

**THE STUDENTS DEMOTIVATING FACTORS FOR
LEARNING ENGLISH IN IAIN LHOKSEUMAWE****Oleh: Zurriyati****Dosen Jurusan Tadris Bahasa Inggris IAIN Lhokseumawe****Email: zuri.ratu@gmail.com*****Abstract***

Everybody needs to have a motivation and a reason for action. Second and foreign language learners should be given the opportunity to be motivated and fulfil their learning orientation. However, in the learning process, many students are still faced with demotivating factors. The purpose of this study is to describe the students' demotivation factors for learning English in IAIN Lhokseumawe. Thirty students were taken subjects of the study to fulfil the data need in completing a questionnaire and ten students were chosen to follow the interview process expressing what affects their English learning motivation negatively. The data finding shown that the students of IAIN Lhokseumawe have many demotivation factors were affected by the subjects aspects such as, listening, writing, reading, speaking, vocabulary and grammar besides of the teachers' style and personality and also cultural perspective.

Keywords: *Students' demotivating factors, learning English*

Abstrak

Setiap orang perlu memiliki motivasi dan alasan untuk bertindak. Pelajar bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing harus diberikan kesempatan untuk termotivasi dan memenuhi orientasi belajar mereka. Namun, dalam proses pembelajaran, banyak mahasiswa masih dihadapkan pada faktor demotivasi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan faktor demotivasi mahasiswa untuk belajar bahasa Inggris di IAIN Lhokseumawe. Tiga puluh mahasiswa diambil subjek penelitian untuk memenuhi kebutuhan data dalam menyelesaikan kuesioner dan sepuluh mahasiswa dipilih untuk mengikuti proses wawancara yang mengungkapkan apa yang mempengaruhi motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris mereka secara negatif. Temuan data menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa IAIN Lhokseumawe memiliki banyak faktor demotivasi dipengaruhi oleh aspek mata pelajaran seperti, mendengar, menulis, membaca, berbicara, kosakata dan tata bahasa selain dari gaya dan kepribadian guru dan juga perspektif budaya.

Kata kunci: *Faktor-faktor demotivasi mahasiswa, belajar bahasa Inggris*

A. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most significant factors in language learning, and it is difficult for low motivated students to learn English as a foreign language. Dornyei (1994) unequivocally states that motivation is one of the main determinants of second/ foreign language learning. Interestingly, motivation is perceived by Dornyei (2001) as cyclic, going up and down, affecting language achievement and being affected by it. He also claimed that a demotivated person is someone who initially had the motivation to fulfil a goal or to engage in an activity and has lost the motivation to do so because of adverse external factors which related to the environment in which learning takes place such as the classroom and school. Nikolov (1999, in Dornyei, 2001) found that the essential demotivating factors for all the age groups were related to the learning situation such as materials, the teacher or teaching methods and he added that these factors had a significant effect on language acquisition and achievement.

Thus, understanding the students' goal and motivation for learning English in addition to the demotivating factors help the teachers, educational policymakers and curriculum planners to improve the students' proficiency. Corria (1999:) claims that a full understanding of students' motivation is necessary to maximise the English language results and positive outcomes.

The English language is a compulsory subject in the English department of IAIN Lhokseumawe institute. They start to study English from the first year entering the institute until they finish for four years. Despite the shift from the traditional teaching methods to communicative language teaching, most English language classrooms are still directed to memorize vocabularies besides practising communication in the environment of the college and English is still to be treated as a subject that needs to be mastered and tested either oral test or writing test rather than a tool for communication.

Although the great efforts exerted in the college to teach English, and to get all students who master four skills in English after graduating,

most students are still weakness in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

B. DISCUSSION.

1. Definition of Demotivation

Many research is done concerning on language learning motivation but less on the demotivating factors in learning the second language and a few studies have addressed them. Donyei & Otto (1998) don't perceive motivation or demotivation as a static phenomenon. On the contrary, they are considered dynamic, increasing and declining, affecting language achievement and being affected by the surrounding learning context. The demotivated learner is defined by Dornyei as the one who is initially motivated and lost his/her motivation because of adverse external factors.

Gorham & Christophei (1992) investigated the factors that students perceive as motivators/demotivators in college classes at West Virginia University. The study compared students' perception of the demotivating and motivating factors. As to demotivating factors, the factors related to teacher's behaviour were the most frequent, forty-three percents, those under partial control of the teacher were second in frequency (e.g. assessment and choice of textbooks), 36%, and only 21% related to contextual factors over which the teacher has little control. Regarding the data as a whole, the teacher behaviour contributed equally to both motivation and demotivation. However, the researchers concluded that motivation is perceived as a student-owned state while a lack of motivation is perceived as a teacher-owned problem.

Oxford's 1998 study advanced the understanding of demotivates by taking into account the time factor. She recognised that demotivation is a process that can be best understood by "looking backwards", i.e., by asking participants to recall their learning experiences over some time, in this case, five years. The students were asked to write a stimulated recall essay using a variety of prompts, including "Describe a situation in which you experienced conflict with a teacher", and "Talk about a classroom in which you felt uncomfortable". The findings drawn from the content analysis of the student essays revealed four broad sources of demotivation, i.e., the

teacher's relationship with the student, the teacher's attitude towards the course or the material, style conflicts between teachers and students, and the nature of the classroom activities. However, since the prompts used by Oxford specifically referred to the teacher's role as a source of demotivation, other potential sources might not have been provided by participants in the study.

Keblawi (2005) conducted a study to explore the factors affecting learning English in Palestine high schools. The data revealed that English teachers were referred to directly or indirectly as demotivators by almost half of the respondents. Interestingly, the study revealed that about half of the respondents referred to aspects of English (grammar, vocabulary) as central secondary students in Budapest who were identified as demotivated, Dornyei (2001) categorised nine demotivating factors in order of most common to least:

1. the teacher-personality, commitment, competence, teaching method;
2. inadequate school facilities-group is too big or not the right level; frequent change of teachers;
3. reducing self-confidence-experience of failure or lack of success;
4. having a negative attitude towards the second language;
5. Compulsory nature of second language study;
6. Interference of another foreign language which is being studied;
7. The negative attitude towards second language community;
8. The attitude of group members;
9. Coursebook

Finally, while it is not difficult for the students who are involved with, and quite interested in, language learning to point out things that may be classified as demotivates, it is also the case that being able to name such demotivating factors does not provide any insights on the possible effects that demotivates may have on different students. Dornyei (1998) addressed this issue by hypothesising that only demotivated students, or those who have experienced demotivation, can indicate the actual reasons that resulted in their loss of interest in language learning. Thus, in selecting participants for his research, he focused only on those who had been identified as demotivated. Data were collected through lengthy structured interviews. His

findings were consistent with the results reported by previous researchers in that the largest category of demotivates directly concerned the teacher. Nonetheless, while such material provides fascinating insights, one may wonder whether the data collected from interviews alone are sufficient, informative and valid in dealing with such a sensitive problem, especially across all cultural situations.

2. Demotivating Factors

The questionnaire was designed to investigate the factors demotivating the students when learning English. The question asked to recognise the demotivating factors was "which one of the following factors demotivated you when studying English?". The subjects had an opportunity to choose more than one factor. Then, the factors were ranked according to their frequency, from the most frequent to the least.

Table 1: The frequency distribution and percentages of the demotivating factors facing students when studying English.

Rank	Item no.	Demotivating factor	Frequency	Percentage
1	9	Listening skill difficulties	21	70%
2	4	Rare use of technology	20	66%
3	7	Vocabulary load	14	46%
4	8	Difficulty of structures	14	46%
5	6	Textbooks	13	43%
6	1	Lecturer's rapid speech	12	40%
7	5	Evaluation system	11	36%
8	3	Lecturers' personality	9	30%
9	10	Spelling errors	9	30%
10	2	Rare use of Indonesian	8	26%
11	13	Friends' discouragement	7	23%
12	14	Social & religious reasons	3	10%
13	12	Parents' discouragement	2	6%
14	11	Effect of English on Indonesian	1	3%

In table 1, the most demotivating factors mentioned by the students referred to the difficulty of English as a foreign language. The first places regarding demotivating factors were occupied by some subject aspects; "listening skill difficulties" which was considered the first demotivating factor by 70% of the respondents, "vocabulary load", 46%, "difficulty in understanding structure, 46%, and "spelling error" 9%. Moreover, some aspects of the teacher's personality and style are still considered demotivating by considerable percentage of respondents such as, "rare use of technology" became the second rate of demotivating factor, 66%, "lecturer's rapid speech", 40%, "evaluation system", 36%, "rare use of Indonesian", 26%. Demotivating factors related to the textbooks was mentioned by 43% of the respondents whereas only 10% feel demotivated because of some social and religious reason.

To find out more detail information from the respondent to demotivating factor in learning English. The researcher conducted interviews with some students who have taken the questionnaire. Most of the interviewees complained of the subject demotivating factors in all part of English skill such as listening, writing, reading and speaking and also included vocabulary and grammatical structure complexity.

These points are related to the listening subject:

"I found it difficult in understanding listening because there are so many vocabularies used which I do not know the meaning."

"There is no enough facility for us in learning listening so make us feel bored and demotivated in following the teaching-learning process of listening subject.

"The different pronunciation says by a native speaker in the cassette makes me and my classmate confuse to get the meaning of the word and the sentence.

"I like listening because I hear the native speaker directly, but I do not understand what the cassette says, it is so fast and unclear for me although I hear regularly.

"I like English very much, but I feel stressed and frustrated when I have to take the listening subject and find myself unable to follow or understand the recorded dialogues and texts.

The students face the following problems in writing paragraph and composition.

" I have good ability in speaking but low ability in writing. It is difficult for me to find out the idea and develop a paragraph.

"I usually write the diary and story about something. I have no problem in formal writing, but I do not why I get trouble in writing a formal composition and difficult to differ many kinds of writing.

"Writing letters and paragraph is not tricky, but the numerous spelling mistakes and grammatical rule make me stress.

" I dislike learning English because of its difficult grammar. If I pass the grammar subject, the class will be enjoyable and motivating".

Besides listening and writing, there is another factor which affects demotivated students in learning English in term of reading comprehension. Most students mentioned that they have difficulties in pronouncing the word and hard to comprehend the text.

English lecturers were considered as demotivators by some interviewees. The nervousness and the way of lecturer act to face the students who have the problem in understanding the material as a result of the students' weakness or misbehaviours contribute to students' demotivation.

" I dislike seeing the teacher who did not respect the students when making a mistake in answering the question.

" There is something make me uninterested in studying and feeling disappointed when the teacher does not give me enough time to answer the question.

Furthermore, some students claimed that the teachers' style and teaching methods made them unmotivated in learning English.

" Some our English lecturers have good ability in the teaching process, but most of the lessons are presented in the classroom without the use of any technological device.

" I hate the lecturer who seldom enters the class on time. This could kill our motivation to study.

In this part, the focus will be on the external demotivating factors affecting the IAIN Lhokseumawe students' demotivation for learning

English. Dornyei (2001) first broadly states that demotivation "concerns various negative influences that cancel out existing motivation, " but excludes affect as a stimulus by narrowing his definition to "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action".

However, the result of the questionnaire answer sheet and interviews showed that demotivators related to learning contact were not the only type of demotivation which the students' have. Another type of demotivation related to some subject aspects (listening difficulties, vocabulary load, spelling& structural error) was also referred to a higher percentage of students. Additionally, it can be noticed clearly through the result of this study that most of the demotivating factors in IAIN Lhokseumawe context are in line with demotivating factors which are categorized by (Oxford,1994) and (Dornyei, 2001) particularly, teacher's personality and teaching methods, the negative attitudes toward L2 community, coursebook and reduced self-confidence. The discussion will be first about the subject demotivating factors since they were the most frequent and then the teachers as demotivators as they affect mostly the language learning and acquisition.

1. Subject Demotivating Factors

Demotivation resulted from perceived difficulties of some subject related aspects consider intrinsic motivation and its role in the learning process. It is evident in the literature review that intrinsically motivated learners usually find learning fun and display their curiosity and challenge to reflect a willingness to learn. Furthermore, the subject demotivating factors could expand Dornyei's definition of demotivation by adding the difficulty of some subject aspects to the external demotivating factors and learning context.

Most of the students (70%) tend to feel the main difficult subject in English is listening, and this makes the respondents feel demotivated when they face difficulty in understanding the recorded material (listening text). Many factors result in the students' passive perception of listening. First, most students find it hard to understand the native speakers' accent on the tape in listening exercises because they are used to listening to their teachers

who are non-native speakers of English. Second, another consideration is the learning situation inside the classroom; asking the students to listen for specific information or details before listening for gist and activating their schematic knowledge will make comprehension difficult if not impossible. In our ordinary experience the mother tongue language grows in context, whereas in a foreign language, context must be created because the more we know about the situation, the more readily we understand the language used in it.

The other difficulties that the students face and feel demotivated in learning English due to the large number of new lexical items which should be memorised to enable them to write, speak fluently and comprehend the reading text. There is no doubt that vocabulary plays a vital role in learning a foreign language and it is one element that links the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing altogether. In order to communicate well in English, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. Although the students realise that vocabulary is the important in learning English, but they are still passive in improving vocabulary. They do not have the strategies for increasing their vocabulary effectively such as derivation or word collocation.

In mastering four skills in English, the students need to have grammar to arrange proper sentences in language context beside the vocabulary mastery. An understanding of a language grammar is essential and as it is said vocabulary is the flesh of the language and grammar is the skeleton. However, most foreigner of English learners get difficulties in understanding grammar. The primary syntactic errors that the students usually make in the verb phrase (verb formation, tense, and subject-verb agreement) and noun phrase. Also, errors intense sequence, tense marker and confusion of present, past and perfect tenses were identified. Moreover, the sixteen tenses in English are considered of the most difficult structural points facing the students of IAIN Lhokseumawe in learning English.

Related to writing ability, the students get difficulties in constructing idea to develop paragraph and spelling errors. Correct spelling gives the 'writer' more self-confidence and from this grows a willingness to experiment more with language. Additionally, if students hear a new lexical

item and can make a realistic guess about its spelling, they can check its meaning in a dictionary. Also writing it may help them to fix it in their mind.

Regardless of the reasons causing difficulties in mastering English spelling, the constant fear of committing spelling mistakes which affects negatively the writing skill and makes students learn in an insecure learning atmosphere will inevitable reduce the students' motivation for learning English.

2. Teachers as Demotivators

Beside of the subjects as the most demotivated students in learning English, the teachers also affect the students demotivation. The demotivating factors that students referred to and that were related to teachers could be classified into two main groups: teachers' style, such as the way they taught and presented the material to students, and personality traits, such as, the way they behaved with students. Generally, both variables (teacher's personality and style) can play a negative role if perceived negatively by students. The teacher is the key of the teaching and learning process, and his/her personality has great impact on the learners' like or dislike for learning the related subject.

In this study, 66% of the respondents referred to the teaching style and 30% the respondents referred to the teacher personality. The negative behaviour and personality that the teachers show such as: feel angry if the students answer the questions incorrectly and make error in grammatical structure and the teacher force them.

Concerning correcting the students' mistake, teachers need to have students understand that they can learn through mistakes. Harmer (1999) claimed that "when second language learners make errors, they are demonstrating part of the natural process of language learning. Additionally, Doyon (2000) shows that explicit error correction tends to make students feel they are criticised, and instead teacher should correct errors in indirect ways. It should be realised that in a motivating and supportive classroom students feel comfortable taking risks and participating positively in the

class activities because they know that they will not be criticised or embarrassed if they make mistakes.

The other factors which affect the students demotivating in learning English process is the teachers seldom use technology. As we live in the age of science and technology, it is unsurprising to find out that students like some technological devices (TV, video, computer and other multimedia) to be utilised in their learning. This study revealed that 66% of the respondents feel demotivated toward learning because their teachers rarely use technology in presenting the English subjects. Many different types of technology can be used to support and enhance learning. Everything from video content, laptop and projectors to language labs have been used in classroom. Marshall (2002) found strong evidence that educational technology complements what a great teacher does naturally, extends his reach and broadens students' experience beyond the classroom.

C. CONCLUSION

The weakness of English language learners, in general, has been attributed to various factors such as teaching methodology, lack of the target language environment and the learners' motivation. Therefore, it is important for the teachers at least to be aware of the possible factors that may be affecting their students' motivation. With those factors in mind, they may be able to develop strategies to help solve the problems that arise relating to students' motivation and desire to learn English as a foreign language.

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