

Demotivation of English Language Learners in Highly Competitive University Preparatory High Schools in Japan

- Based on Interviews of University Students

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Abstract

本研究は、日本の進学校の高校生にとって、英語学習への動機を減退させる要因は何か、また、それらの要因や動機減退経験を進学校出身の大学生はどのように認識しているかを探索的に捉え、多様な動機減退経験の過程をモデル化することが目的である。進学校出身の国立大学生3名にインタビュー調査を実施し、高校での動機減退経験の詳しい状況や認識を質的な研究で分析した。分析方法はM-GTA(木下, 2003)を採用し、事例数や具体数を研究目的と相関的に決定するためにSCQRM(西條, 2007, 2008)をメタ理論として用い、概念モデルを作成した。研究結果から、「上位層に合わせた授業」「教師の態度」「文法訳読式の指導」「難解なテスト」「難易度の高い大量の課題」が動機減退の要因であることが明らかとなった。高校1年時から「上位層に合わせた授業」についていけない生徒は、学習内容や課題の量と難易度が難しくなるにつれて無力感を抱くこと、さらに状況が改善されない場合は長期的に英語学習への動機を失うことが明らかとなった。

keywords: demotivation, language learners, university preparatory high schools

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 English Education in Japanese High Schools

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) emphasizes the importance of promoting students' awareness of the necessity of English and stimulating their motivation for English learning (MEXT, 2011). Motivation is crucial for determining the success of second/foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2001) and for learners' lifelong learning. To stimulate students' motivation and improve their general English skills, MEXT (2011) indicates that English classes should provide students with "educational materials based on actual English usage, actively introduce debates and discussions, and resort to other means for improvement of lesson quality."

In addition, Stewart (2009) states, "the proposed new Course of Study for senior high school English emphasizes nurturing communicative ability in English amongst students through the integration of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills." However, the reality of a classroom situation does not correspond to the promise to improve communicative ability. Ushioda (2013) states that English classes in

high schools are grammar-focused with minimal attention paid to the development of communication skills. In this traditional grammar-translation instruction, all the sentences of the textbook are translated into Japanese, so students can understand everything by means of Japanese (Hamada, 2011).

Benesse (2013) investigated 3,106 Japanese high school students concerning their awareness of learning and the current situation. The participants were asked about the characteristics of their classes and learning strategies. The survey revealed that the type of instruction used in class differed depending on the school's level. It suggests that various types of instruction (e.g. activities with a partner, discussion, or presentation in class) are NOT used in upper level schools. In other words, upper level schools relied heavily on traditional teaching instruction such as teacher-centered instruction (Benesse, 2013). It suggests that English teachers still use grammar and translation-based instruction.

The greatest obstacle to changing traditional instruction in order to improve communicative ability is the university entrance exam. Kikuchi (2006) analyzed entrance examinations at 10 private and 10 prestigious public universities, as well as one nationwide examination. He concludes that there are many

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translation tasks, so students need to acquire translation skills in order to be successful in solving translation questions (Kikuchi, 2009). High school students must study how to translate English into Japanese, focusing on translation and grammar, in order to pass university entrance exams. Okazaki (2014) claims that traditional college preparatory high school English teachers set a goal for preparing students to pass entrance exams for prestigious universities. Gorsuch (2000; cited in Falout *et al.*, 2009) remarks that traditional teaching instruction, such as grammar-translation instruction, “can be linked to entrance exam preparation, a practice endorsed by teachers, school administrators and parents alike.”

In addition, Benesse’s (2013) survey for high school students throughout Japan found that only 38.3% of students answered the item, “I understand English classes over 70%.” It suggests that approximately 60% of students do not follow their English classes. In other words, many high school students fail to follow their English classes. Therefore, they seem to lose their interest or motivation for learning English.

1.2 Studies on Demotivation

“A ‘demotivated’ learner is someone who was once motivated but has lost his or her commitment/interest for some reason” (Dörnyei, 2001). There might be many possible factors for losing motivation. Above all, Dörnyei (2001) defines demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of behavior, intention, or an ongoing action”. In other words, Dörnyei (2001) found only external factors for demotivation (Hamada, 2011).

In the Japanese context, factors of demotivation that have been identified include a heavy focus on translation, grammar, rote memorization of vocabulary, and a lack of practical application (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Falout *et al.*, 2009). In addition, an inappropriate level of class activities and courses (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Falout *et al.*, 2009) and boring teachers’ monotonous instruction (Falout *et al.*, 2009) influenced learners’ demotivation. Furthermore, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) found internal factors, such as lack of intrinsic

motivation.

Teacher-related factors are the strongest factors of demotivation. Gorham and Christophel’s (1992) research showed that approximately two-thirds of the factors of demotivation involve the teacher. Dörnyei’s (2001) research found that 40% of the total frequency of occurrences of demotivation directly concerned the teacher. Trang *et al.*’s (2007) research also found that 38% were teacher-related factors. These current studies indicate that teachers’ teaching style and activities used in the classroom were demotivating some learners (Hamada, 2011). Therefore, examining the causes of demotivation would be helpful for teachers to understand this problem in order to avoid demotivating students (Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009).

In order to reveal factors of demotivation, many researchers have constructed questionnaires based on Dörnyei’s (2001) nine demotivation factors which were identified by interviews with fifty secondary school students in Budapest, Hungary. Participants were chosen by their teachers or peers as being demotivated while studied either English or German as a foreign language.

Japanese researchers (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006; Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009; Kikuchi, 2009; Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009; Falout *et al.*, 2009) explored the factors of demotivation in English classes at junior high school, senior high school, and university level through quantitative study with a multiple-item questionnaire or qualitative study with an open-ended questionnaire and interviews (Hamada, 2011). Based on these previous research studies, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) identified six common factors in the Japanese context:

1. Teachers
2. Characteristics of classes
3. Experiences of failure
4. Class environment
5. Class materials
6. Lack of goals/interest

1.3 Qualitative Research on Demotivation

There are two significant points in examining learners’ demotivation by qualitative research. First, Kikuchi (2013) states, “Speaking directly with

students and hearing their stories can provide a more situated look at the reasons for demotivation and how different demotivators operate with different individuals and in different educational contexts.” Second, learners’ motivation is not stable, but flexible and fluctuating (Falout, 2012), and their motivation level always changes year by year, presumably day by day (Hamada, 2011).

Kikuchi (2009) conducted interviews with 5 college students (2 male and 3 female) in order to find out their experiences in their high school English classes. They graduated from various types of high schools (4 public and 1 private) throughout Japan. The participants were freshmen, 18-19 years old. He asked the students about their “ideal L2 self,” whether they enjoy studying English and their aspects of studying, and eight open-ended questions constructed on the basis of demotivating factors suggested by Dörnyei (2001). In addition, he asked 42 students at a public university to write about their experiences in an open-ended questionnaire which was comprised of the same questions used in the interviews. In qualitative data analysis, he made matrices through three processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Kikuchi (2009) asked about these eight factors on the questionnaires and in the interviews: (a) teachers, (b) school facilities, (c) students’ experiences in the past, (d) students’ negative attitudes towards the English language or community, (e) the compulsory nature of English study in high school, (f) interference caused by another foreign language that students are studying, (g) the attitudes of other students in their classes, and (h) the textbooks used. In the context of Japanese high schools, the researcher found five demotivating factors:

1. Individual teacher behavior in the classroom
2. The grammar-translation method used in instruction
3. Tests and university entrance examinations
4. Memorization required for vocabulary learning and related issues
5. Textbook/reference book-related issues

Based on the findings, Kikuchi (2009) states that teachers should make an effort to lessen demotivation, and reconsider the nature of the grammar-translation

approach and classes that focus entirely on university entrance exam preparation.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011; cited in Falout, 2012) remark that motivation involves complex inter-relationships between learners’ individual, internal psychological processes and the wider contexts of their learning environments. Falout (2012) focuses on psychological processes, especially EFL learners’ remotivation process and how learners cope with stress or demotivation. 157 university learners in Japan responded to an open-ended questionnaire about the way they lost, regained, and maintained motivation when learning English as a compulsory subject. He found types of developmental adaptive or maladaptive coping processes correlated to learners with positive and negative self-concepts regarding EFL. The participants’ comments were analyzed within a framework of coping processes (Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; cited in Falout, 2012). It covers a wide range of coping processes, and offers opposing adaptive and maladaptive processes. In the category of adaptive processes, there are “problem-solving,” “information-seeking,” “self-reliance,” “support-seeking,” “accommodation” and “negotiation.” In the family of maladaptive processes, there are “helplessness,” “escape,” “delegation,” “social isolation,” “submission” and “opposition.” The researcher concludes that students who have positive self-concepts tend to use adaptive processes, such as “problem-solving” or “negotiation.” He states that over the long term they develop self-reliance and seek support from their social networks. On the other hand, students who have negative self-concepts react with maladaptive processes, such as “helplessness” and “escape.” In the long term, they tend to blame themselves and remain helpless under the pressure to study English. He considers that their lack of using social networks for support decided the outcome of their process.

1.4 Limitation of Previous Studies

Previous research explored the factors of demotivation in English classes throughout Japan. At the high school level, there are quantitative research (Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009) and qualitative research (Kikuchi, 2009). However, they lack detailed charac-

teristics of the participants. This study focused on students only in highly competitive university preparatory high schools.

Secondly, “distinguishing internal factors from external factors is sometimes vague” (Hamada, 2011). This study focused on how external factors influence learners’ behavior. It also suggested how learners’ behaviors influence their affective reactions—in other words, how they perceive their experiences. Many researchers have focused on the factors of demotivation for language learners, whereas there have been just a few studies focusing on the process of demotivation, “how learners’ idiosyncratic experiences relate to English learning motivation and how their motivation changes and interacts with their environments” (Kim and Kim, 2013). In order to reveal the process of demotivation, based on Kikuchi’s (2009) and Falout’s (2012) questionnaires, we prepared interview guides covering the factors of demotivation in high school English classes, participants’ reactions to demotivation, and their perspectives after a few years.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This study was carried out with qualitative analysis using the Structure-Construction Qualitative Research Method (SCQRM) developed by Saijo (2007, 2008). The purpose of the study was to construct a conceptual model of university students’ perception patterns about their experiences of demotivation in their high school days. The research questions are the following:

1. For university students who graduated from highly competitive university preparatory high schools, what factors demotivated them in the study of English?
2. How do they now perceive and react to their experiences of demotivation in their study of English in high school?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The three (one male and two female) university students interviewed are from the same public university. Table 1 is a description of participants’ background in the interview sessions, including their

Table 1 Participants’ Background

Name	Gender	The Type of HS graduated	The University year
Mika	Female	Public	Junior
Toshiki	Male	Public	Junior
Hiroko	Female	Public	Master course

gender, the type of high school from which they had graduated, and their university year. The participants are identified via pseudonyms. Mika, Toshiki and Hiroko were all majoring in English education and wanted to be teachers in public elementary school, junior high school, or senior high school. Mika and Toshiki were juniors, and Hiroko was a master course student. They were chosen because they graduated from highly competitive university preparatory high schools in the Hokuriku region in Japan and they had their first experience of demotivation for learning English there.

The participants enjoyed studying English and were motivated in their junior high school days. They commented, “I enjoyed English classes in JHS,” (Mika) “In JHS, I was interested in English pretty well, so I enjoyed studying English [...] and I was willing to do it,” (Toshiki) “I was good at studying English in JHS” (Hiroko). They belonged to the higher level group in JHS. However, they struggled after entering high school. Since their high schools were among the top ones in their prefectures, they were expected to obtain a high level of English proficiency in order to get into prestigious universities. Therefore, the participants faced motivational struggles with the inappropriate level of their English courses.

2.2 Interviews with the University Students

The interviews were conducted for 30–60 minutes in October and November, 2013. We used a digital portable audio player to record the interviews. We used the semi-structured interview method. Dörnyei (2001) states, “Although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner.”

The interview questions were based on two previous research studies. The first was Kikuchi’s (2009)

interview and open-ended questionnaire for high school students, based on the nine demotivating factors identified in Dörnyei (2001). The second was Falout's (2012) open-ended questionnaire for university students. His questions covered participants' experiences in high school and in junior high school. He states that questions about not only the participants' experiences but also their expectations and motivational struggles in English learning would be helpful for them to reflect back on and actively engage with their past experiences (Falout, 2012). The interview questions are as follows:

1. Warm up questions

We asked the participants about their present learning of English and how they liked it: "Do you enjoy studying English?"

2. Questions about junior high school

We asked them about their study of English in their junior high school days and then how they imagined their study of English would be in high school: "Before you began to study English in high school, what did you imagine learning English would be like?"

3. Questions about high school

First, we asked them when they had experiences that caused them to lose their motivation to study English, and asked for more detail about their English classes in order to gain a better understanding about course books and especially teachers: "When did you have experiences that made you lose your motivation to study English, and do you have any more details?," "Was there anything about your English teachers that discouraged you from studying?" In addition, we also asked them how they perceived and reacted to their experiences: "How did this experience change you?"

2.3 Data Analysis

Interview data was obtained from three university students. One of the purposes of this study was to generate a concept model which would explain university students' perceived past experiences of demotivation in their high school days. Qualitative analysis was carried out using the Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) as developed by Kinoshita

(2003). However, this theory is not available for the employment of concepts which have a small number of examples. Structure-Construction Qualitative Research Method (SCQRM) was used as a meta-theory. SCQRM, developed by Saijo (2007, 2008), makes the best use of the essential qualities of M-GTA, and is appropriate for the study's small size. SCQRM is aimed at determining the number of cases or samples based on research questions or researchers' interests, therefore preserving scientific validity and falsifiability in a small sample case study by structuring the model of the target data (Okazaki, 2014).

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis procedure is as follows:

1. Examining the university students' written responses, sentences or passages that seem to have similar themes or patterns, which are gathered as a variation (concrete example).
2. Similar variations are given a concept name.
3. The concept name, its definition, and concrete examples are written on an analysis worksheet (see e.g., Table 2)

Table 2 An Example of Analysis Worksheet

概念名		低いテストの点数
定義		テストで良い点数を取れないこと。
ヴァリエーション	Mika	中学校では上の方で入ったのに、成績表を見て1から10まで分けられて、「は」とショック。こんな成績見たことない。
	Mika	長期休暇としての課題も出たりするんですけど、やらないから、それがテスト範囲になるから、全然テストもできなくて。
	Toshiki	復習してもまっまっ分からなくて、そのままテストにあって、なんかなあなあになって、結局そうなるわなみたいなの。テストの点数が。っていうことが多くて。
	Toshiki	最初は今度いい点数とればいいと思ってたけど、テスト受けても変わらなくて。
	Toshiki	結局、模試とかでかいテストの時に、全然できなくて。
	Hiroko	高校はテスト範囲が広い。中学校のときと同じように完璧にやりたい。全範囲、全教科みっちりやりたい。でも物理的に無理。勉強しても全範囲できないから、テストで点数とれない。そしたらやりたくなくなる、やらない方がまし。
理論メモ		カテゴリー「外的な動機減退要因」の「難しいテスト」の影響を受ける。また、「復習ができない」の影響がある。カテゴリー「情意反応」の「無力感」「あきらめ」「自尊心の喪失」に悪影響。

4. On the analysis worksheet, a concept name, its definition, concrete examples and a theoretical note with opposite examples and analysis perspective are recorded. One analysis worksheet is created for each concept (Okazaki, 2012).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Factors of Demotivation for University Students

All concepts and categories were summarized in a conceptual diagram (see e.g., Figure 1), which forms the basis of the discussion in this section. The results

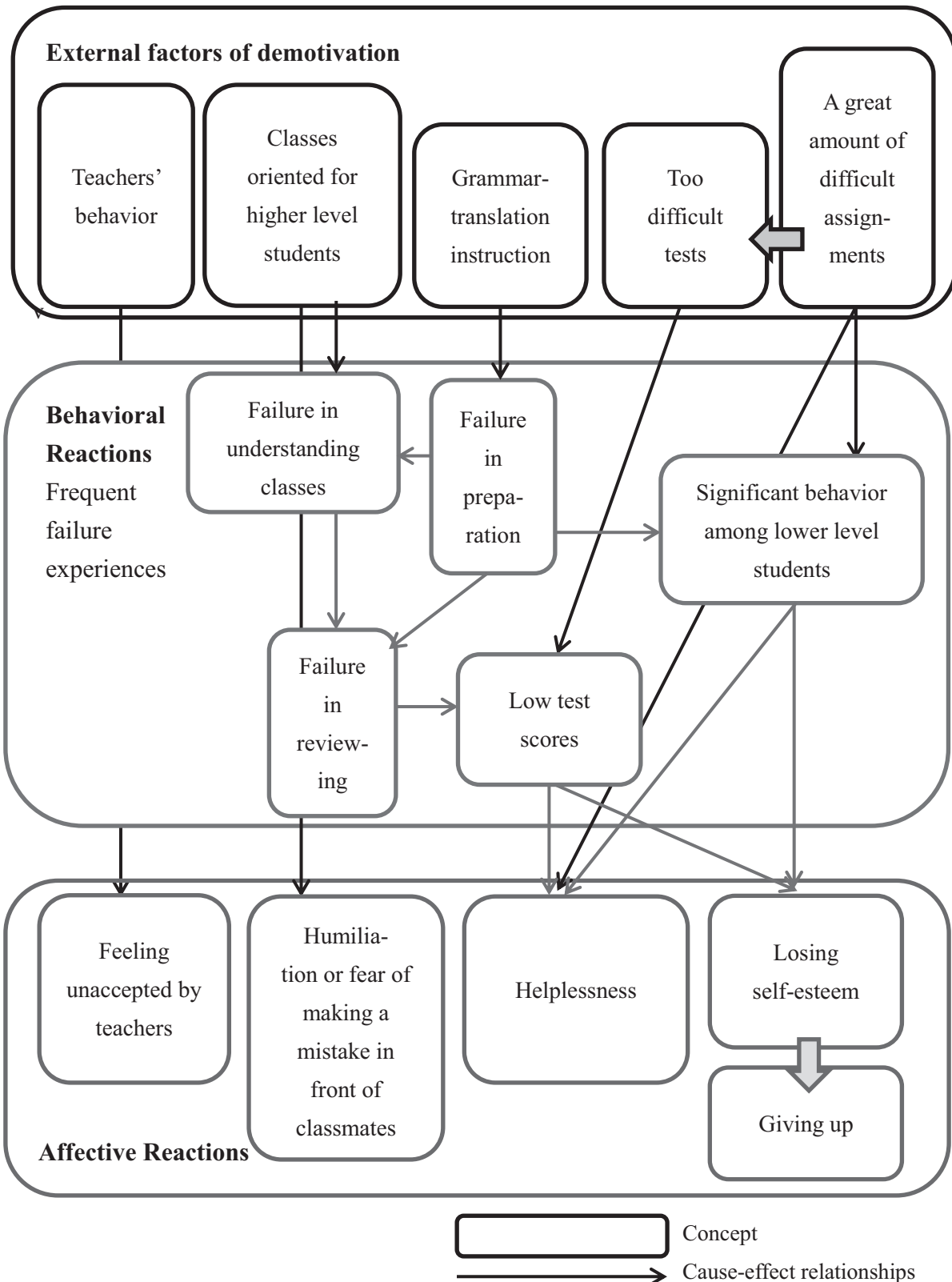


Figure 1. Conceptual model of University students' perception patterns about their experiences of demotivation in high school

obtained from the interviews evoked three major categories: “External factors of demotivation,” “Behavioral reactions to experiences of demotivation,” “Affective reactions to experiences of demotivation.”

The first category, “External factors of demotivation,” consists of five concepts: (Ex1) “Classes oriented for higher level students,” (Ex2) “Teachers’ behavior,” (Ex3) “Grammar-translation instruction,” (Ex4) “Too difficult tests,” (Ex5) “A great amount of difficult assignments.”

The second category, “Behavioral reactions to experiences of demotivation,” comprises five concepts: (Be1) “Failure in understanding classes,” (Be2) “Failure in reviewing,” (Be3) “Failure in doing preparation,” (Be4) “Low test scores,” (Be5) “Significant behavior among lower level students.”

The third category, “Affective reactions to experiences of demotivation,” is made up of five concepts: (Af1) “Humiliation or fear of making a mistake in front of classmates,” (Af2) “Feeling unaccepted by teachers,” (Af3) “Helplessness,” (Af4) “Giving up,” (Af5) “Losing self-esteem.”

3.1.1 Classes Oriented for Higher Level of Students

The concept (Ex1) “Classes oriented for higher level students” emerges from the three participants’ comments. Toshiki’s comments are the following:

Teachers checked to see if upper level students understood. When the teachers asked questions to them, they could answer well. Then, the teachers carried forward. Whereas in the case of students who were not good at English, even if they said, ‘I don’t understand,’ teachers passed over them and said, ‘OK, next.’ If the upper level students answered that they did not understand, the teachers more enthusiastically led them to the correct answer. Their behaviors toward lower level students obviously lacked enthusiasm. The teachers passed them over. (Toshiki)

These comments show that the pace of instruction was based on the degree of understanding of upper level students and teachers did not slow down the pace of teaching for lower level students. Hiroko’s comments are the following:

There are great differences between individuals,

Kojin-sa; it was hard for lower level students to keep up with higher level students. [...] Actually, the instruction was conducted in a way that lower level students couldn’t follow the classes as time went by, whereas higher level students were able to follow the classes. (Hiroko)

These comments suggest that Hiroko noticed a significant characteristic of the classes where lower level students were likely to suffer from failure in understanding. It also suggests that the instruction continued in this way over a long period, and therefore the situation did not change and teachers did not take remedial action to improve the situation.

This instruction style surfaces in the pace of instruction. Toshiki’s comments are the following:

The pace of classes was too fast. [...] If I didn’t do preparation, I couldn’t understand at all. I couldn’t grasp the meaning at all. [...] Teachers said, “You don’t need this part of the translation and additional explanation, do you?” “Of course, you understand.” (Toshiki)

Mika commented, “Teachers said, ‘I will skip this part. I believe you have already understood it.’ But I didn’t understand at all. I thought everyone could understand this point (but I couldn’t).” The participants’ comments show that the students were expected to understand immediately and there were not always enough explanations by the teachers. Hiroko’s comments are the following:

The first time teachers said, “Most of you already know these things” and skipped over what I hadn’t learned. They did not slow down for students who didn’t understand. [...] Anyway, learning the content was difficult, the pace of instruction was fast, and there was too much to study. (Hiroko)

Due to the teachers’ instruction based on advanced students’ understanding, some students may fail to follow the class. Toshiki commented about the experiences of failure in understanding classes:

Even after I listened to the teachers’ explanations, even after I did preparations, I failed to understand the lesson points. I always thought ‘Oh ... (I don’t understand at all)’ during classes. [...] Even after I reviewed before tests, I couldn’t under-

stand the content of the textbook. And I couldn't get good scores after all. I had many experiences like this. (Toshiki)

These comments suggest that the participants felt that the classes were conducted at a high speed and they made an effort to do preparation in order to keep up with the pace. However, they might have experienced two things. First, the participants might have suffered from being unable to follow the classes. It seems to reveal that some high school students may lose their motivation due to the inappropriate speed of classes and experiences of failure in understanding classes.

Secondly, Toshiki's comments suggest that he might have failed to understand the contents of what he learned in classes even if he had reviewed. Finally, he could not get good scores on tests. That is, it suggests that the instruction was focused on higher level students and the teachers did not pay much attention to lower level students. Therefore, some students may fall behind not only in classes, but also on test performance.

The concept (A1) "Humiliation or fear of making a mistake in front of classmates" emerges from Mika's comments. Mika stated, "I seriously did not want to feel embarrassed in classes. I hated feeling ashamed not to answer or respond with 'nonsense.' It changed the class atmosphere and my classmates might have thought of my answer, 'What?'" She also said, "I attended classes and worried about being unable to answer well, (especially) when the teacher pointed to students randomly." These comments suggest that failures made Mika feel embarrassed in front of her classmates. Mika's comments show that she was afraid of making mistakes because she felt constantly pressured from higher level students in her classroom. In the classroom she felt extremely humiliated and the fear of making a mistake continued throughout the class. It seems to reveal that the external factor, "Classes oriented for higher level students," influenced Mika's affective reaction-humiliation in front of higher level classmates. As compared with other classmates, she might have felt inferior in English class and lost her motivation for learning over a long span. Jomairi (2011) considers that comparing oneself with top students is one of the factors of

demotivation. It seemed to contribute to a sense of tension during classes for Mika. From Narikawa and Okazaki's (2012) research, high school students tend to give emphasis to "Creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom" as a motivation for English learning.

3.1.2 Teachers' Behavior

The concept (Ex2) "Teachers' behavior" is obtained from Toshiki's comments:

Teachers changed their behavior and reaction according to the proficiency level of the students. [...] When students who were good at English went to teacher's room and asked for help, the teachers (kindly) recommended some reference books and said, "Why don't you do added assignments?" It didn't happen to me. [...] In my case, the teachers answered my questions, and that's all. [...] I already thought it couldn't be helped. At that time, I did my best to understand the teachers' answers to my questions. It might have been a little bit difficult for me to do added assignments. (Toshiki)

These comments suggest that teachers might treat some students differently, depending on the student's level, out of classes. Toshiki might have been depressed about the different behavior toward him and felt unaccepted. Falout and Maruyama (2004) found that lack of acceptance by teachers is one of the factors of demotivation. However, their study made no mention of teachers' different behavior depending on students. In the case of Toshiki, he might have had a feeling of being unaccepted by teachers due to the open unfairness of their behavior. Hu (2011) stated, "Teachers played an important role in affecting students' learning process; if [they're] not careful, teachers can easily demotivate students to learn." Toshiki might have realized that the teachers treated only higher level students well and he was among the unaccepted students.

3.1.3 Grammar-translation Instruction

The concept (Ex3) "Grammar-translation instruction" was generated by all three participants. The participants stated, "In most of the classes students

prepared all Japanese translations of the textbook, answered questions by teachers, and explained grammar. [...] Teachers always said, 'You should prepare your Japanese translations of all the textbook sentences and grammar explanations'" (Mika) and "Students prepared all Japanese translations of the textbook. In class, the teacher read the English sentences and asked students to answer with a translation of each sentence in Japanese" (Toshiki). These comments suggest that students were required to prepare translations of sentences of the textbook in Japanese. In classes, they listened to their teachers' explanation of grammar and were expected to translate the sentences into Japanese correctly according to their relevant grammar. That is, it seems to be one of the significant characteristics of grammar-translation instruction. First, with this instruction, students are expected to give Japanese translations correctly in classes. Secondly, in order for students to feel competent and comfortable in class, students made much effort to translate all English sentences of the textbook into Japanese beforehand. Hiroko stated the situation in detail:

I wrote the entire teacher's explanation in my notebook before I forgot. It would be helpful to study for tests. I copied down all translations in my textbook, too. If I could prepare all translations, all I had to do was only correct some wrong translations in classes. But I didn't prepare, so I had to write down all sentences, from beginning to end. [...] While I was writing translations someone gave, the next student was called and gave translations, and immediately the teacher corrected the answer. I tried hard to write the students' answers and the teacher's explanation, but I couldn't follow the teacher and classmates. (And finally,) My notebook was full of holes, and lacked continuity. (Hiroko)

It reveals that Hiroko made much effort to write all of the translations in her classes. If someone did not prepare translations, or couldn't translate by themselves, what they needed to do in classes would be copying down all translations. This seems to indicate two other significant characteristics of this instruction. First, students were expected to understand the contents of the textbook through sentence translation (Hamada,

2011). Secondly, in order to get good scores in tests, students were required to study all translations. Hiroko also commented, "Before tests, I wanted to review what was taught and looked at my notebook. However, I didn't write down all translations. I couldn't grasp the meaning and translate English into Japanese" (Hiroko). These comments show that, not only in class but also on tests, participants are expected to succeed in doing Japanese translation. If they don't follow teachers' explanations or write down all Japanese translations in the classes, they might fail to review and get good scores.

Furthermore, her comments are the following:

As time passed, the language content became more difficult, and the amount of textbook passages increased. At the same time, the pace of instruction became faster, so I couldn't follow the classes and failed to write down all of the Japanese translations in my notebook. I succeeded in writing a few sentences or the first sentence of each paragraph, but I thought, "There is no meaning. I give up writing." When I realized how my speed of writing was slower than the pace of instruction, I lost the motive of it. Soon I often fell asleep in class or couldn't keep up my concentration. [...] I tried hard to do preparation for the first month. Nevertheless, I failed to do preparation again and again, and also the amount of work and assignments had increased drastically. At that time, I assumed "I couldn't study English." Finally, I couldn't do any preparation in the last half of the 1st year. (Hiroko)

Her comments show that she might have lost the meaning of studying due to frequent failure in writing down translations. Then, she could not do preparation and might have had a feeling of helplessness over a long span. Once students fail to follow classes, or fail to do preparation, or fail to review, these experiences are repeated again and again. It may be hard for students to get out of the cycle because the instruction is not suitable for students who are struggling and falling behind in English learning. It suggests that participants cannot help but feel helpless due to frequent experiences of failure.

3.1.4 Too Difficult Tests

In highly competitive university preparatory high schools, students are expected to study for exams. For three years in high school they take mock exams, *mo-shi* in Japanese, frequently. Yildirim (2010) indicates that “although students and their teachers were forced to put a lot of emphasis on mock exam questions and test taking strategies due to the format of the exam, those strategies were not very useful to students once the exam has passed.” The concept (Ex4) “Too difficult tests” emerges from Toshiki’s comments:

I didn’t want to go to school when I had to take mock exams on weekends. Teachers conducted school tests even on Sundays because they didn’t want to replace regular classes. When I was in 3rd grade, I had a great amount of tests. I suffered from frequent tests. [...] Every weekend I had tests. [...] School tests were too difficult, definitely. 80% was homework-related questions, and other 20% was questions from past entrance exams, but it was too difficult. [...] I believed I could try to get good scores next time. However, my bad scores remained unchanged. [...] I tended to lose the purpose of studying English due to the great amount of tests. (Toshiki)

These comments reveal that he suffered from the amount of difficult tests and it caused frequent failure to get good test scores. His comments also suggest that he was disappointed with his bad performances and unchanged situation, and he had a feeling of helplessness, such as losing his purpose of studying.

The concept (Be4) “Low test scores” is derived from three participants’ comments, such as, “I couldn’t get good scores after all. I had the same experiences again and again [...] I couldn’t get good scores on mock exams at all” (Toshiki), and “I was shocked to see my report card (the first time). I had never got such grades,” “(A few months later) on holidays the teachers gave a lot of homework to complete but I didn’t do it. It was included in tests, so I couldn’t get good scores at all” (Mika). Hiroko’s comments are the following:

In HS, there was a broad range of exams. I wanted to study the whole part perfectly in the same way I studied in JHS. I wanted to cover a

range of exams for each subject. However, it was physically impossible. I couldn’t study for all exams, so I got low scores. Then, I lost my motivation to study. I thought it might be better not to study. (Hiroko)

These comments suggest that the participants might have had frequent experiences of getting bad scores. In addition, these cases indicate that affective reactions to demotivation vary from student to student. From Toshiki’s comment, he might have had a feeling of helplessness due to consistent failure in tests over a long period. From Mika’s first comment, her pride might have been injured and she felt depressed or miserable because it was an unexpected outcome for her. From Mika’s latter comment and Hiroko’s, they might have given up studying or doing assignments.

As shown in Study 1, 16.25% of high school students regard “bad performance” as one of the factors of demotivation. Falout (2012; Falout and Maruyama, 2004) stated that EFL learners started believing they had no aptitude for EFL learning by their consistently low test scores, and they felt helpless. Performance is very important for students and getting good scores is regarded as one of the successful experiences. As Dörnyei (2001) remarks, if students cannot see any progress on tests, they lose self-confidence and give up in the end.

3.1.5 A Great Amount of Difficult Assignments

The concept (Ex5) “A great amount of difficult assignments” emerges from two participants’ comments. Toshiki’s comments are the following:

When I was in 1st grade, I bought a workbook every two weeks. (I was supposed to complete a workbook within two weeks). The workbook included 20 chapters with long English passages and questions from past entrance exams. I did 5 or 6 chapters on weekends. [...] At first, the workbook was easy, but in the middle of 1st grade it comprised the past entrance exams from prestigious universities, such as Kobe University or Osaka University. [...] I became hopeless and I thought homework was impossible to complete. I copied the whole thing from the answer book. (Toshiki)

These comments show that Toshiki suffered from the amount of assignments due to the extremely high level of the workbook. It reveals that students are expected to set a goal for entrance exams and are required to try questions from past entrance exams. Toshiki's behavioral reaction to the inappropriate level of assignments was copying the answer book. From his comment it seems that he had a feeling of hopelessness.

Mika's comments are the following:

From the beginning, I believed graded reader homework on weekends required hard work. (I supposed that it took much effort). At first, books were thin and contained interesting stories. For some time, books were full of unknown stories. When I received a thick book, I thought "Oh, it's impossible." [...] I asked my friends to show me their homework every Monday morning. [...] I read the whole part, but I couldn't answer the homework questions. After all, I asked for help.

(Mika)

These comments suggest that Mika struggled with questions of reading assignments in spite of the fact that she made much effort to read graded readers. It also seems to reveal that she had a feeling of helplessness and asked friends if she could copy their homework.

The concept (Be5) "Significant behavior among lower level students" is made up of Toshiki, Mika, and Hiroko's comments. Hiroko's comments are the following:

I asked friends to show me their notebooks much more than before. When I was in 2nd grade, I couldn't do preparation by myself. [...] Well, I did not care when I asked friends for help. In other words, I never thought, "In fact, I don't want to ask for help." [...] But, actually, when I was alone in my home, I felt depressed and lost my pride. Reflecting on that, I felt it had been tough on me mentally. (Hiroko)

Hiroko tried to struggle in spite of her sense of helplessness but sometimes she suffered from that feeling over a long period of time. The three participants' comments show that they had continued copying with no other choice, and might have had a feeling of helplessness. In addition, it reveals that Hiroko suffered

from injured pride.

Hiroko also commented, "When I was in JHS, I showed my notebook to friends or taught them. However, my situation turned around in the HS. I asked friends, 'Sorry, please let me copy your notebook,' and 'Could you explain this point?' I found that I was one of the members of the class who were asking higher level students for help." These comments suggest that the participants might struggle to accept their significant behavior among lower level students because they had been one of the higher level students in JHS and they had never done similar behavior to that of lower level students. Therefore, for the first time, they realized themselves as being unable to study. Toshiki stated, "When I was in JHS, I ordinarily studied, then did my best on a test, and got a decent score. I believed, 'I can study well.' However, I couldn't study in the same way in HS." It suggests that he realized that he did not follow English classes in the same way as in JHS, and he might have injured his pride.

The concept (Af5) "Losing self-esteem" emerges from Hiroko's comment, "In JHS, I was a higher level student, so I felt comfortable and I could study hard. In HS I had to admit that I belonged to the lower level group. At that time, I thought, 'I don't care (to study hard).'" This comment reveals that she might have given up. Dörnyei (2001) indicates that, "people with a low sense of self-efficacy in a given domain perceive difficult tasks as personal threats. [...] Consequently, they easily lose faith in their capabilities and are likely to give up." Essentially, losing self-esteem influences students' affective reaction - they give up. Therefore, students who were good at studying in JHS seem to feel depressed from frequent failure and finally give up because they could not fill in the gaps between the realities of HS and their successful career in JHS.

From their interview comments, it seems that they could reflect calmly on the experiences of demotivation. At that time, however, it might be inferred that they could not overcome this kind of gap, and even they could not accept themselves. Due to a widely unchanged situation, they might hold negative affective responses, such as helplessness, and they felt

depressed day by day.

3.2 Findings of the Study

The purpose of this study is to construct a conceptual model of university students' perception patterns about their experiences of demotivation in high school. From the results and discussion, we found some suggestions. They are based on the cause-result relation shown in Figure 1.

(Ex1) "Classes oriented for higher level students" influenced two concepts, (Af1) "Humiliation or fear of making a mistake in front of classmates" and (Be1) "Failure in understanding classes." Once students fail to understand what they learned in classes, they may have (Be2) "Failure in reviewing." Then, students may get (Be5) "Low test scores." The participants felt demotivated due to the factor (Ex1): the pace of instruction was based on the degree of understanding of upper level students and teachers did not slow down the pace of teaching for lower level students. We discovered four remarkable points. First, when the instruction style is unchanged, students who fail to follow the classes have no choice but to catch up by themselves. Second, if teachers do not give lower level students special support or consideration, they continue to hold a feeling of helplessness. Third, frequent failure in class was presented as a lack of successful experiences. Finally, if students could have successful experiences or interaction with teachers and classmates, they would not feel a sense of tension during classes in cases similar to Mika's.

(Ex2) "Teachers' behavior" related to one concept, (Af2) "Feeling unaccepted by teachers." The participant realized the teachers' different behavior depending on the students and that he was among the unaccepted students. Dörnyei (2001) states: "the teacher's personal relationship with the students" is one of the factors of demotivation. This study suggests that teachers' different behavior depending on students' level is a significant characteristic in highly competitive university preparatory high schools.

(Ex3) "Grammar-translation instruction" influenced one concept, (Be3) "Failure in doing preparation." We found four significant characteristics of this instruction. First, students are expected to give

Japanese translations correctly in classes. Second, students are required to make much effort to translate all English sentences of the textbook into Japanese beforehand. Third, students were expected to understand the contents of the textbook through sentence translation (Hamada, 2011). If students fail to prepare all translations, they may have (Be1) "Failure in understanding classes." Finally, in order to get good scores in tests, students were required to study all translations. If students fail to study all translations due to failure in doing preparation or understanding what they learned, they may have (Be2) "Failure in reviewing." Due to this instruction, only checking sentence translations, students may have a lack of opportunity to understand the contents of the textbook deeply in classes. Miyata et al.'s (2004) found that university students tend to give emphasis to "Given enough time to think or discuss" as a good type of instruction for English learning. Therefore, monotonous grammar-translation instruction should be avoided in order to prevent demotivators in English class. We can find there are similarities between university and high school.

(Ex4) "Too difficult tests" affected two concepts, (Be4) "Low test scores" and (Af3) "Helplessness." When students cannot get good scores due to difficult tests beyond their ability, they may feel depressed. Oashi (2010) indicates that appropriate level of difficulty and successful experiences are desirable and a lack of such experiences would be one of the obstructive factors of building self-efficacy. As in the case of the participants, if students suffer from injured pride or low self-esteem, they are likely to give up and not try to control situations.

(Ex5) "A great amount of difficult assignments" is related to one concept, (Be5) "Significant behavior among lower level students." Students who were good at studying in JHS seem to have a feeling of (Af5) "losing self-esteem" or (Af3) "helplessness" from frequent failure because they could not fill in gaps between the realities of HS and their successful experiences in JHS. Dörnyei (2001) indicates that one of the factors of demotivation is the reduction of self-confidence, not simply low self-confidence. Students who enter highly competitive university preparatory

high schools were good at studying and belonged to the higher level group in JHS. Therefore, when they realized themselves as being unable to study, their pride might have been injured.

4. Conclusion

This study attempted to explore significant factors of demotivation in English classes, especially in highly competitive university preparatory high schools. According to the results and discussion, for students who already have experiences of failure, the situation would not change and continue over a long span if they cannot receive special support from teachers or classmates. As a result, through these experiences, they continue to have a feeling of helplessness because their situation doesn't change over a long period of time. Then they continue to struggle with their sense of helplessness, which once established, is very difficult to reverse (Dörnyei, 1994).

Examining learners' demotivation would be helpful for teachers to understand the possible causes of students' demotivation, and teachers can reconsider their teaching styles to avoid demotivating students (Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009). In addition, it would also be useful to consider the students' backgrounds. In other words, one should consider their experiences of demotivation, "the roots of their negative attitudes to learning English" (Tsuchiya, 2006).

Benesse's (2013) survey, for high school students throughout Japan, found that 79.7% of students chose "English" as the item for "The best subject you do much effort to study from now." Therefore, if teachers would make an effort to lessen external factors of demotivation and to give much support, they could sweep away obstacles to keep their students' motivation for the best subject "English."

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