

University Students' Perception of Demotivating Factors in Learning English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Demotivation is a relatively new topic in the field of second or foreign language acquisition which is in need of more rigorous research. In this regard, the present study was an attempt to investigate demotivating factors in learning English as a foreign language in an Iranian context. To this end, 382 Persian learners of English were selected through stratified clustering sampling procedure to participate in this mixed method study. The Data was collected through a 40-item Likert type questionnaire. The Factor analysis of the data extracted seven factors including a) inadequate facilities, b) reduced self-confidence, c) class characteristics, d) lack of purpose to study English, e) teaching methods, f) teachers and teaching styles, and g) negative attitudes toward English and the culture of English-speaking countries as demotivators. The Students' perceptions of these seven factors were compared based on their general English proficiency levels. The Results revealed that low proficient learners perceived reduced self-confidence and negative attitudes more demotivating than their counterparts at other levels of proficiency.

Keywords: Motivation, Demotivating Factors in Learning EFL, General English Proficiency, Iranian EFL Learners

Introduction

Motivation research has conceptualized motive as a positive force to do something. It is believed that motivation plays a significant role in academic success. Dornyei (1994) highlighted the importance of motivation in ELT as “one of the main determinant of second or foreign language achievement” (p. 273). Whereas motivational factors have been repeatedly reported to influence learning positively, demotivating factors are supposed to have detrimental de-energizing effects in educational contexts. After reviewing few relevant studies, Dornyei (2001a) concluded that demotivation is a prominent phenomenon in second language learning and recommended further research in this regard. Dornyei (2001a, p. 124) defined demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action.”

However, many researchers found that internal factors may cause demotivation as well (Arai, 2004; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2004). Moreover, in contrast to his own definition of demotivation, Dörnyei(2001b) listed reduced self-confidence and negative attitude toward the foreign language as sources of demotivation. Therefore, Dörnyei’s original definition of demotivating factors needs to be expanded to include both internal and external factors as possible demotivators which reduce or diminish the motivation to study English (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). The following section is a chronological review of the studies on demotivation with a special focus on research in Asian context.

Not only researchers but also teachers are interested to find out the possible causes of demotivation in educational contexts in order to prevent or remove it. Rudnai (1994) and Dornyei_(1998) were two of the first scholars who studied demotivation in the field of language teaching. Based on Dornyei’s Motivation Model (1994), Rudnai (1996) prepared interview guides investigating demotivation at the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. She concluded that the most important levels were those of learners (i.e., lack of self-confidence) and learning situation which included a) lack of free choice, b) lack of skilled teachers, c) lack of constant learning, and d) being placed in inappropriate proficiency groups. Similarly, Oxford (1998) found the following demotivating factors:

teachers, textbooks, class activities, insufficient equipment, and inappropriate tasks. Dornyei (2001a, p.151) presented the following nine factors as demotivators: “1) teachers’ personalities, commitment, competence, teaching methods; 2) inadequate school facilities (very big group, not the right level, or frequent change of teachers), 3) reduced self-confidence due to experience of failure or lack of success, 4) negative attitude toward the foreign language, 5) compulsory nature of the foreign language, 6) interference of another foreign language that pupils are studying, 7) negative attitude toward the community of the foreign language spoken 8) attitudes of group members, and 9) course books used in class”.

In an Asian study, Ikeno (2002) asked Japanese university students about their experiences of motivation and demotivation. He came up with 22 motivating and 13 demotivating factors such as a) lack of control over content, b) teachers’ characters, c) exam-oriented classes, d) feeling of inferiority, and e) peer negative attitudes. In another study in Japan, Hasegawa (2004) studied high school students and pointed out that negative experiences related to teachers were the most frequently cited source of demotivation. Teachers’ behavior was also a top-ranking factor in other studies (Kearney, Plax & Allen, 2002; Millette & Gorham, 2002; Potee, 2002). Thus, it can be concluded that teachers-students relationships play a significant role in the development of learners’ (de)motivation (Chesebro & McCrosky, 2002; Den Brok, Levy, Brekelmans & Wubbles, 2005; Noels, Cle´ment & Pelletier, 1999; Takako, 2005). Keblawi (2006) investigated demotivators among Arab learners of English. He mentioned such factors as teaching style, teacher personality, textbooks, and evaluation system as the most significant ones. Tsuchiya (2006a, 2006b) added lack of English speaking models to other factors including teachers, classes, complexity of English, negative attitudes, and reduced self-confidence.

In a survey done by Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009), demotivating factors were grouped into three categories of external conditions, internal conditions, and reactive behaviors to demotivating experiences. The findings indicated that internal conditions and reactive behaviors were correlated with long-term EFL learning outcomes. Focusing on external factors, Kikuchi and Sakai (2009) pointed to five extracted factors: a) course books, b) inadequate school facilities, c) test scores, d) non-communicative

methods, and e) teachers competence and teaching styles. However, in a follow-up study considering both internal and external factors, different components were extracted: a) learning content, b) teacher competence and teaching style, c) inadequate school facilities, d) lack of intrinsic motivation, and e) test scores (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Lee and Lee (2011) investigated differences in perception of demotivating factors according to gender and general English proficiency. The results revealed that male students had more negative attitudes and low proficient learners were the most demotivated ones. On the other hand, Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012) reported that factors such as teaching methods, inadequate class time, problems in understanding oral language, and lack of practice in real situation were essential demotivators among Iranian seminary students. Moreover, they found that more motivated students were at higher levels of general English proficiency. Finally, Al-Khairiy (2013) stated teacher behavior, peer pressure, teaching methods, insufficient teaching aids, and complexity of English language as the most demotivating factors among Saudi university students.

The review of previous research indicated that really few studies have focused on demotivation in Iranian contexts. The only case found in literature review was that of Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012); however, the reported results were limited to just one field of study. In other words, they studied demotivating factors affecting EFL learning of Iranian seminary students. Therefore, in order to make the results more generalizable, the present study tried to determine major demotivating factors affecting EFL learning of Iranian university students from different fields of study.

Moreover, this research tried to investigate the students' perception of demotivators across different proficiency levels. The research questions that guided the study were as follows: 1) What are the major demotivating factors of studying English as a foreign language in its Iranian context? 2) Do learners at different levels of general English proficiency have the same perception of demotivators?

Method

A mixed method study was conducted to find out major demotivating factors and students' perception of them in an Iranian context.

Participants

This study targeted university students attending Islamic Azad University (IAU) in Isfahan Province, Iran. There are 20 branches of IAU in Isfahan out of which 5 branches were chosen for sampling based on stratified clustering procedure. The population out of which the sample was selected included 66,000 students. Cochran sampling formula indicated the sample size to include 382 participants. All students, including 223 females and 159 males, were Persian learners of English whose age ranged from 19 to 30 years old. They were senior university students who had passed 3-5 credits of general English courses and 2-4 credits of English for academic purposes.

Instrumentation

The materials applied in this study consisted of interview, GEP self-assessment, and demotivation questionnaires. First, the interview included only one question: "What are the demotivating factors of learning English as a foreign language?" Second, GEP Self-assessment questionnaire was used in order to find out the learners' present level of general English proficiency based on six-point scale of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Third, the demotivation questionnaire consisted of forty, 5-point Likert type, items which were designed to assess ten constructs derived from interview as follows: a) negative attitudes toward English and the culture of English speaking countries (items 24, 25, 31), b) inadequate instructional facilities (items 19, 20, 21), c) teachers' characteristics (items 12, 15, 38), d) teaching styles (items 13, 14, 26, 27), e) teaching methods (items 2, 3, 5, 6, 39), f) lack of specified purpose to study English (1, 32, 33, 34, 35), g) reduced self-confidence due to negative experiences (items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 36), h) class activities and environment (items 22, 30, 37), i) peer pressure (items 23, 28), and j) textbooks (items 4, 16, 18, 29, 40). The instruction was "How demotivating are the following items?" There were 5 alternatives to choose including 1) not at all, 2) slightly, 3) moderately, 4) very, 5) extremely, so that 1 was the least and 5 the most demotivating ones (see Appendix).

Procedure

First of all, 20 university students were interviewed to find out what were the most cited demotivating factors based on which a 40-item questionnaire was designed and piloted with a group of 30 students. Item reliability was measured and the items with low reliability were revised. The obtained Cronbach's Alpha revealed a high reliability coefficient of .87 for demotivation questionnaire. Then, the data collection procedure was carried out in five branches of IAU. The participants were asked to fill out the questionnaires which consisted of three sections including a) demographic information, b) GEP self-assessment, and c) demotivating factors.

The collected data was put through statistical analysis by SPSS software, version 20. An exploratory factor analysis was performed to find out the factor structure of the questionnaire. Then, the mean score of items loading on each factor were calculated and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with GEP as a between-subjects factor and mean score of items loading on demotivating factors as within-subjects factor to see if there were any differences between students' perception at low, mid, and high levels of general English proficiency. In order to make the results easier to understand, the six-point scale of CEFR was codified into three proficiency groups. That is, A1 and A2 levels were considered as beginner, B1 and B2 as intermediate while C1 and C2 as advanced levels of GEP.

Results

The Qualitative analysis of interviews revealed 10 demotivating factors including negative attitudes toward English and culture of English-speaking countries, inadequate instructional facilities, teachers' characteristics, teaching styles, teaching methods, lack of specified purpose to study English, reduced self-confidence due to negative experiences, class activities and environment, peer pressure, and textbooks.

The Quantitative analysis of GEP self-assessment questionnaire revealed that 61.3% of the participants were at low level, 33.2% at mid level, and only 5.5% at high level of GEP (see Table 1). As is shown (table 1), more than half of the learners were classified as beginners.

Table 1
Distribution of participant across GEP levels

	university	General English Proficiency			Total
		Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	
A	Count	18	6	0	24
	% within university	75.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
B	Count	24	9	0	33
	% within university	72.7	27.3	0.0	100.0
C	Count	14	21	6	41
	% within university	34.1	51.2	14.6	100.0
D	Count	92	55	9	156
	% within university	59.0	35.3	5.8	100.0
E	Count	86	36	6	128
	% within university	67.2	28.1	4.7	100.0
Total	Count	234	127	21	382
	% within university	61.3	33.2	5.5	100.0

A principal component analysis (PCA) using a direct oblimin rotation procedure was performed on the 40-item questionnaire. Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. Based on the screen plot and the interpretability of factor solution, a seven factor solution was selected. Seven factors were rotated and for interpretation of factor loadings the criterion of .40 and above was selected based on Field (2005, p.638) and Stevens (2002, p.395). Table 2 displays the pattern structure of factor analysis and items loading on each factor.

Table 2
Factor analysis of demotivation

No	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
	Factor 1: Negative Attitudes toward English							
	My friends are not interested in learning English.							
23	English is the compulsory foreign language to study.	.770	-.025	.036	-.017	.140	.122	-.014
24	I hate learning English.	.727	.055	.050	.166	.107	.024	.010
25	I am not interested in	.686	.132	.098	.160	-.075	.052	.110
31		.611	-.021	.075	.198	.212	.083	-.070

	culture of English-speaking countries.							
	Factor 2: Inadequate Facilities							
20	Classes lack visual teaching aids.	.123	.772	-.049	-.036	.032	.139	.075
19	Classes are short of digital teaching aids.	-.030	.740	.129	-.009	.060	.022	.096
21	Classes are in need of auditory teaching aids.	.130	.691	-.140	-.051	.084	-.107	.111
18	Textbooks are old fashioned.	-.024	.557	.066	.054	.107	-.011	-.031
	Factor 3: Teachers and Teaching Styles							
12	Teachers are not knowledgeable.	.003	.025	.729	.095	-.015	-.130	-.013
14	Teachers' explanations are too complex to understand.	.154	-.119	.684	-.102	.006	.020	-.010
13	Classes are teacher-centered.	-.045	.054	.604	.068	.150	-.118	.090
38	Teachers are bad-tempered.	.168	.012	.601	-.006	-.044	.052	-.103
15	Teachers show negative feedback to students' errors.	-.131	-.103	.495	.061	.160	.010	.069
	Factor 4: Lack of Purpose							
32	My academic success does not depend on knowing English.	.056	-.042	.033	.875	.054	.020	-.085
33	Getting a university degree does not depend on knowing English.	-.002	-.065	.057	.869	-.055	-.040	.004
40	Content of English textbooks are not practical.	.114	.023	.063	.626	-.003	.023	.050
1	I don't use English language out of the class.	.220	-.053	-.032	.538	.113	-.060	-.043
34	English sources are not used in other content courses.	.023	-.087	.053	.461	.219	.052	.008
	Factor 5: Teaching Methods							

3	Most lessons focus on grammar.	-.286	-.005	-.068	.001	.774	.096	-.122
4	Course books are exam-oriented.	-.134	.009	.023	.115	.753	.083	.029
6	Memorizing technique is overemphasized.	-.114	-.030	-.031	-.215	.656	-.030	.019
5	Accuracy is mainly focused on.	.350	-.021	.016	-.019	.540	.214	.043
2	Translation technique is used extensively.	.252	.025	.133	.007	.513	.106	-.028
Factor 6: Reduced Self-confidence								
11	I can't cope with great number of new materials assigned.	.007	.054	.086	.024	-.048	.784	-.084
17	Reading comprehension is problematic to me.	.098	.013	.111	.011	-.019	.704	-.013
36	I don't feel confident when I speak in English.	.101	.053	.007	-.011	-.072	.689	.039
7	Retention of new vocabulary is challenging for me.	-.012	.385	.118	-.095	-.014	.685	.021
9	I am not able to study English by myself.	.001	-.039	.041	.210	-.058	.683	.025
10	Teaching pace is not appropriate for me.	-.022	-.038	-.036	.052	.036	.541	.068
8	I got low scores on English tests.	-.049	.022	-.054	.088	.070	.504	.037
Factor 7: Class Characteristics								
29	English textbooks are boring	.080	.101	-.064	.005	-.112	.168	.617
37	Class activities are boring	-.060	-.018	.114	.050	.107	.101	.576
30	Class time is inadequate	-.101	-.004	.010	.114	-.016	-.147	.493
22	Classes are overcrowded.	.014	.053	.015	-.063	-.013	.006	.460

The first factor contained 4 items (i.e., 23, 24, 31, 25) related to *negative attitudes toward English and culture of English-speaking countries*. The second factor was *inadequate facilities* which included 4 items (i.e., 20, 19, 21, 18). The third factor was *teachers and teaching styles* with 5 items loading above .40 (i.e., 12, 14, 13, 38, 15). The fourth factor was defined by

5 items concerning *lack of purpose* to study English (i.e., 32, 33, 34, 1, 40). The fifth factor was *teaching methods* which consisted of 5 items (i.e., 3, 4, 6, 5, 2). The sixth factor was *reduced self-confidence due to negative experiences* that was composed of 7 items (i.e., 11, 17, 36, 7, 9, 8, 10). Finally, the seventh factor was *class characteristics* with 4 items loading (i.e., 29, 37, 30, 22).

Descriptive statistics as well as reliability coefficients of seven demotivating factors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for demotivating factors

Factors	Cronbach α	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Inadequate Facilities	.83	382	3.113	1.115	.462	.729
Reduced Self-confidence	.85	382	3.110	.931	.152	.437
Class Characteristics	.85	382	3.071	.926	-.131	-.527
Lack of Purpose	.86	382	2.779	.851	.173	-.350
Teaching Methods	.87	382	2.685	.730	.023	-.355
Teachers and Teaching Styles	.85	382	2.677	.923	.076	-.676
Negative Attitudes	.88	382	2.467	1.043	.351	-.633

As it is presented, the factors are ranked from the most demotivating to the least one. In other words, inadequate facilities ($M = 3.113$) and reduced self-confidence ($M = 3.110$) with a minor difference were the most demotivating factors, while negative attitudes ($M = 2.467$) was the least one. Other factors in between were class characteristics ($M = 3.071$), lack of purpose ($M = 2.779$), teaching methods ($M = 2.685$), and teachers and teaching styles ($M = 2.677$) respectively.

In order to answer the second research question, ANOVA tests were carried out with GEP as the between-groups variable and demotivating factors as the within-groups variables. Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for demotivating factors across GEP levels

Factor	GEP	N	Mean	SD
Negative Attitudes	Beginner	234	2.649	1.028
	Intermediate	127	2.169	1.000
	Advanced	21	2.250	1.057
	Total	382	2.467	1.043
Inadequate Facilities	Beginner	234	3.117	1.109
	Intermediate	127	3.122	1.109
	Advanced	21	3.011	1.271
	Total	382	3.113	1.115
Teachers and Teaching Styles	Beginner	234	2.752	.908
	Intermediate	127	2.582	.959
	Advanced	21	2.419	.794
	Total	382	2.677	.923
Lack of Purpose	Beginner	234	2.800	.845
	Intermediate	127	2.716	.849
	Advanced	21	2.923	.949
	Total	382	2.779	.851
Teaching Methods	Beginner	234	2.704	.727
	Intermediate	127	2.697	.726
	Advanced	21	2.409	.770
	Total	382	2.685	.730
Reduced Self-confidence	Beginner	234	3.353	.837
	Intermediate	127	2.779	.964
	Advanced	21	2.408	.756
	Total	382	3.110	.931
Class Characteristics	Beginner	234	3.073	.926
	Intermediate	127	3.104	.909
	Advanced	21	2.845	1.038
	Total	382	3.071	.926

As it is presented, most of the participants indicated their GEP to be at beginner level (N = 234), while intermediate (N = 127) and advanced (N = 21) learners took the second and third places respectively.

ANOVA tests revealed significant differences among students' perception of demotivating factors. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of ANOVA tests

Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Negative Attitudes	Between Groups	20.044	2	10.022	9.613	.000
	Within Groups	395.125	379	1.043		
	Total	415.170	381			
Inadequate Facilities	Between Groups	.230	2	.115	.092	.912
	Within Groups	474.186	379	1.251		
	Total	474.416	381			
Teachers and Teaching Styles	Between Groups	3.848	2	1.924	2.272	.104
	Within Groups	320.898	379	.847		
	Total	324.746	381			
Lack of Purpose	Between Groups	1.039	2	.520	.715	.490
	Within Groups	275.353	379	.727		
	Total	276.392	381			
Teaching Methods	Between Groups	1.701	2	.850	1.596	.204
	Within Groups	201.883	379	.533		
	Total	203.584	381			
Reduced Self-confidence	Between Groups	38.086	2	19.043	24.699	.000
	Within Groups	292.213	379	.771		
	Total	330.299	381			
Class Characteristics	Between Groups	1.213	2	.607	.705	.495
	Within Groups	326.031	379	.860		
	Total	327.244	381			

As indicated in Table 5, the students' perceptions were not the same. More precisely, there were significant differences among the three GEP groups with regard to such factors as negative attitudes ($P = .000$), and reduced self-confidence ($P = .000$); however, the groups did not have significantly different ideas regarding other factors.

To find out more details about significant differences, Tukey HSD post-hoc analyses were done. As far as negative attitudes are concerned, the students with low level of GEP ($M = 2.649$) had significantly different perceptions from intermediate learners, ($M = 2, P=.000$). This means that, beginners had stronger negative attitudes than intermediate ones. Moreover, regarding reduced self-confidence, the case was more remarkable. In other words, beginners were significantly different from both intermediate ($P = .000$) and advanced ($P = .000$) students. To be exact, for beginners, reduced

self-confidence was a greater demotivating factor ($M = 3.353$) than for intermediate ($M = 2.779$) and advanced ($M = 2.408$) learners.

Discussion

The first research question focused on the nature of demotivating factors for university students in its Iranian context. The extracted factors ranked from the most to the least demotivating were as follows: a) inadequate facilities b) reduced self-confidence, c) class characteristics, d) lack of purpose to study English, e) teaching methods, f) teachers and teaching styles, and g) negative attitudes toward English and the culture of English-speaking countries. Although, the questionnaire was constructed on the basis of ten-factor model, seven factors were extracted. More specifically, the items related to textbooks were loaded as part of other factors, that is, item 16 was not loaded, item 18 was loaded as a part of inadequate facilities; while item 29 was loaded as a part of class characteristics. With respect to peer pressure items (i.e., 23, 28), item 23 was loaded as a part of negative attitudes; whereas, item 28 was not loaded. On the other hand, items related to teachers' characteristics (i.e., 12, 15, 38) and teaching styles (i.e., 13, 14, 26, 27) were loaded on one and the same factor named teachers and teaching styles (i.e., 12, 14, 13, 38, 15) to the exclusion of item 27 which was not loaded at all.

Other studies have also reported these factors. To elaborate more, inadequate facilities, which extracted as the most demotivating in this study, was also mentioned in Oxford (1998), Dornyei (2001a), Kikuchi and Sakai (2009), and Al-Khairy (2013) as a demotivator. Reduced self-confidence as the second factor in this study lent support to findings of Dornyei (2001a) and Tsuchiya (2006a, 2006b). The third one, that is, class characteristics was referred to as a demotivator in such other studies as Oxford (1998), Dornyei (2001a), Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012). Teaching methods (i.e., the fifth factor) were also discussed in Kikuchi and Sakai (2009), Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012), and Al-Khairy (2013). Teachers characteristics and styles, as the sixth factor in this survey, was the most cited factor in numerous studies (Al-Khairy, 2013; Dornyei, 2001a; Hasegawa, 2004; Ikeno, 2002; Keblawi, 2006; Kearney et al, 2002; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Millette & Gorham, 2002; Oxford, 1998; Potee, 2002). Finally, loading of

negative attitudes as another demotivating factor was in line with the findings of Dornyei (2001a), Ikeno (2002), and Tsuchiya (2006a, 2006b).

The remarkable contribution of this research is the factor named *lack of purpose to study English*. As it was first noticed in the qualitative analysis of interviews, the participants mentioned that they had no specific reason to learn English since there were quite rare opportunities to use it out of the class. Although being proficient in English was appreciated and English was regarded as a required course to study, its influence on academic success or getting a university degree was not considered to be noticeable. This phenomenon might be experienced more sensibly in foreign language contexts like the one in this study.

The second research question investigated the perception of demotivating factors by students at different proficiency levels. The results indicated that all three proficiency groups of low, mid, and high perceived such factors as inadequate facilities, class characteristics, lack of purpose to study English, teaching methods, teachers and teaching styles in the same way; however, their ideas were different with regard to negative attitudes and reduced self-confidence. In other words, these two factors were more demotivating for beginners than for intermediate and advanced learners. These findings were in contrast with those of Lee and Lee (2011) and Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012) who stated that low proficient learners were the most demotivated considering all factors under the study. Therefore, the remotivating solutions should be decided with more caution.

As the results indicated, it can be claimed that demotivation is a remarkable issue in foreign language situation. Therefore, Dornyei's claim that demotivation is a prominent phenomenon in second language situation can be expanded to include foreign language situation as well. However, as he recommended, further research is required in this regard. For example, it might be interesting to compare and contrast demotivating factors in SLA context with FLA one.

Moreover, the findings of this study supported Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) in that the extracted factors included both internal (i.e., reduced self-confidence, lack of purpose to study English, and negative attitudes) and external factors (i.e. inadequate facilities, class characteristics, teaching

methods, teachers and teaching styles). Therefore, Dörnyei's original definition (2001a) of demotivating factors needs to be expanded to include both internal and external factors as possible demotivators.

In conclusion, this study showed that demotivation is a common phenomenon in a foreign language context, here an Iranian situation, where students have fewer opportunities to apply the target language out of the class. Therefore, in order to remotivate them, it is a good idea to make an attempt to remove the demotivating factors. According to the findings, a) providing the EFL classes with more auditory, visual, and digital instruments, b) creating educational situations for learners, specially beginners, to practice different learning strategies, c) introducing more interesting class activities and textbooks, d) considering English not only as a subject to study, but also as a medium of instruction in other content courses, e) practicing more communicative and learner-centered tasks, and f) giving positive feedback are just a few comments to mention. Further studies are required in this regard; for example, demotivators might be investigated across genders, across different fields of study, and also across educational degrees such as BA, MA, and PhD.

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Appendix

Dear Participants,

The following questionnaire is part of a research project that investigates demotivating factors in EFL context. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Personal Information

University:

Gender:

Part A

Six levels of competence in foreign language described by the Council of Europe are given below and are ranked from weakest (A1) to strongest (C2). Please circle the level corresponding to your present competence.

A1: Read simple words and phrases in everyday life; understand words, basic and familiar expressions in a limited context; write short, specific information; say basic expressions, phrases and ask simple questions on familiar subjects.

A2: Read short and simple texts for gist or for specific information; understand expressions and common vocabulary relative to my immediate environment; write short, simple notes and messages; respond on familiar topics, describe my university course, in simple terms, carrying on very limited conversation.

B1: Read texts written in everyday language, or relative to my studies, although rather slowly; understand key points in clear and standard speech when people speak slowly on familiar topics; write coherent texts or notes on familiar subjects; generally explain my opinions or projects spontaneously participate in conversation on familiar topics.

B2: Read articles or reports expressing a particular point as long as there is adequate time; understand longer talks and follow complex lines of argument on familiar topics; understand most news programs in standard dialect; write clear and detailed texts, reports and essays on topics in my field; express myself clearly and in detail, actively participate in conversation on topics relative to my interests; spontaneously communicate with a native speaker.

C1: Read longer, complex, specialized texts, appreciating differences in style, in a reasonable time frame; understand extended speech, even when it is not clearly structured, TV programs, with relative ease; write clear, well structured texts, developing my point of view on complex subjects; describe complex subjects clearly and in an appropriate manner; express myself spontaneously, clearly and easily in professional or social contexts.

C2: Read any type of text easily, even abstract or complex ones, appreciating subtle distinctions of style, implicit and explicit meanings; understand any kind of spoken language as long as I have time to become familiar with a particular accent; write clear, stylistically appropriate texts; write summaries or critical reviews; describe or argue complex subjects clearly and easily, in an appropriate manner; express myself in any situation in standard, idiomatic language with appropriate nuances.

Part B

How demotivating are the following items? Choose one of the alternatives: 1) not at all, 2) slightly, 3) moderately, 4) very, and 5) extremely. Number 1 is the least demotivating and number 5 is the most demotivating.

No	Items	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely
1	I don't use English language out of the class.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Translation technique is used extensively.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Most lessons focus on grammar.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Course books are exam-oriented.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Accuracy is mainly focused on.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Memorizing technique is overemphasized.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Retention of new vocabulary is challenging for me.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I got low scores on English tests.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am not able to study English by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Teaching pace is not appropriate for me.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I can't cope with great number of new materials assigned.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Teachers are not knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5
13	All materials are presented by teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Teachers' explanations are too complex to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Teachers show negative feedback to students' errors.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Reading texts are too lengthy.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Reading	1	2	3	4	5

	comprehension is problematic to me.					
18	Textbooks are old fashioned.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Classes are short of digital teaching aids.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Classes lack visual teaching aids.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Classes are in need of auditory teaching aids.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Classes are overcrowded.	1	2	3	4	5
23	My friends are not interested in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
24	English is the compulsory foreign language to study.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I hate learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Teachers do not speak English in other content courses.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Teachers speak fast.	1	2	3	4	5
28	My friends make fun of me if I speak in English.	1	2	3	4	5
29	English textbooks are boring.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Class time is inadequate.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I am not interested in culture of English-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5
32	My academic success does not depend on Knowing English.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Getting a university degree does not depend on knowing English.	1	2	3	4	5
34	English sources are not used in other content courses.	1	2	3	4	5

35	I don't know why I should study English.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I don't feel confident when I speak in English.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Class activities are boring	1	2	3	4	5
38	Teachers are bad-tempered.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Teaching methods are teacher-centered.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Content of English textbooks are not practical.	1	2	3	4	5

Biodata

Nafiseh Hosseinpour was born in Isfahan, Iran. She got her BA in TEFL from Kashan University, Kashan, Iran in 2000. She got her MA in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran in 2003. She is currently a PhD student at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch. She has been a faculty member of Islamic Azad University, Falavarjan Branch since 2005. Her research interests are teacher education, teaching and learning strategies, and teaching English as a foreign language, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis.

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