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## Impacts of Demotivation Factors on Speaking Skill Among EFL Learners in Iraqi Secondary Schools in Ankara

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the primary demotivating factors that hinder Iraqi students from speaking English. In order to achieve this objective in the study, İsaoglu's (2017) Speaking Demotivation Scale was utilized after ensuring its validity. This scale consists of 48 items that are answered on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The scale embraces four sub-dimensions of demotivation, which are factors related to students, teachers, the learning materials, and attitudes towards English. The scale was responded by 111 students studying in Iraqi schools. The results of the study revealed that the most significant factors leading to students' demotivation were related to attitudes towards English and learning materials. To examine the factors of demotivation in relation to gender, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. With regard to analyzing the factors associated with students receiving private lessons, a sample t-test was utilized. The results indicated statistically significant differences among male and female students regarding gender-related demotivating factors. Additionally, students who received special training were less affected by demotivating factors compared to students who did not receive such trainings.

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**Keywords:** Demotivation; EFL; Motivation, Speaking English

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## **Introduction**

Many different elements influence how languages are taught and learned. One of these factors that has the most effects on the process of learning a language is motivation. Both teachers and researchers widely recognize that motivation is a key to determining how fast and how well foreign languages are learned. Motivation research in foreign language learning originated from social psychology since learning a new language of a distinct community is closely linked to the learners' social attitudes towards that community.

Based on multiple studies, highly motivated students tend to learn more effectively and achieve greater success (Ely, 1986). Motivated students are more likely to be interested in their course material and actively look for ways to develop their knowledge. Additionally, they tend to establish objectives for themselves and strive to achieve them. On the other hand, a decrease in motivation can lead to demotivation (Bekleyen, 2011). Dörnyei (2001) defines demotivation as external factors that can hinder or reduce an individual's willingness to act on a particular intention or goal. In other words, a person may get demotivated when their motivation for a certain purpose wane. Demotivation can arise from various factors such as a lack of clear objectives for language learning, adequate teacher feedback, support and encouragement from parents and classmates, and a motivating learning environment. According to Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), six factors that contribute to demotivation in language learning can be identified. These factors encapsulate the nature of classes, absence of interest, classroom environment, course materials, teachers, and past experiences of failure. Ahmed (2013) and Bastidas & Muñoz (2011) also highlight the prevalent issue of declining motivation in foreign language learning, particularly within current secondary education systems.

The significance of the current study is repose in its exploration of the demotivating factors that impede Iraqi students, specifically those studying in Iraqi schools outside of Iraq, from speaking English. Understanding these factors is crucial for both academia and practice in the field of language learning. By identifying the demotivating factors, educators and curriculum developers can develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance students' motivation and promote English language proficiency.

This study addresses the existing gaps in the field of demotivation research in the Iraqi context, specifically focusing on English language speaking skills. While previous studies have examined motivation in language learning, there is a lack of research that specifically investigates the demotivating factors that hinder Iraqi students' English- speaking abilities. By

filling this gap, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges faced by Iraqi students and provides valuable insights for designing effective educational interventions.

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the primary factors that demotivate Iraqi students from speaking English and hinder their progress in developing speaking skills?
2. To what extent do age and gender factors affect Iraqi students' reluctance to speak English?
3. Do the demotivating factors that affect students' development of speaking skills differ depending on whether they receive private English lessons or attend English language courses?

By addressing these research questions, the study aims to shed light on the demotivating factors specific to speaking English in the Iraqi context and provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance English language learning for Iraqi students.

### **Importance of Speaking in Foreign Language Learning**

In today's globalized world, communication plays a vital role in achieving success. Language acts as a medium for communication and helps people accomplish their goals and objectives. Without a common language, effective communication becomes impossible. Since English is the dominant global lingua franca and is spoken internationally, it facilitates communication among people across the world, regardless of their geographical location or origins. English serves as a bridge enabling people in diverse regions and nations, to communicate with each other. Without a common language like English, efficient communication and the pursuit of individual and collective goals on a global scale would be unfeasible. In an increasingly interconnected world, English is the thread that weaves discrete cultures, communities and countries together. It is the global social glue and conduit for the exchange of ideas.

Nowadays, the growing significance of English as a means of global communication has led to a significant surge in the demand for individuals who possess strong English-speaking abilities, according to Nazara (2011). Therefore, in order to speak English fluently and accurately, a learner needs to build a strong foundation in components of the language such

as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components are interrelated, and mastering each one will help improve overall proficiency. Developing these skills takes time and practice. So how can learners upgrade their English-speaking skill? One of the effective ways to improve English speaking is to immerse learners in English-speaking environments. Learners should listen to English regularly such as listening to videos, listening to music, or watching foreign films and series in English. It is also beneficial to engage in conversations with native English speakers as frequently as possible (Perez, 2022). Furthermore, listening to educational programs and radio broadcasts in English can be avail. Consistent practice and feedback can help identify areas for improvement and allow for targeted focus on specific language components (Li, 2010).

Owing to the eminence of speaking skills, Brown (2001) emphasizes the importance of communicative competence, which involves the ability to use language effectively in social contexts. Speaking is a crucial aspect of communicative competence, as it allows learners to express themselves fluently and accurately. It allows learners to communicate with other speakers and engage in meaningful conversations, which can enhance their language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Speaking a foreign language not only ameliorates the culture of the learner but also can increase job opportunities. Looking back to the pre-globalization days, knowing the English language was an additional advantage. With technological advancements and modern digital platforms, the world has become a 'small village' and there is a strong need to enhance English language learning proficiency for all individuals in the job market. In today's globalized world, companies are growingly seeking employees who are fluent in multiple languages. Speaking a foreign language reforms an individual's competitiveness in the labor market, which can lead to higher salaries and better job opportunities.

Individuals who are learning English as a second language, especially in terms of speaking, face substantial challenges. Although speaking is a crucial and demanding skill for English as a foreign language learner, there are several main reasons that make it difficult.

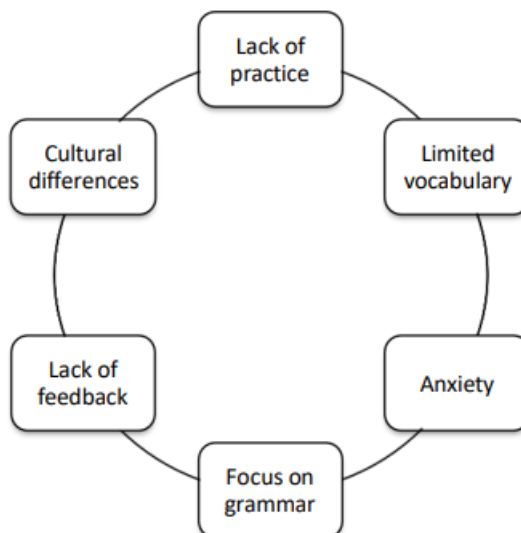


Figure 1. *Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Developing Speaking Skills*

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, the main reasons that make speaking in English challenging include:

- **Lack of practice:** EFL learners often get limited opportunities to speak English in authentic contexts. They mostly rely on textbooks, worksheets and teaching. Speaking needs a lot of practice.
- **Limited vocabulary:** A learner's limited vocabulary can make spontaneous speaking challenging as they struggle to find the right words instantly. Speaking requires fast, on-the-spot recall of words and phrases.
- **Focus on grammar:** EFL teaching often emphasizes reading, writing and grammar. Speaking is not given enough importance, so learners do not develop strong speaking skills and confidence.
- **Lack of feedback:** Without feedback from a fluent speaker, learners do not know how well they are speaking, what needs improvement, and what good speaking skills really sound like.

Multiple research studies suggest that in order to assist EFL learners in enhancing their speaking skills, it is momentous to focus on various aspects such as providing abundant opportunities for speaking practice, addressing anxiety related to speaking, expanding

vocabulary, balancing the curriculum, providing constructive feedback, and promoting cultural awareness (Krashen, 1982; Nation, 2011; Ovando, 1994).

Teachers play a crucial role in the language learning process as they provide a conducive learning environment for the learners, and their instructional programs serve as a framework that fosters educational motivation. If teachers fail to display educational qualities such as serving as role models for students and exhibiting empathy and positivity, then these deficiencies can negatively impact the learning environment. The behavior of teachers significantly impacts students since if teachers fail to demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject matter, it becomes nearly impossible to create student interest (Karaghanh et al.,2019).

### **Concept of Demotivation in Foreign Language Learning**

Numerous studies highlight motivation as a crucial element in foreign language learning, and it is widely recognized as a significant factor that influences learners' ability to achieve proficiency in the target language (Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012). In describing motivation, Brown (2001) referred to it as an innate desire, drive, emotion, or ambition that motivates individuals to carry out particular actions. Hu (2011), on the other hand, explained that motivational factors contribute to success in language learning while demotivating factors demotivate the learning process.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) define demotivation as the opposite of motivation, in that it represents a lack of drive or willingness to engage in a particular activity. Demotivation can arise due to various reasons, such as unpleasant language learning experiences, a lack of perceived advancement or success, and a lack of interest in the language being learned. Additionally, external factors such as time constraints, social pressures, a teacher who is disinterested, and material that is uninteresting, or too difficult additionally contribute to demotivation in language learning. Students may also have negative experiences in the language learning process, such as feeling embarrassed in front of their peers or struggling to understand the material. These experiences can lead to a decrease in motivation and a lack of engagement with the learning process (Çankaya, 2018). Apprehending the factors that lead to demotivation in language learning can assist teachers and learners in recognizing potential barriers and implementing measures to tackle them.

## **Role of Demotivation in Foreign Language Speaking Skills**

With respect to previous studies, acquiring speaking skills in a foreign language can be a daunting task for language learners. While motivation is crucial for learners to actively engage in speaking activities, there are several demotivating factors that can negatively impact learners' willingness to speak. These demotivating factors incorporate teacher-related factors, inadequate school facilities, low self-confidence, negative attitudes towards foreign languages, compulsory language learning, group dynamics, and the quality of textbooks used in the classroom (Dörnyei, 1998).

For some learners, acquiring a new language can be demotivating, particularly concerning speaking. In Iraq, English students often do not get many opportunities to speak in class. Most English teachers in Iraqi schools teach through a method, focusing on grammar rules rather than speaking and listening. Although teaching methods today emphasize communication and speaking, the grammar-translation approach is still predominant in the Iraqi education system. Due to the lack of focus on speech in English classes, Iraqi students frequently feel incapable of developing strong speaking skills and become unmotivated to learn English. When students are not provided with a chance to practice speaking, they lose confidence in their ability to speak and become less motivated to study the language. The skill of speaking is frequently overlooked in the context of learning a foreign language, and it is frequently seen as the most challenging and intricate ability to master (Ur, 1996)..

### **Previous Studies**

The study conducted by Alyousif & Alsuhaibani (2021) investigated the demotivating factors that hinder English language learning among Saudi high school students studying English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The study involved 365 students and 18 English language teachers from six public schools. The researchers employed a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data from both students and teachers. The findings of the study showed that subject-related and teacher-related demotivating factors were the most commonly reported by Saudi high school EFL students. In particular, lack of interesting topics, insufficient opportunities for practicing English, excessive focus on grammar, and teacher incompetence were identified as the most significant demotivating factors.

Soureshjani and Riahipour (2012) conducted a study and they aimed at identifying the various factors that have impacts on the improvement of English-speaking skills among

learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study sought to explore the different factors that may demotivate speaking skills among EFL learners. The researchers discovered that learners' lack of confidence, anxiety, negative attitudes, and limited opportunities to practice speaking were the main demotivating factors. Additionally, the study examined the attitudes of English language teachers towards teaching speaking skills in the classroom. Findings represented that teachers' lack of confidence, limited knowledge of teaching speaking skills, and reliance on traditional teaching methods were among the factors that contributed to learners' lack of progress in speaking. The study highlighted the importance of addressing these demotivating factors and adopting effective teaching strategies to renovate learners' English-speaking abilities.

To investigate the demotivating factors that impact Iranian high school students' and teachers' perceptions of practising the speaking skill in English as a second language. Afrough, Rahimi, & Zarafshan (2014) conducted interviews with 312 students and 92 teachers and used thematic analysis to identify common themes. With reference to the findings and related literature, they developed a questionnaire that was administered to 150 male and 150 female EFL learners and 40 male and 40 female teachers. The researchers analyzed the data collected from the questionnaire performing a statistical technique called principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The analysis revealed that there were six factors that emerged as demotivating for Iranian high school students and teachers when practising the speaking skill in English as a second language. These factors were negative attitudes toward learning L2, inadequate teacher competence and performance, lack of technological facilities in the classroom, lack of adequate teaching materials, unfavorable classroom environment, and insufficient opportunities for speaking practice.

### **Studies in Turkey**

Upon reviewing previous studies in Turkey, it was found that there are a number of studies that have addressed the issue of demotivation in general. However, concerning demotivation specifically in speaking, there is a limited number of studies that have focused on this topic.

Han et al. (2019) investigated the factors that contribute to demotivation in EFL learning among Turkish students and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The study identifies a range of demotivating factors, including negative attitudes of classmates, teacher-related issues, personal difficulties, class characteristics, test anxiety and experiences



of failure. To cope with these demotivating factors, Turkish EFL learners utilize various strategies, such as self-studying, seeking assistance, adopting a positive mindset, ignoring negative feedback, and setting achievable goals. The study's findings emphasize the importance of addressing demotivation in EFL learning to enhance student success. Another study conducted by Akay (2017) on Turkish high school students detected that several demotivating factors hindered their English language learning, comprising a lack of interest in the language, negative teacher attitudes, unsupportive classroom environments, and unappealing course materials. The findings of this study also highlighted the students' expressed need for engaging courses that utilize technological tools and incorporate more speaking activities to enhance their motivation. Furthermore, İsaoglu's (2020) study inspected factors that demotivate speaking skill development in 566 students at Anatolian High School, Ankara. Identified barriers included fear of mistakes, lack of confidence, negative teacher feedback, and limited training opportunities. To enhance motivation and speaking proficiency, the researcher suggests teachers should use motivational strategies, create supportive environments, and employ communicative teaching methods. Additionally, policymakers are expected to incorporate more communication activities in textbooks, offer interactive teacher training, and ensure the quality of speaking exercises.

### **Studies in Iraq**

The study conducted by Ali & Abed (2022) examined EFL students' demotivation and their perceptions of classroom activities. It identified factors such as lack of interest, difficulty with the subject matter, and negative classroom experiences as contributors to demotivation. Students viewed group work and interactive tasks positively, emphasizing collaboration, communication, and practical language use. Traditional activities like lectures and repetitive exercises were spotted as less engaging. It highlights the importance of promoting positive values in classroom activities to enhance student motivation and prevent negative outcomes.

In 2023, Jasim's study discovered that the most commonly mentioned demotivating issues for open educational college EFL students were related to subjects and context, including a lack of engaging subject matter, limited English practice opportunities, and an excessive focus on grammar. Teachers suggested various methods to elevate students' motivation, such as incorporating technology, offering extrinsic rewards and encouragement, and promoting competitive and collaborative work.

In line with previous studies, a study conducted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq found that university students are discouraged from learning English in the classroom due to two main factors. The first factor is related to teachers, with students expressing dissatisfaction with inexperienced teachers who lack variety in teaching methods and fail to cater to the needs of less proficient students. The second factor is the concern about not being employed after graduation, as students observe a high number of unemployed graduates in the region (Hama, 2022).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

This study was conducted on a group of students studying at Iraqi secondary schools in Ankara, Turkey during the academic year 2022-2023. The study sample consisted of (n= 111) male and female students from the secondary stage, whose native language is Arabic and who are studying English as a foreign language. The age range of the participating students in this study was between 15 and 18 years old. It was ensured that all students studied English during their primary and middle school stages, as in the Iraqi education system, students begin learning English from the first grade in primary school.

### **Instrument**

In order to discover the most common factors that demotivate students speaking in English, Speaking Demotivation Scale developed by İsaoglu (2020) was used. Speaking Demotivation Scale included (48) items to be answered on the four-point Likert scale, which starts with 'Strongly Agree' ends with 'Strongly Disagree'.

The questionnaire was distributed to all participants in order to explore the factors that demotivate students from speaking English. Participants agreed to participate in the study on a voluntary basis and were assured that responses should be honest. The students were informed about the research and guaranteed anonymity, with their responses being used for research purposes. Finally, the collected data underwent statistical analyses.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In the current study, the Speaking Demotivation Scale developed by İsaoglu (2020) was used. The scale was applied to students in English without being translated into Arabic. The scale aims to measure the demotivating factors that discourage students from speaking English.

It consists of 48 items that follow a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), with scores given on a scale of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The scale is divided into four sub-dimensions: teacher-related factors, student-related factors, characteristics of the classroom and learning materials, and the nature of the course and attitudes towards the English language. The scale was developed to measure the relationship between demotivating factors and variables such as age, gender, and whether or not students received private lessons. The question corresponding to studying abroad was omitted to prevent any confusion among the students, as the study was conducted on Iraqi students who are enrolled in Iraqi schools in Turkey. It is possible that some students may misunderstand the question about travelling to foreign countries since they are already residing outside their home country of Iraq and currently living in Turkey.

The internal reliability of the scale was computed. Since the data is in a multidimensional structure, instead of the Cronbach alpha coefficient, the stratified alpha coefficient and Mc are used. Danold's Omega coefficient was calculated respectively as 0.81 and 0.82 which indicate acceptable reliability. The alpha values were computed respectively for the 'Teacher', 'Student', 'Class\_Material' and 'Nature\_Attitude' subscales as 0.80, 0.68, 0.58 and 0.40. Alpha values for 'student' and 'Nature\_Attitude' seem low. This is the limitation of this research.

### **Data Analysis**

Before the analysis, one-dimensional outlier analysis was performed and the participants 71, 80 and 86 whose standardized scale scores were outside the range of -3 and +3 were excluded from the analysis.

The assumption of normality was tested, and it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values for all subgroups were in the range of -1 - +1. These findings show that the normality assumption is met for all subgroups. For this reason, parametric tests were used in the analyses. Moreover Homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene test for ANOVA.

Randomized block design ANOVA was calculated to compare the scores of the participants from the subscales. Randomized block designs are utilized to compare the significance of mean scores in cases where the sample is not independent but matched by a variable called a block variable (Albert, Rizzo, 2012). In the present study, the participants are

not independent because the scores of the same participants from discrete subscales are compared. Therefore, the use of randomized block design is appropriate.

The independent sample t-test was calculated to compare the mean scores obtained from the subtests according to gender, receiving private lessons. For the groups where homogeneity of variance assumption was not met Welch two sample tests were utilized. One-way ANOVA was computed to compare the mean scores obtained from the subtests according to age. Because normality assumption is violated according to age for ‘student related factors’ subscale, Kruskal Wallis test was utilized for that comparison.

With regard to data analysis, RSP package (Doğan & Aybek, 2023) in R and some other functions in R programming language were used. Moreover SPSS 21.0 version was used to compute independent sample t test.

## Findings

To answer the primary research question about primary factors that demotivate Iraqi students from speaking English and hinder their progress in developing speaking skills, the mean scores of the participants from the subscales of the scale were computed and compared. Since the number of items in each subscale is divergent, the lowest and highest scores that the participants can get from the scale differ. For this reason, scale scores were normalized (between 0 and 1) in order to make a better comparison.

Prior to the analysis, the assumption of normality was tested, and it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values for all subgroups were in the range of -1 - +1. These findings show that the normality assumption is met. Descriptive statistics are introduced below.

*Table 1. Normalized Mean Scores for Subscales*

<b>Subscales</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Student related factors (S)	108	.28	.16
Teacher related factors (T)	108	.41	.22
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	108	.52	.22
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	108	.55	.22

As seen in Table 1 mean scores are respectively 0.55, 0.52, 0.41 and 0.28 for the subscales ‘Student related factors’, ‘Teacher related factors’, ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ and ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’. These mean scores provide insights into the average ratings or perceptions of participants in relation to each subscale. They are indicators of the degree to which each factor influences the demotivation

and hindrance faced by Iraqi students in speaking English and their progress in developing speaking skills.

To test the significance of the discrepancy between mean scores, Randomized block design ANOVA was computed. In this study, a randomized block design was used to compare the scores of the participants on the subtests of the scale and to test the significance of the mean differences. Below is Table 2 with the results of random block designs.

Table 2. Results for randomized block design ANOVA

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F	p	Sig. Diff	Eta Squared
<b>Subscales</b>	3	5.030	1.6767	55.06	0.000		
<b>Participants</b>	107	8.472	0.0792	2.60	0.000	S-T; S-N; S-C	0.22
<b>Residuals</b>	321	9.775	0.0305			T-C; T-N	

The analysis conducted on the mean subscale scores revealed significant differences among the groups, as indicated by the large F statistics for both treatment (subscales) ( $F(3-107) = 55.05, p < 0.01$ ) and block (participants) ( $F(3-107) = 2.60, p < 0.01$ ). These significant test results allow us to conclude that there are notable variations in the mean scores between at least two groups. To identify the specific groups with significant differences, a post-hoc test (Tukey HSD) was performed. The results of this test indicated that all groups showed significant differences, except for subscale C (Characteristics of the class and learning materials) and subscale N (Nature of the course and attitudes towards English). This implies that there are significant variations in mean scores between most of the groups, highlighting the influence of different factors on the subscale scores. Furthermore, the effect size (eta squared) was calculated for the ANOVA, yielding a value of 0.22. This finding indicates a high effect size, suggesting that the factors being examined have a substantial impact on the observed differences in mean subscale scores.

Overall, this analysis provides valuable insights into the significant differences among the groups and the notable effect size was observed in relation to the subscale scores.

### Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores with Respect to Gender

To investigate whether there is a significant difference in the subtest scores of the scale based on gender, an independent sample t-test was conducted. However, it is important to note that the effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests that did not yield significant results. For the 'Characteristics of the class and learning materials' subscale, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. Therefore, a Welch two- sample t-test was employed

instead of the traditional independent sample t-test. The effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests whose results were not significant. Independent sample t-test results for subgroups according to gender are presented below.

*Table 3. Independent Sample t-test results according to gender*

Subscales	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Student related factors (S)	M	60	28.7	6.52	106	-.85	.40	
	F	48	29.7	6.01				
Teacher related factors (T)	M	60	25.3	7.13	106	-2.71	.008	0.06
	F	48	28.8	5.92				
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)*	M	60	25.4	5.03	99.01	-1.54	.13	
	F	48	26.9	5.23				
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	M	60	20.6	3.29	106	-.50	.62	
	F	48	20.9	2.73				

As represented in Table 3, the mean scores of male and female students regarding the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are 28.7 and 29.7, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -0.85, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in connection with gender.

When the results for the ‘Teacher related factors’, subscale are examined, it is noticed that the mean scores of male and female participants are 25.3 and 28.8, respectively. This difference is statistically significant ( $t(106) = -2.71, p < 0.05$ ). In other words, it can be said that female participants have a significantly higher score on this subscale than males. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for independent sample t-test and the result was found to be 0.06. This finding corresponds to small effect size.

With reference to the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of female and male students are 25.4 and 26.9, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(99.01) = -1.54, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to gender.

When the results for the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale are examined, it is realized that the mean scores of male and female participants are 20.6 and 20.9, respectively. However, there is no significant difference between the two mean scores  $t(106) = -0.50, p > 0.05$ . The effect size was not calculated for the groups that did not have statistically significant differences by gender.

## Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores concerning Age

In order to determine whether or not the subtest scores of the scale show a significant difference according to age, one-way ANOVA was computed. Below are the Table 4 ANOVA results according to age for the ‘Teacher related factors’, ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials and Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscales.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results according to age

Subscales	Age	N	X	SS	df	F	p	Si g- D if.	Eta Squ ared
Teacher related factors (T)	15	32	25.43	6.48	3-104	1.14	.334		
	16	30	26.33	7.44					
	17	25	28.56	5.91					
	18	21	27.66	7.28					
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	15	32	24.25	5.29	3-104	4.63	.004	15-17	0.11
	16	30	25.30	5.10					
	17	25	28.96	4.41				16-17	
	18	21	26.38	4.55					
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	15	32	20.34	3.04	3-104	1.58	.199		
	16	30	20.46	2.99					
	17	25	21.88	2.60					
	18	21	20.33	3.45					

As it is seen in Table 4 for ‘Teacher related factors’ subscale mean scores are respectively 25.43, 26.33, 28.56 and 27.66 for 15, 16, 17 and 18 years old participants. However, the difference between the mean scores was not statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 1.14, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to age.

When the results for the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’, subscale are examined, it is seen that the mean scores are respectively 24.25, 25.30, 28.96 and 26.38 for 15, 16, 17 and 18 years old participants. The difference between the mean scores was statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 4.63, p > 0.05$ ). This finding shows that there is a significant difference between at least two groups. Pairwise comparisons were conducted using (performing) the Tukey HSD test. According to the results of the Tukey test, it was determined that the difference between ages 17 -15 and 17-16 was found significant. This means that 17-year-old participants have higher scores than 15- and 16- year-old participants do in this subscale. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for ANOVA and the result was found to be 0.11. This finding corresponds to medium effect size.

Concerning the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale mean scores are respectively 20.34, 20.46, 21.88 and 20.33 for 15-, 16-, 17- and 18-years old participants. The discrepancy between the mean scores was not statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 1.58, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to age.

Since the ‘student-related factors’ subscale did not illustrate normal distribution in different age groups, the Kruskal Wallis test, which is a non-parametric alternative, was calculated instead of one-way ANOVA. Kruskal Wallis test results are presented in the Table 5. below.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis test results according to age

Subscale	Age	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi Square	p	Sig. Dif.
Student related factors (S)	15	32	48.36	3	10.11	.018	17-18
	16	30	60.17				
	17	25	43.22				
	18	21	69.19				

According to Table 5, the mean ranks for the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are as follows: 48.36 for 15-year-old participants, 60.17 for 16-year-old participants, 43.2 for 17-year-old participants, and 69.19 for 18-year-old participants. The differences between these mean ranks were found to be statistically significant (Chi-Square (3) = 10.11,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the mean scores on this subscale vary according to age.

However, further analysis using pairwise comparisons was conducted to determine the specific differences between age groups. The pairwise comparison results revealed that the significant difference exists only between the 17-year-old and 18-year-old age groups. In other words, 18-year-old participants have a higher mean score on this subscale compared to 17-year-old participants.

This finding suggests that as participants transition from 17 to 18 years old, there is a notable increase in their scores on the ‘Student related factors’ subscale. The higher score indicates a greater perception or emphasis on student-related factors as potential motivators or hindrances in speaking English. It is momentous to note that no significant differences were found between the other age groups on this subscale.



### Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores in Respect of Getting Private Lessons

In order to determine whether the subtest scores of the scale show a significant difference according to receiving private lessons, independent sample t-test was calculated. Considering ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale Welch two Sample test was utilized because homogeneity of variance assumption was not met. The effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests whose results were not significant. Independent sample t-test results for subgroups according to receiving private lessons are presented below.

Table 6. Independent Sample t-test results in respect of getting private lessons.

Subscales	Prv	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Student related factors (S)	Yes	75	27.30	5.11	106	-5.91	.000	0.25
	No	33	33.21	6.87				
Teacher related factors (T)	Yes	75	26.27	6.92	106	-1.32	.188	
	No	33	28.15	6.49				
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	Yes	75	25.16	5.51	81.0	-1.66	.100	
	No	33	27.15	4.09				
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	Yes	75	20.07	2.97	106	-.33	.740	
	No	33	20.09	3.23				

When the results for the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are examined, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 27.3 and 33.21 respectively. This difference is statistically significant ( $t(106)=-5.91$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In other words, it can be said that non-receiving private lessons participants have a significantly higher score on this subscale than receiving private lessons participants do. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for independent sample t-test and the result was found to be 0.25. This finding corresponds to high effect size.

In dealing with the ‘Teacher related factors’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 26.27 and 28.15, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -1.32$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in respect of getting private lessons.

According to Table 6, the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants regarding the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale are 25.16 and 27.15, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(81)=-1.16$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in respect of getting private lessons.

For the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 20.07 and 20.09, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -0.33, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to receiving private.

## **Discussion**

In this study, four demotivating factors were identified, including student-related factors, teacher-related factors, characteristics of the class and learning materials, and attitudes towards English. The analysis results revealed that one of the main factors influencing second language learning was the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’. This study aligns with the findings of Islam, Lamb, and Chambers (2013), which highlighted that negative attitudes or contradictions towards English-speaking Western societies were demotivating factors for some students. Trang and Baldauf (2007) found internal demotivators for Vietnamese students comprised negative attitudes towards English and lack of confidence. This study aligns with the findings of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), which showed that the primary demotivating factors for Japanese university students in learning English were course content and materials, lack of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, this study could be considered in line with the findings of Islam, Lamb, and Chambers (2013), which highlighted that negative attitudes towards English-speaking Western societies were demotivating factors for some students. In summary, this study's findings that attitudes towards English can demotivate learners is consistent with several previous studies regarding the negative attitude towards English.

The classroom characteristics and teaching materials used for teaching were identified as the second cause of students feeling disheartened about speaking English. This finding indicates that excessive reliance on grammar rules and textbooks, along with the absence of engaging activities, can hinder the motivation of language learners who aspire to practice communication. Traditional grammar instruction often fails to support real language development goals such as reading comprehension and speaking enhancement. Furthermore, the scarcity of visual elements in the classroom and the lack of techniques like drama and role-playing to enhance learning were identified as demotivating factors. These findings align with previous studies that linked student demotivation to educational materials and content.

These results are consistent with previous studies that linked student demotivation to educational materials and content. As identified by the results of several studies about demotivating factors in learning English, the top factors reported were lack of speaking practice, boring classes focused on grammar, lack of fun activities, and use of textbooks. Students demotivated when classes focused too much on grammar rules and textbook content rather than on communicative activities (e.g. Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Miranda & Iragui, 2013; Muhonen, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Results of the current study are consistent with the findings of Krishnan and Pathan (2013) who also identified the lack of facilities and course content as major demotivating factors for students. This supports the findings of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) as well, as their study revealed that course contents and teaching materials, particularly those focusing on grammar-based instruction, were significant sources of demotivation.

Contrary to previous findings highlighting the significant role of teachers in student demotivation, the present study found that teachers were the third influential factor in students' demotivation to speak English (Figure 2). When examining the results of the 'Teacher related factors' subscale, it was found that the mean score for male participants was 25.3, while for female participants, it was 28.8. This difference in means was statistically significant ( $t(106) = -2.71, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that female participants obtained significantly higher scores on this subscale compared to males. However, it's worth noting that this study did not align with the results of previous studies (e.g., Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Dörnyei, 2001; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) that emphasized the significant impact of teachers on student motivation. In previous studies, negative teacher behaviors were considered more central in student demotivation, while positive teacher behaviors were not perceived as equally central to motivation.

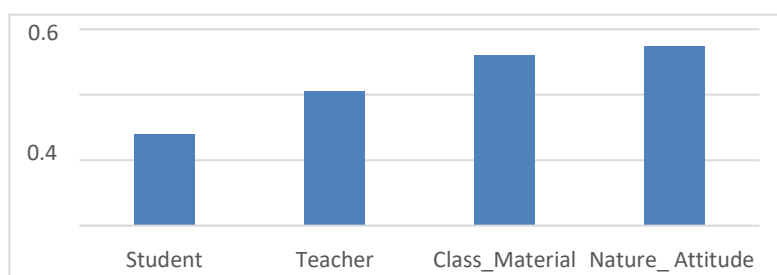


Figure 2. Demotivating Factors Affecting Students: Statistical Analysis Results

Finally, student-related factors such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and previous experience of failure were found to have the least impact on students. Despite student-related factors being less influential in student demotivation, the study found that students who received private lessons were less affected by demotivating factors compared to those who did not receive such lessons. When conducting pairwise comparisons to identify specific differences between age groups, the analysis revealed significant differences only between the 17-year-old and 18-year-old age groups, regarding student-related demotivating factors. In other words, 18-year-old participants had higher average scores in this specific subscale compared to 17-year-old participants. This difference could be attributed to older students' anxiety and fear of obtaining low scores grades in university entrance exams.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study identified key demotivating factors in English language learning, including attitudes towards English, classroom characteristics, teaching materials, and teacher and student-related factors, while studying their relationship with gender, age, and receiving private lessons. The findings align with previous studies that highlight the negative impact of the nature of the course and attitudes towards English-speaking. The excessive focus on grammar rules and textbooks, along with the absence of engaging activities, were identified as demotivating factors related to classroom characteristics and teaching materials. Additionally, the study revealed that teachers had a limited impact on student motivation, contrary to some previous findings that emphasized the role of teachers. Finally, student-related factors such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and previous experience of failure had a lesser impact on student demotivation. However, it was found that participants who were 18 years old obtained higher scores than their 17-year-old counterparts, indicating a possible change in their perceptions of student-related factors. Furthermore, the results showed that students who received private lessons were less affected by student-related demotivating factors, indicating that private lessons provide some protective effect against these demotivating factors.

These findings emphasize the importance of addressing these demotivating factors to enhance students' motivation and engagement in English language learning. Curriculum developers and teachers should work towards creating a positive learning environment, incorporating interactive and communicative activities, and providing support to address students' attitudes and confidence issues in order to promote a more motivated and successful language learning experience. Overall, understanding and addressing these demotivating

factors are crucial in designing effective strategies to encourage and support Iraqi students in their English language development and improve their speaking skills.

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