

Demotivating factors of English-majored juniors at Tay Do University

1Wa Thái Như Phương, 2Nguyễn Huy Hoàng

1 Wa Thái Như Phương, English Department, Tay Do University, wtnphuong@tdu.edu.vn

2 Nguyễn Huy Hoàng, Applied Biology Faculty, Tay Do University, nhhoang@tdu.edu.vn

ABSTRACT

Demotivating factors seem to be rarely mentioned when discussing about students' learning, but the influence of demotivating factors on students' learning outcomes is undeniable, especially for students who are learning English. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the factors that contribute to demotivate English majored juniors at Tay Do University. Thirty students were selected to answer five interview questions related to demotivating factors. The results of the study showed that students are affected by demotivating factors from many aspects. Fortunately, most of these factors are avoidable. Based on the results of the study, some recommendations were offered in order to help students as well as teachers in learning and teaching process to get better results.

Keyword: *Demotivating factors, Motivation, Demotivating factors in English learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the context of the globalization, English is considered the most popular language in the world, and the number of people learning English has been increasing day by day because of the benefits that it brings. English plays an important role in connecting people all around the world so that people can create good relationships with each other. It is also an effective communication tool in many fields such as economy, culture, society, entertainment, etc. Moreover, being good at English not only helps people to study more easily but also has more opportunities in finding a stable job with a high salary.

However, learning English is not easy for many students, especially non-English majored students. To be able to learn English effectively, motivation is really necessary. It plays a significant role in the process of learning English. Having a strong motivation helps students overcome the difficulties in English learning process and maintain good learning outcomes as well as improve their English skills. In contrast, without motivation, students are easily feel tired, bored, find learning English is difficult and failed. Completely contrast to motivating factors is demotivating factors which have been rarely mentioned but its impact to students' English learning process is undeniable. It can be claimed that a demotivated student is someone who used to motivate but has lost his or her interest in learning English for some reasons. Therefore, instead of focusing too much on finding motivation, students also need to figure out what demotivate them.

As above mentioned, this study was conducted to investigate the factors that demotivate English-majored juniors at Tay Do University in their English learning process and suggest some solutions to solve these problems in order to help students learn more effectively.

Research question

This research was conducted in order to answer the following question:

What are the demotivating factors of English-majored juniors at Tay Do University?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of demotivation

The notion of demotivation is comparatively new and has not been absolutely adopted nonetheless within the field of second language analysis. Most researchers cannot agree on a longtime definition of motivation. Dörnyei (2001) has tried to supply a definition for it. Consequently, demotivation refers to "specific external forces that reduce or

diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action” (p143). The learner's antecedent conditions, that embrace overall action orientation, self-concept, perspective toward the topic and learning surroundings, want to become skilled, and expectations of success, the square measure said as context demotivates (Gorham & Millete, 1997).

2.2 Demotivating factors in learning English

Teachers' Incompetence and unscientific teaching methods

Teachers' competence and teaching methods play an important role in students' learning. The teacher may be called as a competent teacher if they have a good competence and performance. It is because of both of them are two important factors teachers needed to conducting successful classroom instructions (Brown, 2001). According to Turnuklu & Yesildere (2007), "people believe that teachers actually have in-depth knowledge and skills in a particular field of science. However, the knowledge and skills are not enough to make them able to teach well". They need to have a combination of both a good teaching ability and a reasonable teaching method. In fact, an incompetent teacher can negatively affect to student's knowledge and make students increasingly bored, even unable to absorb what they have learned in class. Moreover, an unscientific teaching method and no creativity in the lessons also contributes to making students feel uninterested and unattractive.

Negative learning environment

Learning environment has a big influence to the motivation of students. However, an unhealthy learning environment will reduce students' motivation to learn. There are many factors that reduce the motivation of students from the learning environment, the first one is classmates, despite all the positive sides, they could also bring negative thing as well. For instance, some of the classmates have a negative attitude in class and do not focus on the lesson, the learning environment is not very effective due to the lack of connection between students. The atmosphere of tension and lack of unity is also the main cause of the decline in motivation in students.

Students' lack of interest in learning English

Lack of interest is also the cause of demotivation because interest is the main factor to motivate students to do something. There are many factors that affect the students' interest in learning English include motivation, family background, teacher, environment and friends. There have been various researches in the issue of interest and attitudes in learning English to date, Tsuda (2003) states his findings that two third of a group students do not like to study English because they did not have much feeling of success in their learning experience. Moreover, lack of interest also reduces student's passion in learning English, this leads students becoming more and more bored and enthusiastic when approaching the English environment.

Inadequate school facilities

Facilities are decisive for the quality of teaching. However, in reality, school and classroom facilities are still lacking and outdated. Some previous studies have proved that having inadequate facilities leads to worse scores on tests and reduces students' interest in learning. Moreover, the lack of facilities prevents students from accessing technologies that support learning more easily. Being able to study in an environment with spacious facilities means a lot to students. They will gradually get used to the modern, standard, and high-quality environment. From there, expectations about the quality of life as well as work will be raised over time. As a result, no matter what field they work in, what role they play, they will have certain standards for themselves, creating a strong motivation for capacity development.

2.3 Previous studies

Ushioda (1998) conducted a two-stage interview with 20 Irish French learners. They were asked to describe what demotivated them in their L2 learning experiences. Those students, evidently, attribute favorable L2 outcomes to personal aptitude or other internal causes, while poor L2 outcomes or failure are attributed to external sources. Their responses "overwhelmingly addressed unfavorable components of the institutionalized learning framework, rather than personal variables like dropping grades or negative self-perceptions of ability," according to the researchers (1998, p. 86). Ushioda applauds this discovery, claiming that by doing so, these students will be better equipped to build self-motivation and learning autonomy, providing a new perspective on motivation.

Another research conducted by Meshkat and Hassani (2012) also conducted a study on demotivating factors in learning English. They administered 421 questionnaires to 421 Iranian students. They show a result that Iranian students lack in school facilities, and over emphasis on formal linguistic elements. They also lack in learning content, materials and teachers' competence.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

In this study, the participants were thirty English-majored juniors from English 14A at Tay Do University. This study included 8 male and 22 females. They ranged in age from 20 to 21. They were all Vietnamese native speakers with English as a second language. They studied with many lecturers who used various teaching methods. They also used a variety of facilities to aid their studies, engaged in faculty or school events, and learned about academic policies at university. Most of them were university students who wanted to improve their English skills but suffered from a number of factors that reduce their motivation.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an interview. It was used as a very useful instrument to collect detailed information about the participants. There were two main sections in the interview. The first one was about students' personal information such as class, gender, age and years of learning English. The second section of the interview included five questions. The students were invited to have an online interview. The goal of the conducted interview was to collect data individually. The interview took place in twenty minutes in order to get more ideas about students' demotivating factors in learning English.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Students' opinions about teachers' incompetence and unscientific teaching methods

Generally, all of the participants responded that they were demotivated by incompetent teacher and unscientific teaching methods.

“When a teacher has poor communication skills and boring teaching methods, it makes learners lose focus and difficult to understand the lesson”. (Female, English translation)

“Teachers' incompetence and unscientific teaching methods mean that knowledge is not effective and students cannot absorb it in the best way. Students who do not understand will not be interested in learning”. (Male, English translation)

Other students additionally explained that teachers were the ones who conveyed their knowledge to students, if that knowledge was incorrect, the next generation would be lost and students could feel bored.

4.2 Students' opinion about the negative learning environment

When being asked “How negative learning environment affect you in the learning English process?”, most of the participants answered that the negative learning environment distracted them.

“A good learning environment is one that is open and receptive to learners. With a negative learning environment, it will affect the spirit, cause discomfort and lose interest”. (Female, English translation)

Another student listed “No movements, activities or English-related competitions, noisy and passive classmates” were also the demotivating factors in class.

However, there was also an opposite opinion that the negative learning environment did not affect them.

“A positive environment will affect me, a negative environment will not because I only accept positive things. Things that are negative in the learning environment I hardly pay attention to”. (Female, English translation).

4.3 Difficulties that students faced with inadequate school facilities

For the question about the difficulties that students face with inadequate school facilities, twenty-five students shared that they had difficulty with school facilities. For example, one student claimed that “The sound quality of the speakers at school is very bad. Listening exercises are difficult to hear clearly. I often go home to find and listen to it again to practice more for myself” (Female, English translation).

Another students also shared that “The room with the projector is too bright, affecting the vision too much, and lack of microphones leads to poor communication practice”. (Female, English translation).

The remaining student did not have difficulty with facilities.

4.4 Students' opinions on demotivating factors and the solutions

In this question, when asked about demotivating factors, all five students shared the factors that caused them to lose motivation such as stress or academic pressure.

“The main factor in making me lose motivation in learning English is the pressure from my surroundings, everyone around me is too good at study and my family has high expectations”. This student also shared that “Sometimes I have to spend time thinking if I’m suitable for English”. (Female, English translation).

Another student said “The factor that makes me lose motivation to learn English is stress”. This showed that stress greatly affected student’s motivation.

Furthermore, the researcher also asked them if they had any solution to overcome their demotivating factors. Fortunately, all of the participants had their own way to solve their problems. For example, one student said “Individuals must find their own sources of motivation and joy”.

“Normally I would stop studying for a short period of time and do things that would help me relax. Then find a new motivation to keep trying”. (Male, English translation)

5. CONCLUSION

After conducting this research by analyzing the important information collected from the juniors, the researcher finally figured out the demotivating factors of English majored students. Those factors were teacher’s incompetence and unscientific teaching methods, negative learning environment, students’ lack of interest in learning English, and inadequate school facilities. This finding showed that demotivating factors were a challenge for students in learning English.

6. REFERENCES

- [1]. Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New-York: Longman.
- [2]. Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (2 Ed.). Harlow: Longman.
- [3]. Dörnyei, Z., 2001a. *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. 1st Edn., Longman, Harlow, ISBN-10: 0582382386, pp: 295.
- [4]. Falout, J., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2009). Demotivation: Affective states and learning outcomes. *System*, 37(3), 403-417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.03.004>
- [5]. Ghadirzadeh, R., Hashtroudi, F., & Shokri, O. (2012). Demotivating Factors for English Language Learning Among University Students. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2), 189-195. <https://doi.org/10.3844/jssp.2012.189.195>
- [6]. Gorham, J. and D.M. Millette, 1997. A comparative analysis of teacher and student perceptions of sources of motivation and demotivation in college classes. *Commun. Educ.*, 46: 245-261. DOI: 10.1080/03634529709379099
- [7]. Meshkat, M., & Hassani, M. (2012). Demotivating factors in learning English: The case of Iran. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 31, 745–749. doi:10.1016/j. sbspro.2011.12.134
- [8]. Ushioda, E. (1998). Effective motivation thinking: *A cognitive theoretical approach to the study of language learning motivation*. In E. A. Soler & V. C. Espurs (Eds.), *Current issues in English language methodology* (pp. pp 39–50). Plymouth: University of Plymouth.