



**Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University**

Faculty of Humanities

English Department

**The Relationship between Using Language Learning  
Strategies, Learners' Optimism, Educational Status,  
Duration of Learning and Demotivation**

By: Fatemeh Miri

**Supervisor: Dr. M. Meshkat**

**Reader: Dr. R. Nejati**

**A thesis submitted to the Graduate Studies Office in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in**

**Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**

**February, 2012**

In The Name of God



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## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my parents and my brother, for their love, patience and support. And also my dear uncle for his support, trust and kindness.

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## **Abstract**

With the growth of more humanistic approaches towards teaching foreign languages, more emphasis has been put on learners' feelings, emotions and individual differences. One of the issues in teaching and learning English as a foreign language is demotivation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the components of language learning strategies, optimism, duration of learning, learners' educational status, and demotivation. The instruments used for data collection were three questionnaires, SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990), optimism questionnaire (Ganji, 2005), and demotivation questionnaire (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). The participants of the study were 142 English learners of Respina-Talk English institute in Tehran. In order to get information about duration of learning and learners' educational status, the students were asked to answer some questions on a separate sheet of paper attached to the questionnaires. The data gathered by means of questionnaires were subjected to correlation coefficient. Based on the results obtained, there is a significant relationship between using memory strategies and demotivation due to the test scores; there is a significant relationship between affective strategies and demotivation due to the content; and using metacognitive strategies has a significant relationship with occurring demotivation because of the content, methodology, lack of intrinsic motivation and test scores. In addition, using social strategies has a significant relationship with demotivation due to the methodology and test scores. However, the findings revealed that, there is no significant relationship between optimism and demotivation, duration of learning and demotivation, and learners' educational status and demotivation.

**Key words:** demotivation, language learning strategies, optimism, duration of learning

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## **Abbreviations**

L2: Second Language

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

LL: Language Learning

FL: Foreign Language

# **Chapter One**

## Introduction

## **1.1. Introduction**

With the growth of more humanistic approaches towards teaching foreign languages, more emphasis has been put on learners' feelings, emotions and individual differences. One of the issues which has been proven to be of great significance in TEFL is motivation. A highly motivated individual will want to learn the language, enjoy learning the language, and strive to learn the language (Gardner, 1985). Much research has been carried out on motivation, different kinds of motivation and the influence of motivation on learning a foreign language by different researchers such as Gardner (1993), Dornyei (2001), Brown (2000), and etc. The concept of motivation was inspired by Gardner and Lambert in the mid fifties. The findings of the investigations in this field led to Gardner's socio-psychological or socio-educational theory of L2 learning.

One of the new issues in TEFL which considers learners and teachers' feelings and emotions is demotivation. Demotivation research can be conducted with regard to teachers or learners, it can also consider different reasons that may lead to demotivation. The present study tries to investigate the relationship between demotivation and some of learners' individual differences like learning strategies, optimism, duration of learning, and background knowledge.



## **1.2. Significance of the Study**

As mentioned before, a great emphasis is put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching. One of the new issues related to foreign language learning and learners is demotivation. There is a wide literature on motivation and its relationship with different variables in language learning and teaching, but only a few studies by some researchers such as Dornyei (1998), Ushioda (1998), Chambers (1993), and Oxford (1998) have focused on demotivation. A lot of language learners are motivated at the beginning, but different factors cause them to lose their motivation gradually. Demotivation has a lot of negative impacts on language learning and causes language learners not to be as effective as they can be. It's important to find out the reasons why demotivation occurs. One way to clarify why this happens is to look at different factors that may give rise to demotivation. This study attempts to find out whether there is any relationship between learning strategies and demotivation, optimism and demotivation, duration of learning and demotivation, and educational background and demotivation in order to find out how motivation decreases.

## **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

This study examines the relationship between demotivation and some of the individual differences of language learners, which are: using language learning strategies, optimism, duration of learning, and educational status.

The current study attempts to examine if specific external forces that reduce or diminish motivation are related to language learning strategies used by learners. In addition, the researcher wants to examine if there is a meaningful relationship between external forces that cause language learners not to be as effective as they can be in learning a foreign language and the tendency to be hopeful and how optimistic the learners are. Also, the current study attempts to find out if there is a significant relationship between demotivation and duration of time that learners have been studying English. Finally, the researcher wants to examine if there is a meaningful relationship between specific forces that reduce the motivational basis or an ongoing action and how educated learners are.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- Is there any relationship between the components of foreign language learning strategies and the components of demotivation?
- Is there any relationship between learners' optimism in learning a foreign language and demotivation?
- Is there any relationship between duration of learning a foreign language and demotivation?
- Is there any relationship between foreign language learners' educational status and demotivation?

## 1.5. Research Hypotheses

To answer the above mentioned research questions, the researcher made the following research hypotheses:

- There is no relationship between the components of foreign language learning strategies and the components of demotivation.
- There is no relationship between learners' optimism in learning a foreign language and demotivation.
- There is no relationship between duration of learning a foreign language and demotivation.
- There is no relationship between foreign language learners' educational status and demotivation.

## 1.6. Definition of Key Terms

**Demotivation:** Dornyei (2005) defines demotivation as “specific external force that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action” (p.143). In this study, demotivation is measured through Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) demotivation questionnaire, which consists of 23 items and 5 components.

**Language learning strategies:** Language learning strategies are those conscious and unconscious processes which language learners make use of in learning and using a language (Richards and Platt, 1992). In this study, language learning strategies are measured through SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990) and it consists of 6 components.

**Optimism:** Optimism is the tendency to be hopeful and to emphasize the good part of a situation rather than the bad part (Ganji, 2005). In learning context it refers to the tendency to be hopeful and successful in learning a foreign language, which is measured through Ganji's (2005) optimism questionnaire.

**Duration of learning:** the duration of time (the number of months) that each learner has been in this institute or other institutes as a language learner.

## **1.7. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

Like other empirical studies, this study is not without its limitations. The current study was carried out at an English institute in Tehran, Iran. Therefore, it had the following delimitations:

1. All participants were English learners of an institute. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other English learners, who study English at schools or universities. Therefore, the study can be strengthened by including participants of other educational contexts.
2. The study was carried out in Tehran. Therefore, carrying out this study in other cities can enhance its generalizeability.
3. The number of the participants of the study was small. Therefore, the study can be more generalizeable by increasing the sample size.