

Exploring Factors Causing Demotivation and Motivation in Learning English Language among College Students of Quetta, Pakistan

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Abstract

The prime aim of this research was to determine both demotivating and motivating factors for Pakistani college students of Quetta in learning English language. 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. A demotivation questionnaire was adopted from the study by Sakai & Kikuchi(2009) consisting of one open-ended question and 35 close-ended items on six factors of demotivation: *grammar-based teaching, teacher's behaviour, course contents and teaching materials, effects of low test score, classroom environment and lack of self-confidence and interest*. Additionally, a modified 20-items AMTB motivation questionnaire along with one open-ended question was adapted from the study by Gardner (1985) which identifies the *integrative and instrumental* motivation. The closed ended questionnaire was analyzed applying descriptive statistics in SPSS (version, 22) whereas content analysis was performed on narrative data extracted from open-ended questionnaire and was quantified to establish the order and rank of factors causing motivation and demotivation among students in learning English language. 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.

Keywords: demotivating factors, motivating factors, foreign language learning, college students

1. Introduction

English language learning is the center of significance in the present scenario due to the fact that English language has emerged as the *lingua franca* in the world. The importance of this language cannot be neglected as it is the leading language of science and technology (Mannivanan, 2006). Social superiority has always been highly associated with English (Pennycook, 2007; Phillipson, 1992) and therefore the symbolic power of English as “the dominant language in the global market” cannot be overlooked. In Pakistan, most of the examinations and job interviews are conducted in English language which makes this language important for career building in the country (Ali, 2014). Pakistani students link English language with success, honor as well as a language power (Rehman, 2005). For a better learning of English, there is a need for learners to develop a positive attitude towards English language learning. In this regard, numerous researchers investigated the factors of motivation to further improve the learning of the target language. Whereas, the dark side of motivation: demotivation has been the under-researched area (Dornyei, 2001; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Zhang, 2007). As far as demotivation is concerned, it has recently been the focus of attention in the area of second language learning and teaching (Muhenon, 2004). Dornyei (1998) defines demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivation basis of a behavior intention or an ongoing action”. Demotivation, directly or indirectly brings about a negative influence as it reduces and slows down the learning process of the learner resulting in a negative effect on the learning process. Demotivation relates to those particular external forces that are responsible to capitulate the ongoing action, which takes place to achieve some purpose.

On the other hand, motivation is the driving force as Dornyei (2001) states that it stimulates the learners to learn the foreign language. It is the “state of morale; extent of readiness or willingness”. The studies in the field of second language learning reveal the fact that motivation is the most influential factor that affects success of the language learner. Dornyei (2001) claims that motivation can help majority of the learners learn the target

language. Many studies have revealed the correlations between level of motivation and achievement. Therefore, all researchers agree on the effects of motivation on language learning (Dornyei, 2001; Ehram, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003; Graham, 2004; Semmar, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003), the greater the longing for learning language results in better learning motivation. Gardner (1982) in his socio-educational model modified motivation as a collection of three components: *effort, desire and affect*. Effort signifies the way learner chooses the time proposed for language study, desire denotes learner's level of craving in its proficiency whereas affect shows the affection of the learner in learning the target language.

Motivation has been set into two constructs: *instrumental motivation* and *integrative motivation*. Richardson (2003) summarizes the two constructs as: Instrumental motivation is the learning of the target language for some practical benefit whereas integrative motivation is the craving of the learner to learn the target language to better interact and value the community of the English language speakers.

2. Importance of Research

2.1 Demotivation in Learning English Language

Demotivation is an issue which has been the focus of attention in the area of second language learning and teaching (Muhenon, 2004). It has been observed that in the context like Pakistan, students feel unable to develop their proficiency in English languages they have less exposure to it and therefore find it difficult. Being a compulsory subject at school as well as college level, there is a need to find a better way out of this problem. Past researches have shown that teachers' behaviour, classroom environment, teaching style and teaching material have served as contributing factors in demotivating the students in learning second language (Ayako, 2004; Ikeno, 2003; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Kiwa, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006). Whereas Dornyei (1998), who contributed in the early attempts to figure out the demotivation among the learners extracted nine factors (i) teachers' attitude and teaching method (ii) lack of facilities available at school (iii) lack of self-confidence (iv) negative attitude towards the foreign language studied (v) foreign language study as a compulsion (vi) interference of other foreign languages which the students are studying (vii) no positive attitude towards the English spoken communities (viii) group attitude (ix) course books studied in class. These factors have contributed a lot in the field of demotivation research, as many students go through demotivation therefore they lose both integrative and instrumental motivation to continue their efforts in learning English language (Bahramy & Araghi, 2013).

AL-Khairi (2013) conducted a quantitative research to investigate the factors perceived as demotives. The result reported that text books, English faculty behaviors, peer pressure, teaching methods, insufficient use of modern teaching aids, difficult English vocabulary and grammar were the demotivating factors for the Saudi University undergraduates in learning English language.

To determine the demotivating factors among the Arab adolescents learning English as a foreign language, Keblawi (2006) conducted a research in Israel in which 294 Arab learners of English from 6 public schools were included. The findings revealed that teachers, the learning group, and text books could demotivate students if perceived negatively.

Students like can by dislike for another student in learning foreign languages, therefore different findings emerge due to the reason that motivating and demotivating factors vary from context to context. As Ushioda (2011) also stated that "Individual difference research focuses not on differences between individuals, but on average and aggregates that lump together people who share certain characteristics." Hence for a better understanding of the demotivating factors in language learning, more insight in the demotivation research is needed (Dornyei, 2005).

2.2 Motivation in Learning English Language

The research to investigate the role of motivation in foreign language learning as well as the factors that may affect the motivation was conducted by Bernaus (1995) on 137 students of secondary schools in Barcelona. The Data was collected by administering an English Proficiency Test i.e., Pre and posttest to analyze the influence of the teachers on student's motivation. The findings revealed that teachers had significant effect on student's motivation.

The study by Pathan, Shahriar, & Ali Mari (2010) aimed at determining the factors that motivate the students of public universities of Pakistan to learn English language. Responses from the sample of 145 participants studying textile engineering department of a public sector university at Jamshoro, Pakistan were collected. The findings of this study showed the students were having intrinsic motivation to learn English language.

A study to examine the key motivational factors influencing students' English learning performance and some effective ways fostering these factors was conducted by Tuan (2012) at university for natural resources and

environment, Vietnam. 290 students were chosen from the population of 1569 students. The findings demonstrated that students had positive attitudes towards English learning, whereas their teachers played the most influential role in encouraging them in their learning process and could improve students' English performance.

A mixed-method research was conducted to identify the factors that motivate language learning by Krishnan, AL-Lafi, & Pathan (2013). The sample consisted of eighty 10th grade students (40 males and 40 females randomly) were randomly selected. The data was collected by adopting Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire consisting of 17 items on four factors of motivation. For a deeper insight into the underlying factor 10 students were also interviewed. The finding depicted showed that parental encouragement, social factor, desire to learn English, and teacher's style were the most popular sources of motivation for students.

3. Research Questions

The study answers the following research questions:

- What are the factors that demotivate college students of Quetta in learning English language?
- What are the factors that motivate college students of Quetta in learning English language?

4. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design. The study is based on two theoretical frameworks: the framework by Sakai & Kikuchi (2009) elucidates the possible factors that cause demotivation among the language learners whereas the framework by Gardner (1985) AMTB Attitude/Motivation Test Battery comprises of integrative and instrumental motivating factors lucrative for language learning.

4.1 Sample

This study included 150 college students who were randomly selected. They were from three different groups: Pre-Medical, Pre-Engineering and I.C.S. All the participants were females aged between 16-20. All the participants had also studied English language in their previously schools for 10 years as a compulsory subject.

4.2 Research Instrument

In order to answer the first research question of the study, demotivation questionnaire comprised of 35 close-ended items based on a five-point Likert-scale on six factors of demotivation: grammar-based teaching, teacher's behaviour, course contents and teaching materials, effects of low test scores, classroom environment, and lack of self-confidence and interest was adopted from the study by Sakai & Kikuchi (2009). The questionnaire also contained one open-ended question in which participants were asked to narrate the factors which demotivate them in learning English language at the college. To answer the second research question, AMTB, close-ended questionnaire comprising 20-items based on a five-point Linkert scale was adapted from the study by Gardner (1985) which identifies the integrative and instrumental motivating factors. This questionnaire also contained one open-ended questionnaire in which participants were asked to narrate the factors which motivate them in learning English at the college.

4.3 Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted with 35 students. Item reliability analysis was run in SPSS. Cronbach's alpha for a questionnaire on demotivation was 0.761 whereas Cronbach's alpha for questionnaire on motivation was 0.81.

4.4 Procedure

Prior to data collection, a formal approval for data collection was sought from the head of the institution. All the participants were informed of the nature of the study and they were also given instructions in both Urdu and English language to respond to the items in the questionnaires. They were also given 50-60 minutes to respond to the all the items in the questionnaires.

4.5 Data Analysis

To analyse the data, descriptive statistics was performed in the SPSS (version, 21) in which percentages were calculated to determine the potential factors causing motivation and demotivation among college students in learning English language. To analyse the narrative data, content analysis was employed where factors causing demotivation and motivation were quantified. Thus, factors demotivating and motivating students in learning English language were extracted.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Data Analyses for First Research Question

The findings of the quantitative data on the first research question are summarized in the following Table 1:

Table 1. Factors causing demotivation among college students of, Quetta

Factors causing demotivation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar-based teaching	14.72	3.84
Classroom environment	18.19	3.68
Effect of low test scores	15.10	3.36
Teachers' behaviour	18.24**	6.48
Course contents and teaching materials	21.02 *	4.82
Lack of self-confidence and interest	10.38	2.68

Note. Highest percentage *Second highest percentage **.

Table 1 reveals that college students experienced demotivation due to the all six factors cited by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009). However, course contents and teaching materials ($M=21.02$, $SD=4.82$) emerged as the leading potential source of demotivation among college students of Quetta in learning English language followed by teacher's behavior ($M=18.24$, $SD=6.48$) as the second salient source of demotivation. Lack of self-confidence and interest ($M=10.38$, $SD=2.68$) emerged as the least source of demotivation among college students.

5.2 Analysis of Narrative Data for First Research Question

The demotivation questionnaire also comprised of one open-ended question that asked participants, "please describe experiences at your present college that decreased your motivation to study English?". Total 95 responses were extracted from the narrative data and were quantified. The extracted factors were classified into six categories in accordance with the framework of Sakai & Kikuchi (2009). The following Table 2 reveals that course contents and teaching material emerged as the popular source of demotivation followed by teachers' behavior as the second most dominant source of demotivation. These findings compliment the findings of quantitative section where students also mentioned these two factors as the potential source of demotivation for students in learning English language.

Table 2. External and internal demotivating factors and their categories

Demotivating Factors	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Course contents and teaching materials*	Very lengthy syllabus	20	21.1%
	Boring and old lessons	10	10%
	Less emphasis on speaking activities	09	9.4%
Total	External Factor	39	40%
Teachers' Behaviour**	No appreciation from the teacher	12	12.6%
	Favoritism	06	6.8%
	Admonition	03	3.6%
Total	External Factor	21	23%
Effects of Low Test Score	Did not secure the expected marks	11	11.5%
	Strict marking in tests	04	4.4%
	My friends secured better marks	02	2.3%
total	External Factor	17	18.2%
Classroom Environment	overcrowded classroom	05	5.2%
	uncooperative class mates	02	2.1%
Total	External Factor	07	7.3%
Grammar Based teaching	too much focus on grammar	04	4.2%
	Boredom due to grammar lessons	02	2.1%
Total	External factor	06	6.3%
Lack of self-confidence and interest	Fear of committing mistakes	04	4.2%
	Shyness and hesitation	01	1.0%
Total	Internal Factor	05	5.2%
Grand Total		95	100%

Note. Highest percentage * Second highest percentage **.

5.3 Data Analysis for Second Research Question

The second question aimed at determining the factors which motivate college students of Quetta Pakistan in learning English language. The Following Table 3 presents the findings:

Table 3. Motivation for college students in learning English language

Motivating Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instrumental Motivation	25.88	5.57
Integrative Motivation	16.36	5.54

The Table 3 illustrates the fact that college students of Quetta, Pakistan were more instrumentally motivated (M=25.88, SD=5.57) than integrative motivation (M=16.36, SD=5.54). The college students of Quetta Pakistan reported that they are motivated to put efforts to learn English language because it helps them to seek good job opportunities and access the reading material printed in English language.

5.4 Analysis of Narrative Data for Second Research Question

In the motivation questionnaire, one open-ended question asked students to express the factors that motivated them in learning English language. The following Table 4 presents the findings:

Table 4. Motivating factors

Motivating Factors	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Importance of English Language*	Key to seek good job opportunities	20	29.8%
	Secure potential marks in exams	10	14.9%
	Medium of Instructions	09	13.5%
	Access to reading material printed in English language	08	11.9%
Total	External Factor	47	70.1%
Parents' Support**	Financial support	11	16.5%
	Encourage to speak in English	09	13.4%
Total	External Factor	20	29.9%
Grand Total		67	100%

Note. Highest percentage * Second highest percentage **.

The findings of the Table 4 also compliment the narrative data of this study that Pakistan college students of Quetta were instrumentally motivated to learn English language. They reported that they learn English to avail good job opportunities because job interviews are mostly carried out in English language. They further reported that they learn English language to read academic books written in English language and it also paves a lucrative way for them to gain potential good marks in examinations which are conducted in English language besides some humanity subjects which are conducted in Urdu language.

6. Discussion

The findings revealed *course content and teaching material* as the most perceived demotivating factor followed by teachers' behaviour, classroom environment, effects of low test scores, grammar based teaching whereas lack of self-confidence appeared to be the least demotivating. In terms of the *course content and teaching material*, students quoted that they were over burdened by a lot of textbooks as well as supplementary readings assigned, whereas they did not find clear answers for many of the problems related to English language, few students were demotivated due to the inappropriate pace of the lessons. The results extracted from the responses of the participants to open-ended question also suggests that course content and teaching material was the prominent demotivating factor, the reasons cited were the outdated books, lengthy lessons. This finding is in line with the findings of the study by Sakai & Kikuchi (2009) where course content and teaching material was found to be the most prominent demotivating factor for Japanese students. Amemori (2012) in his study on undergraduate students of Finland concluded that course content and teaching material was one of the key factors of demotivation in learning English language. On the other hand the study conducted by Muhonen (2004) ranked the course content and teaching as the second most influential demotivating factor among the Finnish English learners. In another study by Hirvonen (2010) also reported course contents and teaching materials as the demotivating factor among the immigrant pupils in Finland. In the study by Trang & Baldauf (2007) textbooks were found to be boring and therefore considered as a source of demotivating as they did not match the pupils

level of proficiency. On contrary, Dörnyei (1998, as quoted by Dörnyei, 2001) course books were listed to be the less frequent demotive. According to Peacock (1999) the right use of teaching material can be a source of motivation among L2 learners to a great extent. Richard & Renandya (2002) maintained that well-designed teaching materials not only address the need of L2 learners, but they also keep students motivated and enhance their interest in learning the target language. The teachers' behavior also emerged as the second most popular source of demotivation. Most of the students pointed out the poor pronunciation of the teacher, one-man show atmosphere of the class where the students got no chance to ask questions which really demotivated them. The findings of open-ended questionnaire also support teachers' behavior as a demotivating factor, highlighting the unpunctuality of the teacher, her harsh behavior and disrespect for the students. The findings indicated that the teachers had an influential role on pupils' motivation, as William Arthur Ward says "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires," glancing almost the past studies on language learning cited the teacher as the most influential and dominant demotivating factor (Chamber, 1993; Dörnyei, 1998; Muheon, 2004; Oxford, 1998; Ushioda, 1996). In a study by Dörnyei (1998) teacher was reported to be the most demotivating factor by the students. Muheon (2004) in his study, also found teacher as the main source of demotivation among ninth-graders in Finland whereas in the present study, teachers' behavior is the second most influential demotivating factor.

The findings also revealed that Pakistani college students were instrumentally motivated in learning English language. This finding is line with the study by Brown (2007) who found the instrumental motivation among the EFL learners in the Iranian context. The study by Karimnia & Salehizade (2007) also confirmed that English Graduates of Iran were also instrumentally motivated to learn English language. Lai (1999) also found the students of Hong Kong instrumentally motivated. Pakistani students are instrumentally motivated to learn English language for achieving key positions in the society. Gardner & Lambert (1992) defined instrumental motivation for foreign language learning as the key to achieve both social and economic benefits.

7. Conclusion

The present study highlighted the factors which demotivate and motivate Pakistani college students in learning English language. This study has implications on Pakistani English language teachers to know the causes of demotivation among their students and devise possible solutions to help students cope with them. As demotivation is the opposite side of motivation (Jenni, 2004), it should be further researched in Pakistani context to gain deeper insight to facilitate the students in English language learning since it is a medium of instructions in Pakistani educational institutes. This study also confirmed that despite facing demotivation, Pakistani college students carry on their struggle in learning English language for having instrumental motivation since English language as the key mean to advance in different spheres of life in Pakistan. The findings of this study are also significant for the researchers in Pakistan who are currently working on the issues of demotivation and motivation in EFL learning.

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