

## **A Review on Extra-curricular English Course in Replacement of Graduation Certification**

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This study examines an extra-curricular English course that gives a chance for the low-proficient seniors who have not yet met the graduation qualification to graduate upon completion of 90 hours of English program. The subjects were 14 seniors who failed to obtain the minimum requirement scores and had to complete the course in summer of 2014. A total of 5 sets of the TOEIC mock-tests were administered to see if the subjects made any progress in each test after providing lectures on the tips to improve listening skills and test scores. The study analyzed the results of the TOEIC L/C, subjects' translation sheets and the questionnaire at the end of the course. Subjects' personality factors were mainly focused for the study. The affective domain by Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) was adopted to investigate the subjects' learning factors along with their motivation. Based on the results of the study, the extra-curricular English course seemed ineffective as the subjects' perception of the course was extremely nonchalant without any desire and motivation to learn. Their willingness to learn English was practically non-existent in each class presumably partly due to the lenient nature of the course and pressure to focus on their national qualification exam. It is recommended to provide a more practical course that includes testing the students and that reinforces a learning environment. The course is advised to be offered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year so during the senior year, students can put in their effort on more urgent priority such as national nursing test and/or national biomedical laboratory science test. .

**Key Words:** extra-curricular English course, graduation certification, affective domain, motivation, low-proficient-seniors

### **1 Introduction**

Ever since the nation was hit hard by financial crisis and experienced the IMF era in 1997, a large number of universities in Korea have adopted a policy called graduation qualification for English proficiency as part of a graduation certification. The policy usually includes English skills, computer skills, and

volunteer experiences so their students can equip themselves with necessary skills and specification prior to entering into a job market. It was part of a trial on the part of universities to produce competent and eligible workers once they graduate from university as the workplaces demanded graduates who can start work with minimum on-the-job training. Therefore, the university which has long been considered and revered as the ivory tower shifted its emphasis on vocational education with practical training. World trades with English speaking countries have expanded at a substantially fast speed and the nation has been in need of more competent English speakers in all walks of life. Such demand has forced universities to change especially in nurturing students' fluency of the English language.

As many as 44% of the universities are under graduation certification policy and among them, about 85% of the universities have a policy of graduation qualification for English proficiency, according to a reporter at <http://blog.naver.com/bepoisoning/37708531> retrieved in October 2014. In case of HY University, as an example, all students have to take one of the TOEFL, TOEIC, TEPS, G-TEPP and their minimum scores are 630-650 although not publicly revealed. As for SG University, the TOEIC scores are 800, and CBT TOEFL 240 for liberal arts majors whereas the TOEIC scores are 800, and CBT TOEFL 210 for science majors.

At EJ University where the current research was conducted, all the departments have a policy stating that students are to obtain the requirement scores of the TOEIC, although the minimum scores vary depending on the major, ranging from 550 for nursing majors to 700 for medical students, certificates of computer operation skills, and 60 hours of volunteer work completion to meet the graduation certification by May of senior year.

No matter how highly the graduation certification policy is emphasized and how often students are reminded of the policy, there have been students whose best does not turn out to be good enough and therefore, the number of unable-to-graduate students has been a pesky concern for universities. Since graduation certification policy was initiated with an intention to help and encourage students to study English for the purpose of their future use, universities were under strain to come up with an alternative for the unable-to-graduate seniors. Thereby some of the universities with the graduation certification policy have come up with the-so-called rescue program to help their low-proficient students as a replacement of the graduation certification.

For one example, IH University offers a winter session during the last week of December through the mid-January at 180,000 won for the unqualified seniors. EJ University, however, offers a summer program during the month of June and July of senior year at the students' expense. Upon completion of the program, these seniors are given the green light to graduate from the university.

Since these seniors failed to fulfill the graduation qualification, it may have been worthwhile to check their affective personality in learning the English language. Affective domain is a crucial aspect of learning a foreign

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language and motivation also plays an important part of learners' academic performance. Like any other type of learning, English learning requires time, effort, and persistence on the part of learner as Gardner (2001) states. His earlier socio-educational model of motivation in 1985 suggests that effort, desire, and positive affect, are necessary factors distinguishing successful L2 learners from less successful ones. And for the topic of motivation, Chomsky (1988) stresses the importance of activating learners' motivation and claims that "the truth of the matter is that about 99 percent of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material" (p. 181).

The purpose of the study is to see if the seniors who failed to obtain the minimum requirement scores of the TOEIC are actually motivated in the extra-curricular English course by using the affective domain when their primary concern seemed to be focused on the upcoming national exam of their major in the senior year. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1) It is to see if the subjects improve their listening comprehension results on each test when thorough lectures of explanations on the material are provided, 2) to see if the subjects are motivated in learning English using their affective variables, 3) to see how they perform on their translation work after each lecture on the learning material is given, 4) to see if the extra-curricular English course for seniors is actually effective, and 5) to suggest ways to improve such course for the benefit of the students.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 The affective domain

According to Brown (2007) in his book that deals with personality factors to explain human learning process, one of the two facets of the affective domain of second language acquisition is the intrinsic side of affectivity: personality factors within a person that contribute in some way to the success of language learning. With quotes from Ernest Hilgard (1963, p. 267), who is well known for his study of human learning and cognition, "purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity," he emphasizes the importance of personality factor. Dornyei and Skehan (2003) and Arnold (1999) also assert that there is no doubt at all about the importance of examining personality factors in building a theory of second language acquisition.

Brown (2007) further adds that the affective domain is difficult to describe scientifically. A large number of variables are implied in considering the emotional side of human behavior in the second language learning process. Affect refers to feeling or emotion and the affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) provide a useful extended definition of the affective domain that is still widely used today as

follows:

1. At the first and fundamental level, the development of affectivity begins with *receiving*. Persons must be aware of the environment surrounding them and be conscious of situations, phenomena, people, objects; be willing to receive – to tolerate a stimulus, not avoid it – and give a stimulus their controlled or selected attention.
2. Next, persons must go beyond receiving to *responding*, committing themselves in at least some small measure to a phenomenon or a person. Such responding in one dimension may be in acquiescence, but in another higher dimension, the person is willing to respond voluntarily without coercion, and then receives satisfaction from that response.
3. The third level of affectivity involves *valuing*: placing worth on a thing, a behavior, or a person. Valuing takes on the characteristics of beliefs or attitudes as values are internalized. Individuals do not merely accept a value to the point of being willing to be identified with it, but commit themselves to the value to pursue it, seek it out, and want it, finally, to the point of conviction.
4. The fourth level of the affective domain is the *organization* of values into a system of beliefs, determining interrelationships among them, and establishing a hierarchy of values within the system.
5. Finally, individuals become characterized by and understand themselves in terms of their *value system*. Individuals act consistently in accordance with the values they have internalized and integrate beliefs, ideas, and attitudes into a total philosophy or worldview. It is at this level that problem solving, for example, is approached on the basis of a total, self-consistent system.

Second language learners need to be receptive both to those with whom they are communicating and to the language itself, responsive to persons and to the context of communication, and willing and able to place a certain value on the communicative act of interpersonal exchange.

## **2.2 Motivation**

Motivation is yet another affective variable to consider, as Brown (2007) asserts, but one that is so central and with research foundations that are so pervasive that it deserves a separate category. Many teachers of any subject would agree that motivation is the key factor in learning and there have been numerous research studies on the topic. As pointed out in Weiner (1986), Deci (1975), and Maslow's (1970) studies, such assumptions are of course not erroneous, for countless studies and experiments in human learning have

shown that motivation is a key to learning in general. Motivation in learning a second language has been highlighted in Dornyei (2005, 2001a, 2001b, 1998), Dornyei and Skehan (2003), Dornyei and Schmidt (2001) and Spolsky (2000), just to name a few. For teachers of English as a second language, one particular question that we often ask ourselves would be “How do we get our students motivated and maintain their motivation in learning?”

Motivating learners is a continuing practice evolving from creating the condition and generating an initial motivation to maintaining and protecting it and encouraging positive self-evaluation (Dornyei, 2001a). In formal instructional settings, Cameron (2003) underlines the task of sustaining or sometimes restoring learner motivation over longer periods of time is challenging and effort-taking (quoted from Lee, 2008).

For the study’s literature review, Brown’s (2007) motivation theories are to be reiterated. He explains motivation in three different terms: behavioral perspective, cognitive terms, and a constructivist view of motivation. But for the purpose of the study, only the cognitive terms will be focused.

“In cognitive terms, motivation places much more emphasis on the individual’s decisions, “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach, or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (Keller, 1983, p. 389). Some cognitive psychologists see underlying needs or drives as the compelling force behind our decisions. Ausubel (1968, pp. 368-379) identified six needs undergirding the construct of motivation.

- a. The need for exploration, for seeing “the other side of the mountain,” for probing the unknown
- b. The need for manipulation, for operating – to use Skinner’s term – on the environment and causing change
- c. The need for activity, for movement and exercise, both physical and mental
- d. The need for stimulation, the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings
- e. The need for knowledge, the need to process and internalize the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to resolve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and for self-consistent systems of knowledge
- f. Finally, the need for ego enhancement, for the self to be known and to be accepted and approved of by others, or, what Dornyei (2005, p. 93) calls the “self-system”

### **3 Method**

#### **3.1 Subjects and procedure**

The current study was set out to see if the subjects who were taking the extra-curricular English course at their senior year were indeed motivated to learn the language using their affective variables and academically benefitted from the course by examining their TOEIC mock-test results, subjects' translation sheets, and the questionnaire responses. It was also to examine the effectiveness of the extra-curricular English course at the senior year. The study was done on a total of 14 seniors who were obligated to take the extra-curricular English course from June 16 to July 15, 2014 at their own expense. The subjects were 5 nursing science majors (all females) and 9 biomedical laboratory science majors (7 males and 2 females) who failed to obtain the minimum requirement scores of the standardized English test, TOEIC, 550, and 650, respectively. The graduation qualification for English proficiency was absolutely essential in order to graduate and such requirement policy has been notified to the students from their first year to get fully ready for it.

When there are students in their senior year who have not yet met the graduation requirement, EJ University offers an extra-curricular English course for 45 hours of listening comprehension (L/C) and 45 hours of reading comprehension (R/C) during the summer of the students' senior year. The course runs for 11 days each for 4 hours daily and 5 hours on the last day of the listening comprehension class and another 11 days for reading comprehension class of the same hours with a different instructor.

This study was based on the listening comprehension course only. The subjects were to take 5 TOEIC L/C mock tests; however, nothing was mandatory except for 10-day-attendance for each L/C and R/C, respectively. After each test, a thorough explanation on the material was provided as a lecture for the students to understand the nature (or types) of the L/C questions, diverse pronunciations, contracted syllables, meaning of the statements, useful expressions, and strategies on where and what to pay attention for each part of the listening.

Upon finishing each day's lecture, the day's learning material was reviewed both in Korean and English as to what to remember from different parts and useful expressions that were likely to repeatedly appear in other similar tests. Newly learned vocabulary and expressions were highlighted before wrapping up every class. The following day, 15-sentence-translation was conducted to see if the subjects *received* what they were exposed to and *responded* positively to the learning material. Translation sheets were collected, checked and analyzed. Useful words and expressions were reemphasized over again to make sure for subjects to acquire throughout the course. The last hour of each listening session was conducted with some movie watching and Ted.com lectures as the subjects seemed too uninterested in learning the TOEIC material.

### **3.2 Data analysis**

The five-test results were analyzed to see if the subjects progressed from one test to another. Each day's translation sheets were examined to check if they actually remember what they studied and the questionnaires were administered on the last day with 14 questions to see if the subjects were motivated to follow each day's study. The average scores were calculated and compared. For questions on the questionnaire, 5-point Likert scale was used and they are listed in the appendix.

### **4 Results and Discussions**

As one-time absence was excused throughout the listening comprehension course, every single subject took advantage of it and missed the class at least once. There was not even a subject who gradually progressed in each test except for one who scored 325, 350 and 355 out of five tests; however, the score increase was not substantial and the subject missed two tests. Most of the subjects scored between low 200s and slightly upper 300s. Subjects' names were shown by their first name and the same names were indicated as A and B in the table. The mean scores of the 5 tests were between 280 and 291 out of 495. The highest was 370 and the lowest 145.

As the test was not compulsory, some subjects walked out of the classroom in the middle of the test and returned 20 or 30 minutes later, showing the result of 145 points out of 495, for example. A couple of subjects even dozed off during the test and did not bother to do anything in class. Some subjects paid no attention to what was being covered or presented in class and habitually carried their mobile phones out of the classroom to stay away from the class. Only a couple of subjects seemed serious in taking the test and learning but their listening comprehension level was very low. Considering the amount of hours put in for the course, equivalent to a three-hour-a-week course of a semester, the test results seemed far from satisfactory. Comparing to the previous year's medical students' pre- and post-TOEIC results, these seniors' score increase of 11 points (from 280 to 291, however the mean score of 5 tests, 286, showing only 5 points increase from the mean score) seemed almost insignificant as the medical students' average mean score of L/C went up by 54 points (from 365 to 419). The test results are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Scores of Five Tests

Name	1 <sup>st</sup> test	2 <sup>nd</sup> test	3 <sup>rd</sup> test	4 <sup>th</sup> test	5 <sup>th</sup> test
Yun	365	325	370	335	360
Cho	310	305	320	260	x
Hye	255	275	305	300	255
Suk	145	280	250	x	230
Pu -A-	250	295	220	x	230
Tae	265	215	265	210	240
Gyeong	300	285	330	310	250
Seong -A-	220	260	230	285	x
Su	270	x	185	225	x
Seong -B-	335	240	265	295	325
Eun	355	365	330	330	350
Nan	285	235	270	235	275
Pu -B-	x	x	325	350	355
Bo	x	350	315	335	345
Average	280	286	284	289	291

mean scores of 5 tests: 286

x: test not taken

Even some contents and learning materials were highly emphasized as worthy of knowing, translation sheets revealed that the subjects were not paying attention nor receiving the learning material. Only chunks of words were written as a form of incomprehensible cluster of words, very different from what was learned in class as for translation. It was evident that the subjects did not use their affective variables to study the language. They were lack of desire, effort, and positive affect to learn. They seemed to avoid receiving any kind of stimulus. By examining the subjects' translation of the sentences that were covered the previous day, most of them came up with awkward word combination as translation. It was due to the fact that they did not pay attention to the expressions they were learning nor cared about what was going on each class hour. No matter how highly emphasized the importance of the learning material, they were not willing to learn at all. Their eye contact with the instructor was not made during the class hours and most of them were doing other than English study. Even during movie watching which students usually enjoy, they were not paying attention. So even though expressions are repeatedly explained and reviewed, the subjects' translation was unsatisfying and ungrammatical.

Here are eight examples of the subjects' translation:

\*Seat booking before? (Did you reserve seats in advance?)

\*Many shoes there. (There are various kinds of shoes.)

\*Flowers all same look. (The flowers look all the same.)



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- \*No look at drug store restaurant way? (You didn't see any pharmacy on your way to the restaurant, did you?)
- \*How much you give pay mother baby time to employee? (How much paid maternity leave do you offer your workers?)
- \*I accident yesterday night. (I got into an accident last night.)
- \*I will go your office directly. (I will drop by your office right away.)
- \*Don't like to sit there? (Do you mind sitting over there?)

Next, the subjects' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed. In terms of interest and motivation in English, over half of them were indifferent (58%) and not-motivated accounted for 21% whereas only 21% felt slightly motivated. Seventy one percent of the subjects felt listening comprehension was difficult for them whereas 29% were indifferent. Half of the subjects did not try anything for their L/C skills and 21% were indifferent of such try. The majority of the subjects (72%) did not try to improve their English whereas only one out of 14 subjects tried a little to listen to English conversation and/or TOEIC listening comprehension tape. Also half of the subjects were indifferent about memorizing what they learned in class. Only 3 subjects slightly tried to memorize what they learned in class. A total of 57% of the subjects felt L/C words were difficult whereas 43% were indifferent. All subjects (except one, indifferent) felt inference questions were difficult and all of them agreed that English would be necessary for their future.

The results revealed that these subjects were not motivated, nor interested in learning English in the extra-curricular English course. They were physically present for the class with a simple intention to graduate from school just like their peers. Another factor for their indifferent attitude was supposedly to do with relaxed nature of the course. As the only requirement was attendance, the subjects must have felt that they could get by with the course under one condition of being physically present. Neither exam was given for them to study or feel the importance of the language study to pay enough attention to learn, nor was any task assigned. Table 2 shows the results of the questionnaire.

Table 2. The Results of the Questionnaire

Question	Very much	Slightly	Indifferent	Not really	Never
1.Motivated?	x	3(21%)	8(58%)	2(14%)	1(7%)
3.Is L/C difficult?	3(21%)	7(50%)	4(29%)	x	x
5.Do for better L/C?	1(7%)	3(21%)	3(21%)	2(14%)	5(36%)
8. Try to improve?	x	1(7%)	3(21%)	4(29%)	6(43%)
10.Words difficult?	1(7%)	7(50%)	6(43%)	x	x
11.Inference difficult?	3(21%)	10(72%)	1(7%)	x	x
12.Try to memorize?	x	3(22%)	7(50%)	3(21%)	1(7%)
14.English necessary?	8(57%)	6(43%)	x	x	x

- Question 1: Are you interested and motivated in learning English?
- Question 3: Is listening comprehension (L/C) difficult for you?
- Question 5: Is there anything you do for better L/C skills?
- Question 8: Do you try to improve your English ability?
- Question 10: Are L/C words of the TOEIC difficult for you?
- Question 11: Are inference questions difficult for you?
- Question 12: Do you try to memorize the words and expressions you learn in class?
- Question 14: Is English language necessary for your future career?

When 79% of the subjects were asked question 2, “Why are you not motivated?,” their answers varied; 29% felt English was difficult, 29% did not like to memorize anything, 21% were simply not interested in the English language and another 21% answered all of the above. For those who felt L/C was difficult, 21% of the subjects had trouble with pronunciation and another 21% attributed difficulty to lack of vocabulary knowledge. Twenty nine percent of the students felt native English speakers’ sentences were too fast and another 29% responded all of the above reasons. As for most difficult parts of L/C, most of the subjects felt parts 2, 3, and 4 of the listening were difficult as they lacked vocabulary knowledge, and due to difficult pronunciation because of various types of world English intonation and accent in the test. For the question why they do not try to remember or memorize anything they learn during the class, 43% of the subjects felt no desire or need to memorize, 29% were too busy with other studies, and 21% of them blamed their poor memory. Figure 1 shows the result of question 2.

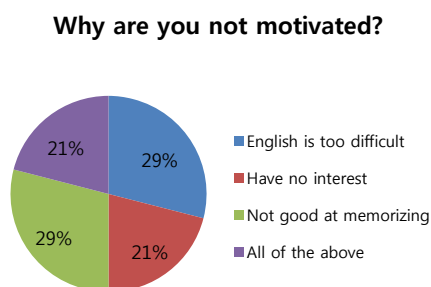


Figure 1. Results of question 2

For the question “Why is English L/C difficult for you?,” 21% of the subjects responded English pronunciation is difficult, another 21% felt they were lack of vocabulary knowledge, 29% responded English is just too fast, and the rest 29% attributed to all the above reasons. Figure 2 shows the results on question 4.

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**Why is English L/C difficult for you?**

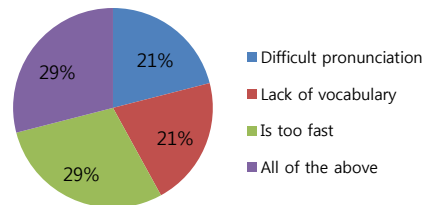


Figure 2. Results of question 4

Then the subjects were asked which part of the L/C was most difficult and slightly over one third of the subjects felt all the parts were difficult. Figure 3 shows the results.

**Which part of L/C is most difficult for you?**

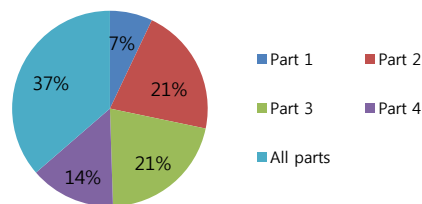


Figure 3. Results of question 6

The next question was to see if they tried to remember what they learned in class and 43% of the subjects had no desire to learn the language or need to remember what was taught to them whereas 29% answered they were too busy with more urgent studies such as national exam, and 21% blamed their poor memory. Only one subject responded all of the above. Figure 4 shows the results on question 13.

Why do you not try to remember the learning material?

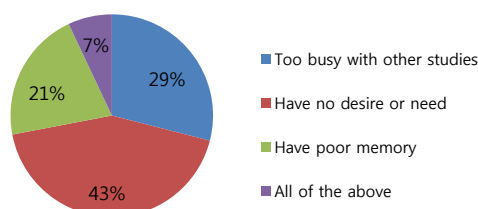


Figure 4. Results of question13

For question 7, “Which skill is most difficult?” the subjects responded speaking was the most difficult skill, followed by writing, reading and listening. However, for this question, their response seemed perfunctory. And for question 9, “If you try to improve your English, what do you do?,” only one subject answered she tried to listen to the TOEIC L/C tape at home.

### 5 Conclusion and Implications

This study set out with an aim of examining subjects’ motivation and their progress on each test, understanding of the study material by analyzing their translation work, as well as looking into the effectiveness of the extra-curricular English course for seniors who failed to obtain the minimum requirement scores of the standardized English test as a replacement of graduation certification.

Subjects’ personality factors were examined and the affective domain by Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) was adopted to learn the subjects’ learning factors along with their motivation. The subjects were only physically present in the classroom simply because they had no other choice but to follow what they were asked to do. Their intention was to get over with the course and be ready to graduate without much effort. Most of them did not have the desire to learn the language and they tuned off what was presented in class. Lack of motivation and affective domain was evident among the subjects of this study. There was no *receiving* or *responding* aspect of affective domain. The subjects’ perception of the course was far from receptive of knowledge and their willingness to study English was practically non-existent each class hour presumably partly due to the lenient policy of the program. The subjects’ need for exploration and operating on the environment, need for knowledge, and need for ego enhancement was not evident.

The results of the listening tests revealed that the subjects’ improvement on the TOEIC L/C was insignificant no matter how often the lecture material

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was repeated day after day or what teaching methods were applied. Throughout the course, it was evident that the subjects paid no attention to what was presented in the classroom. Each mock-test seemed to be done as killing time or something that was forced upon without any determination to do better or well. Also, little progress on the mock tests had to do with no interest and motivation in the English language.

These subjects were primarily worried about their national exams which were scheduled in five to six months of the time from which they were in the course and felt stressed out as they were under a great deal of pressure from their professors in the department. During the English class, some students were studying for upcoming test as their only reason being in the class was not to learn English but merely to obtain a chance to be able to graduate. Therefore, what they learned in class did not get through to them and accordingly even simple translation was not successfully carried out among the majority of the subjects.

Based on the results of the five TOEIC mock tests, translation sheets, and questionnaire responses, subjects' affective variables were not actively involved with the extra-curricular English course. The program did not seem to be effective for students to learn English. It is advised to provide a more practical course that includes testing the students and reinforcing a learning environment. The chance for such rescue program should be given in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year so that during the senior year, students can focus on their major examinations such as national nursing test and national biomedical laboratory science test.

This study is not free of limitations, however. It was done on one single year students of only 14 subjects rather than several years of low-proficient seniors, and therefore, the results are not to be generalized. It would have been better if it were done on a number of courses that were offered in the previous years so that the results could provide a much more inclusive data to determine the effectiveness of the course in a broader term. However, since the seniors of these two majors have no desire to learn the language in their senior year, the extra-curricular English course is advised to be offered in the junior year instead. Also testing should be included for the students to learn and certain degree of regulation is necessary to make the program more effective.

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**Appendix**  
**Questionnaire**

1. Are you interested and motivated in learning English?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
2. If not, why not?  
I have no interest,                      English is too difficult  
I am not good at memorizing      All of the above
3. Is TOEIC L/C difficult for you?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
4. Why is it difficult?  
Difficult pronunciation      Lack of vocabulary knowledge  
Speed is too fast                      All of the above
5. Is there anything that you try for better L/C?
6. What is the most difficult part of L/C?  
Part 1      Part 2      Part 3      Part 4      All parts
7. Which skill is most difficult?  
Speaking      Listening      Writing      Reading
8. Do you try to improve your English?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
9. If so, what do you do?
10. Are L/C words difficult?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
11. Are inference questions difficult?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
12. Do you try to remember or memorized the learning material?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never
13. If not, why?
14. Is English necessary language for your future?  
Very much      Slightly      Indifferent      Not really      Never