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Different Faces of Demotivation: A Comparative Study on Chinese and Korean College EFL Learners' Demotivators

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Abstract: Demotivation, as the detrimental forces impeding second language acquisition, has unveiled its diverse appearances to EFL learners worldwide. Based on the reviewing of previous research and a 40-item questionnaire survey, this study investigated 97 Chinese and 101 Korean college EFL learners to reveal the demotivators that degraded subjects' drive and efficacy in L2 learning. As a result, six demotivators were extracted from Chinese subjects and five from Korean counterparts. By comparing the shared and discrepant demotivators between the two subject groups, some noticeable findings stood out for discussion. Shared by both sides were the diminishing role of teachers, the high attribution of confidence deficiency and the increasing proportion of internal demotivators. Two demotivators were unique to Chinese subjects, including learning strategy deficiency and the negative attitude toward target language/culture. Peer pressure was the only demotivator proper to the Koreans. Consequently, a number of possible inducements were sought to explain the highly culture-specific features of demotivators as shown in this study, involving ethnic philosophy, native culture/language and educational settings. Accompanying the inducements, suggestions were made to minimize demotivation or facilitate remotivation.

Key words: EFL, demotivation, demotivators, comparative study

INTRODUCTION

As a novel interdisciplinary concept crossing psycholinguistics and SLA arenas, the definition of demotivation is under divergence. Dornyei (1998) defined it as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action", while other linguists (Falout *et al.*, 2009; Zhou and Wang, 2012) supplemented the definition with "internal forces" based on empirical findings. Zhou (2012) made three prerequisites in discriminating the connotation of demotivation: (a) Motivation must exist in L2 learners before there can be a gradual loss of the drive to acquire or utilize the target language, (b) It is an internalized process induced by external and/or internal triggers, namely demotivators and (c) it is a reversible process: the recovery procedure of motivation is named remotivation, while the total loss of motivation is termed as amotivation, which is unrecoverable.

In comparison with the salient and traditional motivation theory, the conceptualization of demotivation takes notice of detrimental factors triggering the decrease of learners' motive in L2 acquisition. This theory expands the horizon of motivation discipline by focusing on the negative factors or the 'dark side' of motives, which

provides completely new perspectives for linguists and TESOL practitioners to reflect on maintaining or recovering learners' motivation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

European and North American studies: Demotivational research was initially introduced into L2 domain by European and North American researchers. L2 learners in primary and secondary education were targeted as the main subjects in most of these studies and qualitative methods were adopted as the prevailing experimental instruments.

On investigating 191 British year-nine pupils and 7 teachers with a questionnaire, Chambers (1993) found discrepant results between teacher and learner surveys. Learners were more inclined to attribute their demotivation mainly to teachers whereas teachers blamed it on students' psychological, attitudinal, social, historical and geographical inducements except themselves. In addition, Chambers found the triggers of demotivation too diversified to conclude.

Subsequent to Chambers' study, Rudnai (1996) was among the early attempts to investigate L2 learners' demotivation. By interviewing 15 Hungarian secondary

EFL learners covering demotivation at the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level, Rudnai (1996) concluded that the learner level (e.g., caused mostly by negative past experiences) and the learning situation level (e.g., lack of free choice) were found to be the most influential causes of subjects' demotivation.

Oxford (1998) surveyed 250 American high school and college students by conducting a content analysis of their essays in retrospect of their past L2 learning experiences. All subjects in the study reported to have demotivating experiences. However, Oxford (1998) specifically referred to the teacher's role as a source of demotivation, while other potential sources were not taken into account.

In Ushioda's (1998) follow-up interview of 20 Irish L2 learners, the subjects were more inclined to attribute their demotivation to external inducements like school learning environments rather than internal factors such as personal capabilities. One outstanding finding of the study was that subjects managed to sustain or revive their motivation by resorting to a series of self-motivating strategies, which laid the foundation for future research on remotivation.

In a structured long interview of 50 demotivated Hungarian secondary school learners, Dornyei (1998) analyzed the results with a stepwise theme-based processing procedure and summarized nine categories among hundreds of demotivating factors, namely The Teachers, Inadequate School Facilities, Negative Attitude toward L2, Reduced Self-confidence, Compulsory Nature of L2 Study, Interference of L3 being Studied, Negative Attitude towards L2 Community, Attitudes of Group Members and Coursebook. Dornyei sequenced the categories and The Teacher ranked the largest with 40% of the total frequency of occurrences directly and 15% indirectly. The other two were proposed as significant (above 10%), namely, Inadequate School Facilities and Negative Attitude toward L2. The nine categories are prototypes of demotivators in later demotivational studies and provide a measure scale for cross comparison of demotivation among L2 learners from different countries.

Asian studies: Inspired by preceding occidental research, a number of empirical studies were carried out worldwide, among which Asian experiments were impressive. Most of these studies targeted at university students who were believed as relatively successful English learners but not highly demotivated. In addition, more large-sample extensive-range quantitative approaches were implemented.

Falout and Maruyama (2004) surveyed 164 Japanese university students in a quantitative study with a 49-item

Likert Scale questionnaire and creatively segmented the subjects into higher and lower proficiency (HP and LP) groups to validate the nine demotivators suggested by Dornyei (1998) as mentioned above. Results demonstrated the most significant demotivator in both HP and LP groups was an intrinsic factor of Self-confidence, which deviated from Dornyei's definition of 'specific external forces'. In the following study of 900 Japanese university EFL learners, Falout *et al.* (2009) summarized three categories of demotivators: external conditions of the learning environment, internal conditions of the learner and reactive behaviors to demotivating experiences, the latter two of which were reported to correlate with long-term EFL learning outcomes.

In comparison with numerous Japanese studies, China and Korea's research is relatively under-focused. Kim (2009) surveyed 220 Korean junior high school learners with a self-report 31-item questionnaire and identified five demotivators: Difficulty of Learning English, Teachers' Competence and Teaching Styles, Characteristics of English Classes, Reduced Motivation and Interest and Inadequate Learning Environment. By decoding the quantitative data obtained from 6301 elementary school students and the qualitative findings from 17 teachers in Korea, Kim and Seo (2012) extracted three demotivators, the Teachers, Excessive Social Expectation and Students' Proficiency Gap. This categorization reflected culture-specific features of Korean subjects' demotivational behaviors from their counterparts in other countries.

Based on theoretical reviews of overseas studies, new empirical investigations on Chinese L2 learners were reported, the majority of which adopting blended approaches of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Surveying 766 university EFL learners with a 40-item questionnaire, Zhou and Wang (2012) investigated Chinese college EFL learners' demotivational behaviors and summarized five demotivators, including external factors of Teachers' Competence and Teaching Styles, Curriculum and Materials and Inadequate Facilities, together with internal factors of Lack of Intrinsic Interest and Learning Strategies Deficiency. Zhou (2012) continued his study by comparing the impact intensity of the four demotivators, namely Teachers, Learning Contexts, Language and Culture Background and Learners, between 41 Chinese university EFL learners and 36 counterparts from Japan. The results of this cross sectional study indicated significant discrepancies on the item means of the three demotivators of Teachers, Language and Culture Background and Learners between the two subject groups and the causes of subjects' disparate demotivating behaviors were sought from culturally specific factors. The findings of Zhou's two

experiments gave insight into Chinese college EFL learners' internal demotivators rather than external ones emphasized by former occidental researchers.

However, empirical studies regarding the characteristics and culture-specific contexts of Chinese L2 learners' demotivation are few, especially those comparative studies on learners' demotivative features in L2 acquisition between neighboring countries sharing Confucius cultures. Therefore, an investigation of Sino-Korean college EFL learners' demotivation is made.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for the study are:

- RQ1:** What are the demotivators eliciting Chinese college EFL learners' demotivation?
- RQ2:** What are the demotivators triggering Korean college EFL learners' demotivation?
- RQ3:** Are there any featuring demotivators concerning Chinese and Korean college EFL learners' culture-specific situations?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: In total 240 questionnaires were equally released to both Chinese and Korean subjects. 103 returned from Chinese subjects, among which 97 were valid while 102 returned from Korean subjects with 101 valid. The mean age of the students at the outset of the study was 20.7 and 21.2 years, respectively. The demographic variables within the subjects were as follows: 87 freshmen (36 Chinese and 51 Korean), 72 sophomores (41 and 31), 27 juniors (11 and 16) and 12 senior (9 and 3).

Materials: The experimental instrument included two phases. The first was written feedback on open-end questions, aiming to collect data on subjects' demographic information and their antecedent experience in L2 learning. To further investigate and conclude subjects' insights of learning demotivation, a number of in-person interviews were supplemented as well. Phase One was carried out in subjects' L1, namely Chinese and Korean.

The second phase was the Demotivational Questionnaire, which consisted of 40 5-point Likert scale items, ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The items were set and revised on the qualitative results of Phase One, so as to cover as many potential demotivating factors as possible. Phase Two was taken in English to avoid ambiguity in translation.

Data collection and processing: Mixed methods were adopted to process both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were dealt through the content analysis of students' feedbacks, together with teachers' evaluation to extract possible triggers of demotivation. Subsequently the quantitative data were accumulated via questionnaires and analyzed with Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0. Mean scores of each item were calculated to conduct reliability analysis and factor analysis to explore demotivators in subjects' EFL learning.

RESULTS

Descriptives and frequencies: Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for each item of both Chinese and Korean subjects in the survey. As to Chinese surveys, the means of Item 1 (dislike of classmates), Item 20 (deficiency in guessing the meaning of words from texts) and Item 35 (insufficient support from teachers) ranked the highest of all, at 3.650, 3.732 and 3.691, respectively. These three items were considered by Chinese subjects as the most demotivating elements. Besides, it is noteworthy that more than half of the subjects chose scale 4 (Agree) or 5 (Strongly Agree) on the following items: Item 8 (aversion of English language), Item 18 (unspecific and unclear textbooks), Item 31 (no future plan for English-related professions); Item 34 (test-oriented curriculum), Item 38 (inability to learn English independently) and Item 1, 20, 35 as mentioned above. The items were reported as the major factors leading to Chinese subjects' EFL learning demotivation as well. By contrast, not all factors negatively influenced subjects' demotivation, for instance, the means of Item 12 (excessive class size), Item 17 (confidence lost in communicating with Westerners), Item 22 (predominance of grammar-translation method) and Item 28 (insufficient English communicating activities) were below 2.000, embodying their minor or naught impact on subjects.

The demotivating status of Korean subjects is presented in Table 1 as well. It is remarkable that seven items exceeded the extraordinary high means of 3.500, which indicated their excessively strong impact on Korean subjects' demotivation, namely, Item 4 (inferiority to classmates), Item 5 (teachers' personalities), Item 8, Item 14 (monotonous teaching pedagogy), Item 30 (insufficient school facilities), Item 31 and Item 39 (teachers' insufficient preparation). Contrary to the high scores of aforementioned items, less than five Korean subjects selected scale 5 (Strongly Agree) on the following items: Item 1, Item 6 (inappropriate teaching contents), Item 21 (excessive information in reading texts), Item 24 (goal-lost in English learning), Item 34 and Item 40 (infrequent

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for items in the demotivational questionnaire

Item	CHN	KOR	Item	CHN	KOR	Item	CHN	KOR	Item	CHN	KOR
1	3.650	1.594	11	2.258	2.891	21	3.021	1.733	31	3.299	3.951
2	3.113	2.911	12	1.990	2.852	22	1.959	2.436	32	2.052	2.178
3	2.258	3.406	13	2.309	3.257	23	2.196	2.743	33	2.722	2.941
4	2.124	4.050	14	2.876	4.040	24	2.722	1.871	34	3.536	2.911
5	3.124	3.525	15	2.979	2.941	25	2.990	3.218	35	3.691	2.960
6	2.866	1.960	16	2.093	3.337	26	2.309	2.703	36	2.650	2.743
7	3.381	3.356	17	1.918	2.683	27	2.505	2.931	37	2.588	2.426
8	3.443	3.545	18	3.588	3.436	28	1.918	2.792	38	3.464	3.327
9	2.443	3.228	19	2.227	3.178	29	2.567	2.842	39	3.062	3.782
10	3.495	2.951	20	3.732	1.881	30	2.928	3.545	40	2.577	1.733

CHN: China, KOR: Korea, n (Chinese) = 97, n (Korean) = 101

Table 2: Factor analysis of Chinese EFL learners' demotivation

No.	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Factor one: Inadequate facilities							
19	I could not get enough access to school facilities while learning English	0.555					
12	The size of classes was too big	0.540					
26	Video materials were not or seldom utilized	0.530					
40	The internet was not or seldom utilized	0.514					
25	Audio materials were not or seldom utilized	0.428					
Factor two: Negative attitude toward target language and culture							
36	I did not like Western culture		0.518				
7	I lost interest in learning English		0.457				
8	I did not like English language itself		0.414				
Factor three: Learning strategies deficiency							
9	I was not familiar with language learning strategies like inference and induction			0.539			
20	I seldom guessed the meaning of words through context in reading comprehension			0.472			
38	I could not learn English merely by myself			0.470			
Factor four: The teachers							
10	Teachers' explanation was unclear and writings were not easy to follow				0.534		
5	Teachers got strange and irritating personalities				0.475		
3	Teachers' pronunciation was poor and was weak in spoken English				0.457		
32	Teachers seldom offered encouraging non-verbal expressions like smiling, nodding				0.443		
39	Teachers did not prepare lessons sufficiently and correct assignments timely				0.440		
Factor five: Confidence deficiency							
37	I was not confident enough to learn English because of too many failures					0.578	
17	I lost confidence to communicate with Westerners					0.562	
33	I did not have confidence in fulfilling the assignments in English learning					0.452	
Factor six: The learning environment							
34	The curriculum was designed for national English tests						0.524
22	Most of the lessons focused on grammar and translation of vocabulary/sentence						0.474
27	The means of testing was monotonous, over-dependent on close-book tests						0.468

utilization of Internet facilities). These items were not reported by Korean subjects as their demotivational factors.

Factor analysis: The Bartlett's test of Sphericity of this study was significant, which proved that the data collected was suitable for factor analysis. The principal component factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation procedure was performed, extracting six and five factors from Chinese and Korean subjects, respectively. Table 2 and 3 demonstrate the loading on each item within the factors (demotivators) extracted. The cutoff point for factor loadings on each item was set at 0.40.

As to Chinese subjects, Factor One (F1) included five items (12, 19, 25, 26, 40), all correlated with teaching facilities and school equipments. Just as Zhou (2012) remarked, it was rational to ascribe L2 learners' demotivation to inadequate facilities. Therefore, this

factor was entitled Inadequate Facilities. Factor Two (F2) contained merely three items (7, 8, 36). Item 7 and 8 revealed subjects' aversion of target language whereas Item 36 reflected how disinterest of target language culture demotivated subjects. This factor was named Negative Attitude toward Target Language and Culture. Factor Three (F3) covered three items: Item 9 (unfamiliarity with L2 learning strategies), Item 20 and Item 38, indicating subjects' strong inclination of reflecting on personal learning modes. This factor was nominated Learning Strategies Deficiency. Factor Four (F4) consisted of five items (3, 5, 10, 32, 39), which associated with teachers' teaching capability, personality, pedagogy and attitude. Subjects believed these items directly caused their demotivation in EFL learning. This result echoed Dornyei's (1998) first type of demotivator-The Teacher (personality, commitment, competence, teaching method), which was the major trigger of learners' demotivation.

Table 3: Factor analysis of Korean EFL learners' demotivation

No.	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Factor one: The learning environment						
21	The passages in the textbooks were too long with too many new words	0.487				
22	Most of the lessons focused on grammar and translation of vocabulary/sentence	0.478				
6	Topics of the passages were old, no sufficient authentic materials in contents	0.461				
29	The contents of the passages in textbooks contained too much information to understand	0.445				
27	The means of testing was monotonous, over-dependent on close-book tests	0.402				
Factor two: The teachers						
35	Teachers did not provide enough support for learners		0.571			
3	Teachers' pronunciation was poor and was weak in spoken English		0.515			
32	Teachers seldom offered encouraging non-verbal expressions like smiling, nodding		0.501			
14	Teachers' pedagogy was monotonous and lacked interaction		0.500			
5	Teachers got strange and irritating personalities		0.447			
Factor three: Confidence deficiency						
33	I did not have confidence in fulfilling the assignments in English learning			0.538		
16	I had no confidence in learning English because of little experience in reaching success			0.476		
17	I lost confidence to communicate with Westerners.			0.463		
37	I was not confident enough to learn English because of too many failures			0.408		
Factor four: Peer pressure						
4	I felt inferior to my classmates while learning English				0.586	
23	I was embarrassed to express my ideas to classmates while learning English				0.547	
1	I did not like my classmates in English classes				0.408	
Factor five: Inadequate facilities						
30	I could hardly practice my English through school equipments					0.509
25	Audio materials were not or seldom utilized					0.497
40	The internet was not or seldom utilized					0.456

Hence F4 was labeled as the Teachers. Factor Five (F5), named as Confidence Deficiency, was made up of three items (17, 33, 37) related to subjects' self-confidence in L2 learning. Factor Six (F6) comprised three items (22, 27, 34), which covered a wide range of fields. Item 22 directed at the prevailing teaching methods in classroom. Item 34 targeted at curriculum design. In addition, inappropriate testing instruments (Item 27) were regarded by subjects as detrimental factors, too. According to Brown (1995), testing is an indispensable part of curriculum design as the firsthand feedback of learners' adaptation to the curriculum. Therefore, F6 was named The Learning Environment.

Meanwhile, Table 3 illustrates the results of factor analysis among Korean subjects. Factor One (F1) comprised five items. Item 6, 22 and 27 manifested subjects' motivation might be impaired by inappropriate learning context, while Item 21 and 29 reflected the detriment of information overload. Therefore, F1 was regarded as The Learning Environment. Factor Two (F2) included five items (3, 5, 14, 32, 35), concerning teacher-related elements and was hence addressed as The Teachers. Factor Three (F3) covered Item 16, 17, 33, 37, relating to subjects' internal triggers of demotivation and was entitled as Confidence Deficiency. Factor Four (F4) was named Peer Pressure as the constituent Item 1, 4 and 23 embodied the interpersonal features of language learning, peers' detrimental influences in particular. Factor Five (F5) highlighted subjects' demanding of both hardware (Item 25, 30) and software support (40) in L2 classroom. This factor was nominated as Inadequate Facilities.

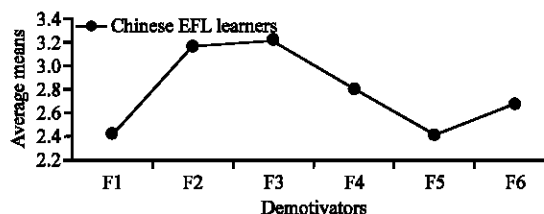


Fig. 1: Chinese subjects' average means of demotivators

DISCUSSION

(RQ1) What are the factors eliciting Chinese college EFL learners' demotivation?: Six demotivators were extracted from the study on Chinese respondents: Inadequate Facilities (F1), Negative Attitude toward Target Language and Culture (F2), Learning Strategies Deficiency (F3), The Teachers (F4), Confidence Deficiency (F5) and The Learning Environment (F6). The sequence of the six demotivators in descending order in accordance with their average means were F3 (3.213), F2 (3.158), F4 (2.798), F6 (2.667), F1 (2.419) and F5 (2.409) (Fig. 1).

Based on classical theoretical framework of demotivation, the six factors were divided into two types, namely, internal and external demotivators. Internal demotivators correlated with learners' interior forces to reduce or diminish motivation in language learning, including Negative Attitude toward Target Language and Culture (F2), Learning Strategies Deficiency (F3) and Confidence Deficiency (F5); whereas external demotivators related to exterior drives detrimental to

Table 4: Teachers' attribution to learners' demotivation in different studies

Experiment (Year)	Dornyei (1998)	Arai (2004)	Trang and Baldauf (2007)	This study (2013)
Teachers' Attribution% (subjects' nationality)	55% (Hungarian)	46.7% (Japanese)	38% (Viet Nameese)	16.79% (Chinese) 22.89% (Korean)

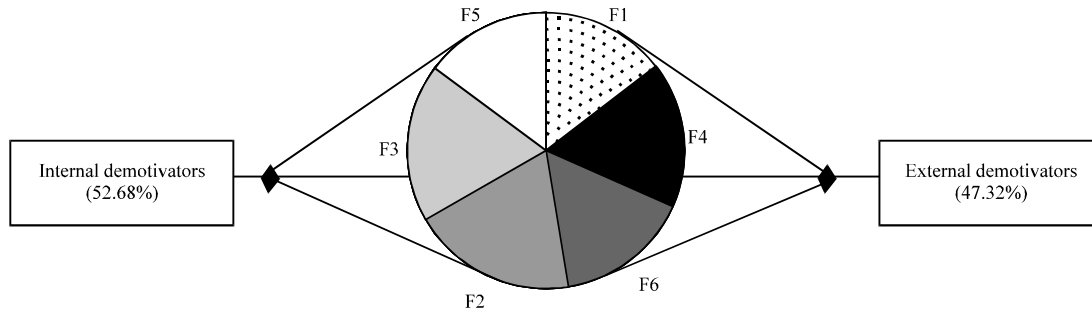


Fig. 2: Proportion of demotivators and constitution of Chinese subjects' internal/external demotivators

learners' motivational basis of second language acquisition, comprising Inadequate Facilities (F1), The Teachers (F2) and The Learning Environment (F6). Figure 2 demonstrates the percentage of the demotivators attributed to learners' demotivation and the constitution of internal and external demotivators.

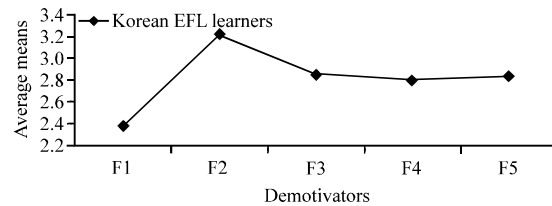


Fig. 3: Korean subjects' average means of demotivators

(RQ2) What are the factors triggering Korean college EFL learners' demotivation?: Concerning Korean subjects, five demotivators were rotated from this experiment: The Learning Environment (F1), The Teachers (F2), Confidence Deficiency (F3), Peer Pressure (F4) and Inadequate Facilities (F5). The mean Likert value of each demotivator differed substantially from Chinese counterparts (Fig. 3), the mean scores of F2 and F3 were relatively high (3.222 and 2.847, respectively), followed by F5 and F4 (2.832 and 2.796). The mean score of F1 bottomed at 2.380. Among these five demotivators, The Learning Environment (F1), The Teachers (F2) and Inadequate Facilities (F5) were categorized as external demotivators whereas the other two were internal demotivators (Fig. 4).

(RQ3) Are there any featuring demotivators concerning Chinese and Korean college EFL learners' culture-specific situations?

Shared demotivators: In Chinese and Korean subjects' categorization of demotivators, four are shared by both sides, The Teachers, Confidence Deficiency, Inadequate Facilities and The Learning Environment. Some phenomena in the above demotivators are noticeable and worth reviewing, namely EFL teachers' diminishing role of incurring demotivation among the two groups of subjects; the high percentage of Confidence Deficiency; and the increasing proportion of internal demotivators.

The teachers: In retrospect of past investigations on EFL learners' demotivation, no matter age, proficiency or native culture, a high percentage of L2 learners reported teachers as the prime demotivator. In this survey, teachers' negative impact was considered by Korean subjects as the most significant demotivator whereas by Chinese counterparts the third. However, teachers' detrimental influence on learners in this study has decreased substantially in comparison with that of former experiments (Table 4). The diminishment of teachers' role in demotivating EFL learners probably consists in the strong influence of traditional Confucian pedagogy salient in the two countries, which emphasizes teachers' unchallengeable authority in classroom. Imbued with Confucianism, students are less inclined to blame the cause of demotivation on respected tutors.

Meanwhile, the figure of teacher-related items in this survey revealed as well the differences between the two subject groups. The lower attribution of teachers' role in Chinese subjects' demotivation (16.79%) than that of Koreans' (22.89%) exemplified this discrepancy. This phenomenon might root from the educational reform carried out in the past decade throughout Chinese colleges, which have gradually overthrown the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy and introduced learner-

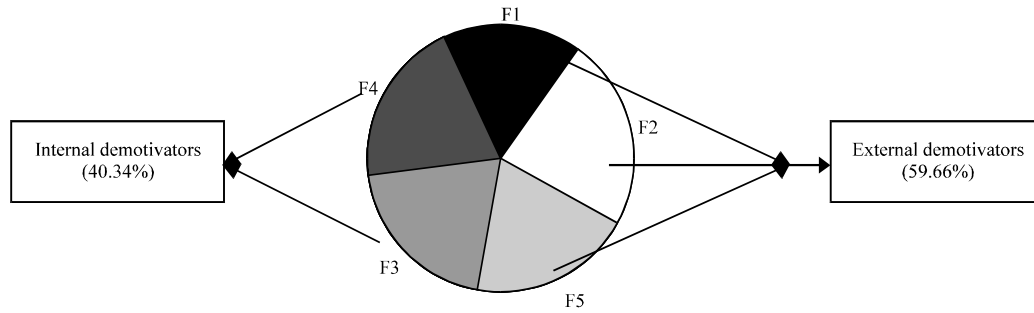


Fig. 4: Proportion of demotivators and constitution of Korean subjects' internal/external demotivators

centered module into EFL classrooms. As a result, Chinese EFL learners concern more on teachers' supportive role in classroom while Korean counterparts still depend significantly on teachers' centeredness. For instance, Chinese subjects' means on Item 35 (insufficient support from teachers) was much higher than that of Koreans' (3.691 and 2.960, respectively), while Korean subjects (4.040) scored higher on Item 14 (monotonous teaching pedagogy) than Chinese (2.876).

In response to the teacher-related factors that exert strong impact on learners' demotivation, sufficient correlated teacher-training or teacher-education is suggested, recommending teachers to avert practices that demotivating learners. Just as Falout *et al.* remarked (2009): Ultimately, teachers have the greatest potential to influence the external contexts in the classroom and the internal conditions of the learner, for better or worse.

Confidence deficiency: Ranking the second in Korean group and the sixth in Chinese, this demotivator resembles Dornyei's (1998) categorization of Reduced Self-confidence, which was deemed as a significant demotivator to Hungarian subjects. However, the two demotivators are not exactly the same due to subjects' different cultural backgrounds and thinking habits. Dornyei blamed the reduction of Hungarians' confidence on too many failures in past language learning experiences, while the triggers for the Chinese and Korean subjects in this study might be more complicated. Lack of experience in reaching success (Item 16), together with failing to reach parents' or teachers' expectations and inferior performance to peers (as given in subjects' feedback of open-questions) might incur the declining of subjects' confidence. To be precise, this phenomenon might root from Confucian philosophy shared by both Chinese and Korean subjects. Different from Westerners' egocentrism, Confucianism stresses on the sense of hierarchy. Students are brought up to be obedient to parents' or teachers' authority and expectations. Once

learners become aware of their incapability to attain the objective set by dominants, they will be more likely to attribute their failure to self reasons, which eventually elicit learners' confidence deficiency. Dornyei's (2009) L2 self system theory might explain the trigger of this demotivator as well: when subjects' real self fail to achieve the altitude set by ideal self and ought-to self, confidence will be shattered and demotivation will occur.

Internal demotivators: In comparison with former studies carried out in Europe and North America, one significant finding of this study is the increasing proportion of internal demotivators, which attributed 52.68 and 40.34%, respectively to Chinese and Korean learners' demotivation (Fig. 2, 4). This finding signifies Korean subjects still tended to ascribe the major inducement of demotivation to external elements whereas Chinese college EFL learners were more inclined to perceive internal demotivating triggers such as confidence, learning strategy and attitude towards target language/culture. The high scale of internal demotivators coheres with findings from former empirical studies administered on Chinese collegiate learners (Li, 2011; Zhou, 2012; Li, 2013a, b) that demotivation is not merely 'a specific external forces' as Dornyei (1998) defined. Both internal and external demotivators induce L2 learners' demotivation, the specific segmentation of the two demotivators is decided by culture-specific factors together with other unidentified variables, which needs to be investigated in future research.

The high segmentation of internal demotivators among Chinese college EFL learners is not an optimistic indicator as it might lead to attribution bias, incurring learners' down-spiral affective state of self-blame or amotivation at worst. Therefore, particular attention is needed from Chinese college EFL practitioners to tackle this demotivative state. Ushioda's (1998) advice of attribution training is an appropriate approach of remotivation. Learners are to be instructed with certain

strategies to place blame on external factors, which will dissociate past demotivating experience from self-confidence and consequently debilitate the occurrence of demotivation.

Discrepant demotivators: Owing to different educational contexts, the Chinese and Korean subjects in this study manifested discrepant culture-specific demotivators, namely Chinese subjects' Learning Strategy Deficiency and Negative Attitude toward Target Language/Culture, as well as Koreans' Peer Pressure.

Learning strategies deficiency: The average means of Learning Strategies Deficiency (F3) in this study is 3.213, attributing the largest to Chinese subjects' demotivation, accounting for approximately 19.28% (Fig. 2). This salience consists in the gap between traditional and modern EFL pedagogies. The English education in Chinese primary and secondary schools is more Confucianized, emphasizing teacher-centeredness and grammar-translation method. Students are accustomed to depending deeply on teachers' theoretical output and practical modeling in classroom. However, the EFL education in Chinese universities is more Westernized, stressing learner-centeredness. The abrupt shift between two pedagogies highlights students' deficiency in language learning strategies, bringing them sense of maladjustment and anxiety and consequently triggering demotivation.

Having not been observed in former studies on Western L2 learners, the demotivator of Learning Strategies Deficiency demonstrates significant correlation with Confucius culture prevailing in Eastern Asia. This demotivator is not unique to Chinese college EFL learners, as in Tsuchiya's (2004) study of Japanese counterparts, the factor of Ways of Learning is relatively similar.

In detail, this study has revealed two types of learning strategy deficiency. One is students' lack of learning strategies that can be utilized. The high means of Item 38 "inability to learn English independently" (3.464) fully exemplified subjects' awareness of the importance as well as their devoid of learning strategies. The other type is students' low proficiency in using the strategies appropriately, as Item 9 "unfamiliarity with L2 learning strategies" (2.443) and Item 20 "deficiency in guessing the meaning of words from texts" (3.732) illustrated. The finding proves Li's (2011) viewpoint that both the acquired quantities and the effectiveness of the learning strategies used would directly impact on Chinese college EFL learners' demotivation. Therefore, proper and relevant learning strategy training is suggested in tackling this demotivator.

Negative attitude toward target language and culture:

The average mean value of constituent items in this demotivator reaches 3.158, ranking the second among all six demotivators. This result reveals Chinese subjects were more resistant to English language and culture than Koreans. Chinese students' attitude toward English language might be explained from the perspectives of L1 negative transfer. The huge gap between native and target languages magnifies learners' difficulty in acquiring English. Belonging to Sino-Tibetan and Indo-European families, respectively, the Chinese and English languages differ substantially in pronunciation, morphology, semantics and even ideology. Therefore, Chinese learners, who have been imbued in hieroglyphic L1 for approximately two decades, are more liable to be negatively influenced by L1 transfer than Koreans whose native language is alphabetic script like L2 English. The high means of Chinese subjects on Item 7 (disinterest in learning English) and Item 8 (aversion of English language), accounting for 3.381 and 3.443, respectively, fully proved this negative attitude. Moreover, this phenomenon can be explained by instrumental motivation theory as well. Due to the large scale domestic job market, Chinese students have more possibilities than Koreans of working in L1 context. Hence Chinese learners are less prone to get engaged in English-related professions, just like the high means of Item 31 shows (3.299). As a matter of fact, the importance of English as a working tool is relatively low to Chinese learners and so forth their instrumental motivation to learn the target language.

In addition, Chinese students' negative attitudes toward English culture increase their demotivation in learning the language. Due to the relatively seclusive geographical location and the hegemony of monoculture, the Chinese culture is more continental, exclusive and unique, which in turn deepens Chinese students' resistance to heterogeneous culture, as Item 36 (2.650) exemplified.

Peer pressure: As the particular discrepant demotivator of Korean subjects, the pressure of peers on EFL learners is alarming. The dark side of prevailing cooperative learning method is to some extent unveiled in this study. The mean value of Item 4 (inferiority to classmates) was 4.050, ranking the highest of all items. The detrimental influence of competition and cooperation among learners in pairwork, groupwork or teamwork was also reconfirmed by Korean subjects in their written feedback on open-end questions in the first phase of the study. The majority of subjects admitted having suffered from demotivating experiences from classmates, eliciting sense of embarrassment and reluctance to practice English among

peers in classroom, as Item 23 (2.743) illustrated. Furthermore, this result is not unique to Koreans, as similar findings were reported among Japanese EFL learners (Falout and Maruyama, 2004).

The demotivator of peer pressure raises the need to reconsider the designing and organizing of cooperative activities in EFL classroom and appropriate countermeasures are to be schemed out to lessen the rivalrousness of activities and the frustrating feeling to most college EFL learners. Therefore, future research is warranted to make a series of in-depth inquires into the cause of peer pressure among college EFL learners by Asian EFL practitioners besides Koreans.

CONCLUSION

The empirical evidence taken from Chinese and Korean college EFL learners in this study gives support to the inclusion of 'internal forces' that trigger L2 learners' demotivation in language acquisition. Therefore, the conceptualization of demotivation should take into account both the internal and external demotivators as Li (2011), Li (2013a, b) and Zhou (2012) claimed in antecedent research.

In this study, six demotivators were identified among Chinese college EFL learners as well as five among Korean counterparts. By comparing the categorization with former studies carried out worldwide, it is apparent that demotivation reveals strong culture-specific features in accordance with different contexts. Learners from East Asia demotivate disparately from those on the other side of the Eurasia Continent and even those sharing similar cultures show distinct features, as the Chinese and Korean subjects exemplified in this study.

By contrasting the correlated similarities and discrepancies in this study, a number of variables have been revealed to impact on L2 learners' demotivative behaviors, including philosophy, native culture, L1 transfer, educational settings and so forth. Yet more are to be explored for EFL practitioners to manipulate appropriate counter-demotivating or remotivating pedagogies for learners from different contexts in classroom.

To unveil what demotivates EFL learners is not the entire story of demotivation research, the ultimate objective is to diminish or overcome the occurrence of demotivators detrimental to learners' English language acquisition. Therefore, correlative implications might be derived from this study for policymakers, administrators and EFL teachers to reflect on language education policies, syllabus design, evaluation, as well as classroom practices.

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