

## STUDENTS' DEMOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

Students with high motivation to learn English as a second language become efficient language learners and ultimately acquire second language proficiency. However, demotivation in learning English as a second language remains to be a serious challenge. Thus, research-based information is needed to shed light in unravelling the factors of demotivation among second language learners and to guide teachers in putting forward practical solutions to increase students' motivation in second language learning. This study was conducted to find out the specific factors that hinder students' desire to learn English as a second language. The researcher used descriptive research design and involved 1,302 students of Palawan State University Cuyo Campus selected through random sampling. Demotivating factors were measured using a modified questionnaire with reliability index of 0.85. Students' self-confidence, learning content and context, focus of teaching and school facilities are revealed as demotivation to second language learning. The findings of this study may guide English teachers in designing teaching-learning contexts that are interesting and can boost student's confidence in using English as a second language. It is also beneficial to policymakers and curriculum developers so that necessary policies may be implemented to improve school facilities, teaching strategies, and learning content and context.

**Keywords:** *Demotivation, Learning English as a Second Language, Students*

### INTRODUCTION

English as a language has always been part of the Filipino's daily lives ever since the Americans had contact with their country (Aquino, Cabarrubias and Park, 2016). For the students, it is very essential to learn English language to develop critical thinking, listening, speaking, and writing skills. Being proficient in the second language is believed to be crucial for having better chances in the future. Thus, parents want their children to have good command of English (Rajabi and Povzeh, 2016). Based on the observation of the researchers, only few have the willingness and motivation to learn English language. Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/foreign language (L2) learning (Aquino, et al., 2016).

Motivation plays a critical role in the sustained process of mastering a language. Research has shown that motivation is one of the influential factors with regards to an individual's success in learning a language (Ghonsooly, 2017). Most

of the researches conducted focused on motivating factors which has left a gap about factors demotivating English language learning. Demotivation is a state or condition that hinders a person from doing his/her best in achieving a specific purpose. As cited by Afrough, Rahimi, and Zarafshan (2013), demotivation is an issue, which has been recently the focus of attention in the field of second language (L2) learning and teaching. Demotivation can affect the class in a negative way. Although there are many factors about demotivation in English language learning, there are some types of motivation that need to be in focus in order to solve or lessen this problem.

In every educational institution, every classroom is composed of learners diverse in age, beliefs, gender, academic performance, and socio-economic status in which these diversities have impact on the factors demotivating English language learning. It is not too late to make them see and persuade that many students have demotivation in learning English language. In view of the above, the researcher found it necessary to conduct this study to illuminate the students' perceptions about demotivating factors in learning English as second language. Specifically, this research sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, general weighted average, and family income?
2. What are the demotivating factors in English language learning as perceived by the students?
3. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the students of the demotivating factors in learning English as a second language when grouped according to age, sex, general weighted average, and monthly income?

Numerous studies were conducted regarding the factors affecting motivation about learning English language. A motivated learner can spread the positive feeling and energy in the whole class while a demotivated learner is highly able to affect the class members in the opposite way (Rajabi and Pozveh, 2016). Demotivated students can influence the other students, and this will decrease the efficiency of the lesson and in addition, obscure the purpose of the lesson. During the last decades, demotivation has often been studied in the area of 'instructional communication' and academic lecture presentations in different countries (Zhang, 2007, cited by Ghadirzadeh, Hashtroudi, and Shokri, 2012). Using the principal axis factor analysis, Ghadirzadeh, et al. (2012), extracted five demotivation factors such as lack of perceived individual competence, lack of intrinsic motivation, inappropriate characteristics of teacher's teaching methods and course contents, inadequate university facilities and focus on difficult grammar. The result showed that there is statistically significant differences between the two groups for two factors (lack of perceived individual and competence and lack of intrinsic motivation) while there were no statistical significant differences for other demotivating factors (inappropriate characteristics of teacher's teaching methods and course contents, inadequate university facilities and focus on difficult grammar).

Moreover, the research conducted by Sahragard and Ansari-pour (2014) about demotivating and remotivating factors among 170 Iranian MA students, showed that economic problems was the most salient demotivating factor followed by future pessimism, professor's characteristics, and syllabus design. Gulnez, Ahmad and Mandouh (2016) also found out that teacher's fluency distorts understanding and contemplation of the learners.

Recently, Cankaya (2018) confirmed that focusing on translation is the most demotivating factor in learning English and ridiculing students' mistakes as least demotivating. His study also revealed that male and female respondents, first- and second-class students do not differ statistically in their perceptions about demotivating factors in learning English.

Researches revealed various demotivators of English language learning in different contexts such as examinations, lack of speaking class, lack of basic English competence, characteristics of classroom (Al-Khasawneh, 2017); facilities, foundation, pronunciation, teaching strategies, confidence, fear of committing mistakes (Aquino, Cabarrubias, 2016); negative attitudes towards speaking English influenced by peers, teachers and materials (Afrough, Rahimi, Zarafshan, 2013); class characteristics, class material and teachers (Rajah and Pozveh, 2016).

Additionally, the case study conducted by Aydin (2012) revealed six main factors for demotivation in the English for Foreign Language (ELF) teaching process which include problems related to teaching profession, colleagues, administrators, and physical conditions. All of these provide clear history and ongoing researches about demotivation in English language learning. These researches show that demotivation to learn English language exists all around the globe.

The review of related literature and studies discloses several demotivating factors to English language learning that can be categorized as internal and external factors. Common internal factors proven by most studies are lack of intrinsic motivation and basic competence, negative attitudes towards English learning and lack of self-confidence. Researchers have repeatedly found out that the influenced of external factors to English learning such as teaching strategies of teachers, classroom materials and facilities, physical and economic conditions. In this study, the researcher conceptualized that both internal and external factors are causing demotivation among English language learners. By investigating the variables defined in this study further, it may eventually explain why some learners are demotivated to learn English language.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study used descriptive design to determine the demotivating factors of students to learn English language. It involved 156 students of Palawan State University-Cuyo Campus, school year 2019-2020. The researchers used modified questionnaire adapted from Sahragard and Alimorad (2013). It consists of two sections: profile section that recorded the age, sex, general weighted average and monthly income and the demotivation questionnaire section which includes 48 statements measuring seven factors: self-confidence, interests in English language, teachers' competence and teaching styles, school facilities, learning content and context, usefulness of English and focus on teaching formatted with a 5-point Likert scale: 1, absolutely wrong; 2, mostly not true; 3, neither true nor wrong; 4, to some extent true; and 5, completely true. Validation of the questionnaire resulted to a reliability index of 0.85. To comply with research ethics, the researcher sought the informed consent of the respondents, data gathered were used solely for the purpose of the study.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1-A. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age, GWA, and Family Income

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Age</b>	17	35	20.08	2.83
<b>General Weighted Average (GWA)</b>	1.2	2.4	1.81	.2680
<b>Family Income</b>	1000	21000	5566.03	3092.43

Table 1 shows that the average age of the respondents is indicative of the usual age of a third-year college student. Their average GWA is highly satisfactory while their average family income is very low.

Table 1-B. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Female</b>	945	73%
<b>Male</b>	357	27%

It can be inferred from table 1-B that majority of the respondents are female. It further attests to the fact that at PSU Cuyo, female students outnumbered the male students.

Table 2. Demotivating Factors in Learning English as a Second Language as Perceived by the Students

	Min	Max	SD	Mean
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	2.0	4.5	.6721	4.28
<b>Teacher's Competence and Teaching Styles</b>	1.2	2.62	.4328	2.061
<b>Interest in English language</b>	1.8	3.9	.6181	2.575
<b>School Facilities</b>	1.8	4.30	.5665	4.06
<b>Learning Content and Context</b>	2.0	4.12	.3353	3.96
<b>Usefulness of English language</b>	1.6	3.4	.4592	2.400
<b>Focus on Teaching</b>	1.7	4.0	.4942	3.92

*Scale of Interpretation: 4.20-5.0(completely true) 3.40-4.19(to some extent true) 2.60-3.39(neither true nor wrong) 1.80-2.59 (mostly not true) 1.0-1.79 (absolutely wrong)*

Table 2 shows the perceptions of the respondents about factors that demotivate them in learning English as a second language. The respondents confirmed that factors such as self-confidence, school facilities, learning content and context and focus of teaching influence their motivation to learn the English language. Based on the computed averages, their perceptions about these factors range from 3.92 to 4.10 which can be interpreted as true to some extent

to completely true. These findings confirmed the findings of Aquino, Cabarrubias (2016); Afrough, Rahimi, Zarafshan (2013); (Rajah and Pozveh, 2016).

Table 3. Analysis of the Differences in the Perceptions of the Students about Demotivating Factors in terms of Age, Sex, General Weighted Average and Family Income

		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	2.209	14	.158	1.248	.248	No significant difference
	<b>Within Groups</b>	17.824	141	.126			
	<b>Total</b>	20.032	155				
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	.123	14	.123	.950	.331	No significant difference
	<b>Within Groups</b>	19.910	141	.129			
	<b>Total</b>	20.032	155				
<b>General Weighted Average</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	1.064	14	.097	.734	.704	No significant difference
	<b>Within Groups</b>	18.968	141	.132			
	<b>Total</b>	20.032	155				
<b>Family Income</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	2.596	14	.130	1.005	.461	No significant difference
	<b>Within Groups</b>	17.436	141	.129			
	<b>Total</b>	20.032	155				

Based on the analysis of variance, table 3 reveals that the respondents do not differ in their perceptions of the demotivating factors to learning English as a second language when grouped according to age, sex, general weighted average, and family income. Since p-values are all greater than .05, the respondents have the same perceptions of the demotivating factors revealed in this research regardless of their age, sex, general weighted and family income. In 2018, the study of Cankaya also revealed that male and female respondents, first- and second-class students do not differ statistically in their perceptions about demotivating factors in learning English. The findings of Cankaya (2018) were confirmed by this study.

### CONCLUSIONS

In general, four demotivating factors to learning English as a second language perceived by the respondents need to be addressed by teachers and administrators. Enhancing the self-confidence of the students in learning the English language must be the teachers' primary concern while improving the school facilities, learning content, context and focus of teaching may require the support of school administrators. Findings of this study, may guide teachers in designing curriculum materials that could improve the content, context and focus of the teaching and learning of

English to make it more interactive and communicative which may consequently improve students' self-confidence. Moreover, improvement of school facilities needed in language instruction must be prioritized by the administration.

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