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Coping With Demotivation: EFL Learners' Remotivation Processes

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Abstract

When foreign language education is compulsory, competitive, or coercive, how learners cope with stress can determine outcomes, including value of the subject, persistence on task, and level of proficiency. The development of adaptive or maladaptive coping processes toward situated learning goals is influenced by learners' beliefs about themselves and their experiences. This study consisted of 157 university learners in Japan who responded to an open-ended questionnaire about the ways they lost, regained, and maintained motivation when learning English as a foreign language (EFL) as a compulsory subject. Data were analyzed using a framework of coping processes. Short- and long-term coping processes were compared between learners with positive and negative self-concepts regarding EFL. This paper reports on the stages and types of developmental coping processes that can lead to building a wide range of adaptive processes, or to self-defeating helplessness, when facing impediments to learning. Findings indicate that establishing adaptive processes early in learning appeared critical for long-term self-confidence and eventual proficiency. Moreover, learners with positive self-concepts more often reported using their social networks for motivational support than learners with negative self-concepts, who believed such support would have helped them to remotivate. Implications for teaching are also discussed.

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan can be stressful. The educational system is test-driven and devoid of practical purposes to use English, which decreases learners' motivation and leaves them without meaningful goals (Falout et al., 2009). This environment contains complex temporal dimensions of stress; the high stakes tests themselves are short-term stressors that can spark automatic nervous system reactions, such as pounding heart and butterflies in the stomach, and their unremitting occurrence

throughout the lifetime can cause chronic stress (Aldwin, 1994). Learners avoid or survive these difficulties through a process of coping—or "regulation under stress" (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Exactly how do they developmentally shape their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in ways that are adaptive or maladaptive toward EFL learning? How are these processes affected by past experiences, present self-concept, and future expectations? This study investigates the developmental stages of coping to regain and maintain motivation along the long path toward language acquisition.

Background

Motivation research and theorizing about learning a second language (L2) is entering what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) describe as the *socio-dynamic phase*, which can be characterized as understanding motivation as comprising complex interrelationships between learners' individual, internal psychological processes and the wider contexts of their learning environments. Dörnyei's proposed model, *the L2 motivational self system*, describes the interplay of what learners aspire to and ideally might become, as might be influenced through their immediate experiences and learning environments (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Ushioda's theoretical perspective, *a person-in-context relational view*, emphasizes that past learning experiences influences emergent motivation, self, and identity for L2 learners. She asserts that the ways learners perceive themselves within their environment can develop into complex motivational directions that may not be understood within generalizing cause-and-effect models of motivation (Ushioda, 2009).

Part of the complexities of motivation is that it is not stable, but flexible and fluctuating. Many recent studies on demotivation, which occurs when motivation decreases, have been based in learning EFL in Japan (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), which is also the context of this study. For the prime demotivator, much evidence points to grammar-translation (Murphey et al., 2009; Falout et al. 2009; Kikuchi, 2009), which bores students (Falout & Falout, 2005) and frustrates them when they do not understand or feel that it is beyond their level (Carpenter et al., 2009). Attendant to the practice of grammar-translation is reliance on rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, which itself can be seen as a common demotivator (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kikuchi, 2009). Occurring within this practice is also a reliance on both low and high stakes tests, which is also seen as a common demotivator in this context (Kikuchi, 2009; Murphey et al., 2009).

These previously stated factors of demotivation are external to the learners' psychology. However, the learners' psychology also plays a critical role. One study (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) suggests that a lack of intrinsic motivation could lower other types of motivation, such as extrinsic motivation. Once demotivated, learners can react in ways that are maladaptive, such as sleeping in class, ignoring the teacher, and refusing to study. All of these behaviors potentially further compromise their learning and complicate their motivation problems (Arai, 2004). Another study (Falout et al., 2009) suggests that a lowered self-confidence and a tendency for self-denigration during learning struggles could lower motivation and relate to low proficiency in the long term, whereas a tendency to react to demotivation by seeking enjoyment with English, such as watching movies or listening to music, has the opposite effect. Therefore, these results suggest

that the sources of demotivation and how learners cope with it might have different overall effects on motivation and learning outcomes.

Remotivation is a process of recovering motivation after losing it, a process of "getting your motivation online again" (Ushioda, 1988, p. 86). Long-term incremental losses and recoveries without a net loss of motivation can be seen as a process of maintaining motivation. Ushioda (2001) identified four motivational strategies for shorter-term application and four thinking patterns (i.e., mindsets) for longer-term application to remotivate and maintain motivation over the temporal fluctuations of motivation with French L2 learners in Ireland. The motivational strategies for renewing lost motivation or maintaining it in the face of difficulties are: (1) focusing on incentives or pressures, such as taking a trip to France or an upcoming test; (2) focusing on the L2 study using goal-oriented self-regulation; (3) seeking temporary relief from L2 study, which helps learners to reconnect with enjoyable aspects of the L2; and (4) talking over motivation problems with others, both inside and outside the class, and even self-talking (Ushioda, 2001).

The mindsets for channeling motivation are: (1) reinforcing one's self-concept by attributing positive L2 outcomes to one's abilities, such as effort; (2) attributing negative L2 outcomes to temporary, changeable aspects, such as lack of effort; (3) dissociating demotivational and negative affective experiences with L2 learning to something outside of one's self, such as institutional shortcomings or demands; and (4) believing that one can self-motivate through personal resourcefulness and initiative (i.e., belief in personal agency to self-regulate motivation).

In Japan, learning EFL has been essentially mandatory. English courses have been in place for years at 97% of the public primary schools with strong support from parents. Thereafter, learning English officially became compulsory throughout the country in 2011 (MEXT, 2007). For secondary education, English officially became compulsory in 1997 (MEXT, 1997), although it had long been a de facto compulsory subject, as these schools focus their English curricula to prepare students for university entrance exams, most of which have an English section. Throughout these years of formal education, and outside of it, supplemental English courses are commonly attended at cram and conversation schools [1] during after-school hours, weekends, and seasonal vacations.

By the second year of junior high school (JHS), many students have learned to dislike English, feeling demotivated by the dominant pedagogical practice called grammar-translation (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2009). The loss of motivation comes not from the method as much as the mono-methodical way it is taught, with learners memorizing by rote huge volumes of words and complicated grammar rules, devoid of context and meaningful application (Murphey et al., 2009; Falout et al. 2009; Gorsuch, 2000, 2002). Casanave and Sosa (2008) explain that "teachers tend to teach to the test, do a lesson and move on . . . [to] teach for 'coverage'" (p. 90).

Secondary education learners study for entrance exams, then once in college or companies they study for the standardized Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC®). Thus, high stakes English tests do not end with formal school

education but continue even after students get a job. For many students, learning English entails lifelong study without much practical use. Some professionals who score high enough may be promoted to a position that brings opportunities to actually use English. To acquire the proficiency necessary for scoring well, learners need to stay motivated by proactively coping with the compulsory nature and disconnected practices of the English educational-economic system (Falout et al., 2008; Falout et al., 2009).

The currently accepted model of coping is a dual process to deal with challenges, problems, and trauma. The first process involves unregulated, automatic responses. While these reactions are involuntary, the second process involves the volitional regulation of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses. Researchers debate whether these two processes operate in sequential phases or in parallel, simultaneous co-regulation (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Extensive reviews of the research on coping as a developmental process (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001; Skinner & Wellborn, 1997; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003) indicate that three recurring areas of interest are prevalent: (1) age, maturity, and experience-related development; (2) temperament, self-beliefs, and self-concept; and (3) social relationships, resources, and support. Infants show signs of involuntary coping processes. Their volitional and complex use of coping skills begins in childhood and increases into adolescence and onward. When individuals have strong beliefs in personal resourcefulness and control over their abilities to cope, they are more likely to use adaptive regulatory processes. Positive outlooks, rather than negative frames of mind, help people face struggles in ways that optimize outcomes (i.e., finding solutions to problems). Self-belief systems are closely connected to social interactions, as significant others not only provide comfort in difficult times, but model adaptive behaviors and co-construct regulation for coping individuals. Researchers agree that these three key factors of coping are highly interrelated, co-constructive, and mutually developmental (Compas et al., 2001; Skinner & Wellborn, 1997; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003).

Skinner and Wellborn (1997) assert that students could learn more within academic disciplines by explicitly learning how to cope with academic struggles. They point to the potential positive coping resources in the classroom—the individual and interpersonal developments of adaptive regulation with past, present, and future stressors (Skinner & Wellborn, 1997). Patterns of coping can be nurtured away from disaffection with school and towards proactive engagement with learning challenges. Negative or maladaptive patterns include self-blame, anxiety, absenteeism, and helplessness, whereas positive or adaptive patterns include continuing effort, soliciting and volunteering help, controlling negative thoughts, making positive self-statements, building self-efficacy, and coping through social modeling. Skinner and Wellborn (1997) also note that both short- and long-term outcomes follow such learning because the patterns of coping form the outcomes of stressful experiences, which in turn form the antecedent conditions used in succeeding academic struggles.

Antecedent conditions are the psychological or internal conditions that learners bring with them into the first day of classes (Gorham & Millette, 1997). Gorham and Millette (1997) describe these conditions as a conglomeration of psychological variables related to academic dispositions, such as self-concept, attitude and value toward the subject, preferences of learning environment, goal focus, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and expectations of success. Learners' antecedent conditions can influence fluctuations of motivational levels and predict future developments regarding learning.

Evidence supporting these effects has emerged in one study on demotivation in Japan (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Learners experiencing a streak of negative affect toward learning EFL had concurrent losses in motivation through exposure to mono-methodical teaching, lack of progress, and loss of self-confidence. They ended up with lower proficiencies (LP) than learners who had longer periods of positive affect and higher proficiencies (HP). LP learners reported instances of demotivating experiences at the same rate as HP learners, but the onset of their demotivation began earlier in their formal education than HP learners and they displayed less control over their affective states regarding EFL learning. LP learners reported no matter how hard they studied they did not see progress, which caused negative affect and an avoidance of learning.

A factor analysis of these data (Falout & Maruyama, 2004) grouped ten items with reliability ($\alpha = .90$) related to interest, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in the face of learning difficulties (Appendix A). Named *antecedent conditions of the learner* (ACL), this factor had the greatest statistical differences between the responses of LP and HP learners, with LP learners tending to have negative ACLs, and HP learners positive ACLs (Falout, 2006). This means that students who maintain positive perceptions of themselves as learners and their learning experiences are more likely to engage learning proactively, persist when facing difficulties, and ultimately achieve higher abilities than students with negative perceptions of their academic EFL experiences and self-concept.

To confirm that affective regulation positively influences learning outcomes, a follow-up study on demotivation found that affective states and self-regulatory capacities correlated with English proficiency outcomes, whereas frequency of demotivational experiences did not (Falout et al., 2009). In other words, there was evidence that no matter how many times learners had negative experiences, it did not influence academic outcomes; however, learners who could control their affect and behaviors about learning English ultimately achieved higher proficiency. Self-confidence in particular had a strong correlation with proficiency; those who felt they had aptitude were more likely to have higher proficiency scores. HP learners displayed more frequent use of self-regulating behaviors when struggling with learning English. LP learners, on the other hand, tended to blame themselves more for their learning setbacks, displaying maladaptive coping behaviors, such as disengaging from studying or telling themselves that they are not good at foreign languages. These behaviors resulted in a *negative affective cycle* (Falout & Falout, 2005) of failure and self-denigration.

An item discrimination analysis on these data (Falout et al., 2009) revealed five Likert scale items that most discriminated proficiency. This means LP and HP learners were separated best by how they answered the questions (Appendix B). These items were similar to those from the ACL factor in Falout's study in 2006, thus Carpenter et al. (2009) reasoned that with a similar population, these items could be used to index learners' ACL levels with corresponding levels of English ability. The researchers conducted a comparative study based on these items to examine how learners with different ACL levels responded to demotivating experiences in order to regain their decreased or lost motivation. To represent the concept of ACL, the researchers used the metaphor of *emotional baggage*—the mixture of internal conditions including perceptions of experiences, self-confidence, and self-concept that learners carry with them from their past into their present. Those with high positive ACLs, as opposed to low positive and negative ACLs, reported experiencing shorter periods of demotivation (Figure 1) by using motivational and meta-cognitive learning strategies in greater types and frequencies, and were influenced positively by significant others in their social environment for becoming remotivated to learn English. For instance, high positive ACL learners reported diligence with tasks, both self-regulated and teacher-regulated, alongside taking short breaks to recharge their energy for studying. Negative ACL learners' responses indicated that they used fewer types of learning strategies, and using them less often, to regain control and self-confidence after setbacks in their English studies. They also displayed a tendency towards isolated, helpless states.

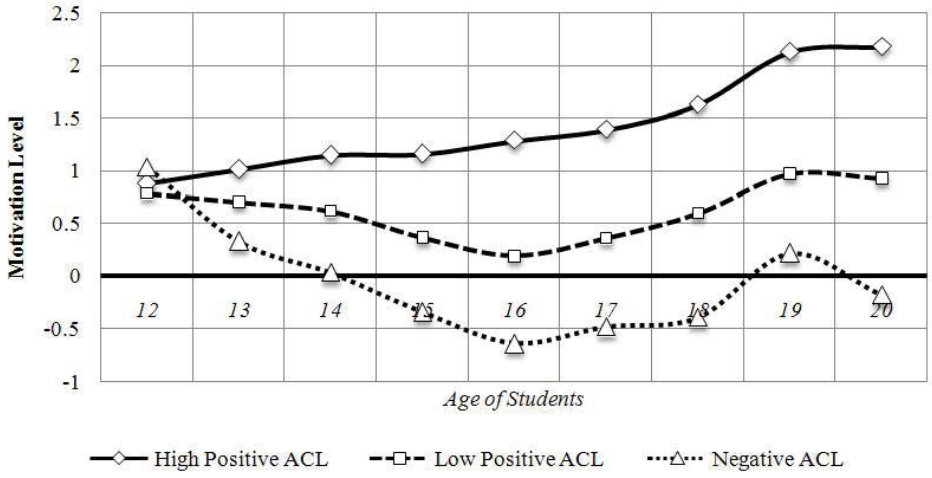


Figure 1. In-Class Motivation Timelines (Carpenter et al., 2009)

The salient difference among these learners was their self-appraisals in relation to academic experiences. What might matter more for learning is not what learners experience as much as how they perceive and react to their experiences, how they internalize their positive and negative experiences in relation to their academic self-

concept, cope with their thoughts and behaviors, and engage in learning through their self-regulatory capacities. Dweck (2000) describes how the type of self-concept learners have affects their behaviors. With incremental mindsets they perceive challenges as welcomed opportunities to develop their competence and knowledge, and thus willingly engage, accept mistakes, and persist. On the other hand, with entity mindsets they perceive challenges as threats to self-image and thus hesitate to engage, fear mistakes, and give up easily. These distinctions are opposites along a continuum upon which anyone's self-concept can slide, depending on the situated conditions, their previous histories, and present community.

Self-concept can be linked to motivational states. In one study (Falout & Maruyama, 2004), EFL learners initially studied hard, thinking they could learn English. But because they could not see progress, as shown to them by their consistently low test scores, they started believing they had no aptitude for EFL learning and either slid into or solidified their entity mindsets. Consequently, they fell into *learned helplessness* (Seligman, 1975) from experience that one's behavior cannot change the outcomes, became demotivated, disengaged from studying, and, by the time they entered college, displayed low ACLs. However, learners with negative ACLs can regain incremental thinking by utilizing their social resources, asserted Carpenter et al. (2009). In their study, learners became remotivated through watching or talking with social models—their teachers and peers—learning new and effective strategies that helped them to regulate cognitive and affective states, reinvigorating their desires and behaviors toward learning.

Methods

Research Questions

This present study is based on three theoretical assumptions. The first is that coping processes follow a development that can be reflected upon in hindsight, from initial reactions through present processes. The second assumption is that learners with different ACLs will experience different coping processes. The third is that interventions can influence coping processes, particularly through social modeling. The study thus addresses the following questions:

1. What are the developmental coping processes with learning EFL?
2. What are the potential coping processes with learning EFL?

Participants

A total of 157 university students participated. Eighty-eight (88) participants (56%) scored into the negative ACL group and 69 participants (44%) scored into the positive ACL group. The participants completed surveys during class time and were informed in both written and verbal form that their participation was voluntary and would in no way affect their grades. They were majoring in the physical sciences and studying EFL in Japan. Participants included 76 sophomores (48%), 29 juniors (18%), 23 seniors (15%), 25 Master's candidates (16%). Overall, 136 males (87%) and 19 females (12%) participated.

There are indications that science majors have a higher rate of motivational struggles in their past experiences learning English. An ANOVA in comparing the responses between science and non-science majors, using data from Falout et al. (2009), shows significant differences at $p < .0001$ in six of the nine factors relating to demotivation (Appendix C). This analysis suggests that university science majors are more likely to have faced motivational struggles from feeling less close to their past English teachers, holding less positive regard toward the grammar-translation method, reacting to demotivation more likely with maladaptive avoidance, holding less value toward learning English, and believing that the level of their English courses was inappropriate.

Instrument

Appendix D includes the questionnaire, which comprised five 6-point Likert scale questions (a)-(e) to determine participants' ACL levels, six open-ended questions (f)-(k) to elicit reflections of initial expectations when starting to learn English and any demotivational experiences in the past, and six open-ended questions (l)-(q) to elicit descriptions of developmental and potential coping processes for regaining and maintaining motivation to learn EFL.

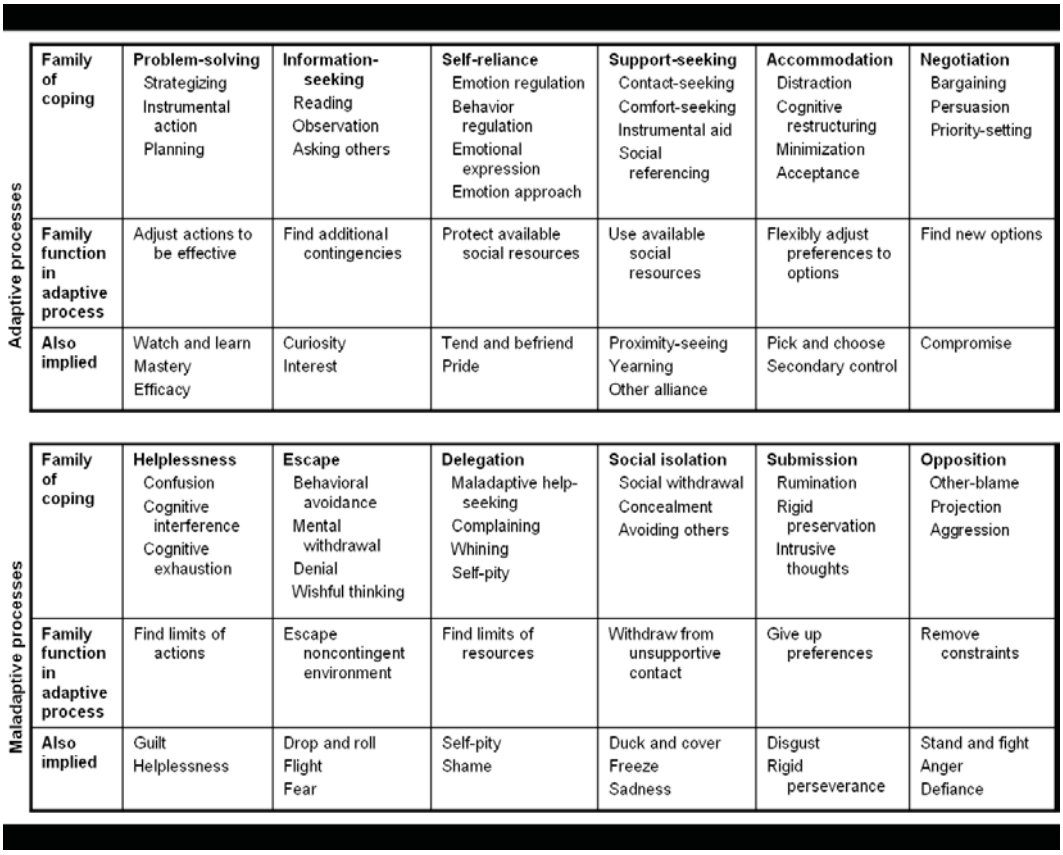
ACL items, (a)-(e), were taken directly from a previous study (Carpenter et al., 2009) on learner demotivation for two reasons. First, the items relate to psychological conditions of the learner that pertain to motivation and demotivation, as described by Gorham and Millette (1997). Two items, (a) and (c), also stem directly from the ACL factor that resulted from a factorization study (Falout, 2006) in the same EFL educational context. Two items, (a) and (b), are worded in present tense, one (c) in past conditional, and two, (d) and (e), in past tense—a mixture necessary to connect this factor to the theory that the ACL is a present affective state based on perceptions of past experiences (Murphey & Falout, in press). Second, Falout et al. (2009) showed a relationship between affective states and long-term outcomes in proficiency, and from that data set, these were the top five items out of 52 that most discriminated proficiency (Appendix B). Additionally, one item (c) asks about the desire to study English were it not compulsory, establishing some connection to the present study's theoretical groundings of coping with the stress of learning a subject under long-term mandatory conditions.

Open-ended questions (f)-(k) reports on expectations and motivational struggles in learning English and were intended to help the participants reflect back and actively engage with their past experiences. This is both to prime their memories before answering the next questions (l)-(q) about demotivation and remotivation, and to gain additional data about their learning histories.

Analysis

To code participants' reported experiences, a framework of higher-order families of coping and adaptive processes from Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) was adopted (Figure 2). It was chosen *a priori* for two reasons. First, the framework covers a wide range of coping processes, which would help to reveal coping processes that might be

absent. Second, its symmetry of opposing adaptive and maladaptive processes offers a correlative comparison after data analysis.



Adaptive processes

Family of coping	Problem-solving Strategizing Instrumental action Planning	Information-seeking Reading Observation Asking others	Self-reliance Emotion regulation Behavior regulation Emotional expression Emotion approach	Support-seeking Contact-seeking Comfort-seeking Instrumental aid Social referencing	Accommodation Distraction Cognitive restructuring Minimization Acceptance	Negotiation Bargaining Persuasion Priority-setting
Family function in adaptive process	Adjust actions to be effective	Find additional contingencies	Protect available social resources	Use available social resources	Flexibly adjust preferences to options	Find new options
Also implied	Watch and learn Mastery Efficacy	Curiosity Interest	Tend and befriend Pride	Proximity-seeing Yearning Other alliance	Pick and choose Secondary control	Compromise

Maladaptive processes

Family of coping	Helplessness Confusion Cognitive interference Cognitive exhaustion	Escape Behavioral avoidance Mental withdrawal Denial Wishful thinking	Delegation Maladaptive help-seeking Complaining Whining Self-pity	Social isolation Social withdrawal Concealment Avoiding others	Submission Rumination Rigid preservation Intrusive thoughts	Opposition Other-blame Projection Aggression
Family function in adaptive process	Find limits of actions	Escape noncontingent environment	Find limits of resources	Withdraw from unsupportive contact	Give up preferences	Remove constraints
Also implied	Guilt Helplessness	Drop and roll Flight Fear	Self-pity Shame	Duck and cover Freeze Sadness	Disgust Rigid perseverance	Stand and fight Anger Defiance

Figure 2. Links Between Higher-Order Families of Coping and Adaptive Processes
(adapted from Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007, p. 126)

The analysis allowed for coding as many adaptive and maladaptive processes as indicated in a response to an open-ended question. Additionally, responses for one question would sometimes be applicable for other questions. For example, responses to "What happened to lower your motivation?" sometimes already included information that would answer the following question, "What was your reaction to it?" Furthermore, some participants did not mark that they had been demotivated or explain how it occurred, but later responded to the question "For those who were demotivated in the past, how did you revive or remotivate yourself?" Therefore coding was open to allow for applicable answers across questions.

Results

The internal reliability of ACL as a factor was confirmed ($\alpha = .83$). Average scores below and above 3.50 determined categorization of negative and positive ACL, respectively. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for each item, with the difference between each significant at $p < .0001$, as confirmed by one-way ANOVA in Table 2.

Comparing percentages of respondents within groups, Tables 3 and 4 show that negative ACLs were more likely to experience demotivation earlier than positive ACLs. Negative ACLs first experienced it in JHS, with attributions primarily about their troubles with maintaining self-confidence and the mono-methodic use of grammar-translation in class. Positive ACLs were more likely demotivated in high school (HS) primarily due to grammar-translation.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

		Item				
ACL	Statistic	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Negative	Mean	3.15	2.33	2.76	2.93	1.78
ACL	SD	1.12	1.27	1.30	1.18	0.81
group	Skewness	-.15	.60	.27	-.12	.55
	Kurtosis	-.11	-.73	-.73	-.56	-.85
Positive	Mean	4.87	4.04	4.75	4.67	3.36
ACL	SD	.75	1.22	.98	.90	1.12
group	Skewness	.00	-.39	-.95	-.15	.00
	Kurtosis	-.69	-.25	1.11	-.72	.02

Table 2. ANOVA for ACL Groups

Item		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
(a)	Between Groups	114.66	1	114.66	120.98	.000*
	Within Groups	146.91	155	.95		
	Total	261.57	156			
(b)	Between Groups	113.61	1	113.61	73.28	.000*
	Within Groups	240.31	155	1.55		
	Total	353.92	156			
(c)	Between Groups	153.51	1	153.51	111.81	.000*
	Within Groups	212.80	155	1.37		
	Total	366.31	156			
(d)	Between Groups	116.87	1	116.87	102.72	.000*
	Within Groups	176.36	155	1.14		
	Total	293.23	156			
(e)	Between Groups	96.33	1	96.33	104.53	.000*
	Within Groups	142.84	155	.92		
	Total	239.17	156			

* Significant at $p < .0001$

Table 3. Occurrence of Demotivation

	Have you had experiences to lose or decrease your motivation to study English?		**If "Yes," when did it happen?**	
ACL	*Yes*	*No*	*JHS*	*HS*
Negative ACL group	59%	38%	58%	28%
Positive ACL group	48%	51%	14%	45%

Table 4. Attributions of Demotivation

	What happened to lower your motivation?				
ACL	***Teacher personality***	***Pedagogy (grammar-translation)***	***Self-confidence***	***Course level***	***Other***
Negative ACL group	6%	23%	35%	6%	2%
Positive ACL group	1%	32%	4%	12%	4%

Results about the developmental coping processes are graphically displayed in Figures 3 through 8. For the developmental coping processes, 81 adaptive and 152 maladaptive responses were coded for the negative ACL group, and 120 adaptive and 51 maladaptive responses were coded for the positive ACL group. For the possibilities of coping, 222 adaptive and 51 maladaptive responses were coded for the negative ACL group, and 354 adaptive and 13 maladaptive responses were coded for the positive ACL group. These results indicate that overall, the positive ACL group was more than half as likely to report adaptive processes, while the negative ACL group was more than three times as likely to report maladaptive processes.

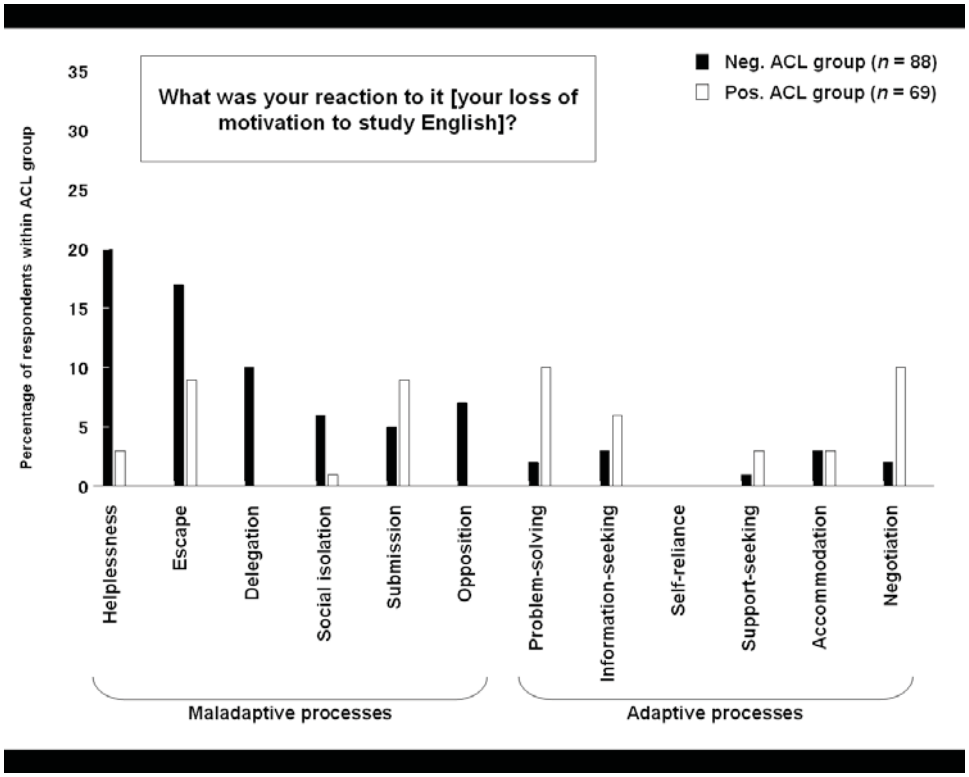


Figure 3. Reflexive Coping Processes

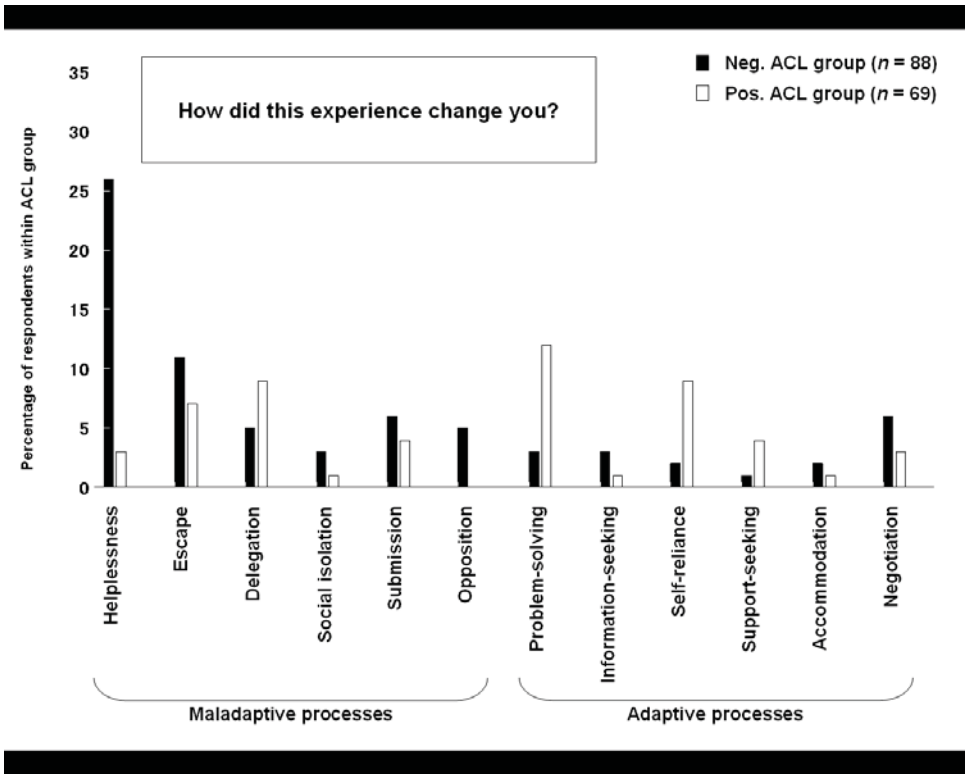


Figure 4. Short-Term Coping Processes

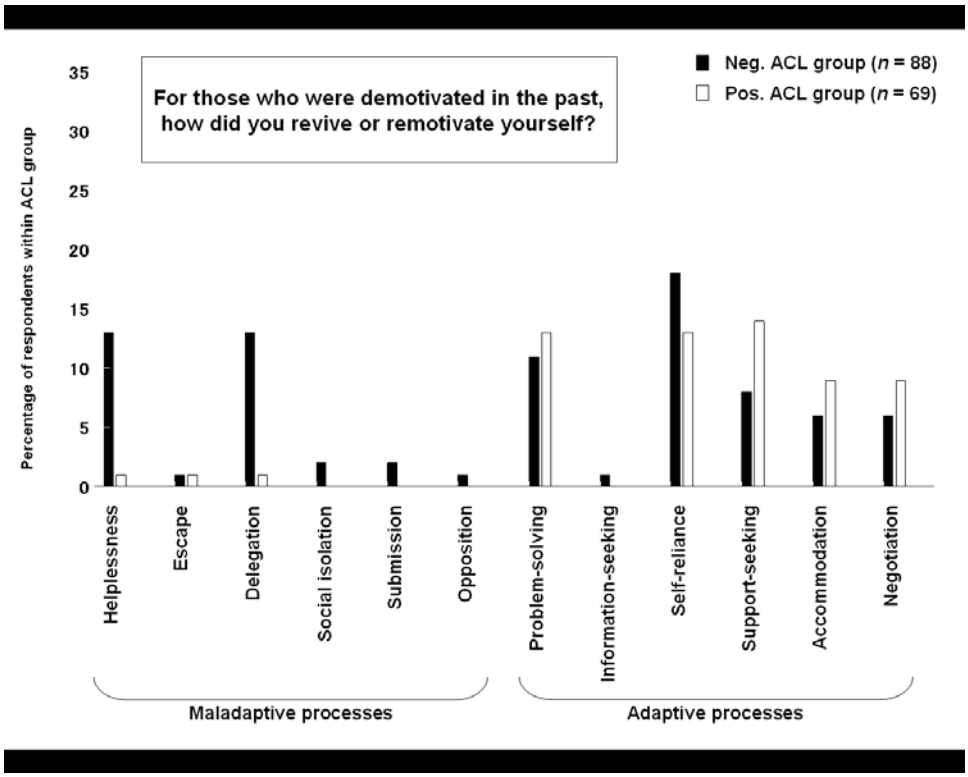


Figure 5. Long-Term Coping Processes

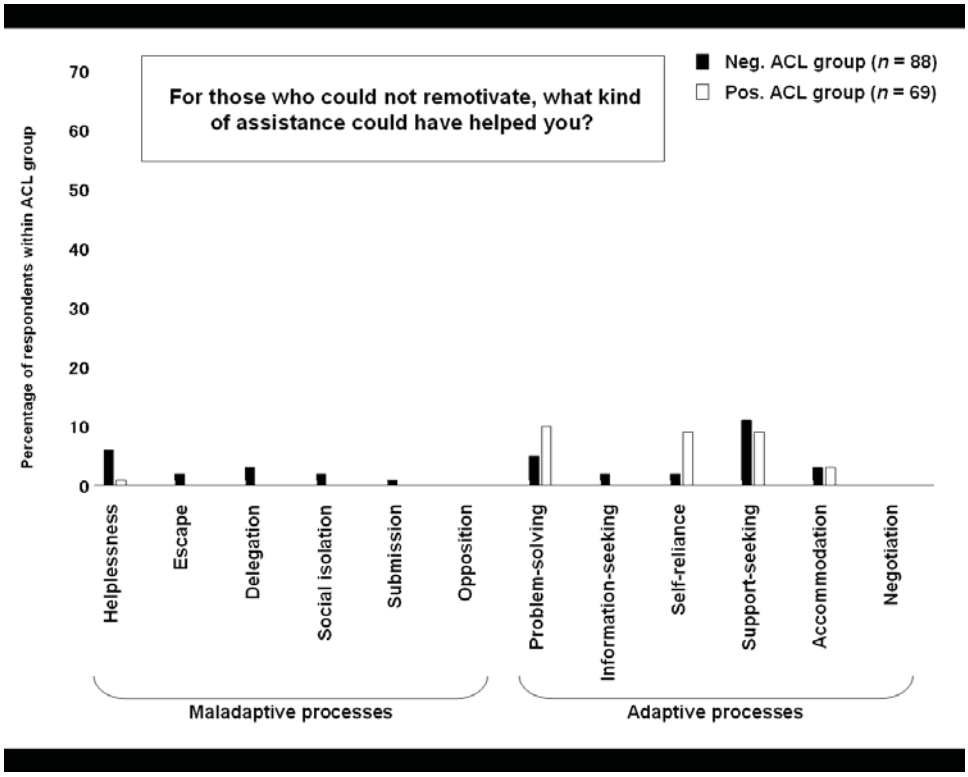


Figure 6. Retrospective Coping Potential

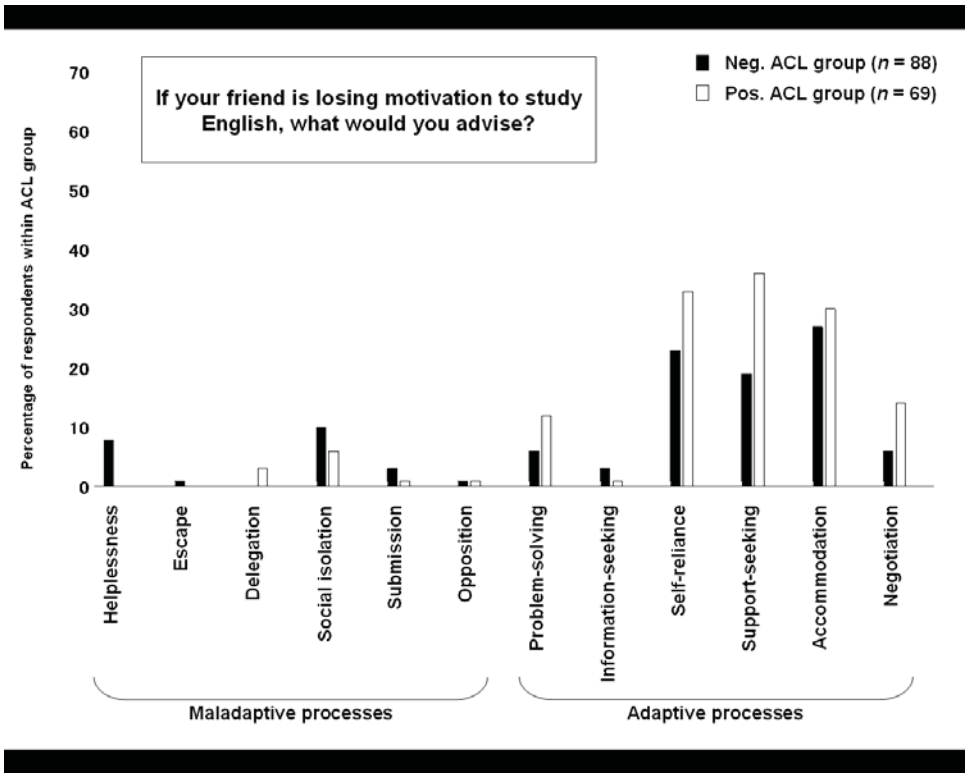


Figure 7. Social Coping Potential

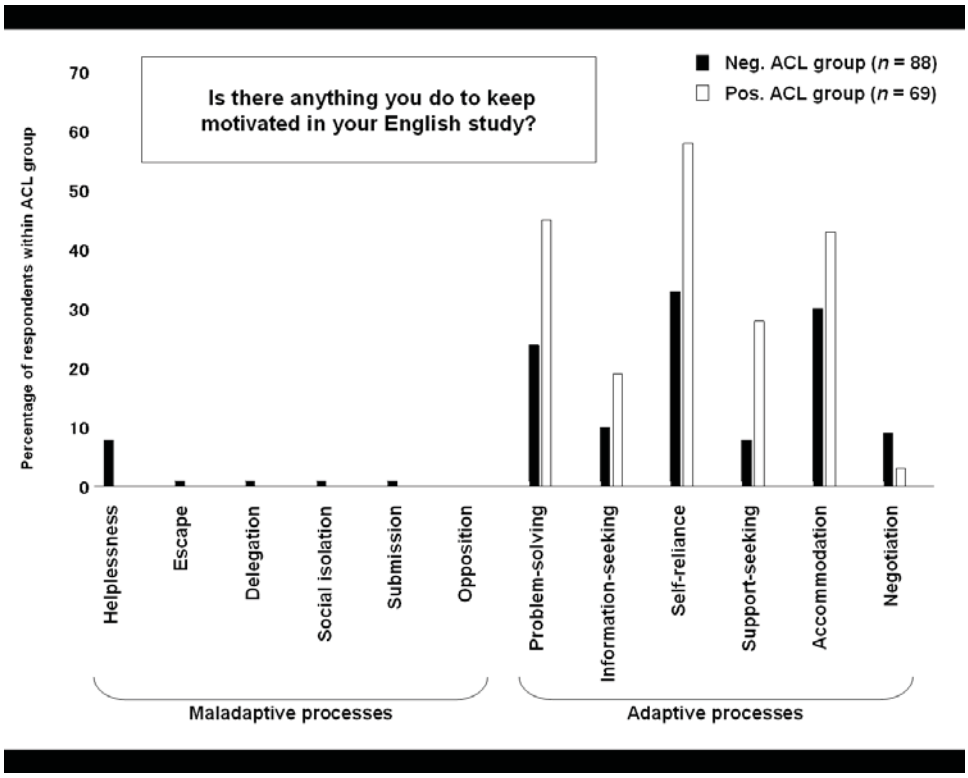


Figure 8. Present and Future Coping Potential

Discussion

Self-Appraisals In Remotivation

According to a previous study on demotivation in EFL learning (Falout et al., 2009), affective and reactive variables related more to learning outcomes than did experiences. However, present affect combined with appraisals about past experiences forms perceptions of the present self and abilities, which determine the ACL learners carry with them into each consecutive academic situation. ACLs can impede or improve EFL learning, particularly in the area of motivational and learning strategy use (Carpenter et al., 2009).

Self-appraisals do not necessarily need to be accurate to be influential on learning. When people believe in their self-efficacy, or a perception that something specific can be accomplished despite any evidence of such, they tend to put more effort into the specific activity, which results in eventual aptitude, although actual ability at the onset may not have been high. Nevertheless, a positive self-belief can thus assist in creating positive outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, focus can be directed toward past, present, or future selves. Based on the outcomes of past experiences, learners can anticipate how they will perform in similar situations in the future. Positive appraisals in one timeframe can bring out further positive appraisals in another timeframe. Linked through this co-construction, appraisals of past and future selves continually help create or block pathways of present possible action, achievement, and resolution. Consequently, the ACL critically acts in the development of learning (Murphey & Falout, 2010).

Participants from this study were separated into positive or negative ACL groups. Responses to how they became demotivated and remotivated were coded by coping processes and quantified (Figures 3 through 8) for comparison according to the research questions in this study.

Research Question #1: What Are The Developmental Coping Processes Of Learning EFL?

Three open-ended questions helped to determine this development: Question (l) What was your reaction to it [your loss of motivation to study English]? Question (m) How did this experience change you? Question (n) For those who were demotivated in the past, how did you revive or remotivate yourself? The first question was intended to isolate involuntary responses, reflexes to stresses just as or after they occur. Principally focusing on volitional responses to stress, the latter two questions were respectively intended to help separate short- and long-term coping processes.

In the initial stages of demotivation, involuntary reactions of negative ACLs tended to be maladaptive (Figure 3), such as the learned helplessness of "I realized [struggling to gain English] was impossible," and escaping by "I talked and slept and didn't listen to the teacher's lectures at all." Positive ACLs were more likely to react with adaptive processes, particularly problem-solving. They reported instrumental actions of dealing with difficulties, for example, "I tried my best to memorize words and break up

sentences into chunks to understand the meanings." Negotiation was also used, as "When I started thinking about my future, I felt the need to study English."

For the development of short-term coping, positive ACLs appear to begin using less negotiation (Figure 4). Perhaps at this stage, learners negotiate with themselves less because the values or beliefs conducive for learning English are becoming more intrinsic, allowing for the development of other types of adaptive processes, particularly self-reliance and support-seeking. Positive ACLs are showing tendencies of delegation in the short-term. On the other hand, negative ACLs are falling further into helplessness, attributing their lack of English abilities and loss of motivation on internal, stable, uncontrollable causes (Weiner, 1986)—"I couldn't see the progress no matter how hard I studied." Their self-confidence decreases because they are not doing as well as others in the classroom. In the long-term, they have a greater tendency for self-blame, whereas positive ACLs are by then blaming themselves less and predominantly using adaptive processes.

As long-term coping develops, negative ACLs are beginning to use adaptive processes, particularly self-reliance, such as studying regularly, and problem-solving (Figure 5). However, some still remained helpless under the pressures to study English. Negative ACLs appeared furthest behind in using their social networks, a result consistent with the study from Carpenter et al. (2009). Meanwhile, positive ACLs have established a wider range of adaptive processes, which greatly increase self-reliance, accommodation, and in particular, support-seeking from people who can help. Aldwin (1994) emphasizes the key element in developing effective coping strategies is the flexibility to alternate and adjust, and she cites Menninger (1963): "If coping pattern A does not work, then pattern B is brought to bear on the problem. If A and B together do not work, then pattern C is brought into play, and so on" (quote in Aldwin, 1994, p. 97). Snyder and Pulvers (2001) comment, "It may be because of the increased flexibility in thinking that stress and subsequent coping may produce growth" (p. 18).

In summary, positive ACLs react to demotivation with negotiation and problem-solving. Over the long term, they build adaptive processes, particularly self-reliance, and seek support from their social networks. In contrast, negative ACLs react with maladaptive processes, such as helplessness and escape. Although some negative ACL learners remained helpless in the long term, many learned to cope through self-reliance. However, a noticeable difference is their lack of using social networks for support.

Research Question #2: What Are The Potential Coping Processes With Learning EFL?

Question (o): For those who could not remotivate, what kind of assistance could have helped you? This question was intended to help participants reflect upon their potential to use adaptive processes through the power of hindsight. Imagining "what could have happened" might be easier than "what could happen." Therefore answering this question first about past potential might invoke creative thought processes to prepare participants for answering the following questions about future potential. Also, the way participants answer questionnaires can influence their subsequent behaviors, a phenomenon known as the mere measurement effect (Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004).

Given this chance to reflect, participants might come up with solutions to some of their affective troubles with learning English. Thus this questionnaire might not only be a tool of research but of didactics for improving motivation.

A comparison of developmental and potential coping processes indicates that negative ACLs imagined using adaptive processes more than they experienced them. They most recognized that support-seeking could have benefited them (Figure 6), whereas this adaptive process showed the largest discrepancy in responses between positive and negative ACLs for long-term remotivation (Figure 5). Negative ACLs saw connections among teacher practice, peers' attitudes, and self-reliance. One participant stated, "If teachers could have given us classes in which we could see the progress on our English abilities, I could have remotivated myself." This learner sees the potential of his incremental mindset through a learning environment that promotes evidence of improved abilities. The highest attribution of demotivation from positive ACLs was teacher pedagogy (grammar-translation) and from negative ACLs it was loss of self-confidence. When comments from the teacher or marks on tests only point out wrong answers, and when level and pace of the classes are not appropriate, learners can quickly lose their self-efficacy (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). In hindsight, negative ACLs in this study also would have attended to past affective troubles with problem-solving for themselves and for the teaching practices which had not provided them practical uses of English. One participant noted, "If there were classes where I could actually use English instead of translation and drills at JHS and HS, I could have been more motivated."

Question (p): If your friend is losing motivation to study English, what would you advise? This question was intended to find potential socially supported coping methods. Would these college students be willing to assist each other in coping? Based on the greater number of responses for adaptive processes, both positive and negative ACL students appear willing and able to help their peers cope with demotivation in learning English (Figure 7). Their suggestions for struggling peers most often involved self-reliance, support-seeking, and accommodation. Individuals can provide both emotional support for those under stress and feedback about the appropriateness of the coping process (Aldwin, 1994). Notable in the present study is a tendency in these recommendations to overlap strategies and adjust for an individual's affective needs, with accommodation as the top recommended strategy from negative ACLs. Accommodation involves cognitive restructuring, meaning changing one's thinking. One participant mentioned what he would say to a friend, "I think learning that studying English is not a formidable task by listening to music or [doing] something important [to you]. If you hate learning English, nothing will be input to your head." Another participant suggested, "I think he should enjoy a foreign culture instead of studying English as a foreign language."

Such peer-to-peer assistance at the psychological level might not be simply hypothetical. Mechanic (1978) provides a detailed account of how social coping models determined the outcomes of doctoral exams. According to their past experiences (i.e., ACLs), students had individually formed independent appraisals of the importance of the

exams, the strategies to study for them, and the ways to cope with the stress. Then they consulted each other about the exams and formed consensual beliefs according to their office locations. Those whose offices were more central rather than peripheral and isolated, appraised, studied, and coped more adaptively. They placed greater importance on the weight of the exams and the effort in studying, and eventually outperformed those whose offices were more peripheral. These effects support the hypothesis that social networks can help learners to remotivate and stay motivated.

Question (q): Is there anything you do to keep motivated in your English study? This question uses the present tense. However, it elicits ongoing processes that extend into the future. And the mere measurement effect suggests that writing thoughts about future actions more likely leads to following through on these plans than if they had not been written (Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004). Therefore, this question is intended to both inspire and find future potential for motivated language learning.

In their responses, negative ACLs indicate development of adaptive processes, although at a lesser rate than the positive ACLs (Figure 8). And even in their imagined futures, some negative ACLs remain helpless. In contrast, positive ACLs imagine using a wider range of adaptive processes simultaneously and flexibly, which increases their chances of applying effective regulatory processes to continue learning across various difficult situations. This result is consistent with Carpenter et al. (2009), who believe that positive ACLs can act dynamically with coping strategies because they have been modeled for them within their social networks.

Overall, positive ACLs would likely use multiple adaptive processes flexibly and simultaneously to maintain motivation to learn. Comparatively, responses from negative ACLs indicate a slower development of using adaptive processes, and that some may never recover from learned helplessness. Both groups of learners were ready to help peers struggling with their motivation, offering advice with sensitivity, and suggesting adaptive methods to cope and learn. Considering that positive ACLs reported greater use of social networks for gaining support and that negative ACLs most often claimed social support would have helped them to remotivate, it suggests that these learners are ready to share and benefit from their peers' learned strengths.

Implications

The socio-dynamic phase in theories about motivation recognizes the motivational influences of all members within a learning environment (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In particular, a person-in-context relational view places attention on learners as individually developing human beings with unique histories, aspirations, and perspectives (Ushioda, 2009). Individual attention and care within a positive social environment is important to promote positive self-concepts related to learning because learners with different ACLs have different motivational needs.

The results of this study indicate that, when facing motivational struggles to learn, learners with negative ACLs are more likely to fall into self-blame and helplessness, whereas those with positive ACLs develop adaptive coping strategies sooner, hold a

more positive self-concept, and seek social support more often. Negative ACLs could use more help to build their self-concepts in relation to their learning. For positive ACLs, teachers might help them set higher learning goals and reinforce using adaptive processes that work for them.

To get an indication of learners' ACL levels and the kind of academic emotional baggage they are carrying, teachers can use surveys such as the one in this study and ask learners to write their language learning histories and their possible future selves (Murphey & Falout, in press); and try to keep an eye on who is struggling and succeeding, asking what attributions learners have for their successes and failures.

Praise can provide an effective way for promoting positive self-concepts through social exchange. And the way praise is given can influence the development of learners' mindsets (Dweck, 2000). To encourage the development of incremental mindsets, the kind that helps learners through their struggles with adaptive processes, teachers should not praise personality, for that tends to foster entity mindsets. Instead, teachers should praise effort, struggles, and achievements, taking care to be specific and genuine (Dweck, 2006).

Teachers can also model adaptive processes in a variety of ways. There is cognitive modeling, where the teacher verbalizes the strategies while performing the task. Attributional feedback directs the learners to recognize the specific causes of their successes, promoting repeat use of practices effective for learning. In attributional retraining, the teacher guides struggling students to blame failure on controllable causes, which can then be remedied with strategies for success. These three techniques are effective for increasing learner self-efficacy and abilities, especially for struggling students (Brophy, 2004; Shunk, 2008).

The participants themselves seemed prepared to model adaptive processes, as described in the previous section, and peers are readily available in the classroom as role models. Adaptive process can be shown through peer coping models, who demonstrate their struggles with a task and eventually the strategies to solve it. In observing this, their peers increase in both self-efficacy and skill use (Alderman, 2004; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Peers can also talk about their motivational problems and share their motivation strategies to encourage each other (Ushioda, 2001). One way to promote such talk in the classroom is through *critical participatory looping*, in which learners are first surveyed about the strategies they use to maintain motivation. Then the teacher ranks the strategies into tables and passes these back to the learners. In small groups, the learners discuss whether they use the motivational strategies and find them effective. Learners reported this experience increased their sense of validation for what strategies worked for them, and it motivated them to try new strategies (Murphey & Falout, 2010).

Conclusion

The results support the hypothesis that adaptive coping in social contexts leads to remotivation for those who have lost interest in learning and maintenance of motivation

for continual learning, particularly when learning is stressful. Students who adaptively cope right from the onset of demotivation tend to make more positive learning experiences for themselves in the long run, which leads to less maladaptive efforts, more adaptive regulation, and greater learning.

Teachers might strive to promote relatedness between teachers and students, students themselves, and teachers themselves. They can help their students to remotivate by creating socially supportive learning environments that are rich in social interaction for modeling adaptive processes. Teachers can interact with other teachers for social modeling and building their own self-efficacy about motivating students. When the faculty of a school shares a sense of commitment to help students succeed, teachers experience collective teacher efficacy, which has been shown to promote the academic achievements of students (Alderman, 2004). Our past experiences, present self-concepts, and future expectations about teaching help us develop ways of coping along the long path of teaching a foreign language. We can adopt paradigms and practices that create classrooms, schools, and societies that are full of communities of learners striving toward cooperative goals.

Notes

[1] Cram and conversation schools train students to meet specific goals, most commonly to pass entrance examinations of high schools or universities.

About the Author

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Appendix A

Items Comprising the ACL Factor with Proficiency Group Comparisons (1 = I strongly agree; 6 = I strongly disagree)

Item no.		LP (n=86)	HP (n=78)	Sig.
10	Even if English had not been a compulsory subject, I would have chosen to study it.	3.81	2.92	.000*
29	Learning English is an exciting activity.	4.00	3.63	0.50*
30	Learning English is not a painful task.	3.86	3.19	.002*
31	I'm interested in learning English.	3.24	2.81	0.25*
34	The things I have to learn in English don't intimidate/bother me.	4.07	3.78	.125
35	I am confident in learning English.	5.08	4.00	.000*
39	When faced with a hurdle in my English studies, I could get past it easily.	4.62	3.90	.000*
40	In the past I could find a way to learn English effectively.	4.58	3.67	.000*
42	I was not embarrassed using English in my classes.	4.15	3.62	.005*
46	I don't feel inferior to my classmates for my English ability.	4.70	3.62	.000*

* Significant at $p < .05$

Appendix B

Items Comprising the ACL Index with Proficiency Group Comparisons (I strongly agree = 6; I strongly disagree = 1)

Original item no.		LP learners	MP learners (n=78)	HP learners	Sig.
in Falout et al., 2009 (item in present study)		(n=184)		(n=54)	
A-1 (a)	I am confident in learning English now.	2.44	2.93	3.67	.000*
A-3 (b)	I like studying English now.	3.96	4.60	5.22	.000*
A-5 (c)	Even if English had not been a compulsory subject, I would have chosen to study it.	4.39	4.96	5.31	.000*
A-6 (d)	Learning English was an enjoyable activity.	4.11	4.77	5.22	.000*
A-15 (e)	After receiving grades for English tests, I thought I did well.	2.75	3.26	3.81	.000*

* Significant at $p < .0001$

Appendix C

ANOVA for Comparing Science Majors and Non-Science Majors

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teacher immediacy								
science majors	185	3.70	.97	.07	40.77	40.77	50.82	.000*
non-science majors	715	4.23	.87	.03	720.48	0.80		
Help-seeking								
science majors	185	2.99	1.18	.09	1.93	1.93	1.25	.265
non-science majors	715	2.87	1.26	.05	1390.55	1.55		
Enjoyment-seeking								
science majors	185	2.40	.92	.07	1.75	1.75	1.80	.179
non-science majors	715	2.29	1.00	.04	871.72	0.97		
Grammar-translation								
science majors	185	2.76	.91	.07	14.57	14.57	19.12	.000*
non-science majors	715	3.08	.86	.03	684.13	0.76		
Avoidance								
science majors	185	3.01	1.01	.07	30.33	30.33	25.58	.000*
non-science majors	715	2.55	1.11	.04	1064.75	1.19		
Self-denigration								
science majors	185	3.97	1.15	.08	24.13	24.13	15.69	.000*
non-science majors	715	3.57	1.26	0.5	1380.99	1.54		
Value								
science majors	185	3.42	.52	.04	7.26	7.26	30.84	.000*
non-science majors	715	3.65	.48	.02	211.56	0.24		
Course level								
science majors	185	3.36	1.01	.07	23.58	23.58	26.54	.000*

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
non-science majors	715	3.76	.92	.03	797.95	0.89		
Self-confidence								
science majors	185	3.02	.58	.04	0.43	0.43	1.37	.242
non-science majors	715	3.07	.55	.02	279.74	0.31		

* Significant at $p < .0001$

Appendix D

EFL Remotivation Questionnaire

Please think back to your English education from the beginning through now.
Then answer the following questions.

(1 = Very much disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Slightly disagree | 4 = Slightly agree | 5 = Agree | 6 = Strongly agree)

(a) I am confident in learning English now. 1 2 3 4 5 6
(b) I like studying English now. 1 2 3 4 5 6
(c) Even if English had not been a compulsory subject, I would have chosen to study it. 1 2 3 4 5 6
(d) Learning English was an enjoyable activity. 1 2 3 4 5 6
(e) After receiving grades for English tests, I thought I did well. 1 2 3 4 5 6
(f) Before you began to study English, what did you imagine learning English would be like?
(g) Did your first English class meet your expectations? Yes / No
(h) If "No," how was it different from what you thought it would be?
(i) Have you had experiences to lose or decrease your motivation to study English? Yes / No
(j) If "Yes," when did it happen?
(k) What happened to lower your motivation?
(l) What was your reaction to it?
(m) How did this experience change you?
(n) For those who were demotivated in the past, how did you revive or remotivate yourself?
(o) For those who could not remotivate, what kind of assistance could have helped you?
(p) If your friend is losing motivation to study English, what would you advise?
(q) Is there anything you do to keep motivated in your English study?