

Investigating Teachers' Communicative Styles in EFL Context: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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Abstract

Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) postulates that autonomy-enhancing behaviors of teachers affect learners' self-determined/autonomous motivation in learning through supporting the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Moreover, the issue of the teacher's communicative style, including controlling versus autonomy-supportive style within self-determination theory, has been investigated in many general classroom settings, but the number of studies in EFL context is scarce. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine how the perceptions of the teacher as controlling or autonomy-supportive are associated with autonomous motivational regulations within self-determination theory. Increasingly, this study investigated the relationship between the subtypes of autonomy-enhancing behaviors (fostering relatedness, allowing criticism, and providing choice) and those of autonomy-suppressing behaviors (suppressing criticism, intruding, and forcing meaningless acts) of EFL teachers. To this aim, a sample population of 120 EFL learners completed the questionnaires, measuring the determined variables in the study. The findings indicated that intrinsic motivation subscale correlates with the teachers' autonomy-supportive communicative teaching style, while learners' perceptions of their language teacher as controlling correspond with less self-determined motivational regulations. Moreover, the results indicated that the subscales of autonomy-enhancing behaviors of teachers correlate negatively with autonomy-suppressing subscales. The findings underscore the importance of different autonomy-affecting teacher behaviors during instruction and suggest that provision of choice should not always be viewed as an indicator of autonomy support among learners. The major implication for this study is that SDT has many applications to the second language learning process as SDT describes EFL learners' autonomous motivational regulations and the relation between teachers' communicative style and autonomous motivational subtypes. Also, another implication for this study is that language teachers must foster relatedness during their instruction and avoid suppressing criticism if they tend to encourage self-determined motivation among EFL learners.

Keywords: autonomy-enhancing; autonomy-suppressing; competence, relatedness; self-determination theory

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' ability to support learners' autonomy is viewed as one of the promises of positive humanistic teaching (Deci & Ryan, & Williams, 1996; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991). When learners feel that their teachers support their autonomy, they not only experience positive feelings toward learning but also develop cognitive engagement in learning process (Connell, 1990; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). Self-determination theory (SDT) distinguishes a number of teacher-behaviors that affect learners' feelings and engagement in learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). These behaviors are grouped into the three general clusters of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In educational settings, teachers create autonomy-enhancing teaching environment by having behaviors such as providing choice, encouraging self-initiation, minimizing the use of controls, and acknowledging the learners' perspectives (Ryan, Deci, 2002; Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996).

Many studies (Black & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) have provided evidence on the effect of fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness on academic achievement and autonomous motivation. However, the role of autonomy-affecting behaviors of teachers has received little attention in EFL context. To bridge this gap, this study is an attempt to see how the perceptions of the teacher as controlling or autonomy-supportive are associated with autonomous motivational regulations within self-determination theory. Moreover, this study investigated the extent to which EFL learners can distinguish among different types of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing behaviors of teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-determination Theory (SDT)

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), self-determination theory as an organismic-dialectic framework of motivation is on this tenet that humans are always actively searching for optimal challenges and new experience in the life. In educational settings, self-determination theory suggests that the learners are intrinsically motivated to deal with activities that are interesting, optimally challenging and satisfying. According to self-determination theory, learners feel well and show consideration for others when the learning environment enables them to satisfy their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Therefore, the type of behaviors the teachers have towards their learners might have devastating or uplifting effect on learners' feelings and engagement in learning (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Ryan, 1995). The cluster of autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors includes behaviors such as acknowledging the learners' perspectives, providing choice, encouraging self-initiation, minimizing the use of controls, clarifying the relevance of expected behaviors, accepting the expression of criticism, and minimizing the suppression of criticism (Assor et al., 2002; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Furthermore, self-determination theory postulates that teachers' autonomy-enhancing actions not only enhance cognitive engagement but also reduce negative feelings toward learning. As Deci and Ryan (2000) point out, learners who feel confident that they are sufficiently competent to complete a task, and believe that it is their own aspiration that led them to participate in the learning task are more likely to report autonomous motivation. Therefore, self-determination theory identifies the inner motivational resources that all learners possess, and it provides the teachers with certain guidelines to nurture and strengthen their learners' inner resources during their instruction (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2010).

Motivation within Self-determination Theory

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), self-determination theory is an approach to understanding human motivation that holds that the satisfaction of certain innate psychological needs is the basis for self-motivation, psychological growth, and optimal well-being. As Deci and Ryan (2008) point out, SDT posits the social contexts that provide support for the satisfaction of innate basic psychological needs for **competence**, **autonomy**, and **relatedness**. The need for competence is understood as the desire to interact effectively with one's environment. The need for relatedness refers to the necessity for close and secure emotional bonds with significant others (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Also, the need for autonomy is defined as the necessity of experiencing a sense of choice, willingness, and volition as one behaves. Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT distinguishes between different types of motivation.

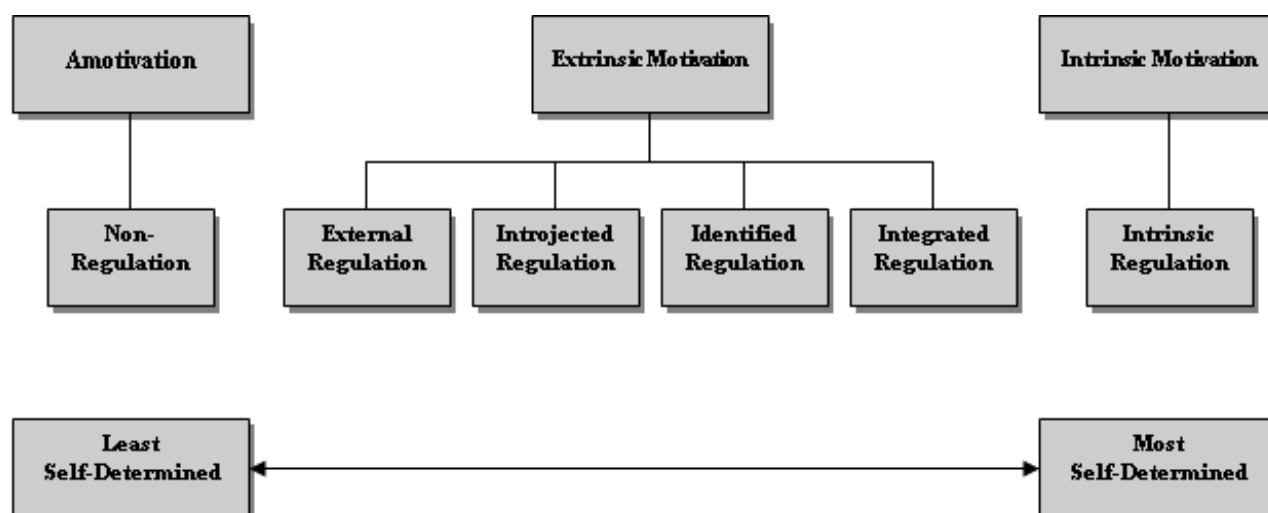


Figure 1. Types of Motivation within Self-Determination Theory Ryan & Deci (2000)

As Figure 1 shows, amotivation represents the state of lacking an intention to act. Extrinsic motivations can be classified into external, introjected, identified, and integrated regulations. With external regulation, an individual engages in an activity to obtain external rewards or to avoid punishments (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Also, learners guided by introjected regulation engage in the activity because of internal pressure, feelings of guilt or to attain ego enhancement. As Deci and Ryan (2000) point out, a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is regulation through identification.

Identified regulation reflects participation in an activity because one holds certain outcomes of the behavior to be personally significant. Integrated forms of extrinsic motivation is observed when the activity with which a person identifies is more consistent with the individual's values, needs, interests, and emotional regulations. However, this form of regulation is not assessed in many studies as it does not emerge in a meaningful way and it can be difficult to ascertain through self-report (Deci, Ryan & Williams, 1996). Intrinsic motivation is defined as the engagement in an activity for its own sake; that is to say, a person who is intrinsically motivated, is doing an activity for the sense of satisfaction and enjoyment experienced during the course of the activity itself. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivation is sometimes defined with respect to the satisfactions a person gains from doing intrinsically motivated task while others view intrinsic motivation in terms of an interesting task. Deci and Ryan (2000) believe that the innate psychological needs for competence and self-determination underlie intrinsically motivated behaviors. Deci and Ryan (1995) state that intrinsically motivated behaviors occur in the absence of external reward. This in fact implies that intrinsic motivation is a challenge against the tenet of operant psychology which is founded on this concept that all behaviors have external reinforcement. With respect to L2 learning process, intrinsic motivation refers to the reasons for L2 learning that are derived from one's inherent pleasure and interest in the activity (Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999; Ramage, 1990).

Teachers' Communicative Style within Self-determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory is on this tenet that people are active by nature and possess inherent sources of intrinsic motivation in which energize them to explore their interests and develop their competencies. Self-determination theory, as an organismic dialectic meta-theory, suggests that every individual is growth-oriented organism who actively interacts with his environment. In fact, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory holds that people are endowed with an innate striving to actualize their potential, cultivate their interests, and explore the world. Subsequently, the people's tendency to expand their experiences is accompanied by their natural inclination to interact with other people. This assumption that humans are inherently active organisms does not imply that this tendency can happen automatically (Vansteenkiste, Ryan, & Deci, 2008).

In contrast, Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory holds that the growth-oriented nature of individuals needs nutrients, and build inner resources to feed this inherent tendency or find the necessary support in the environment. Therefore, as described in SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985a), the social contexts can support or thwart individuals inherent growth tendency. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the quality of the persons social-environmental conditions that functions as a key condition to explain when people are engaged actively and when they are passively disengaged. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory posits that the people's inherent motivational sources are supported and nurtured by other people. In educational settings, the concept of motivating style deals with the teacher's interpersonal style toward the

learners and it exists on a continuum, ranging from a highly controlling style to a highly autonomy-supportive style (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981). In fact, Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory investigates the people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for the people's self-motivation and personality integration. Self-determination theory, investigating human motivation basically in the categories of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation, posits that people's motivation types are influenced by social factors that enhance or frustrate the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Self-determination theory posits that the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness must be satisfied to achieve integration and self-determination. SDT research focuses on the interpersonal environment and the effects of that environment on autonomous motivation. Also, the classroom climates are characterized in terms of the degree to which they are autonomy-supportive versus controlling (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994).

Within the framework of self-determination theory, motivational style is affected by the factors in the social environment that affect self-perceptions of competence and autonomy. As it is described in self-determination theory, the learners possess inherent needs and growth propensities to seek out and constructively engage in their classroom surroundings. These classroom surroundings affect the learners' daily motivations and motivational development (Reeve, 1998; Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Deci and Ryan (2008) state that when people experience autonomy from their environmental conditions, they have tendency to behave more positively and experience more psychological well-being. SDT guides much of the research on classroom conditions that nurture versus undermine learners' positive functioning. SDT assumes that all learners possess inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs that provide a motivational foundation for their optimal functioning, academic engagement, and constructive social development (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). A teacher's motivating style can be understood along a continuum that ranges from highly controlling to highly autonomy-supportive (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999). Autonomy-supportive teachers facilitate whereas controlling teachers interfere with the congruence between the learners' self-determined inner guides and their day-to-day classroom activity. Autonomy-supportive teachers facilitate congruence by identifying and nurturing the learners' needs, interests, and preferences, and by creating classroom opportunities for learners to guide their behavior. Nevertheless, controlling teachers interfere with learners' self-determination because they as learners are to adapt themselves to the teacher-constructed instructional regulations.

According to Reeve (2009), autonomy-supportive environments involve and nurture the learners' psychological needs, personal interests, and integrated values. Learners in classroom taught by teachers having autonomy-supportive communicative style experience an impressive and meaningful range of positive educational outcomes, including greater perceived competence, higher motivation, greater engagement, positive emotionality, higher autonomous motivation, and enhanced well-being (Black

& Deci, 2000; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003). However, controlling communicative style is the interpersonal sentiment and behavior teachers provide during instruction to pressure students to think, feel, or behave in a specific way (Assor, Kaplan, Kanat-Mayman, & Roth, 2005; Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Therefore, as Reeve (2006) points out, the starting point for a controlling style is the prioritization of the teacher's perspective to the point that it overruns the students' perspective. The adoption of the teacher's perspective during instruction is not controlling, when teachers routinely recommend to students a multitude of constructive ways of thinking, feeling or behaving. Such recommendations become controlling only when they overrun the students' perspective via intrusion and pressure.

Reeve (2009) believes that controlling communicative style involves the application of sufficient pressure until students change their behaviors and opinions. In practice, acts of intrusion and pressure lead students to forego their internal frame of reference and their natural rhythm during a learning activity to, instead, absorb and respond to the pressure to think, feel, or behave in a teacher-defined way. Elsewhere, Reeve (2011) states that a controlling communicative style undermines students' positive functioning and outcomes because it induces in students an external perceived locus of causality, a sense of pressure, and a sense of obligation to others or to one's own negative emotion. In educational settings, the learners who experience autonomy-supportive environmental condition, show greater educational benefits, including higher learning, more engagement, enhanced intrinsic motivation, and enhanced academic achievement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve, 2006). The learners feel autonomy when they follow their educational interests, study to satisfy their curiosity and also volitionally engage in their assignments. Therefore, many experimental studies are in favor of this concept that learners taught by teachers having autonomy-supportive communicative style show greater perceived competence, higher motivation, enhanced creativity, deeper information processing, higher autonomous/intrinsic motivation, and better academic performance (Boggiano, Flink, Shields, Seelbach, & Barrett, 1993; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986).

According to Reeve (2009), autonomy-support refers to the interpersonal behavior that one person provides to nurture and develop the other's inner motivational resources, such as the need for autonomy, intrinsic motivation, personal interests, and intrinsic goals. To define autonomy-support as a construct that can be manipulated by intervention, Deci et al., (1994) also refer to autonomy-supportive context as the one that the teacher acknowledges the learners' perspective, allow opportunities and choice for self-initiation, apply non-controlling language, and provide timely positive feedback. Moreover, some added concepts were introduced into the definitions of autonomy-support, including offering choices (Williams, Cox, Kouides, & Deci, 1999), nurturing inner motivational resources (Reeve et al., 2004), and acknowledging perspective and

feelings (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2008). Reeve (2006) believes that students possess inner autonomous resources that are fully capable of energizing and directing their classroom activity in productive ways. Nurturing inner autonomous resources

therefore focuses first on gaining an awareness of what inner resources students possess and then finding ways during

instruction to involve, nurture, and develop those resources. To nurture these inner resources during instruction, teachers can build lessons around students' interests, autonomy, competence, relatedness, preferences, sense of challenge, and intrinsic goal (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Reeve & Halusic, 2009; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Schraw & Lehman, 2001).

According to Reeve (2011), through providing meaningful rationales, the learner will be provided with a rationale that explains why tasks engagement is a beneficial thing to do. Also, learners experience autonomy in learning provided that they gain the opportunity to work on tasks that allow them to realize their goals or interests (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth 2002; Noels, 1999; Turner, Meyer, Cox, Logan, Dicintio, & Thomas, 1998; Vansteenkiste, Ryan, & Deci, 2008). As Reeve (1998) points out, the first task the teacher can do in trying to have autonomy-supportive communicative style is to become less controlling. In other words, to foster autonomy-supportive teaching style, the teachers are to avoid controlling sentiment, controlling language, and controlling behaviors. As teachers become more mindful of the causes and consequences of their motivating style, they gain a greater capacity to behave in a flexible, autonomous, and adaptive way, rather than in an impulsive, habitual, or reactive way (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Autonomy-enhancing versus Autonomy-suppressing Teacher behaviors in

Self-determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory is on this tenet that the existence of three fundamental psychological needs for *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness* are the basis for self-motivation and personality integration. Also, in educational settings, interpersonal contexts that provide opportunities to satisfy the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhance self-regulation and those contexts that undermine satisfaction of these needs impair self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997). The need for autonomy is defined as an inherent desire to act with a sense of choice and volition and the need for competence is concerned with the psychological needs to experience confidence in one's abilities and the capacity to affect outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Moreover, the need for relatedness involves the need to experience connectedness with others and to have supportive social relationships. Nevertheless, controlling learning contexts undermine learners' positive functioning and outcomes as it encourages a sense of pressure, and a sense of obligation to others or to one's own negative emotion. In contrast, an autonomy-supportive style promotes student outcomes because it supports learners' experience of volition, and a sense of choice (Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003). When learners engage in learning activities without volition, and perceived choice, their engagement lacks the motivational foundation of personal interest, task involvement, positive feelings, self-

initiative, personal causation, a desire to continue, and the type of high-quality motivation (Reeve, 1998; 2009).

Moreover, an autonomy-enhancing approach to instruction rests on the assumption that learners possess inner motivational resources that are fully capable of energizing and directing their classroom activity in productive ways. In other words, all learners have psychological needs for autonomy, competence, relatedness, interests, preferences, self-chosen goals, personal values, and internalized motivation (Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). To foster these inner resources during instruction, teachers can build lessons around learners' interests (Schraw & Lehman, 2001), autonomy (Reeve & Jang, 2006), competence (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986), relatedness (Furrer & Skinner, 2003), and preferences (Reeve & Halusic, 2009).

Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory distinguishes between socializing contexts that are autonomy-enhancing versus autonomy-suppressing. Autonomy-suppressing learning contexts are the ones that pressure the learner to think or behave in particular ways. Self-determination theory is on this proposition that there are a number of teachers' behaviors that affect learners' feelings and engagement in learning. Therefore, under the tenets of self-determination theory, the two types of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing behaviors of teachers are distinguished (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Teachers' behavior is viewed to be highly autonomy-enhancing if they nurture inner motivational resources, rely on non-controlling informational language and acknowledge the learners' perspective and feelings (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Reeve, 2009). On the contrary, teachers' behavior is viewed as autonomy-suppressing if it is interfering with learners' thoughts, self-chosen values, and feelings (Deci, Hodges, Pierson, & Tomassone, 1992; Su & Reeve, 2011).

The autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors are under the three headings of "fostering relatedness", "providing choice", and "allowing criticism" (Assor & Raveh, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2000). As Ryan and Solky (1996) point out, people are naturally inclined to seek for close and intimate relationships with other people. In educational settings, "fostering relatedness" causes the learner to be involved in supportive and caring relationships in which their feelings, thoughts, and values are respected. The need to feel related for learners involves the need to experience connectedness with their teachers and classmates and to have satisfying and supportive learning context (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Also, "providing choice", as an autonomy-enhancing teacher behavior, involves teachers' attempts to enable the learners to choose learning activities that are consistent with their interests and undoubtedly this sense of choice has great contribution to developing autonomy. Moreover, as Deci and Ryan (2000) point out, the need for autonomy provides many adaptive advantages for learners, including the ability to regulate one's thoughts, actions, and emotions in harmony with one's own needs and values. Furthermore, teachers' behaviors in "allowing criticism" might provoke the feeling of interest in the learning process as learners' expressions of

dissatisfaction might cause the teachers to make the learning activities more interesting (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002).

Moreover, autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors fall into the three distinct categories of “intruding”, “suppressing criticism”, and “forcing meaningless activities” (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Reeve, 2009). In “intruding” type of behavior, teachers usually communicate with learners in a way that maximize pressure and do not convey a sense of choice and flexibility in the location of behavior (Su & Reeve, 2011). That is to say, teachers' continual interference with learners' natural rhythm might minimize learners' realizations of their goals and values. “Suppressing criticism” refers to the type of teacher behavior that is highly controlling. In other words, suppressing criticism occurs when teachers refuse to take learners' perspectives, assert power, use intimidating tactics, try to change learners' values, and compel the learners to be obedient (Cheon & Reeve, 2015). “Forcing meaningless activities”, as an autonomy-suppressing teacher behavior, refers to teachers' attempt to compel their students to do activities that they find uninteresting, resulting in amotivation and negative feeling. As Reeve (2013) points out, an amotivated learner lacks both sufficient ability to perform the learning task and an intentional desire to do a particular learning activity. However, many studies from outside second language acquisition have provided evidence on the positive and negative effects of teachers' behavior on learners' feelings and cognitive engagement (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Reeve, 2009). However, little research has concentrated on the relationship between autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing behaviors of teachers in EFL context. To bridge this gap, this study aimed at investigating the extent to which EFL learners can differentiate among different subtypes of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors. Moreover, this study investigated the relationship between teachers' communicative style and self-perceptions of learners' autonomous motivation within SDT. To achieve this aim, the following research questions are formulated:

- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' communicative style and self-perceptions of learners' autonomous motivation, as described within self-determination theory?
- Can EFL learners distinguish among various types of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing behaviors of their teachers?

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 120 senior undergraduate students (90 females and 30 males), doing their bachelor's degree in English Translation Studies and English Language Teaching at Islamic Azad University-South Tehran Branch. However, the initial number of the participants was 140 in which 20 of them were discarded from data analysis on account of incomplete answers. All the participants were attending Academic Writing Course 2 and their age range was approximately 18-30. Moreover, the participants distributed fairly evenly across three classes, taught by the same teacher.

Instruments

Teachers Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire (Wellborn & Connell, 1987) was used to measure the learners' perceptions about their teacher's autonomy-supportive or autonomy-suppressing behaviors during the instruction. Teachers' Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire is a 4-point (1= Not at all true to 4= Very true) Likert scaling questionnaire, including 34 items. Autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors were measured by the three subscales of providing choice (7 items), fostering relevance (4 items), and allowing criticism (7 items). As wellborn and Connell (1987) report, the reliability indices for these three subscales are .77, .75, and .77, respectively. Also, autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors was measured by the three subscales of intruding (9 items), suppressing criticism (3 items), and forcing meaningless activities (4 items). The reliability indices for these three subscales are .78, .77, and .77, respectively. Moreover, the Perceptions of the Teachers' Communicative Style Questionnaire (Pelletier & Vallerand, 1996) was used to measure the participants' perceptions of the communicative style of their language teachers as both controlling and autonomy-supportive ones. This is a 7-point (1=Never to 7=Always) Likert scaling questionnaire, including 10 items.

As Pelletier and Vallerand (1996) report, the alpha reliabilities for the two subscales of controlling and autonomy-supportive regulations are 0.80 and 0.81, respectively. Increasingly, to measure the participants' motivational regulations, the researcher administered the adapted version of Behavioral Regulation Questionnaire (BRQ) developed by Markland and Tobin (2004). This is a 5-point Likert scaling questionnaire (1=Not true for me to 5=Very true for me), including 19 items. The Behavioral Regulation Questionnaire contains five subscales that measure amotivation, external, introjected, identified and intrinsic motivational regulations of the participants. The reliabilities for the subscales of amotivation, external, introjected, identified, and intrinsic regulations were computed and they were found to be 0.89, 0.89, 0.90, 0.91 and 0.91, respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

The participants were asked to complete Perceptions of the Teachers' Communicative Style Questionnaire (Pelletier & Vallerand, 1996) and Behavioral Regulation Questionnaire (Markland & Tobin, 2004). Furthermore, the participants were asked to complete Teachers Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire (Wellborn & Connell, 1987) and express their views about their teacher's behaviors during the instruction. Also, it is worth noting that the participants were provided with sufficient explanation about how to fill the questionnaires. Moreover, all the participants were ensured that their responses to the questionnaires were exclusively used for accomplishing the present study and their responses had nothing to do with classroom evaluation.

Data Analysis

To determine the relationship between the teachers' communicative style and autonomous motivational subtypes within self-determination theory, the researcher computed correlational data analysis between the data collected from administering the Perceptions of the Teachers' Communicative Style Questionnaire and Behavioral Regulation Questionnaire. Moreover, the researcher hypothesized that EFL learners can differentiate among the two global types of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors. Therefore, factor analysis was run using principal component analysis to reduce the data collected from administering Teachers Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire (Wellborn & Connell, 1987) into a smaller number of factors. Moreover, correlational analysis was computed among the data collected from autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing subscales.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it was stated earlier, the researcher collected data on the relationships between autonomous motivational regulations within SDT and learners' perceptions of teachers' controlling versus autonomy-supportive communicative style. The descriptive statistics of the correlational data analysis between autonomous motivational subtypes and the perceptions of the teacher as controlling or autonomy-supportive one are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Correlational Data Analysis between Autonomous Motivational Subtypes and Perceptions of Teachers

	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Varian ce	Skewness	Kurtosis			
	Statis tic	Statis tic	Statis tic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statis tic	Std. Error	Statis tic	Std. Error
Amotivation	120	4	4.733	0.078	0.857	0.735	1.197	0.221	1.376	0.438
External	120	4	4.017	0.085	0.926	0.857	0.807	0.221	0.544	0.438
Introjected	120	9	8.375	0.157	1.715	2.942	-0.876	0.221	2.086	0.438
Identified	120	6	10.867	0.137	1.506	2.268	0.111	0.221	-0.680	0.438
Intrinsic	120	6	17.967	0.131	1.432	2.049	-0.517	0.221	-0.016	0.438
Autonomy-Supportive	120	11	30.275	0.222	2.436	5.932	0.128	0.221	0.042	0.438
Controlling	120	10	8.725	0.231	2.534	6.420	0.157	0.221	-0.733	0.438

The results of descriptive statistics reported in Table 1 indicated that the distribution of scores was examined for skewedness and kurtosis and it was found to be normal. Moreover, the results of correlational analysis between the data collected from the Perceptions of the Teachers' Communicative Style Questionnaire and Behavioral Regulation Questionnaire are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlational Data Analysis Between Autonomous Motivational Subtypes and Perceptions of Teach

		Autonomy Supportive	Controlling
Amotivation	Pearson Correlation	-.116	.213(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.004
	N	120	120
External	Pearson Correlation	.177	.274(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.002
	N	120	120
introjected	Pearson Correlation	-.015	-.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.872	.338
	N	120	120
Identified	Pearson Correlation	.120	-.157
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	.086
	N	120	120
Intrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.218(*)	-.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.532
	N	120	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 2 illustrates, perceptions of the teacher as autonomy-supportive correlate negatively with amotivation ($r = -.11$). Also, intrinsic motivation was negatively correlated with perceiving the teacher as controlling ($r = -.058$) and positively correlated with perceiving the teacher as autonomy-supportive ($r = .21$). As it stated earlier, external regulation is viewed to be less self-determined form of autonomous motivational regulation within Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory. As Table 2 displays, external regulation significantly correlated with perceptions of the teacher as controlling ($r = .27$). Furthermore, amotivation correlated significantly with the perception of being controlling ($r = .21$), while it associated negatively with perceptions of teacher as autonomy-supportive ($r = -.11$). Also, as it was hypothesized, identified regulation positively correlated with teachers' autonomy-supportive style ($r = .12$), while it correlated negatively with perceptions of teacher as controlling ($r = -.15$). Therefore, the findings are in line with principles of self-determination theory as the results indicated that more autonomous motivational regulation (identified regulation and intrinsic motivation) are significantly associated with perceiving the teacher as autonomy-supportive and less perceptions of being controlled. Therefore, the findings provided evidence on the applications of self-determination theory to the second language learning process as SDT describes EFL learners' autonomous motivational regulations and the relation between teachers' communicative style and autonomous motivational subtypes.

The pattern of correlations is consistent with the expected relations outlined in Deci and Ryan's (2000) SDT. The pattern of relations also indicates that intrinsic motivation is associated with the teachers' autonomy-supportive communicative style. The results indicated that learners' perceptions of their language teacher as controlling correspond

with less self-determined motivational regulations. Therefore, as Deci and Ryan (2000) point out, teachers' autonomy-supportive style enhances learners' sense of self-determination. The positive correlation between a general sense of being controlled and amotivation is consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2000) idea that control can be demotivating. SDT assumes that all the learners possess inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs that provide a motivational foundation for their optimal functioning, academic engagement, and personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Reeve (2009) defines autonomy-supportive style as the one that nurtures inner motivational resources of the learners and provides them with explanatory rationales. Hence, teachers with autonomy-supportive communicative style rely on non-controlling language and allow the learners to pace their own learning. According to Reeve (2006), providing explanatory rationales and taking the learners' perspective are in harmony together as learners' internalization experiences and activity engagements reflect not only the quality of the teacher's rationales but also the extent to which teachers help raise students' awareness of how the activity at hand connects to students' existing goals, values, needs, and personal striving. Therefore, learners who are exposed to autonomy-supportive communicative style and non-evaluative comments enhance their perceived autonomy (Reeve & Jang, 2006). Furthermore, this study hypothesized that the participants can distinguish among autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors. Hence, a factor analysis was run among the data collected from administering Teachers Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire (Wellborn & Connell, 1987) to reduce the data into a smaller number of factors that account for high proportion of variance. Table 3 displays the results of factor analyses.

Table 3. Results of Factor Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.460	24.336	24.336	1.460	24.336	24.336	1.447	24.118	24.118
2	1.145	19.081	43.417	1.145	19.081	43.417	1.158	19.299	43.417
3	1.034	17.236	60.653						
4	.933	15.548	76.201						
5	.740	12.334	88.535						
6	.688	11.465	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

As Table 3 illustrates, the two global factors of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors with eigenvalue of 1 were extracted to explain 43 percent of the total variance. Then, correlational analysis was run among the data collected from the six subscales of Teachers Autonomy-affecting Behavior Questionnaire to determine the associations among the determined variables in this study. Table 4 reports the results of correlational data analysis.

Table 4. Correlational Data Analysis Between Autonomy-enhancing and Autonomy-suppressing Subscales

	Providing choice	Fostering relevance	Allowing criticism	Intruding	Suppressing criticism	Forcing Meaningless activities	
Providing choice	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.011	.085	-.085	-.142*	-.141*
	P-value. (2-tailed)		.876	.231	.231	.049	.047
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Fostering relatedness	Pearson Correlation	.011	1.000	.015	-.102	-.124	-.008
	P-value. (2-tailed)	.876		.835	.151	.080	.914
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Allowing criticism	Pearson Correlation	.085	.015	1.000	-.077	-.137	-.052
	P-value. (2-tailed)	.231	.835		.279	.053	.463
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Intruding	Pearson Correlation	-.085	-.102	-.077	1.000	.141	.023
	P-value. (2-tailed)	.231	.0151	.279		.047	.752
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Suppressing criticism	Pearson Correlation	-.142*	-.124	-.137	.141	1.000	.123
	P-value. (2-tailed)	.082	.080	.053	.047		.082
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Forcing Meaningless activities	Pearson Correlation	-.141*	-.008	-.052	.023	.123	1.000
	P-value. (2-tailed)	.047	.914	.463	.752	.082	
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 4 illustrates, the three autonomy-enhancing subscales correlated negatively with the three autonomy-suppressing subscales. The value of correlation between providing choice and intruding was moderate ($r = -.085$). Nevertheless, providing choice had significantly negative correlation with suppressing criticism ($r = -.142$). Besides, providing choice and forcing meaningless activities had negatively significant correlation ($r = -.141$). Also, fostering relatedness correlate negatively with suppressing criticism ($r = -.124$). Furthermore, fostering relatedness did not correlate with intruding ($r = -.102$). Although the correlation between fostering relatedness and forcing meaningless activities was not significant, the value of correlation was negative ($r = -.008$). Furthermore, as Table 4 displays, the values of correlation among the three autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors were positive, whereas they associated negatively with the three autonomy-enhancing subscales. The magnitude of correlation between suppressing criticism and intruding was significant ($r = .141$). Although

suppressing criticism did not have significant correlation with forcing meaningless activities, the value of their correlation was positive ($r=.123$). Therefore, the results were in harmony with the paradigm of self-determination theory as the three autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors correlated negatively with autonomy-suppressing behaviors (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989).

Therefore, the overall results indicated that EFL learners can differentiate among the six types of autonomy-enhancing and suppressing teacher behaviors. In other words, the findings provided evidence on the fact that EFL learners pass verdict on their teachers on the basis of their teachers' supportive or suppressing approach towards their autonomy. The present study indicated that autonomy is a multifaceted construct and providing choice is not necessarily the most indispensable component of fostering autonomy among learners. Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory is on this tenet that learners satisfy their needs for autonomy by realizing their interests, goals, and self-chosen values. Thus, many studies (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981; Maehr & Midgley, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000) have provided evidence on the fact that autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors have deleterious effects on learners' affective and developmental processes. Many studies (Black & Deci, 2000; Deci, 1972; Deci & Ryan, & Williams, 1996) have confirmed the fact that the experience of autonomy facilitate positive functioning and promote internalization. In other words, learners in classroom with more autonomy-enhancing teachers show greater curiosity and higher self-esteem than the learners with more controlling teachers. The teachers who provide choice or volition and avoid criticism might strive to create a space to allow the learners to realize their personal goals and values, but many studies (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan, 1995) have indicated that many learners find it difficult to perceive this space as autonomy-enhancing because they cannot link the activities they do to their individual values. The findings indicated that language teachers must make an attempt to realize their learners' personal values, goals and this might be a way to help their learners understand the association between their interests and their cognitive engagement in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between teachers' communicative style and self-perceptions of learners' autonomous motivation within SDT. The major conclusion drawn was that autonomous motivation is associated with the teachers' communicative style. That is to say, perceptions of the language teacher as controlling associate with less autonomous/self-determined motivational regulations. Moreover, the results of this study provided evidence on the application of Deci and Ryan's (2000) SDT to fostering autonomous motivation among learners. Many studies (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Williams & Deci, 1996) suggest that autonomy-supportive learning environment leads to greater internalization of values and more autonomous motivation as the teacher takes the learners' perspective, encourages self-initiation, provides choice, and minimizes the use of controlling language. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination

theory assumes that learners are always in active exchange with their classroom environment and they hence need support from their environment to nurture their inner motivational resources. According to Reeve and Halusic (2009), autonomy is the inner endorsement of one's behavior. When people are autonomous, they perceive that their behavior appears from the self and it is self-authored. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory is on this tenet that autonomy is an inherent psychological need that requires support from environmental conditions and interpersonal relationships for its satisfaction. A plethora of studies (Benware & Deci, 1984; Black & Deci, 2000; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003) are in favor of this concept that teachers' communicative style or the way the teacher interacts with learners is associated with learners' autonomous motivation. That is to say, learners' self-perceptions of autonomy and competence are high when they make their own decisions about their learning.

According to self-determination theory, autonomy-suppressing teacher behavior includes behaviors such as preventing the learners from working at their own preferred pace, giving controlling directions to learners, and suppressing learners' voice and opinion during the classroom settings (Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Reeve, 2006). Nevertheless, autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors involves the provision of choice, explanation of relatedness, and acceptance of criticism in which associate with learners' positive feelings and engagement in learning. As Deci (2012) points out, autonomy-suppressing teacher behaviors result in developing the sense of amotivation among learners, undermining intense engagement in learning process. That is to say, amotivated learners do not tend to invest any effort in learning process, while learners who are exposed to autonomy-enhancing teacher behaviors invest a great deal of effort while studying and show great attention and endurance in learning (Deci & Ryan, 1991, 1995, 2008; Deci et al., 1992; Markland, Tobin, & Rollnick, 2005). Many studies (Flowerday & Schrew, 2003; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003; Schrew et al., 1998) indicate that offering choices of learning activities is usually ineffective as the learners do not usually perceive a connection between having choice or volition and their personal goals and interests. In other words, learners with choice can enhance autonomy, positive feeling, and cognitive engagement in learning if it is accompanied by fostering relatedness and allowing criticism. The findings of this study are congruent with the paradigm of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan, & Deci, 2000) as the results indicated that suppressing behaviors of teachers such as restricting the expression of personal opinions and compelling participation in meaningless activities undermine learners' positive feeling and engagement in learning process.

Moreover, many studies from outside second language acquisition (Jang, Reeve, 2010; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wubbels & Levy, 1991; Wubbels, Creton, Levy, & Hooymaerys, 1991) provide evidence on the fact that the two autonomy-enhancing behaviors of providing choice and fostering relatedness are interrelated as providing choice enriches learners' perceived autonomy and sense of personal causation and fostering relatedness flourishes learners' competence and perceptions of control over the learning outcomes. That is to say, learners' persistence and engagement in learning

is highest when teachers take autonomy-enhancing actions and lowest when teachers show autonomy-suppressing behaviors (Assor et al., 2002; Goh & Fraser, 1996; Denbrok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2006).

This study indicated that teacher appears to be the key person who affects learners' perceptions toward the learning. Therefore, the teachers' communicative styles are associated with learners' autonomous motivation (Reeve, 2006). Reeve (2011) believes that when teacher-learners interactions go well, teachers function both as a guide to structure learners' learning opportunities, as well as support system to nurture learners' interests and to enable learners to internalize new values, develop important skills, and develop social responsibility. In this supportive condition, learners' classroom activity is consistent with their needs, interests and preferences as learners show strong motivation, active engagement and meaningful learning (Reeve, 2006, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, this study provided evidence on this fact that when teachers become more aware of the causes and consequences of their behaviors, they gain a greater capacity to behave in a flexible, autonomous, and adaptive way, rather than in an impulsive, habitual, or reactive way (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Thus, greater awareness of how one's behaviors affect learners' functions as the first step in the effort to become a more autonomy-enhancing teacher. Autonomy-enhancing behavior is the interpersonal sentiment teachers provide to identify and develop their learners' positive affect and engagement during the instruction (Reeve, 2009). Hence, this is of primary importance to language teachers to distinguish between the two global types of autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-suppressing behaviors as any of their actions or behaviors can predict learners' constructive motivation, positive functioning in the classroom, and engagement during the learning process.

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