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Is There a Relation between the
Individual Background and Perceived
De-Motivating Factors in Learning
English among Japanese Students?

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Introduction

Many Japanese high school graduates state that they disliked their English classes.

This is often attributed to the teaching style in junior and senior high school in Japan.

This study investigates if there is also a personal (individual) background component to the phenomenon.

Motivation and Demotivation in English Learning

- Motivation Study
 - Dörnyei (2005, 2009)
from the viewpoint of Psycholinguistics
- Demotivation Study
 - Zhang (2007)
in order to know more about “motivation”
 - Dörnyei (2005) not much has been researched

Motivation and Demotivation in English Learning

- Kakita et al. (1993)
 - 3 Motivating factors (contributors)
 - 1.Environment
 - 2.Teaching
 - 3.Learner him/her-self

A Demotivation Study - 1

“Japanese Learners’ Demotivation to Study English: A Survey Study”

Kikuchi & Sakai (2009)

JALT Journal, Vol. 31, No. 2, November 2009.

<http://jalt-publications.org/recentpdf/jj/2009b/art3.pdf>

- They developed a 35-item questionnaire to gather quantitative data.
- The participants were 112 learners of English from three private universities in Tokyo and Shizuoka, Japan.

A Demotivation Study - 2

- Using factor analysis, five factors were extracted:
 - (a) Course Books
 - (b) Inadequate School Facilities
 - (c) Test Scores
 - (d) Noncommunicative Methods, and
 - (e) Teachers' Competence and Teaching Styles

My Study-1

- In my university (private, in Tokyo)
 - English classes grouped based on a TOEIC-based placement test
- Targeting ...
 - Non-English (actually non-language) major
 - All in Social Studies
 - Freshman & Sophomore Sts (in all levels)
 - In compulsory English classes
n = 115 in total

My Study-2

- Questionnaire
 - Section I: Using questions regarding the socio-linguistic background (similar to previous studies of Nishikawa-Van Eester)
 - Section II: Using a selected set of questions from Kikuchi and Sakai, selected based on their factor analysis
- Objective English level known from the placement test

My Research Questions

- Is there any relation between the demotivating factors and the social linguistic background of the learners?
- Is there any relation between the actual English capability of the learners and the socio-linguistic factors, the demotivating factors?

Question Items - 1

Section I

1. あなたの家族で誰か英語が話せますか？ Can anyone speak English in your family? (Multiple choice)

家族で少なくとも一人は英語で会話ができる。 At least one of my family members can have conversations in English.

家族で少なくとも一人は英語で映画が理解できる。 At least one of my family members can understand movies in English.

家族で少なくとも一人は英語で小説が読める。 At least one of my family members can read novels in English.

家族で少なくとも一人は英語のウェブサイトから情報収集ができる。 At least one of my family members can get information from English websites.

2. あなたは家で、英語でテレビ番組を観ることがありますか？ Do you watch any TV program in English at home? (Choose one)

月1回以下 less than once a month

日本語字幕付きで with Japanese subtitles

Question Items - 2

日本語字幕無しで without Japanese subtitles

3.あなたは英語を学ぶことは必要だと思いますか？もしそうなら、なぜ？ Do you think studying English is necessary? If so, why? (multiple choice)

いいえ No

はい、良い仕事に就く(良い就職の)ために必要です。 Yes. To get a good job.

はい、コミュニケーションのために必要です。 Yes. To communicate

4.あなたは英語の勉強が好きですか？ Do you like studying English? (Choose one)

いいえ No

はい、でも学校での勉強は好きではありません。 Yes, but I don't like studying English at school

はい Yes

5.あなたは外国語を使うことがありますか？何のために？何語を？ Do you use (a) foreign language(s)? For what? Which language(s)?

Question Items - 3

- () テレビを観るため To watch TV
- () 休暇(旅行)のため For vacation (traveling)
- () インターネットを利用するため To use the Internet
- () その他: _____ のため Others: for _____

- () 英語 English
- () フランス語 French
- () ドイツ語 German
- () スペイン語 Spanish
- () 中国語 Chinese
- () 韓国語 Korean
- その他: _____ 語

Question Items - 4

Section II

1. 英語でコミュニケーションをする機会がなかったから。I seldom had chances to communicate in English.
2. 文法に関する学習が多かったから。Most of the lessons focused on grammar.
3. 大学入試のための授業が多かったから。Most of the lessons were entrance examination oriented.
4. 英単語・熟語を覚えられなかったから。I had difficulty in memorizing words and phrases.
5. 定期テスト(例: 中間・期末・実力テスト)の結果が悪かったから。I got low scores on tests (such as mid-term and final examinations).
6. 先生の英語の発音が悪かったから。Teachers' pronunciation of English was poor.
7. 先生が生徒の間違いを馬鹿にした態度をとったから。Teachers ridiculed students' mistakes.

Question Items - 5

8. 先生の説明がわかりにくかったから。Teachers explanations were not easy to understand.
9. 授業で扱う英文のトピック(話題)が興味深くなかったから。Topics of the English passages in the textbooks were not interesting.
10. 教科書の文章が長かったから。English passages in the textbooks were too long.
11. 授業で扱う英文の内容が難しかったから。English sentences dealt with in the lessons were difficult to interpret.
12. 教科書や副読本がたくさん与えられたから。A great number of textbooks and supplementary readers were assigned.
13. コンピューター設備を使わなかったから。Computer equipment was not used.
14. 映像教材(ビデオ・DVD)を使わなかったから。Visual materials (such as videos and DVDs) were not used.
15. インターネットを使わなかったから。The Internet was not used.
16. 友達と比べてテストの得点が取れなかったから。I was often compared with my friends.

Method

- Analysis of correlation matrix as generated with SPSS

Findings -1

- People with family members who use English (I-1)
 - don't complain about grammar-focused lessons (II-2 • corr = $-.234$)
 - do complain about the pronunciation of English teachers (II-6 • corr = $.187$)

Findings - 2

- People who like studying English (I-4)
 - didn't have difficulties in memorizing vocabulary (II-4 ▪ corr = $-.237$)
- People who actually use foreign language(s) (I-5)
 - complain that their schools did not use practical tools (PC, video, the Internet) (II-13/14/15 ▪ corr = $.313/.210/.254$)

Findings -3

- People in the classes with a higher placement score
 - think that learning English is necessary (I-3 ▪ corr = .255)
 - actually do use (a) foreign language(s) (I-5 ▪ corr = .201)
 - don't complain about grammar-focused lessons (II-2 ▪ corr = -.219)
 - don't complain about the length of passages in textbooks (II-10 ▪ corr = -.300)

Other Studies (1)

- **Top five motivations for learning English –**

<https://www.english.com/blog/inspiredtolearn-what-are-top-five-motivations-learning-english>

“We asked 6,000 people in twelve countries about the reasons why they’re learning English – here are the top motivating factors” (Pearson English)

Other Studies (2)

- 1. Learning English makes it easier to communicate while abroad**
- 2. English is the closest the world comes to having a global language**
- 3. Learning English facilitates communication with people from different countries**
- 4. Learning English improves career prospects**
- 5. Learning English makes working life easier**

(Pearson English)

Concluding Remarks

Motivation and De-Motivation

- 1. Learning English makes it easier to communicate while abroad**
- 2. English is the closest the world comes to having a global language**
- 3. Learning English facilitates communication with people from different countries**
- 4. Learning English improves career prospects**
- 5. Learning English makes working life easier**

(Pearson English)

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Thank you very much !