

Demonstrating Factors Causing Demotivation in Learning English as a Second Language in the University of Eastern Philippines: Basis for Institutional Teaching Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to document the demonstrating factors that demotivate college students at the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus from learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Based on the findings, the researchers developed institutional teaching strategies to address demotivation factors.

The study employed a descriptive research design. A total of 552 randomly sampled college students enrolled in GE 2 (Purposive Communication) during the Second Semester of Academic Year 2020-2021 were considered as research participants. The questionnaire was adapted from the study of Gardner (1985).

Findings revealed that with a total weighted mean of 3.46, the respondents are “much demotivated” on the internal factors. On external factors, six (6) categories were found out, teachers’ behavior, 3.75 “much demotivated;” teachers’ competence, 3.63 “much demotivated;” classroom learning resource preparedness/availability, 3.53, “much demotivated;” course content, 3.27 “demotivated;” class size, and course assessment and requirements, 3.26 “demotivated.” The 3.39 total weighted mean suggest that they are “demotivated” on external factors. The general weighted mean of 3.43, suggest that they are “much demotivated” on both internal and external factors.

To address the demotivating factor issues of the language learners, the researchers came up with institutional teaching strategies framework which the language teachers may employ. These strategies include metacognitive, cognitive, social strategies, use of audio-visual materials, and internet-based language learning.

KEYWORDS: *demonstrating factors, demotivate, college students, learning, second language, English, institutional teaching strategies*

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language, as the world’s lingua franca has become the shared mode of communication amongst people in the depth and width of the globe. It is of prime importance which cannot be neglected being the leading language in almost all disciplines - in Science and Technology (Mannivanan, 2006) and in whatever academic and business transactions. Even the concept of social superiority has always been highly associated with English (Pennycook, 2007;

Philipson, 1992) and therefore the symbolic power of English as “the dominant language in the global market” cannot be overlooked.

In this highly globalized and competitive society, the people, more especially the young learners should consider English to be the premium of their capital identity. However, in the study of second language acquisition (L2A), learner’s individual difference is

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one of the focal points, among which motivation has received the most attention (Ellis, 1994). Different experimental evidences have shown that some English language learners lose their interest and motivation during the English language learning process (Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Ayako, 2004; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; and Falout *et al.*, 2009). The decrease in motivation in L2 is a frequent problem with a more significant presence in the current secondary education systems (Ahmed; 2013; Bastidas and Muñoz, 2011). Findings in studies on demotivation by Dörnyei (1998); Gorham and Christophel (1992) & Hasegawa (2004) reveal that there are external and internal factors that can negatively influence learning. Demotivating factors are indeed essential factors which negatively influence the learner's attitudes and behaviors and hence lead to undesired learning outcomes (Ghadirzadeh, et al., 2012).

In the Philippines, most of the examinations, job interviews, and other similar transactions are conducted in English language which makes this language important for career building in the country. Similar to other countries, students link English language with success, honor as well as a language power (Rehman, et al., 2005).

Despite the probable importance of demotivation in learning in general, and L2 and FL learning in particular, to date few studies have focused on student demotivation (Trang and Baldauf, 2007). Hence, this study.

The prime aim of this research study is to document the demotivating factors for college students in the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) in learning the second language. This is alongside fulfilling the recommendations forwarded by the AACCUP accreditors particularly on researches which results can be utilized for student enhancement/development programs.

2. Objectives

The study sought to:

1. document the factors that demotivate college students of the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus in learning the second language, in terms of:
 - 1.1. internal factors
 - 1.2. external factors; and
2. develop institutional teaching strategies to address students' demotivation in learning the second language.

3. Review of Literature

The current study finds similarities with the study of Maheen Sher Ali and Zahid Hussain Pathan on

“Exploring Factors Causing Demotivation and Motivation in Learning English Language among College Students of Quetta, Pakistan”. A quantitative design was employed in which 150 freshman college students studying in three different disciplines: Pre-medical, Pre-engineering and I.C.S at Government Girls college students of Quetta, Pakistan were included. The findings revealed that course content and teaching material emerged as the most salient demotivating factor. On the other hand, instrumental motivation emerged as the most influential source of motivation among students. The findings have implication on both teaching and learning of English language in Pakistan.

This study also finds connection with the previous knowledge repository of Turgay Han Nilüfer, Aybirdi Ayşegül, and Takkaç Tuglar who teamed up to work on “Factors Causing Demotivation in EFL Learning Process and the Strategies Used by Turkish EFL Learners to Overcome their Demotivation”. The purpose of which was to determine main demotivating factors affecting Turkish EFL university students' English language learning process and to identify the ways they apply to cope with these negative experiences from their own perspectives. The participants were 469 first and second year Turkish EFL university students. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data in the study. Quantitative results revealed that are significant differences between female and male students in terms of the factors related to characteristics of classes and experiences of failure. Qualitative findings indicated that major factors that demotivate students are negative attitudes of the classmates, teacher-related factors, personal issues, class characteristics, test anxiety, failure experiences, and education system. Also, strategies for overcoming demotivation were determined as self-studying, asking for assistance, changing perspective, thinking positively, ignoring what others think, and being goal oriented. It is implied that the results obtained from this study might be helpful for both language learners and teachers in developing effective coping strategies to overcome demotivation.

Lastly, this study is related with the inquiry of Trang and Baldauf (2007) on Demotivation: Understanding Resistance to English Language Learning – The Case of Vietnamese Students with three main foci: (i) the reasons (i.e., the demotives) underlying demotivation; (ii) the degree of influence of different demotives; and (iii) students' experiences in overcoming demotivation. Using stimulated recall essays from 100 university students of their foreign language learning experiences, the findings indicated that

demotivation was a significant issue for EFL learning, and a framework for discussing the different sources of demotives was developed. While some categories of demotives occurred more frequent than others, no category appeared to be more or less difficult to overcome. Rather, students' awareness of the role of English language and their determination to succeed were critical factors in overcoming demotivation.

4. Methodology

The study employed descriptive research design. A total of 552 randomly sampled college students

5. Results and Discussion Demotivating Factors

Table 1: Factors that Demotivate College Students of the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus in Learning the English Language

Factors	Category	WM	Interpretation
Internal	Attitude towards learning English	3.71	Much demotivated
	Socialization	3.45	Much demotivated
	English language competency	3.22	Demotivated
	Total Weighted Mean	3.46	Much demotivated
External	Teachers' Behavior	3.75	Much demotivated
	Teachers' Competence	3.63	Much demotivated
	Classroom Learning Resource Preparedness/Availability	3.53	Much demotivated
	Course Content	3.27	Demotivated
	Class size	3.26	Demotivated
	Classroom Assessment and Requirements	3.02	Demotivated
	Total Weighted Mean	3.39	Demotivated
	General Weighted Mean	3.43	Much demotivated

Table 1 shows the data on the demotivating factors of the college students in the University of Eastern Philippines in learning the second language. These factors include both internal and external factors. The inclusion of these factors in the present study upkeeps other researchers' intent have identified that not only external factors but also internal factors can come into play in demotivating students' English learning (Chong & Renandya, 2019).

For internal factors, three (3) categories were highlighted, attitude towards learning English, socialization, and English language competency. With a weighted mean of 3.71, the college students are "much demotivated" as regards their attitude towards ESL learning. This goes to show that they lost their interest and goal to be a speaker of English, allowed their friends to influence them to unlike English, have fear of responding English answers to English questions, found no meaning in understanding the purpose of studying English and in how to self-study for English lessons, and compared their unfavourable performance with their classmates' exemplary performance. The same data were identified in the findings of Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Gorham and

enrolled in GE 2 (Purposive Communication) during the Second Semester of Academic Year 2020-2021 at the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus, were considered as research participants.

The demotivation questionnaire comprised of 35 close-ended items based on a five-point Likert scale was adapted from the study of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009). The proposed institutional strategies were crafted by the researchers based on the findings of the latter.

Christophel, 1992; Gorham and Millette, 1997; Kojima, 2004; Ikeno, 2003; and Tsuchiya, 2006.

With a weighted mean of 3.45, they are "much demotivated" on their socialization, as primarily they do not like their classmates. This is the same data which was found out in the studies of Keblawi, 2005; Pinzon, 2011; and Lee and Lee, 2011. On the other hand, with a weighted mean of 3.22, their English language competency found to be "demotivated." Reasons to these could be their low scores on tests, more specifically during midterm and final examinations and due to their difficulty in memorizing words and phrases. These are the same data which were culled out from the findings of Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Gorham and Christophel, 1992; Gorham and Millette, 1997; Kikuchi, 2009; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009; Kojima, 2004; Ikeno, 2003; Tsuchiya, 2006. With a total weighted mean of 3.46, they are "much demotivated" on the internal factors. As regards external factors, six (6) categories were found out, teachers' behaviour, teachers' competence, classroom learning resource preparedness/availability, course content, class size, and course assessment and requirements. With a weighted mean of 3.75, they are

“much demotivated” on their teachers’ behaviour. It can be deduced that they find demotivation when their teachers shouted or got angry of them, ridiculed them on their mistakes, and of having been compared with their friends and other classmates. This data is parallel to the findings of Keblawi, 2005; Ghenghesh, 2010; Kim and Seo, 2012; Alavinia and Sehat, 2013; and Li and Zhou, 2017.

With a weighted mean of 3.63, they are “much demotivated” on their teachers’ competence. They find their teachers’ pronunciation intimidating, explanations were somewhat one-way, and not easy to understand. This data go along with the findings of Kiwa, 2004; Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Gorham and Christophel, 1992; Gorham and Millette, 1997; Ikeno, 2003; Kikuchi, 2009; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2007; Kojima, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006; Zhang, 2007).

With a weighted mean of 3.53, they are “much demotivated” on their classroom learning resource preparedness/availability. Unavailability of internet, speech-related laboratory, computer equipment, and audio-visual materials are few factors causing their much demotivation. The data is in congruent with the results revealed in the studies of Kiwa, 2004; Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Gorham and Christophel, 1992; Gorham and Millette, 1997; Kikuchi, 2009; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009; Tsuchiya, 2006.

With a weighted mean of 3.27, they are “demotivated” on the course content. It can be implied from the data that they find no interest in the topics taught in English passages as they seemed to be old, the pace of lessons was inappropriate, textbook passages were long and difficult to interpret, and lessons are focused on grammar and translation and entrance examination-oriented. The results are in one with the data of Kiwa, 2004; Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Gorham and Christophel, 1992; Gorham and Millette, 1997; Kikuchi, 2009; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009; Kojima, 2004; Ikeno, 2003; Tsuchiya, 2006; Zhang, 2007).

With a weighted mean of 3.26, they are “demotivated” of the class size. Having been in a big class size demotivates them to learn English. Heppner (2007) views large classes as a small business which should be set up and handled carefully. Participants in Al- Jarf’s (2006) study commented that “due to the size of the class they do not have enough time to pay attention to each and give every student a chance to speak and participate.” In words, such context makes some students, especially the shy or weak, to be neglected and left behind. Kennedy & Kennedy (1996) shared similar view as they believed it is

difficult to overcome all of what occur in class when the number of students exceeds a certain limit. AL-Jarf (2006) recorded that “large class sizes inhibit small group activities and individualized instruction, because of the noise level and lack of space in the classroom.” Many researchers believe that large classes offer few opportunities to teachers to employ quality teaching and learning environment for learners (Blatchford *et al.*, 2002; Hattie, 2005; Pedder, 2006).

Lastly, with a weighted mean of 3.02, they are “demotivated” on their classroom assessment and requirements. They are demotivated when they are forced to memorize the sentences in the English textbooks, when required to speak and write grammatically correct straight English and to read a bulk of main textbooks and supplementary/suggested readings. The data confirm the findings in the scholarly investigations of Keblawi, 2005; Hamada and Kito, 2008; Kim, 2009; Lee and Lee, 2011; Hosseini and Jafari, 2014; Meshkat and Hassani, 2014; and Gkonou, 2013. With a total weighted mean of 3.39, they are “demotivated” of the external factors.

The general weighted mean of 3.43, suggests that they are “much demotivated” on both internal and external factors. Generally, the findings of the study confirm the study of Dornyei (2001) which revealed nine (9) possible factors of demotivation, to wit: teachers’ personalities, commitments, competence, teaching methods; inadequate school facilities (large class sizes, unsuitable level of classes or frequent change of teachers); reduced self-confidence due to their experience of failure or lack of success; negative attitude toward the foreign language studied; compulsory nature of the foreign language study; interference of another foreign language that pupils are studying; negative attitude toward the community of the foreign language spoken; attitudes of group members; and course books used in class. While the exploratory factor analysis of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) found out five (5) demotivating factors in learning English as a second language, namely: (a) Learning Contents and Materials, (b) Teachers’ Competence and Teaching Styles, (c) Inadequate School Facilities, (d) Lack of Intrinsic Motivation and (e) Test Scores, this study determined nine (9) demotivating factors.

It can be noted in the findings of the present study that the internal factors are way greater than the external ones. The data, however, are in reverse order based on the conclusion of Soviana (2018) in her case study involving 19 students in Malang, Indonesia as cited in the study of Liu (2020).

Institutional Teaching Strategies to Address Students' Demotivation in Learning English as a Second Language

As the sole state university in Northern Samar, Philippines catering to more than 12,000 students, the University of Eastern Philippines should revisit the teaching strategies of English language teachers to lessen the demotivating factors of its students in learning the second language.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified three (3) the strategies, to wit: metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies that successful language learners should enjoy to facilitate their learning of the second language.

Cognitive strategies are focusing in exposing students with the target language. It is more directly related to students' learning tasks and involve direct manipulation or transformation of information (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). They focus on comprehension, acquisition, and retention. It is focusing on students' experience in using the language. The college students in UEP become demotivated in learning English as they are offered a great number of textbooks and supplementary readers were assigned (3.16) and seldom had chances to communicate in English (2.80). Thus, the teachers need to make the students to practice the language frequently. They may infuse in their teaching strategies resourcing, translation, notetaking, elaboration, inferring, and speaking activities. Also noteworthy are guessing from the context, skimming, scanning, problem-solving skills, etc. (Straková, 2009).

The students are "much demotivated" due to teachers' explanations which are not easy to understand (3.52) and "demotivated" on teachers' one-way explanations (3.29). Thus, metacognitive strategies should be strengthened. There should be careful planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production, and self-evaluation of learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) using various activities/performances and assessments. Educational research has proved that students' attitude toward a foreign language course (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 2014), their language teacher (Gardner, 1985), or about a particular foreign nation in which the foreign language is addressed (Gardner, 1985) has an effect on their acquisition/achievement in that language. Therefore, teachers need to make interesting class activities and fair assessments. They may employ strategies like advance organization, direct attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. As reiterated in the study of Iobidze (2019), rather than focusing students'

attention solely on learning a language, English language teachers can help students learn to think about what happens during the language learning process. Subsequently, if learners are able to monitor their thinking process, they will be more concerned about the mistakes they make and find the ways to avoid them further. As in the thoughts of Mazumder (2010), successful students are those who are capable of assessing and regulating their own learning behavior as they are never satisfied with superficial learning. Thus, if they are able to control and observe their thinking and the learning process, they become more confident and productive in using the second language.

The internal factors, attitude towards learning English (3.71) and socialization (3.45) are both "much motivated." To help the students regain interest in learning the language, be determined with their goal to be a speaker of English, allowing their friends to influence them to like English, overcome fear of responding English answers to English questions, finding meaning in understanding the purpose of studying English and in how to self-study for English lessons, and refrain from compared their unfavourable performance with their classmates' exemplary performance social strategies should be utilized. As strategies that favor students' communication, they primarily focus on interaction with another learner (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). They emphasize group work between and among students. Hence, the center of the learning is the students and the teachers would plainly be facilitators. Some examples under this strategy include: questions for clarification and co-operation. A study of ethnic Chinese, bilingual Singaporean university students studying a foreign found that students reported a preference for social strategies (Wharton, 2000) as these are good for practicing pronunciation and fluency. Likewise, it is highly recommended in the study of Alhaysony (2017) who investigated language learning strategies (LLS) used by Saudi EFL students at Aljouf University and proved that the participants showed a strong preference for learning with others by learning from the teacher, asking the other speaker to repeat and to speak slowly. In other words, they asked questions and cooperated with others.

The classroom environment - learning resource preparedness/availability (3.35) "much demotivated" the college students from learning the English language. Thus, in addition the abovementioned strategies, the English teachers should also make use of audio-visual materials. According to Seferoğlu (2008), films provide authentic language input and a stimulating framework for classroom discussions.

They also provide a realistic view of the language and culture providing insights into the reality of life of native English speakers (Florence, 2009).

Course-content also caused demotivation among the college students (3.27). It appears that topics of the English passages used in lessons were old and long, hence not that interesting. Thus, internet-based language learning (IBLL) is another strategy which is appropriate now that modular classes are done online. It keeps students interested and engaged in current topics and activities. Agarwal (2010) enumerated the benefits of IBLL to its students, to wit: (1) students work with great pleasure on the computers as the language is given in different and more interesting, attractive ways through games, animated graphics and problem solving techniques; (2) students are well-disciplined as the use of technology inside or outside the classroom tends to make the class more interesting; (3) students feel empowered and less afraid to contact others and realize their full potential as a team to accomplish their language acquisition tasks more effectively; (4) students instead of a teacher become leaders in class; (5) students receive feedback immediately and they benefit from it; (6) some online quizzes explain students' mistakes, which make students understand the topic faster; (7) students are highly-motivated to use IBLL because they associate it with fun and games or fashion; (8) students have time flexibility as they can use various resources of authentic materials either at school or from their home; they do not need to be at a fixed place at a fixed time to learn a language or to pass a test; (9) students feel independent from a single source of Information as the internet provides them with thousands of information sources; for one particular aspect of any language there can be found a lot of different internet resources; (10) students get greater interactions; and (11) students do exercises and learn faster with several windows open at a time and it helps them to better understand any language aspects explained by different instructors.

6. Conclusions

Internal and external factors causing demotivation in learning the second language were determined in this study. The college students in the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus are "much demotivated" on the internal factors. On the other hand, they are "demotivated" on external factors. The data conclude that the internal factors are greater than the external factors. Hence, it can be implied that the external factors are plainly contributing factors but the immediate cause of their demotivation in learning the English boils down to their internal self.

To address the demotivating factor issues of the language learners, the researchers came up with institutional teaching strategies framework which the language teachers may employ. These strategies include metacognitive, cognitive, social strategies, use of audio-visual materials, and internet-based language learning. Strengthening English classroom instruction through these strategies, which have been proven as effective by previous scholarly works would help not only the teachers and learners but the university as a whole of producing world-class graduate-effective speakers of English.

7. Recommendations

On the basis of the highlights of the study, the hereunder recommendations are set forth.

- A. Second language teachers should device mechanisms, which would help the students gain self-confidence and develop their interest in learning English language. There must be a thorough review and/or re-engineering of teaching strategies, course contents and requirements.
- B. The proposed institutional strategies be considered for inclusion in the institutional development plans, more specifically for second language (English) language curriculum. Related studies with wider scope and different methodologies are highly recommended.

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