

Study of the Contributing Factors of the Demotivation in Non-English Major's English Learning based on SPSS Software Analysis

Chengshu Yao

School of Foreign Languages, Nanning Normal University, Nanning 530299, China

yaochengshu1996@foxmail.com

Abstract

The present study probes into the demotivation of students and their behaviors in the process of English acquisition, the contributing factors leading to demotivation and which factors are the main factors, encompassing 190 non-English major freshmen in Zhuhai College of Science and Technology. By dint of SPSS, the present study has made the following findings: 1) there are six kinds of contributing factors leading to the demotivation, which are: teacher's inadequate competence and lack of adequate teaching materials; lack of self-confidence and insufficient opportunities for speaking practice; incorrect teaching methods and excessive attention to the teaching content of the exam; lack of effective learning strategies; lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom atmosphere; negative attitude to language learning and speaking. 2) Among those factors, the last two factors are the main factors leading to demotivation. It is hoped that the present study could provide ways to minimize demotivation among college students during the course of learning English and help them to improve their learning efficiency.

Keywords

Demotivation; Contributing Factors; Non-English Majors; SPSS.

1. Introduction

Regarded as an indispensable factor affecting language learning, motivation has always generated much attention in the study of second language acquisitions and foreign language learning. A multitude of experts in this domain believes that motivation is one of the most influential factors which could affect one's success in developing a second or foreign language to a varying degree.

Although almost everyone takes heed to motivation, few scholars, be them at home or abroad, focused on the negative side of motivation. In addition, some of them realized that demotivation affects a great impact on students' learning, but different people have different opinions in which factors have big impact on students. Since the phenomenon of demotivation is quite ubiquitous to foreign language learning, demotivation provides a new perspective to probe into the factors which could influence the students' foreign language learning.

2. Literature Review

For the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding about the essence of demotivation, and about varying studies at home and abroad, the definition of demotivation as well as relevant researches would be manifested.

2.1. Definition of Demotivation

According to Dornyei [1], the negative motivator in the English classroom is called the "dark side" of motivation, which can be defined as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish

the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action". In addition, for those who have demotivation in learning, it does not mean that the learner has lost his or her motivation completely. Arai [2] harbors the idea that when it comes to internal and external factors, demotivating factors also concerning internal influence rather than sole external effect. In other words, both external factors and internal factors could be potential causes of demotivation. To crown it all, demotivation could be easily described as the loss of motivation, caused by negative effects of internal factors or by external factors.

2.2. Related Studies at Home and Abroad

In China, since demotivation is relatively new in the field of second language learning motivation, plenty of studies have been carried out with the hope of wrestling with the problems about promoting the positive motivation of students whereas very few take heed to identify the demotivation factors for Chinese learners.

When it comes to weakening motivation research, Zhang Shuwei [3] takes the idea that motivation could be classified as integrative motivation and instrumental motivation and there are internal and external causes in the weakening of motivation, the former including self-confidence, anxiety and so on whereas the latter including the attitude of teachers, teaching approach, teaching materials and so on. Li Yanhui [4] carries out the experiments employing qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to investigate the related factors for demotivation. The findings manifests that demotivating factors are directly related to teacher behaviors and thus teachers should pay heed to promote students' motivation. In the study put forward by Li Lin [5], there are four factors, namely, decrease in self-confidence, insufficiency in affective cognition, learning strategies deficiency and lack of intrinsic interest. She harbors the idea that it is more grueling to plumb the internal factors than the external factors while the learners of lower level are prone to be affected by demotivating factors compared with learners of higher level. Zou Wen [6] tries to put forward strategies to eliminate demotivation influence factors and improve learners' autonomous learning ability under the teaching mode of SPOC and flipped classroom. She classifies factors into five kinds, namely, lack of interest in learning, SPOC video effect, lack of real learning situation, lack of learning strategies and planning, unreasonable curriculum setting and learning resources respectively.

Outside China, Gorham and Chrisophel [7] were regarded as he first one to probe into the influence of teachers' classroom misconduct on students' learning motivation. The conclusion of their study reveals that motivation was perceived by students as a student-owned state whereas the lack of motivation was perceived as a teacher-owned problem. Chambers [8] took the lead in the study of demotivation into foreign language teaching. The study tries to examine the way to motivate students who are unwilling to learn a foreign language, with the finding showing that the opinions of teachers and learners were contrary to the causes of demotivation, namely, teachers believed the main causes of the decline in learning motivation was from students whereas the students took the totally contrary opinions. As for Japanese learners, Hideki Sakai and Keita Kikuchi [9] also carry out the 35-item questionnaire among 656 Japanese high school students to probe into the demotivating factors, with the result of the study showing that learning contents, learning materials and lower exam results are the main sources of demotivation whereas the competence and teaching style of teachers on students is not the main cause. As for Korean learners, Jinsook Lee [10] probes into the demotivation and remotivation factors of English learners among 175 Korean university students, finding the main demotivation factors are lack of basic language ability and the core focus on tests while the leading remotivational factors are generated by high test scores and future job prospects.

3. Methodology

A detailed account of methodology of the present study would be manifested in this part. The research questions and participants, instruments and research procedures would be demonstrated respectively.

3.1. Research Questions

On the basis of literature review, the present study tries to explore the general situation of non-English majors' demotivation and demotivating factors which influence their English learning motivation. Thus the present research tries to deal with the following research questions:

- 1) What are the contributing factors of the demotivation among foreign language learners in Chinese colleges?
- 2) What is the most contributing factor leading to demotivation?

3.2. Research Participants

The participants of this experiment are 190 non-English major freshmen of Zhuhai College of Science and Technology. In this research, college students are research participants, including 56 boys and 130 girls aged from seventeen to twenty, as the number of female students is much more than male students in this college. These students are required to do the choices via the questionnaire.

Among the 190 questionnaires, 186 are valid and thus the effectiveness is 97.9%. The relevant statistics are displayed in Table 1. The experiment contains questionnaires and there are 186 subjects in this experiment. After the data collection, all the effective questionnaire information is inputted the computer and analyzed with SPSS.

Table 1. Basic Information of Student Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	56	30.1	30.1	30.1
Valid female	130	69.9	69.9	100.0
Total	186	100.0	100.0	

3.3. Instruments

Taking the reliability and validity into account, the questionnaire about demotivation employed in the present study was adapted from Sakai and Kikuchi's [9] study. All the questions here are passively worded, and a 5-point Likert scale is employed with values of: 1= not at all important to me; 2= slightly important to me; 3= not sure to me; 4= important to me; 5= great importance to me. Therefore, the greater the number is, the more likely the incidence of demotivation force would be.

There are three parts speaking of questionnaire, namely, the first part is personal information encompassing one's gender, age and major; the second part is a question: Do you think there is demotivation in the process of learning English; the last part is 37 5-point Likert scale items about students' demotivation which they may encounter during the course of learning English.

3.4. Research Procedures

3.4.1. Data Collection

Participants are required to complete the questionnaires and all the collected 186 questionnaires are numbered and the answers of the questions are sorted and dealt with in the

computer. The software employed for statistical analysis in the present study is SPSS Statistics 20.

3.4.2. Data Analysis

All the quantitative data is input into SPSS Statistics 20 for further statistical analysis. First and foremost, it is necessary to conduct the reliability analysis so as to ensure the collected data from the questionnaires are reliable and convicting. For the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is measured. Table 2 shows that the result is 0.925, which proves it has good reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.925	37

Secondly, the determinant, KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett Test of Sphericity are employed to check the factor ability of data. Since the KMO test value indicates the variance ratio of all variables, in general, the higher the KMO value, the more common factors among variables, the research data are suitable for factor analysis. As Table 3 shows, the KMO value of the present study is 0.861, manifesting that the size of the sample complies with the requirements and the collected data is quite suitable for factor analysis. The smaller significant level value of Bartlett's, the more suitable the factor would be. The significant level in the present study is 0.000, namely, the existence of a common factor which affirms the applicability of the factor analysis. To sum up, the data in the present study are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.861
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9701.736
	df	666
	Sig.	.000

4. Results and Discussion

In this part, the data collected by questionnaire would be presented and analyzed by dint of SPSS 20, trying to answer the two research questions.

4.1. Demotivation Intensity

After the information background of each student, student's attitude towards demotivation would be surveyed at the very beginning in the questionnaire to plumb the overall situation about it. The answer to the question "do you think there is demotivation in the course of learning English?" would be demonstrated in the table 4.

Based on the answer about student's attitude towards demotivation, they have an obvious demotivation in learning English. 103 students believe they are having basic demotivation, accounting for 55.3% whereas 18 students think they do not have demotivation, accounting for 9.7%. To crown it all, it could be ascertained that demotivation is quite common in the course of learning English among non-English major college students.

Table 4. Demotivation Intensity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	completely nonexistent	18	9.7	9.7	9.7
	basically do not exist	30	16.1	16.1	25.8
	uncertain	35	18.8	18.8	44.6
	basic existence	38	20.4	20.4	65.1
	complete existence	65	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	186	100.0	100.0	

4.2. The Contributing Factors of the Demotivation

Table 5. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Item1	3.75	186	1.041	Item20	2.81	186	1.165
Item2	2.79	186	1.052	Item21	2.57	186	1.277
Item3	2.82	186	1.065	Item22	2.51	186	1.283
Item4	2.94	186	1.370	Item23	3.01	186	1.344
Item5	3.71	186	1.066	Item24	3.53	186	1.244
Item6	3.00	186	1.336	Item25	3.33	186	1.432
Item7	3.33	186	1.306	Item26	2.92	186	1.373
Item8	3.04	186	1.369	Item27	2.19	186	1.183
Item9	3.36	186	1.122	Item28	1.78	186	.894
Item10	3.05	186	1.159	Item29	2.37	186	1.109
Item11	2.24	186	1.003	Item30	2.57	186	1.238
Item12	2.18	186	.973	Item31	3.11	186	1.379
Item13	2.90	186	1.179	Item32	2.74	186	1.364
Item14	2.59	186	1.098	Item33	2.82	186	1.397
Item15	2.25	186	1.057	Item34	2.75	186	1.345
Item16	2.87	186	1.225	Item35	2.79	186	1.141
Item17	2.96	186	1.258	Item36	2.96	186	1.223
Item18	2.83	186	1.168	Item37	3.05	186	1.310
Item19	2.65	186	1.111				

Since the data shows most of the students have demotivation in learning English with rare exception (merely 9.7% believe they do not have demotivation), this part tries to answer the first research question: What are the contributing factors of the demotivation among foreign language learners in Chinese colleges?

Table 5 shows the statistical data to reveal the situation about English learning motivation among non-English majors, trying to find out whether demotivation is ubiquitous among non-English majors. Among these items, the mean value of 12 items is over 3.00, which are Little chance of communicating in English in the class (item 1), I was asked to do the English writing conversation with the correct grammar (item 5), I often be forced to recite the sentences in the textbook (item 6), I get difficulty in memorizing vocabularies and phrases (item 7), I have low English scores in the exam (item 8), I don't know how to study on my own (item 9), the speed in English class is not suitable for me (item 10), there are always written exercises in English classes without other forms of activity (item 23), I am afraid to speak English in public (item 24), I study English for the purpose of passing exam (item 25), English is a compulsory course and I have to learn (item 31), I am afraid to make a bad impression of others in my English class (item 37) respectively. In others words, those factors could be labelled as the main cause of the students' demotivation in learning English.

4.3. Comparison of Demotivation Factors

After figuring out the contributing factors of the demotivation among foreign language learners in Chinese colleges, this part tries to answer the second research question: What is the most contributing factor leading to demotivation? Factor loading indicates the correlation between the original variable and the common factor. According to the classification of contributing factors of demotivation of Dornyei [11], six factors each with at least 4 items would be shown in the table 6, with the highest 0.833 and the lowest 0.505.

The first factor is related to the inadequacy of teachers' teaching ability and the obsolete materials, thus dubbing it as "teacher's inadequate competence and lack of adequate teaching materials", which is consistent with the Dornyei's demotivation factors. The first factor includes item 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 20 with loading value over 0.509. Among them, item 16, 17 and 20 show the attitude towards adequate teaching materials with loading value 0.634, 0.509 and 0.694 respectively whereas item 12, 14, 15 show students' towards English teacher with loading value 0.541, 0.691 and 0.513 respectively.

The second factor is pertinent to the students' internal factors named "negative attitude towards language learning and speaking", which is consistent with the fifth of the ninth factors of Dornyei, encompassing five items, namely, item 31, 32, 33, 34 and 25 with the loading value 0.762, 0.753, 0.851, 0.743 and 0.705 respectively. Among them, item 33 enjoys the highest loading value 0.851.

The third factor is about students' reflection on their own way of learning labelled as "lack of effective learning strategies", which could be a new contributing factor compared with other factors. Item 7, 8, 9 and 10 belongs to this kind of factor, with the loading value 0.734, 0.653, 0.781 and 0.534 respectively.

The fourth factor is related to the school teaching facilities and learning atmosphere in the classroom thus would be dubbed as "lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom climate". There are six items in this kind of factor, which are item 13, 21, 22, 23, 29 and 30 with the loading value 0.781, 0.721, 0.763, 0.754, 0.683 and 0.588 respectively. Among them, four of six are over 0.7.

The fifth factor is pertinent to self-confidence and mother tongue interference dubbed as "lack of self-confidence and insufficient opportunities for speaking interference", including four items, namely, item 1, 24, 36 and 37 with loading value 0.718, 0.523, 0.708 and 0.705 respectively. Among them, the former two shows the self-esteem and self-confidence whereas the latter two present the students' condition of communicating in English.

The last factor is related to teaching methods and examinations thus could be labelled as "incorrect teaching methods and excessive attention to the teaching content of the exam". There

are five items get involved, namely, item 3, 4, 5, 6 and 26 with loading value 0.658, 0.762, 0.635, 0.733 and 0.501 respectively.

Table 6. The Factors and Loading

Factor / Item	Initial	Loading	Factor / Item	Initial	Loading
Factor One: Teacher’s inadequate competence and lack of adequate teaching materials			Factor Four: Lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom climate		
12	1.000	.541	13	1.000	.781
14	1.000	.691	21	1.000	.721
15	1.000	.513	22	1.000	.763
16	1.000	.634	23	1.000	.754
17	1.000	.509	29	1.000	.683
20	1.000	.694	30	1.000	.588
Factor Two: Negative attitude towards language learning and speaking			Factor Five: Lack of self-confidence and insufficient opportunities for speaking practice		
31	1.000	.762	1		
32	1.000	.753	24	1.000	.718
33	1.000	.851	36	1.000	.523
34	1.000	.743	37	1.000	.708
35	1.000	.705		1.000	.705
Factor Three: Lack of effective learning strategies			Factor Six: incorrect teaching methods and excessive attention to teaching content of the exam		
			3	1.000	.658
7	1.000	.734	4	1.000	.762
8	1.000	.653	5	1.000	.635
9	1.000	.781	6	1.000	.733
10	1.000	.534	26	1.000	.501

Table 7 shows the average loading value of each factor. It could be ascertained that the second factor “negative attitude towards language learning and speaking” is the most significant source contributing to students’ demotivation of leaning English, since the second factor has the highest average loading value 0.763. In the study put forward by Cai Ling [12], the result also shows the interest and confidence including several items such as “being afraid of speaking English”, “unsatisfactory score lower interest of learning English” are the main cause, which is

consistent with the result of this part. The fourth factor “lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom atmosphere” has a secondary influence on students with an average loading value 0.715.

Table 7. Average Loading Value of Each Factor

Factor	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
Average Loading	0.597	0.763	0.676	0.715	0.664	0.658

To crown it all, from the above different tables and analysis, it could be ascertained that six factors get involved in non-English major students' demotivation. Among them, the second factor “negative attitude towards language learning and speaking” and the fourth one “lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom climate” enjoy higher loading value compared with the other four. Thus these two are the primary factors contributing to demotivation among college students in the present study.

5. Conclusion

In the previous part, the answer of two research questions is manifested based on the results and analysis presented. This part would put emphasis on the major findings and pedagogical implications of the present study.

5.1. Major Findings

The present study tries to probe into the demotivation in non-English major's English learning and its contributing factors. Based on the data and analysis from the questionnaire among 186 participants, the following are major findings.

On the one hand, most of the students have demotivation problem and the contributing factors of demotivation vary from person to person. Merely 9.7% think they do not have demotivation. The six contributing factors are “teacher's inadequate competence and lack of adequate teaching materials”, “negative attitude towards language learning and speaking”, “lack of effective learning strategies”, “lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom climate”, “lack of self-confidence and insufficient opportunities for speaking interference”, “incorrect teaching methods and excessive attention to the teaching content of the exam”. On the other hand, among factors mentioned above, “negative attitude towards language learning and speaking” and “lack of technological facilities in class and unfavorable classroom climate” are the primary factors contributing to the demotivation among college students in the present study.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the different kinds of the demotivation, college students would have a decline in learning enthusiasm during the course of English learning. Thus the ways to overcome demotivation would be important.

First and foremost, from the perspective of students, setting up a student's file would be one way. Since the contributing factors on demotivation vary from person to person, it is reasonable to set up a file for each student encompassing classroom performance, regular homework, family background, personality and so on. Via that way, teachers could grasp one's specific situation on learning and figure out the specific solution for that student.

In the second place, from the perspective of teachers, developing teachers' own competence would be more than important. Based on the two major factors mentioned above, technological facilities in class should be used, and in doing so, the interest of learning could be increased.

Besides, the harmonious relationships between teachers and students could change students' attitude towards English learning. For example, teachers may employ some funny jokes or episodes from videos via computer to create a good atmosphere in class. Besides, teachers should employ teaching facilities accessible and grasp the latest knowledge about one certain topic in the fast-tempo society, since the brand-new material and reasonable arrangement of the class would influence students' motivation on learning.

To sum up, teachers should grasp each student's information background and endeavor to plumb different solution to overcome student's demotivation based on his or her own situation.

References

- [1] Dornyei, Z.: Teaching and Researching Motivation: Applied Linguistics in Action (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001).
- [2] Arai, K. : What "Demotivates" Language Learners: Qualitative Study on Demotivational Factors and Learners' Reactions, Bulletin of Toyo Gakuen University, Vol. 12 (2004), p. 39-47.
- [3] S. W. Zhang: Motivation--An Important Factor in Foreign Language Learning, Journal of Jilin Agricultural University, (1995), No. S1, p. 80-84.
- [4] Y. H. Li: The Analysis of EFL Learners' Demotivation and Promotion of Motivation(MS, Dalian Maritime University, China 2004).
- [5] L. Li: A Study on Internal Factors of Chinese College EFL Learners' Demotivation, Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages, Vol. 36 (2013), No.2, p. 65-69+128.
- [6] W. Zou: Research on the Demotivating Influence Factors of English Learner under the background of SPOC and Flipped Classroom, Journal of Wuhan Polytechnic, Vol. 20(2021), No.3, p.60-63.
- [7] Gorham, J. & Christophel, D. Studnets' Perception of Teacher Behaviors as Motivating and Demotivating Factors in College Classes, Communication Quarterly, Vol. 40(1992), No.3, p.239-252.
- [8] Chamber, G.: Taking the "De" out of Demotivation, Language Learning Journal, Vol. 7(1993), No.1, p.13-16.
- [9] Sakai, H., Kikuchi, K. : An Analysis of Demotivaiors in the EFL Classroom, System, Vol. 37(2008), No.1, p.57-69.
- [10] Jinsook Lee : An Analysis of Korean University Students' Demotivation and Remotivation in the EFL Classroom, English Language&Literature Teaching, Vol. 24(2018), No.1.
- [11] Dornyei, Z. : Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning, Language Teaching, Vol. 31 (1998), No.3, p.117-135.
- [12] L. Cai : On Junior High School Students' English Learning Demotivators in Ethnic Areas: A Case Study of Six Middle Schools in Qiannan Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province, Journal of Chengdu Normal University, Vol. 37(2021), No.5, p.118-124.