



The Relationship between Learners' Autonomy and Creativity

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between learner's autonomy and creativity. Since many studies had been mainly studied autonomy and creativity independently of each other, this study attempt to find whether creativity and autonomy are interrelated. To this end, 100 EFL learners were chosen to participate in the study. To collect data, Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) questionnaire to measure their autonomy, and Abedi's creativity test to measure their creativity were used. The Oxford Quick Placement Test was also administrated to measure the participants' language proficiency level. To see the relation between autonomy and creativity, the correlation coefficient was applied. The result of the correlation coefficient revealed that there is a relationship between autonomy, creativity.

Keywords: creativity, autonomy, language, language proficiency, self-directed Learning

INTRODUCTION

Creativity may serve as a foundation for understanding and applying constructivism to learning and treatment (Chessick, 1998; Viney, 1996). Pucker, Begetto and Dow (2004) believe that creativity is an integral part of any understanding of human education and psychology. It is rarely explored by the behavioral, social scientists, theorists and researchers. Creativity makes students intrapersonal and intrapersonal problem solvers. Brabe and Duffy (2000) note that the results of the creativity studies are applicable to educational psychology.

According to (Zimmerman, 2000 as cited in Zarei and Gilani, 2014). Autonomy is a constructive process that employs a large amount of valuable information about the processes and environment which help learners to acquire new knowledge and skills. Lui (2015) asserts that autonomy is a very unique variables because it involves learning being responsible for their own learning.

Despite conducting many studies in the field of learner's autonomy, and creativity, few studies have considered the relationship between creativity and autonomy in educational systems, specifically in the Iranian educational system. The current study aims to

contribute to a better understanding of the importance autonomy and creativity in language learning process. In this regard, the study attempts to answer the following question:

- Is there any relationship between creativity and autonomy in Iranian context?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner autonomy flourishes by intrapersonal initiation, interpersonal collaboration, and learner-centred instruction (Thanasoulas, 2000) Kohen asserts that autonomy makes the learners be able to cooperate with others. According to Little (1991) learner autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. To gain autonomy helps learners maintain the currency of their knowledge and skills (March, Richards, and Smith, 2001). Ponton, Carr and Confessore (2000) note that autonomous learning involves personal initiative in engaging with learning and finding resources and opportunities for learning, persistence in learning, and resourcefulness. The concept of learner autonomy was coined and promoted by Holec in 1980s in the context of language education in Europe. Holec (1981) believed that foreign language learners were those who are responsible for their own language learning. This responsibility encompassed their determination of the learning purpose, content, rhythm, and method while simultaneously monitoring the progress of the learning process and evaluating its outcomes

It is very essential for learners to use and learn language creatively. This facilitates their progress beyond the rudimentary levels (Hadley, 2003). According to Marashi and Driad (2013) there is no general consensus over the definition of creativity. It is said that this lack of unity in defining creativity is associated with different philosophical and psychological views. Marrapodi (2003 as cited in Marashi and Dadari, 2012) define creativity as a conscious process, which is primarily employed to understand or assess information and experiences with a set of insightful attitudes and capabilities that guide considerate actions and beliefs. Additionally, Mishan defines creativity as an inherent aspect of all pedagogical tasks (Mishan, 2005). According to Ferrari et al. (2009), creativity encompasses the capability of listening and communicating and the ability to inspire and interest. Furthermore, Sawyer (2003) defines creativity as problem-solving process.

In regard to the relationship between autonomy and creativity, few studies are conducted. Shemirani, Marandi and Sotudeh (2011) examined the relationship among autonomy, creativity and language proficiency. The results indicated that indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between autonomy and language proficiency level on one hand and creativity and language proficiency level on the other hand. The results also showed that there was a significant positive relation between autonomy and creativity of the learners.

Nosratinia and Zaker (2013) studied the relationship between creativity and autonomy among EFL learners. In the results of the study suggested that there was a significant and positive relationship between EFL learners' creativity and autonomy

In addition, Nosratinia, Mirzaki (2017) investigated the relationship among EFL learners' Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Regulation (SR), Autonomy (AU), and Creativity (CR). The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between EFL learners' EI and SR, EI and CR SR and AU SR and CR), and AU and CR.

METHOD

Instrumentation

Schumacher Creativity Test

In order to measure creativity, Schumacher Creativity Test (O'Neil, Abedi & Spielberger, 1994) was used. The test is a multiple choice format on which learners rate themselves on 60 questions regarded as indicators for, Fluency (22items); Flexibility (11items); Originality (16 items); and Elaboration (11 items). According to Nosratnia and Mirzakeri (2013), the multiple-choice items of this questionnaire have three options ranging from least to most creative responses with a range of scores between 0-2; therefore, the scores of the Persian Creativity Test could range from 0 to 100, and the participants are allocated 50 minutes to respond to the questionnaire.

The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale

According to Fisher, King, and Tague, (2001) Self-Directed learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) measures an individual readiness for self-directed learning. The range of total scores on this scale represents an inner-outer directedness continuum along which an individual's readiness for self-direction.

Oxford Quick Placement Test

The test developed by Oxford University was used to determine participants' level of language proficiency. It consists of 60 multiple-choice items. According to this test, participants were divided into 3 groups of low, middle and high regarding their language proficiency. Those candidates whose scores are from 0-29 are regarded as the low group, 30-47 as the middle group(lower and upper intermediates) and advanced students are in high group with scores from 48-60.

Data Collection Procedures

The aims of this study was to investigate the relationship between autonomy and creativity. To achieve this purposes a survey method was conducted. The participants of this study were randomly selected. These 100 learners were from Shiraz. This research was conducted during the second semester, 2017. At first, OQPT was administered to EFL learners, and exam sheets were collected. One day after, the advanced learners were participants are handed out The Self-Directed Learning Readiness questionnaire and

Schumacher Creativity Test. The researcher explained the instructions of the questionnaire to the participants. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire. The total administration time was totally about 60 minutes.

RESULTS

Questionnaire data analysis included the analysis of closed- ended questions. The closed-ended questions were analyzed with the help of the statistical analysis software SPSS (version 21) was used. Descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the mean, the variance and the standard deviation of data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to answer research question.

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for frequency of Iranian EFL learners' level.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Frequency of Learners' Proficiency Level

Valid	Frequency	Valid Percent
Beginner	25	25
Intermediate	37	37
Advanced	38	38
Total	100	100

As it is illustrated in the table 1 of the 100 participants 25 are beginners, 37 are intermediates and 38 are advanced learners.

To answer the research questions, two types of tests, namely, an independent samples *t*-test and a Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation were run. In order to investigate whether there is a correlation between autonomy and creativity Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Table 2 shows the result.

Table 2. Correlations between Creativity and Autonomy

	Sig (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation
Attitude and Proficiency	0.01	0.311

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between creativity and autonomy. The results show that there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.311$, $n = 100$, $p = 0.01$.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of the present study was to find out the relationship between autonomy and creativity. Based on the procedure of the research, the participants were divided into three groups. With regard to the language proficiency test, the advanced group had the highest score whom participate in the study. In order to find out the relationship between autonomy and creativity a Pearson product moment correlation was run. The results indicated that there was a relationship between learners' autonomy and creativity. In line with the results of the current study, Nosratinia and Mirzaki (2014) also concluded that creativity and autonomy are interrelated. This result is also supported by the findings of

Shemirani, Marandi and Sotudeh (2011) who investigated a relationship between learners; autonomy and creativity. Nosratinia and Mirzaki (2017) who investigated the relationship between autonomy and creativity obtained the same results. The findings of this study have some implications for EFL teachers. EFL teachers can inform learners to be more independent and creative in doing leaning activities. Being autonomous and independent help learners to become more confident and self-regulated. In addition, curriculum developers and material producers can design more appropriate materials and activities that will create a more autonomous and creative context.

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