

EFL Learners' Preferences for Error Correction and Its Relationship with Demotivation and Language Proficiency in the Iranian Context

Mina Rastegar*

Assistant Professor, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Hajar Homayoon

M.A. in TEFL, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Received: February 6, 2012; **Accepted:** September 2, 2012

Abstract

The present study is an attempt to explore any significant relationships between learners' preferences for error correction, demotivation, and language proficiency (LP). One hundred Iranian EFL students, including both males and females, studying at the departments of foreign languages of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman and Tehran University took part in this study. In order to obtain the required data, two questionnaires and a proficiency test were utilized: the learners' preferences for error correction questionnaire (Fukuda, 2004) to measure learners' preferences for error correction, the demotivation questionnaire (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) to measure demotivation, and Michigan Test (1997) to measure the learners' language proficiency level. The findings of this study revealed that first, there was a significant negative relationship between the learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation (- 0.79): the more satisfied learners are with the error corrections they receive, the less demotivated they will be; second, there was a significant positive relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP (0.69): the higher the learners' satisfaction with error corrections they receive, the higher their level of LP; third, there was a significant negative relationship between demotivation and LP (- 0.59): the more demotivated learners are, the less their scores of LP will be.

Keywords: preferences for error correction, demotivation, language proficiency, EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Everyone, even native speakers, make mistakes when using a language. As Brown (2007) states, errors are the “idiosyncrasies in the language of the learner that are direct manifestations of a system within which a learner is operating at the time” (p. 258). Moreover, learning a foreign language is a gradual process, during which mistakes are to be expected in all stages (Truscott, 1996). According to researchers (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), error correction is “the replacement of error or mistake by what is correct” (p. 363). Park (2010) believes when treating students’ errors teachers should be cautious about its both positive and negative effects. He believes that positive effects of error correction may lead to better language learning; on the contrary, its negative effects could be the hindrances of learners’ language development because error correction may cause a kind of misunderstanding between instructors and learners that could lead to the state of anxiety and demotivation. Error correction is one of the most sensitive areas in language learning and more importantly is when, how, and by means of whom must such a correction take place (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Over the history, language specialists have held varying opinions about error correction. As an example, behaviorist psychologists and structural linguists believed that learners’ errors must be corrected immediately and comprehensively by the teacher in order not to become a part of their habit system (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Oladejo, 1993). As Brooks (1960) asserts, “like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected” (p. 58). Humanistic psychologists emphasized learners and their inner worlds (Williams & Burden, 1997) and advised teachers to be more tolerant of learners’ errors (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Supporters of humanistic psychology stress that learners emotions and thoughts are the most notable aspects of their developments (Williams & Burden, 1997). As a result, teachers are recommended to know their students’ perceptions and preferences of language learning and error correction (Horwitz, 1988).

Demotivation is a relatively new concept and has not been fully adopted yet in the field of L2 research. However, Dörnyei (2001a) defines demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (page. 143). Moreover, Demotivation, as defined by Dörnyei (2001b), is a decrease or drop in the level of motivation. According to Dörnyei,

demotivation does not result from (a) distractions of a more attractive option, (b) a gradual loss of interest across a period of time, or (c) internal triggers. Demotivation starts from an external locus, a demotivating trigger, before it becomes an internalized process. In fact, motivation must exist before there can be a subsequent decrease. Researchers do not all agree that demotivation is solely external. Many researchers (e.g., Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kojima, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b) included not only external factors but also internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitude within learners themselves.

According to Dörnyei (2001a), a demotivated student is someone who initially had a motivation to participate in an activity and carry out a task, but has lost the motivation for the reason of external factors such as classroom or teacher behavior in the learning situation. Researchers believe that demotivating factors hinder learners' learning motivation and lead to unsuccessful mastery of English language proficiency (Hu, 2011).

Bachman (1990) believes that language proficiency generally refers to knowledge, competence, or ability in the use of a language, irrespective of how, where, or under what conditions it has been acquired. According to Valdés and Figueroa (1994), knowing a language and how to use it involves a mastery and control of a large number of interdependent elements that interact with one another and are affected by the nature of the situation in which communication takes place.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, an overview of the previous researches that are considered relevant to the present investigation is presented. *Learners' Preferences for Error Correction* is the first variable that is reviewed, following that a review of the literature regarding *Demotivation* and *Language Proficiency* is presented.

The correction of learners' errors and its effectiveness has always been a controversial issue (Amador, 2008). In the process of L2 learning and instruction, there are a considerable number of studies that focus on the issue of error correction and its possible effects on language learning. A survey study carried out by Cathcart and Olsen (1976), explored both teachers' and students' preferences for the correction of spoken errors in the classroom. By distributing a questionnaire to 188 ESL students and

38 teachers, they found that students preferred to be corrected more than what teachers believed to be necessary.

Hendrickson's (1978) study investigated whether, when, which, and how students' errors should be corrected and who should correct them. The findings indicated that: (a) correction promotes language learning, (b) there is no general consensus as to when errors should be corrected, (c) frequently occurring errors and errors that impair communication should be corrected, and (d) various corrective feedback types are used by teachers.

Lightbown and Spada (1990) in a research which was conducted to examine the effects of corrective feedback in communication-focused classroom revealed that the students who were rarely corrected on their forms produced less accurate utterances than those who were frequently corrected. As a result, in order to be a good communicator, a learner must have both the knowledge of grammar and its appropriate use; therefore, teaching of the grammatically accurate forms cannot be neglected.

Fukuda (2004) investigated teachers' and students' opinions about error treatment by surveying teachers and students in Japanese high school oral communication classes. The results of the survey revealed significant differences between the teachers and students regarding error treatment. Generally, the results indicated that the students preferred more error treatment than what their teachers believed. On the findings, Fukuda suggested that the effectiveness of error treatment is extremely difficult to identify since it depends on many factors, including students' needs, preferences, personalities, proficiency levels, and motivation.

Katayama (2007) in a survey investigated three important factors: (1) students' attitudes toward classroom oral error correction, (2) their preferences for correction of different types of oral errors, and (3) their preferences for particular correction methods. He employed a questionnaire survey to 588 EFL students at several Japanese universities. The results indicated that the students had strongly positive attitudes toward teacher correction of errors. The most favored correction method for the students was that the teacher gives them a hint which might enable them to notice the error and self-correct.

Amador (2008) conducted a study among twenty-three college students of English who were asked their preferences for twenty error correction techniques which were presented mainly in the form of dialogue as usually takes place in classroom. The study indicated that the techniques which learners preferred were those in which they were

explicitly told what their mistake was. The learners also preferred to be corrected by the teacher rather than their peers. Besides, students favored those kind of techniques in which they have a chance to repeat the correct model which is provided for them by the teacher and thus repair their imperfect speech. The study inferred that these techniques of corrective feedback encourage learners to participate in the correction of their spoken errors which leads to the acquisition of the foreign language.

Park (2010) investigated the teachers' and learners' opinions about error correction. One hundred sixty adult ESL students and 18 native English speaking teachers in two language institutes at Northern California universities participated in the surveys. The results revealed that both the teachers and students agreed that students' errors should be treated, but students wanted more correction than their teachers thought. A discrepancy was found between the teachers and students regarding the timing of error correction. Unlike the teachers, the students regarded immediate error correction that can interrupt the flow of conversation as effective. Both the teachers and students believed that serious and frequent errors should be treated, but the students wanted to receive more error treatment. The students wanted error treatment even on infrequent and individual errors. Teachers preferred to treat learners' errors by repetition, explicit feedback, and elicitation, whereas learners preferred elicitation, explicit, and implicit feedbacks. Both teachers and students preferred teachers to correct learners' errors. The findings show that the teachers and students had significantly different opinions about timing, method, and delivering agents of error correction, as well as types of errors that need to be corrected.

Park (2010) in his study also examined the relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and anxiety. He assigned students into either a low anxiety group or a high anxiety group based on their language anxiety scores from a questionnaire. The findings indicated that regardless of their anxiety levels, the students in both the high and low anxiety groups agreed that student errors should be treated. Both groups regarded elicitation, explicit, and implicit feedbacks as the most effective types of feedback. However, a significant difference between the high and low anxiety groups was found only in delivering agents of error correction. The students with high anxiety welcomed all sources of error correction, but the students with low anxiety did not value their peers' error correction.

During the last decades, demotivation has often been studied in the area of “instructional communication” and academic lecture presentations in different countries (Zhang 2007). However, Chambers (1993) was one of the first researchers who emphasized on the issue of demotivation in the field of SLA. Chambers (1993) conducted a study and gathered both teachers’ and students’ perspectives about the concept of demotivation. He found that reasons underlying student demotivation were perceived quite differently by the teachers and their students. From the teachers’ point of view, demotivation was found to be a prominent problem. Teachers perceived the causes of demotivation to be related to psychological, attitudinal, social, historical and geographical reasons, but they explicitly excluded themselves. They described demotivated pupils as having poor concentration, lacking belief in their own capabilities and making no effort to learn. In addition, they tend to be disruptive, distract other pupils, and fail to bring materials to lessons. On the other hand, students’ perceived reasons for demotivation also varied and included as teachers’ behaviors, class size, and so forth.

Gorham and Christopel (1992) cataloged what learners perceived as causes of their demotivation in university classrooms in a variety of academic subjects. In comparing learner attributions of demotivation and motivation, they found that the absence of demotivators in the classroom such as unenthusiastic teaching, dissatisfaction with grading, and boring subject had a more positive influence on motivation than the presence of motivators such as an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher. The researchers concluded that teachers could promote learner motivation simply by preventing demotivation.

Oxford (1998) carried out an investigation on approximately 250 American students (both in high schools and universities) about their learning experiences by taking into account the time factor. She recognized that demotivation is a process that can be best understood by looking backward, i.e., by asking participants to recall their learning experiences over a period of time. Therefore, the students were asked to write a stimulated recall essay using a variety of prompts, including “Describe a situation in which you experienced conflict with a teacher” and “Talk about a classroom in which you felt uncomfortable”. The findings drawn from the content analysis of the student essays revealed four broad sources of demotivation: (1) the teacher’s personal relationship with the student, (2) the teacher’s attitude towards the course

or the material, (3) style conflicts between teachers and students, and (4) the nature of the classroom activities.

Muhonen (2004) conducted a study on factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The data for the study were collected by means of a retrospective writing task in which the pupils were asked to describe the issues that had a negative influence on their motivation to learn English and explain in what way these demotives had affected their motivation. On the basis of qualitative content analysis several demotives emerged from the data which fell under five main themes: (a) the teachers, (b) learning material and their contents, (c) the learner characteristics, (d) school environment, (e) the learners' attitudes towards the English language. Comparing demotivating factors and English grades revealed that the average grade of those pupils who considered the English language as demotivating was significantly lower than of those pupils whose demotivation resulted from the teacher or the learning material.

Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) explored Japanese high school students' demotivation by collecting data from 656 students through a questionnaire. As a result, five demotivational factors emerged from the data: (1) learning contents and materials, (2) teacher's competence and teaching styles, (3) inadequate school facilities, (4) lack of intrinsic motivation, and (5) test scores. Contrary to most of the previous studies presented so far, factors related to teacher were not found to have very strong demotivating influence compared to learning contents and materials or test scores which were found to be the two most salient demotivators among participants.

Over the history, language proficiency has been investigated in relation to various factors. Mackey and Philp's (1998) study examined the effects of intensive recasts in relation to learners' level of proficiency. They found that learners at high developmental levels who received intensive recasts showed a greater improvement in sentence structures than learners who did not receive intensive recasts. Furthermore, the research findings indicated that learners who were more developmentally ready to acquire the target forms benefited more from recasts than those who were not.

The results of the Lyster and Panova's (2002) investigation indicated that teachers depending on the learners' proficiency levels provided them with varying error treatment techniques. Based on the

findings, they suggested that teachers had a tendency to provide a specific type of corrective feedback, recasts, more frequently to lower level students than higher level students when correcting their students' errors. The findings are interesting when the fact is considered that more proficient learners can benefit more from recasts than the less ones.

Falout and Maruyama (2004) conducted a study to demonstrate measurable differences in learners' demotivation between low proficiency (LP) and high proficiency (HP) students at the college freshmen level. They used both questionnaires and open-ended questions in order to gather the data. From the questionnaire came the factors of negative affect for LP students. From the open-ended prompts, both sets attributed their demotivation to: disappointment in performance, course contents and pace, *and* teacher. LP students were demotivated earlier and their demotivation correlates to their affective states. LP students more often internalized the causes of their demotivation. HP students showed more control over their affective states and learning situations. They especially despised the pedagogy of humiliation, though both sets vented most about teachers.

Hu (2011) investigated the relationship between Taiwanese EFL students' past demotivating factors and their English language proficiency to identify to what extent does demotivation affect EFL learners' English language proficiency attainment. The study provided a great understanding of demotivating factors for EFL learning. It found that learning difficulties preceded the rest of the predictor variables and accounted for the greatest amount of variance. Among the entered items pertinent to learning difficulties, lacking sufficient vocabulary inventory comes as the first and foremost significant demotivating factor. Insufficient vocabulary size has a detrimental impact on foreign language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary size, learners will never be able to command the English language effectively.

The fact that error correction might potentially demotivate EFL learners and lack of such a study with these variables in Iranian context have motivated the researchers to undertake this study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Considering the above-mentioned review, the present research project aims at investigating the relationship between the three aforementioned variables namely preferences for error correction, demotivation, and

language proficiency of EFL learners. Thus, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation?
2. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' preferences for error correction and their language proficiency?
3. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' demotivation and their language proficiency?

Understanding the relationship among such important variables help teachers improve the quality of their L2 classes by identifying their learners' preferences and source of demotivation.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

One hundred Iranian EFL students studying at the departments of foreign languages of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman and Tehran University took part in this study. The participants, including both males and females, were selected randomly from junior and senior students majoring in English Translation and English Literature. The age range of the participants is from 20 to 25. The participants' language proficiency constitutes a normal curve.

Instruments

In order to obtain the required data on the variables of this study, the following scales were utilized:

1. Learners' Preference for Error Correction (LPEC) Questionnaire (Fukuda, 2004)
2. Demotivation Questionnaire (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009)
3. Language Proficiency Test (Michigan Test, 1997)

The Learners' Preference for Error Correction Questionnaire

Fukuda's (2004) questionnaire consists of 25 items on a 5-point Likert type scale. It has two main sections; the first section includes twenty-two

items investigating students' perceptions of the necessity of error correction (item 1), frequency of error correction (item 2), timing of error correction (items 3-6), preferences for the types of errors that need to be corrected (items 7-11), types of corrective feedback (items 12-19), and delivering agents of error correction (items 20-22). The second section, the demographic section, consists of three items (items 23-25), and is designed to collect participants' demographic information, including their genders, the length of English learning, and students' proficiency levels. The responses range from (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "strongly disagree" (items 1, 3-6, and 20-22); (1) "always" to (5) "never" (items 2 and 7-11); and (1) "very effective" to (5) "very ineffective" (items 12-19). For each item, the highest degree of agreement and satisfaction receives five points and the lowest one receives one point. The higher the score of each item the more students are satisfied with necessity, frequency, timing, types of errors to be corrected, types of corrective feedback, and delivering agents of error correction. The range of the participants' scores is from 25 to 125. The reliability index (Cronbach's α) as estimated by the researchers of the study is 0.78.

The Demotivation Questionnaire

Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) demotivation questionnaire consists of 35 items in a 5-point Likert type questions. The questionnaire consists of six categories of demotivating factors including: a. characteristics of classes (items 1-6, and 26), b. experiences of failure (items 7-9, 27, and 30), c. teachers (items 10-15), d. class materials (items 16-20, and 35), e. class environment (items 21-25, 28, and 29), and f. lack of interest (items 31-34). The participants were asked to answer to the general question: "How much is the following statement true for you as a demotivating factor?" The participants were required to choose one of the alternatives: (1) "not true", (2) "mostly not true", (3) "not either true or untrue", (4) "to some extent true", and (5) "true". For each item, the highest degree of demotivation receives five points and the lowest, one point. Participants' scores range from 35 to 175. Thus, the higher the score, the stronger the demotivating factor. The reliability index (Cronbach's α) as estimated by the researchers of the study is 0.86.

The Language Proficiency Test

The instrument used to measure the participants' English language proficiency was adopted from the Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE), University of Michigan (1997). The short version of Michigan Test is one of the most accessible and widely used language proficiency tests in field of L2 research. It consists of 35 items in four parts respectively, a cloze test passage, grammar, vocabulary, and a reading passage. The range of the participants' scores can be from 0 to 35. Thus the higher the students' scores, the higher their level of English language proficiency.

Data Collection Procedure

The present study was carried out during the class time in the second semester of the academic year (2011). The questionnaires and the proficiency test were distributed among the participants by one of the researchers. The participants were given 35-minute time to answer the questionnaire, and there were accompanying instructions. They were informed that the information would be used for research purposes and they were assured that they would be kept completely confidential.

Data Analysis

Statistical procedure of Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was used, utilizing SPSS version 15, to seek any meaningful relations between the variables of the study. Detailed description of the analysis of the collected data is presented below.

RESULTS

The Descriptive Statistics of the variables of the study (LPEC, Demotivation, and LP) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The descriptive statistics of the variables

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
LPEC	100	63.00	45.00	108.00	75.13	15.81	250.25
Demotivation	100	92.00	43.00	135.00	83.18	24.98	624.33
LP	100	24.00	5.00	29.00	17.05	6.01	36.18

Learners' preferences for error correction (LPEC)
Language proficiency (LP)

Analysis of Learners' Preferences for Error Correction and Demotivation

To answer the first research question—*Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation?*—statistical test of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients was conducted. The analysis of the collected data shows that Pearson's correlation coefficients between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation is - 0.79 with the P-values of .000 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, there is a significant negative relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation. Table 2 below represents the results.

Table 2: Pearson correlation between LPEC and demotivation

		LPEC	Demotivation
LPEC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Demotivation	Pearson Correlation	-.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Learners' preferences for error correction (LPEC)

Analysis of LPEC and Language Proficiency

To answer the second research question—*Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' preferences for error correction and their language proficiency?*—statistical procedure of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients was conducted. Pearson's correlation coefficients between learners' preferences for error correction and LP is 0.69 with the P-values of .000 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$. There is a significant positive relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP. Table 3 below represents the results.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between LPEC and LP

		LPEC	LP
LPEC	Pearson Correlation	1	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
LP	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Analysis of Demotivation and Language Proficiency

To answer the third research question of the study—*Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' demotivation and their language proficiency?*-- statistical procedure of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients was conducted. Pearson's correlation coefficients between demotivation and LP is - 0.59 with the P-values of 0.00 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$. So, there is a significant negative relationship between demotivation and LP. Table 4 below represents the results.

Table 4: Pearson correlation between demotivation and LP

		Demotivation	LP
Demotivation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
LP	Pearson Correlation	-.590**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Language proficiency (LP)

Therefore, the results can be summarized as follows. First, there is a significant negative relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation (Figure 1). Second, there is a significant positive relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP (Figure 2). Third, there is a significant negative relationship between demotivation and LP (Figure 3).

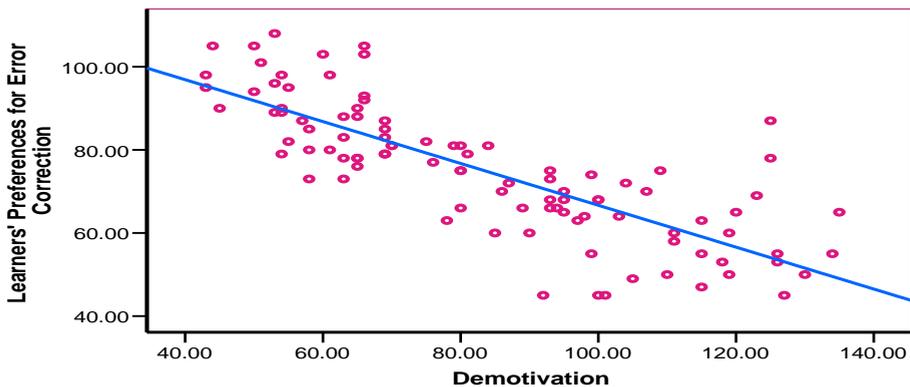


Figure 1: The scatter diagram for correlation between LPEC and Demotivation

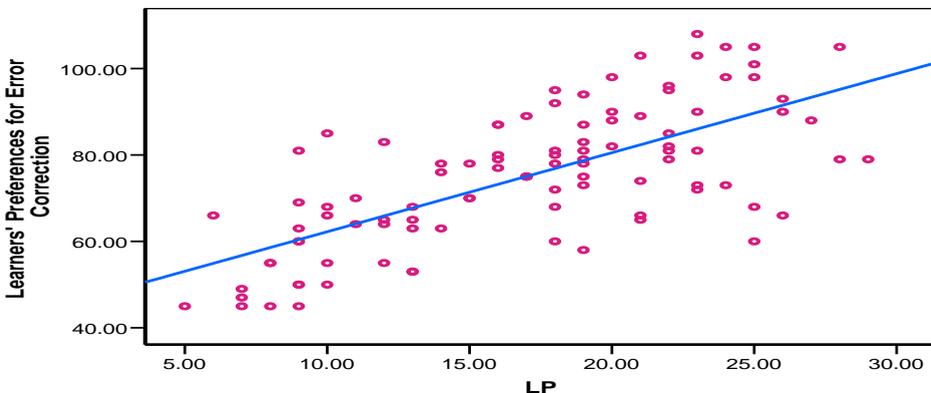


Figure 2: The scatter diagram for correlation between LPEC and LP

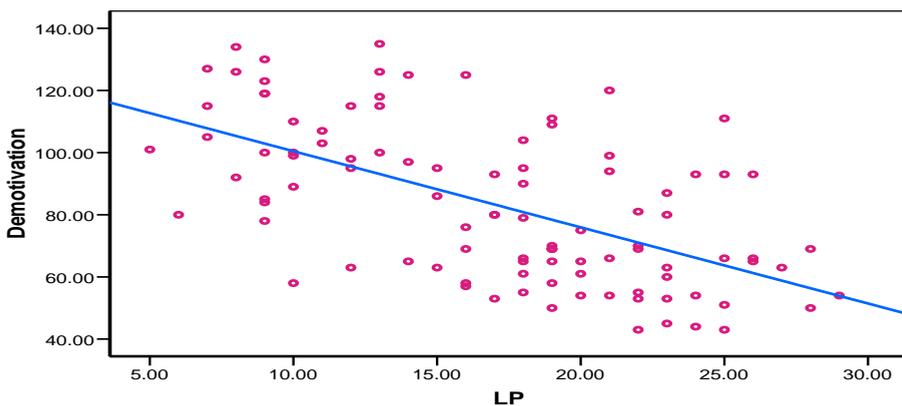


Figure 3: The scatter diagram for correlation between Demotivation and LP

DISCUSSION

In this section, the research questions presented in this paper are dealt with one by one. Each research question is answered based on the findings of the study. The first research question asked whether there is any relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation. The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation ($r = -0.79$). In fact, the more satisfied learners are with the error corrections they receive, the less demotivated they are. To the extent of the current researchers' knowledge, no studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation in the literature. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be discussed in the light of previous literature.

The second research question asked whether there is any relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP ($r = 0.69$). In fact, the higher the learners' satisfaction with error corrections they receive, the higher their level of LP. The results of this study is in line and consistent with the results reported by Lyster and Panova (2002) which have indicated that more proficient learners have special preferences for error correction and can benefit more from error correction than the less proficient ones.

The third research question asked whether there is any relationship between demotivation and LP. The results revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between demotivation and LP ($r = -0.59$). In fact, the more demotivated the students, the less their level of LP. Thus, the result of this study is in line with the results reported by Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Hu (2011). They have found that lower proficient students were demotivated earlier and were least likely to cope with demotivating experiences.

On the whole, how and when to correct the errors of language learners is an important issue in language instruction programs in different contexts. Moreover, error correction in English classes, if not handled appropriately will lead to disappointment and eventually demotivation of language learners. However, this important issue, although seem axiomatic among the language teacher, has not yet received the due attention and it is not attended by the researchers in

Iranian educational settings. An important fact in TEFL has always been to try to boost the attention and motivation of language learners and not to demotivate them. Since this is an interesting area of research in the area of TEFL, more research is needed to shed more light on the issue.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study sets out to find out relationship among learners' preferences for error correction, demotivation, and LP of EFL learners in Iran. The study's findings of the study revealed that first, there is a significant negative relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and demotivation. This result implies that language teachers must be very cautious when attempting to correct the EFL learners' errors because different learners have diverse expectations when it comes to correcting their errors and some types of error correction would, in fact, demotivate some learners.

Second, there is a significant positive relationship between learners' preferences for error correction and LP. This signifies that the proficiency level of the EFL learners is a crucial factor that must be considered by the teachers when trying to correct the errors. More proficient students have more confidence and more experience in language learning and consequently they get less demotivated when corrected by their teachers. Consequently, for low proficiency learner more care must be exercised when correcting the errors of more basic learners.

Third, there is a significant negative relationship between demotivation and LP. Accordingly, the more proficient learners are less demotivated. In other words, the more demotivated the students, the less their level of LP. Thus, in order not to demotivate the EFL learners in basic levels extra care must be taken by the language teachers to consider the preferences of the learners and correct the errors in a way to boost their motivation in their EFL courses.

These findings have some implications for English teachers. They need to be more aware of what learners expect to receive from them as an error treatment and also consider that their approach to treatment and correction of errors may cause demotivation in their students. The findings suggest that the students expect their teachers to use various types of corrective feedback in a flexible way that suits their current proficiency level considering the target item. Teachers can help their

students by trying to make learners notice that what they want and what they prefer is taken into account by the teacher. As a result, students would feel less demotivated to a great extent and this has positive effects on their language learning (Truscott, 1996). Therefore, teachers should try to identify their students' expectations and use various types of corrective feedback in an adaptable way that suits them to avoid demotivating their students.

Bio-data

Mina Ratsegar has been an Assistant Professor of Language and Applied Linguistics in the language department of the University of Kerman for the last 26 years. Her professional expertise lies in the area of Psycholinguistics. Her research focuses on L2 learner factors— affective, cognitive, and personality. She is currently teaching research methods, methodology, testing, and advanced writing at both B.A. and M.A. levels.

Hajar Homayoon has received her M.A. in TEFL from Shahid-Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. Her current research interests include various aspects of English teaching and Psycholinguistics.

References

- Amador, Y. A. (2008). Learner attitude toward error correction in a beginners English class. *Revista Comunicación*, 17(1), 18-28.
- Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Functional considerations in language testing* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brooks, N. (1960). *Language and language learning* (2nd Ed.). New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Cathcart, R., & Olsen, J. W. (1976). Teachers' and students' preferences for correction of classroom errors. In J. Fanselow & R. Crymes (Eds.), *On TESOL 76* (41-53). Washington: TESOL.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Grammar pedagogy in second land foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 459-480.
- Chambers, G. (1993). Taking the 'de' out of demotivation. *Language Learning Journal*, 7(1), 13-16.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001a). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow: Longman.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2001b). *Motivation strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Falout, J., & Maruyama, M. (2004). A comparative study of proficiency and learner demotivation. *The Language Teacher*, 28(8), 3-9.
- Fukuda, Y. (2004). *Treatment of spoken errors in Japanese high school oral communication classes*. Unpublished Master's thesis, California State University, San Francisco.
- Gorham, J., & Christophel, D. (1992). Students' perception of teacher behaviors as motivating and demotivating factors in college classes. *Communication Quarterly*, 40(3), 239-252.
- Hendrickson, J. (1978). Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 62(8), 387-398.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *The Modern Language Journal*, 72(3), 283-294.
- Hu, R. J. S. (2011). The relationship between demotivation and EFL learners' English language proficiency. *English Language Teaching*, 4(4), 88-96.
- Katayama, A. (2007). Learners' perceptions toward oral error correction. In K. Bradford-Watts (Ed.), *JALT2006 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.
- Kojima, S. (2004). *EFL students: Research in demotivational patterns from the qualitative research results English learning demotivation in Japanese of three different types of high schools*. Unpublished master's thesis. Hyogo, Japan: Kwansai Gakuin University.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1990). Focus-on-form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12(4), 429-448.
- Lyster, R., & Panova, I. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(4), 573-595.
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66.
- Mackey, A., & Philp, J. (1998). Conversational interaction and second language development: Recasts, responses, and red herrings? *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(3), 338-356.
- Muhonen, J. (2004). *Second language demotivation: Factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language*. Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Oladejo, J. A. (1993). Error correction in ESL: Learners' preference. *TESL Canada Journal*, 10(2), 71-89.

- Oxford, R. L. (1998). *The unravelling tapestry: Teacher and course characteristics associated with demotivation in the language classroom*. Demotivation in Foreign Language Learning: Paper presented at the TESOL '98 Congress, Seattle, WA.
- Park, H. S. (2010). *Teachers' and learners' preferences for error correction*. Unpublished Master's thesis. California State University, Sacramento.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom. *System*, 37(1), 57-69.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 53(2), 361-382.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning* 46(2), 327-369.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2004a). Nihonjin daigakuseino eigogakushuuheno demotivation (Japanese university students' demotivation to study English). *The Chugoku Academic Society of English Language Education Kenkyukiyo* 34, 57-66.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2004b). Factors in demotivation concerning learning English: A preliminary study of Japanese university students. *The Kyushu Academic Society of English Language Education (KASELE)* 32, 39-46.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2006a). Factors in demotivation of lower proficiency English learners at college. *The Kyushu Academic Society of English Language Education (KASELE)* 34, 87-96.
- Tsuchiya, M. (2006b). Profiling of lower achievement English learners at college in terms of demotivating factors. *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan (ARELE)*, 17, 171-180.
- Valdés, G., & Figueroa, R. (1994). *Bilingualism and testing a special case of bias*. Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation.
- Williams, M., & Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhang, Q. (2007). Teacher misbehaviors as learning demotivators in college classrooms: A cross-cultural investigation in China, Germany, Japan, and the United States. *Communication Education*, 56(2), 209-227.