

Students' Demotivating Factors in Learning English in Vocational High School in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Demotivation in learning English is a common problem faced by students and it can hinder them to achieve their target language proficiency. Students who face difficulties in learning English are often demotivated to learn. This research was aimed at finding out the students demotivating factors in learning English among vocational high school in Yogyakarta. The descriptive phenomenology research was used as the research design. The research took place at one vocational high school in Yogyakarta. Three students at the third grade in the first semester become the participants of this research. The data were collected through the interviews. There were five main findings found related to the research question which is about the students' demotivating factors in learning English. Those were teachers' method of teaching, students' lack of self-confidence, classroom environment, teaching materials, teachers' attitude and unsupportive peers.

Keywords: Demotivation, students' demotivating factors in vocational high school.

Background

A research from Cavas (2011) stated that motivation is a fundamental education variable as it helps previously learned skills, strategies and behaviors to promote new

learning and performance. Many first time learners face challenges in learning a second language. Motivation plays a very important role in enhancing the students' English learning performance. When students are motivated, they can achieve the target language proficiency. However, Dornyei and Csizer (1998) said that without motivation, proper curriculum and good instruction are not enough to guarantee students' success. It means that motivation might be more important than curriculum and the method applied in teaching. For some cases, students who are strongly motivated can start to study without specific reason. It is because they have a good motivation in learning.

Students' motivation is the key parameter for their success and achievement of high-quality academic grades. Their motivation depends on their subjective experiences and willingness to engage in understanding the lessons. Motivation can be created in classroom, home or at the level of school administration. Afzal and Murphy (2004) said that motivation of the students towards the process of learning can be improved when the teacher uses the appropriate teaching strategies on for the students. Students have to have strong motivation to acquire a lot of knowledge. Lack of motivation might influence students' achievement in the school. When learning becomes pressure for the students rather than passion, their grades begin to fall. This is what the teacher should know before they start to teach the students in the class. Students' academic performance is directly linked with their motivation to learn. Condry (1987) stated that instructional practices can enhance the motivational level and academic achievement among the students in the school. However, Dornyei (2011) found that motivating English Foreign Language (EFL) students to develop their proficiency in their target language is quite complex. It is because if they lost interest in learning for some reasons, they will neglect their task. The opposite side which is closely linked to student's failure and lack of success is demotivating. For some cases, students who face difficulties in learning English are often demotivated to learn.

Students can feel demotivated because of many factors. Johnson (2008) said that the factors that influence students' motivation towards their learning process includes various of environmental factors such as classroom cleanliness, teachers behavior with the students and interest level of the students towards a particular course content. Classroom can be the factor that makes students comfortable or uncomfortable in learning. When the condition in the calssroom is quite clean, it can make the students comfortable in studying. In addition, if the teachers do not have a good leadership quality then students will be more demotivated towards learning process. Every teacher has their own methodology in teaching. However, in teaching and learning process, the teacher is expected to create the course more interesting for their students. Setting up a conducive enviroment using relevant and interesting activities are also very important.

Students' motivation may be different from each individual, and it varies from person to person in each classroom setting. It is in line with Bullock (as cited in Lumsden, 1994) who stated that students may be intrinsically motivated or extrinsically motivated to learn. Some students may complete an activity simply for the enjoyment of it, while others may complete an assignment to obtain a reward or avoid a punishment of some sorts. In this case, students' self-confidence can be the factor of students' demotivation. Students who are lack of self-confidence during learning process can have lower motivation and achievment in the school. Moreover, Tsuchiya (2006) also stated that students' self-confidence is deeply interrelated especially with test. The correlation between the reduction of self-confidence and have a test becomes the strongest factor of students' demotivation.

Some demotivating factors in learning English are enviroment and teaching material in classroom. This statement was in line with Hirvonen (2010) who confirmed that classroom environment as a source of demotivation among students. Another study was done by Richards and Renandya (2002) who stated that well-designed teaching materials do not only

address the needs of second language(L2) learners, but they also keep students motivated to ameliorate their interest in L2 learning. In addition, self-confidence is one of demotivation factors in learning English. It can be said that there are other factors causing students' demotivation in learning English.

Senior high school students also experience demotivation in learning English. Thus, the researcher decided to explore further about the students' demotivating factors in learning English. The researcher chose to conduct this research in one vocational high school in Yogyakarta, and the data was based on students' perception. In conclusion, the researcher was interested in conducting a research investigation about students' demotivating factors in learning English in a vocational high school in Yogyakarta.

The researcher chose to conduct this research in one vocational high school in Bugisan, Bantul, Yogyakarta . The researcher chose this school because rarely people who try to find out how is the condition of English course in a vocational high school. In addition, the researcher was curious to investigate about the students' who do not seem to care with English course in this school. From this case the researcher want to know more about that condition by doing the research.

Demotivation

A demotivated student is someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her commitment or interest for some reasons. According to Dornyei (2001), who stated that learning a second language is not only learning a subject matter, but the learner has to engage in culture learning, and motivation plays as a key role in the learning process. Another study was done by Vallerand (1997), who stated that demotivation can result from a capacity-ability belief, meaning that the learners think that they do not have the ability to perform an action. In addition, Palmer (2009), also said that without motivation, learners may not start

the act of learning at all, and for those who have started to learn, they may not be able to maintain their learning once experiencing hardship in the process.

Learners who do not have motivation and learners who feel demotivated are different. Learners with no motivation are learners who are feeling unmotivated from the beginning. However, learners who feel demotivated are learners who are just unmotivated because of some cases or reasons (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). Besides that, Christophel and Gorham also argued that demotivation means a state or condition that hinders a person from doing his or her best in achieving a specific purpose. Dornyei (2001) defined demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (p. 273). Thus, demotivation could be regarded as the negative counterpart of motivation.

Demotivation in learning English is a common problem faced by students because of some factors which can decrease their motivation to achieve their target language proficiency. Furthermore, in the other study, Dornyei (2001) claimed that a demotivated person is someone who actually has had a motivation in their life and lost the motivation because of negative external factors related to the environment such as classroom and school. In addition, Arai, Falout, and Maruyama (2004) stated, “demotivation is not only external factors and it is also included internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitude within learners themselves” (p. 3-9) To sum up, demotivation is a condition in which the students lose their motivation, and they are lack of interest in achieving their target language proficiency because of several reasons such as classroom or school environment.

Demotivating Factors in Learning English

Students' demotivating factors are crucial factors that make students' attitude and behavior become negative and cause unwillingness to achieve their target language

proficiency. Additionally, Chang and Cho (2003) found out that demotivating factors in English language learning are learning difficulties, threats to self-worth, monotonous teaching, poor teacher-student relationship, punishments, general and language specific anxiety, lack of self-determination, and poor classroom management. Chang and Cho also stated that students learning difficulties are the main students' demotivation factors.

Some experts argued that students' demotivation in learning English can be caused by many factors such as the factors from the students and factors caused by environment. Additionally, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) argued that grammar-based teaching, teacher's behavior, course content, and teaching materials, effects of low-test scores, classroom environment, and lack of self-confidence and interest are all cited as demotivating factors in learning English. Sakai and Kikuchi also explained that learning content and material are the most demotivating factors. Moreover, Sakai and Kikuchi mentioned that lack of intrinsic motivation linked in with students' lack of self-confidence and interest in learning English to achieve their target language proficiency. In addition, Alavina (2012) showed that teachers' personality and behavior, teaching method, learning material and content, learning environment, learners' lack of success, and learner characteristics are the sources of students' demotivating factors. Alavina also stated that learning environment and learners' lack of success are the dominant students' demotivating factors. However, Hosseini and Jafari (2014) in attempt to find sources of students' demotivating factors found that insufficient school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation like students' lack of self-confidence, and inappropriate teaching materials are the most detrimental predictor of English Foreign Language (EFL) learners' demotivation.

Teacher's attitude toward teaching learning process also influences students' motivation to achieve their target language proficiency. In addition, the other factors which make students demotivated in learning English also come up from environment and

government policy. Ayadin (2012) found out six main factors that cause demotivation during the EFL teaching process; the factors are problem relating to the teaching profession, curriculum, working condition, students and their parents, colleagues and school administrators, and physical conditions. Ayadin also stated that curriculum is highlighted as the main factor of the teacher demotivation that affects students' demotivating factors in achieving their target language proficiency. Some problems related to the curriculum are lack of supportive material for classroom used, invalid central examinations, and problems with the course books regarding the disunity and coherence, and imbalanced activities presented in the books. Based on the explanation from several researchers above, some students' demotivating factors that commonly happened are explained as follows:

Teachers' methodology. Several teachers in their learning process usually use monotonous teaching methodologies. Some of them use conventional method to teach. Several teachers also use teacher-centered approach in teaching, and it can lead to poor-student relationship because they have limited opportunities to communicate with others, and it makes students feel bored in the teaching-learning process. However, students also feel demotivated when they learn about the same material like reading comprehension, grammar aspect using the same method. Teachers are expected to improve their ability in delivering the same material with different teaching methodology to make students enthusiastic in teaching and learning process.

Teacher could be the one who motivated students' and also can demotivate them in the same time. In line with Kikuchi (2009), who stated that too many textbooks and supplementary readings, uninteresting topics, and outdated and irrelevant teaching materials, boring lectures and lessons, lengthy English lesson become sources of students demotivating factor. It is also in line with Hirvonen (2010) who revealed that ineffective teaching materials and teaching methods demotivate students. Besides that, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) revealed

that characteristic of course contents and teaching materials discourage secondary school students to learn English language effectively.

Students' lack of self-confidence. Learners' lack of self-confidence which is the result of their earlier experience of failure also becomes one of demotivation factors for the students. Tsuchiya (2006) stated that students' self-confidence is deeply interrelated especially with test. The correlation between reduced self-confidence and test is the strongest factors that can influence students' motivation. The disappointed feeling after receiving poor test result can demotivate them more than being unable to understand the lessons. Kikuchi (2011) also confirmed that lack of confidence and interest are influential sources of demotivation among high school students. Although lack of self-confidence is an internal problem, students can be motivated by providing a more conducive environment which is stress-free in which they can be encouraged to practice the English language regardless the fear of making mistakes.

Classroom environment. Classroom environment becomes one of the motivation factors at the school. The inadequate classroom facilities such as lack of computer equipment and audio, video materials, and lack of access can demotivate students to learn English effectively. Besides that, other related factors influencing students' grouping based on proficiency levels, students' dislike to their classmates, and overcrowded classroom make students feel demotivated. These arguments supported by Dornyei (1998), who revealed that lack of facilities in the classroom can demotivate secondary school students.

Furthermore, Hirvonen (2010) also confirmed that classroom environment as a source of demotivation among students. Since lack of facilities creates unfavorable L2 learning environment, university classrooms should be facilitated with video projectors and language laboratories to enhance the motivation level among second language learners (Jomairi, 2011).

Besides that, English language is a skill subject in which L2 learners are required to perform various drill and activities to attain proficiency, so over-crowded classrooms do not provide students equal opportunities to get teachers' proper feedback, and they become demotivated to sustain their interest in English language learning (Chambers, 1993).

Course contents and teaching materials. Course contents and teaching materials are also included to the cause of demotivation factors for students. These factors come up in the form of supplementary reading and assignments assigned by the teachers and the use of uninteresting topic in English lessons. Moreover, Hamada (2010) stated that usually the textbooks contain more unfamiliar words. Besides that, uninteresting teaching materials cause boredom and decrease students' motivation in learning English. In addition, Richards and Renandya (2002) also stated that well-designed teaching materials do not only address the needs of L2 learners, but they also keep students motivated to ameliorate their interest in L2 learning. On the contrary, inappropriate teaching material fails to address the needs of students and discourages them from learning the second language effectively.

Methodology

This research used qualitative approach. The researcher used qualitative approach, because the researcher wants to gain deep information from the participants. The method under qualitative research design adopted by the researcher was phenomenological research. Phenomenological research is a design to investigate an issue coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2012). Creswell also stated that this description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. This design has strong philosophical contributor and typically involves conducting interviews (p. 45).

In addition, the kind of phenomenological research used by the researcher was descriptive phenomenological research. Descriptive phenomenology refers to the study of personal experience and requires a description or interpretation of the meanings of phenomena experienced by participants in an investigation (Mariwilida, 2015). The goal of phenomenological research is to “construct” the studied object according to the own structures and components (Ponce, 2014). In addition, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) stated, “Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting and exploring the data, in short, making sense of data in terms of participants’ definition of the situation, nothing patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (p. 537). Phenomenological research design was appropriate to be applied in this research, because the researcher wanted to know the detail information from students and permitted students to explain and tell his or her story about students’ demotivating factors in learning English. Therefore, by applying descriptive phenomenological research helped the researcher to answer the research question which is about students demotivating factors, it also allowed the researcher to gather deeper data from the participants.

Finding

Based on the data collection, there were four findings revealed related to the students’ demotivating factors in learning English. The demotivating factors were inappropriate teachers’ methodology, students’ classmates, unsupportive peers, classroom environment (over-crowded classroom), teaching materials and teachers’ attitude.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher concluded that all of the factors that make students demotivated in learning English in vocational high school in Yogyakarta were common factors. The factors are factors coming from around student and students’ environment itself such as teachers’ methodology, and classroom environment. Coordination

between teacher, student, and institutional are needed to improve students' motivation in learning English.

Conclusion

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Based on the results of this study, the researcher concluded that all of the factors that make students demotivated in learning English in vocational high school in Yogyakarta were common factors. The factors are factors coming from around student and students' environment itself such as teachers' methodology, and classroom environment. Coordination between teacher, student, and institutional are needed to improve students' motivation in learning English. From the statements mentioned the students' can understand how to anticipate themselves before they lose their motivation in learning English. In addition the students also suggested to have a discussion with the English teacher to improve their motivation in joining the class. In other side, the teachers also can help their students in solving the problem by giving further strategies or suggestion. The teachers are suggested to develop or to change their teaching method to avoid students' demotivating factors. If the students and the teacher can solve their problem in the future they could have a better course.

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