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A Comparative Analysis of Demotivation in Secondary English Classes*

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This study was designed to assess demotivation factors and compare the factor between two secondary school student groups. It furthermore examined how the factors related to students' L2 proficiency. A 31-item questionnaire was completed by 407 junior (JH) and senior high school (SH) students. Five factors were extracted through the principal axis factoring: *Teachers' competence and teaching styles, Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system, Difficulty of learning English, Lack of motivation and interest in learning English,* and *Inadequate learning contents.* Although both JH and SH students did not perceive their English teacher as a strong attribution of demotivation, *Difficulty of learning English* and *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system* were the two strongest demotivating factors. When compared the overall mean scores of each factor between JH and SH groups, significant differences were found in all factors except Factor 4, with SH students reporting stronger demotivation. JH students attributed their demotivation to *Difficulty of learning English,* while SH students attributed that to *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system.* Both groups tended to attribute their demotivation to external forces. The study also showed that several demotivation factors related negatively to L2 proficiency.

[demotivation in learning English/levels of study/English proficiency]

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to determine what kinds of instructional environments might best suit different types of individual learners, scholars of second or foreign language (L2) research have examined differences among L2 learners. Learners' motivation is of course particularly

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regarded as important to the understanding of L2 learning in institutional settings (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1990, 1994, Gardner, 1985; Han, 2005; Lee, 2005; Nikolov, 2001). In considering learner motivation, Dörnyei (2001) mentioned it is important to figure out how much demotivation subtracts from the positive motivation. If motivation increases a learning tendency, demotivation, which is the negative counterpart of motivation, cuts learning short and further demotivation negatively affects learner motivation (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Dörnyei (2001) stated that demotivation concerns various negative influences and defined it as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). However, it does not result from (a) distractions of a more attractive option, (b) a gradual loss of interest across a period of time, or (3) an internal process without any specific external triggers (pp. 142-143). With regard to these three considerations, demotivation can be viewed as a product of cognitive process, which should start as a reaction to external factors (Falout & Falout, 2005). But, demotivation is distinct from amotivation, which is absence of any motivation and a feeling of helplessness caused by lack of contingency between behavior and outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2002). In comparison, demotivation is a decrease or drop in level of motivation by a strong negative cause. Thus, a demotivated L2 learner is someone who once motivated to learn the L2 but has lost his or her interest by negative external components, while some positive motivational factors may still remain operational. For example, an English learner who has lost his or her commitment to study English due to the teacher being boring may still believe in the important role of English as an international language.

In the meantime, previous research in L2 demotivation raises a question of Dörnyei's (2001) definition of demotivation because demotivation is not simply and solely external. Indeed, many researchers (Chambers, 1993; Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Gorham & Millette, 1997; Lens & Decruyenaere, 1991; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007) reported not only external factors but also internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitudes toward an L2 as factors of demotivation, even Dörnyei (2001) also included internal attributions such as reduced self-confidence and negative attitudes towards L2 community. Therefore, further research is needed to examine Dörnyei's original definition and to expand it to cover both internal and external factors that may lead to learner demotivation to study an L2. Furthermore, while many would agree to the importance of demotivation factors for L2 achievement, the field of L2 demotivation is an underexplored area. In the meantime, although the Korean Ministry of Education has initiated innovations of English education over the past decade focusing on communicative competence rather than translation, rote memorization of vocabulary, and a lack of practical application, learning environments across secondary education in Korea still require high-stakes testing

that may produce demotivation. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to identify demotivating factors of secondary school students learning English and to compare the differences in demotivation factors between junior high school (JH) students and senior high school (SH) students. It furthermore examines student demotivation in relation to their L2 proficiency in an effort to test hypothesis about the potential effect of L2 proficiency on students' demotivation.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research on demotivation in the area of L2 learning and teaching generally seeks to identify attributions about what is involved in learning an L2 that may contribute to learner frustration, anxiety, and in some cases, ending of L2 study. Some researchers (Gorham & Christophel, 1992, Gorham & Millette, 1997; Zhang, 2007) focused on teachers who had been identified as demotivators. Others (Chambers, 1993; Dörnyei, 1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 2001) attempted to identify what L2 learners found to be demotivating in their L2 learning experiences in terms of learner level problems (e.g., lack of self-confidence) and learning situation problems (e.g., inferior equipment, lack of skilled teachers).

Dörnyei (1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) in a study of English or German learners, identified nine demotivating factors by conducting structured interviews with 50 secondary school students: 1) *teacher's personality, competence, teaching method*; 2) *inadequate school facilities* (e.g., large class size); 3) *reduced self-confidence due to the experience of failure*; 4) *negative attitude towards the L2*; 5) *compulsory nature of L2 study*; 6) *interference of another L2 being studied*; 7) *negative attitudes towards L2 community* (e.g., dislike of the way the L2 operates); 8) *attitudes of group members*; and 9) *coursebooks used in class.* He generated that the students perceived the first factor concerning the teacher as the primary cause of their demotivation, accounting for 40% of the total frequency of occurrences. This result that teachers have a considerable responsibility in learner demotivation is consistent with the findings reported by other researchers (Oxford, 1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001; Zhang, 2007). In addition, more than 10% of the demotivation was accounted for by inadequate school facilities and negative attitude towards the L2.

On the other hand, Chambers (1993) examined demotivation from both student and teacher perspectives. Teachers attributed their students' demotivation to the students' lack of effort to learn, self-confidence and interest, poor concentration, and unwillingness to cooperate. However, students' responses were in a different vein that 50% of them blamed their teacher for not giving clear instruction, criticizing students, and using old-fashioned

teaching materials. Chambers further found that the teachers perceived the causes of demotivation as related to a variety of reasons such as psychological, attitudinal, social, historical, and geographical factors, but they explicitly excluded themselves. Although Chambers did not try to determine what the demotivating factors were, instead simply listing the teachers and students' opinions, he yielded a few conclusions about the impact of demotivation on L2 learning experiences.

A number of studies from English as a foreign language (EFL) and international settings have addressed demotivation to study L2 following Dörnyei's (2001) work. Falout and Maruyama (2004) reduced Dörnyei's nine categories to six attributions in order to make them appropriate for Japanese secondary education. They dropped *inadequate school facilities* and *interference of another L2 being studied* and incorporated *compulsory nature of L2 study* and *coursebooks* into one factor, *courses.* They generated demotivation in the following descending order: *reduced self-confidence, attitude towards L2, courses, teachers, attitude of group members,* and *attitudes towards L2 community.* Trang and Baldauf, Jr. (2007), reporting the underlying sources of demotivation of English learners at a university in Vietnam, found both internal and external factors. They illustrated that the greatest source of demotivation was related to teachers. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) identified demotivating factors in Japanese high school English classes. They extracted five factors: *learning content and materials, teachers' competence and teaching style, inadequate school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation,* and *test score.* Unlike general results reported in previous studies that teachers were found to have a strong impact on students' demotivation, Sakai and Kikuchi found that *learning contents and materials* was the most demotivating factor followed by and *test scores*, indicating that *teachers' competence and teaching style* was not a strong cause of demotivation.

Most recently, Falout et al. (2009) with a study of 900 EFL university students across seven colleges in Tokyo, found nine demotivating factors and further grouped them into three categories: external conditions of the learning environment (e.g., *teacher immediacy, grammar-translation, course level*), internal conditions of the learner (e.g., *self-confidence, value*), and reactive behaviors to demotivating experiences (e.g., *help-seeking, avoidance, enjoyment-seeking, self-denigration*). They reported that the most demotivating factor was *grammar-translation,* the external factor, suggesting that the dominant pedagogy posed the largest threat to learner motivation. As evidenced by above discussed studies, *lack of self-confidence and interest* as an internal component was a component of demotivation (Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007), thus, internal factors are also included in this study that will lead to greater understanding of demotivating factors of L2 learning.

In terms of differences in demotivation between JH and SH students, Hasegawa (2004) qualitatively studied with 125 JH and 98 SH students in Japan. She identified six

demotivating categories: *the nature of classroom activities, the teacher, negative attitudes towards English learning, anxiety, exams and grades,* and *classroom atmosphere*. While more SH students experienced demotivating moments in their English classes than their JH counterparts, both groups showed that the experiences related to teachers were the most frequently cited as a source of demotivation. There have been a number of studies on L2 motivation, whereas a paucity of research has directly compared JH students' demotivating factors to those of SH students. Therefore, it seems clear that more research is needed to examine what comprises demotivation to study L2 in a Korean EFL context. The research questions for this study are:

1. What are demotivating factors in secondary English classes?
2. How do JH students' demotivation differ from SH students in terms of factors both groups find demotivating?
3. How does students' L2 proficiency affect their demotivation in learning L2?

III. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Participants

Descriptive summary of the participants is presented in Table 1. A total of 407 students attending a coeducational junior high school (n = 220) and a girls' senior high school (n = 187) participated in the study. Both schools are located in Gwangju. Seventy-eight of the JH students were 7th grade, 68 were 8th grade, and 74 were 9th grade, whereas all the SH participants were 3rd-year students (12th grade). One hundred and thirty-two (32.4%) of the sample considered the role the classroom teacher in English learning as the most important factors to make their learning effective, followed by self-study (n = 119, 29.2%) and private instituting (n = 76, 18.7%). Only a small number of the participants have ever traveled abroad (n = 76, 18.7%) and enrolled in an English class in private institutes (n = 110, 27.0%), although about half of the JH participants (n = 104, 47.3%) attended private academies. When asked to assess themselves on their self-perceived English proficiency, 180 (44.2%) reported their proficiency as 'not good' (n = 146) or 'very poor' (n = 34), and 72 (17.7%) rated as either 'good' (n = 61) or 'excellent' (n = 11). Thirty-eight percent of the students (n = 155) indicated it as 'medium' in the self-assessed English proficiency.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Summary of JH and SH Participants

	Sex		Age	Grade			Influential factor				Travel abroad		Private instituting		Proficiency				
	M	F		1	2	3	Tt*	P	T	S	Yes	No	Yes	No	1**	2	3	4	5
JH	125	95	13.5	78	68	74	21	59	86	29	36	180	104	105	15	73	81	37	10
SH	0	187	17.7	0	0	187	17	17	46	90	40	147	6	181	19	73	74	24	1
Total	125	282	15.4	78	69	260	38	76	132	119	76	327	110	296	34	146	155	61	11

*Tt=textbook, P=private instituting, T=teacher, S=self-study
**1=very poor, 2= not good, 3=medium, 4=good, 5=excellent

2. Measures and Data Collection

The demotivation questionnaire for the study consisted of two sections. The first section comprised a 31-item questionnaire that measured with a four-point Likert scale using answer choices ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of demotivating factors suggested by Dörnyei (2001), Gorham and Millette (1997), Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), and Trang and Baldauf, Jr. (2007). Thirty-one items were designed to measure seven constructs of demotivational factors derived from pervious studies: characteristics of English classes (Items 1-4), experiences of failure or difficulty of English learning (Items 5-9), coursebook (Items 10-13), inadequate learning environment (Items 14-16), testing concerns (Items 17-20), lack of interest (Items 21-23), and teachers (Items 24-31). In the questionnaire, each reason was preceded by the phrase *The reason that demotivates learning English for me is because.*

The second section was related to participants' background information such as gender, age, grade, factor for effective learning English, travel experiences to English-dominant countries, whether or not they have attended private institutes, and how they would rate their own English proficiency. The wording of each item was written in Korean. The participants were given the questionnaire during their regularly scheduled class period in the middle of the spring semester, 2009.

3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were computed for the participants' responses to the items of the questionnaires. Cronbach alphas were calculated to estimate the reliability of the questionnaires in measuring L2 demotivation and for each derived demotivating factor. An exploratory factor analysis was applied to identify how many factors were involved in participants' responses to the questionnaire for L2 demotivating factors. The extracted factors were used throughout the rest of analysis.

Then, *t*-tests were performed to examine the differences in demotivating factors between JH and SH students. Finally, correlations were performed to examine the degree of interrelatedness between demotivation and participants' self-assessed English proficiency and among demotivational sub-components themselves.

IV. RESULTS

The reliability coefficients calculated by Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire was .90, showing that the items were consistently reliable in measuring participants' demotivation in English. The results are presented in three sections. In the first section, the results of the factor analysis of the demotivation in the L2 are reported. The differences in demotivating factors between the JH and SH groups are highlighted in the second section. In the third section, the interrelationships between L2 demotivations and self-assessed L2 proficiency are discussed.

1. Demotivating Factors in Learning English

In order to determine the underlying constructs of demotivation in English, Principal axis factoring analysis with an oblique rotation (Direct oblimin), which yields a more accurate and realistic representation of how factors are likely to be correlated to one another (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999; Preacher & MacCallum, 2003), was conducted. There is a theoretical and empirical basis for expecting psychological constructs (e.g., attitudes, personality traits, motivation, demotivation) to be correlated with one another (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The number of factors to be extracted was based on the following criteria: eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater, the scree test, and interpretability of the resulting solutions (Thurstone, 1947, cited in Preacher & MacCallum, 2003). Five items were dropped from the analysis for some reasons. First, Item 21 (*English is a compulsory subject*) was excluded because it had very low communality (.293). Although common magnitudes of communalities in the social sciences are low to moderate, a communality of less than .40 indicates that the item may not be related to the other items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Second, Items 15 (*The number of students in classes is large*), 16 (*There are unequal levels of proficiency among classmates*), and 17 (*I got low scores on tests such as midterm and final exams*) were also dropped as they had low factor loadings of .327, .322, and .326 respectively. Lastly, Item 14 (*Learning facilities such as computer, DVDs, Internet, and/or CDs are not used*) was deleted because it was crossloaded on multiple factors. A crossloading item refers to the item that loads at .32 or higher on two or more factors (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Item 14

loaded on F1, F2, and F3 with the loadings of .319, .354, and .350, respectively. The remaining 26 items showed a five-factor solution that accounted for 55.38% of the total variance in demotivating factors in English class for Korean secondary school students. The results of the five-factor solution, means, and standard deviations for each item for the total participants and JH and SH students are presented together in Tables 2 to 6 for easier comparisons.

Factor 1 was associated with eight items as shown in Table 2. All the items in this factor related to teachers' behavior and attitudes such as feedback (Item 26), enthusiasm (Item 24), ability (Item 28), and the way of teaching (Items 25, 27, & 31). Therefore, this factor was labeled *Teachers' competence and teaching styles.* The mean scores on each item of this factor were generally below the midpoint of 2.5, indicating that the participants did not characterize themselves as demotivated with respect to *Teachers' competence and teaching styles.* Only SH participants considered their teachers as demotivators in terms of not teaching English skills comprehensively (Item 27, M = 2.81) and giving them one-way explanation rather than interaction (Item 31, M = 3.12).

TABLE 2

Factor 1: Teachers' Competence and Teaching Styles

Item	Loading		*M*	*SD*
26. Teachers do not provide corrective feedback.		JH	1.78	.90
	.736	SH	2.27	.81
		Total	2.00	.89
24. Teachers lack enthusiasm about instruction.		JH	1.68	.91
	.698	SH	2.11	.77
		Total	1.87	.87
25. Teachers distribute Korean and English use ineffectively in lessons.		JH	1.79	.90
	.694	SH	2.00	.70
		Total	1.88	.82
30. Teachers laugh at my mistakes and errors.		JH	1.79	.85
	.628	SH	1.79	.77
		Total	1.80	.92
27. Teachers don't teach English skills comprehensively.		JH	1.84	.92
	.624	SH	2.81	.85
		Total	2.29	1.01
28. Teachers are not knowledgeable about English.		JH	1.63	.85
	.596	SH	1.67	.60
		Total	1.65	.74
31. Teachers make one-way explanations rather than interaction.		JH	2.00	.94
	.535	SH	3.12	.87
		Total	2.51	1.06
29. Teachers are not available outside of class for individual help.		JH	2.10	.99
	.482	SH	2.09	.77
		Total	2.09	.90

Table 3 shows that seven items concerning the characteristics of English classes (Items 1 - 4) and grading system (Items 18 - 20) loaded on the second factor. This factor was called *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system.* In terms of general outlook based on mean scores, the participants indicated themselves as demotivated due to the characteristics of English classes such as lack of opportunities to communicate in English (Item 1) and exam-oriented lessons (Item 4) and discrepancy between their grades and English proficiency (Item 18) and dissatisfaction with the grading systems (Item 20).

TABLE 3

Factor 2: Dissatisfaction with English Classes and Grading System

Item	Loading		*M*	*SD*
1. I seldom have opportunities to communicate in English in class.	.576	JH	2.33	.91
		SH	2.91	.80
		Total	2.60	.91
3. Most of English lessons focus on grammar.	.548	JH	2.38	.90
		SH	2.89	.82
		Total	2.62	.90
18. Grading did not correspond to my level of proficiency.	.540	JH	2.32	.95
		SH	2.76	.81
		Total	2.52	.91
2. Most of English lessons focus on translation.	.539	JH	2.31	.82
		SH	2.92	.81
		Total	2.59	.87
4. Most of the lessons are exam-oriented.	.533	JH	2.37	1.04
		SH	2.89	.96
		Total	2.61	1.04
20. I was dissatisfied with the grading system in English classes.	.529	JH	2.28	.98
		SH	2.81	.78
		Total	2.52	.94
19. I got low marks despite having studied English hard.	.444	JH	2.44	1.03
		SH	2.90	.79
		Total	2.66	.96

The third factor contained five items with factor loadings above .40 as displayed in Table 4. The items showed high loadings in Factor 3 concerned difficulties in learning English. Students' perception of difficulty in memorizing vocabulary (Item 6) and understanding class lessons (Items 7 & 12) loaded on this factor. Thus, this factor was labeled *Difficulty of learning English.* Negative loadings of all items in this factor indicate negative relations of the items to the factor. All mean scores on each item of the factor were above the midpoint of 2.5, with the exception of Item 7 (M = 2.25), suggesting that the participants were demotivated with regard to the difficulty of English learning.

Factor 4 was labeled as *Lack of motivation and interest in learning English,* because the items in this factor reflected learning goals (Item 22), interest (Item 23) and frustration

(Item 8) as shown in Table 5. All items in this factor negatively related to the factor showing negative factor loadings. Only Item 8 had the above the midpoint. Thus, the participants seemed to be as demotivated to study English for not knowing how to self-study English (Item 8, *M* = 2.82), and more positively, they did not lose goal (*M* = 2.23) or interest in English (*M* = 2.30).

TABLE 4

Factor 3: Difficulty of Learning English

Item	Loading		*M*	*SD*
6. I have difficulty in memorizing words and phrases in English.		JH	2.67	1.01
	-.759	SH	2.94	.87
		Total	2.79	.96
5. I am forced to study large vocabulary in the textbooks.		JH	2.59	1.05
	-.583	SH	2.91	.92
		Total	2.74	1.01
12. English sentences dealt with in the lesson are difficult to interpret.		JH	2.50	.99
	-.458	SH	2.51	.78
		Total	2.51	.90
7. I fail to understand English class lessons.		JH	2.34	1.01
	-.456	SH	2.14	.79
		Total	2.25	.92
9. I do not like complicated English grammar.		JH	2.87	.99
	-.436	SH	3.20	.82
		Total	3.02	.93

TABLE 5

Factor 4: Lack of Motivation and Interest in Learning English

Item	Loading		*M*	*SD*
22. I lost my goal of learning English.		JH	2.23	1.02
	-.832	SH	2.23	.95
		Total	2.23	.99
23. I lost my interest in English.		JH	2.28	1.03
	-.795	SH	2.33	1.00
		Total	2.30	1.02
8. I do not know how to self-study for English class.		JH	2.65	1.04
	-.462	SH	3.01	.86
		Total	2.82	.98

The last factor was defined by three items related to textbooks, and thus, this factor was labeled *Inadequate learning contents.* Mean scores of all three items were below the midpoint. Thus, relative to other demotivation factors, the participants did not seem to be as demotivated to study English for learning materials.

TABLE 6

Factor 5: Inadequate Learning Contents

Item	Loading		*M*	*SD*
11. English reading passages in the textbooks are too long.		JH	2.39	.96
	.585	SH	2.04	.75
		Total	2.23	.89
10. Topics of the English textbook used in lessons were not interesting.		JH	2.43	.93
	.473	SH	2.29	.82
		Total	2.37	.88
13. Textbooks are not corresponding to my level of proficiency.		JH	2.45	.99
	.420	SH	2.34	.72
		Total	2.40	.88

Based on the results of the factor analysis, scale scores for each factor of L2 demotivation were computed by summing the scores on each item on the factor and then computing the mean. Reliabilities of four factors, as shown in Table 7, represented reasonably good internal consistency having greater than .70, and *Inadequate learning contents* had reliability closely approaching .70. Paired *t*-tests indicated that all means of five factors were statistically significantly different from one another. All except for the difference between Factor 2 and Factor 3 of the statistically significant differences in pairs of means had *p* values of .001; the remaining one had *p* values less than .05. Further, the mean scores on *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system* (*M* = 2.59) and *Difficulty of learning English* (*M* = 2.66) were above the median score of 2.5, indicating that the participants were demotivated to study English for these two reasons. On the other hand, *Teachers' competence and teaching styles*, *Lack of motivation and interest*, and *Inadequate learning contents* had relatively low mean scores. Thus, the participants did not attribute their demotivation to their lack of motivation and interest (*M* = 2.45), teacher (*M* = 2.01), and learning materials (*M* = 2.33).

TABLE 7

Reliabilities and Descriptive Summary for L2 Demotivation Scales

Factor	Number of Items	Alpha	*M*	*SD*
F1: Teachers' competence & style	8	.85	2.01	.63
F2: English classes & grading system	7	.77	2.59	.60
F3: Difficulty of learning English	5	.78	2.66	.69
F4: Lack of motivation and interest	3	.76	2.45	.82
F5: Inadequate learning contents	3	.68	2.33	.69

2. Differences in Demotivating Factors between JH and SH Students

1) Teachers' Competence and Teaching Styles

Both JH and SH students did not seem to attribute their teacher characteristics such as language proficiency, attitude, teaching competence, enthusiasm, and teaching style, as a source of their demotivation (see Table 2). All items of the factor elicited uniform disagreement among JH students but somewhat varied responses from SH students. The analysis between the two groups revealed statistically significant mean differences on Items 24, 25, 26, 27, and 31. In every item except Item 30, SH participants had higher mean scores than JH counterparts. If the alpha level is adjusted to .006 based on Bonferroni's correction, created by dividing the number of tests by .05, the differences would reach statistical significance on the same items except Item 25.

2) Dissatisfaction with English Classes and Grading System

When the analysis focuses on group tendencies, both JH and SH students seemed to be quite different concerning their responses to characteristics of English classes and the grading system as sources of demotivation (see Table 3). The mean scores on across all items of the factor for the JH group were below the median point of 2.5, while those for the SH group were above the median score. The analyses with the more stringent alpha level of .007 revealed statistically significant differences on all items between the two groups. Thus, significantly more SH participants tended to agree that lesson foci on exams, grammar, and translation (Items 2, 3, & 4), their lack of opportunities to communicate in English (Item 1), and unsatisfying evaluation system were the reasons that demotivate them in studying English, while JH participants tended to disagree.

3) Difficulty of Learning English

Both JH and SH participants seemed to attribute their demotivation to the difficulties in memorizing words and phrases (Items 5 & 6), grammar (Item 9), and interpreting English sentences (Item 12) (see Table 4). However, SH participants had higher mean scores in every item with the exception of Item 7 than JH students. If the more stringent alpha level of .01 is adopted to correct the inflation of the Type I error rate from multiple *t*-tests, the analyses revealed statistically significant differences on Items 5, 6, and 9. More SH participants perceived difficulties in learning English as their demotivation reasons than JH counterparts. Both groups, in contrast, did not seem to regard Item 7 (*I fail to understand English class lessons)* as their demotivation source.

4) Lack of Motivation and Interest in Learning English

Although individual variation existed within two groups, both JH and SH students' responses were on the whole quite uniform in terms of their perception of the lack of motivation (Item 22) and interest in English learning (Item 23) as a demotivating factor (see Table 5). However, on Item 8 for which there was a statistically significant difference with the conservative alpha level of .017, SH students had higher mean scores than JH students.

5) Inadequate Learning Contents

Even though both groups' mean scores on all items of the factor were below the median point of 2.5, they varied the most in Item 11 (see Table 6), which yielded statistically significant differences at the adjusted alpha level of .017. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that contrary to other demotivation factors identified in this study, JH students had higher mean scores on across all three items of the factor than SH counterparts although the differences were not significant except Item 11.

When compared the overall mean scores of each demotivating factor between JH and SH groups, the clearest differences were found in all factors except Factor 4 (t = -1.684, p = .093), as illustrated in Table 8. There were statistically significant differences in four scales, indicating that SH participants showed significantly higher mean scores in *Teachers' competence and styles*, *English classes and grading system*, and *Difficulty of learning English*, while JH participants displayed significantly higher scores in *Inadequate learning contents.* SH participants presented a slightly higher score in *Lack of motivation and interest* than their JH counterparts, although the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant. Note that Table 8 does not reflect the correction for inflation of the Type I error rate from the multiple tests. The more conservative alpha level of .01 also revealed statistically significant differences in the same scales, with the exception of *Difficulty of learning English.*

TABLE 8

Descriptive Statistics of Demotivation between JH and SH

Factor	JH (n = 220)		SH (n = 187)		t	p
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
F1: Teachers' competence & style	1.82	.69	2.23	.46	-6.921	.001
F2: English classes & grading system	2.34	.62	2.87	.43	-9.770	.001
F3: Difficulty of learning English	2.60	.78	2.74	.55	-2.111	.035
F4: Lack of motivation and interest	2.39	.86	2.52	.76	-1.684	.093
F5: Inadequate learning contents	2.42	.75	2.22	.58	2.998	.003

3. Relationships between Demotivation and L2 Proficiency

In order to examine the relationships between the participants' demotivation factors and their English proficiency, data from self-assessed English proficiency and midterm exam scores were used in the analysis. As shown in Table 9, the correlations were in moderate range in general with all of the negative correlations statistically significant at the .01 level or better. JH participants' midterm exam scores were significantly associated with their self-assessed English proficiency (r = .601). Self-assessed proficiency and midterm exam scores related negatively to *Difficulty of learning English*, *Lack of motivation and interest*, and *Inadequate learning contents*, but related positively to *Teachers' competence and teaching styles* and *English classes and grading system*, although these two positive correlations were not statistically significant. Intercorrelations among demotivation factors varied from the lowest being .262 between *Teachers' competence and styles* and *Difficulty of learning English*, to the strongest being .574 between *Difficulty of learning English* and *Lack of motivation and interest*, indicating that all correlations were positive and statistically significant at the .01 level or better.

TABLE 9

Intercorrelations between Demotivation and English Proficiency

Factor	Self-assessed proficiency	Midterm score	F1	F2	F3	F4
Midterm (n = 213)[1]	.601*					
F1: Teachers' competence & style	.018	.076				
F2: English classes & grading system	.021	.037	.487*			
F3: Difficulty of learning English	-.354*	-.308*	.262*	.361*		
F4: Lack of motivation and interest	-.390*	-.326*	.301*	.307*	.574*	
F5: Inadequate learning contents	-.202*	-.208*	.318*	.273*	.558*	.448*

*p < .01.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study identified demotivational factors in learning English for Korean secondary school students and examined differences in demotivation between JH and SH students. It further explored the possible link between demotivation and L2 proficiency. Although the questionnaire was constructed based on a seven-factor model, five factors

[1] Only JH students' midterm exam scores were collected that they took a few weeks before completing the questionnaire. Seven students did not provide their exam scores, indicating that they would not release their English test scores. On the midterm exam of 100 possible points, the mean score and standard deviation for 213 JH students were 75.9 and 14.9.

were extracted from the data: *Teachers' competence and teaching styles, Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system, Difficulty of learning English, Lack of motivation and interest in learning English,* and *Inadequate learning contents.* Although this multifaceted aspect of demotivation confirmed many previous research findings (Dörnyei, 2001; Falout et al., 2009; Gorham & Millette, 1997; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007), items related to *Characteristics of English classes* and *Testing concerns,* which hypothesized as two separated factors, loaded on *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system.* Furthermore, all items concerning *Inadequate learning environment* (Items 14-16) were excluded in terms of low factor loading and cross-loading characteristics, suggesting that they did not seem to cluster together in demotivation for Korean secondary school students learning English.

Difficulty of learning English was the most demotivating factor, especially for JH participants. JH students' perception of difficulty in English learning may reflect their beliefs about English learning that English is a difficult language to learn because they should memorize vocabulary and study complicated grammar. Contrary to many previous findings (Dörnyei, 2001; Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Gorham & Millette, 1997; Oxford, 1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001, Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007; Zhang, 2007), *Teachers' competence and teaching styles* were not perceived to be a source of demotivation with the lowest mean score (M = 2.01) among the five factors. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also showed the similar result with Japanese senior high school students that the teacher-related factor was not found to be a strong attribution of demotivation compared to other factors like *learning contents and materials* and *test scores*. This finding may be explained by cultural beliefs about the teacher that Korean students brought in classrooms to bear in situations and decisions related to their learning in school. Korean students think that teachers have the authority to decide everything with regard to their learning. Furthermore, cultural heritage of Korean society encourages the young students to respect and trust in teachers' behaviors. Thus, students' opinions concerning their teachers' competence and teaching styles may be based on their respectful attitudes towards their teacher authority. Contrary to blaming their teachers for diminishing their motivation to study English, the Korean students found demotivating reasons from the nature of English learning (e.g., *Difficulty of learning English*) or blaming themselves through finding their own internal reasons (e.g., *Lack of motivation and interest in learning English*).

Concerning the characteristics of demotivation, a point is noteworthy. Although Factor 4 (*Lack of motivation and interest in learning English*) was extracted, the study participants did not regard this factor to be demotivating. This finding, however, provided further evidence for the mixed nature of demotivation, indicating that internal attributions cannot be ignored as demotivating factors; instead, both internal (e.g., interest) and external (e.g.,

grading system) dimensions contribute to student demotivation. Therefore, Dörnyei's (2001) definition of demotivation needs to be expanded to cover and better understand both external and internal reasons as causes of demotivation.

JH and SH students differed significantly in all factors of demotivation except *Lack of motivation and interest in learning English.* SH students had higher mean scores on all factors except *Inadequate learning contents* than JH students. Thus, SH students were more likely to experience demotivation in English classrooms. JH students attributed their demotivation to *Difficulty of learning English*, while SH students attributed that to *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system* and *Difficulty of learning English.* Both groups, in general, tended to attribute their demotivation to external forces, which are somewhat beyond their control. The strongest differences between the two groups were in all seven items on *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system.* Exam-oriented lessons that focused on grammar and translation, a lack of opportunities to communicate in English, and obtaining low test scores despite having studied hard were all perceived as strongly demotivating reasons for SH students. In contrast, JH students did not consider such characteristics of English classes and the grading system as demotivating. This finding may reflect both groups' English learning environment. For JH students who are relatively free from preparing the government-sponsored scholastic aptitude test (SAT) to enter colleges, English learning may be based on learner-centered instruction emphasizing listening and speaking skills with interactive pair and small group activities. However, the SH sample in this study were all the twelfth graders who should take SAT in a short time. The English part in SAT contains considerable vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension items with a few listening questions. Accordingly, teacher-directed instruction rooted in the college entrance exam is generally conducted with exam-oriented syllabi and lessons in many SH English classrooms. Therefore, it is natural those who feel pressure to achieve high scores on English in SAT, but are not interested in English learning are more likely to fall into demotivation. SH English teachers' heavy reliance on teacher-directed grammar translation instruction was also corroborated by SH participants' responses to Items 27 and 31. The SH students' mean scores on Items 27 (*Teachers don't teach English skills comprehensively, M* = 2.81) and 31 (*Teachers make one-way explanations rather than interaction, M* = 3.12) were significantly higher than those of the JH students (*M* = 1.84 & *M* = 2.00, respectively). In accordance with the explanation above concerning the strongest differences in *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system*, the SH students also significantly higher mean scores on *Teachers' competence and teaching styles* than the JH students, meaning that the SH students were more likely to attribute their demotivation to their teacher's teaching styles and competence.

The negative relations between some of demotivation factors and L2 proficiency are consistent with the findings of previous studies (Falout & Falout, 2005; Falout &

Maruyama, 2004). Such relationships are also in line with a claim in the field of general L2 motivation that learning goal and interest are important factors for L2 achievement (Gardner, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2002). It is understandable that students with higher L2 proficiency can feel more confident in their ability and blame less studying difficult English texts, and enjoy L2 learning. By contrast, it would be true for lower level students to be likely to feel difficult in L2 learning and blame their low proficiency on learning materials, and consequently lose motivation and interest in the L2. The relations between demotivation and proficiency that were statistically significant were generally small in magnitude. The limited amount of variance accounted for may indicate limited practical significance. However, the results should not be taken to mean that demotivation and L2 proficiency are not meaningfully correlated because both demotivation and L2 proficiency except the midterm exam scores of the JH students were examined by self-report measures, and so there may be method variance.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study has sought to compare JH students' demotivation in studying L2 to those of SH students. It also examined the relationships between demotivation and L2 proficiency. It is encouraging that both JH and SH students did not perceive their English teacher as a strong attribution of demotivation. But, it is somewhat troubling that this finding in some cases may be based on cultural heritage of Korean society such as students' respectful attitudes to teacher authority and trust in teacher behavior. Indeed, *Dissatisfaction with English classes and grading system* was found to be the second strongest demotivating factor. Cleary teachers should continue to provide strong encouragement to students, but they should help students to be motivated by avoiding practices that demotivate them. Incorporating a variety of teaching methods and classroom activities may make L2 learning interesting and meaningful. In order to cope with demotivation caused by difficulty of learning English, teachers should be attuned to students' interest and proficiency level when choosing learning materials. Furthermore, by presenting specific course objectives and by clearly explaining why we learn L2 and what we do in the classroom it may be possible to considerably allay student frustration. It is also important to recognize that students' demotivation may not always be reduced by efforts of a teacher because demotivation can be characterized as both internal and external forces.

This study has a number of limitations that should be acknowledged. First is the sample related particularly to SH participants. Although it was relatively large sample, it may not be representative of the populations from which SH students were drawn. Thus, caution must be taken in generalizing the results. Another limitation of the study concerns items

that were included in the questionnaire. The results of this study indicated that demotivation is multifaceted. However, the demotivation factors this study identified are not the only ones. Questionnaires containing different kinds of items could possibly discover other aspects of demotivation. Therefore, it is important for researchers to identify additional kinds of demotivation towards L2 learning.

Given the limitations, it is important to note implications this study has for future research. Attempts to replicate demotivation factors in other samples involving a variety of settings, languages, and levels of study are clearly warranted to extend understanding of the personal and instructional aspects of demotivation in language learning. Second, future studies need to consider a variety of variables that are not treated in this study, in conjunction with think aloud protocols and detailed classroom observation to validate the questionnaire and to contextualize demotivation factors found in quantitative data. Finally, further investigation of unidentified relations between demotivation and L2 proficiency (e.g., whether demotivation and L2 proficiency emerge at the same time or they interact with each other) is needed to develop hypotheses about the potential causal relationships.

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Examples in: English
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Applicable Levels: Secondary

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