

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

Yo Hamada

Yokote Seiryō Gakuin

Hamada, Y. (2008). Demotivators for Japanese teenagers. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 1-23.

These two decades have seen a surge in interest in the study of motivation throughout the field of language acquisition. Several distinguished motivational theories have been established: self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), goal-setting theories (Locke & Latham, 1990), attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-worth theory (Covington, 1992) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1993). In response to the negative trend that some learners lose interest in foreign language learning despite the best efforts by teachers, researchers have started to explore a different category of motivation, *demotivation*. Dornyei (2001) defines a demotivated learner as “someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her commitment/interest for some reason” (p. 142). Demotivation has been researched in Japan, at primarily in the university and high school level. To overcome limitations of the previous studies, the current study explores the following three questions. (1) How do Japanese high school learners change their state of demotivation through? (2) How does each demotivator contribute to learners’ demotivation? (3) When does demotivation start and what factors contribute to junior high school demotivation? The participants are 54 second year high school learners and 36 third year junior high students from a school in Japan. A 26 item-questionnaire and an in-house test were used to examine the high school learners. A 9 item-open ended questionnaire with two 5 Likert type questions was used to examine the high school learners. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. High school learners’ state of demotivation changed in the intensity toward *communicative method* and several variables are considered to contribute to demotivated learners. For junior high school learners, grammar and confidence issue are the stronger demotivator. Implications for practical classroom instructions, and recommendations for further research are given based on the results.

Key Words: motivation, demotivation, grammar

1 Introduction

Recently, in Japan, the Ministry of Education has proposed an idea to educate the Japanese to be able to use English. Traditionally, Japanese English education has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on grammar, via an instructional model of grammar translation. However, a recent survey carried out by Midorikawa (2007) shows that Japanese learners are better at writing compared to learners in Korea, though, overall, the learners in Korea are better English users. Midorikawa assumes the reason to the practice of integrating English learning into Korean elementary schools. Teaching English to elementary school children has finally started in Japan

Hamada

and it is hotly debated now (Benesse, 2007). Naganuma (2007) mentions that fostering a positive attitude toward English is an important purpose of elementary school (p. 21), but those who first had positive feelings toward English eventually grow to dislike English as they proceed to junior high school. As a result, students end up being classified into three high school groups: (a) I like English (b) Neutral (c) I don't like English (p. 35).

Under these circumstances, researchers are also studying techniques and methods to improve the situation on reading, writing, speaking, listening, learner beliefs, learners' learning strategies, and motivation.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous research

These two decades have seen a surge in interest in the study of motivation throughout the field (Gardner, 1985; Little, Ridley, Ushioda, 2003; Dornyei, 2001; Dornyei and Murphy, 2004, Saywer, 2007). Several distinguished motivational theories have been established: self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), goal-setting theories (Locke & Latham, 1990), attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-worth theory (Covington, 1992) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1993).

However, Hiromori (2003) expresses his concerns that the outcomes of motivation research have not successfully contributed to actual classroom instruction because there is a "wall" between research and actual classroom instructions (p.142). Besides that, some learners lose interest in foreign language learning despite the best efforts by teachers (Kikuchi, in press). In response to this trend, researchers have started to explore a different category of motivation, demotivation. Dornyei (2001) defines a demotivated learner as "someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her commitment/interest for some reason" (p. 142). Demotivation should not be confused with the conceptually different phenomenon of no motivation (Christophel and Gorham, 1995, p.294). An absence of motivation is defined as amotivation (Legault, et.al., 2006, p. 567). Demotivated learners are those who were once motivated to varying extents but are less motivated now because of some external factors. According to Dornyei (2001), students possibly become demotivated for nine reasons (Table 1).

Table 1. Possible Reasons for Demotivation for Learner Motivation, Based on Dornyei (2001, p.152-143)

Item number	Reasons	Examples
1	The teacher	The teacher shouted all the time.
2	Inadequate school facilities	We had 11 teachers; Everybody tried out a new method.
3	Reduced self-confidence	I don't have confidence at all anymore.
4	Negative attitude towards the L2	I don't like the whole structure of English.
5	Compulsory nature of L2 study	I have not choice: I have to learn English anyway.

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

6	Interference of another foreign language being studied	English is similar to German, which gets in the way sometimes.
7	Negative attitude towards L2 community	I don't have a good feeling about countries where English is spoken.
8	Attitude of group members	There were quite a few of them that I didn't like.
9	Course book	I had to use what I think was the worst course book.

Demotivation has been researched in Japan, at primarily in the university and high school level. Several studies have been conducted with university students (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b; Kikuchi, in press; Kikuchi and Sakai, in press). (Table 2)

Table 2. Primary Studies on EFL Student Motivation in Japan from 2004-2008

Research	Participants	Methods	Demotivating factors
Arai (2004)	33 university English majors	Reports	Teachers (46.7%) Class content (36.7%) Classmates (13.3%)
Falout and Maruyama (2004)	164 university science majors	49-item questionnaire	The higher proficiency learners: self-confidence. The lower proficiency learners: negative attitudes towards English.
Tsuchiya (2004a, 2004b)	204 university engineering majors 90 university English majors and International relations students	26-item questionnaire	Sense of English uselessness. Sense of incompetence. Little admiration. Inconsistent studying way. Sense of discouragement. Lack of acceptance.
Tsuchiya (2006a)	129 university freshmen	37-item questionnaire	High proficiency learners rated higher in each item.
Kikuchi and Sakai (in press)	112 university freshmen	35-item questionnaire	Course books. Inadequate school facilities. Test scores. Non-communicative methods. Teacher's competence and teaching style.
Hamada and Kito (2008)	100 2 nd year high school students	35-item questionnaire	Learning environment. Teacher's competence and teaching style. Little intrinsic motivation. Non-communicative methods. Textbooks and lessons.

Arai (2004) surveyed 33 high proficiency university English majors on their demotivating factors and how they dealt with those factors. The participants reported on experiences in elementary school, junior high school, high school, *juku* (cram school), and college. The demotivating reasons she found are teachers' attitudes toward students, teachers' personalities, teaching methods, and teachers' language proficiency (46.7%), followed by class content such as no feedback, simple and

Hamada

boring lessons, inappropriate content levels, and uninteresting materials (36.2%). Class atmosphere such as class being inactive, other students' unwillingness to communicate, and studying with higher or lower level classmates are rated low (13.3%).

Falout and Maruyama explored when demotivation began by asking the learners when they began disliking English. Their findings showed that 24.3% of the LP learners answered Jr. High (non-specific) and 27% answered Jr. High 2nd year, and 29.2 % of HP learners answered High School. The time of when the learners started disliking English may have resulted from their proficiency level. However, their study did not ask the learners when they began demotivated, but asked when they began hating English. More precise questions need to be asked to further understand the complexities of demotivation.

Tsuchiya's (2004a, 2004b) 26-item questionnaire based educational psychology research and it was administered to 204 university freshman engineering students with limited English proficiency, 90 university freshman and sophomore English majors with average proficiency, and 163 International relations students who were highly motivated and proficient. Tsuchiya found six demotivating factors: sense of English uselessness, sense of incompetence, little admiration, inconsistent studying styles, sense of discouragement, and lack of acceptance (2004a).

Tsuchiya (2006b) summarized nine demotivating factors by integrating the findings of her research (Tsuchiya, 2004a, 2004b, 200b) with those of Dornyei (2001), and Falout and Maruyama (2004). The factors are teachers, classes, compulsory nature of English study, negative attitude toward the English community, negative attitude toward English itself, reduced self-confidence, negative group attitude, lack of positive English speaking model, and ways of learning (p.173).

Tsuchiya (2006b) administered a 37- item questionnaire, which was created based on these nine factors above, to 129 freshman university students. She divided the students into two levels (LP and HP) by means of an English proficiency test. These results indicate that the LP group rated higher than the HP group in each demotivating factor. In addition, the rank order of demotivating factors differed between the two groups. Tsuchiya (2006b) analyzed the data of the 72 LP group by cluster analysis and suggested that they could be divided into four categories.

To explore the practical classroom applications of demotivation, Kikuchi (in press) conducted two types of qualitative research based on interviews and open ended surveys with 5 university students for interviews and with 47 university students for 11 open-ended questions. After analyzing the data, eight factors were identified: teachers, school facility, students' experience in the past, students' negative attitude toward English language or spoken community, compulsory nature of English study in high school, interference between learning another foreign language, attitudes of group members, and textbooks used (p. 8).

Kikuchi and Sakai (in press) investigated more participants than the previous studies in attempts to find the salient demotivational factors for Japanese high school students and compare which factors were more demotivating than others. They administered a 35-item questionnaire, which was created based on the findings of Kikuchi (in press) and other previous studies, to 112 university students aged 18-21.

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

After factor analysis, five factors were identified: 1) course books, 2) inadequate school facilities, 3) test scores, 4) non-communicative methods, and 5) teachers' competence and teaching style. Further, the second factor, inadequate school facilities, was found to be less demotivating than the other factors for the participants.

The limitation of the previous studies was that the participants had been mainly the students in Kanto area and that most participants were university students. Hamada and Kito (2008) investigated directly high school students outside Kanto area, Tohoku. They administered a 35-item questionnaire to 100 high school students and identified five factors through factor analysis: (1) Learning environment (2) Teacher's competence and teaching style (3) Little intrinsic motivation (4) Non-communicative methods and (5) Textbooks and lessons. Based on these results, they interviewed 26 students who had answered the questionnaire, in order to discover information which could not be determined by questionnaire analysis alone. By conducting these interviews, evidence suggests that one of the strongest demotivating factors may be teacher-related. As was implied in Kikuchi and Sakai (in press), school facilities and surroundings were not a strong demotivator for the participants. Besides that, as Kikuchi and Sakai (in press) points out, most of the previous studies did not address the issue of when demotivation begins. The interview survey gave hints that more than half of the interviewees started disliking English when grammar instruction began. A few of the interviewees noted that they started to be demotivated when they began failing to achieve high scores on tests, which occurred in the second grade or the third grade of junior high school. However, the exact year when demotivation begins is unclear (p.176).

2.2 Limitations and problems

Reflecting upon the mentioned studies, research suggests that one of the most significant demotivating factors is teacher-related and that demotivating factors differ from learner to learner between different proficiency levels. Christophel and Gorham (1995) report that approximately two-thirds of reported sources of demotivation were teacher-owned (p.298).

However, there are still some limitations to the collected data even after reviewing these studies. First, though primary demotivation factors have been identified, most studies have examined learners' state of demotivation at only one point in a student's educational career. Sawyer (2007) notes that L2 motivation was generally treated as a stable trait (p.1). Current information is limited as to how learners' states of demotivation change. Second, research so far has been conducted with either university students or high school learners, while little research has reported on demotivation of junior high school students. The information on when learners' demotivation first begins is still limited at best. Hamada and Kito (2008) suggests that high school learners have first experienced demotivation at some point in junior high school. Thus, it is urgent to understand the situation of junior high school demotivation in Japan.

The current study explores the following three questions. (1) How do Japanese high school learners change their state of demotivation through? (2) How does each

Hamada

demotivator contribute to learners' demotivation? (3) When does demotivation start and what factors contribute to junior high school demotivation?

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants for the study of 2nd year high school learners were 44 second year high school students in a public junior and senior high school in Tohoku region (34 males, 10 females). The original population size consisted of 54; 10 were excluded from the list because they did not answer the questionnaires appropriately, missed either of the questionnaire, or missed the test. The English proficiency level of most of the students is near national average for Japanese high school students according to a practice examination organized by cram schools, *juku*.

The participants for the study of junior high school learners were 36 third year junior high students in Tohoku region (17 males, 19 females).

A 26 item-questionnaire was developed based on Kikuchi and Sakai (in press) and Hamada and Kito (2008), which is made up of five categories: (1) Learning environment and facility (2) Teacher's competence and teaching style (3) English itself (4) Non-communicative methods (5) Course books. An English translation of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A. All the items were 5 point Likert type questions. The findings of the previous studies and some high school learners have already claimed that test score is a strong demotivator (Hamada and Kito, 2008). The learners' test scores were used to examine how the scores are related to other demotivators. The test was an in-house achievement test to measure how well the learners had studied the assignment for the spring vacation.

A 9 item-open ended questionnaire with two 5 Likert type questions was created, combining the five demotivators identified in Kikuchi and Sakai (in press) with some of the outstanding factors discovered through the interview survey of Hamada and Kito (2008). The two Likert type questions were included so as to measure the decline of their motivation. In other words, to examine how much they have been demotivated for the past two years. An English translation of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The 26 item-questionnaire was administered to the high school learners in the beginning of a lesson in April. The same questionnaire was administered to the same learners before the second lesson after a summer vacation started. It took the learners approximately 10 minutes to complete. The first test was conducted on the second day of lesson in April. It took the learners 50 minutes to complete.

The 9 item-open ended questionnaire with two 5 Likert-type questions was administered to the junior high school learners before the summer vacation. Open ended questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to answer.

3.2 Data analysis procedure

The questionnaire of the high school learners is analyzed as follows. First, one-way

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

analysis of variance (ANOVA) is performed to examine if there is any difference of demotivation level among the five factors. For the post hoc analysis, to examine in which factor there are differences, Dunnett T3 is performed because the homogeneity of variance was not assured.

Second, to observe how learners' state of demotivation has changed, a repeated-measures two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is performed. Then, the two questionnaires are compared factor by factor, displaying a plot. Then, the items in a factor which showed a notable change are compared respectively.

Third, the correlation of each factor of the first questionnaire and the test is examined to measure how each factor contributes to learners' demotivation. To obtain the most accurate correlation between test scores and measured factors, learners were not alerted to their test scores until the learners completed the first questionnaire. This was done to help prevent the effect of any emotional responses of the learners' tests' outcome.

The questionnaire of the junior high school learners were dealt with through the following process. Brown (1998) suggests three processes in qualitative data analysis (p.213-251): (1) data reduction, (2) data display by transcribing, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. In the analysis of the data through these processes, matrixes are used to reduce and display the fairly amount of qualitative data obtained from questionnaire. The data was summarized with the following category: (1) Losing confidence issue (2) The way to study (3) Test (4) Learning environment, (5) Teacher related issue, (6) Non-communicative lesson, (7) Course book, (8) Grammar.

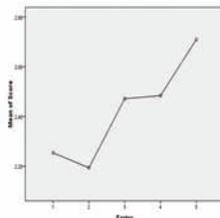
4 Results and Discussions

4.1 Questionnaire for high school

Based on statistical analysis, the reliability of the first and second questionnaire fall well within acceptable parameters ($\alpha=.90$, $\alpha=.94$, respectively).

The analysis shows there was a difference among the five factors ($F(4, 215) = 3.184$, $p<.05$). From the Dunnett T3, significant differences were found between factor 2 (Teacher's personality and style) and factor 5 (Course books). Analysis suggests that course books are a stronger demotivator than teacher's personality and style. Figure 1 also supports the finding that Teacher's personality and style is a weaker demotivator than the others.

Figure 1. The strength of each demotivator for the first questionnaire



Hamada

Figure 2: Demotivation change through the first question to the second

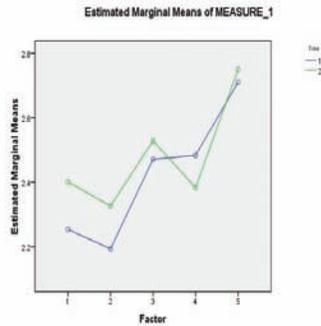


Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Factor 4

(1st questionnaire)

Item	Number	Mean	SD	Skweness	Kurtosis
1	44	2.14	1.03	1.34	2.22
2	44	2.32	0.93	0.74	0.54
3	44	2.84	1.18	0.32	-0.66
4	44	2.02	0.73	0.71	1.08
5	43	2.74	1.00	0.40	-0.38
25	44	2.86	1.23	0.51	-0.76

(2nd questionnaire)

Item	Number	Mean	SD	Skweness	Kurtosis
1	44	2.68	1.27	0.57	-0.68
2	44	2.39	1.15	0.92	0.06
3	44	2.39	1.02	1.23	1.30
4	44	1.84	0.89	1.58	3.44
5	43	2.36	1.06	0.81	0.22
25	44	2.64	1.01	1.00	-0.26

The analysis did not confirm any change of learners' state of demotivation ($F(1,43)=0.518$, n.s.). No interaction effect between time and factors were found, either ($F(4,40)=0.759$, n.s.). However, figure 2 shows a decline in the score of factor 4, non-communicative method; all the other factors show a near stable or minor increase in each score. In detail, the 6 items of factor 4 in the first questionnaire and those of the second questionnaire were compared in Table 3. Four of the six items were rated lower, and two were rated higher in the second. While Item 2 was rated slightly higher, Item 1 was rated fairly higher. The lessons through the time have four characteristics as follows. (1) Grammar was hardly focused on, so proper grammar was ignored. (2) The instructor did not emphasize the mid-term examination and used authentic textbooks whose contents would not be tested on. (3) The instructor prioritized listening skill and development over other skills. (4) The learners were not given enough opportunities to use English. The lessons were conducted based on the

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

principle that learners' overall listening skill should be improved, grammar should not be emphasized, and that lessons should not focus on for exams. In addition, an informal interview with a few learners revealed that the learners would like to learn more about grammar, though it had been considered a demotivator. While sufficient evidence does not yet exist, this information suggests that learners become willing to study grammar once they have succeeded in weakening the negative feelings for grammar.

Further analysis shows correlation between each factor. The analysis suggests each factor influences each other factor and demotivation occurs by a combination of several. Further, though the correlation between each factor, and the test was not confirmed with significant differences, a weak tendency was observed between lower scores and the reported demotivating influence of learning environment and facility, *factor 1* ($p=.077$).

Table 4. Correlations Between Factors and Test

Variables		Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Test
Factor1	Correlation	1	0.589**	0.602**	0.456**	0.511**	-0.269
Factor2	Correlation	0.589**	1	0.582**	0.341*	0.472**	-0.213
Factor3	Correlation	0.602**	0.582**	1	0.614**	0.650**	-0.170
Factor4	Correlation	0.456**	0.341*	0.614**	1	0.504**	-0.135
Factor5	Correlation	0.511**	0.472**	0.650**	0.504**	1	-0.253
Test	Correlation	-0.269	-0.213	-0.170	-0.135	-0.253	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From these analyses, two indications can be given. First, teachers' personality and style turned out to be a weaker demotivator, though teacher related issue has been considered a strong demotivator (Kikuchi and Sakai, in press, Christophel and Gorham, 1995). In order to strengthen the validity of this claim, more participant data needs to be collected. Second, learners' state of demotivation would not change dramatically over only a few months' instruction. However, learners possibly feel less demotivated on the used activities if the instructor did not focus on grammar, but rather bring on activities to improve communicative skills. Third, each factor possibly affects each factor, which leads to demotivation.

4.2 Questionnaire of junior high school

The degree of learner's motivation over a two year period beginning, from first year of junior high, is analyzed. The data confirms learners' motivation has declined ($t(34) = 3.833, p < .001$). The issues in detail are discussed as follows, category by category. The summary of each category is described in Table 5.

Table 5. Demotivators for Junior High School Learners

(a) Losing confidence (23)	(b) The way to study (9)	(c) Test (16)	(d) Learning environment (4)
----------------------------	--------------------------	---------------	------------------------------

Hamada

<p>Time related issue (4) -Lost confidence in the second year because studying English became difficult. (3) -Lost confidence and motivation in the mid-term exam.</p>	<p>The way to study (5) - I don't know how to study myself.</p> <p>-Homework related issue (2) -We had a lot of homework.</p>	<p>Bad score (12) -When receiving bad results. (9)</p> <p>-When I became the second grade, my score collapsed.</p>	<p>-Not good -My partner won't speak.</p> <p>-I am made fun of pronunciation. -Classmates are noisy.</p>
<p>Test related issue (8) -When I could not achieve high score (5) -When I was studying for "Eiken pre-second grade." -I couldn't answer well on tests though I was ok when reviewing each lesson. -When I failed at a test.</p>	<p>-When the passage of homework has many letters. Others (2) -I cannot remember despite the effort. -I don't like to write longer sentences.</p>	<p>-When my score is below 50. - When my score is 80. Little progress (4) -I had bad results despite the effort.</p> <p>-When my score won't go up. -When my score gradually goes down. -Only my score is low and I am getting left behind.</p>	
<p>Contents of a lesson (9) -When I could not pronounce well.</p> <p>-I cannot proceed my workbook smoothly. (2) -I don't understand the English teachers use. (2) -When I am forced to pronounce words. -When I read a long passage. -When I failed to remember the words I had practiced hard. -When I encountered a difficult sentence.</p> <p>Anxiety (2) -When my teacher called on me and I got a wrong answer, I thought only I could not get it correct. -When other friends' score is higher.</p>			
(e) Teacher-related issue (14)	(f) Non-communicative lesson (2)	(g) Course books (4)	(g) Grammar (31)

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

Technique(Speed) (8) -The pace of lessons is crazy. -I don't understand my teacher sometimes.	-We lack communicative activities (2). -Non-communicative lesson makes me sleepy.	-It is written almost all in English. -I don't like a particular section of the text.	Genuinely (8) -I can't remember grammar.
-The pace is slow.	-Homework related issue (2) -We had a lot of homework.	-We have different main characters from previous textbooks.	-We have to learn more than before these days.
-When the pace is slow.	- When the passage of homework has many letters.	-I want to be more comprehensible.	-Overall of grammar. (3)
-Teaching style differs from teacher to teacher.	Others (2)		-I have to use varieties of grammar item, depending on the sentence. -Long sentences.
-When the speed and difficulty to understand differs.	-I cannot remember despite the effort.		
-When ordered to do something in English suddenly.	-I don't like to write longer sentences.		-The useless grammatical item in daily life. Particular item (23)
-When I had difficulty in understanding.			-5W1H.
-Too much homework.			-Past participle. -Conjunction.
Personality(6) -When my teacher is emotional.			
-My teacher is not my favorite.			-I my me mine.(2)
-Teacher gets angry and teach when I don't understand.			-Interrogative.
-My teacher is too energetic.			-Past tense/ Past participle. -Past tense/ Passive voice. -Gerund. -Third person

Hamada

singular. (2)
-Present perfect.
-Pronoun. (3)
-be am are.
-Words which have
several meanings.
-Verb.
-Numeral.
-Comparative.

4.2.1 Losing confidence issue

In the *losing confidence* category, four sub-demotivators were identified. In previous studies, this demotivator has been identified as self-confidence, but the learners comments are rooted in losing confidence rather than gaining or maintaining self-confidence. The sub-demotivators are as follows. (1) *time* (2) *test* (3) *content* (4) *anxiety*. First, learners reveal that they have lost confidence during the second year, especially by the mid-term examination of the same year. Hamada and Kito (2008) question when learners initially show noticeable levels of demotivation, and what the learners reveal can help answer the question. Second, eight of the learners describe results' of tests discouraging and demotivating them. The learners' comments reveal that bad test results' make learners lose confidence, which leads to demotivation. Third, two of the learners mention that they have lost confidence because they have difficulty understanding instructions provided in English. While instructions in English are often recommended, Mizohata (2006) places an importance on the way for teachers to use English in the classroom. Teachers should not simply increase the exposure to English, but need to prepare and plan how to help learners use English efficiently (p.104). Fourth, a few learners confess their anxiety for making mistakes and an irrational fear that they are the only ones making such mistakes. Teachers in Japan tend to ask a student to stand up and answer in front of others in lessons. However, now is the time to give a second thought to the genuine advantage of this teaching method.

4.2.2 The way to study

Learners' report that this issue consists of two sub-demotivators. First, five of the learners reported that they had no or little idea as to how to study by themselves, which led to demotivation. Homework, or rather, the amount or density is a demotivator. According to Benesse (2008), approximately 30 % of junior high school learners study six days a week or everyday and 20 % study four or five days a week. Learners at schools outside large cities have a stronger tendency to study at home with greater frequently and length (p.38-41). Creating an effective and meaningful assignment is a significant role of a teacher, especially in a local area, considering that learners naturally start to be demotivated by working on only workbooks. At the same time, making an allowance to help individual learners find effective ways to study by

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

themselves is another teacher's role. In other words, teachers need to promote learner's autonomy, in such ways as allowing learners to experience many aspects of the learning process and to use self-assessment procedures (Dornyei and Murphey, 2004, p.105-106).

4.2.3 Test

As stated previously, *test scores* are a key demotivator. The test related issue is comprised of two sub-factors. First, receiving poor grades demotivates learners. Two learners report that their scores started declining in the second grade. The level at which a score is considered a demotivation is dependent on each learner. Some learners consider 50 points as a demotivating score, while others consider 80 points as a demotivating score. Second, the idea that their score won't improve demotivates learners. A few learners express their feeling that their score would not improve despite their efforts. Furthermore, one learner feels left behind because her score will not improve. Since test scores have been already identified as a demotivating factor at the high school and university level, too, these comments support the evidence and suggest test score is one of the most powerful demotivators. Furthermore, *test scores* cause losing learners' confidence, which leads to demotivation as is already revealed. One recommendation is that teachers in junior high school should have more opportunities to learn about *testing method*. For example, a common test question is "translate this sentence into Japanese." However, this type of question only measures learners' translation and memorizing skills. Having learners write several sentences and score them by t-unit or error free t-unit (EFT) as Abe (2003) did can analyze multiple skills such as fluency and grammatical accuracy.

4.2.4 Learning environment

Kikuchi and Sakai's (in press) data suggests inadequate school facilities is a weaker factor of demotivation. This trend seems to be applicable to junior high school learners as well, as learners commented less on this question, versus the others. However, two notable answers were given. First, "My partner would not talk." Since the revision of *the course of study for junior high school* (Gakushu-shido-yoryo), the importance of practical communication skill has been strongly emphasized, casing textbook makers to include more communicative material. Teachers are encouraged to use more communicative activities as Matoba (2006) mentions (p.161). If partners do not work together, the objective of the activity is not achieved. Since *team teaching* is often conducted in junior high school, teachers should use the opportunity to introduce varieties of activities which can enhance learner's autonomy such as *debating* (Sato, 2002, p.94). Second, "I was made fun of while trying to practice pronunciation."

From the point of second language acquisition, learners of junior high school are in developmentally critical period. The importance of acquiring pronunciation at an early age is highly supported by critical period hypothesis, (Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p.61). In uncomfortable situations, the learner's affective filter (p.39-40) rises. This issue should be avoided at all cost.

Hamada

In addition, lending support to a concept of *group dynamics*, the significant role that learning environment plays is explained from three different perspectives (Dornyei and Murphey, 2004). First, group cohesiveness enhances the productivity of the group. Group cohesiveness consists of three components, *interpersonal attraction*, *commitment to task*, and *group pride*. The more components learners have, the more cohesive group they can make. However, the potential pitfall is that a group becomes too cohesive, resulting in the learners focusing more on their relationship than on their task. (2) Students' role and role modeling promote learning (p.109-133). In a developmental process of a classroom, learners naturally start taking roles, such as a leader, initiator, information seeker, opinion seeker, coordinator, energizer, and so forth. On the contrary, a teacher can assign roles instead. The effectiveness of *near peer role models* is reported by Murphey (1998), and Murphey and Arao (2001). (3) The physical classroom environment contributes to group dynamics (p.74-89). For example, instead of traditional classroom layouts, arranging the seats in semi-circular structure, in circular structure, ad hoc clusters of chairs/desks can be stimulating and should be used according to purpose. While learning environment was not considered a strong demotivator, taking the above suggestions into consideration should contribute to a more learner-friendly environment.

4.2.5 Teacher-related issue

As is suggested, demotivation is a teacher owned problem (Christophel & Gorham, 1995, p.298) and teachers are the strongest variable on each other factor (Falout and Maruyama, 2004). This same concept applies to the junior high school as well. The learners' comments are categorized into two sub-factors. The first one is teacher's technique. While the learners' comments vary to some extent, the pace of a lesson and a basic principle of lessons can be a demotivator. When learners doubt the comprehensibility and the effectiveness of the teacher's style, learners easily get demotivated, and end up not making efforts to learn. The second one is teacher's personality. One learner reports that teacher seems angry when she asks questions. It is unavoidable that some learners like or dislike certain teachers, but a teacher must welcome all questions regardless of the learner asking the questions. In addition, each class naturally has its own atmosphere, so a teacher should tailor teaching styles to each class, while maintaining the primary principal of the class.

Suggestions for avoiding learners' demotivation by teachers' behavior are as follows. Dornyei and Murphey (2004) describe teachers' roles from a point of group dynamics, such as teacher as a leader, teacher as a role model, and teacher as a group leader. The following teacher behaviors demotivated learners: (1) "teachers responded with ridicule and blame, remarking only upon the ignorance of the questioner. (2) Teacher respond, "First, go study it harder by yourself (Falout & Maruyama, 2004, p. 9)." On the contrary, Christophel & Gorham (1995) suggests several examples for teachers' positive verbal behaviors: (1) encouraging students to talk, (2) having discussions based on points students raise, (3) asking students how they feel about assignments and course procedures (p.303).

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

4.2.6 Non-communicative lesson

Only a few comments were reported in this section since these results reflect the communicative lesson based curriculum. Unlike high school, lessons in junior high school encourage communicative lessons, so a lack of student feedback on this issue is unsurprising.

4.2.7 Course books

Few learners complained about the course book used. A notable report from an interview survey (Hamada and Kito, 2008) suggests that high school learners might be demotivated because the course book has fewer pictures than junior high textbooks. The pictures of a course book can be defined as a small demotivator, because junior high learners, whose texts have more pictures, did not complain and high school learners did.

4.2.8 Grammar

The data analysis confirms that learning about grammar accounts for the major parts of demotivator. As many as 29 of the participants, 81%, describe this as a demotivator. The issue of grammar consists of two dimensions. First, some learners are genuinely not proficient at remembering grammar rules. Second, others have experienced a difficult time learning certain sections of grammar. Four learners comment the earliest time learners started to feel demotivated was in the first grade of junior high school, when learning third person singular or possessive. The demotivating grammatical aspects vary. Table 5 shows examples of grammatical items that the second grade and the third grade learners are supposed to learn. The data from Table 4 reflects the tendency that demotivation starts in the first year, becoming worse in the second year. This finding is supported by the Falout and Maruyama (2004) study that reported the year when lower proficiency learners most frequently began hating English was during the second year of junior high (27%). Since examinations frequently include questions about grammar, learners who have difficulty in acquiring grammar naturally obtain lower scores, leading to demotivation.

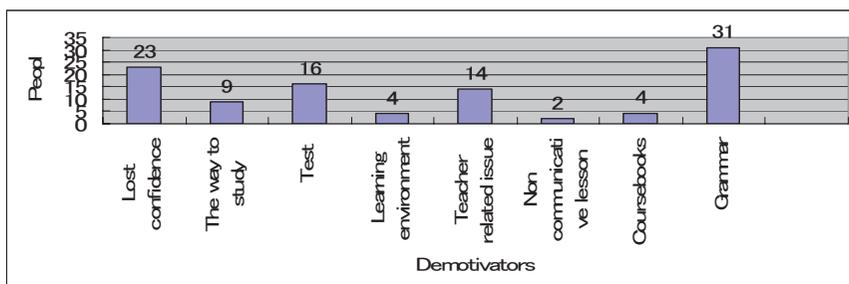
Table 6. Grammatical Items Junior High School Learners Learn (Based on *Sunshine*)

Grade	Grammatical Item	Example
3	Present Perfect	I have been to Seoul many times.
	It is A for B to C	It is hard for me to get up so early.
	Passive	It is used all over the world.
	How to, What to	I don't know what to say.
	Causative verb	It makes me happy.
	Participle	Look at the dog running outside.
2	Relative Pronoun	This is the book that I bought.
	Past Tense	What did you do last Saturday?
	Past Progressive	I was doing my homework.
	Future tense	I'll call him.
	Future Tense	I will call him tonight.

Hamada

1	Infinitive	I came here to talk to you.
	Conjunction (when)	When I was there, I saw my uncle.
	Gerund	I finished writing a letter.
	Conjunction 'if)	If it rains tomorrow, I won't go out.
	Comparative	It's more difficult than that one.
	Alphabet	Good morning.
	Simple Sentence	I am Emily.
	Interrogative	What is that?
	Verb	I play tennis.
	Plural	I have two brothers.
	Third Person	He does not swim.
	Past tense	I went to the park yesterday.
	Possessive	That's mine.
Present Progressive	I am writing a letter.	

Figure 3. Demotivators for junior high school learners



Comparing the number of comments by category, *grammar* is seen as a demotivator by the most students, followed by *losing confidence*, *test*, and *teacher related issue*. Teacher-related issue is not perceived as a dominant demotivator for the junior high learners.

Compared to the demotivators reported in previous studies, the current study identifies new student demotivators, *the way to study*. Previous studies investigated mainly high school learners and university learners, who already possessed studying strategies after. However, junior high learners have been studying for less than three years and some learners possibly do not know effective studying techniques. This result suggests that demotivators for junior high learners are different from those of high school learners.

5 Conclusion and Implications

The data analysis indicates that several factors are related to increase in demotivation, and that overall Japanese learners' state of demotivation would not change during a short period such as two months or three months. However, a change can be brought about to some degree by factors, such as non-communicative methods. The analysis also indicates that demotivation tends to start in the second year of junior high school with high frequency. Of the several demotivators examined, *grammar* is the powerful

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

demotivator for the junior high learners. While the grammatical items which demotivate a learner depend on each individual, there appears to be a tendency that the items that the learners are supposed to learn in the second year strongly demotivate learners.

The demotivators for high school learners and those for junior high school learners appear to differ in some ways. *Course books* are considered to be the strongest demotivator for high school (Figure 1), though it is not for junior high school. *Non-communicative lesson* is not a primary demotivator, either. Course books of high school have much more information, target grammatical items, and include less pictures. According to research (Hasegawa, 2003), the number of words which is appeared in textbooks of junior high school, *Horizon 1-3*, is 1124 and the number in high school textbooks, *Unicorn 1, 2, Reading*, is 3478 and 2857 for *Powwow 1, 2, Reading* (p.153). The average word coverage of the national center examination (Sentaa Shiken) by *Horizon* and *Unicorn* for a decade from 1993 to 2002 is 94.22%. Assuming the accurate estimation that learners need to know 98% of the words in order to ideally gain adequate comprehension (Nation, 2001, p.118), even mastering all the words in those textbooks is not enough. Thus, it is unavoidable that course books of high school include more vocabulary and that high school teachers focus less on communicative activities. The key principle to follow will be not what course books to use but how to use them.

Building a bridge between high school and junior high school is an important task for teachers. Learners in junior high school are often described as learning English joyfully, while the stereotype of high school learners is of studying in desperation. Knowing which grammatical items demotivated learners in junior high school it is of great importance for high school teachers to understand in order to approach differently when teaching. Teaching grammar through communicative methods in high school, though difficult, is recommended whenever possible. Using *functional grammar*, or *task-based learning* (Willis, 1996) could bring about better effects. For example, learners will recognize the relationship between the English for examinations and the English for real life use. Learners should learn English based on the concept that it is for use. The fundamental concept that teachers should always keep in mind is there should not be a distinction between English for junior high and English for high school.

Throughout this study, the question of what is the definition of the word demotivation arises. Christophel and Gorham (1995) mentions that demotivators are primarily teacher-owned. However, the current study's results suggest the contrary. Among neither high school learners nor junior high school learners is teacher issue the main cause of demotivation. If teacher issue was the most powerful demotivator, the learners' state of demotivation on this issue would have changed, after three months positively or negatively. Rather, each demotivator shows a strong relationship with other factors. Demotivation is caused by several variables.

Though this survey is an exploratory study of junior high learners, demotivators for junior high learners and those for high school appear to differ. Furthermore, though Dornyei (2001) reports that demotivators are defined as external forces which decrease learners' motivation, which is not only caused by external

Hamada

factors but rather internal factors, are one of the strongest demotivators in this study. Supporting this claim, Falout and Maruyama (2004) includes *self-confidence* as one reason for demotivation and Tsuchiya (2004a-2006b) defines sense of discouragement as a contributing factor. Demotivation should be perceived broadly and as caused by a combination of variables.

Considering the limitations of this study, the recommendation for future studies are as follows. (1) To research high school learners longitudinally to see how states of demotivation change and what are the reasons for the change. (2) To survey more participants of junior high school learners to see the general tendency of demotivation in junior high school. (3) To examine the differences of demotivators for junior high learners, high school learners, and university learners.

References

- Abe, W. (2003). Measurement of immersion and non-immersion learners. イマージョンと非イマージョンの測定. *Step Bulliten*, 15, 39-50.
- Arai, K. (2004). What 'demotivates' language learners?: Qualitative study on demotivational factors and learners' reactions. *Bulletin of Toyo Gakuen University*, 12, 39-47.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28, 117-148.
- Christophel, D., & Gorham, J. (1995). A test-retest analysis of student motivation, teacher immediacy and perceived sources of motivation and demotivation in college classes. *Communication Education*, 44, 292-306.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow: Longman.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2004). *Group dynamics in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Falout, J., & Maruyama, M. (2004). A comparative study of proficiency and learner demotivation. *The Language Teacher*, 28, 3-9. Retrieved from <http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2004/08/falout>
- Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamada, Y., & Kito, K. (2008). Demotivation in Japanese high schools. In K. Bradford-Watts (Ed.), *JALT2007 Conference Proceeding* (pp. 168-178). Tokyo: JALT.
- Hasegawa, A. (2004). Student demotivation in the foreign language classroom. *Takushoku Language Studies*, 107, 119-136
- Hasegawa, S. (2003). Effectiveness of vocabulary in English textbooks towards Senta-Shiken and Eiken 2 grade. センター試験と英検2級の英語教科書の語彙の効果. *Step Bulletin*, 15, 152-159.
- Hinomori, Y. (2003). What increases learners' motivation: An analysis based on self-determination theory. *Step Bulletin*, 15, 142-151.
- Kikuchi, K. (in press). Listening to our learners' voices: What demotivates EFL high school students? *Language Teaching Research*, Vol. 13.

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

- Kikuchi, K., & Sakai, H. (in press). Japanese learners' demotivation to study English: A survey study. *JALT journal*.
- Legault, L., Green-Demers, I., & Pelletier, L. (2006). Why do high school students lack motivation in the classroom? Toward an understanding of academic amotivation and the role of social support. *Journal of educational psychology, 98* (3), 567-582.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1999). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Little, D., Ridley, J., & Ushioda, E. (2003). Learner autonomy in the foreign Language classroom: Teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment. Dublin: Authentik.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Matoba, M. (2006). The effectiveness of reflection in junior high learners' speaking ability. 中学生のスピーキング能力におけるreflectionの効果, *Step Bulliten, 18*, 161-176.
- Midorikawa, H. (2007). Eigoryoku to nichijo no eigo-shiyo ni kansuru ishiki no hikaku kenkyu. 英語力の日常の英語使用に関する意識に比較研究 Higashi-Asia Koko Eigo Kyoiku GTEC chosa 2006. Tokyo: Benesse.
- Mizohata, Y. (2006). The technique to give English instruction in English-1,2 in high school and its effectiveness. 高等学校英語 I・IIの授業の大半を英語で行うための工夫とその授業の効果, *Step Bulliten, 17*, 95-106
- Murphey, T. (1998). Motivating with near peer role models. In B. Visgatis (Ed.), *JALT 1997 Conference Proceedings: Trends and Transitions* (pp. 201-205).
- Murphey, T., & Arao, H. (2001). Reported belief changes through near peer role modeling. *TEFL-EJ, 5* (3).
- Naganuma, N. (2007). Nihon no Kokosei no Eigo Gakushu ni Taisuru Sho-chu-ko deno Joihenka to Dokizuke. 日本の高校生の英語学習に関する小中高での情意変化の動機付け Higashi-Asia Koko Eigo Kyoiku GTEC chosa 2006. Tokyo: Benesse.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. UK: Cambridge.
- Sato, R. (2002). Improvement of communication ability through improvement of contents of a conversation. *Step Bulliten, 16*.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2004a). Nihonjin daigakuseino eigogakushuheno demotivation. 日本人大学生の英語学習へのデモチベーション *The Chugoku Academic Society of English Language Education Kenkyukiyo, 34*, 57-66.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2004b). Factors in demotivation concerning learning English: A preliminary study of Japanese university students. *The Kyushu Academic Society of English Language Education, 32*, 39-46.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2006a). Factors in demotivation of lower proficiency English learners at college. *The Kyushu Academic Society of English Language Education, 34*, 87-96.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2006b). Profiling of lower achievement English learners at college in terms of demotivating factors. *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan, 17*, 171-180

Hamada

Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for Task-Based Learning*. Oxford: Longman

Hamada Yo
Yokote Seiryō Gakuin High School
147-1 Osawa, Maeda, Yokote-city, 013-0041, Japan
Tel: (018) 235-4033
Fax: (018) 235-4034
Email: shuukounanya@hotmail.com

Received: August 6, 2008

Revised: November 20, 2008

Accepted: December 5, 2008

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

Appendix A. Questionnaire for High School Learners

When did you get demotivated or what has demotivated you?

Least Agree	Less Agree	Agree	More Agree	Most Agree
1	No chance to use English to communicate			
	1	2	3	4
2	Too much translations			
	1	2	3	4
3	Too much grammar lessons			
	1	2	3	4
4	Course was designed examination oriented			
	1	2	3	4
5	Correctness of grammar was emphasized			
	1	2	3	4
6	Did not know how to study or review			
	1	2	3	4
7	Teacher's pronunciation was bad			
	1	2	3	4
8	Teacher centered, one-way instruction			
	1	2	3	4
9	Teacher's instructions were not clear			
	1	2	3	4
10	Teacher had bad attitudes and temper problems			
	1	2	3	4
11	Topics used in class were not interesting			
	1	2	3	4
12	Sentences in textbooks were too long			
	1	2	3	4
13	Grammars taught in class were way too difficult			
	1	2	3	4
14	No use of computers			
	1	2	3	4
15	No use of Videos or DVDs in class			
	1	2	3	4
16	No use of CDs or tapes			
	1	2	3	4
17	I hated my classmates			
	1	2	3	4
18	Friends around me did not like English			
	1	2	3	4

Hamada

19	Lost purpose in learning English	1	2	3	4	5
20	Lost interest in English	1	2	3	4	5
21	Realized that I do not need to be fluent	1	2	3	4	5
22	Answers to questions were no clear	1	2	3	4	5
23	Teacher expected us to learn everything	1	2	3	4	5
24	Living in a rural place, where few native speakers are.	1	2	3	4	5
25	My purpose is only to get high scores	1	2	3	4	5
26	English used was of use	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B. Questionnaire for Junior High School Learners

A. Are you motivated to study English now?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

B. Were you motivated to study English

when you started learning English in the first grade.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

C. If any of the below has demotivated you , please feel free to report, in detail hopefully.

1. I lost my confidence
2. The way to study
3. Test score
4. Learning environment, such as friends and facility
5. Teacher

Demotivators for Japanese Teenagers

6. Non communicative lesson

7. Course book

8. Grammar