English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 18, No. 4 Winter 2012

The Structural Relationship between Demotivational Factors and English Achievement for High School Students*

Kyung Ja Kim
(Chosun University)

Kim, Kyung Ja. (2012). The structural relationship between demotivational factors and English achievement for high school students. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 18*(4), 71-92.

The aim of this study was to identify demotivating factors and establish a structural equation model (SEM) that best explains the relationship between demotivation and L2 achievement for Korean EFL high school students. It also investigated the gender differences in the structural model. A total of 385 students (179 boys, 206 girls) at two high schools completed a questionnaire containing 28 Likert-scale items. The results of the factor analysis produced six demotivating constructs: *difficulty of English learning*, *teachers' teaching styles*, *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system*, *inadequate learning contents*, *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, and *inadequate learning environment*. The students' demotivation was attributed more to external factors than internal ones, indicating that *difficulty of English learning* and *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system* were the two strongest demotivators. The final SEM showed that both *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* were significant, direct, and negative predictors of L2 achievement. The study also found that student gender moderated the causal effect of demotivation on L2 achievement. The implications based on the findings were presented for better L2 instruction.

[demotivation/structural equation modeling/L2 achievement/gender effect]

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the role of learner motivation in determining second or foreign language (L2) outcomes has been widely examined in the field of L2 acquisition (e.g., Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Kim, 2004; Lukmani, 1972; Wen, 1997;

* This study was supported by research fund from Chosun University, 2012.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Yang, 2011), that of learner demotivation has started to work on fairly recently. If motivation pushes learning for L2 success, demotivation cuts learning short (Falout & Falout, 2005). According to Dörnyei (2001), demotivation is defined as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of behavioral intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). It does not result from (a) powerful distractions of a more attractive option, (b) a gradual loss of interest, nor (c) an internal process without any external triggers. A demotivated L2 learner, therefore, is someone who was once motivated to learn the L2 but has lost his or her commitment for specific external causes. However, many researchers on L2 demotivation (e.g., Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007) argued that internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitudes toward an L2 could also play a vital role in generating demotivation.

While quite a few studies have investigated L2 learning demotivation of different age and cultural groups in a variety of different settings around the world (Chambers, 1993; Falout et al., 2009; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2011; Nikolov, 2001; Ushioda, 2001), most of them focused on exploring and identifying demotivation factors. Furthermore, some of these previous studies found inconclusive findings about whether L2 learner demotivation varied by cultural group or were simply related to individual differences in instructional practices. Although after the 2000s some form of communication-oriented approaches and methods was initiated in Korean EFL high school education, Grammar Translation continued to constitute the core of English teaching because high-stakes testing imposed on every high school student generates a washback effect of exam-centered learning and teaching practices. This situation may aggravate motivational problems and produce demotivation toward learning English.

Only a few previous studies have also researched learner demotivation in relation to L2 proficiency levels (Bing, 2011; Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kim, 2009). All of these studies employed descriptive statistics, *t*-test, ANOVA, and/or intercorrelations to examine the strength of the relationship between demotivation factors and L2 proficiency. However, the correlation analysis without reference to other factors that directly or indirectly influence L2 achievement limits the generalizability of the findings (Pae, 2008). To the best of my knowledge, no attempts have been made to investigate the structural relationship between demotivation factors and L2 achievement including the effects of mediating or moderating variables in an EFL context. Thus, it is necessary to examine the causal relationship among demotivation factors affecting L2 achievement using an instrument embedded in the EFL setting in Korea with a more rigorous statistical analysis.

The aim of this study is to identify demotivating factors of Korean EFL high school students and to establish a structural model that best explains the demotivation factors

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

connected with English achievement using structural equation modeling (SEM). It also investigates gender differences in the proposed causal path model. The purpose of the comparison between genders is to identify the effects of the moderating variable on the demotivation factors in relation to the L2 achievement.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. L2 Learning Demotivation

Rudnai (1996) and Dörnyei (1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) were among the pioneers of exploring attributions of demotivation with regard to L2 learning. Rudnai (1996) in a qualitative study found that learner level problems (e.g., *lack of self-confidence*) and learning situation level problems (e.g., *lack of free choice*, *lack of skilled teachers)* were the principal causes of the students' demotivation. Dörnyei (1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) categorized nine demotivating factors by conducting structured interviews with 50 secondary school students in Hungary: 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*; 8) *attitudes of group members*; and 9) *coursebooks used in class.* He claimed that the teacher is the primary cause of student demotivation, accounting for 40% of the total frequency of occurrences. Stimulated by his work, many L2 researchers have sought to identify demotivation factors across wide contexts, for example, learning English in Korea (Jung, 2011; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2011), Japan (Hamada & Kito, 2008; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009), and Vietnam (Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007), learning French in Ireland (Ushioda, 2001), and learning various L2s in Hungary (Nikolov, 2001). Although the findings of these studies were remarkably similar, with external attributions such as *difficulty of L2 learning*, *learning contents and materials*, *teachers' styles*, and *dissatisfaction with the grading system* most often found to be the key demotivators, the differences in factors were specific to context or setting.

Falout et al. (2009) with a study of 900 EFL university students across seven colleges in Tokyo, produced nine demotivating factors and further grouped them into three categories: external factors 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 found that the most demotivating factor was *grammar-translation,* the external factor, indicating that the dominant teaching method posed the greatest threat

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

to learner motivation. As evidenced by the above discussed studies, while L2 researchers have agreed that both external and internal attributions are important causes of demotivation, the findings of the previous studies are not conclusive concerning the rank order in attributions of demotivation. The teacher factor, for example, was considered as the main source of learner demotivation in some studies (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007; Ushioda, 2001), whereas it did not have much influence on demotivation in other studies (Falout et al., 2009; Jung, 2011; Kim, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). These inconsistent findings suggest that L2 learning demotivation factors are situated within the socially and culturally conditioned context where learning takes place. For this reason, demotivating factors within the specific instructional practices deserve a more systematic investigation in order to fully understand a possible structural relationship between demotivation and L2 achievement.

2. The Relationship between Demotivation and L2 Achievement

Although the idea that demotivating factors have an impact on an individual's L2 achievement is not new, there is little extant research exploring the influence of L2 demotivation factors in terms of L2 proficiency. Falout and Maruyama (2004) investigated differences in demotivating factors across high- and low-L2 proficiency levels and discovered contrasts in two proficiency groups. The main sources of demotivation for low-proficiency learners were *reduced self-confidence, attitudes towards the L2, courses, teachers,* and *attitudes of group members* in descending order. The low-proficiency group presented demotivation in five out of six factors. However, high-proficiency group shared an indication of demotivation in the *reduced self-confidence* with the other factors being relatively neutral. Falout and Falout (2005) reported that while "*teachers* remains a key factor of demotivation that most consistently affects learners across two proficiency levels" (p. 282), the lower proficient group started to develop negative attitudes towards English earlier than the higher proficient counterpart.

More recently, Falout et al. (2009) in their exploratory comparative study, found internal (e.g., *self-confidence*) reactive (e.g., *help-seeking*, *avoidance*) factors of demotivation may be more of a determinant in learning outcomes than external factors. Kim (2009) studied how the demotivating factors related to students' L2 proficiency among Korean EFL secondary school students. She found that *difficulty of learning English, lack of motivation and interest,* and *inadequate learning contents* were negative associated with L2 achievement, as measured by midterm exam scores. However, she stated that the relations between demotivation and proficiency that yielded statistically significant produced generally small coefficients in magnitude. This limited amount of variance accounted for may indicate limited practical significance.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Analyses of demotivating factors affecting L2 achievement, as stated earlier, focused on descriptive statistics, *t*-test, ANOVA, and/or correlations. A number of critiques could be leveled at these statistical methods, including the failure to provide information about the causality among factors of interest. The results from these analyses also indicated that direct and indirect paths that lead to learners' L2 achievement are not identified. Consequently, it is still open to question which learner demotivating factor has the strongest predictive power in accounting for variances associated with L2 achievement. Therefore, it is necessary to systematic investigation into the relationship between demotivation and L2 achievement using an instrument embedded in the Korean EFL learning context with a more rigorous statistical analysis. Through the SEM analysis of the relationship between demotivation and L2 achievement, the findings of the present study might suggest how L2 classroom instructors and curriculum developers could most profitably make their greater efforts to promote successful L2 learning.

3. Gender Differences in Demotivation and L2 Achievement

Although many L2 researchers have long been interested in gender effects on the relationship between motivational factors and L2 achievement and have found significant gender-related differences (e.g., Kim, 2004; Mitchell, 1992; Pae, 2006; Payne & Lynn, 2011; Vallerand et al., 1992), concerning demotivation there is a paucity of empirical research on how gender impacts demotivating factors. Bing (2011) examined differences in six demotivating factors and self-assessed L2 proficiency of EFL university students. She found significant differences in *teachers' competence and teaching styles* and *inadequate learning environment*, indicating that female students had higher mean scores of all five factors except one factor, *difficulty of learning English*, than their male counterparts. Female students' self-assessed L2 proficiency also revealed significantly higher mean scores than those of male students. Bing performed *t*-tests to assess the differences in demotivation and self-assessed proficiency between two gender groups. Although the *t*-test is commonly used, it has limitations (Hollis, 1997). It can only test differences between two groups and examine only the effects of one independent variable on one dependent variable. However, the *t*-test can not simultaneously examine the impact of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable. Consequently, Bing's study might present an important methodological weakness.

Therefore, it seems clear that more research is needed to bridge these gaps in L2 demotivation literature. The present study aims to explore and identify L2 demotivation factors, develop the causal path model of demotivation and L2 achievement that might best describe Korean EFL secondary students, and examine the gender effects on the model. The research questions for this study are:

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

1. What are underlying factors that demotivate Korean high school students in learning English?
2. What is the structural relationship between demotivation and L2 achievement?
3. Are there differences in the structural model of demotivating factors affecting L2 achievement between two gender groups?

III. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Participants

Twelve intact classes from two high schools took part in the present study. Descriptive summary of the participants is presented in Table 1. A total of 385 students attending a boys high school (n = 179) and a girls high school (n = 206) participated in the study. They were all Korean natives and have previously studied English as a required school subject for at least 7 years from their grade 3 in the elementary school. One hundred thirty-five were in the 10th grade, 84 were 11th graders, and 166 were in grade 12. One hundred thirty-two (34.3%) students of the total sample considered the role of private instituting in English learning as the most important factor to help their English learning effective, followed by the school English teacher (n = 125, 32.5%) and self-study (n = 54, 14%). A small number of the participants have ever traveled abroad (n = 73, 19%) and 138 (22.9%) enrolled in private after-school English classes. When asked to rate themselves on their self-assessed English proficiency, 166 (43.1%) reported their proficiency as 'not good' (n = 135, 35.1%) or 'very poor' (n = 31, .8.0%), and 17.7% (n=68) rated themselves 'good' (n = 52, 13.5%) or 'excellent' (n = 16, 4.2%). One hundred forty-eight (38.4%) students rated their level as 'medium' compared to other students in their class.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Summary of Boys and Girls Participants

	N	Grade			Influential factor				Travel abroad		Private instituting		Self-assessed L2 Proficiency				
		10th	11th	12th	Tt*	P	T	S	Yes	No	Yes	No	1**	2	3	4	5
Boys	179	41	52	86	15	81	28	32	27	150	82	96	16	58	70	25	9
Girls	206	94	32	80	19	51	97	22	46	157	56	148	15	77	78	27	7
Total	385	135	84	166	34	132	125	54	73	307	138	244	31	135	148	52	16

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

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

2. Measures and Data Collection

1) Demotivation in L2 Learning

The demotivation questionnaire for the study consisted of two parts. The first section comprised a 28-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). The total items were designed to measure various constructs of demotivational factors derived from pervious studies including the following: *characteristics of English classes*, *experiences of failure or difficulty of English learning*, *coursebook*, *inadequate learning environment*, *testing concerns*, *lack of interest*, and *teachers*. The wording of some items was slightly modified to reflect the Korean EFL learning context. In the questionnaire, each reason was preceded by the phrase *The reason that demotivates learning English for me is because* in order to increase the validity of the instrument. 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.

2) English Achievement

For the English achievement measure, the present study employed the raw score of the midterm exam. The exam included vocabulary, grammar, and reading sections with a mainly multiple-choice format and few short-answers. The researcher acquired students' test results from their English instructors based on individual participants' agreement to disclosure of their scores. Three hundred fifty-one English achievement data out of 385 participants were collected for the analysis.

3. Procedures

Data collection was made on a regular class session by classroom English teachers in the middle of the fall semester, 2011. Thus, notably high response rates were achieved approaching 99% for boys and 100% for girls. Each participant was asked to complete an informed consent by providing his or her name and identification number. The entire data collection process took approximately 20 minutes.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

4. Data Analysis

Initially, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify how many factors were involved in the participants' responses to the questionnaire for L2 demotivating factors. The extracted factors then served as the subscales (e.g., latent variables) throughout the rest of the analyses. Cronbach's alphas were calculated to estimate the reliability coefficient for each subscale of L2 demotivating factors.

Next, the SEM analysis was performed among demotivating factors affecting English achievement using Amos 18 via maximum likelihood estimation procedure (Byrne, 2001). A baseline measurement model representing the causal relationship between demotivation variables and L2 achievement was proposed and specified direct and indirect paths based on the previous literature. This proposed model was tested in order to identify the structural model that shows the best fit to the sample covariance matrix observed in the present study. After establishing a structural model, the effects of gender on the structural model was further examined.

IV. RESULTS

1. Demotivating Factors in Learning English

The reliability coefficients calculated by Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was .87, indicating a sufficient reliability coefficient for conducting a factor analysis. A principal axis factoring with oblique rotation method was chosen because there is theoretical and empirical basis for assuming psychological constructs (e.g., confidence, motivation, demotivation) to be correlated to one another. Accordingly, this may yield a more accurate and realistic representation than principal components analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 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). Two items were excluded from all further analyses for some reasons. Item 1 (*I seldom have opportunities to communicate in English in class.*) loaded on multiple factors simultaneously at the loading of less than .40, which is often regarded as a critical value in the factor analysis. The item-total correlation coefficient of Item 18 (*Grading did not correspond to my level of proficiency.*) was below .30, and consequently these two items were deleted. The remaining 26 items produced a six-factor solution that accounted for 56.18% of the total variance in demotivating factors in English learning for Korean high school students. Table 2 presents the factor loading, mean, and

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

standard deviation for each item of the six extracted factors.

TABLE 2

Six-Factor Solution of Demotivation in English Learning

Item	*Loading*	*M*	*SD*
Factor 1: Difficulty of English learning			
6. I have difficulty in memorizing words and phrases in English.	.757	2.77	.96
9. I dislike complicated English grammar.	.689	3.08	.91
17. I got low scores on tests such as midterm and final exams.	.621	2.79	.97
5. I am forced to study memorize large vocabulary in the textbooks.	.591	2.73	1.00
7. I fail to understand English class lessons.	.587	2.20	.91
8. I get lost in how to self-study for English lessons.	.573	2.84	.95
Factor 2: Teachers' teaching styles			
26. Teachers do not provide corrective feedback.	.774	2.02	.87
27. Teachers do not teach English skills comprehensively.	.749	2.38	1.00
24. Teachers lack enthusiasm about instruction.	.747	1.87	.86
25. Teachers distribute Korean and English use ineffectively in lessons.	.725	1.87	.81
28. Teachers make one-way explanations rather than interaction.	.713	2.60	1.04
Factor 3: Dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system			
4. Most of the lessons are college entrance exam-oriented.	.753	2.63	1.05
3. Most of English lessons focus on grammar.	.625	2.64	.93
20. I was dissatisfied with the grading system in English classes.	.623	2.54	.92
19. I got low marks despite having studied English hard.	.535	2.69	.95
2. Most of English lessons focus on translation.	.478	2.62	.90
Factor 4: Inadequate learning contents			
11. English reading passages in the textbooks are too long.	.803	2.17	.89
10. Topics of the English textbook used in lessons were not interesting.	.713	2.30	.91
12. English sentences dealt with in the lessons are difficult to interpret.	.612	2.48	.92
13. Textbooks are not corresponding to my level of proficiency.	.574	2.41	.89
Factor 5: Lack of motivation and interest in learning English			
22. I lost my goal of studying English.	.809	2.23	1.15
23. I lost my interest in English.	.778	2.26	1.02
21. English is a compulsory subject.	.617	2.34	1.00
Factor 6: Inadequate learning environment			
15. The number of students in classes is large.	.716	1.99	.88
16. There are unequal levels of proficiency among classmates.	.593	2.58	.89
14. Learning facilities such as computer, DVDs, and/or Internet are not used.	.514	2.32	.99

Factor 1, labeled *difficulty of English learning*, contained items that concern students' perception of difficulty in memorizing vocabulary (Item 6) and understanding class lessons (Item 7). All mean scores of each individual items in the factor were above the midpoint of 2.5, with the exception of Item 7 (M = 2.20), suggesting that the participants were demotivated with regard to the difficulty of English learning. The second factor was labeled *teachers' teaching styles* because it contained items addressing the teachers'

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

behavior and attitudes such as feedback (Item 26), enthusiasm (Item 24), and the way of teaching (Items 25, 27, 28). The mean scores of all items except Item 28 ($M = 2.60$) of this factor were generally below the midpoint of 2.5, indicating that the participants did not characterize themselves as demotivated with respect to the *teachers' teaching styles* factor. The third factor was labeled *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system,* which contained items that related to the characteristics of English class lessons and grading system. In terms of general outlook based on the mean scores, the participants indicated themselves as demotivated due to the characteristics of English classes such as college entrance exam-oriented lessons (Item 4) and discrepancy between their grades and English proficiency (Item 18) and dissatisfaction with the grading systems (Item 20). The fourth factor addressing textbooks was labeled *inadequate learning contents.* The fifth factor, labeled *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, contained three items that reflected the learning goals (Item 22) and interest (Item 23). Mean scores of all items for both *inadequate learning contents* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* were below the midpoint. Thus, compared to other demotivation factors, the participants did not seem to be as demotivated to learn English because of their coursebooks or lack of interest and motivation. Finally, the sixth factor demonstrated *inadequate learning environment* that concerned large class sizes (Item 15) and unequal levels of student proficiency in a class (Item 16).

TABLE 3

Reliability Coefficients and Descriptive Summary for L2 Demotivation Scales

Subscale	Number of items	Alpha	*M*	*SD*
F1: Difficulty of English learning	6	.79	2.73	.66
F2: Teachers' teaching styles	5	.83	2.15	.71
F3: Dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system	5	.72	2.63	.65
F4: Inadequate learning contents	4	.76	2.34	.69
F5: Lack of motivation and interest in learning English	3	.82	2.27	.86
F6: Inadequate learning environment	3	.70	2.30	.65

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. Reliability coefficients of the six factors, as shown in Table 3, represented reasonably good internal consistency having greater than .70. The mean scores on *difficulty of English learning* ($M = 2.73$) and *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system* ($M = 2.63$) scales were above the median score of 2.5, indicating that the participants were demotivated toward learning English for these two reasons. On the other hand, *teachers' teaching styles, inadequate learning contents*, *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, and inadequate learning environment had relatively low mean scores. Thus, the participants did not attribute their demotivation to their teacher ($M =$

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

2.15), and learning contents (M = 2.34), lack of motivation and interest (M = 2.27), and learning environment (M = 2.30). Although the mean score of the *teachers' teaching styles* factor was showed the lowest among the six scales, it had the highest value of Cronbach's alpha (a = . 83), indicating good internal consistency of the items in the scale.

2. The Structural Relationship between Demotivation and L2 Achievement

Although some of the six factors had more than three items that loaded strongly (e.g., *difficulty of English learning* and *teachers' teaching styles*), the researcher retained only three items for each factor for the subsequent SEM analysis. The reason for the limitation of the number of indicator variables per factor to three was to have a baseline model that would be less complex (Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud, 2009) and that, therefore, would be easily replicable across both gender groups. A total of 18 items were thus used as observed variables for the six latent variables. The means and standard deviations for each indicator appear in Table 2. The baseline measurement model representing the relationship between six demotivation factors and English achievement was analyzed using the SEM methodology. Figure 1 displays a visual representation of the initial relations among six latent variables affecting L2 achievement, which shows the six latent variables (ovals) and their representative indicator variables (e.g., questionnaire items shown in rectangles).

In order to assess the quality of the model's fit, the chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used. Since chi-square statistic tends to be inflated in a larger sample size, other fit indices were also reported. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI, Bentler, 1990), which compares the improved fit of the hypothesized model with a null model, was checked. CFI with values that approximate or exceed .95 represents a good fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, Browne & Cudeck, 1993), which shows the fit between the implied and the population covariance matrix, is a parsimony-adjusted index. A RMSEA less than .05 indicates a good fit, with lower values (i.e., closer to 0) being more desirable.

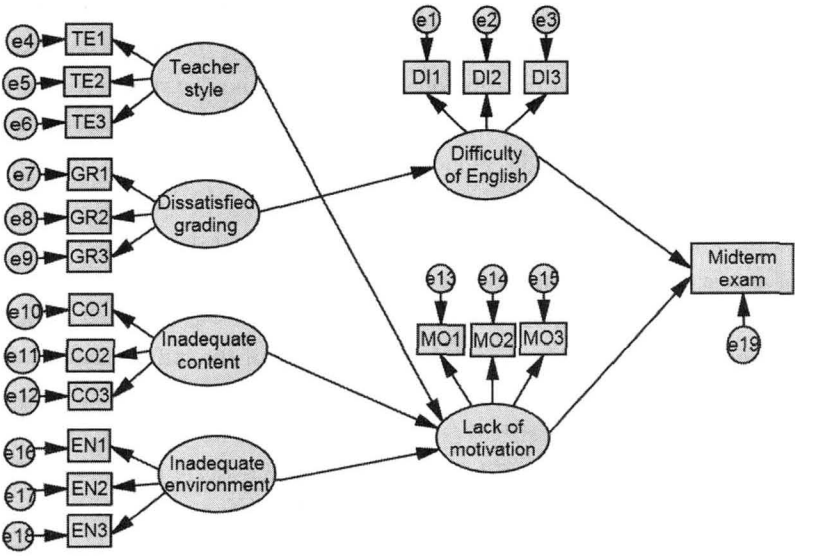
Table 4 presents model-data fit statistics of each model tested. Model 1, which examined the causal relationships of the baseline measurement model, resulted in unsatisfactory fit indices (χ^2 = 344.42, χ^2/df = 3.34, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .078). In Model 2, a latent variable *inadequate learning environment*, which yielded the non-significant path loading between *inadequate learning environment* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, was deleted. The results of Model 2 showed a chi-square of 206.24 with 63 degrees of freedom. The ratio of the chi-square to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df = 3.13) was still more than the recommended cutoff value of 2.0 for concluding a satisfactory model-data fit. Other fit statistics (CFI = .91, RMSEA = .070) also presented an unacceptable fit of the model. In Model 3, the number of the latent variables retained the

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

same with those in Model 2, but the direct path between *difficulty of English learning* and *inadequate learning contents* was added. The results of Model 3 produced the best fit to the data (χ^2 = 128.62, χ^2/df = 2.07, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .059) out of the three tested models.

FIGURE 1

Measurement Model of the Relationship between Demotivation and L2 Achievement



Note. DI: Difficulty of English learning; TE: Teachers' teaching styles; GR: Dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system; CO: Inadequate learning contents; MO: Lack of motivation and interest in learning English; and EN: Inadequate learning environment

TABLE 4

Model-fit Indices for the Relationship between Demotivation and L2 Achievement

Model	Latent variables	χ^2	*df*	*p*-value	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA
1	DI, TE, GR, CO, MO, EN	344.42	103	.001	3.34	.88	.078
2	DI, TE, GR, CO, MO	278.51	102	.001	2.73	.92	.067
3	DI, TE, GR, CO, MO	128.62	62	.001	2.07	.94	.059

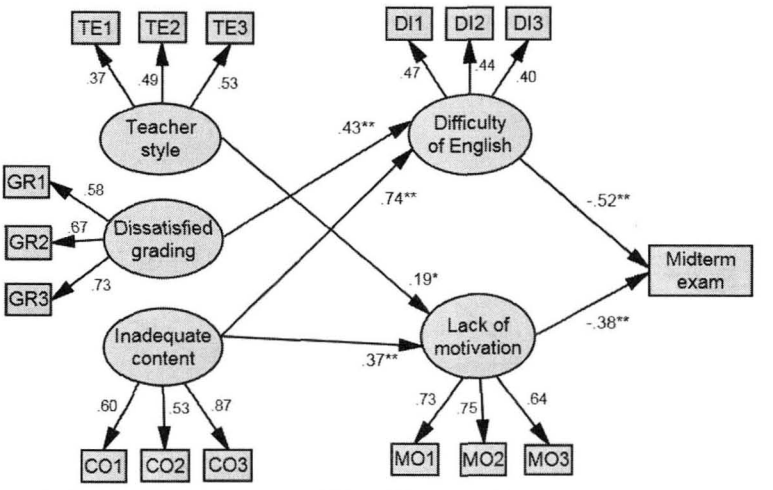
Model 3 demonstrated to be the only model that adequately represents the present data. The path diagram including path coefficients of Model 3 is presented in Figure 2 for close investigation. All the path coefficients were statistically significant at the alpha level of .05 or less. The results showed that demotivation was negatively related to L2 achievement. Students' demotivation of *difficulty of English learning* (β = -.52) was the most significant predictor of their English achievement in the Korean EFL context. Furthermore, students' *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* (β = -.38)

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

showed a negative direct path to their L2 achievement. On the other hand, students' demotivation of *teachers' teaching styles* and *inadequate learning contents* showed positive direct relations to their *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, which in turn significantly predicted their English achievement as measured by midterm exam scores. This means that EFL students who tend to dissatisfy with their teachers' teaching styles and with English coursebooks are likely to lack of motivation toward and interest in learning English, which in turn make a significant negative contribution their English exam scores. Students' dissatisfaction with *inadequate learning contents* was also a significant predictor of their *difficulty of English learning* factor. The same pattern was observed between *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system* and *difficulty of English learning*, meaning that when the students dissatisfy with their English lessons and grading system, they tend to show greater perception of difficulty of learning English. Overall, the results of the present SEM analyses produced that Korean EFL students' demotivation due to *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* was a significant direct negative predictor of their English achievement, while *teachers' teaching styles*, *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system*, and *inadequate learning contents* were indirectly predicted L2 achievement through *difficulty of English learning* or *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*, which played as a mediating role in the model.

FIGURE 2

The Final SEM for Demotivation and L2 Achievement



Note. *means significant path loading at $p < .05$ and ** at $p < .001$.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

3. Gender Differences in the Structural Model

As suggested by Table 5, although girls students showed a little higher mean score of the English exam than boys, *t*-tests produced statistically non-significant differences (t = -.762, p = .447) between the two gender groups. The final SEM as shown in Figure 2 was used for the subsequent analysis of gender differences. The SEM for girls showed a better fit to the data than boys', as examined by several fit indexes.

TABLE 5

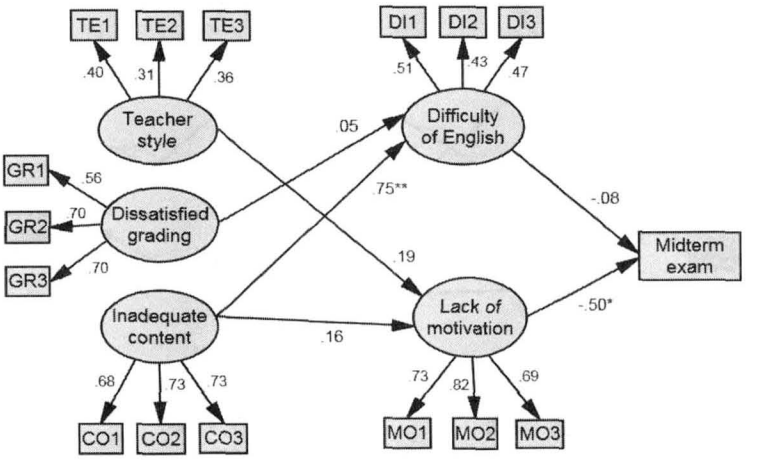
Model Fit Statistics for Demotivation and L2 Achievement by Gender

	Mean	*SD*	χ^2	*p*-value	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA
Boys (n = 156)	65.95	21.62	328.36	.001	3.22	.86	.094
Girls (n = 195)	67.60	18.80	156.00	.001	1.53	.95	.051

Figure 3 presents the path diagram of the structural model between demotivation and L2 achievement for the boys group. The students' *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* (β = -.50) was a single significant predictor of their English achievement, as demonstrated by the direct negative path coefficient between the two. Furthermore, the direct positive significant relationship was observed only between *difficulty of English learning* and *inadequate learning contents* among the five latent variables. The results showed that there were no latent variables that mediate between demotivating factors and L2 achievement, indicating the non-significant path coefficients

FIGURE 3

The Structural Model for the Boys Group

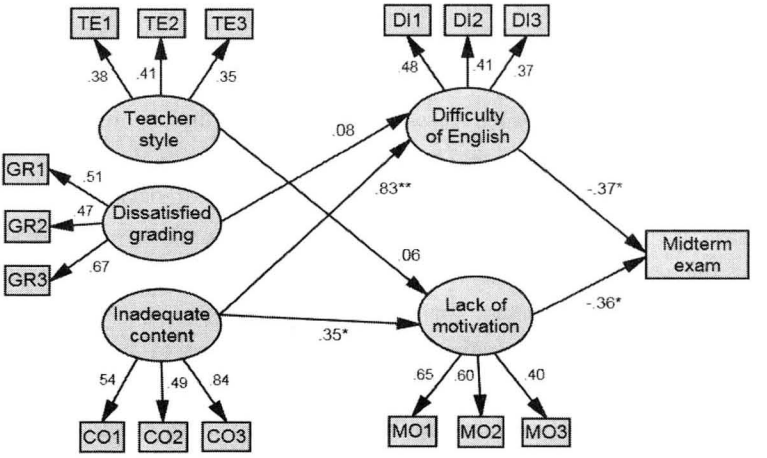


Note. *means significant path loading at $p < .05$ and ** at $p < .001$.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

The causal relationship model for girls, as shown in Figure 4, suggested that students' L2 achievement showed significant, negative, direct associations with *difficulty of English learning* (β = -.37) and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* (β = -.36). Furthermore, unlike the SEM for boys, the standardized parameter estimates for the direct paths between *difficulty of English learning* and *inadequate learning contents* and between *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* and *inadequate learning contents* revealed statistically significant, meaning that *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* played as mediator variables in the structural relationships among demotivating factors affecting L2 achievement. However, the causal relationships with *teachers' teaching styles* and *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system* produced non-significant path coefficients.

FIGURE 4
The Structural Model for the Girls Group



Note. *means significant path loading at $p < .05$ and ** at $p < .001$.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study identified demotivating factors in learning English for Korean high school students and established the SEM by examining the structural relationships among demotivating factors affecting L2 achievement. It also investigated the gender differences in the structural model. The results of the factor analysis produced six demotivating constructs: *difficulty of English learning*, *teachers' teaching styles*, *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system*, *inadequate learning contents*, *lack of motivation and*

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

interest in learning English, and *inadequate learning environment*. This finding provided support to the multidimensional characteristics of L2 demotivation factors (Dörnyei, 2001; Falout et al., 2009; Kim, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Furthermore, both external and internal factors were extracted although internal one (e.g., *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*) was not a strong demotivator ($M = 2.27$). This finding, hence provided further evidence for the mixed nature of demotivation, suggesting that internal constructs cannot be ignored; instead, both internal and external (e.g., *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system*) constructs contribute to student demotivation.

In line with the previous research, the study found that EFL high school students' demotivation was attributed more to external factors than internal ones, indicating that *difficulty of English learning* and *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system* were the two strongest demotivators (Jung, 2011; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007). However, contrary to many previous findings (Dörnyei, 2001; Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Trang & Baldauf, Jr., 2007; Zhang, 2007), *teachers' teaching styles* was not perceived to be a source of demotivation showing the lowest mean score ($M = 2.15$) among the six factors. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also showed the comparable finding with Japanese senior high school students that the teacher-related factor was not a strong cause of student demotivation compared to other factors. This finding may be explained by cultural beliefs about the teachers that Korean students brought in classrooms (Kim, 2009). Korean students might think that the teachers have the power to decide what is taught and how to teach them in the classrooms. A cultural heritage of the Korean society also encourages the young students to respect and trust in their teachers' behaviors. Thus, instead of blaming their teachers for reducing their motivation to learn English, the students might attribute demotivating reasons to the nature of English learning (e.g., *difficulty of English learning*) or the grading system.

Concerning the structural relationships between demotivation and L2 achievement, the present study generated several important findings. The latent variable *inadequate learning environment* did not fit the structural model for demotivation and L2 achievement. It was neither significantly nor directly associated with *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* as specified in the present study, and thus it was deleted in the further SEM analyses. The non-significant role of *inadequate learning environment* in the Korean EFL students' L2 achievement is in line with the previous finding (Kim, 2009), in which all the items that concerned the insufficient learning environment were dropped from the factor analysis for some reasons such as low communality or factor loading, crossloading characteristics, meaning that they did not seem to cluster together in a demotivating factor for Korean EFL students.

Both *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* factors were significant negative direct predictors of L2 achievement. *Difficulty of*

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

English learning was also the strongest demotivator. The students' perception of difficulty in English learning may reflect their beliefs about English study that English is a difficult language to acquire because they should memorize an extensive range of vocabulary and study complicated grammar. Although the mean score of *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* was below the median score, as stated earlier, this factor was the second most significant predictor of L2 achievement. The present finding with respect to the importance of motivation and interest in L2 learning provided empirical evidence, which is consistent with the previous ones (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Kim, 2004; Pae, 2008).

In the meantime, *dissatisfaction with English lessons and grading system*, which was the second strongest demotivator, was indirectly related to the L2 achievement through the mediating role of *difficulty of English learning*. Likewise, *teachers' teaching styles* and *inadequate learning contents* were negatively, indirectly associated with L2 achievement through their direct influence on *lack of motivation and interest in learning English*. These results imply that the above-mentioned three demotivating factors alone are not sufficient to cause students' low achievement in the L2, although the students were demotivated by *teachers' teaching styles* or *inadequate learning contents*. Only when dissatisfaction with the teachers' teaching styles is connected with the students' lack of motivation or interest in L2 learning does the students' demotivation by *teachers' teaching styles* lead to the L2 achievement negatively. These results are consistent with previous L2 motivation research findings (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Pae, 2008; Vallerand et al., 1992), providing support to the socio-educational model of motivation in L2 learning, which is based on the assumption that attitudinal variables are indirectly related to L2 achievement through motivational constructs. The same pattern was obtained for *inadequate learning contents*, meaning that the students with a higher level of perception about the inadequacy of learning contents tend to show lower motivation toward L2 learning, which in turn make an important negative contribution to their L2 achievement.

In term of gender differences in the structural model, the two groups varied on certain points. While the differences were not statistically significant, girls had higher exam scores than boys, which are in line with several previous studies concerning females' superiority (Bing, 2011; Kim, 2004; Payne & Lynn, 2011). The clearest differences were found in the path diagrams including the magnitude of the path coefficients. The boys group showed that the students' *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* was a single significant causal factor of their L2 achievement, while the girls group demonstrated both *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* were directly negatively related to L2 achievement. Another substantial difference in the model was the causal relationship among latent variables. For boys *inadequate learning contents* alone was directly related to *difficulty of English learning*, which means that there were no

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

mediating variables between demotivation and L2 achievement. For girls, however, more complex path relationships among latent variables were observed. Girl students' *difficulty of English learning* and *lack of motivation and interest in learning English* played as mediating factors as well as direct causes of their L2 achievement. The reason behind the differences in the structural relationships between boys and girls might relate to contextual effects since the data for the present study were collected from two different high schools, boys and girls high schools. Why demotivating factors affecting L2 achievement differed by student gender is a question in need of further investigation.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study are at once encouraging and cautionary. It is encouraging that the students did not consider their English teacher as a demotivator. But it is somewhat troubling that the students perceived English learning as a difficult task, which demotivates them toward learning English. Clearly L2 teachers should continue to provide strong encouragement to the students and help them gain self-confidence in L2 learning. In order to remotivate the demotivated students by the difficulty of learning English, teachers should adjust learning contents and materials to the students' interest and proficiency level. By using a variety of teaching methods and classroom activities it may be possible to attract the students and to improve their understanding of lessons. At the same time, by presenting specific lesson objectives and by clearly explaining why we learn L2 and what we do in the classroom it possibly escalates students' motivation and interest. It is also important to recognize, however, that the demotivated students may not always be remotivated by the efforts of a teacher because demotivation is not solely external, but it includes internal factors like negative attitude within students themselves.

The findings of the present study must be interpreted in the light of several limitations. The first concerns the validity of examining demotivation with a survey items. If the study performed open-ended interviews with a structured questionnaire, it could have yielded more valid findings. The questionnaire containing different kinds of items could possibly discover other aspects of demotivation. The second has to with the associations between demotivation and L2 achievement. Although the study stated causal relationships between the two, other researchers based on different L2 motivation and demotivation literature may develop the baseline measurement model representing the causal relationship between the two variables differently. The path diagram reported here, thus, pertain to the groups studied. This also has to do with the generalizability of the structural model and findings. Extrapolations to other populations must remain cautious.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

The study's findings and limitations lead to a number of implications for future research. First, from the validity standpoint, because demotivation is based on external factors as well as internal forces, future studies need to include a variety of factors that are not treated in this study, in conjunction with think aloud protocols and detailed classroom observation to validate the questionnaire and to better explain demotivation factors found in the quantitative data. Second, from the measurement perspective, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures with suitable analysis methods will not only permit cross-validation of measures but also facilitate the identification of reliable patterns of learner demotivation. Finally, differences between boys and girls in the model inform us of the importance of considering contextual factors such as curriculum, geographic location, school population, and classroom atmosphere. Therefore, replications of L2 demotivation studies involving a variety of settings and levels of study will lead to greater understanding of demotivation bases and help the field flourish.

REFERENCES

Bentler, P. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural equation models. *Psychological Bulletin, 107,* 238-246.

Bing, H. (2011). *Demotivation of Korean EFL college students.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Chosun University, Gwangju, Korea.

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Byrne, B. M. (2001). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chambers, G. (1993). Taking the "de" out of demotivation. *Language Learning Journal, 7,* 13-16.

Clément, R., & Kruidenier, B. G. (1983). Orientations in second language acquisition: I. The effects of ethnicity, milieu, and target language on their emergence. *Language Learning, 33,* 273-291.

Costello, A. B., & Osborne, J. W. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 10*(7). Retrieved September 14, 2011, from the World Wide Web: http://pareonline.net/pdf/v10n7.pdf.

Csizér, K., & Dörnyei, Z. (2005). Language learners' motivational profiles and their motivated learning behavior. *Language Learning, 55*(4), 613-659.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation.* London: Longman.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Fabrigar, L. R., Wegener, D. T., MacCallum, R. C., & Strahan, E. J. (1999). Evaluating the use of exploratory factor analysis in psychological research. *Psychological Methods, 4*(3), 272-299.

Falout, J., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2009). Demotivation: Affective states and learning outcomes. *System, 37*(3), 403-417.

Falout, J., & Falout, M. (2005). The other side of motivation: Learner demotivation. In K. Bradford-Watts, C. Ikeguchi, & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT 2004 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 280-289). Tokyo: JALT.

Falout, J., & Maruyama, M. (2004). A comparative study of proficiency and learner demotivation. *The Language Teacher, 28*(8), 3-9.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation.* Baltimore, MD: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R., & MacIntyre, P. (1991). An instrumental motivation in language study: Who says it isn't effective? *Studies on Second Language Acquisition, 13,* 57-72.

Gorham, J., & Christophel, D. M. (1992). Students' perceptions of teacher behaviors as motivating and demotivating factors in college classes. *Communication Quarterly, 40*(3), 239-252.

Gorham, J., & Millette, D. M. (1997). A comparative analysis of teacher and student perceptions of sources of motivation and demotivation in college classes. *Communication Education, 46*(4), 245-261.

Hamada, Y., & Kito, K. (2008). Demotivation in Japanese high schools. In K. Bradford Watts, T. Muller, & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT 2007 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 168-178). Tokyo: JALT.

Hollis, S. (1997). Analysis of method comparison studies. *JIFCC, 9,* 8-12.

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6,* 1-55.

Jung, S. K. (2011). Demotivating and remotivating factors in learning English: A case of low level college students. *English Teaching, 66*(2), 47-72.

Kim, K. J. (2004). A structural model for English achievement based on motivation, gender, and academic majors. *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics, 20*(1), 59-80.

Kim, K. J. (2009). A comparative analysis of demotivaiton in secondary English classes. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 15*(4), 75-94.

Kim, T. (2011). Korean elementary school students' English learning demotivation: A comparative survey study. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 12,* 1-11.

Kouritzin, S. G., Piquemal, N. A., & Renaud, R. D. (2009). An international comparison of socially constructed language learning motivation and beliefs. *Foreign Language Annals, 42,* 287-317.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Lukmani, Y. M. (1972). Motivation to learn and language proficiency. *Language Learning, 22,* 261-273.

Mitchell, J. V. (1992). Interrelationships and predictive efficacy for indices of intrinsic, extrinsic, and self-assessed motivation for learning. *Journal of Research & Development in Education, 25,* 149-155.

Nikolov, M. (2001). A study of unsuccessful language learners. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp.149-169). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Pae, T. (2006). The effects of gender and academic backgrounds on the structural model of English achievement. *English Teaching, 61*(3), 255-271.

Pae, T. (2008). Second language orientation and self-determination theory: A structural analysis of the factors affecting second language achievement. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 27,* 5-27.

Payne, T. W., & Lynn, R. (2011). Sex differences in second language comprehension. *Personality and Individual Differences, 50,* 434-436.

Preacher, K. J., & MacCallum, R. C. (2003). Repairing Tom Swift's electric factor analysis machine. *Understanding Statistics, 2,* 13–43.

Rudnai, Z. (1996). *Demotivation in learning English among secondary school students in Budapest.* Unpublished master thesis. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom. *System, 37,* 57-69.

Trang, T. T., & Baldauf, Jr., R. B. (2007). Demotivation: Understanding resistance to English language learning: The case of Vietnamese students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 4*(1), 79-105.

Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university: Exploring the role of motivational thinking. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 93-125). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., Blais, M. R., Brière, N. M., Senécal, C., & Vallières, E. F. (1992). The academic motivation scale: A measure of intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation in education. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 52,* 1003-1017.

Wen, X. (1997). Motivation and language learning with students of Chinese. *Foreign Language Annals, 30,* 235-251.

Yang, E. (2011). Korean college students' English learning motivation and listening proficiency. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 17*(2), 93-114.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Zhang, Q. (2007). Teacher misbehaviors as learning demotivators in college classrooms: A cross-cultural investigation in China, Germany, Japan, and the United States. *Communication Education, 56,* 209-227.

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Secondary

Kyung Ja Kim
Department of English Education
Chosun University
309 Pilmun-daero, Dong-gu
Gwangju 501-759, Korea
Tel: (062) 230-6994
Email: kyung9@chosun.ac.kr

Received in October, 2012
Reviewed in November, 2012
Revised version received in December, 2012

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre