

# Relationship between Motivation and Proficiency Improvement\*

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**Lee, Eun-Hee & Oh, Hee Jeong. 2011. Relationship between Motivation and Proficiency Improvement.** *Linguistic Research* 28(2), 405-430. Among several factors that affect the level of success in language learning, motivation to learn the language is of particular importance. Thus, the relationship between motivational factors and language learners' proficiency improvement has been chosen for closer examination. Ninety-two first-year Korean university students who took a mandatory English course for one semester participated in this study. They completed a questionnaire on their motivation to learn English and answered short essay questions related to their preferences in English courses; they also provided demographic information. Data analysis indicates that the participants consider English the cornerstone for their success in life regardless of their major. Means for instrumental and integrative motivation were higher than those for intrinsic motivation and interest. Group differences for all four factors were statistically significant. However, interest was the sole factor that contributed to improvements in the participants' scores. These results are expected to provide language teachers and researchers with ways to prevent possible demotivation and to eventually enhance effectiveness of language learning by aiding them with a better understanding of language learning motivation. (Seoul Women's University)

**Key Words** demotivation, mandatory English program, motivation, motivational factors, proficiency improvement

## 1. Introduction

Most Korean universities require undergraduate students to take at least one or two English courses before graduation. Previous research (Kim, 1996) reports that there is a big motivational difference between students taking mandatory and elective English courses. As learners' lack of motivation in mandatory English courses can

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reduce their progress, numerous research (Cha, 2006; Chong & Kim, 2001; Ihm, 2005; Kim, 1996; Kim, Kim & Kim, 2011; Lee, 2006; Lim, 2006; Park, 2004) discuss problems in mandatory English courses, solutions for the problems and ways to improve the quality of mandatory English courses.

Previous motivational research focuses on curriculum and language skills that English courses should emphasize (Kim, 1996; Ihm, 2005); influential motivational factors in language learning (Chong & Kim, 2001; Deci, 1975; Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1997; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991); learners' motivational changes (Kim et al., 2011); demotivation (Falout, Elwood & Hood, 2009; Ghenghesh, 2010; Kikuchi, 2009; TY Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2011; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009); effectiveness of adopting multimedia-assisted language learning in English courses (Ihm, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Lee, 2006).

Motivational factors are diverse and the debate over the most influential factors in language learning has not reached a consensus. Factors commonly discussed are comparisons between instrumental and integrative, and between intrinsic and extrinsic factors, but the area that integrates diverse motivational factors is underresearched. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether motivation influences academic achievement, and to explore the relationship between various motivational factors and improvements to participants' scores. As demotivation can have a profound negative impact on language learning, exploring the reasons and causes of demotivation as well as eliminating any detriments can enhance the effectiveness of language learning. The results are expected to suggest ways to prevent demotivation and to eventually improve learning effect.

## 2. Literature Review

The relationship between several motivational factors and grade improvement is examined in this study, so various definitions of motivation are given first along with their subcategories. Previous research on several environments which can influence motivation is reviewed in the second part. Factors that influence motivational changes or demotivation are discussed at the end.

## 2.1 Definitions of Motivation

Language learners' motivation is considered one of the critical factors which influence learning effect (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Gardner and Lambert (1972) divided several attitudinal and motivational factors that contributed to learning success into instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation means that learners study a language in order to achieve practical goals such as getting a job or completing translation tasks, while integrative motivation means that learners study English to become more knowledgeable about the cultures of English speaking countries and societies and to integrate themselves into the culture. Another categorization is from Deci (1975, cited in Brown, 2007), who defines intrinsic motivation as inclinations without any extrinsic rewards such as prizes or money. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is related to those same extrinsic rewards. Notably, it has been argued that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation in language learning for long-term retention.

After Gardner and Lambert (1972) argued for the importance of instrumental and integrative motivation, some researchers (Ellis, 1997; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) began to emphasize the importance of integrative motivation on language learning while other researchers (Chong & Kim, 2001; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991) claim that instrumental motivation plays a critical role in language learning. TY Kim (2006, 2009) and Lamb (2007) claim that influence of each motivational factor may be different depending on the context; influence of integrative motivation may be stronger among ESL learners while that of instrumental motivation may be stronger among EFL learners.

Dörnyei (2005) introduces the concepts of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, emphasizing the sociocultural aspects of motivation. The ideal L2 self is formed when learners visualize positive aspects of learning outcomes such as getting a good job or a promotion at work, and ought-to L2 self is formed when learners are motivated to study L2 due to external forces or when they visualize negative aspects of learning outcomes such as losing a job or unsuccessful promotion. Kim (2006) claims that any discussion of EFL learners' motivation should consider the socio-political dimensions of motivation. He investigated the socio-political aspects of motivation among Korean high school students and found that a situation-specific, competitive drive influenced the participants' language learning. The unique situation

in Korea, a very competitive university entrance examination, provided Korean high school students with a peculiar motivation in language learning.

## 2.2 Environments that Influence Motivation

In order to compare the results of this study with other studies, several aspects and environments need to be considered. Among several components that can influence language learners' motivation, detailed discussions about the effects of proficiency, major, and classroom environment follow. Language learners' proficiency level is a critical factor in predicting motivation (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; KJ Kim, 2009; Tsuchiya, 2006a, 2006b); learners have different motivational factors and levels depending on their proficiency. Tsuchiya (2006a, 2006b; cited in Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009) investigated motivational differences between a low-proficiency group and a higher-proficiency group. The demotivation level for the low-proficiency group was higher than that for the higher-proficiency group and each group was demotivated due to different demotivating factors. The higher-proficiency group cited external demotivating factors such as classes, teachers, negative group attitude, and the compulsory nature of English study, whereas the low-proficiency group cited external factors but also internal factors such as reduced self-confidence. In KJ Kim's (2009) study among 220 Korean junior high students, the demotivation factors for the low-proficiency group were difficulty of learning English and interest. For the higher-proficiency group, factors cited included characteristics of English classes such as test-targeted class organization and a grammar-centered curriculum.

Learners' majors also influence their motivation. Previous studies (Chong & Kim, 2001; Kim, 1996; Kim, 2003; Lim, 2006) investigated Korean university students' language learning motivation. Instrumental motivations such as getting a job were a primary reason for Korean students to learn English (Chong & Kim, 2001; Kim, 1996; Kim et al., 2011; Lim, 2006), but participants chose different motivational factors depending on their majors. In Kim's (1996) study, Korean university students whose majors were in the humanities and social sciences, 60% and 50.3% respectively, learned English to further their goals of getting a job, while students whose majors were in the sciences learned English in order to further their goals of getting a job (35.6%) and also to study abroad (33.7%). For arts and physical education majors, studying overseas in English speaking countries was the primary

reason, 24.7%, and getting a job was the second primary reason, 27.3%. In Chong and Kim's (2001) study, participants chose instrumental reasons for taking courses regardless of their majors. The language skills that they wanted to improve were speaking and listening.

Other administrative environments also influence learners' motivation. In the 2000s, language learners favored Korean universities (1) reducing the number of students in a class; (2) increasing the number of compulsory English courses; (3) conducting a proficiency test; and (4) utilizing computer technology in the language classroom (Chong & Kim, 2001, p. 265). Korean university students in Ihm's (2005) study favored Korean universities (1) dividing English courses on the basis of learners' proficiency levels; (2) adopting multimedia-assisted curriculums in the language classroom; (3) focusing on speaking and listening; (4) using authentic materials; and (5) considering learners' various needs; jobs, further study, etc. The English mandatory course in this study has met all administrative needs that Korean university students wanted in the 2000s. The primary goal of this study is to investigate language learners' motivation now that all of the needs expressed throughout the 2000s have been addressed.

### 2.3 Motivational Factors

Kim's (1996) study reported university students' low motivation in English mandatory courses. After her study, numerous research projects have focused on Korean university students' motivation in mandatory English courses. Whereafter, Korean universities have tried to improve the curriculum of mandatory English programs (Chong & Kim, 2001; Park, 2004) and many of them have adopted CALL as a way to improve learners' motivation and to meet their needs (Ihm, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Lee, 2006).

Recent studies (Falout et al., 2009; Ghenghesh, 2010; Kikuchi, 2009; KJ Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2011; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) have investigated demotivational factors in order to improve learning effect and maintain learners' motivation. In KJ Kim's (2009) study, Korean junior high school students chose difficulty of learning English as the strongest demotivational factor while teachers' competence, teaching styles, and inadequate learning environment did not influence demotivation. The participants' proficiency influenced demotivation factors cited, and the group

differences between low-proficiency and higher- proficiency groups were statistically significant. On the basis of the results, KJ Kim (2009) suggested that (1) teachers should consider learners' proficiency levels and interest when choosing a textbook; (2) teachers need to give students freedom to choose their reading materials and space to read; and (3) teachers need to listen to and try to understand learners' difficulties.

Kim et al. (2011) gauged motivation levels in 126 first-year Korean university students' over the course of one semester and found no changes in motivation; they maintained their language learning motivation after taking one mandatory English course. An on- and off-line blended curriculum helped low level participants form a positive L2 self; the blended learning was effective for low level students and students who were less exposed to computer-mediated language learning. The participants spent an average of 2.39 hours doing online tasks in addition to participating in speaking-focused face-to-face classes, and this blended learning environment helped them improve confidence when speaking English. The study concluded that speaking-focused English courses and computer-assisted language learning environment prevented demotivation and positively influenced or sustained learning motivation.

Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) reported five demotivating factors for Japanese high school students: (1) learning content and materials; (2) teachers' competence and teaching styles; (3) inadequate school facilities; (4) lack of intrinsic motivation; and (5) test scores. Falout and Maruyama (2004) reported that advanced level Japanese university learners thought that teachers and poor educational environments weakened their learning motivation, but low level participants thought that their lack of effort and a loss of self-confidence were demotivational factors. In Falout et al. (2009), Japanese university students reported that grammar-centered curriculum reduced learning motivation while the teacher played a positive role toward inspiring learning motivation.

In previous research, influential motivational factors in language learning, descriptive statistics among motivational factors, changes in demotivational factors over one semester, Korean-specific motivational factors, etc. were mainly discussed. In order to integrate and compare several motivational factors and to determine which is most influential, research questions posed by the current study are:

1. Does English proficiency among Korean EFL students determine the factors that serve as their primary motivation?
2. Among diverse motivational factors, what are the motivational factors which contribute to the participants' proficiency improvement?

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

Ninety-six first-year women's university students participated in this study. All of them have been learning English for nine years (three years in elementary school, three years in junior high school and three years in high school) before they registered for the first-year mandatory English course at the university. After the participants took a placement test, they could register for a course appropriate to their proficiency level. At the university, English I is divided into three proficiency levels and each class comprises 24 to 28 students. Four classes, two mid level and two low level classes, participated in this study, and the researcher taught all four classes. Students in these classes spent an average of 2.7 hours studying English outside the English classroom each week. Since each class was divided by their English proficiency level, their majors were varied. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of participants' majors and TOEIC scores.

**Table 1.** Description of Participants

Sampling		N	%
Major	Humanities	23	23.9
	Social Science	18	18.7
	Natural Science	14	14.6
	Information & Media	10	10.4
	Fine Arts & Physical Education	20	20.8
	Pre-major	11	11.5
1 <sup>st</sup> TOEIC Score	135-405	27	29.3
	410-505	29	31.6
	510-605	36	39.1

The average TOEIC score was 455 when students took the exam to determine placement in the course. The average for the mid-level classes was 543 ranging from 485 to 605 and that for the low level classes was 379 ranging from 135 to 475. At the end of the semester, the participants took another TOEIC test and the average TOEIC score was 579. The average for the mid-level classes was 648 ranging from 400 to 790 and that for the low level classes was 518 ranging from 200 to 760. Four students who did not take the semester-end TOEIC test were excluded from data analysis, so a total of ninety-two students' data were analyzed.

The TOEIC test has been used by numerous companies and English language learning programs in 120 countries in order to assess English language skills, and more than 6 million TOEIC tests were administered last year (ETS, 2011). The score has been used in order to judge research participants' proficiency (Lee, 2006; Lee, 2009; Nam & Kim, 2009) and in this study, the TOEIC standardized test score, is also used in order to provide a reliable, comparable measurement of English proficiency.

### 3.2 Course Description

The mandatory English course title is "English Conversation 1." The three hour course is divided into two sessions per week, 75 minutes each. Each class has a different goal; speaking practice in the first class and preparation for a TOEIC test



in the second class. The textbook for mid-level participants was "Talk Time 2" and that for low-level participants was "American Headway 2." In the second class, various handouts related to the TOEIC test were provided. All students joined an Internet-based community and all course materials were uploaded to the community. Each proficiency level had a different community. At the end of the semester, all participants took another TOEIC test in addition to a final exam.

### 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The participants answered the questionnaire at the end of the spring semester 2011. For the questionnaire, 60-items were selected in order to measure the participants' motivation, demotivation, level of interest, usefulness, and participation. The questionnaire was written in Korean and items were from Kim et al. (2011), Lee (2006) and Yeon and Kim (2010). The questionnaire incorporated a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). As all participants were females and freshmen, they were asked to list at the beginning of the questionnaire their majors, average number of hours devoted to English study outside the English classroom and their beliefs about the degree to which their proficiency would improve after taking English 1.

Descriptive statistics were computed to analyze the background information and Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine the reliability among the items in each factor. Fourteen motivational factors were selected from previous research; (1) instrumental motivation, (2) intrinsic motivation, (3) integrative motivation, (4) extrinsic motivation, (5) ideal L2 self, (6) ought-to L2 self, (7) self-development motivation, (8) competitive motivation, (9) heuristic motivation, (10) interest, (11) expectation of utility, (12) participation, (13) self-confidence, (14) demotivation. Yeon and Kim (2010) explained that instrumental, self-development, competitive, and heuristic motivation could all be categorized as extrinsic motivation. Items that belong to each factor are explained in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Items in Each Factor and Reliability

Factors	Question #	Cronbach's Alpha
Instrumental	1, 2, 16, 17, 29, 33	.733
Intrinsic	3, 28, 32	.755
Integrative	6	
Extrinsic	7, 13	.313
Ideal L2 self	8, 10, 14	.785
Ought-to L2 self	9, 15	.304
Self-development	18, 20, 31	.686
Competitive	19, 21, 22, 30	.721
Heuristic	24, 25, 26, 27	.750
Interest	34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39	.750
Expectation of utility	40, 41, 42, 43	.674
Participation	44, 45, 46	.646
Self-confidence	4, 5, 11, 12	.782
Demotivation	51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57	.791

Cronbach's alpha for two factors, extrinsic motivation and ought-to L2 self, were lower than .4, so correlations between the items were calculated to see whether the low Cronbach's alpha scores were due to the small number of items in each factor. Correlation for extrinsic motivation was  $r=.196$  and that for ought-to L2 self was  $.198$ . As both of them were not statistically significant at  $p<.05$ , these two factors were excluded from the analysis. After comparing group differences in motivational and demotivational factors between mid-level and low-level participants using a T-test, bivariate linear regression analysis was performed in order to explore the relationship between motivational factors and the participants' TOEIC scores.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Group Differences and Motivational Factors

In order to explore the group differences between mid-level participants and

low-level participants for twelve motivational factors, 12 separate independent t-tests were performed. Means for integrative motivation were high for both levels, 4.51 and 4.18 respectively, and those for demotivation were low, 2.08 and 2.14. The integrative item, Question 6, was "English is important because I can learn about other countries from foreigners." The high mean score indicates that the participants well-acknowledged the value of a lingua franca in the global society. The low means for demotivational items reveal that the participants' demotivation did not rise over the course of one semester as did that of the participants in Kim et al.'s (2011) study.

Among mid-level participants, an instrumental item (Question 2: "English is important in order to study at graduate school or study abroad") has the highest mean at 4.91 with a range of 3 to 5 (SD: 0.37) and the second highest, 4.79 (SD: 0.47), is from another instrumental item (Question 1: "English is important in order to get a good job"). A demotivation item (Question 57: "I was demotivated due to the instructor's lack of explanation, incompatible personality, and lack of encouragement and compliment") has the lowest mean at 1.58 (SD: 0.73), and the second lowest mean is from Question 52: "I was demotivated due to my negative attitude toward English learning," 1.74 (SD: 0.693).

Among low-level participants, even though the overall means were lower than those for mid-level participants, the patterns were the same. Question 2 shows the highest mean, 4.78 (SD: 0.59), and Question 1 has the second highest mean, 4.73 (SD: 0.7). Question 57 has the lowest mean at 1.55 (SD: 0.65), and Question 52 has the second lowest mean at 1.88 (SD: 0.90). For easier comparisons, Table 3 illustrates means, standard deviation, group differences for each factor, and their statistical significance.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics between Mid-Level and Low-Level

	Level	N	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Instrumental	M	43	4.35 (0.43)	2.33	.022*
	L	49	4.08 (0.67)		
Intrinsic	M	43	3.82 (0.85)	3.70	.000***
	L	49	3.16 (0.87)		
Integrative	M	43	4.51 (0.70)	2.10	.038*
	L	49	4.18 (0.78)		
Ideal	M	43	4.19 (0.76)	.20	.843
	L	49	4.16 (0.71)		
SelfDevelopment	M	43	4.47 (0.61)	1.81	.074
	L	49	4.23 (0.61)		
Competition	M	43	4.07 (0.68)	.25	.804
	L	49	4.03 (0.81)		
Heuristic	M	43	3.94 (0.58)	3.35	.001***
	L	49	3.39 (0.97)		
Interest	M	43	3.40 (0.62)	1.50	.137
	L	49	3.23 (0.51)		
Usefulness	M	43	3.48 (0.74)	.42	.674
	L	49	3.42 (0.59)		
Participation	M	43	3.57 (0.71)	.62	.538
	L	49	3.48 (0.68)		
DeMotivation	M	43	2.08 (0.64)	-.40	.692
	L	49	2.14 (0.65)		
SelfConfidence	M	43	3.47 (0.75)	-.97	.334
	L	49	3.61 (0.49)		

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Group differences for instrumental, intrinsic, integrative, and heuristic motivation were statistically significant. Means for instrumental and integrative motivations were high compared to those for intrinsic and heuristic motivation. Previous research (Lamb, 2007; TY Kim, 2006, 2009) claims that EFL learners demonstrate higher mean scores for instrumental motivation than ESL learners, but ESL learners exhibit

a higher mean for integrative motivation. Contrary to previous research results, in this research, the participants' mean for integrative motivation was higher than that for instrumental motivation even though they gave more weight to extrinsic items. This result should be interpreted cautiously as there is one integrative motivation item (Question 6) with a mean of 4.51 for which means from two instrumental items, Questions 1 and 2 with means of 4.79 and 4.91 respectively, were higher. Even though the group differences for ideal, self-development, and competition were not statistically significant, the means for those three factors were high regardless of proficiency level. In sum, the means were higher for instrumental, integrative, ideal, self-development, and competition factors for all participants. In order to parse the group differences for intrinsic and heuristic motivation, Table 4 presents the overall outlook of the data.

**Table 4.** Items in Intrinsic and Heuristic Motivation

Factor	Item	L	M (SD)	<i>t</i>
Intrinsic	3: I am interested in English and I enjoy learning it	M	3.95 (0.98)	3.81***
		L	3.14 (1.04)	
	28: I learn English out of curiosity	M	3.63 (1.21)	2.63**
		L	2.98 (1.15)	
	32: I like English	M	3.88 (1.0)	2.51*
		L	3.26 (1.20)	
Heuristic	24: I learn English to get information written in English	M	4.12 (0.82)	3.56***
		L	3.39 (1.13)	
	25: I learn English to read numerous papers written in English	M	4.09 (0.78)	3.23**
		L	3.43 (1.17)	
	26: I learn English to read my major-related materials	M	3.60 (0.98)	2.41*
		L	3.04 (1.26)	
27: I learn English because it is a lingua franca	M	3.95 (0.93)	1.13	
	L	3.71 (1.08)		

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Significant group difference is seen for one item under intrinsic motivation, Question 3: "I am interested in English and I enjoy learning it." The mean for

mid-level participants is 3.95 while that for low-level participants is 3.14; the higher the proficiency level, the higher mean for intrinsic motivation. Another noteworthy group difference is seen for one item under heuristic motivation, Question 24: "I learn English to get information written in English." Here, the mean for mid-level participants is 4.12 and that for low-level participants is 3.39. For Question 27, the group difference between the two groups was not statistically significant, indicating that all participants were aware of the status of English as a lingua franca regardless of their proficiency level. The results illustrate that the current participants are all aware of importance of English, its status as a lingua franca, and its instrumental role.

## 4.2 Relationship between Motivational Factors and Score Improvement

### 4.2.1 TOEIC improvement

The average TOEIC score for all participants was 455 on the placement test. The average for the mid-level participants was 543 and that for the low-level participants was 379. At the end of the semester, the participants took another TOEIC test and the average score on the second TOEIC test for all participants was 579. The average for the mid-level participants was 648 and that for the low-level participants was 518. Four students who did not take the semester-end TOEIC test were excluded: one student from the mid-level group and three students from the lower level. Table 5 summarizes the score changes.

TABLE 5. Descriptive Statistics of Semester-End TOEIC Score

Level	N	Score	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
Mid	43	TOEIC_B	543.02 (34.14)	480	605
	43	TOEIC_A	648.26 (90.01)	400	790
Low	49	TOEIC_B	378.88 (85.93)	135	475
	49	TOEIC_A	517.65 (122.37)	200	760

For the semester-end TOEIC test, ten out of 92 participants (11%) scored lower than they did on the placement TOEIC test and eighty-two participants' semester-end TOEIC scores (89%) improved. The average improvement for all participants was

123 (SD: 108).

**TABLE 6.** Descriptive Statistics of TOEIC Score Improvement

Level	N	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
Mid	43	105.23 (96.94)	-160	275
Low	49	138.78 (115.97)	-100	390

As Table 6 illustrates, mid-level participants' improvement was less than that of low-level participants. This is probably because as students score higher, it becomes harder to improve; a student whose TOEIC score is 400 can improve his or her score by 50 points much easier than a student whose TOEIC score is 700. In order to examine the statistical significance of score improvement, a repeated measures ANOVA was performed. As seen in Table 7, the participants' TOEIC scores improved at the end of the semester and the improvement was statistically significant at  $F(1.91)=119.37$ ,  $p<.001$ .

**TABLE 7.** Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Improvement	676271.88	1	676271.88	119.37***
Error	515540.63	91	5665.28	

\*\*\* $p<.001$ .

In order to examine the statistical significance of participants' improvement at each level, another repeated measures ANOVA was performed. The results indicated that score differences from mid-level participants were statistically significant at  $F(1.42)=50.67$ ,  $p<.001$  and score differences from the lower-level were also statistically significant at  $F(1.48)=70.16$ ,  $p<.001$ . In sum, the participants' TOEIC scores improved over the course of one semester regardless of their initial proficiency level, and the improvement was statistically significant at  $p<.001$ .

#### 4.2.2 Relationship between motivational factors and improvement

In the previous sections, the participants were grouped according to their placement test scores. In this section, participants were divided into new groups

according to their semester-end TOEIC score in order to explore the relationship between motivational factors and their score improvement. Students who scored lower than 600 belong to Group 1 and those who scored higher than 600 belonged to Group 2. The cutoff score of 600 was chosen in order to produce groups with an equal number of participants, 46 in each.

TABLE 8. Descriptive Statistics between Group 1 and Group 2

	G	N	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Instrumental	G1	46	4.33 (0.46)	2.198	.030*
	G2	46	4.07 (0.66)		
Intrinsic	G1	46	3.71 (0.91)	2.629	.010**
	G2	46	3.23 (0.86)		
Integrative	G1	46	4.52 (0.69)	2.392	.019*
	G2	46	4.15 (0.79)		
Ideal	G1	46	4.28 (0.73)	1.283	.203
	G2	46	4.08 (0.73)		
SelfDevelop	G1	46	4.43 (0.60)	1.354	.179
	G2	46	4.26 (0.63)		
Competition	G1	46	4.10 (0.62)	.694	.490
	G2	46	3.99 (0.86)		
Heuristic	G1	46	3.89 (0.75)	2.757	.007**
	G2	46	3.41 (0.89)		
Interest	G1	46	3.50 (0.56)	3.507	.001***
	G2	46	3.11 (0.51)		
Usefulness	G1	46	3.56 (0.61)	1.676	.097
	G2	46	3.33 (0.69)		
Participation	G1	46	3.58 (0.61)	.852	.397
	G2	46	3.46 (0.77)		
DeMotivation	G1	46	2.03 (0.69)	-.155	.251
	G2	46	2.19 (0.59)		
SelfConfidence	G1	46	3.58 (0.64)	.686	.495
	G2	46	3.48 (0.66)		

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



As seen in Table 3, there were statistically significant group differences for instrumental, intrinsic, integrative, and heuristic motivation on the placement test. In addition to those four motivational factors, interest is a newly added item for the semester-end TOEIC test as shown in Table 8 above. Similar to the group differences seen on the placement test, group differences between Group 1, above a score of 600, and Group 2, below a score of 600, for intrinsic and heuristic motivation were greater than those for instrumental and integrative motivation. Even though the group differences for ideal, self-development, and competition were not statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , means were equally high regardless of proficiency level. Group differences for interest, intrinsic and heuristic motivation were statistically significant but the means were lower than those for the instrumental, integrative, ideal, self-development, and competition factors. The results mean that all participants were aware of the importance of English and gave significant weight to instrumental, integrative, ideal, self-development, and competition factors regardless of proficiency level. As proficiency level increased, so did the means for interest and intrinsic and heuristic motivation.

In order to examine the contribution of each factor to the participants' semester-end TOEIC score and to determine possible predictors of score improvement, bivariate linear regression analysis was performed. Table 9 shows the result of the regression analysis between each factor and the semester-end TOEIC score. Normality and homoskedasticity of the semester end TOEIC score were assumed.

**TABLE 9.** Regression Analysis for Factors Predicting TOEIC Score

	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Instrumental	-3.118	-.015	-.082	.935
Intrinsic	24.917	.204	1.243	.218
Integrative	21.427	.127	.987	.327
Ideal	-21.745	-.133	-.959	.341
SelfDevelop	2.913	.016	.086	.932
Competition	-21.850	-.129	-.864	.391
Heuristic	22.389	.156	1.203	.234
Interest	76.326	.349	1.865	.067*
Usefulness	17.870	.097	.584	.561
Participation	-18.197	-.103	-.757	.452
DeMotivation	-10.073	-.055	-.432	.667
SelfConfidence	-34.737	-.192	-1.022	.311

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

As seen in Table 9, the regression analysis shows that no factors were significant predictors for the semester-end TOEIC score. Only one factor, interest, was statistically significant at  $p < .1$ . In addition to a high score, improvement is another critical factor when measuring learners' effort in the language classroom. In order to explore influential motivational factors with respect to score improvement, bivariate linear regression analysis between all factors and TOEIC improvement was performed. TOEIC improvement was calculated by subtracting the placement test score from the semester-end test score. Unlike the regression analysis for motivational factors and the semester-end TOEIC scores, the score improvement was regressed on only one factor, interest. Table 10 illustrates the results of the data analysis.

TABLE 10. Regression Analysis for Factors Predicting Improvement

	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Instrumental	-25.306	-.139	-.729	.469
Intrinsic	-13.286	-.123	-.726	.471
Integrative	20.352	.137	1.026	.309
Ideal	25.348	.176	1.223	.226
SelfDevelop	-25.899	-.163	-.839	.405
Competition	-7.395	-.050	-.320	.750
Heuristic	7.146	.057	.420	.676
Interest	91.413	.474	2.444	.017*
Usefulness	-10.271	-.063	-.367	.714
Participation	-29.692	-.191	-1.352	.181
DeMotivation	-17.924	-.111	-.840	.404
SelfConfidence	-7.495	-.047	-.241	.810

\* $p < .05$

As seen in Table 10, only one motivational factor out of twelve was statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . In other words, score improvement of participants with higher interest is greater than that of participants with lower interest in English learning. The questions under the interest factor ask whether or not interest in (34) English; (35) English speaking; (36) English listening; (37) TOEIC; (38) culture and society of English speaking countries increased after taking the course. Even though the means for interest, 3.50 (G1) and 3.11 (G2), were the lowest among the motivational factors, as the mean for interest increased, so did improvement. This result indicates that language teachers and researchers need to inspire interest in learners and to maintain their interest in order to improve scores.

In order to gauge the participants' opinions on interest, short-answer questions were included in the questionnaire. The questions asked the participants to list the most interesting activity in the class, the least interesting activity in the class, activities that helped the participants improve their English proficiency, etc. For the most interesting activity, many participants listed speaking activities which require pair or group work. They cited TOEIC preparation as the least interesting activity. However, they believed that TOEIC practice helped them improve their English

proficiency.

### 4.3 Discussions

This study explores motivational factors that contribute to differences between mid-level and low-level groups and the relationship between motivational factors and score improvement. With the findings, language teachers and researchers can enhance learning effect by promoting those motivational factors which contribute to score improvement. The results of the current study are consistent with previous research (Deci, 1975; Ellis, 1997; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The means for extrinsic motivation were higher than means for intrinsic motivation which indicates that Korean university students are compelled to learn English by external forces rather than internal desire.

Contrary to other research (Ellis, 1997; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), this study found that the mean for integrative motivation was higher than that for instrumental motivation. Several points may serve as possible explanations for this finding. The participants in this study were all freshmen, so for the underlying factors for instrumental motivation such as getting a job may have been less intense than participants in other studies. Another reason is likely the small number of items in the category of integrative factors; there was only one item.

Consistent with the previous research (Kim et al., 2011), no participants, regardless of their proficiency level, were demotivated after taking this course. The means for all demotivation items were much lower than items under other factors,  $m=2.08$  (mid-level) and  $2.14$  (low-level), and group differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, it is assumed that demotivation toward English learning did not contribute to a lack of score improvement.

In this study, the participants' self-confidence with respect to English speaking increased over one semester, and there was no group difference. All participants' speaking confidence improved regardless of their proficiency level. The short essay answers reveal that the participants took two oral exams for one semester, in week 7 and week 15, and the preparation for the exams such as writing model answers and practicing with their partners helped them boost their confidence with respect to English speaking.

In addition to mean comparisons, group comparisons provided more useful

information about learners' motivation. Even though means for intrinsic and heuristic motivation, and interest were lower than other factors, these factors were important in predicting the participants' high scores. The higher the interest and intrinsic and heuristic motivation, the higher the proficiency level. This result can be interpreted as teachers and researchers needing to provide learners with ways to improve their motivation with regard to these factors.

Improvement is another important element in predicting learning effect. There may be students who scored high on the first test as well as the second test. In this case, learning effect is not as great as that for students whose second test score is much higher than the first. In sum, analyzing motivation for students whose second test score is higher than the first one can provide teachers and researchers with information useful to increase learning effect.

In the regression analysis, interest was the sole factor in determining improvement among participants' scores. The questionnaire items under the interest factor mainly asked whether the participants believed that their interest in English learning increased. Even though several elements may have contributed to the increase in interest, the answers for the short essay questions reveal that various communication-focused activities such as card games or watching video clips aroused student interest. However, curriculum designers should not just eliminate every boring component because the participants indicated that TOEIC practice was boring as they also said that it helped them to improve their proficiency. Therefore, language teachers and curriculum designers need to be cautious when organizing language classes, considering both student interest and the indispensable elements for language learning.

## 5. Conclusion

Since previous research did not compare the effects of each motivational factor on learners' improvement, studies on this topic have been needed. The current research examined motivational factors that influence learners' score improvement and group differences for diverse motivational factors. The participants were divided into two groups depending on their placement test scores and the group comparisons on differences in motivational factors reveal that the differences for four motivational

factors between mid-level and low-level participants were statistically significant. The participants' instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, and heuristic motivation levels were different from one another; the mid-level participants gave more weight to all factors than low-level participants.

In the next section, the participants were grouped according to their semester-end TOEIC scores. The participants whose TOEIC scores were higher gave more weight to five motivational factors: instrumental, integrative, intrinsic and heuristic motivation, and interest. However, only one factor, interest, was regressed on the score improvement. Here, we saw that the higher the interest, the greater the score improvement. It is assumed that learners demonstrating greater interest have the potential to improve their English proficiency faster than those with weaker interest. Therefore, language instructors and researchers need to enhance learners' interest, yet at the same time not abandoning serious but essential academic components.

Moving forward, more integrated research is needed. Mere comparison between instrumental and integrative or between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will not provide language educators with meaningful insight. However, uncovering factors that contribute to group differences between high- proficiency groups and low-proficiency groups and determining how to manage those factors can provide language learners with relevant scaffoldings.

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## Appendix

- I. 영어에 대한 여러분의 생각을 1~5 중 하나에 표시하여 응답해 주세요.
- 1 영어는 나중에 좋은 직업을 갖는데 중요하다.
  - 2 영어는 나중에 대학원 진학이나 유학을 가는데 중요하다.
  - 3 영어는 내가 흥미를 가지고 재미있게 배우는 과목이라서 나에게 중요하다.
  - 4 이 수업을 통해 나는 긍정적인 영어학습 자세를 갖게 되었다.
  - 5 이 수업을 통해 나는 영어를 열심히 공부하고 싶은 동기를 생겼다.
  - 6 영어는 내가 외국인을 만나고 다른 나라에 대해서 배울 수 있어서 중요하다.
  - 7 영어는 지금껏 학교에서 계속 배워왔고 앞으로도 배울 것이므로 중요하다.
  - 8 나는 영어를 잘 할 수 있다고 믿는다.
  - 9 내가 영어를 잘 하면 내 주위에 있는 사람들이 나를 부러워할 것이다.
  - 10 미래의 내 모습을 상상할 때 마다 영어를 잘하는 나를 상상한다.
  - 11 나는 이 수업을 통해 영어 말하기에 대한 자신감이 생겼다.
  - 12 나는 이 수업을 통해 TOEIC 시험에 대한 자신감이 생겼다.
  - 13 내가 존경하는 주위 분들이 늘 영어가 중요하다고 하시기 때문에 영어 공부를 해야 한다.
  - 14 원어민 선생님과 영어로 자유롭게 이야기하는 나의 모습을 상상한다.
  - 15 내 부모님들은 교양 있는 사람이 되려면 영어를 잘해야 한다고 말씀하신다.
  - 16 영어는 세계 공용어여서 배운다.
  - 17 해외여행을 할 때 외국인들과 의사소통을 위해서 배운다.
  - 18 세계에 대한 넓은 시야를 가질 수 있는 유용한 도구이기에 배운다.
  - 19 친구들에게 뒤지지 않기 위해서 배운다.
  - 20 영어는 자기 발전에 기여하기 때문에 배운다.
  - 21 영어를 모르는 사람이 되고 싶지 않기 때문에 배운다.
  - 22 인생에서 성공하기 위해서 배운다.
  - 23 꾸준히 공부하면 영어를 잘하는 것이 가능하다고 생각한다.
  - 24 영어로 된 정보를 얻기 위해서 배운다.
  - 25 주위에 영어로 된 것이 많고 이런 것들을 다 읽기 위해서 배운다.
  - 26 전문서적이 영어로 된 것이 많으므로 배운다.
  - 27 가장 많이 접할 수 있는 외국어이니까 배운다.
  - 28 영어에 대한 호기심과 동경심 때문에 배운다.
  - 29 외국인 친구를 사귀기 위해서 배운다.
  - 30 시기적으로 영어의 중요성이 증대되므로 미래의 세계무대에서 살아남기 위해 배운다.
  - 31 영어는 모든 분야에서 중요하기 때문에 배운다.
  - 32 나는 영어를 좋아한다.
  - 33 새로운 문화에 친숙해 지고 싶기 때문에 배운다.

II. 1~5 중 하나에 표시하여 응답해 주세요.

- 1 이번 수업을 통해 영어에 대한 흥미가 늘어났다.
- 2 이번 수업을 통해 영어 말하기에 대한 흥미가 늘어났다.
- 3 이번 수업을 통해 영어 듣기에 대한 흥미가 늘어났다.
- 4 이번 수업을 통해 TOEIC 에 대한 흥미가 늘어났다.
- 5 이번 수업을 통해 영어 문화권에 대한 흥미가 늘어났다.
- 6 이번 수업을 통해 나는 영어 문화권에 대해 알게 되었다.
- 7 나는 이번 수업으로 영어로 된 지문을 읽는 속도가 빨라졌다.
- 8 교과서 수업시간에 파트너나 그룹간의 말하기 활동이 도움이 되었다.
- 9 토의시간에 숙제로 풀어진 문제들이 도움이 되었다.
- 10 단어 암기와 단어 시험 준비가 도움이 되었다.
- 11 e-learning 문법과 단어 공부에 도움이 되었다.
- 12 협동학습 과제 해결을 통해 영어학습에 더 적극적으로 참여할 수 있었다.
- 13 수업시간에 적극적으로 참여하였다.
- 14 수업에 다른 친구들의 다양한 생각들을 접할 수 있었다.
- 15 수업 중에서 가장 재미있었던 활동은 무엇입니까? (주관식)
- 16 수업 중에서 가장 재미없었던 활동은 무엇입니까? (주관식)
- 17 수업에서 나의 영어 실력 향상에 가장 도움이 되었던 활동은 무엇이 라고 생각합니까? (주관식)
- 18 수업에서 내가 가장 적극적으로 참여한 활동은 무엇입니까? (주관식)

III. 때로는 교양 영어 수업이 지루하다거나 힘들어서 영어를 배우고 싶은 마음(즉, 학습동기)이 별로 없어진 경우가 있을 수도 있습니다. 다음 각 항목이 여러분의 영어 학습 동기 상실에 얼마나 큰 영향을 미쳤는지 1~5 중 하나에 표시하여 응답해 주십시오.

- 1 나와 맞지 않는 학급 구성원들의 태도
- 2 영어에 대한 나의 부정적 태도 증가
- 3 자신감의 감소
- 4 경직된 수업 분위기
- 5 부족한 수업 환경
- 6 학습 내용 및 교재의 문제점
- 7 교\_강사의 성격 및 전문성 미흡
- 8 이번 수업에 참여하면서 얻은 수확이나 이점이 있다면 어떤 것이 있나요? (주관식)
- 9 이 수업 시작 전에 비해 영어에 대해 자신감이 생겼다고 생각하나요? 이유는? (주관식)