



Thai Students' Demotivation and Remotivation in an Advanced EFL Writing Class:

A Case Study of English Major Students at Ramkhamhaeng University

การลดและการเพิ่มแรงจูงใจของนักศึกษาไทยในการเรียนวิชาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็น
ภาษาต่างประเทศระดับสูง: กรณีศึกษาของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษมหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหง

Dr. Thitirat Phukanchana¹

Abstract

This study explores internal and external factors that demotivate Thai EFL university students and the ways in which they remotivate themselves to engage in an advanced EFL writing class. Participants were 40 English major students at Ramkhamhaeng University. The data were collected by a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. Results of the thematic analysis revealed that the theme of learner-related issues related to the internal factors that demotivated the students. As for the external factors, the themes concerning teaching methods, teaching materials, and learning environments emerged from the analysis. With respect to the students' remotivation, the study found the following themes: Goal attainment, perceived benefits of the subject, prospects of a good future, and social support. Overall, the ways the students remotivated themselves reflect the students' self-reliance, their determination to improve their writing ability, and their positive thinking toward their future. However, this study indicates that internal factors related to the students are more influential than the external ones, particularly in the context of teaching and learning at Ramkhamhaeng University,

¹Lecturer, Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Ramkhamhaeng University

E-mail: thiti77@gmail.com



an open-admission university, where class attendance is not required, so the students need more self-reliance than normal to carry out their studies.

Keywords: demotivation; remotivation; writing; Thai EFL university students

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาปัจจัยภายในและภายนอกที่ส่งผลต่อการลดแรงจูงใจในการเรียนของนักศึกษาไทยในวิชาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศระดับสูง และศึกษาวิธีที่นักศึกษาเพิ่มแรงจูงใจในการเรียน นักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหงจำนวน 40 คน ร่วมตอบแบบสอบถามและสัมภาษณ์ ผลของการวิเคราะห์แก่นเนื้อหาพบว่า ปัจจัยภายในที่เกี่ยวข้องกับตัวผู้เรียนมีผลทำให้แรงจูงใจในการเรียนลดลง และจากการวิเคราะห์แก่นเนื้อหาปัจจัยภายนอกได้แก่ปัจจัยที่เกี่ยวกับผู้สอน เช่น การสอน สื่อการสอนและสิ่งแวดล้อมในการเรียน ส่วนผลการศึกษาการเพิ่มแรงจูงใจพบว่า นักศึกษามุ่งเน้นการบรรลุเป้าหมายในการเรียนและจบการศึกษา การรับรู้ถึงประโยชน์ของการเรียนวิชานี้ การมีความคิดเชิงบวกเกี่ยวกับการมีอนาคตที่ดี และการสนับสนุนจากเพื่อน ครอบครัวและครู โดยภาพรวมการเพิ่มแรงจูงใจของนักศึกษาสะท้อนการพึ่งพาตนเอง ความมุ่งมั่นที่จะพัฒนาความสามารถในการเขียนและการคิดเชิงบวกต่ออนาคตตนเอง อย่างไรก็ตาม การศึกษานี้ชี้ให้เห็นว่าปัจจัยภายในที่สัมพันธ์กับผู้เรียนมีอิทธิพลต่อการลดและการเพิ่มแรงจูงใจมากกว่าปัจจัยภายนอก โดยเฉพาะในกรณีของการเรียนการสอนที่มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหงซึ่งเป็นมหาวิทยาลัยเปิดและไม่มีการกำหนดให้นักศึกษาต้องเข้าชั้นเรียน ดังนั้น นักศึกษาจึงจำเป็นต้องพึ่งพาตนเองในการเรียนมากกว่านักศึกษาทั่วไป

คำสำคัญ: การลดแรงจูงใจ; การเพิ่มแรงจูงใจ; การเขียน; นักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ



Introduction

In recent years, inquiries into the demotivating factors have drawn the attention of scholars in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) to the negative effects of demotivation on EFL and ESL students' learning achievement (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Bahramy & Araghi, 2013). Research on EFL students' demotivation (e.g., Afrough & Zarafshan, 2014; Bahramy & Araghi, 2013; Falout & Falout, 2005; Kikuchi, 2009; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Li & Zhou, 2013; Sakui & Cowie, 2012) identified various factors that adversely impact students' success in foreign language learning. Furthermore, previous studies (e.g., Dornyei, 1998; Haque, 2009; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009) on demotivation indicated that different groups of students and contexts resulted in dissimilar demotivating factors. With such differences, it is indispensable for EFL researchers to investigate the impact of both internal and external factors on students' demotivation in

various EFL classroom contexts. Out of the four English skills, writing has been identified as the most difficult skill for EFL students because the learners require both syntactic and lexical knowledge to convey their ideas and thoughts into written texts (Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). It is evident that insufficient linguistic knowledge negatively affects the students' writing ability.

While there are many studies on EFL students' demotivation, the amount of researches on demotivation of Thai students is limited, particularly that of EFL students at Ramkhamhaeng University. Weaving previous studies of EFL learners' demotivation with her teaching experience in advanced EFL writing classes at Ramkhamhaeng University, the researcher supposed that there may be certain factors negatively affecting the students' motivation to learn. The motivation reduction was manifested in the decreasing number of students attending classes, the low number of turned-in writing assignments,



students' complaints about learning difficulty, and other issues. Therefore, it is worthwhile to postulate that those factors may account for Ramkhamhaeng University students' demotivation in EFL writing classes; however, these problems have not been adequately investigated. Then, to have a better understanding of the causes that reduce Ramkhamhaeng EFL students' motivation and how they would remotivate themselves when engaging in EFL writing classes, the researcher believed that a thorough investigation was warranted.

Concept of Motivation

Dornyei (1998) defined motivation as "a process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other forces come into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached" (Dornyei, 1998, p. 118). The process-oriented view of motivation suggests that learner motivation is not static; in contrast, it can be

increased, decreased, or maintained due to the occurrence of any factor that has an effect on it. In the field of cognitive psychology, motivation is categorized as instrumental and integrative. From a different viewpoint, social psychology divides motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. A study by Gan, Humphreys and Hamp-Lyons (2004) found that intrinsic motivation was a key factor in successful EFL learning. They stated that most successful EFL students relied mainly on internal factors, including their interest, learning progress, self-confidence, and self-efficacy (Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004, p. 240). The following section turns to concepts of demotivation and research on factors that reduce learners' motivation in learning EFL.

Definition of Demotivation

Dornyei, who has done extensive research on motivation, defined demotivation as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a



behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dornyei, 2001, p. 143). His definition is consistent with that of Zhang (2007), namely, that demotivation is identified as the force that decreases learners’ energy to learn (p. 213). In his structured interviews with demotivated students in Hungary, Dornyei (2001) found nine demotivating factors, including external factors such as teacher’s competence and insufficient school facilities, as well as internal forces involving students’ self-confidence and attitude. Furthermore, subsequent research (e.g., Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Falout et al., 2009; Kikuchi, 2009) asserted that internal factors were a cause of students’ demotivation. Similarly, based on their empirical studies, Falout and Maruyama (2004) found that students’ self-confidence was the crucial demotivating factor for the high-and low-proficiency students. As Kikuchi (2011) and Dinius (2013) pointed out, whether internal factors should also be conceptualized as demotivators is still debatable. However, there is a number of demotivation researchers

(Bahramy & Araghi, 2013; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Hamada, 2011; Jung, 2011; Kikuchi, 2011; Dinius, 2013; Li & Zhou, 2013) who identified both internal and external forces as demotivating factors in their studies. With reference to the previous studies of demotivation, this study, therefore, adds internal factors to Dornyei’s (2001) definition of demotivation, thus defining demotivating factors as external and internal forces that diminish students’ motivation to engage in an EFL writing course (Dornyei, 1998; Li & Zhou, 2013). To understand the impacts of demotivation, the next section presents previous research on students’ demotivation in EFL and ESL classes.

Demotivation in Various EFL and ESL

Contexts

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing number of studies on demotivation in EFL and ESL contexts (Aliakbari& Hemmatizad, 2015; Dornyei, 2001; Falout & Falout, 2005; Kikuchi, 2009; Sakui



& Cowie, 2012; Soureshjani & Riahipour, 2012; Li & Zhou, 2013). Many researchers (e.g., Kikuchi, 2009; Sakui & Cowie, 2012; Soureshjani & Riahipour, 2012; Li & Zhou, 2013) pointed to the importance of demotivation in EFL learning and explored causes or sources of demotivation. In his study of 50 demotivated students in Hungary, Dornyei (1998) found nine demotivating factors related to teachers' personalities, teaching method, insufficient school facilities, students' reduced self-confidence, students' negative attitudes towards the foreign language studied, and textbooks used in class. Of the nine factors, the factors concerning teachers occurred with the highest frequency. Similarly, Kikuchi and Sakai (2009) investigated 112 Japanese private university students' causes of demotivation and found five main factors: course books, inadequate school facilities, test scores, noncommunicative methods, and teachers' competence and teaching styles (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009, p. 197). With respect to previous results, EFL learning context is inevitably

linked to learners' diminished motivation. Importantly, Gorham and Millette (1997) contended that the most frequently mentioned cause of demotivation by the students was the lack of teachers' enthusiasm and ability to instruct them (Gorham & Millette, 1997, as cited in Falout & Falout, 2005, pp. 280-282). However, Falout and Falout (2005) claimed that teacher personalities or traits that reduce learner motivation seem to be universal and specific. While studies in Europe and North America lean toward favoritism by teachers, some studies (e.g., Arai, 2004; Falout & Falout, 2005) in Japan identified negative teacher behavior, such as being aggressive, critical, and fussy and humiliating the students, as demotivating (Arai, 2004, as cited in Falout & Falout, 2005, p. 282). Jung (2011) found four major demotivating factors: external, internal, learning situation (classroom/ outside classroom), and learner factors. Furthermore, the study revealed that the learning situation factor caused more demotivation than did the



learner factor. In the learning situation category, difficulty of English and low test scores were ranked first and third, respectively, while lack of will to study English in the learner category was ranked second. According to Jung, the learning situation factor includes teaching and learning processes and is considered an external factor, and the learner factor, concerned with learners' feelings, perceptions, and interest, is categorized as an internal factor. Jung pointed out that the external factors seem more influential than the internal. In accordance with the influence of external factors on student's demotivation, Haque (2009) illustrated learning demotivation that Bangladeshi EFL students faced in their large classroom. Haque concluded that large classes hinder teaching and learning EFL, and contribute to students' low task performance (p. 7). Li and Zhou (2013) conducted a comparative study of demotivation in Chinese and Korean college EFL students. Both groups had somewhat similar demotivators (i.e., the

teachers, confidence deficiency, inadequate facilities, and learning environment). Li and Zhou's (2013) study pointed to culture-specific features of demotivating factors. As known, Confucian philosophy emphasizes hierarchy. Children are brought up to be obedient to their parents and teacher's authority and the expectations of their parents and teachers. It is apparent that influence of traditional Confucianism in both Korea and China allows teachers to have unchallengeable authority in a classroom

Conceptualization of Remotivation

Research on remotivation in EFL classes is scarce, although understanding of how students regain their motivation is essential for student learning achievement. As is widely known, learning a foreign language can be stressful and can negatively impact learners' motivation. Falout (2012) claimed that learners can avoid or survive a stressful learning environment through a process whereby the learners shape their



thoughts, feelings, and behavior in ways that are helpful and adaptive toward EFL learning (p. 2). While demotivation causes a reduction in a student's motivation to learn a foreign language, remotivation is referred to as a recovery process of motivation (Li & Zhou, 2013). Likewise, Sahragard and Ansari-pour (2014) viewed remotivation as steps to revitalize students' reduced motivation (p. 89). As many researchers agree on the concept of remotivation, this study of EFL students' remotivation will, therefore, explore the ways that the students use to cope with their pressures, to make sense of their situations and reflective behavior, and to recover their motivation to engage in EFL classes (Falout et al., 2013, p. 328).

Remotivation in EFL Contexts

Carpenter et al., 2009 found certain strategies the students intentionally used to remotivate themselves, for example out-of-class self-regulated action (e.g., became more diligent in self-regulated study),

cognitive/affective modification (e.g., Consulted with friends, family or teachers for emotional support and encouragement), in-class self-regulated action (e.g., became more diligent with teacher-regulated tasks), goal focus (e.g., focused on personal long-term goal), and demotivator avoidance (e.g., took a break from study)(Carpenter et al., 2009, pp. 273-274). A study by Ushioda (1998) pointed to the hindrance that prevents students from remotivation. She explained that self-blame creates a negative affective state. Students need to control their negative forces that counter their motivation to learn. When students start blaming themselves, they lose both motivation and the belief that they are able to bring back their motivation. The more students blame themselves, the worse they perform and vice versa. In effect, this becomes an affective cycle. It is apparent that the students attribute their demotivation to themselves is an internal factor. To get out of the harmful affective cycle, students, therefore, need to control their affective state by doing two things:



(1) disconnecting their demotivating experience from internal factor such as themselves and (2) believing that they are able to motivate themselves again. Ushioda affirmed that if students can control their affective states, they can continue their studies (Ushioda, 1998, as cited in Falout & Falout, 2005, p. 287). Apart from certain strategies to bring back remotivation, some research indicated that students themselves are critical factor to the process of remotivation (Carpenter et al., 2009, Falout, 2012,). Carpenter et al. found that students with positive experiences were more likely to employ various remotivating strategies, and they were more creative and productive than those with negative experience. Namely, the students with positive past experience employed remotivating strategies in a variety of social contexts rather than only the classroom. Consistent with previous research on remotivation, Falout (2012) indicated that students with positive past experience used more social networks for obtaining support. The results showed

that students with a positive self-concept tended to use numerous adaptive processes simultaneously to stay motivated in their learning. In contrast, learners with a negative self-concept showed a slower development in using adaptive processes, and some learners may never recover from demotivation. The results derived from Falout et al. (2009) and Falout (2012) consistently point to interaction between remotivation and social networks, such as teachers, peers, and family; the network clearly plays a crucial role in recovering and maintaining learners' motivation to keep them engaged in EFL learning. Interestingly, Falout's studies showed that caring instructors were a remotivating factor that could bring students' motivation back on track (p. 98).

Writing in a Thai EFL Classroom Context

In her article on teaching EFL writing in Thai contexts, Dueraman (2012) claimed that a considerable number of Thai high school students graduate with no or little experience in English writing practice. She



added that university students with a non-English major are not taught to write an English composition. Only English major students are required to enroll in writing courses. It is known that developing writing skills, particularly for EFL students, is not an easy task to achieve in a short period of time. Writing is not a simple productive language skill but involves complex cognitive processes (Zakaria & Mugaddam, 2013; Buyukyavuz & Cakir, 2014). Essentially, EFL students need to pay attention at various levels, including developing and organizing their ideas, and dealing with both grammar and lexis (Buyukyavuz & Cakir, 2014, p. 154). To explain why writing in English is difficult for foreign language learners, Buyukyavuz and Cakir (2014) stated that the difficulty is in how the learners generate and organize their ideas, and transform the ideas to text suitable for the writing context. Braughton et al. (2003) added that learners have problems with the mechanics use of the English script, inaccurate grammatical usage and vocabulary,

selection of writing style appropriate for the context, and developing and expressing the intended ideas (Braughton et al., 2003, as cited in Buyukyavuz & Cakir, 2014, p. 154). In effect, writing involves critical thinking in each stage of the writing process.

With respect to challenges EFL teachers and students encounter in Thai EFL classrooms, Dueraman (2012) analyzed each of them in detail. First, lack of skilled English writing teachers at levels lower than university prevents students from developing their writing skills when they enter the university level. It is apparent that ineffective EFL writing teachers become a possible cause of students' lack of productive language skills. Ineffective EFL teachers may not wish to emphasize writing practice; therefore, students have less opportunity to perform. Second, since writing is a difficult skill to acquire for most EFL learners, and often has little or no application to their work; therefore, Thai students pay less attention to improving their writing skill. The third



challenge involves limited writing resource for EFL learners, together with students' lack of interest in studying from other sources in addition to their main textbook. Fourth, the use of traditional methods employed by Thai teachers does not enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This method mainly focuses on grammar and sentence structure but ignores necessary skills critical to develop students' independent learning. With reference to significant writing skills, Elbow (1998) similarly agrees that learners need the ability to construct words and ideas, and in the meantime they require a skill to help them decide which to use in their written texts. Therefore, creativity and critical thinking are required for effective EFL writing (Elbow, 1998, as cited in Zakaria & Mugaddam, 2013, p. 1). Lastly, feedback from teachers or peers is useful in helping students to improve their performance. Students want feedback that assists them in improving organization and expression of ideas they want to communicate via the written texts,

rather than focusing only on grammatical errors. Furthermore, a cultural reason for Thai students' poor proficiency in English is highlighted in Rajeevnath's (2015) article. Rajeevnath noted that collectivism and hierarchy, two cultural aspects of Thai society, play a crucial role in regulating relationships of Thai people. As he exemplified, a teacher is socially and culturally perceived to be superior to students. When students want to question the teacher's feedback on the assignment, they may be afraid of doing so, because the cultural norms of Thai classroom context do not promote an exchange of ideas freely between students and a teacher. The next section turns to research questions of the study.

Research Questions

1. What are the external factors that demotivate Thai university students in EFL writing classes?
2. What are the internal factors that demotivate Thai university students in EFL



writing classes?

3. How do the students remotivate themselves to engage in their writing class?

Research Method

This study was designed as a qualitative case study of English major students at Ramkhamhaeng University. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select 40 students who enrolled in ENG 4401, an advanced writing course, in the first semester of the 2015 academic year. This study was divided into two phases; it used a questionnaire survey and a one-on-one semi-structured interview to collect the data. The first part of the questionnaire inquired about demographic information and the second part explored the students' demotivation and remotivation when they engaged in ENG 4401. With respect to the demotivation questions, the questionnaire asked whether the students experienced demotivation when they studied ENG 4401 and the causes of the students' demotivation. Some items in

the questionnaire concerning demotivation were adapted from Dornyei's (2001) nine demotivating factors including teacher's personality, teaching method, textbook, teaching materials, class environment, students' feeling toward the subject etc. In the remotivation part, the researcher asked about the way in which the students remotivated themselves to stay engaged in the subject. The items focusing on remotivation were derived from previous research in remotivation (Carpenter et al., 2009, Falout & Falout, 2005; Falout et. al., 2013). In the interview sessions, the researcher used the students' responses from the questionnaires survey as well as questions from previous research on demotivation (e.g. Dornyei, 2001; KiKuchi, 2009) and remotivation process which were adapted from the responses from the questionnaire and research by Carpenter et al.'s (2009).

Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed to



English major students who took ENG 4401 in the first semester of 2015. The students were asked for their voluntary participation. Ones who experienced learning demotivation and remotivation while they were studying ENG 4401 were purposefully selected as the participants. After the first step, the researcher scheduled interviews for each participant. The interviews ranged from 15 to 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded by a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants and conducted in a friendly conversational style.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed the data derived from the questionnaire survey as a supplement to data analysis. The data obtained from each interview were transcribed in MS-Word. Only the selected data extracts were translated from Thai into English. In this study, thematic analysis is a method used to seek in-depth information concerning the Thai EFL university students' demotivation

and remotivation in learning an EFL writing course. By employing thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2012) suggested, researchers are able to identify, organize, and gain insight into pattern of themes (meaning) of the data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six phases of thematic analysis, including: Familiarizing yourself with your data, generating with initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (p.16).

Results

The total number of participants is 40, consisting of 12 males and 28 females. Of the 40 participants, 13 students worked fulltime, 17 worked part-time, and 10 were unemployed at the time of studying ENG 4401. The majority of participants are aged between 20-30 years old, accounting for 75 % of the total. The interview period took place from mid - November 2015 to the beginning of February 2016.



Table 1 *External Factors in Demotivation*

Themes	Codes	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Teacher-related issues</i>	Teaching methods	17	35.4.%
	Teachers' personality	3	6.2%
<i>Learning environment</i>	Learning atmosphere	7	14.6%
	outside the classroom		
	Large classroom	6	12.5.%
	Weather	4	8.4%
	Number of students	2	4.1%
<i>Teaching materials</i>	Textbooks	9	18.8.%
Total		48	100%

Table 2 *Internal Factors in Demotivation*

Themes	Codes	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Learner-related issues</i>	Perceived lack of	21	31.4.%
	writing skills		
	Thoughts and feelings	15	22.3%
	related to learning		
	Work obligations and	15	22.3%
	time limitation		
	Lack of understanding	14	21.0%
	of course content		
	Financial concerns	2	3.0%
Total		67	100%

**Table 3** *Students' Remotivation*

Themes	Codes	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Goal Attainment</i>	Building self-confidence	35	19.6 %
	Focusing on self-improvement	31	17.3 %
	Attending class	18	10.1%
	Adjusting the attitude towards learning and teaching	11	6.1%
	Adjusting learning practice	11	6.1%
	Usefulness of the subject	31	17.3 %
<i>Perceived usefulness of the subject</i>	Usefulness of the subject	31	17.3 %
<i>A prospect of a good future</i>	Prospect of a good future	24	13.4%
<i>Social support</i>	Seeking support from family and friends	10	5.6%
	Seeking advice and support from teachers	8	4.5%
Total		179	100%

In relation to research question 1, concerning the external factors that demotivated the students from staying engaged in ENG 4401, the analysis of the data reveals three themes (factors): teacher-related issue, learning environment, and teaching materials.

Themes of Demotivation

Teacher-related issues (External factors)

This theme is concerned with the ways the students perceived various aspects of teacher-related issues, including their personality and teaching methods as factors that demotivated them in learning ENG 4401.



Questionnaire results show that teaching method accounted for 35.4 %, which is the most frequently mentioned externally demotivating factor. The following excerpts from the interviews are presented to illustrate the students' demotivation regarding the teaching method.

S. 7 "I think sometimes the assignment was too difficult. ...If students have to write something too difficult, they can be demotivated to produce their own work. And I think the way my instructor taught wasn't interesting."

S. 18 "When I attended class, I wanted the instructor to emphasize the important points but he or she didn't. It made me not want to attend class... ."

Learning environment (External factors)

The data analysis indicates that learning environment is ranked second. This theme involves the context of learning both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. In relation to learning in a classroom, the

students revealed that the weather on the day they attended class affected their concentration and motivation to study. In addition to the physical condition of the classroom and the weather, the learning atmosphere outside of the classroom, such as no friend to share the thoughts and feelings seemed to decrease the students' motivation to learn.

Teaching materials (External factors)

Teaching materials is ranked third among demotivating factors and accounts for 18.8%. This theme is concerned with materials and instruction tools such as textbook, supplementary sheets, and examples of writing. According to the account of the participants, the textbook was perceived as uninteresting. The following excerpt illustrated the students' perception of the textbook for ENG 4401 class:

S. 13 "The textbook was too old to get students want to read it. The paper was brown and wasn't inviting for us to read the book."



Learner-related issue (Internal factors)

Among the internal factors found in this study, the first three factors most mentioned by the students are their perceived writing deficiency, their thoughts and feelings regarding learning and teaching ENG 4401, and work obligation. The students' perceived writing ability occurred with the highest frequency 31.4%, as shown in Table 2. The following are excerpts illustrating ENG 4401 students' difficulty in writing:

S. 2 "I am not good at writing. I don't know how to write and connect my idea in one sentence to another. ...It is difficult to begin writing each time. I know I didn't read much."

The analysis of the data revealed four themes of remotivation as in the following:

Themes of Remotivation

Goal attainment

The first theme highlights the ways the participants increased their self-confidence,

and determination to improve themselves, making adjustments to their attitude and practicing learning so that they could pass the exam and ultimately graduate. As shown in Table 3, building self-confidence and being determined to improve themselves are the two most common ways that the participants remotivated themselves, which account for 19.6% and 17.3% respectively. The following excerpts illustrate the point above:

S. 12 "When I practiced writing a lot, attended class, read a lot of passages, I gained confidence. And I took the instructor's advice. I am pretty sure that I can pass the exam."

S. 33 "Most of the will power came from me. I said if I got a good job, I could give more money to my mom. Therefore, I was determined to do better and pass the exam."

Perceived usefulness of the subject

This theme involves the way in which the students perceived that knowledge they would get from ENG 4401 was useful and would benefit them either in their current jobs or their other studies. According to the



data analysis, the perception of usefulness of the subject is mentioned by 31 students who employed this perception as a way to remotivate themselves, which accounts for 17.3%.

S. 11 "Nowadays, English is important. Your knowledge of that language is helpful for your career. Overall, taking English courses is beneficial for you."

Prospect of a good future

It concerns the students' expectation that they would get well-paid job, promoted to higher position, and have a better living condition if they could pass ENG 4401 and graduate. In accordance with the data, 24 students, which accounts for 13.4%, mentioned that they see a prospect of having a good future if they pass the exam and graduate. This perception enables them to stay engaged in the course despite their difficulties in work and studies.

Social support

The data analysis revealed that family, friends, and teachers are factors that constructively impacted students' remotivation process. Of 40 participants, 10 participants mentioned that they asked for advice from both friends and family, which accounts for 5.6%. In addition to the support from friends and family, the researcher found that 8 participants received the support from their instructor. Ushioda (2007) point out, social interactions with teachers, family, and friends become a prominent factor in students' remotivation (Ushioda, 2007, as cited in Carpenter et al., 2009, p. 265). Significantly, previous research had agreed that the teacher is a key factor in both demotivation and remotivation. The interview data show that the participants felt comfortable with the instructor who was friendly and helpful.

Discussion

Importantly, the demotivating factors discovered in this study illustrate the unique



characters of teaching and learning and of students at Ramkhamhaeng University. According to the interview data, it indicated that many students faced many challenges when they studied ENG 4401. For instance, students who work either fulltime or part-time do not have time to attend class; work obligation and their lack of understanding of the course content and their writing deficiency caused learning difficulties for them. Because writing is not just a language skill but involves a complex cognitive process (Zakaria & Mugaddam, 2013; Buyukyavuz & Cakir, 2014), the students need to know how to develop and organize their ideas. While writing, they encounter the problems with grammar and vocabularies. When students do not have time to gain knowledge from reading and practicing their writing, it seems impossible for them to learn how to develop and organize their thoughts and ideas and transform those ideas into a written work. As a result, they face many difficulties in creating a piece of writing. Their lack of

critical thinking, limited writing ability, and their negative thoughts and feelings about themselves and the course can destructively affect their motivation to be successful in their studies. For the external factors, teaching method was mostly mentioned as a demotivating factor. Many students indicated that the teaching method used in this writing class was not helpful for their writing improvement; moreover, it demotivated them from going to class. According to the data, the researcher found that students were not likely to question their instructor's teaching method. Although some of them thought the teaching method was not helpful, it is rare for them to voice their concerns. As Rajeevnath (2015) indicated, cultural aspects of Thai society regulate relationships of Thai students and their teachers. In Thailand, teachers are revered and generally perceived as knowledgeable and authoritative, so it is unusual to see Thai students question or argue with their instructors. According to Duenraman (2012), traditional methods of teaching with



an emphasis on grammar and sentence structure tend to ignore necessary skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills that promote students' independent learning, which is indispensable for Ramkhamhaeng University students particularly, who do not attend class on regular basis. If students were taught with traditional methods, it is most likely that students have a limited opportunity to learn how to generate, organize and transform their ideas in a way that was suitable for the context in which they were writing (Buyukyavuz & Cakir, 2014).

In addition to teaching method, the learning environments in which the learning and teaching take place can influence students' learning demotivation. According to the data, some students firmly stated that they did not want to attend class if the weather was uncomfortable. Besides, the large number of students does not allow the teachers to have enough time to provide their feedback and suggestion to help students with limited writing ability, especially since they are the

majority of the students in a classroom. Pertaining to the context of learning outside of the classroom, Ramkhamhaeng students find learning materials and resources limited. The number of learning materials, including textbooks and supplementary book required for certain courses, may be limited. That is, the numbers of students and of the learning materials are imbalanced. Further, some students mentioned that they did not have a friend or classmate with whom they could discuss the lesson learned in the classroom. Not having a friend to consult is also mentioned as a cause of their demotivation. Moreover, the students viewed that the textbook was uninteresting. Some students elaborated that the layout, font type, and the paper seemed out of date. Some said it did not motivate them to read the book. The result of the analysis is consistent with previous research (e.g. Dornyei, 2001 and Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009) that textbooks are perceived as a factor demotivating students who want to learn EFL.



In regard to research question 3 pertaining to the way in which the students remotivate themselves to stay engaged in their writing class, the researcher found that the students had an intention to strengthen their self-confidence, improve their writing ability, adjust their learning practice, maintain a positive attitude, and seek advice or suggestions from family, friends, and teachers. Of all the remotivating practices found in this study, strengthening self-confidence, increasing self-improvement and maintaining a positive attitude towards their studies and their future were the most common remotivating practices. With their positive attitude and confidence, the study shows that the participants tried to adjust their learning practice. Students who were aware of their writing difficulty became more diligent, attended class intentionally, were more engaged in writing practice sessions, and sought advice and support from family, friends, and the teacher. The adjustment of their learning practice allowed them to expose themselves to more English

written materials related to the course content, such as feature stories, and social and business letters. Techniques and strategies employed to improve their writing skill may vary, but most students agreed that practice helped them to write in English better.

Significantly, the research on students' demotivation and remotivation confirmed the process-oriented view of motivation, which claims that learner motivation is not static; it can be demotivated or remotivated owing to the occurrence of the factors that have an effect on it. Apart from that, knowing and understanding students' demotivation can help teachers to provide instructions suitable and effective for their students' writing ability. As Jung (2011) suggested, teachers should create a cooperative atmosphere for the students in the classroom (p. 67). A "study buddy" system in and outside the classroom could help students to get to know each other and help them to create a study group for themselves, according to Lunde (n.d.). Not only does the study buddy idea motivate



students to engage in the class work, but it also provides a platform where students can share their either positive or negative thoughts and feelings with classmates. Moreover, teaching material, textbooks, and teaching methods should be adjusted according to the students' learning ability. Consultation sessions and extra practices may be needed, specifically for students with limited writing ability. For students' remotivation, gaining some insight into the ways the students regained their learning motivation to stay engaged in the course may enable teachers to create a learning environment suitable for their students. As for students, knowing the ways they can remotivate themselves can help them to make the factors inside or outside them more favorable and helpful for their learning. Furthermore, sharing their remotivating practice with classmates could help other students to have a positive attitude toward the learning and be successful in their studies.

Limitations of the Study

With respect to the sample size, 40 participants selected in the study may not represent all the English major students who enrolled in the ENG 4401 course. The lack of "representativeness" of the sample may affect the research results because the small sample size provides limited data concerning the students' remotivation and demotivation. Nonetheless, the variety and range of responses is similar to those in other studies (e.g., Dornyei, 2001; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Kim, 2009; Li & Zhou, 2013). Additionally, the self-reported data obtained from the questionnaire survey and the interviews may raise a concern over the issue of accuracy. The self-reported data can be a source of bias. Therefore, the accuracy of the data is a consideration when the research results are interpreted and generalized.



Recommendations for Future Research

The line of research should be extended to investigate demotivation and remotivation among EFL teachers themselves and their perceptions of their students (e.g., Gorham & Millette, 1997) because the teachers' perceptions can influence their teaching. Moreover, if the teachers become demotivated, they may be unable to help increase students' motivation in learning.

(Sahragard & Alimorad, 2013, p. 320). Since this study explores Ramkhamhaeng University students' demotivation and remotivation in an EFL writing class, the other language skills such as speaking and reading should also be explored. Finally, future research is recommended to examine Thai EFL university students' demotivation and remotivation in other educational contexts.

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