upon request.

Participants

    Survey participants. The survey was sent to international students studying at Emporia State University, USA in the fall semester of 2017. The population included students studying English as a second language or English as a foreign language. Students from different disciplines, different years in school, and different ethnic and educational backgrounds were invited to participate in the survey. Some of those were students enrolled in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at the university. A total of 40 students took the survey online and their identity remained unknown, except for those who provided their emails to partake in the follow-up interview. The majority of the students, 80% percent, reported that they had been studying English for 6 years or more. 10% had been studying English for 3-6 years and 10% for 1-3 years. The following diagram, Figure 1, illustrates the English levels of those who took the survey:
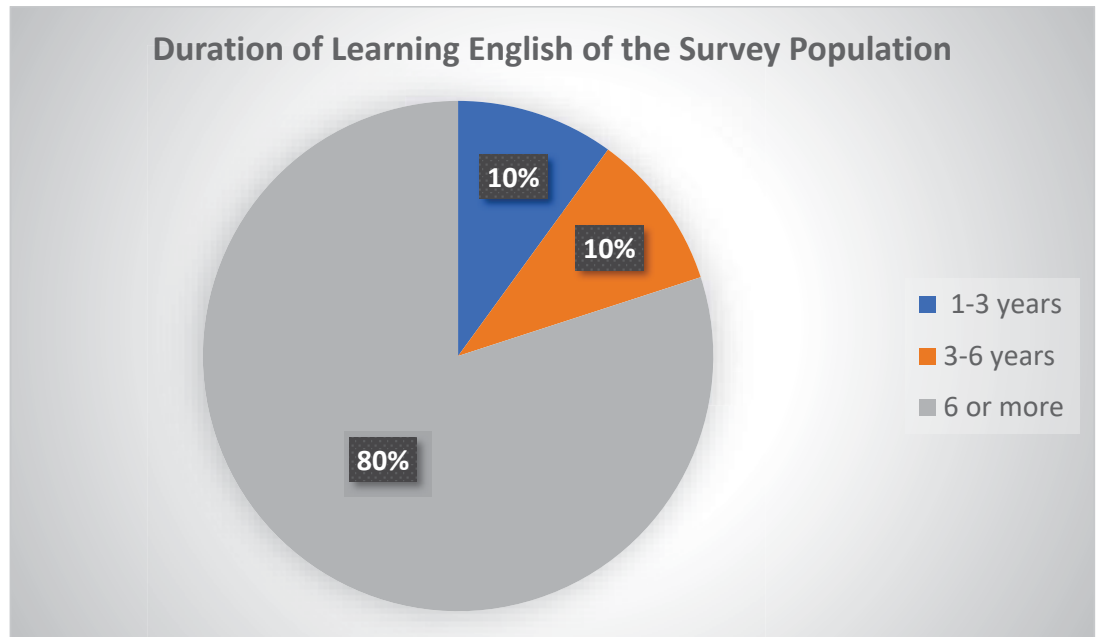
Figure 1. Duration of learning English of the survey population.

Students' self-reported levels of English varied to a degree; however, most of them were in the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels (37.5% for each). Furthermore, 15% of the students self-evaluated their level as advanced, and the rest of the students were between beginner and pre-intermediate.
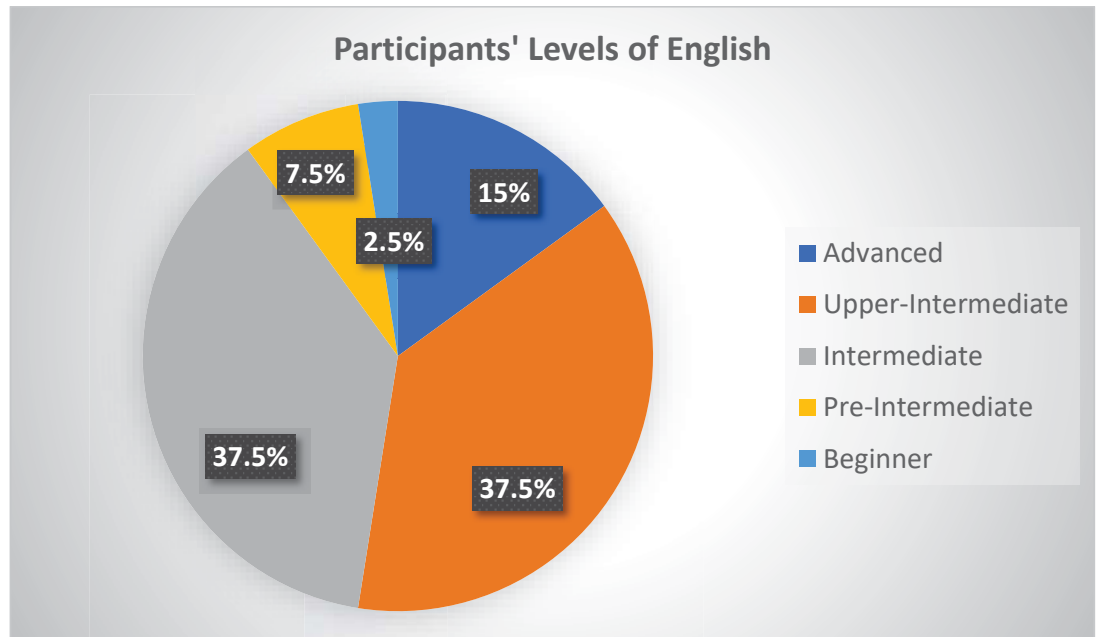
Figure 2. Participants' levels of English.

Interview participants. Three of the 40 students taking the survey participated in the interview. The first of the interviewees[1], Chao, studies accounting at ESU. He is originally from China, and he speaks three languages, Chinese, English, and Portuguese. Chao spent most of his life in China and studied English for many years in his home country. Chao lived in Portugal for five years to learn and study the Portuguese language. He has been in America for two years studying business at ESU and took IEP classes at ESU. Before coming to the US, Chao had been studying English for approximately 15 years. The second interviewee is from Saudi Arabia. Amir is a graduate student with an English major. He has been in the United States for three years. Before he started his degree, he voluntarily chose to take the IEP classes at ESU, even though he was not required to take them. Amir studied English for more than seven years in Saudi Arabia, and he worked as an ESL teacher for a while before

---

[1] Interviewed participants' names have been anonymized.

coming to the United States. The third interviewee, Mike, is a Hungarian student completing his bachelor's degree in business administration. He has been in the US for more than three years. Unlike the other two interviewees, Mike did not take any IEP classes at ESU. He had studied English as a second language for a number of years at school in Hungary before coming to the US. Interviewees with differing educational backgrounds were selected to provide a more comprehensive view on the topic. The variation in their levels and their educational backgrounds may affect their perception and reflection of their learning experiences.

Results

As explained earlier in this paper the study focuses on two main elements: 1) The hypothesis that self-regulated activities are viewed by language students to be equally as effective (or more effective than) regular classroom instruction and, 2) What types of motivation encourages students to adopt a self-regulated learning attitude. In order to investigate into the former, I examined the topic from three main aspects: students' experience with self-regulated activities, students' experience with regular class instruction, and students' desire for autonomy. With regard to the latter, I focused on three main types of motivation: integrative motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation (see lit review for definitions of types of motivation).

Effectiveness of SRL activities. There seemed to be a consensus among students that using self-regulated learning activities helped them in learning English. However, the extent to which those activities were effective compared to regular classroom instruction varied. The variation in the student's evaluation

of the effectiveness of self-regulated activities in language learning is illustrated

in Figure 3 below:
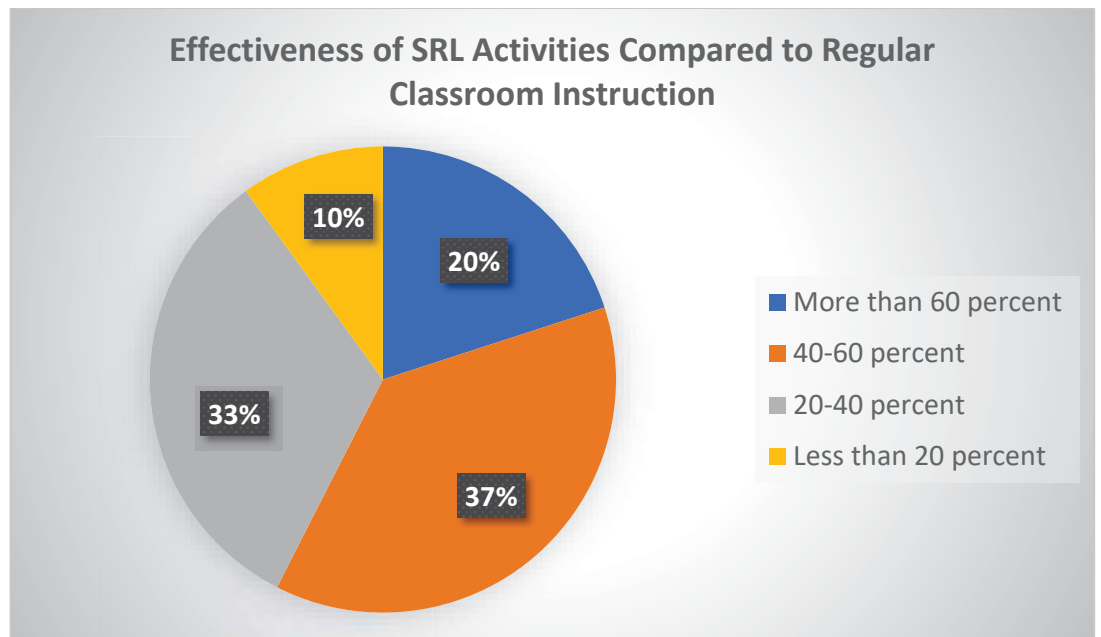
Figure 3. Effectiveness of self-regulated learning (SRL) activities compared to regular classroom instruction.

As illustrated by the chart, the majority of students estimated that SRL

activities are equally as important as regular classroom instruction. When the

result of this question of the survey was further examined in the interview, two

of the three students interviewed, Amir and Chao, reported that what they did

outside the classroom counted for 60% of their language learning compared to

what they gained from the classroom experience. The third of the interviewees,

Mike, who had what could be considered a more privileged educational

background, mentioned that what he did outside the classroom counted for 40%.

However, he explained that the percentage went higher to 60% as his English

improved and he could manage to study independently and find ways to learn

on his own.

Interview questions regarding SRL activities. When the students

were asked to explain their answers for their choice regarding the effectiveness

of using SRL activities, they each had a valuable response: Chao, the Chinese student, said that the main reason that learning outside the classroom was more effective for him was due to the fact that the learning happened because of his own desire and not to pass a required class. He explained that no matter how interesting the class is, at the end there is a test and a grade and that is what makes the class less effective. When Amir was asked to evaluate his experience with self-regulated learning, he said that SRL activities counted for 60 to 70 percent, compared to regular classroom instruction. Amir explained that in the English classes he took he was more motivated than his colleagues and that encouraged him to seek further assistance outside the classroom. He added that his peers considered English as a required class (meaning that they just needed to pass) while he wanted to learn the language itself. Consequently, Amir had to find support somewhere else outside the classroom. Finally, when Mike was asked to explain if or how the outside-of-class activities were more helpful, he said that it actually varied at the stage of learning. He explained that at the beginning of learning English he was more dependent on in-class learning, and then, as his level progressed, and he was able to overcome the "barrier," he started shifting his practice to rely more on out-of-class learning. Mike added that after adopting self-regulated learning, he found that he was already familiar with most of the grammar taught in class, and almost all the vocabulary taught he had already learned from his study outside of class.

Types of self-regulated activities. In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of SRL activities, students were asked to identify the type of activities they have used and which ones they deemed most useful in learning

English. The following list of 14 self-regulated activities was provided for students in the survey to choose from:

1.   Movies
2.   Songs
3.   Novels or short stories
4.   Self-study books
5.   Conversation partners
6.   Games
7.   Educational websites
8.   Educational phone-apps
9.   Social media
10.   Setting laptop/phone setting in English
11.   Listening to radio channels
12.   Listening to podcasts
13.   Watching You tube videos
14.   Going to Events where English is the language of communication (e.g., lecture, workshop, gallery, etc.)

Students chose from the list what SRL activities they found useful in learning English. The following graph (Figure 4) illustrates the selections of the students:

Self-Regulated Activities

Movies: 35
YouTube: 29
Conv. Partners: 24
Songs: 23
Going to Events: 23
Novels/Stories: 19
Self-Study Books: 16
Social Media: 16
Games: 15
Educational...: 12
Educational Photos: 10
Computer in English: 10
Podcasts: 10
Radio: 7
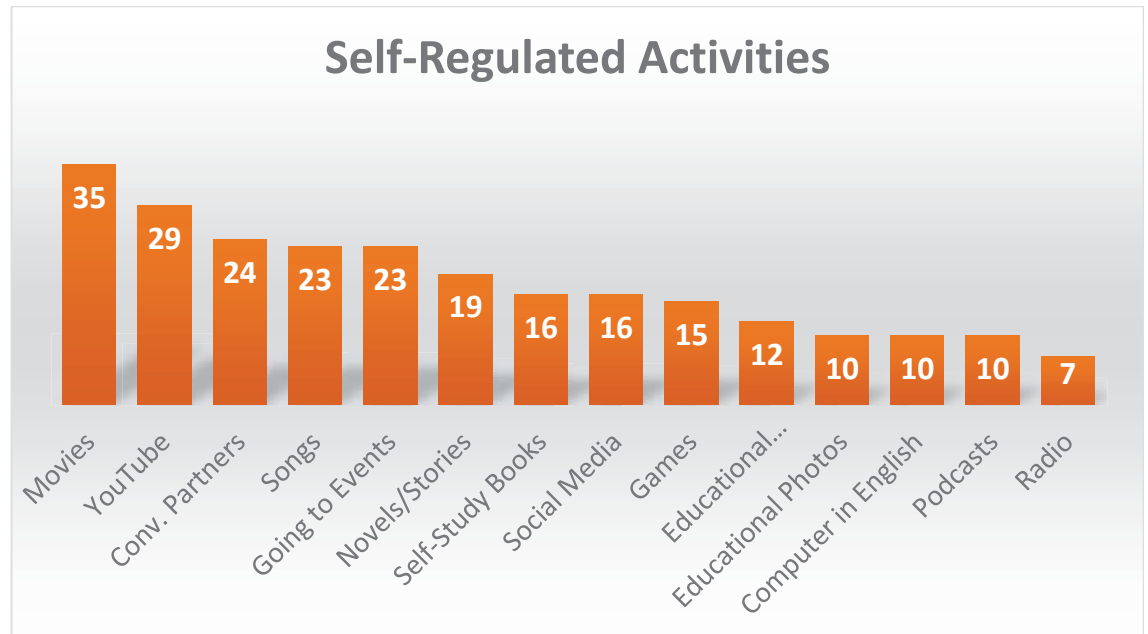
Figure 4. Self-regulated activities that survey participants found useful in learning English.

As illustrated above, movies came out on top of the list in terms of their usefulness. Students in the interviews explained how the use of movies is particularly useful in learning everyday English. They clarified that movies offered them not only the language but also information about the culture of the target language. For them, it was a combination of entertainment and learning. Chao commented that he specifically found YouTube channels, which came second on the list of activities in terms of importance, even more useful. He explained that he was impressed by the information in the videos, as well as by the cultural aspects of the videos. He stated that at the beginning it was difficult for him to understand the language, but as he watched more videos, he started to understand the language in the videos better. Amir and Mike also reported that they found the internet with its various resources helpful in learning. They

explained that they used the internet for reading, watching videos, and playing games, which they found useful in learning English.

Demotivators. In order to investigate the reasons why some students may prefer self-regulated learning to regular classroom instruction, I highlighted a number of demotivators or obstacles that ESL students face in the classroom. The survey included four questions that discuss what can be described as regular class obstacles (see Appendix B, questions 4-7). These obstacles include classroom anxiety, test anxiety, peer anxiety, and textbook use.

Classroom anxiety. In response to the first obstacle which is classroom anxiety, 75 percent of the students in the survey reported that they would prefer to have activities outside the classroom such as field trips, and others. The second question was concerned with test anxiety. Most of the students (62.5%) said that they would prefer their language classes to have no tests. Later, in the interview, Chao explained that tests make the class less effective since students will shift from wanting to learn the language to wanting to pass the class with a good grade. The third question is concerned with peer pressure and anxiety of speaking in the second language in front of others. Students were asked whether they preferred to speak English in the classroom or outside the classroom with a friend, and 90% of them said that they would prefer practicing English with a friend outside the classroom to practicing English inside the classroom. This is more likely to be due to peer pressure, as explained by Amir, who said that his peers in class did not care as much and were not as motivated as he was, which made him try to find other ways to practice English. The fourth obstacle is the use of textbooks and their quality in teaching English. Students were asked to

evaluate text books they used in language classes on a Likert scale that ranged from "very interesting" to "very boring." The result is illustrated in the pie chart below (Figure 5):
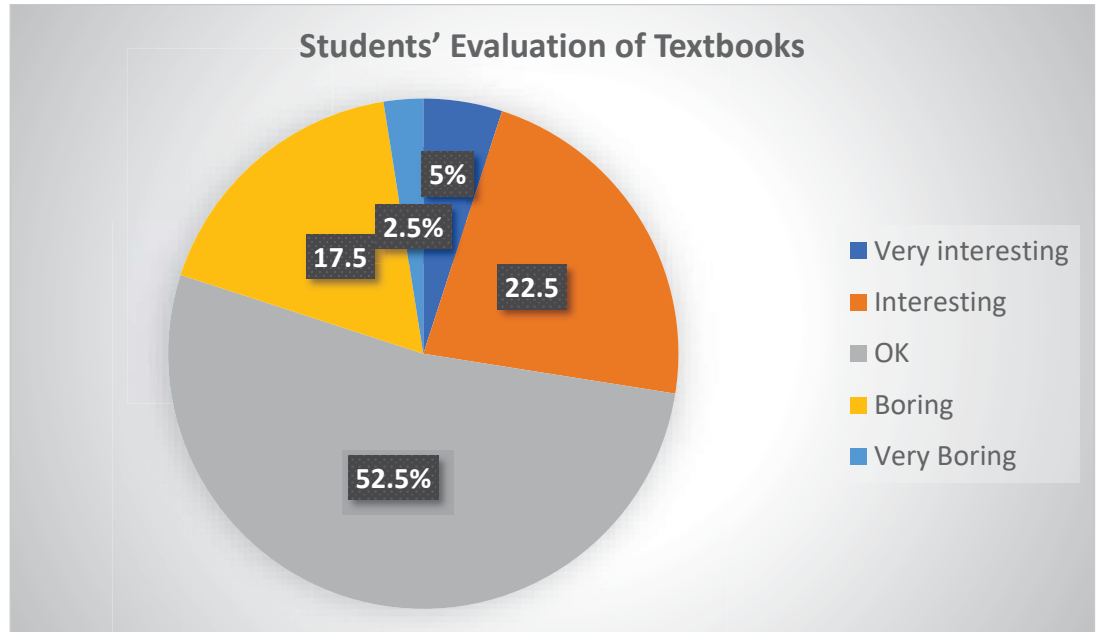
Figure 5. Students' evaluation of their textbooks.

According to the chart, students' overall satisfaction with the textbooks used in class is not high. This might be another reason why students try to find more interesting sources and materials outside the classroom to learn the English language. This might be due to the focus of the book, the way it deals with the language skills or the topics it covers which makes students seek a more interesting, authentic material. Later in this study the interestingness of textbooks will be discussed in more detail.

Interview responses for demotivators. In addition to the four obstacles highlighted in the survey, the interviewees added a few other elements that, in their estimation, made their regular classes less effective. One of those elements is that some classes focused on teaching grammar, which they did not find

effective in speaking the language. They also found grammar teaching to be boring especially because of the way it was taught. Amir emphasized that the fact that his classmates did not care much about acquiring the language and rather dealt with it as a required class was a learning obstacle. That obstacle not only had an effect on what he wanted to learn from class, but it also affected the teacher's attitude towards teaching which in retrospect affected the quality of teaching. Finally, all the interviewees pointed out that classes should focus on teaching the aspects of the English language students need to use in everyday life, and what they would need more practically later in their lives instead of reading or writing about topics that might be irrelevant or inauthentic.

SRL vs. regular classroom instruction. The study revealed that students adopted a self-regulated learning strategy not only to overcome the obstacles in the regular classroom, but also in order to satisfy a desire for learning autonomy. When students were asked if they wanted to use their own ways to learn English, 77.5% expressed their interest in doing so. In addition, when students were asked if they wanted to go a step further and do other work outside the classroom to improve their English, 95% of the responses were positive. Even though all participants agreed that self-regulated learning is effective in learning the language, the majority of them believed that they would not abandon regular classroom learning. When students were asked about the best way to learn English, their answer varied between self-regulated learning, regular class, or a combination of both. The responses, depicted in Figure 6, were as follows:
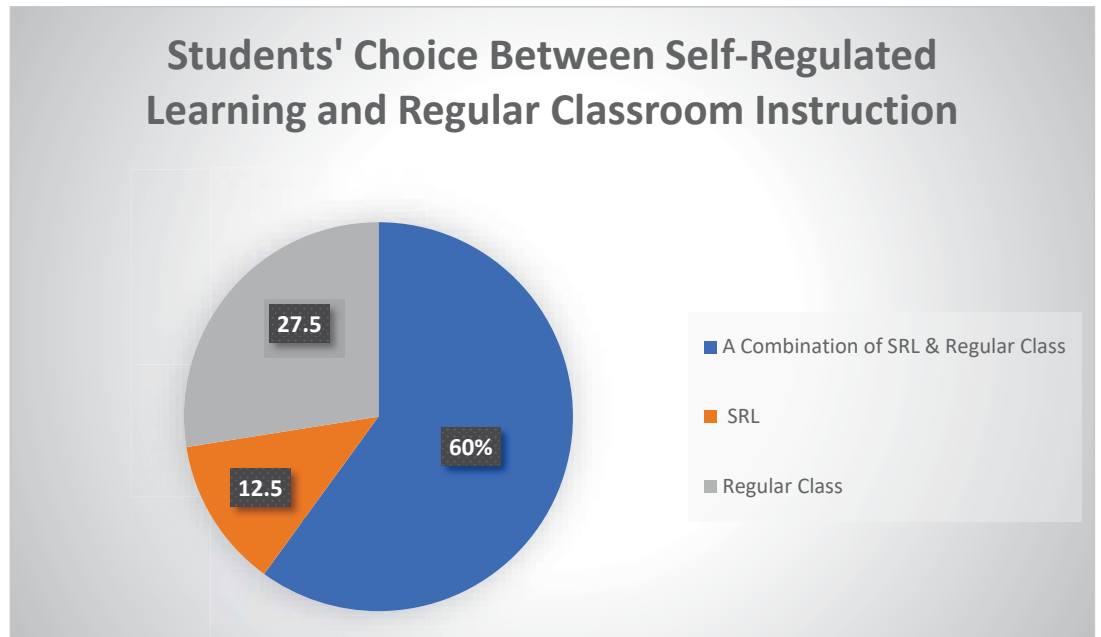
Figure 6. Students' choice between self-regulated learning and regular classroom instruction.

Interview elaboration of preferences: SRL vs. classroom. Chao, Amir, and Mike elaborated on this preference in the interview. They explained that even though they learn a lot outside the classroom, they still find regular classroom learning useful. When they were asked which method they would recommend to a friend who wants to learn English (see Appendix C, question 14), they all agreed that a combination of both is the best method. Some of them clarified that regular classroom learning should be something to start with until the student gets to a point where they can develop their own self-regulated learning technique.

The study shows that the types of student motivation did not affect their attitude toward self-regulated learning. Students with different types of motivation—integrative motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation—all had a positive attitude toward self-regulated learning. They all reported that they had used self-regulated activities regardless of their type of

motivation. This fact was proven further in the results collected from the interviews. Each interviewee seemed to have a different type of motivation from the others. Amir, who opted to take the IEP class just to learn the language, expressed an intrinsic motivation; Chao, who said that his main priority with the language was to be a part of the community, showed an integrative motivation; and finally Mike, who said that English could be a means to connect with more people around the world, seemed to hold an instrumental or extrinsic motivation. They all performed activities outside the classroom to improve their English regardless of the reasons they wanted to learn English in the first place.

Impact of language learning duration on activities. I also observed that neither the length for which students had been learning the language nor the level had an impact on the number of self-regulated learning activities they tried. Students were classified in three main categories regarding their English learning experience:

1. Students who have been studying for 1 to 3 years,

2. Students who have been studying for 3 to 6 years, and

3. Students who have been studying for more than 6 years (see Appendix B question 1).

When the number of activities students tried to improve their English was compared to the number of years, no significant distinction was found. The same observation was made in regard to the students' level and the same result was found.

The results of this research may have several applications depending on which aspect we are looking at. There are mainly three sections in the collected

data that are considered in the implications of this study which are: 1) What students reported about their desire for autonomy. 2)The obstacles students faced in regular classes. 3) Students' desire for self-regulated learning and their favorite practices. The following section of this study explains how this study can be beneficial.

Implications

This study has several implications that can be used either inside the language learning classroom for pedagogical practices or outside the classroom for educational development and other learning purposes. As evident from the results of the survey, students self-reported that using self-regulated learning is highly effective in learning a second language. According to what participants believe as effective, self-regulated learning carries the same effectiveness as regular class learning does. Therefore, ESL educators should pay more attention to self-regulated learning and its inherent skills and strategies and incorporate aspects of this approach in teaching English as a second language or use it as an independent method in teaching the language.

Benefits for language teachers. ESL educators can benefit from this study in class by encouraging their students to adopt a self-regulated learning strategy (or strategies) in addition to regular classroom learning. According to the research, self-regulated learning has the same impact, if not more in some cases, as regular classroom learning. When students become aware of the positive influence self-regulated learning has on their acquisition of English, especially from an accredited source of information (like their ESL instructor), they are more likely to adopt such strategy in learning.

Some students might already be attentive to the importance of doing extra work outside the classroom, but they may require some guidance to know what exactly they need to do. Therefore, the ESL teacher should provide the necessary assistance to those students. The ESL educator can benefit from the activities identified in the research as most effective (e.g. watching movies, watching You tube videos, having conversation partners, or going to events in the target language) by recommending these activities for self-regulated learners. Moreover, such activities can be specifically adjusted for the objectives of a given course meaning that the suggested activities can match the level of the ESL students and the requirements of the course. For example, the instructor could suggest watching some animated movies might be more suitable for intermediate students while watching a thriller would be more suitable for advanced students. The same is applicable for other activities. To illustrate, sending an advanced student to attend a guest speaker event and reporting on it might be of more help than asking a student with intermediate or basic English language abilities to do so. In this way, the list of self-regulated activities can be used as guidelines, but the teacher is the one to decide which of those activities and what level of content would be the best for the individual student.

SRL as extracurricular activities. Another method of incorporating SRL activities into the language learning classroom curriculum could be to use them as extra-curricular activities for which students earn extra credit points. Those activities can be included in an appendix in the course syllabus with specifications on the type of activities and what students need to do for each activity. The activities, for instance, may include a list of relevant movies to be

watched, related articles to be read, or on- or off-campus events to be attended. The content of such activities can be determined according to the objectives of the course and, therefore, would provide appropriate levels of extracurricular assistance to students learning the objectives of the class. The activities will probably offer students a more entertaining way to master the course content in addition to the in-class activities. The extra-curricular activities may even include games. The benefits of selected activities are further discussed below.

The list of activities can be used as materials to prepare for class or for in-class activities as well. ESL educators may use movies, for example, as a listening material instead of regular audio tape. That is likely to have a positive impact on engaging students and teaching them every day language as well as the culture of the target language. The use of movies in teaching is becoming more popular in ESL classes. Movies provide ESL leaners with authentic contextualized conversations where they can learn about different topics. Furthermore, movies can be a more engaging and interesting medium of education. Movies in their different genres can be matched to three informational conditions of interest defined by Poupore in his 2014 study "*The Influence of Content on Adult L2 Learners: Task Motivation: An Interest Theory Perspective.*" In his study Poupore (2014) identified three main elements, or "informational conditions," that create interest in any L2 learning task. The three informational conditions are the following:

1. Abnormality or non-normative qualities (unusual things that deviate from our expectations);

2. Relevant but missing information; and

3. Absolute interests (e.g., romance, sex, danger, power, death) (Poupore, 2014, p. 72).

For the first informational condition, fictional movies can generate interest because of their non-normative traits. For the second condition, documentaries can be a good choice as they fill a gap in the information but also leave the viewers curious to learn more. And finally, movie genres like romances, drama and sitcoms can create what Poupore (2014) calls *absolute interest* because these genres contain themes such as love, hate, power, and more. Moreover, movies as a medium have certain advantages over other media for teaching English as a second language. Ismaili (2013) has demonstrated how movies can be an effective tool to teach a second language due to the lingual content they have, the interest they create as a visually-stimulating medium, and the cultural knowledge they can provide L2 students:

> Video is lauded for contextualizing language (i.e., linking language form to meaning) and depicting the foreign culture more effectively than other instructional materials. Videotapes permit students to hear native speakers interacting in everyday conversational situations and to practice important linguistic structures. Unlike audiocassettes, video's visual dimension is thought to reduce ambiguities present in native speaker voices and to motivate students to want to learn the foreign language. (p. 122)

Like movies, YouTube videos, which were ranked second in the present study in terms of effectiveness, can be used for the same purpose and will carry similar advantages to movies. YouTube videos, however, may have a slight privilege over movies since short videos can be more suitable to give time for

instructors and students to discuss the material in class. YouTube videos may also offer a wider variety of topics that movies do not always have. Additionally, these videos are often produced and uploaded by relative amateurs, and so it is a good possibility that the level of speech, colloquialisms, and vocabulary are less academic, and therefore, more approachable to language learners. One of the interviewees, Chao, stated that he found watching YouTube videos the most helpful. He also added that watching YouTube videos taught him language and culture, and that they also served as an inspiration for him to come to the US and study.

SRL as acculturator. It is worth noting how students emphasized that learning about the target culture is crucial to learning the language. In the survey, 62.5% of the students reported that they wanted to learn the language to a point where they could understand the culture and use the language to become a member of the larger community. In other words, language can be a means to learn about the culture. Furthermore, in a follow-up interview, Chao pointed out that watching movies and videos for him was helpful not only because of the language but also because of what he could learn about the culture. Culture and language seem to be inseparable and synergetic: that is, language can be a motive to learn about culture and culture can be a motive to learn about language. Therefore, it is recommended that language teachers incorporate information about the target culture in their teaching. In a study aimed at finding the most important elements for motivating L2 students, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) include "familiarizing L2 students with the culture of the target language" as one of the ten most important factors for motivating language learners (p. 212).   Gardner further emphasizes the relationship between

language and culture and that teachers can benefit from teaching the culture

along with teaching the language:

> The words, sounds, grammatical principles and the like that the
> language
>
> teacher tries to present are more than aspects of some linguistic code;
> they
>
> are integral parts of another culture. As a result, students' attitudes
> toward
>
> the specific language group are bound to influence how successful they
> will
>
> be in incorporating aspects of that language. (as cited in Dörnyei &
> Csizér, 1998, p. 218)

As illustrated in the quote, language cannot be dealt with separately from the culture where it exists. The words and the texts come in a cultural context, and when students have a positive attitude towards the culture, they will have a positive attitude toward the language. When students understand the culture better, they will understand the language better and vice versa.

Another activity that ESL educators can implement in teaching to overcome one of the classroom obstacles is pairing their students with conversation partners. This activity was ranked third in the survey. ESL teachers understand that learning a second language is a stressful process that involves a lot of anxiety that can affect students' performance in class. One of the main reasons such anxiety may arise is that students feel the pressure to speak well in front of their peers. Liao and Wang (2015) note,

When instructors correct their students […] in front of their peers, that often provokes anxiety. After being corrected in front of others many times, it is possible that students may generalize this anxiety and experience difficulties in other language learning contexts. In general, they may come to connect anxiety arousal with foreign language. (p. 632)

When students were asked whether they preferred practicing English with a friend outside the classroom to in-class practice, 90% of them preferred the option to practice with a friend. In order to overcome the learning obstacle of anxiety, teachers may use conversation partners for language practice outside the classroom which will consequently lead to less anxiety and the potential for furthered learning progress. In classes set in English-speaking countries, students can be paired with native speakers and experience learning both language and culture in their meetings. In countries where English is not the first language, students can be paired with other students in the same class and can meet outside the classroom or use other technological means of communication (e.g. Skype, Facebook, Google Hangouts) to further practice their language. The advantage of pairing students from the same class is that they both will have the same learning objectives and classroom materials/topics.

Authentic materials. It is important to note that the list of activities provided in the study contain what ESL educators identify as authentic material. Using authentic material in second-language teaching can be more educative and more engaging than designed material. Authentic activities engage students in real-life situations rather than imitating them. For example, going to a guest speaker event will offer students a real-life situation where they listen in the

target language to a topic they are interested in. This practice shares one advantage with movies: both activities provide students with contextualized learning and the language of real-life situations that they need to learn. Authentic activities and materials maximize students' engagement and foster connections to real-world contexts and situations. In other words, these activities are inextricably linked to students' needs, everyday lives, and experiences. "They provide students with opportunities not only to interact with authentic materials but also to meaningfully connect their language learning to the outside world in genuine communication" (Huang, Tindall, & Nisbet 2011, p.8).

The effectiveness of authentic activities and materials has been given more attention recently in the field of second language teaching. In fact, some scholars have compiled materials and coined activities based off authentic out-of-class environments. Some scholars now tend to take the whole learning experience outside the classroom and engage their students in a real English-speaking environment. Among those scholars are Michael Jerald and Patrick R. Morgan, who co-authored a book based on out-of-class activities titled *Out-of-class Language Acquisition and Cultural Awareness Activities*. In that book, Jerald and Morgan (1994) emphasise that language acquisition happens outside the classroom, and out-of-class activities can increase students' awareness of the L2 culture. For that purpose, Jerald and Morgan listed dozens of activities that utilize the out-of-class English-speaking environment.

SRL activities in Textbooks. The notion of self-regulated learning activities should not fall only to classroom teachers. Language textbooks may also take into consideration what students reported in this research especially

regarding the use of self-regulated activities. To incorporate authentic material with designed material for a greater benefit, language textbook authors may include a self-regulated appendix that matches the level of the book. It can possibly be a CD with a number of activities like those in the survey. The CD or the appendix can include videos, games, movies, links to educational websites and suggestions of other activities.

Creating a self-regulated course. Another possible implication of this study is an ESL self-regulated course. In this course students will use only a selection of activities from those suggested in the study. Below is a number of activities suggested for a course, but the instructor has the option to add or exclude activities. The class may include:

1. A number of movies to be watched and discussed in class.
2. A conversation partner who gets together with his peer either in person or through video calls to communicate online.
3. A group of articles to be read and reflected on (either in essay form, discussion post, or an online video discussion).
4. A number of educational games that can teach language skills, train students and give them feedback on some language level errors.
5. A radio station or a podcast to which students can listen regularly and write discussion posts about.
6. A Facebook (or other social media) page which students can use to chat and practise their writing skills or to share any language content relevant to their learning objectives.
7. A novel or a story which they can read during the course and write about at the end of class.

Such a class uses only authentic material and is more likely to be effective and interesting to L2 learners since it uses material that is more engaging. The material in this class might also help ESL teachers avoid the use of textbooks which the majority of the students taking the survey did not find particularly interesting (see Appendix B). The class can also be offered online which saves time and space since all the material and the activities can be provided online. The activities above are only suggestions. ESL teachers can use all of them, some of them or combine them with other activities they may find applicable and useful.

Benefits for Intensive English Programs (IEPs). The outcomes of the study can also be used as a service provided in IEP departments or in any English teaching institute. The service can be online in the form of an educational consultant who would discuss with students their interests and identify their motivations and what they want to do with the L2 in the future. Based on such evaluation, the consultant will design a self-study guide combining the activities that would particularly match the interest of the student using the service. The self-study guide can be a page online accessed with an account and password. Each student will have their account that includes the self-study guide that is adjusted according to their needs, level, and desire. For example, a self-study guide may include the following:

1. Links to educational websites matching the level of the student. Those can be for improving one particular skill that students need to work on. For example, for reading they can have a link to a website with reading passages that match their levels. Some websites include levelled passages with questions and feedback for answers. For doing such exercise a student does

not need an instructor since they can read and get the feedback on their own. They can also have many more opportunities to practice with many other texts that will not be provided in the actual classroom course.

2. Some educational videos or short entertaining or educational videos in the target language that match the students interest which can also have a suggested list on the side to provide the student with more videos with similar content (in the same way YouTube suggests videos).

3. A selection of movies that match the student's level and his/her interest. The movies can be of particular genres that appeal to the student. Some summary forms or exercise sheets based on the movies can be provided to students for further practice.

4. Short stories with optional audio recordings.

5. Suggested local/national radio channels and podcasts.

6. Links to computerized writing programs. Such programs provide students with feedback on their writing based off a gigantic corpus of texts. Examples of such corpora are: Daedalus Integrated Writing, Check My Words, Word Neighbor and others.

7. A selection of events that would attract the students and be accessible to them. Standardized report sheets can be provided to students to reflect on their experiences at the events.

8. Games, either educational ones or just entertaining games, in the English language.

9. Digital books, either language self-study books or just books that would be of interest to students and match their level.

The guide may expand on some activities based on individual student motivation and interest. For example, some students may not be interested in listening to radio channels. In that case, this activity can be eliminated and so on. Other students might be interested in some other activities such as following the news. In that case, an online newspaper can be added. In the same way, the self-study guide account can be designed in a way that is closely tailored to individual student's interests.

The system used to make the accounts can also benefit from feedback and frequency of usage for further improvement. Students may provide feedback on what they found particularly interesting and useful (perhaps through short surveys), and the guide will be adjusted accordingly. The system can also supply students with similar activities that they frequently use by giving suggested links, movies, games etc. A phone app can also be designed to access the system for easy access and to encourage students to use the system more frequently.

According to the survey, the possibility of students using an online system is high. When students were asked if they used websites that help them improve their English language without being instructed by their teacher to do so, (see Appendix B questions 12-13), 82.5 % of them reported that they did use websites without being required to do so. Furthermore, when students were asked whether they found the use of such websites effective, 87.5% of them gave a positive answer between useful and very useful. In the three interviews following the survey, all interviewed students reported using one form or another of online sources. The data indicates that students will be interested in

online educational systems which further supports that the implication of an online service is of potential success.

Learning Obstacles. ESL educators can also benefit from the knowledge gained from the study regarding L2 learning obstacles. The survey and the interview have highlighted some teaching practices that students found ineffective or demotivating. The first of those practices is the fact of being in a classroom itself. When students were asked whether they preferred activities outside the classroom to those inside the classroom, 75% of them favoured the out-of-class activities to those inside. Previous research shows that just the fact of having students learning a foreign language in a classroom may cause anxiety that has a negative effect on both their willingness to communicate and their scholastic success (Rastegar and Karami, 2015, p. 2391). Thus, teachers can avoid this learning obstacle by taking the learning experience outside the classroom and giving students opportunities to do out-of-class activities.

The second regular class learning obstacle analyzed in the study is tests. Despite some students stating that they wanted to have tests in learning a second language, the majority of respondents (62.5%) prefer English classes with no tests. Previous research found that tests can either work for student's benefit, since it makes them study better, or it can work against student's interest as it causes more anxiety (Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015, p. 855). Excluding the test element from the L2 learning experience and substituting it by other evaluating methods, such as portfolio assessment, quizzes, reflective papers, presentations, or student proposed presentations, may have a positive impact on students' performance. Using other evaluative methods will not only alleviate the anxiety

that L2 students have while learning, but other methods will also offer a more comprehensive and progressive way to evaluate the skills students learn.

The results of the study also show that students prefer practicing their English with a friend outside the classroom to using it in the classroom. As evidence for such choice, ESL teachers may notice that some students are reluctant to participate in class. ESL learners have anxiety in language learning. Such anxiety may even increase when they feel that they need to speak in front of others. Their fear of making verbal errors may stop them from participating in classroom activities. Some studies indicate that students refrain from participating due to fear of making pronunciation mistakes or just due to fear of speaking in front of others (Shabani, 2012, p. 2379). Therefore, teachers should be aware of such issues and help English language learners overcome these types of anxiety. That can be done through using activities that do not require students to speak in front of a large group of students. Teachers may use pair work to alleviate the stress on students since speaking to only one person is likely to be less stressful than speaking to a group. Teachers can also pair students in class and ask them to meet outside the classroom in an informal setting to practise their English. In institutes where native speakers are available, it will be greatly beneficial to have conversation partners with whom L2 learners are likely to feel comfortable talking.

Students' desire for autonomy. Another important finding of the study is how much students valued their autonomy in language learning. Even though the study concluded that most students prefer some guidance from a teacher or an expert of some sort, they sill desire to have control and choice of what and how they want to learn. According to the survey 77.5 percent of students would

like to use their own ways to learn English and 95% said that they would like to take a step further and find ways outside the classroom to learn English. ESL educators should then be aware of how much students value having some control over their learning experience. Understanding the importance of autonomy entitles providing students with more choices inside and outside the classroom.

Students can participate in making decisions for what they learn from the beginning of the learning experience, even prior to the commencement of a course. Students should take part in the assessment of their needs and what they want to study in any given course. When students decide what they study, they are more likely to have a higher motivation in learning. "By establishing their own learning goals and finding motivation from within to make progress toward those goals, students are more likely to persist through difficult learning tasks and often find the learning process more gratifying" (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011, p. 10). To highlight the importance of autonomy even further, Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) define three main components of the needs analysis; necessities, lacks, and wants. The last of these is concerned with what students self-identify as needed which consequently creates a high willingness (or motivation) to achieve better results. Learners have their own views about what they believe is useful for them, and since teachers have ready access to their students, they can easily elicit students' wants and expectations with simple tools such as informal conversations, interviews, and surveys. Knowing what our students think about their felt needs is vitally important to engaging them in the learning process and to adjusting our teaching appropriately (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014, p. 153-4).

Giving students autonomy should not only be considered in the content of what they learn, but they should also be given the opportunity to choose the method of how they learn. Students can be given a choice in what specific activities they prefer. Such activities may vary from one class to another. In a heterogeneous class, for instance, students may prefer pair work or individual work to group work. Students in a homogeneous class, on the other hand, may prefer group work to individual work. Students may also choose if they would do certain activities as homework or classwork. Consulting students about what they prefer to do is likely to make students more motivated to do the assigned tasks and help teachers have better classroom management.

Perhaps one of the main reasons for students to adopt self-regulated learning is the desire to have autonomy over their language learning experience: "What sets self-regulated learners apart from their peers is that these students not only seek advice from others, but they do so with the goal of making themselves more autonomous" (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011, p. 12). Understanding such desire is important for ESL educators to include more students in their classes. If students are given the freedom to learn in their ways, they are more likely to benefit from regular classroom instruction. It is important to understand that students' desire for autonomy does not mean that they would abandon their teachers and work totally on their own. The majority of the students in the survey admitted that they need help either in the form of a regular class or in any other form that provides them with guidance. Similarly, when students in the interview were asked about what they would recommend to other students for learning a language, they said that they would recommend a

combination of regular classroom and self-study. Therefore, providing students with autonomy may increase their interest in regular classroom instruction.

The autonomy of the students is likely to increase as they progress in learning and become more confident and more independent. ESL learners may tend to be more dependent when they first start learning the new language and then, as they become more confident, they start pursuing other ways to learn the language. One of the interviewees emphasized the importance of the level in the use of self-regulated activities by saying that the effectiveness of the activities varied depending on the stage of learning. He said that at the beginning of his learning experience he found the classroom instruction vital and as he progressed he started finding his own ways to improve outside the classroom. Therefore, ESL teachers should consider the level of the student in allowing them more autonomy and assigning them independent activities. Like learning any skill or knowledge in life, learners start by being more dependent on their teachers until they feel confident enough to form their own thinking and pursue the knowledge in their own way. However, teachers should always try their best to gradually allow their students to gain independence.

This study is mainly aimed at ESL students. The data collected were all related to English learners and the findings were made in the same context. However, one can infer that several generalizations can be made. The same implications of the study can be used for any other language and not necessarily English. Furthermore, self-regulated learning is a concept that can be applied in other disciplines where students can utilize the vast number of sources that is more available to us nowadays than it has ever been before.

Limitations

This research originally attempted to investigate two main topics. The first is the effectiveness of self-regulated activities (according to students' own reporting) in learning a second language. The second is the identification of which type(s) of motivation (integrative, intrinsic, or extrinsic) are likely to encourage students to adopt a self-regulated learning strategy. With the former topic, there were only minor limitations; however, it was more challenging to achieve clear results with the latter topic.

Research tools. First, there were some restrictions with the research tools. The research originally started with approximately twice as many questions for the survey that aimed at investigating more aspects of the topic. However, in order to guarantee effective participation, especially since participants volunteered to take the survey, a shorter version of the survey was adapted from the original one. The short version had more of a negative impact on the second inquiry regarding identifying the type of motivation more than the first goal dealing with the effectiveness of SRL activities. It was challenging to exactly identify the type of motivation with such limitations. The research drew the questions from previous research on motivation, and the effectiveness of the questions had already been tested, but the limitation of the research tool made it difficult to include the list of questions originally made for the research.

The limitation of the research tool was not only regarding the number of the questions, but also the forms of the questions. I started the research by browsing a variety of online survey tools that would allow me to form my questions in the way I wanted (i.e., being able to use multiple choice questions,

Likert scale questions, etc.). However, only one of those survey tools (Google Forms) was cost efficient enough for me to use according to my research budget. Consequently, the form of the original survey questions had to be adapted to the question types available on Google Forms. In this process, I excluded a number of questions that could not be asked using the forms given on Google Forms. Fortunately, most of the questions could be edited to match the forms, but the results for one question of the survey were excluded from the research findings due to the confusion that the new form caused (see question 11, Appendix B).

In order to overcome the difficulties faced with the survey, I tried to include some of the important questions excluded from the survey in the one-to-one interviews with my participants. The interview method helped in compensating for the missing information in the survey results. The interviews also elaborated on certain points of the research that needed more explanation due to the restriction of number and form of the questions in the survey. Such elaboration as I got from the interviews was helpful in the investigation of the first inquiry of the effectiveness of self-regulated activities, but it was still unsatisfactory in regard to the identification of the type of motivation.

Educational background of students. Another limitation of the findings that may affect the implications of the study to a small extent is the educational background of students. Regardless of the educational backgrounds of the students participating in the survey and the interview, the findings of the research are consistent. However, after close investigation, particularly in the interviews, which purposely included three international students with different educational backgrounds, I noticed a slightly different attitude towards classroom instruction that is likely to be due to certain pedagogical practices

that varied from one educational setting to another. To illustrate, it seemed from the information given in the interviews with the Arab and the Chinese students, Amir and Chao, that their ESL teachers focused primarily on teaching grammar. The two participants considered their experiences to be the main method of learning a second language; however, current language acquisition pedagogy regards this as an out-of-date approach in teaching. Mike, the Hungarian student, on the other hand, mentioned other language-learning practices that seemed to be aimed at using the communicative approach (which unlike the grammar teaching approach focuses mainly on the practical use of language as means for communication and not as a set of rules). It is also worth mentioning that both the Arab and the Chinese students were required to take the IEP class when they applied to study at ESU, while the Hungarian student did not have the same requirement. That fact might attest to the proficiency of the participants' language. The educational environment in which each student received their education seemed to have an effect on their language level as well as their attitude toward studying in a classroom. That being said, it is important to highlight that students' views regarding self-regulated learning were still all positively consistent.

Finally, it is important to take into consideration the size and the location of the studied student population. The survey was given to 40 students, only three of which were interviewed. The students were also college students in one American university. If the same study is carried out on a bigger scale with more students and perhaps more diversity, results may vary to a degree. Additional research in different educational institutes might lead to even more useful

findings. This research was an attempt to pave the way for more research to come in self-regulated learning in the field of ESL.

Future Considerations

The study's main purpose is to test the effectiveness of self-regulated learning (SRL) activities in learning English. The study aimed at examining the topic through students' reporting on the subject. In other words, it was about the personal beliefs and impressions of the students. Even though some of these beliefs are supported by previous research in the field, I suggest that further research on the topic is necessary to examine the effectiveness of self-regulated activities.

One possible way to further investigate the topic is to carry out a follow-up study on two separate groups of language learners. Group A will consist of students taking a regular language class and group B will be a group of students using only self-regulated activities to learn the target language. The study should be preceded and followed by assessment tests to evaluate students' level of and progress in language acquisition as well as motivational factors. A self-regulated module given to group B can be created according to the guidelines mentioned earlier in this research.

In addition, this study was carried out on testing the effectiveness of SRL in learning English as a second language. The study can be replicated in learning other languages. Since English is the lingua franca, the self-regulated activities can be more available in English than they are in other languages. Such ease of access might affect the results of similar research in languages other than English. The difficulty of the target language and the average

duration it requires for learning may affect the results as well. However, research may find a lot of similarities in the effect of adopting a self-regulated attitude toward learning a second language.

Conclusion

In today's educational climate, there is access to several ways to learn English other than the traditional classroom instruction. The internet is brimming with websites designed to help English language learners; self-study books are now available in different forms and styles, movies in English are accessible anywhere in the world, and English learning phone apps have been developed to help learners improve their language skills. Language learners have many methods to learn that are seen as more convenient and more enjoyable than traditional in-class methods. In order for ESL educators to "keep up with the times" and improve their classroom teaching, they should try to utilize all available resources to maintain their students' motivation and to achieve better outcomes.

As mentioned earlier in the research, student motivation is key to self-regulated learning, and it goes without saying that motivation is the key to any type of learning. If students are motivated, they will do their best to achieve the best results, and they will find ways to overcome the challenges to achieve their goals. Therefore, it is important to recognize the obstacles that students may experience in the ESL classroom and work toward eliminating them. Language teachers should consider adopting new practices that are likely to achieve better results and keep students' motivation high. This research highlighted some classroom practices that are considered demotivators in learning English as a

second language. Avoiding such demotivators and perhaps adopting the suggested substituting practices may lead to better learning outcomes.

Self-Regulated Learning is a learning strategy that has been used for centuries. Many iconic figures: artists, authors, educators, engineers, scientists, and leaders were self-educated, also known as autodidacts. To name a few, among those self-taught figures were Ernest Hemingway, Alan Moore, John Clare, George Bernard Shaw, Sor Juana, James Watt, Benjamin Franklin, and Abraham Lincoln. The practice has been used as an alternative to institutionalized learning, but, given the outcomes of these famous individuals, it seems that it can be just as successful as institutionalized learning if not even more. Perhaps academia needs to embrace the notion self-regulated learning and apply SRL strategies in several disciplines instead of rejecting it or only acknowledging it as a parallel or substitute form of formal education. The field of English language learning might have the privilege to pioneer inclusion of SRL strategies, since the field is blessed with a gigantic body of resources such as educational videos, learning websites, movies, books and many other resources that might not be available in the same quantity in other languages or other fields of study. If such incorporation is achieved along with being investigated further in future research, the field may witness great progress and a vast expansion that helps more students and promote learning in the traditional classroom, institution, or university.

References

Amiri, M., & Ghonsooly, B. (2015). The Relationship between English learning anxiety and the students' achievement on examinations. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6*(4), 855-865. doi:10.17507/jltr.0604.20

Biglari, N., & Farahian, M. (2017). An investigation into the effect of reader response approach on EFL learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary retention and test anxiety. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 7*(8), 633-643. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0708.05

Bonney, C. R., Cortina, K. S., Smith-Darden, J. P., & Fiori, K. L. (2008). Understanding strategies in foreign language learning: Are integrative and intrinsic motives distinct predictors? *Learning and Individual Differences*, *18*, 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2007.11.005.

Carrasquillo, A. L. (2013). *Teaching English as a second language: A resource guide.* Hoboken, NJ: Routledge.

Dacanay, F. R. (1963). *Techniques and procedures in second language teaching.* Quezon City, NY: Oceana Publications.

Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., & Richard, R. M (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist 26*(2&4), 325-346. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep2603&4_6

Diller, K. C. (1978). *The language teaching controversy*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003) Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language

learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language*

Learning, 53, 3–32. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.53222

Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language

learners: results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching*

Research, 2(3), 203-229. Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/ pdfviewer/ pdfviewer?vid=12&sid=

89c8726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-b685564cb57c% 40sessionmgr4007

Farahnaz, F., & Antonella, V. (2012). TESOL teacher education: Novice

teachers' perceptions of their preparedness and efficacy in the

classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(3), 450-471. doi:10.1002/tesq.37

Ferris, D. R., & Hedgcock, J. S. (2014). *Teaching L2 composition: purpose,*

process, and practice. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gardner, R. C. (2005). Integrative motivation and second language

acquisition. Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics.

Gatbonton, E. (2008). Looking beyond teachers' classroom behaviour: Novice

and experienced ESL teachers' pedagogical knowledge. *Language*

Teaching Research 12(2), 161-182. Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer

?vid=16&sid=89c8726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-

b685564cb57c%40sessionmgr4007

Goodridge, P. (2017). Second-language acquisition and motivation: A

literature review. *The Journal of Undergraduate Research at The*

University of Tennessee, *8* (1), 79-82. Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/

pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=18&sid=89c8726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-

b685564c b57c%40sessionmgr4007

Huang, J., Tindall, E., & Nisbet, D. (2011). Authentic activities and materials

for adult ESL learners. *Journal of Adult Education, 40*(1), 1-10.

Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=21&sid=89c8

726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-b685564cb57c%40sessionmgr4007

Hung-Chang, L., & Ya-Huei, W. (2015). Creating a positive learning

environment for students with English classroom

anxiety. *Psychological Reports, 116* (2), 631-646.

doi:10.2466/11.PR0.116k21w8

Ismaili, M. (2013). The Effectiveness of using movies in the EFL classroom:

A study conducted at South East European university. *Academic

Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 2*(4), 121-132.

doi:10.5901/ajis.2012.v2n4p121

Jerald, M., & Clark, R. C. (1989). *Experiential language teaching techniques:

Out-of-class language acquisition and cultural awareness activities.*

Brattleboro, VT.: Pro Lingua Associates.

Moos, D. D. & Ringdal, A. (2012). Self-regulated learning in the classroom: A

literature review on the teacher's role. *Education Research

International,* 1-15. doi:10.1155/2012/423284

Pintrich, P. R., & De Groot, E. V. (1990) Motivational and self-regulated

learning components of classroom academic performance, *Journal of

Educational Psychology,18*(1). 8233-40. doi:10.1037/0022-

0663.82.1.33

Poupore, G. (2014). The Influence of content on adult L2 learners' task motivation:

An interest theory Perspective. *Canadian Journal of Applied*

Linguistics, *17*(2), 69-90. Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?

vid=29&sid=89c8726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-

b685564cb57c%40sessionmgr4007

Rastegar, M., & Karami, M. (2015). On the relationship between foreign

language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate and

scholastic success among Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in*

Language Studies, *5* (11), 2387-94. doi:http://

dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0511.25

Shabani, M. S. (2012). Levels and sources of language anxiety and fear of

negative evaluation among Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice*

in Language Studies, *2*(11), 2378-83. doi:10.4304/tpls.2.11.2378-2383

Zimmerman, B. J. (1989). A social cognitive view of self-regulated academic

learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*(3), 329-39. Retrieved

from

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e1ff/53e710437e009f06bc264b093a2b

a9523879.pdf

Zimmerman, B. J. (1990) Self-regulated learning and academic achievement:

An overview. *Educational Psychologist, 25*(1), 3-17. Retrieved from

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=39&sid=89c8

726f-cd6e-45b1-b0b4-b685564cb57c%40sessionmgr4007

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview.

Theory into Practice, 41(2), 64-70. DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2

Zumbrunn, S., Tadlock, J., & Roberts E. D. (2001). Encouraging self-

regulated learning in the classroom: A review of the literature.

Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, 1-28*.* Retrieved from

http://www. selfregulation.ca/uploads/5/6/ 2/6/56264915/encouraging_

self_regulated_ learning_in_the_classroom.pdf

Appendix A

Email/Announcement to Recruit Study Participants

"The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English Language

Learning"

Dear ESU student,

My name is Mostafa Ahmed, and I am a master's student in English here at

ESU. You are receiving this email because you are an English language

learner. My thesis project, "The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in

English Language Learning," seeks to determine the usefulness of self-study

in English language learning. In an effort to help current and future English

language learners, we would appreciate your input by filling out the following

survey.

(Link to survey here)

The data from the survey will be used in my graduate thesis project. If you

would like to be informed of the findings of the research, please express your

interest at the end of the survey.

Sincerely,

Mostafa Ahmed

Appendix B

Survey Questions

"The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English Language

Learning"

1. How long have you been studying English?

    *1-3 years

    * 3-6 years

    * 6 or more years

2. How would you describe your overall level of English?

    *Beginner

    *Pre-intermediate

    *Intermediate

    *Upper-intermediate

    *Advanced

3. Which of the following best describes you as a learner?

    *I would like to be fluent in English to a point where I can understand

    the culture and use the language to become a member of the

    community.

    *I would like to learn enough English that can help me get my degree

    and find a job.

    *I would like to learn English because I enjoy learning the language in

    general.

4. I prefer activities outside the classroom (for example, field trips or attending events) to those inside the classroom.

  *Yes

  *No

5. If I had the option, I would prefer an English class with no tests.

  *Yes

  *No

6. I would prefer practicing my English with a friend outside of class to speaking in class.

  *Yes

  *No

7. In my experience in English language classes, I found the textbooks we used in class:

  *Very interesting

  *Interesting

  *OK

  *Boring

  *Very boring

8. I like to use my own ways to learn English.

  *Yes

  *No

9. I like to go a step further and do work outside the classroom to improve

   my English language.

     *Yes

     *No

10. In my opinion, I believe the best way to learn English is:

     *A class with a teacher and a classroom setting.

     *I can acquire the language on my own using my ways.

     *I can do a lot on my own, but I can benefit from some guidance from

     an expert.

11. As a listening activity, which of the following would you like the most?

    [Attending an event and listening to a speaker.

Please check one box for each activity according to your preference from 1 to

4 (1 being the best).

     * Attending an event and listening to a speaker.

     * Watching a movie or a show.

     * Listening to a song.

     * Listening to an audio tape in class.

12. Some websites help English learners improve their English. In your past

    experience, have you used any without being instructed from your teacher

    to do so?

     *Yes

     *No

13. How useful did you find using websites in learning English?

     *Very useful

     *Useful

     *Not useful

14. In your experience, which of the following did you find useful in

   improving your English?

You may select more than one. Please select everything you have found

useful.

     *Movies

     *Songs

     *Novels or stories

     *Self-study books

     *Conversation partners

     *Games

     *Educational websites

     *Educational phone-apps

     *Social media

     *Setting my laptop/phone settings in English

     *Listening to radio channels

     *Listening to podcasts

     *Watching YouTube videos

     *Going to Events where English is the language of communication

     (lecture, workshop, gallery etc.)

15. To what extent did you find out-of-class activities useful in learning

    English compared to class work?

    *less than 20 percent

    *20 to 40 percent

    *40 to 60 percent

    *more than 60 percent

16. Would you like to be notified when research has been completed to view

    any findings/results? If yes, please provide your email address. If no,

    please skip this question.

17. Would you like to participate in an interview following this survey? If yes,

    please provide your email address. If no, please skip this question.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

"The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English Language

Learning"

1.   How long have you been learning English?

a.   How long in school?

b.   How long out of school?

2.   Beyond the classroom, how long have you been using English in your

speaking and writing?

3.   While I was learning English, Have you tried to find a native speaker

or a friend to practice English with? Describe that experience. How did you

find one? How effective was it?

4.   What were your motivations for learning English? (For example…)

5.   What did you do outside the classroom to learn English?

6.   Which in-class activities did you find most helpful/interesting? Least

helpful/interesting? Explain these answers.

7.   Which out-of-class activities did you find most helpful/interesting?

Least helpful/interesting? Explain these answers.

8.   Have you had any difficulties in learning English? What were they?

9.   Why is/was learning English important to you?

10.   In your opinion, did you find that your English language learning in

the classroom was more or less effective than learning outside the classroom?

Can you explain?

11.   Let's say you have a friend who wants to learn English. What are the

recommendations you would give them for how to learn English most

effectively? (Formal class setting, or self-regulated activities, or a combination

of both?)

Appendix D

Informed Consent Document

"The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English Language

Learning"

The Department of English, Modern Languages, and Journalism at Emporia
State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects
participating in research and related activities. The following information is
provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present
study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free
to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will
not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach. Likewise, if you
choose not to participate, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other
form of reproach.
The objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of English
language learning activities outside the classroom versus inside the classroom.
The study will include a survey for all participants; then, participants can
choose to be contacted for a one-to-one interview with the researcher.
Questions will focus on activities used both inside and outside the classroom
and how helpful they are in learning English as a second language. The survey
and interview will take 30-45 minutes each.

There are no possible discomforts or other forms of risk involved for subjects
taking part in the study. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from
the study at any time.

The study aims at finding better ways to learn English as a second language,
which consequently benefits language learners. The study also examines
regular classroom instruction and seeks to improve current practices, which
will benefit the university and teachers in the discipline by providing them
with alternative effective teaching methods.

The data collected will be stored in a password-protected laptop. Only the
principal investigator (researcher) and his thesis chair will have access to the
information. Within the survey data, all participants will remain anonymous,
and participants who volunteer for interviews will choose an alias.

For any inquiries concerning the procedures of the study, please contact
Mostafa Ahmed at mashmed@g.emporia.edu.

*"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the
procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity
to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks
involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them
voluntarily. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any
time without being subjected to reproach."*

_____   _____

_____

Subject   Date

_____   _____

_____

Parent or Guardian (if subject is a minor)   Date

I, Mostafa Youssef Ahmed, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia State University as partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available to use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, digitizing or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a non-profit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author. I also agree to permit the Graduate School at Emporia State University to digitize and place this thesis in the ESU institutional repository.

_____

Signature of Author

_____

Date

Students' Beliefs on the Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Activities in English

Language   Learning

Title of Thesis

_____

Signature of Graduate School Staff

_____

Date Received