The Motivating and Demotivating Factors at the Learning of English Center in Thailand

Bella Llego

Abstract—This study aims to investigate the motivating and de- motivating factors that affect the learning ability of students attending the English Learning Center in Thailand. The subjects of this research were 20 students from the Hana Semiconductor Co., Limited. The data were collected by using questionnaire and analyzed using the SPSS program for the percentage, mean and standard deviation. The research results show that the main motivating factor in learning English at Hana Semiconductor Co., Ltd. is that it would help the employees to communicate with foreign customers and managers. Other reasons include the need to read and write e-mails, and reports in English, as well as to increase overall general knowledge. The main de-motivating factor is that there is a lot of vocabulary to remember when learning English. Another de- motivating factor is that when homework is given, the students have no time to complete the tasks required of them at the end of the working day.

Keywords—Motivating, demotivating, English learning center, student communicate.

I. INTRODUCTION

HANA Semiconductor Co., Limited is a member of the Hana Microelectronic Group, which deals with manufacturing semiconductors, and has branches in the United States, China, and Thailand. The staff and administration aim to conduct their communications in English. For this reason, the company conducts classes for the staff as part of the training plan to upgrade their use and understanding of English, as well as to enable them to communicate with their superiors and customers. These classes also teach the students listening and understanding for the trainings and meetings, which are conducted by the company in English. Unfortunately, the attendance in these English classes decreases towards the end of the course. For these reasons, two ongoing classes were selected towards the middle of the course, and this study was conducted to investigate the motivating and demotivating factors that influenced attendance and lack of attendance among the students at the end of the course [1].

Two classes had a total of 40 students at the beginning, starting in August and running through to December, 2007. A pre- test taken from the Center for Professional Assessment (Thailand) TOEIC® Services, 2003 was given before the start of the course. The scores from the exams of 98 students ranged from 32 points to 73 points, out of a possible 100

Bella Llego is with the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, and Bangkok, Thailand (phone: +6621601492; fax: +6621601491; e-mail: leobelle14@hotmail.com).

points, with a mean of 49 points. The students who scored low were the ones encouraged to take the English classes. The classes were held in the training room of the Hana Semiconductor Co., Limited on Thursdays for the first class, and on Fridays for the second class, every week for an hour each. The classes on Basic English will be helpful for the students to develop their skills and boost their courage to speak and communicate. The lesson focuses on grammar as a tool of effective communication. As the classes proceed and the attendance gradually diminishes, progress in terms of the speaking capacity of the students is greatly diminished. As a result, the class was restructuring into one with 20 students scheduled to attend until mid-December. However, in the middle of May 2008, a new class will be organized, as the English classes are part of the company's training plan, which is developed by the Human Resources Department. Eleven students have inquired about the details, and two of those who took the proficiency exam showed an interest in joining.

Attendance in English classes at Hana Semiconductor Co., Limited declined, and 20 out of 40 students stopped attending the classes. This study aims to discover the reason to this obstacle that affects the learning process of the English students at Hana Semiconductor Co., Limited.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. What Is Motivation?

Motivation is a word that both teachers and learners use widely when they speak about language learning success or failure, and normally it is taken for granted that we understand what the term covers. This seemingly unambiguous understanding, however, contrasts starkly with the perception of motivation as a technical term in the psychological and applied linguistics literature. Although it is used frequently, the meaning of the concept can span such a wide spectrum that sometimes we wonder whether people are talking about the same thing at all. In fact, there have been serious doubts as to whether motivation is more than a rather obsolete umbrella term for a wide range of variables that have little to do with each other. Indeed, motivation has been considered as both affect (emotion) and cognition; it has been used as both a stable variable of individual difference (i.e., a trait) and a transient - state attribute; and it has even been characterized as a process that is in constant flux, going through ebbs and flows. Furthermore, motivation has been considered as both a factor internal to the learner (e.g., individual curiosity or interest) and a factor externally determined by the

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sociopolitical setup of the learner's environment (e.g., language attitudes influenced by the relationships within language communities) [2].

Moreover, motivation is defined as an internal force that arouses us to action, directs us in specific directions, and keeps us involved in certain activities. Learning and motivation are equally important for achievement. Learning allows us to acquire new knowledge and skills and motivation pushes us through the learning process. On the role language teacher's play when it comes to motivation, their explanation of the language taught in a traditional instructional environment is important in order to provide the right motivation to learn. Sometimes, the teacher's goal is to teach vocabulary and grammar to the students, and the students' goal is to pass the course rather than to be able to learn to use the language in their daily interactions. These goals do not allow students to acquire the target language and they do not retain the language for long. Therefore, students need to set their goals to learning by communicative interaction and use it in their daily communication and interaction. Teachers help by ensuring that lessons in the classroom motivate and allow the students to interact and communicate [3].

B. Why Do We Need Motivation?

Motivation plays a significant role in the process of learning a language. Language teachers cannot effectively teach a language if they do not understand the relationship between motivation and its effect on language acquisition. The core of motivation is what might be called passion, which relates to a person's intrinsic goals and desires. Successful learners know their preferences, their strengths and weaknesses, and effectively utilize strengths and compensate for weaknesses. Successful language learning is linked to the learner's passion, and instructors should find ways to connect to this passion.

Motivation is an important psychological concept that affects learning and performance in at least four ways: 1) Motivation increases on individual energy and activity level. 2) Motivation directs an individual toward certain goals. 3) Motivation promotes imitation of certain activities and persistence in those activities. 4) Motivation affects the learning strategies and cognitive processes the individual employs [3]. Many students seem naturally eager to learn, but some need their teachers to encourage, motivate, and inspire them: "The teacher's ability to motivate the students to keep their interest in those particular subjects on the right track and keep their interest that brought students to the course in the first place causes effective learning". The classroom is a place of transformation for the students and the result could be anything depending on what happens in the classroom. The teacher's role is to motivate the students to learn [4].

C. What Are the Types of Motivation?

Motivation is classified into two types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is based on external outcomes such as rewards and punishments. This motivation could bring a negative impact to the students, because with extrinsic motivation, it is not the total willingness of the student to learn; rather what pushes him is his interest in the rewards and fear of punishment. When a student is learning because he is promised a promotion or monetary reward, for example, he will be highly motivated to come to classes and learn, and achieve the goals that his company desires for him, i.e. to be able to speak in English. But when these rewards are taken away, like for example in cases where there is a low budget for English classes for the employees of the company, and where the employees may be forced to pay for the tuition. In this case, the learners may cease to come back to classes, and be de-motivated to spend the time and money for further studies. Extrinsic motivation is divided into two types. The first is Instrumental motivation, which refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for some specific purposes i.e. getting a job or traveling or taking the exam in the context of language learning. The second is Integrative motivation, and as the name implies, is the need to learn a target language to integrate successfully into the language community. Instrumental motivation plays an important role in the attitudes of the employee towards the learning of English as a second language. For example, if they aspire to get a higher paying job, or desire a promotion within the job, and if English were one of the criteria to satisfy, to reach their goals, (instrumental motivation) learning English and attending their English classes would be important to them. It is also instrumental motivation when they use the language to read memoranda and notices, e-mails that come in, and websites. Integrative motivation does not relate to this study because it was found that the students' reason for studying English was to communicate with the foreign bosses and customers. While, intrinsic motivation is the internal desire of students to learn, without the need for external outcomes, or whether it has some external payoff. There are no negative impacts in having intrinsic motivation. In addition, intrinsic motivation pushes the student to learn without rewards, because the need is innate [5].

1) English Communication Class

The English Communication Class is part of the training plan at HANA Semiconductor (Ayuthaya) Co., Limited for all employees. The main goal is to teach employees to listen and understand the meetings and training lectures conducted by the company in English, as well as to be able to communicate with foreign bosses and customers. English classes were held from August to December, 2007. Prior to that, an English proficiency test was given to the staff. A pre-test taken from the Center for Professional Assessment (Thailand) TOEIC® Services, 2003 was given before the start of the course. The scores of the exams of 98 students ranged from 32 to 73 with the mean of 49. Forty seats were allotted at the beginning of the course, with the students divided equally into two classes. The classes took place at the Training Room on the third floor of the Hana Ayuthaya Plant, Hi Tech Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand, 100 Moo 1, T. Ban-Len, A. Bang Pa-

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in, KM. 59. Asia Road, Ayuthaya 13160, Thailand. The classes lasted for one hour each at the beginning, on Thursdays and Fridays. After two months, the classes on Thursdays had decreased to only eight students attending regularly. The other class on Fridays had only 12 students attending. For this reason, the two classes were combined together and opted for one day classes on Thursdays, of one and a half hours duration each week. The textbook used was the Interchange, Book One (3rd Edition) [6].

The module is designed in four skills of English speaking, reading, writing and listening. This includes becoming more enjoyable, productive and responsible staff to teach eligible employees. Unfortunately, the pace of learning was very slow and the attendance fluctuated; the students cited lack of time due of the demands of their work and department as the main reason.

The students felt they were progressing slowly, but were attentive and cooperative in interacting with each other. They participated in some activities, but would not attempt to communicate in English. At the end of the course, 20 students remained of the original 40 [5].

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Subjects

The subjects were 20 students who stayed active until the end of the course. However, only 18 students responded in this survey since the other two did not return their questionnaires. Among the participating students, nine were female and nine were male. The dominant age group was 35 years old and up, and their dominant education level was a Bachelor's degree. There were six engineers, two auditors, one clerk, five trainers, one technician, two programmers and one systems analyst. Among these students, 40% had learned English for more than 10 years and for their English skills in listening, the average response was fair. For speaking skills, and for writing skills, the average response was fair as well. However, the reading skill level was a little different. There were two students who responded excellently [8].

B. Instruments

The questionnaires designed for this study were given to the students as an instrument employed to collect data needed for this survey study. These questionnaires were translated into the Thai language to make sure the students understood the questions being asked of them.

1) Details of Questionnaire

Part 1: includes the general information of the students about their sex, age, education background, and experience in learning English, as well as their language skills. Part 2: includes the motivation and de-motivation factors in learning English at Hana which break down to the sub items.

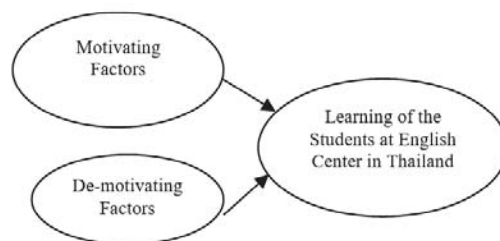The research conceptual framework is shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

2) Data Collection

The questionnaires which were written in English were translated into Thai and were given to 20 students in February, 2008. Eighteen questionnaires were returned within a week.

3) Data Analysis

For all the collected data, the SPSS program was employed for data analysis e.g. mean, percentage and standard deviation (SD).

IV. FINDINGS

The data of the subjects, details of the questionnaire, data collection and data analysis, are shown in Table I. While chapter four reports the findings of the analysis of the data.

TABLE I
DATA OF THE SUBJECT

Topic	General Information	Number	Percentage
(1) Gender	Male	9	50.0
	Female	9	50.0
	Total	18	100.0
(2) Age	20-23	0	0
	24-27	1	5.6
	28-31	5	27.8
	32-35	2	11.1
	Over 35 years	10	55.6
	Total	18	100.0
(3) Education	Vocational	1	5.6
	Diploma	2	11.1
	Bachelor's degree	15	83.3
	Total	18	100.0
(4) Job title	Engineer	6	33.3
	Auditor	2	11.1
	Clerk	1	5.6
	Trainer	5	27.8
	Technician	1	5.6
	Programmer	2	11.1
	Systems Analyst	1	5.6
	Total	18	100.0

The result indicates that of the students who answered the questionnaires, 50% (nine students) were males and 50% (nine students), were females. The majority of the students were in the age group of over 35 years old or 56% (10 students). The dominant education level was Bachelor's degree, with 83% (15 students). Career wise, Engineering dominates the others with 33.3% (six students). The highest number of years of learning English was more than 10 years, with 38.9% (seven students). There were 66.7% (12 students) students who had not attended an English tutorial school. For those who attended English tutorial schools, only 8.3% (one

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student) attended more than two years, and 33.3% (four students) attended English tutorial school for less than a year.

Eleven, 12, eight and 11 students rated their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, respectively, as "fair" [9].

TABLE II
MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Motivation in learning English	Strong agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total		Mean	S.D.	Opinion
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Learning English will help me understand the multi-cultural aspects of the language owner.	3	16.7	13	72.2	2	11.1	-	-	18	100	3.06	0.539	Agree
Learning English will help me communicate with foreign customers and bosses.	14	77.8	4	22.2	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.78	0.428	Strongly agree
Knowledge of English will help in my job promotions and new job opportunities.	9	50	8	44.4	1	5.6	-	-	18	100	3.44	0.616	Strongly agree
Knowledge of English will help me read and write e-mails.	11	61.1	7	38.9	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.61	0.502	Strongly agree
Knowledge of English will help me read English report.	11	61.1	7	38.9	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.61	0.502	Strongly agree
Ability to read English will help increase my knowledge	11	61.1	7	38.9	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.61	0.502	Strongly agree

The result indicates that the highest response was 77.8% (14 students) who strongly agreed with item 10, (Learning English will help me communicate with foreign customers and bosses,) and in item 17, 61.1% (11 students) disagreed with "I'd like to have foreign friends" as a motivating factor. The subjects strongly agreed or agreed with the rest of the questions in items 9 to 20 in this table on Motivation in Learning English.

The result indicates that 38.9% of the subjects (seven students) agreed that the highest de-motivating factor was: Learning English needs a lot of vocabulary. While 61.1% (eleven students) agreed that the exam result is poor even though they studied hard. The rest of the questions in De-motivation in Learning from item 21 to item 25 had a rating of Agree or, in other words, more than half of the subjects agreed.

TABLE III
DE-MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

De-motivation in learning English	Strong agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total		Mean	S.D.	Opinion
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
English words are hard to pronounce.	3	16.7	6.	33.3	9	50	-	-	18	100	2.67	0.767	Agree
Leaning English entails use of a lot of vocabulary.	7	38.9	6	33.3	5	27.8	-	-	18	100	3.11	0.832	Agree
English grammar has many rules and they are hard to remember.	2	11.1	10	55.6	6	33.3	-	-	18	100	2.78	0.647	Agree
No time for home work after work.	5	27.8	7	38.9	6	33.3	-	-	18	100	2.94	0.802	Agree
Teacher's pronunciation is hard to understand resulting in failing in the exam and inability to do the exercises.	1	5.6	10	55.6	6	33.3	1	5.6	18	100	2.61	0.698	Agree
The exam result is poor even though I study hard.	-	-	11	61.1	7	38.9	-	-	18	100	2.61	0.502	Agree
Mean of de-motivation in learning English=2.787													

TABLE IV
LEARNING STYLES IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Learning styles	Strong agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total		Mean	S.D.	Opinion
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
I will be able to understand grammar and write very well if I had enough exercises.	4	22.2	12	66.7	2	11.1	-	-	18	100	3.11	0.583	Agree
I will read very well if there are pictures from magazines, newspapers.	6	33.3	12	66.7	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.33	0.485	Strongly agree
I will listen very well if there is an exercise with the movies.	10	55.6	8	44.4	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.56	0.511	Strongly agree
I will speak very well if there is an audio tape for practicing.	9	50	9	50	-	-	-	-	18	100	3.5	0.514	Strongly agree
Mean of learning style = 3.375													

The result indicates that 55.6% of the subjects (10 students) strongly agreed that they would listen very well if there was an exercise with movies, and 100% (18 students) strongly agreed that they would speak very well if there were an audio tape to practice with. Meanwhile, 66.7% (12 students) also strongly agreed they would read well if there were pictures from magazines and newspapers, and 66.7% (12 students) agreed that they would be able to understand grammar and

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write very well if they had enough exercises. This table indicates a strong leaning of this group towards a learning style with authentic material [7].

V. CONCLUSION

There were 10 men and 10 women in the total of students; however, only nine men and nine women responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the age group was over 35 years old or 56% (10 students). Mostly, their education level was Bachelor's degree, accounting for 83% (15 students). Engineers dominated the other occupations at 33% (six students). The highest number of years of attending English classes was more than 10 years, showing as 38.9%, (seven students), while 66.7% (12 students) had not attended an English tutorial school. A total of 33.3% (six students) attended an English tutorial school for less than a year, while only 8.3% (one student) attended more than two years and only 5.6% (one student) attended for more than two years. Overall, the students rated their English skills as fair, with 61.1% (11 students) rating fair for listening skills, 66.7% (12 students) for speaking skills, 44.8% (eight students) for reading skills, and 61.1% (11 students) for writing skills. There were two students (11.1%) who rated their reading skills as excellent. Since the other students also rated this skill as fair, good and excellent, this implies that the reading skill does not need to be of so much focus for the next course, for this group, and the focus of the lessons could be on the other English skills.

A. Motivation in Learning English

Item 10 had the highest mean of 3.78 and strongly agree response, and item 12, 13 and 14 had the same second highest mean of 3.61 and strongly agree responses. On the other hand, item 17 had the lowest mean of 2.39 with disagree response. Most of the students ranked item 10 as the highest motivating factor for learning because they believed that knowledge of English would help them communicate with foreign customers and bosses; thus, 77.8% (fourteen students) strongly agreed with item 10 (Mean = 3.78), which is an instrumental motivation extrinsic in nature. The students ranked other motivating factors as Knowledge of English would help them read and write e-mails, (Mean = 3.61), Knowledge of English would help them read reports, (Mean = 3.61), and Ability to read English would increase their knowledge (Mean = 3.61). These are all extrinsic factors of motivation, specifically instrumental motivation, where students want to learn because they believe that mastery of the language would be an instrument in getting them a better job, position or status in helping them in communicating through the Internet. Ranked third of the motivating factors chosen by the students were items 19 and 20. These items touch on wanting to understand foreign news and wanting to understand Internet information, (Mean = 3.56). Both are extrinsic in nature. Getting involved in the world affairs as they relate to them is integrative motivation.

It is interesting to note that item 11, (Knowledge of English would help in my job promotions and new job opportunities) ranked fourth, (Mean = 3.44). This result is surprising, because it was expected that job promotion and new job opportunities would be the expected primary motivating factors for an employee to advance in their careers. This is an instrumental form of motivation. However, as already stated, it ranked only fourth in this group. Also, among the lowest ranking factors was item 17, (Mean = 2.39). It touches on the students' wanting to study English to have foreign friends. To this, nine students disagreed (50%), and two of them (11.1%) strongly disagreed. It appears that the students do not want to integrate, and only want to speak English as a tool for communication. Supporting this idea is the result obtained for item number 9 (Learning English will help me understand the multi-cultural aspects of the language owner.) Here, although the students agreed, it had a low mean (Mean 3.06) [9].

In order for the students to easily learn the language, teacher should act as a 'speech coach', rather than as a mere checker of pronunciation. The feedback given to the student can encourage learners to improve their pronunciation, while understanding the language. The teacher should be well prepared before facing the entire class, to allow discussions to flow smoothly. If these criteria are met, all learners, within the learner's unique aims, can be expected to do well in learning a foreign language. Giving the students homework can help them not to forget the lessons they have learned from class, and through this, they can refresh and apply the skills learned in everyday life. Motivation is not only a measure of student success; a motivated student without the appropriate cognitive skills will not perform well – nor will a skilled student who is not motivated. Students need to acquire factual knowledge and basic skills, as well as critical thinking skills which will enable them to evaluate new ideas and concepts [10].

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