

In the name of God



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**Demotivation: The Sources of Demotivation in
Learning English among Non-English Majors**

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Dedication

Dedicated to my mother and my father, who supported me throughout my life and also to my sister.

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Abstract

Motivation is a key factor in learning in general and in second language learning in particular. As a matter of fact motivation has a dark side, “demotivation” that is the loss of existing motivation, which can lead to failure of students in second language learning. Despite the importance of demotivation, few studies were carried out in this area. This study aimed at finding the most important demotivating factor(s) in Engineering and Humanities students in Iran, and also to find out the differences between Engineering and Humanities students in Iran. A developed form of Sakaii and Kikuchi’s demotivation questionnaire by Keivanpanah and Ghasemi (۲۰۱۱) with a reliability of .۸۷ was administered to ۳۰۰ university students (۱۰۰ Humanity, ۱۰۰ Engineering), from ۷ universities of Iran.(Qom, Kashan, Tehran). The result of the study showed that the three “Learning contents, Materials Facilities”, and “The Teacher”, and “Attitude towards Second Language Learning”, were the most important demotivating factors in both Engineering, and Humanities students. It also showed significant differences between Humanities and Engineering students. The findings of this study are useful for text-book developers and compilers for non-English university students, and also English professors teaching non-English majors.

Key word: Demotivation, Motivation, Learning English, Learning contents, Materials Facilities, The Teacher, Attitude towards Second Language Learning

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Abbreviations

L₂: Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

IM: Intrinsic Motivation

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

There is a long history of the study of motivation in language learning. Research results indicate that motivation is one of the main determining factors in an individual's success in developing a second language (L₂) or foreign language (FL) (Dornyei, 1990, 2001a, 2001b; Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, & Evers, 1980; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Scarcella & Oxford 1992; Warden & Lin, 2000 cited in Baldauf Jr & Trang Tran Thi Thu, 2007). Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and appropriate curricula and good teaching methods cannot guarantee their achievement (Dornyei, 1998). Research has shown that motivation is crucial for L₂ learning (Dornyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1996 cited in Baldauf Jr & Trang Tran Thi Thu, 2007). This has become particularly evident in a world where intercultural communication and foreign language learning have become an increasing necessity for many people (cited in Baldauf Jr & Trang Tran Thi Thu, 2007). The research on motivation to learn a second language was initiated over four decades ago. The pioneering work was done by Gardner and Lambert (1959 cited in Hasani, 2011), who developed a socio-psychological or educational model of L₂ learning. The other new approach to motivation is the self-determining theory which is based on Gardner's integrativeness/integrative motivation proposed by Dornyei in 2000 (Hasani, 2011). The L₂ motivational self-system attempts to integrate several approaches to second language

learning with findings of self-research in psychology. It consists of three dimensions: the ideal L² self, the ought-to self, and the L² learning experiences (cited in Hasani, 2011).

Researchers regard demotivation as “another side of motivation” (e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Falout, Elwood & Hood, 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kikuchi, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009 cited in Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011). Demotivation refers to “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 90). Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) go on to expand “Dörnyei’s original definition to cover both external and internal factors (i.e. demotivation) which reduce or diminish the motivation to study English” (cited in Hasani, 2011).

Researchers also note that students’ motivation is subject to many negative influences during the process of second language learning. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) argue that these negative influences may relate to “particular learning-related events or experiences, such as performance anxiety, public humiliation, heavy work demands or poor test results” and “factors in the social learning environment, such as the personality and the attitude of the teacher or classroom counter-cultures and peer pressures” (p. 148). Demotivation has negative effects on language learning processes and outcomes. It seems that successful language learning requires a serious attention to and plans for dispelling demotivating factors. Any failure to learn a second language may be largely due to the existence of demotivating factors on the part of learners (cited in Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The word motivation derives from the Latin verb mover meaning to move. What moves a person to make certain choices, to take actions, to engage in an action, to keep going an action. Motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to

sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it (Candlin & Hall, 2001). So, motivation in learning L2 is as important as in other fields. Dornyei and Otto (cited in Candlin & Hall, 2001, p.), defined L2 motivation as follows: "in a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. So, it can be implied that "motivation" is the first and the most important factor in learning an L2. So, losing motivation as an important drive, can cause a disaster in learning L2.

Demotivation concerns specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action. Demotivation does not mean that all the positive influences that originally made up the motivational basis of a behavior have been annulled; rather, it is only the resultant force that has been dampened by a strong negative component, and some other positive motives may still remain operational (Candlin & Hall, 2001: 129). It seems that demotivation plays an important role in failure in learning English as the L2 among B.A. non-English students in Iran. As Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi's (2011) research showed, there are important external demotivating factors which demotivate university students more than others. This can be seen in their bad marks, being absent in the English classes and trying just to pass the courses. They do not pay attention to learning and enjoying language. They also show less interest in learning English, while knowing English is vital for their future education. They do not consider that English is the international language and the language of science. As a matter of fact such students are weak in the basics of English knowledge. In order to uncover the reasons for students' demotivation this study aimed at finding the most important factors, among the five categories of demotivating factors which were identified in a research done by

Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi(۲۰۱۱). These five categories are: learning content, materials, and facilities; attitude towards English speaking community; the teacher; experience of failure; and attitude towards second language learning. This study is based on Dornyei's (۱۹۹۴) Framework of L^۲ motivation and the purpose is to find the sources of demotivation in such demotivated students.

۱.۳ Significance of the Study

As motivation plays a crucial role in language learning, demotivation also can be considered as important as motivation, especially in capable and intelligent students. These students may become great experts in their majors, but they may not have anything to present at a global level. Due to globalization English has become the international language and the language of science, so lack of knowledge of English will result in learners facing problems in their education, and they may fail to present their knowledge to the world. The findings of this study may help university professors take account of students needs and desires in order to exclude demotivating factors and incorporate some motivating factors instead. As a result of such improvements, demotivated students may become motivated and those who are apt to be demotivated, may be stopped from suffering, and become motivated and interested in learning.

Research Questions

This study is going to find answers to the following research questions:

- ۱) What are the sources and the main factors of demotivation among Iranian Engineering students?
- ۲) What are the sources and the main factors of demotivation among Iranian Humanities students?

3) Is there any significant difference between the sources of demotivation between Humanities students and Engineering students?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference between the sources of demotivation between Humanities and Engineering students.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Demotivation refers to “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dornyei, 2009, p. 90). Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) go on to expand “Dornyei’s original definition to cover both external and internal factors (i.e. demotivation) which reduce or diminish the motivation to study English” (cited in Hasani, 2011). In order to measure and investigate the sources of demotivation in this study the Sakai and Kikuchi’s questionnaire is used. It has 32 items and addresses five demotivating factors: “learning contents, materials and, facilities”, and “the teacher”, and “attitude towards second language learning”, and “attitude towards English speaking community”, and “experience of failure”.

1.7 The Limitations

The students may not be honest in answering the questions; it may be due to the nature of self-report measures. According to Dornyei (2003b), in administration of the questionnaires the researcher may face social desirability bias. That is, respondents answer as they think they should feel or believe rather than what they actually do believe

(cited in Hasani, ٢٠١١). To overcome this problem, the participants were informed that their responses would be treated confidentially.

١.٨. Delimitations of the study

The study was done just among university students, at the B.A. level. Their major was not English, rather Humanities and Engineering. English major students were excluded, because presumably they are motivated in learning English as they have chosen it by their will.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature