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# Self-Regulation, Co-Regulation, and Feedback in the Context of Cross-Cultural Language Acquisition in Higher Education: A Conceptual Approach

## **About the Author(s)**

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## **Keywords**

cross-cultural, languages, English, Chinese, logographic, self-regulation, co-regulation, conceptual



## SELF-REGULATION, CO-REGULATION, AND FEEDBACK IN THE CONTEXT OF CROSS-CULTURAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Papia Bawa, Purdue University

### Abstract

Given the exponential growth in international student populations in the United States, supporting cross-cultural language learners (CCLL) in developing their self and co-regulated learning is highly important. This paper presents a conceptual framework on the value of feedback within self-regulated versus co-regulated environments, in the context of cross-cultural language learning. We use the term cross-cultural language learners (CCLL) to refer to international learners, in particular from Asia. When exploring the issues of cross-cultural language acquisition relating to logographic (Chinese) and alphabetic (English) languages, we examine the literature that supports self and co-regulated learning within the frame of feedback. The results indicate that because CCLLs have unique motivational, behavioral and cognitive challenges, they may benefit less from the use of only one option between self and co-regulation. A fusion of self and co-regulated feedback may transfer cross-cultural language skills for CCLLs more efficiently.

### Introduction

#### Key Definitions and Why the Discussions Matter

The acronym term CCLL means cross-cultural language learners. This term was selected to represent the population of students from Asian countries that use primarily logographic language systems. Even though the term ELL (English Language Learners) exists to demarcate non-native English learners, it is necessary to create a distinct identity for Asian students based on their large numbers, both in the USA and worldwide. Currently, there are more than one million CCLLs in the USA alone (US. Immigration and Customs, 2015). The term ELL is used to indicate all non-native learners of English language. However, there is evidence in the literature about identifiers other than ELL that is used for specific race and ethnic groups who are non-native English users/learners. A pertinent example is the use of the terms LatCrit and TribalCrit that identify Latino and Native American groups in the context of discussing Critical Race Theory. These terms help give credence to the specific groups' ethnicity and highlight the unique aspects pertaining to these cultures, including the use of Spanish and indigenous languages (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2013).

The CCLLs are not only growing exponentially as a group in the US educational arena, but they also bring in substantial benefits for the nation and non-CCLL learners. According to NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student Advisers) report of 2012-2013, International students contributed twenty-four billion to the US economy and supported three hundred and thirteen thousand jobs. In addition, interacting with CCLLs help develop higher learning skills such as the ability to speak a new language, as well as develop new cognitive skills (New study reports on benefits of international students on U.S. students, 2013; Luo, & Jamieson-Drake, 2014). Despite

the benefits that they bring, there appears to be a lack of support systems that can effectively deal with the learning issues of CCLLs given the motivational, behavioral and cognitive challenges (MBCC) that they encounter in their learning process. Thus, it is imperative to have more discussions on how we can facilitate the learning processes of CCLLs. This paper is an attempt in that direction.

### **What Constitutes Regulated Learning?**

Regulation is omnipresent within all learning environments. When viewed within the frame of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), regulation is a critical form of mediation that augments human mental functioning. Cultural situations, artifacts, and concepts are a key part of this mediated process (Ratner, 2015; Lantolf, Thorne & Poehner, 2015). While examining what constitutes regulation in learning, Hadwin, Jarvela, and Miller (2011) contend that it is a process that is intentional and goal oriented, metacognitive and social. They posit that while successful learners are those that conquer motivational, behavioral and cognitive challenges (MBCCs), it is the identification of these challenges within self or co-regulation, which leads to effective interventions and consequent knowledge acquisition. In the context of this idea, it is also important to recognize that while some of these challenges may be central to any learning situation and can be viewed as universal challenges; there will be others that may be unique to a discipline or subject. Recognizing both sets of challenges will be critical to fostering positive learning outcomes.

An essential aspect of regulated learning is the nature of feedback that learners receive. Depending on the nature of regulation (self or co), this feedback can come from several sources including, self, peers, instructors, administrators, and family members. However, the effectiveness or otherwise of the feedback's impact on learning can be dependent on the MBCCs a learner is facing. Thus, for successful learning to take place, instructors must critically examine teaching and instructional designing practices, with respect to feedback, in the context of what MBCC learners may be facing when situated within different disciplines and learning different subjects. This is pertinent to both self and co-regulation process.

### **Regulation for CCLLs**

Different disciplines/subjects present different sets of challenges as they interact with the learners' social and cognitive backgrounds. Coe, Searle, Barmby, Jones, and Higgins (2008) discuss the level of difficulties among subjects and conclude that some subjects like Science, Technology, and Mathematics are harder to learn. The English language is another subject of concern, especially for non- native users, due to the inherent cultural differences that underpin the languages. Souriyavongsa Rany, Abidin and Mei (2013) examined students from Laos and found that "students' weakness in English language learning is due to the differences of social contexts, cultural environments; for example, in the environments where the first and second or foreign languages learning to take place such as Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and others" (p.181). Musa, Lie, and Azman (2012) examined similar problems in Malaysia and concluded that, "Teachers and curriculum developers need to investigate the extent to which English is positioned in the learners' repertoire (ibid) so that they can design a literacy curriculum that will better suit the learners' needs" (p.46).

Musa et al (2012) cited the study of Lee Su Kim (2003) to demonstrate how "performance in English language learning and using English has some impacts on the learners' identity. It is important therefore for teachers and curriculum designers to understand how the English language plays a part in the learners' repertoire and their identities" (p. 43). Before delving further into the discussion of the unique challenges faced by cross-cultural language learners

(CCLL), it is important to articulate the theoretical perspectives and frameworks that surround the elements of feedback in self and co-regulated learning, as these are central to any learning experience. Understanding these elements will facilitate the identification of effective practices to alleviate CCLL concerns.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Key aspects of Constructivism, Cognitivism and Social Learning theories are applicable to understanding self-regulation co-regulation, and associated feedback.

#### **What is Self and Co-Regulation?**

Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) define self-regulation as a process that learners use to transform their cognitive abilities into skills related to academic tasks. Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) recommend a four-stage process of self-regulation that involves learning from social sources (observing, social guidance, and feedback), emulating the observed world, internalizing their discovered self-regulation strategies, and finally adapting their learning strategies to behavioral and contextual changes. Pintrich (2000) describes self-regulated learning as a constructive process that learners actively engage in by setting learning goals and strategies to regulate their motivation and cognition with respect to their unique learning environments. When intrinsic (self-regulated) and extrinsic (other resources of learning like peers, instructors and learning resources) learning methods fuse together; it leads to co-regulation of learning. The definition of co-regulation varies, but generally, co-regulated learning refers to the coordination of the self-regulatory process through interactions between self and others (McCaslin & Hickey, 2001).

#### **How Does Constructivism Relate to Self and Co-Regulation?**

In the context of self-regulation, Constructivism believes in the active construction of new knowledge based on a learner's prior experiences (Harman & Koochang, 2005; Hung, 2001; Hung & Nichani, 2001; Koochang & Harman, 2005; Cunningham, 1991). Constructivism works on the premise that knowledge is constructed from people's perceptions and experiences, and understanding learner experiences are critical (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990; & Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1991). Learning is created within learners' consciousness (self-regulated), as they interact with the world (co-regulated) around them (Reiser & Dempsey, 2012). The learning activities are a critical factor in this process, which is why it is important that activities are situated within realistic settings and learning tasks are relevant to the students' experiences (Jonassen, 1992; Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Clancey, 1986). As discussed in the subsequent section, in the context of CCLLs, this is not always the case. In the context of co-regulation, Vygotsky (1962, 1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explained the importance of participative learning or co-regulation. Co-regulation involves both the social contingencies of the learners and the subject matter expertise of the instructors to create meaningful levels of knowledge and skill transfers (McCaslin, 2009; Fogel & Garvey, 2007).

#### **How Does Cognitivism and Social Learning Theory Relate to Self and Co-Regulation?**

Cognitivists believe that the human memory system is like an organic processor of information that relies on prior knowledge and how humans make sense of them when faced with new knowledge and awareness, creating new meanings and knowledge. The Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) deals with the amounts of effort required for human cognition when transferring memory from working to long term. A critical aspect of this theory is the distinction between intrinsic (intrinsic aspects of the content that has to be learned), extraneous (the way the contents or educational materials are presented) and germane loads (the process of learning), which

constitutes a learners' total cognitive load (Sweller, 2010). In order for learning to occur, the cognitive load must always be less than a learner's working memory capacity. Thus educational strategies must aim at manipulating cognitive loads in ways that reduce extraneous loads (Paas, Renkle & Sweller, 2003; Jong, 2009; Vandewaetere, & Clarebout, 2013; DeLeeuw, & Mayer, 2008; Debue & van de Leemput, 2014). In the context of self-regulation approach for CCLLs, the learners' unfamiliarity with the foreign language and low entry-level skills will influence the level of cognitive loads. Novice learners may face higher levels of MBCC.

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning theory argues that new knowledge, skills, and behaviors can be acquired by the direct experiences of learners (self-regulation), their observations of how others behave, and how the others interact with the learners (co-regulation). In the context of self-regulation and co-regulation, learners learn through the process of doing and observing their own actions, as well as those of the world around them.

### **Motivational Theories and Regulated Learning**

Some researchers perceive co-regulation to be peer to peer interaction based, and distinguish between other and shared regulation, wherein a more regulated peer assumes the responsibility of regulating a less regulated peer, or several peers jointly assume regulatory responsibilities. The concepts relate to learner engagement and motivation, personal dispositions, and the scaffolding provided by teachers, peers, curriculum materials, and assessments (McCaslin & Hickey 2001; McCaslin, 2009; Yowell & Smylie 1999; Vauras, Iiskala, Kajamies, Kinnunen, & Lehtinen, 2003). In the case of CCLL, learners' personal dispositions may largely be a product of their unique socio-cultural background and the indigenous ways in which they acquired their first language skills.

Allal (2011) discusses the ten principles for the Teaching and Learning Research Program (TLRP) that links co-regulation to the principles of scaffolding and student engagement. Such an approach creates a powerful relationship matrix between the learners and their learning environments, fostering an effective process of co-regulation. In the context of CCLL, the kind and extent of scaffolding play a critical role in competency development. Additionally, the scaffolding type and depth may vary, depending on which approach between self and co-regulation was taken.

The skill sets and knowledge base that a learner possesses with respect to specific learning situations is a critical factor in determining the success or failure of any self-regulated learning. When the variables in motivational climate interact with cognitive, behavioral, and contextual factors they bring forth changes in the self-regulatory behaviors (Schunk, 2005; Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). In the context of self and co-regulated language learning, an important motivational element is the level and type of feedback learners may receive. This is discussed in greater detail subsequently in the paper.

### **Benefits of Self and Co-Regulation**

There are several benefits of self and co-regulation approach. These include encouraging learners to engage in the learning process using the unique, individual learning markers, which may allow for greater motivation, engagement, and sense of ownership on part of the learners (Mos, 2003). Self-regulation also allows learners to indulge in critical thinking and rethinking processes, and continual improvement as a result. At some point, students are able to recognize problems, construct cognition of the issues and solutions, research and test their hypotheses, and learn from the results, while adjusting their preexisting knowledge and skills to the newly acquired ones (Echevarria, 2003). Vighnarajah, Wong, and Kamariah (2009) conducted a study on student perceptions on the practice of self-regulation in learning and concluded, "to self-

regulate the learning process allows for active engagement in the learning process and this has strong implications on the learner and the learning process" (p.102). Their study suggested participation in the online discussion platform to improve the practice of elaboration in the learning process.

### **Value of Feedback**

Feedback is quintessential to the human psychology as it creates environments within which humans can survive, thrive, or be destroyed. Hattie and Timperely (2007) engaged in a detailed discussion of the negative and positive value of feedback and contended that in order to understand the full potential of this process, it is important to investigate the meaning of the term feedback. They define feedback as, "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (p.81), and that "feedback is a consequence of performance" (p.81). The role of different agents will define the kind of feedback they may provide. Thus, teacher or parental feedback may be corrective and/or encouraging, peers may give alternate information or perspective, instructional artifacts may clarify information, and learners may refer to the information to assess the correctness of their response or actions.

### **Feedback as Reinforcements**

Feedback provides information that fills learners' performance gaps, allows them to engage in a variety of perspectives, and ultimately acts as a tool for their learning successes or failures. Therefore, feedback can be both negative and positive reinforcements. As a positive reinforcement, feedback can allow learners to move forward with diligence and confidence, while as a negative reinforcement, feedback may provide opportunities to the learners to rethink their learning process and/or revisit the sources of information upon which the learning is based. Whether it is negative or positive, feedback is most valuable when aligned with the learners' learning goals. Learners are more apt to learn from positive feedback if they are committed to a goal; however, when such commitment is lacking, negative feedback is more likely to be a motivator for learning (Hattie & Timperely (2007)).

Typically, students monitor the success of their learning process by responding to the feedback they receive either through self-assessments or through instructor interventions. This monitoring eventually leads to behavioral changes with respect to the learning process, as learners modify their self-regulation by replacing ineffective learning strategies with more effective ones, or by revisiting the source of their information to re-learn. This is akin to a looping of learning using feedback (Carver& Scheier, 2013).

### **Feedback in the Context of Self and Co-Regulation**

Higgin's (1997) Regulatory Focus Theory discusses pleasure and pain as learning motivators or feedback and distinguishes between promotion focus concerns and prevention focus concerns of learners. Individuals' self-regulation may involve promotion focus concerns or sensitivity to rewards of good performance, and prevention focus concerns or fear of punishment for poor performance (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004; Förster, Grant, Idson, & Higgins, 2001). Atkinson (1964) also discusses the fear of failure and hope for success as powerful feedback and motivators. The relationship of these concepts to the feedback process is that while positive feedback creates pleasure and negative feedback creates pain, both circumstances play a prominent role in determining the path of self-regulation learners might take, based on their value systems and the specific learning situations they are placed in.

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2007), distinguish between feedback that is external (contributions by peers singularly or in a collaborative group context; teachers' comments,

and/or written progress report) and internal (student's self-monitoring). External feedback relates to co-regulation, while internal feedback relates to the self-regulation of the learning process. Irrespective of the type of regulation, feedback is essential to the development of both the teacher and the student. Teachers can use students' reaction to feedback as a tool to assess if their practices need to be modified, and if so, how.

### **Feedback in the Context of CCLLs**

Even though there are marked benefits of feedback within self-regulation and co-regulation approaches in the general learning process, the discipline and subject matter of learning can play a prominent part in determining how beneficial these approaches can be for the learners. This is particularly true for cross-cultural language learners (CCLL), who face unique challenges that pose the need to think beyond the limitations of self and co-regulation. It is more effective to identify useful strategies from each approach and create a viable synthesis of best practices to help CCLLs. The reasons for this are discussed in the next section. With respect to language learning, Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner (2015) believe that even though self-regulation is required to be a proficient user of a language, self-regulation is an unstable condition. "Even the most proficient communicators, including native speakers, may need to reaccess earlier stages of development when confronted with challenging communicative situations. Under stress, for example, adult native users of a language produce incoherent utterances" (p. 209). Thus, it may be prudent to devise learning and teaching strategies that compensate for such situations.

### **Motivational, Behavioral and Cognitive Challenges (MBCC) of Cross-Cultural Language Learners (CCLL) and a Fusion Model**

This section discusses the specific challenges faced by CCLLs that greatly mitigates the teaching and learning efforts, not only for language competencies but also in the context of wider academic goals. Given the magnitude of the issue, a single teaching and learning approach may be less efficient than a combination of approaches. Thus a fusion model and a possible solution are provided.

### **Overview**

Cross-cultural language acquisition poses a unique set of MBCCs for its learners. The constructivist approach of self-regulated learning relies on the premise that interventions (like giving feedback) during the knowledge acquisition stage should be avoided so that greater learning challenges can be created, which in turn will help learners to better construct their own learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2007; Nicol, Thomson, & Breslin 2013; Driscoll, 2005; Hill, 2002; Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). Some cognitivist- approach-based research contends that delay in feedback provides more long-term transfer, even though this could slow down the rate of immediate learning (Scroth, 1992). However, this may not be applicable to situations where adult learners are engaged in learning languages that have different systemic structures of writing such as in logographic (Chinese) versus alphabetic (English). This is because the attitudes and aptitudes of learners are shaped by the degree of differences between the languages, which influences the way the native language users perceive, interpret, assimilate and eventually translate information. This creates a unique set of challenges that place logographic learners in disadvantageous spaces when faced with writing assignments in English and competing with native users. Without adequate interventions, this may prevent learners from constructing usable knowledge, and eventually prove demotivating.

### **Language Acquisition across Writing Systems**

It is important to examine how writing systems work, with a specific focus on how the interactions between logographic and alphabetic languages influence the users. Even though they are not language in themselves, writing systems are foundational to a culture's language and communication system and plays a critical role in the transfer of language and cross-cultural language acquisition. There are three main writing systems in use today: Alphabets including consonants and syllabic, Semanto-Phonetic including pictograms, logograms, ideograms, and compound characters, and Syllabaries (Ager, 2015). The core difference between these systems relates to the characters and scripts used, the internal relationships between them, and the ideas they represent. Scripts are primarily classified into logographic (semiotic based) and phonetic (sound-based), based on how they represent language. Hoosain (2005) discusses how in English, letters represent the sound that in turn, convert to meanings. In Chinese, each character of the script simultaneously represents a unit of meaning (morpheme), as well as a syllable. It is this characteristic that allows written Chinese to be pronounced differently in different dialects, and even though these dialects can be mutually unintelligible, all Chinese people can still share the same language. Such a phenomenon cannot exist in a phonetic (syllable to sound) language like English. This creates MBCC challenges for native users of logographic languages when learning English.

Word recognition in English reading is imitated by visual patterns and getting language proficiency requires that such patterns be matched to the spellings in the users' long-term memories (Venzeky, 2005). Thus, for proficiency in English usage, the recognition pattern for an alphabetic set of characters representing the script should reside within the users' long-term memory, which is not the case with logographic users, who may have significantly less time and resources to make this happen. This issue is compounded when taking into consideration the fact that logographic users follow a different pattern of learning their language. Irrespective of what writing system they follow, native language users are exposed to the specific characters and internal structures of their language from the earliest and most formative years of their lives. As explained above, Chinese and English languages use completely different patterns of recognition. Thus, there are clear processing differences between the two writing systems, and this must be considered during any attempt to transfer language skills between the two systems.

### **Language Learning and Situated Cognition**

Acquiring literacy is a lifelong, context-bound process, reliant on cultural contents. Durgunoglu and Verhoeven (2013) explain how minority communities may be communicating in the dominant language on a daily basis, but because the dominant language is learned as a secondary one, knowledge of the first language becomes a potential hindrance to the successful acquisition of the second one. When assessing writing skills, it is therefore important to consider the native and secondary language expertise of learners. The issues of cross-cultural language acquisition can also be explained using the theory of Situated Cognition. The core premise of this theory is that learning is linked to the situation and circumstances of its acquisition, and that learned skills and knowledge might not readily transfer to situations that are too foreign, remote or otherwise disengaged from the original sources (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Hedegaard, 1998; Arnseth, 2008). Even though factors such as learner capabilities, motivation, and engagement play a prominent role in knowledge acquisition and transfer, the extent of transfer depends largely on the immersion ratio of the learners' internal attributes and the elements of the external settings within which such attributes may blossom or perish. The external settings can include elements such as teachers and the dominant country's socio-political and cultural

landscape. These can sometimes play a significant part in the challenges associated with the language acquisition process.

### **Socio-Political and Cultural Associated Phenomenon**

In order to interact effectively with peers and mentors as well as fit within the society, non-native users need to be immersed in the dominant, native user population over a long term. Using several literature resources like Fuhrer, 1993, Goodnow, 1990, Lave, 1990, Lave & Wenger, 1991, Billett (1996) contends, "A socio-cultural pathway to expertise is associated with immersion in a particular social situation over time, and acquiring not only skillful knowledge but also the facility to engage successfully in the discourse, norms, and practices of the particular community of practice " (p. 266). In reality, many international learners who arrive in the United States do not have the luxury of such long-term immersion but are expected to display socio-communication skills equivalent to those who have been immersed in the culture long term, creating extensive MBCC issues.

Genç and Bada (2010) discuss how the globalization of English has led to the trend of publishing scholarly literature in English language, even for non-natives, for a variety of disciplines besides liberal arts. These may include scientific and other extended disciplines like "aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism" (Genç & Bada, 2010, p. 143). Low proficiency skills in using English will have a negative impact on the non-native learners' ability to excel in academia. There is thus a great need to customize how English is taught to CCLLs as conventional methods are no longer working (Graham, 1987; .C Sharndama, Samaila, & Ishaya Tsojon, 2014; Mežek, 2013). In addition, non-native writers face significantly greater challenges when translating English and vice versa. Quigley (2009) discusses these challenges, using the example of Khmer or Cambodian language, and explains the idea of the untranslatable, which propounds that the sum essence of certain experiences cannot be translated across languages, without losing a majority or all of the import given to that experience within the context of the native language used to describe it. Although his article specifically talks about fiction writing, the ideas expressed apply very readily to all cross-cultural writing situations. The reason is that "secondhand empirical knowledge usually comes in the form of words, sounds, and images" (p. 93) and this creates a unique challenge when it comes to translating experiences. Quigley (2009) gives the examples of translating the experiences like touching a snake or smelling a Durian fruit as instances, which are untranslatable. "Durian fruit, for example, presents a serious threat to writing cross-culturally.... It is a fruit that possesses the most potent, yet horrible smell at least to one who is not acclimated....Such smells do not translate, for there is no such smell in the West that compares" (p. 94).

The political and administrative settings may also affect cross-cultural language acquisition. The language policies of regional and national authorities could determine the fate of native language acquisition. When a country follows a policy of language segregation, it becomes difficult for learners to develop cross-language skills. Li (2010) discusses how the Chinese government's involvement in dictating English language learning policies in China is being detrimental to the true skill acquisitions of the English language. The current education system in China focuses on higher marks in the entrance examinations to secure positions in universities, because positions at tertiary level are limited. Teachers still use the traditional grammar-translation approach that facilitates higher scores, but not necessarily, corresponding higher skills in learners (Li, 2010). When students from this kind of an academic background come to dominantly English-speaking countries, they face challenges of critical thinking and communicating at a higher cognitive level using English. On the other hand, a policy of language

maintenance (attention to preserving native language and culture) and language assimilation (exclusive attention to the majority language) in the United States creates a double challenge for such learners as they compete with native and global learners whose country's policies are English friendly, like that of India.

### **Learning Environments**

Learning environments play a prominent role in the way learners learn. Teachers are a significant element of the learning environment of language acquisition. Language teachers are purported to be experts about the language they teach. Since the knowledge of the language is acquired through the interaction of the teachers and the students, it may be problematic in a cross-cultural setting. This could be for several reasons like the major difference between the novice level knowledge of teacher with respect to the non-native learners' cultural background, faculty attitudes, and perceptions, as well as the levels of expectations faculty, may have about language proficiency of the non-native learners (Lave, 1996; Krampetz, 2005). "Multicultural and multilingual students may not present knowledge and ideas according to typical academic patterns, and as a result, they often find themselves and their written or spoken word either misunderstood and/or unappreciated" (Krampetz, 2005, p.3). Students must encounter the issue of a specific mindset of expectations relative to student writing and speaking in an academic context.

These expectations become even more intensified given the high-caliber and scholarly aptitudes of the faculty, a majority of whom are well versed in the English language. The gap between the need for cultural awareness created by education globalization and the lack of adequate training that faculty receives in this regard is growing. As more foreign students seek to enroll themselves in English medium courses offered by countries like the United States, there is an increasing probability that such learners are being taught by faculty who may have little to no exposure to the international community. Despite having the best of intentions, the lack of cross-cultural interaction creates a lack of empathy for one another on part of both students and faculty alike (Ruggs and Habel, 2012). Another issue relates to classroom tasks and assessments that are perceived by learners to be non-inclusive of their cultural background. This is non-conducive to learners' sense of belonging and feeling accepted in their learning environments. Characteristics that facilitate positive attitudes for classroom tasks, including assessments, may include the perceived value of the task, the clarity with which the task is described, as well as the resources available to assist in the task's completion. Literature indicates that learners value tasks that are relevant to their personal goals (Schunk 1990, 1995; Nichols, 1983).

The goals or success orientations of learners influence their rate of success. Nichols (1983) discusses the concept of task and ego orientations. Task relates to the perception that learning means to improve one's skills. Ego orientation relates to the learners' perception that successful learning is performing better than peers, and/or to appear more important or competent than others are. The danger to the learning process occurs when learners experience fear, boredom, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about instruction and the learning environment. Learners with "self-doubts about their abilities work lackadaisically and expend little effort on difficult tasks" (Schunk, 1990, p. 7). In the context of CCLLs, it is therefore critical that learning environments in which they are placed reflect an understanding of these issues. Not doing so may have a negative effect on the learners' success orientations.

### **Attribution Theory**

Closely related to motivation is the Attribution Theory, which argues that the perceived reasons for past success or failure may greatly influence the learners' sense of achievement and

motivation. When past failures are attributed to the lack of appropriate ability to do a task, it is likely that the learner will hesitate to engage in that task again, or completely avoid any more engagement. With respect to CCLLs, this could translate into serious demotivation when learners attribute their low English skills to their lack of ability to use the language. This requires a teaching approach that uses more intensive interventions and support, including feedback (Weiner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2003; Tremblay, & Gardner, 1995; Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura, 2001; Kozaki, & Ross, 2011).

### **The Fusion Concept: Using Self and Co-Regulated feedback: A Combination Approach The Process**

In the preceding discussions, it has been established why co and self-regulation should exist simultaneously and iteratively within the CCLLs' learning environment. This is visualized as a continuous loop process until the CCLLs reach the expected or desired level of competencies. To apply this, the following steps are proposed:

**1. Provide the learner with co-regulated support at the onset of learning (engage them with peers and have instructors provide deeper feedback and resources).**

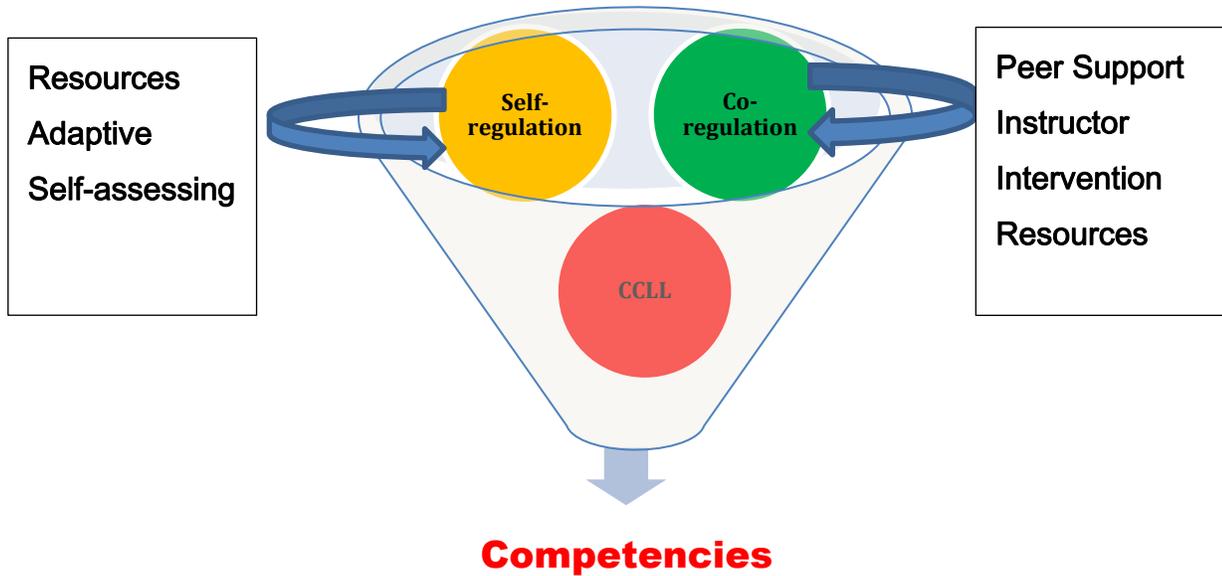
**2. Simultaneously, provide learners with the opportunities to engage in self-regulation by participating in self-administered, auto graded, adaptive activities. Provide participation incentives by way of grades or bonus or similar means.**

**3. Have periodic assessments to evaluate the CCLLs' progress. Ideally, the learner and the teacher should decide this frequency collaboratively. "To improve learning and indeed teaching, assessment must be formative in both function and purpose and must put the student at the centre of the assessment process" (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002, p.244).**

**4. Create rubric to identify competencies, and add the periodic assessment results to the CCLLs' progress report. Keep adding until expected or desired level of competency is achieved.**

### **Diagram**

The funnel represents the fusion-learning environment, where the CCLLs are engaged in both self and co-regulation, leading to desired competencies. The rectangles represent the critical elements that need to be included in these regulations.



### Discussion

The paper discussed several facets of feedback with respect to self and co-regulation in learning. To briefly recap the salient ideas, the value of feedback is extensively covered in the literature, but the viewpoints discussed are dramatically divergent. One line of thought argues in favor of intensive interventions and feedback (co-regulated), while the other favors the constructivist approach of minimal interventions and feedback, leaving the learners to construct most of their learning (self-regulated). The Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) propounded by Vygotsky (1978) explain how a person's cultural development happens through the interaction of social and individual levels. Based on this, there are certain tasks learners can do without help, but there may be other tasks for which they will need help from teachers and/or peers. Hogan and Tudge (1999) build on Vygotsky's (1978) theory and further elucidated the value of peer interactions within a learner's ZPD to facilitate learning pertaining to specific learning challenges, because simply placing children in proximal zones may not be enough. Aimin (2013) has similar views that "the development of human cognitive and higher mental function comes from social interactions and that through participation in social activities requiring cognitive and communicative functions, individuals are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and "scaffold" them" (p. 162).

Some researchers who subscribe to a constructivist philosophy believe that not providing extensive feedback could facilitate learners' self-growth through the process of self-assessments (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2007). The argument is that self-regulated learners are higher achievers due to their greater persistence, resourcefulness, and confidence. The process is also facilitated due to the growing control learners have on the learning that allows them, over a period, to let go of the clutches of external dependency on teachers (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001, 2004). Scroth (1992) conducted an experiment to investigate the effects of feedback frequency on imminent and delayed-transfer tasks in concept identification. This was done to ratify the general principle that more difficult learning conditions in the initial stages of acquiring knowledge may actually help the greater transfer of knowledge and more retention of skills. *However, these perspectives do not recognize the degree of challenges that CCLLs face, which makes such contentions questionable in that context.*

On the other hand, there are researchers who argue in favor of extensive, co-regulated feedback, and contend that feedback is not valuable if merely used as a tool to tell learners what is wrong and how learners can improve. Feedback is more effective as a two-way dialogue rather than a one-way transmission of information. In this regard, both the quality of feedback comments and how students use them to improve and build on existing knowledge, are important for productive learning (Nicol, Thompson & Breslin, 2013; Nicol, 2010). “Most researchers are now in agreement that, if students are to learn from feedback, they must have opportunities to construct their own meaning from the received message: they must do something with it, analyze it, ask questions about it, discuss it with others and connect it with prior knowledge” (Nicol, Thompson & Breslin, p 103, 2013)

Self-regulated learning feedback works for learners with appropriate levels of preexisting skills and knowledge pertaining to the subject of study. However, as evident from the discussion in the previous section, it is very likely that self-regulated learning will not work for CCLLs in terms of English language acquisition process, because of their low-level proficiencies in the subject. This raises the question: what will work for such learners? To answer this, it is pertinent to discuss and conduct in-depth research to identify options outside of strictly self-regulated versus co-regulated environments. One option is to consider a fusion of self-regulation with co-regulation, where specific and more frequent feedback focused on English grammar, syntax and ideas/contents is provided, but learners are also given the opportunity to validate their own learning through self-regulatory methods. This might work best because humans use co-regulation and self-regulation throughout their lives to deal with situations of dysfunctions and stress (Sbarra & Hazen, 2008; Fogel & Garvey, 2007). Facing challenges of language acquisitions certainly qualifies for such situations.

### **Conclusion and Future Implications**

Currently, there are a few feedback-based, self-and co-regulation teaching and motivational models, which may be viable learning options for CCLLs, given the unique set of motivational, behavioral and cognitive challenges (MBCC) these learners face. One such option is the Raising Educational Achievement in Collaborative Hubs (REACH) project of Schademan, Pierro, and McMahan (2015) that uses peer hubs to enhance learning. Another option is the Peer Engagement to Augment English Learning (PETAEL) project of Bawa (2015) that recommends intensive peer collaboration across courses combined with self-regulatory activities to help CCLLs.

In addition, there is some precedence in research of the successful use of the fusion approach. Chung and Yuen (2011) explore the ‘Five Ps’ (People, Programs, Policies, Places, and Processes) that provide various forms of feedback and input that could encourage self-regulation. They claim that providing detailed and personalized feedback to students may facilitate students to evolve successfully as autonomous learners. DiDonato’s (2006) study on how students regulate problem-solving of authentic interdisciplinary tasks displayed how co-regulated moderation influenced self-regulatory learning in positive ways. Butler, Schnellert, and Cartie (2012) examined how students’ self-regulated learning through reading (LTR) process was enhanced when teachers engaged in a combination of self and co-regulated inquiry for their professional development. The findings concluded that “when student and teacher self- and co-regulation are considered and nurtured in relation to one another, desired links can be achieved between practice changes and positive outcomes for students” (pp. 16, 17).

Based on the review of the literature we find that although there is compelling evidence that fusing self and co-regulation may be a useful practice for CCLLs, not enough is being done

regarding its application. Based on the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (2015) data, more than one million international students are enrolled in the United States, and seventy-six percent of these students are from Asia, meaning they are CCLLs. Despite the availability of some existing models to work with, there is a significant gap between the growing need and the availability of options to alleviate CCLL concerns. Thus, there is ample scope for future research that applies the fusion concept more intensively within programs. Moving forward with more studies in this regard may prove valuable for educators and learners alike.

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