

Case Studies on the Effects of English Language Learning by the Effective Use of the Internet and Learning Strategies

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Abstract: Motivation is one of the most crucial factors for students to study and for teachers to teach efficiently therefore it is necessary for teachers and students to use it during the teaching and learning period. This research project was conducted at the ABC School, Shenyang City, Liaoning province, China. This research lasted from January to March in 2016 and there are three participants, Tom, Peter and John, from different grades. The research methods include interviews, tests and research journals. The research findings from the detailed and accurate analysis show that the motivation is more critical for students to master English language basic skills efficiently. Meanwhile, the learning strategies and the use of the Internet can help students to stimulate the motivation. The findings also indicate that the effective use of the Internet and learning strategies can motivate learners to effectively improve their test scores and their English proficiency. They are expected to raise the attention of the motivation, to benefit both students and teachers and even to make good examples of the further research.

1. Introduction

Currently, English has developed into the most widely used language and one of the most important information carrier in human life, therefore learning English has become a vital skill for everyone. However, a large number of people do not like to learn English, that is to say, they pay less attention on the importance of motivation in their learning processes so that they do not have the effective learning methods and may get low grades.

As Dörnyei claims, motivation is one of the most important factors in effective learning and teaching^[1]. Owing to the importance of the motivation, this paper aims to discover how the learning strategies and the effective use of the Internet stimulate the motivation so that students can improve the grades steadily by the method of case study, because case study presents research or evaluation data in a more accessible form than other kinds of research methods^[2].

1.1. The Background of the Research

Nowadays, many teachers only pay attention to the grades of students and they cannot adapt to the current society to use the innovative strategies to teach students because they just use the traditional teaching methods. The learning problems can be showed in the following aspects. Firstly, the students may not have the independent learning abilities or autonomous learning abilities. Next, the students cannot use the appropriate methods by themselves to learn knowledge. Finally, the teachers cannot keep up with the pace of the times so they may not use the Internet to stimulate their motivation.

In addition, the students take no account of the motivation, as a result, they cannot realize that if they can have the interests in learning, they can achieve high scores. Therefore, the students and teachers should pay more attention to motivation, learning strategies and the effective use of the Internet.

From the above analysis, we can realize that the learning strategies and the use of the Internet can

stimulate the motivation for students to improve the grades steadily.

1.2. The Significance and Purpose of the Study

In today's society, motivation is considered as the most important factor to learn English. The students in different schools hardly have the motivation on learning and they even do not have appropriate learning methods to learn something more effectively. Thus promoting students' motivation is a vital factor in their learning period.

The motivation has significant impacts on the different areas of social life, such as theories, methods and practice. It especially plays the most necessary role in the students' study period and the most basic roles are the following three aspects. Firstly, the motivation is the driving force of the beginning of practice. Secondly, it is the intrinsic factors to promote the positive practice of people and thirdly it is the decisive link to practical goals.

The purpose of this research is to make everyone consider the motivation and to make the students use the good learning strategies to enhance the motivation and the interests in English learning. There are three main research questions to be addressed so that the research objectives can be reached.

- (1) What influences students' motivation for students in their learning period?
- (2) How can the learning strategies improve the motivation?
- (3) How to apply the effective use of the Internet will stimulate the motivation?

2. Literature Review

Motivation is regarded as the key element of success or failure in the research area of language learning^[1]. However, the most English learners spend a great deal of time in studying English because they do not realize the importance of motivation. Considering the current situation, the learning strategies and the effective use of the Internet can improve motivation in the learning period. There are three parts discussed in detail in this section in the following description.

2.1. The Importance of Motivation in Language Learning

Since motivation plays an important role in today's schooling especially for students and teachers, as a result, many scholars and researchers, such as Dörnyei, Harmer and Lomb, have noticed the importance of the motivation. Motivating someone is to do some things which can relate to many different things in order to gain knowledge instead of persuading him/her directly to exerting indirect influence on him/her by arranging the environments or conditions in a way that the people is possible to choose the specific course of action^[1]. In the second language learning, motivation is a complex phenomenon. Dörnyei^[1] defined it in terms of two aspects, the first one is the learner's communicative needs and the second one is learners' attitudes towards the second language community. If learners have the need of speaking the L2 (Second Language) in many different situations or they want to achieve their dreams, they will desire to know the value of communicative needs hence they will have more motivation on learning.

Because of the significance of motivation, many experts make a clear classification of motivation. Harmer^[3] gives the deep research on the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Although this separation is clear in some research, it also has some shortcomings. In order to make an easy and clear distinction between the orientations to the L2, Dörnyei^[1] researches a process-oriented model of motivation which is composed of three stages. As the motivation is so vital to the students in their learning period, many researchers have also stressed its importance in language learning. Lomb^[4] argues that if the learners do not have motivation in learning L2, they will make less progress. Thus on the basis of the statement mentioned above, motivation is considered as one of the most important factors in language learning. Furthermore, if learners have positive attitudes to learn the L2, they will get more grades. Others hold the opinion that learners with enough motivation can obtain an application of knowledge of an L2 in spite of their attitude or other cognitive features^[1].

Since motivation is so important in our teaching, it is worth thinking over what and who form parts of the world about students' feelings and appointments with the learning process. Dörnyei^[1]

argues that motivational teaching can be a good investment in the long run, and it will also let students learn the L2 better. When either loses the confidence, the motivation will be reduced, on the contrary, if they are willing to use the method, success will be closer^[5]. They consider that teachers can provide a positive atmosphere of the classroom that students can enjoy the pleasant and interesting content so that students can achieve the goals clearly and easily.

However, all the students' motivation cannot be noticed by teachers, because it is finally decided by themselves. Besides, there are three aspects where our behavior can directly affect the students' participation which contains the goals and goal setting, the learning environment and the interesting classes. The first one is that teachers need to make a clear distinction on the long- and short-term goals. If teachers set appropriate goals in the different stages in their life, they will have a significant effect on their motivation and will have a clear goal in their learning career. The second one is that teachers can change the learning environment from the unattractive atmosphere, for example, they can use some music during their teaching process. Furthermore the last one is to provide them with many interesting exercises to make them engage in the class which can continue to motivate the students in learning activities^[5].

In short, the above research studies present that the motivation is the vital element in English learning period and the students should pay more attention on it. Meanwhile, the teachers should make good use of it in their teaching practice to raise the grades of students.

2.2. The Significance of Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are important for students to enhance their own learning. The proper language learning strategies can lead to good learning efficiency and great self-confidence^[6]. The learning language strategies can promote the development of communicative competence both in general and specific ways. It had a powerful impact on how language learning strategies promote the development of communicative competence.

There are two learning strategies can stimulate the communicative competence, one is the cognitive strategies and the other is the metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies help people to understand and recall the useful and new information. Metacognitive strategies are helpful for learners to pay attention to their own cognition, plan, and process during their learning period. Compensation strategies assist learners in filling the knowledge gap and promoting in-depth study, so these learning strategies aid communicative competence to grow. When the learners' communicative competence grows, the learning strategies can boost particular aspects of competence in specific ways, such as discourse, grammatical and sociolinguistic elements^[6].

The learning strategies for students can raise their motivation and interests to learn English. As Palinscar and Brown^[7] have proved that the importance of an active role of learners in the growth of self-regulation in L2 learning. They studied how learning strategies which learners could use to adjust their L2 learning might be taught. Sovik, Frostad and Lie^[8] have also found how inadequate learning strategies could be an essential element in educational underachievement by the figure analysis of the study in achievement of Norwegian students in middle ages. Motivation was also regarded as the section of the effective strategies which help the students to find the emotional factors to achieve the studying goals^[9].

Not only the students can use the learning strategies to improve the grades but also the teachers can use different learning strategies to let students into a positive and effective experience of learning. Almost all learners want to do the activity that their friends usually want to do, therefore teachers have to analyze the learners with all different ages and set different activities to make students like to listen and learn new skills in class^[10]. Hewitt^[11] also points out that learning strategies should be decided between learners and teachers and it is likely to focus the performance orientation on both L2 learners and teachers. In the meantime, students have to know that although they have used the learning strategies, they still need time and space to reflect in their learning.

In condition, the above researchers thought the learning strategies can improve the motivation during the learning and teaching period and the students and the teachers should take the learning

strategies as the important factors in class.

2.3. The Effective Use of the Internet

Currently, the prosperity of the network culture greatly enriches the education field and provides a convenient platform for the vast number of teachers to teach the students. Hence the use of the Internet and technology can promote the learners' motivation^[12]. Oxford^[6] shows 11 examples of language learning strategies which use from England, the United States, the Philippines, France, Denmark and Israel. All the examples in different countries are presented the various learning strategies how used in diverse settings and programs all over the world.

Nowadays, the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is widely applied in many countries in the world. With the development of the technologies, the computer-mediated communication (CMC) is usually viewed as the learning environment for the language learning^[13]. The use of the Internet and the computer in education continues to raise at a high level, the video, the tape recorder and the computer all provide the motivation and convenience to the L2 learners. Using the video during the teaching periods, there are some benefits that it can see language-in-use clearly, raise the cross-cultural awareness, increase the power of creation and stimulate the learning motivation^[5]. Cohen et al.^[2] thought that the more use of the Internet has provided many advantages in teaching and learning. It can reduce the cost of studying, learners can study at home as well as learners can lessen the errors in processing the website data.

To recapitulate the opinions of the present researchers stated, motivation can be used as the essential element to learn the L2, meanwhile the learning strategies and the use of the Internet can stimulate the motivation to increase the interests in learning and improve the students' grades. However, these methods not have the pertinence of the students even cannot reflect the specific situation of individuals.

Based on the studies above, the effective use of the Internet is necessary in English learning and if the students make good use of it, they can raise their motivation in learning. Therefore, the case study is conducted in order to research the importance of the motivation and the relationship between the learning strategies and the use of the Internet with the motivation.

3. Research Design

The original aim of this research is to discuss the effects of motivation on students L2 learning. Through the case studies that we mentioned blow, the learning strategies and the use of the Internet are proved to boost motivation in L2 learning.

3.1. Research Methods

This research project was conducted during the winter vacation in 2016 at ABC Teaching School in Shenyang which mainly focuses on the private tutorial by one to one. The research methods contain interviews, research journals, quiz and pre- and post-testing research methods. Therefore, it is necessary to combine all the methods during the process of teaching to make the findings more convincing.

The interview is usually regarded as one of the main research tools in order to survey by analytic data collected from questions^[14]. It is a short talk with learners at the beginning of the class and at the end of the class. The aim of the early interview is to know the learner's motivation and his demand on learning. In the meanwhile, the depth interview is to find out what problems exist in the process of learning and what other aspects that need improving in the latter part of the learning process. The benefits of the interview are the teacher can get more information about the learner's study condition and is highly targeted to the shortcomings of the learners.

Quiz, pre-test and post-test are the fundamental tools to be used for the test and experimental to the students^[2]. Quiz is carried out during the class, the teacher can chase down the defects of this class and then they can help students to make up for the deficiencies. Pre-test is conducted at the beginning of the contact with students so that teachers can have a simple sketch of the general situation of the students. Post-test is usually conducted after the completion of the teaching phase. It

can point that the growth of children in this period and the need to improve in the learning future. These three kinds of testing all find the shortcomings of students' learning.

Research journal is the induction and summary of the students' learning situation of each class. Through this method, teachers can intuitively see the problems of students learning and make further efforts to help students realize their shortcomings and then to overcome them.

3.2. Research Participants

There are three participants in this research and they are all boys (two prime school pupils, one junior middle school student). One is in Grade 3, the other in Grade 6, and another is in Junior 2. They are not only from different schools but have different scores and different learning targets. Tom got 76 points in the last final term test (Full mark is 100 points). Because of the family situation, he could not have enough energy and sufficient environment to study. His basis of English is very weak, especially in terms of English vocabulary. Therefore, what is the most important to him is to consolidate the foundation of English and learn how to recite the words.

Peter obtained 97 points in his last final test among 100 points. He only mistook one single selection and lost 1 point in writing so we can draw the conclusion that his basic level of English is really good. What he needed mostly was to deepen the degree of difficulty and master the more detailed knowledge points and he can pass an entrance examination to a key junior middle school.

John, a Junior II student, achieved 90 points in the last final term test (full mark: 120 points). In this period of grade, students usually do not master the knowledge point and grasp them clearly. Consequently, he had to pay more attention to the solidification of knowledge and studying the new class.

Although they were all from different grades, various school, diverse scores and distinct learning aims, they all studied at the ABC School in their spare time, the teaching environment is the same. They all came to the ABC School in order to improve their learning abilities for a variety of study purposes.

3.3. Identification of Learning Problems

This study mainly focuses on what motivation is, how the strategies influence the learning motivation and how the Internet can help to stimulate motivation. The direct aim is to help the learners to find out their motivation and through it to improve their learning abilities.

The primary problems of these three students were as follows: firstly, they all did not have the appropriate habits of study. What is more, they could not accurately recite the English words in the textbook. Last but not in the least, they all did not have the abilities to study independently.

From all the questions mentioned above, the most difficult question the teachers need to overcome is autonomous learning abilities. Consequently, the teachers had to pay attention to how to improve the abilities in line with motivation.

3.4. Teaching Action

Before the class, we made an interview with Tom in order to find the problems in him and the place which needed to be improved. Test was widely used in the process of learning and quiz was the main way to test if the learners grasp the situation. And then, after each class, we kept the research journal in order to discover the child's word forgetting rules as well as develop learning tasks and study aim in the next stage.

At the beginning of the class, we talked with Peter and his mother and further realized that what they wanted most was to adapt to the learning method in a junior high school faster and complete the transition from a primary school to a junior high school. He used the post-test method to check if he had mastered all the knowledge. John, at the start of the class, talked with us for a period of time and so we found out that he had a weak foundation. He did a lot of tests in order to accomplish the memory of the basic knowledge. He was found inappropriate to apply English learning methods.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section aims to answer the research questions through analyzing the data. At first, the data were

collected from interviews then they were analyzed. What is more, the data collected from the test include quiz, pre-test and post-test. Thirdly, the data collected from the research journal are analyzed.

Table 1 Interviewees' Answers and the Author's Comments

	Students	Students' answers	Authors' analysis and comments
Question 1: Do you have the interests in learning English?	Tom	He does not like English, especially the words and he could not have the appropriate atmosphere to learn English because his home situation is not good.	From their opinions, we can draw the conclusion that the three participants all do not have enough interests in learning English. Therefore, they do not have the sufficient motivation on English and their English grades are not satisfied with themselves.
	Peter	In his views, English is not interesting, he does not have interests in it. The vocabulary is the most place he hates.	
	John	From his points of view, he has little interests in learning English, he thinks English is only useful when he plays the computer games.	
Question 2: Do you have a good way to learn English?	Tom	He does not like to finish his homework. He can just listen to English teacher in class, but will not accomplish the homework.	According to their answers, we can see they do not have the effective method to learn English. They can solely study English from the teachers' help so that they cannot have the independent learning ability. They cannot have the appropriate way to conclude the key points of knowledge in their own way.
	Peter	From the teachers' tutoring, he can follow their thoughts and finish homework. However, he could not do other English works or recite words without teachers' supervising.	
	John	He can finish homework and recite the words. He would master the knowledge. However, he cannot conclude the sufficient study method in learning English.	
Question 3: Do you like surfing the Internet and will you watch the English videos or listen to English songs on the Internet?	Tom	He seldom plays the computer because his parents do not allow him to play the computer therefore he also seldom watches the English videos or listens to the English songs.	In their views, we are able to see that Tom and Peter could not have the effective use of the Internet. They do not use the Internet or do not pay attention to the use of the Internet in learning English. In the contrast, John use the Internet and learn English from it, so he can learn the English quickly and effectively.
	Peter	He usually plays the computer and surfs the Internet but he seldom sees the English videos or listens to the English songs. Hence he does not think the use of the Internet is related to study English.	
	John	He usually plays the computer and sees the English movies and listens the English songs. Therefore he can learn English from the Internet.	

4.1. Analysis and Discussion of the Interview

Each of the students before and after the class, they would conduct two stages of the interview. The interview was conducted to find if the learners have the motivation to learn English, what strategies do they like best in the learning class and do they use the Internet to experience the leisure and recreation. There are three interview questions shown in Table 1.

The interviews was done in an easy and comfortable atmosphere so that the three participants might feel relaxed when they answered the questions. By doing this, the effect of the interview would be more effective. Their typical answers and authors' comments and analysis are also indicated in Table 1.

4.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Tests

Testing is a tool which is used to measure the individual behaviors and works. It usually consists of

properly arranged questions and tasks and the scores of the tests are to react with the individual's situation and abilities. There are two types of the tests, one is the pre-test, the other is the post-test. The pre-test is to check the deficiency of the students while the pre-test is to inspect the degree of the mastery of knowledge. It has the practicability, the reliability and the effectiveness. Three participants use the tests for guaranteeing the learning efficiency.

Tom usually made a pre-test to check up if he had mastered the knowledge and what points of knowledge he did not master before the class. After knowing his lack of knowledge, we could make a proper teaching program for him in this class learning. From the scores of the pre-tests, we realized that Tom could not master word well. Hence he had to use some efficient strategies to learn the way of how to master the words quickly. We used the associated method to teach him, for example, the word 'shorts', the Chinese meaning is "DUAN KU", we taught how to remember the word 'short', the meaning is "DUAN DE", this is the common knowledge that trousers have two legs therefore the 'shorts' also needs two legs, the plural needs to add 's' after the word, hence the word "shorts" is easy to remember. Despite the pre-tests, we also used the tests during the class to see the degree of the mastery of words. After about two classes, it was evident that he had more motivation in English learning than before and he could master the words by the associated way in his own method.

There are fewer tests on Peter, we mainly took the post-tests on him. He needed to study more knowledge. Hence we used the post-test to check whether he mastered the point of knowledge of the last class and what aspects he still needed to memory repeatedly. After the tests, we understood that he had not master the key points of the class therefore he had to use the high-efficient strategies for him to master the knowledge accurately. After five classes, we made a unit test volume to check the degree of his mastery, after the analyzing, we realized he had mastered the skills of doing the questions but he had to recite the words what he has learned before.

John used many tests during the class because he did not have enough time in learning English, so doing the tests in class is an effective task. From the test results, we found he did not make a good review after the course so he would learn the knowledge in the class and digest the knowledge in the class by the strategies. For example, we used every tense of the passive voice to teach him to master the regular pattern of this knowledge points, we told him that he only needed to master the change of the "be" with the different tenses while the past participle "done" is not changed so he mastered the passive voice quickly and accurately. After the tutorship, we gave a unit test volume to him to see if he had learned the relevant grammar. When we corrected the test, we knew that he had mastered the most grammar but he still had not mastered some grammar in use perfectly. Therefore, he had to learn grammars more carefully.

4.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Research Journal

The research journal is used to make notes of each student and from it what is insufficient and what need to be improved in the next class. We noted down the research journals of every participant after they had the class in order to find the learning problems they had encountered.

For Tom, we found that he did not have a review in time after class and he did not have the ability of reciting the words through effective ways of regulation. From the research journal, we summarize the learning strategies in reciting the words such as the associated method, the compound words, the affixation and the homophony. For example, the word "ice-cream", we taught him to recite the word from two parts, "ice" and "cream", so he remembered this word clearly and he could also find the other useful memorizing vocabulary methods like that.

Peter intended to enter a key journal high school and he needed the high-performance to learn the books. We used the research journal to plan the teaching schedule for him in order to let him to master the knowledge efficiently. From the first two classes, we decided to teach more points during the class because he was very clever and mastered knowledge so quickly. However, at the third class, we discovered that he had more detailed knowledge he could not digest hence we had no choice but to slow the teaching processes and let him have enough time to acquire it.

John had the ability of autonomous learning so he had to pay more attention to master the

knowledge exactly and knew the solution of questions. From the research journal, we could find what he still had the insufficient aspects of testing scores. Also take the passive voice of the tenses as an example, he always forgot the basic structure of it, so we realized that his major problem was not to grasp the basic knowledge points firmly. Then, we let him do more relevant exercises of the passive voices so that he could improve his English grammar level.

4.4. Discussion on the Learning Strategies and the Use of the Internet

Based on the methods what we have mentioned and listed above, we discuss what the importance of motivation on English learning and if the strategies as well as the Internet are used appropriately, the learning motivation can be increased for students.

At first, motivation is the key element of English learning. The three participants all have not enough motivation to study English so they have to attend the remedial classes after the school learning to improve the grades. Tom did not have the good foundations in English classes and he did not have the good environments to study so that he did not have the motivation to learn English. Peter, on the contrary, had the good foundations and better environments to learn. Although he had learned so much under so much pressures, he had no motivation on English learning. While John was not the same as them, he has no motivation either because he always wanted to play or not to study English. On the whole, they all did not have much motivation in learning English at the beginning of the courses we taught.

Moreover, from the tests and research journals we have conducted during the three participants studying periods, we conclude that fine and high-efficient strategies can increase the motivation to learn English. Because Tom and Peter was so young, we used the interesting and organized teaching strategies to let them have interests in English and realize that learning English is also funny. Nevertheless, we taught John the skills to acquire the knowledge and accurately apply for the knowledge. From the interview, we found that they all felt the English was not boring as usual and they had more motivation in learning it.

Last but not in the least, during the teaching processes of the three participants, they achieved more grades and had more interests through the Internet which assisted their English language learning. As we all know, the Internet is the best teacher for students to learn and raise the motivation in learning. The Internet is used to assist in all kinds of teaching activities and it can shorten the learning time efficiently, improve the teaching quality and achieve the optimization of teaching objectives. By using the Internet, we searched for the good methods to teach the ways of reciting words and teaching ways of the knowledge explanation for Tom and Peter. Even we could talk about the American films and songs with John to raise his motivation so that he could know more knowledge about English and practice the spoken English for him to pass the 20 scores in the new English test.

4.5. Summary of the Research

From the research, it is clear that the effects of the English language learning are based on the effective use of the Internet and learning strategies. Through the research methods and findings that are discussed above, the three questions in Section One are answered exactly. Table 2 indicates the answers of the three research questions.

Table 2 Summary of the research on Section One

Research Questions	Research Methods	Findings
1. What influences students' motivation for students in their learning period?	Interview	From the findings of the interview, it is clear to see that the three participants all do not have the motivation to learning English so that they got the lower grades than other students like them. Hence the motivation is the vital factor for them to increase the grades in their learning period.
2. How can the learning strategies improve the motivation?	Test, Research journal	In the research period, the three participants can get the systemic tests and constantly research journal and from the research methods we can find the problem in time and then give the appropriate learning strategies for them to increase the motivation and the study habits.
3. How to apply the effective use of the Internet will stimulate the motivation?	Interview	From the detailed communication with the three participants, the effective use of the Internet is important in the current society, especially in the field of English education. If teachers use it adequately and appropriately, their students can raise their motivation in their learning period.

To sum up, it is clear that the students could use the sufficient learning strategies and the Internet to raise their motivation and their interests in learning English, which led to the improvement of their scores and their English proficiency in their learning periods.

5. Conclusion, Implications and Suggestions

From the materials, research findings and discussion of the case study we have concluded above, it is clear that motivation is the most important elements for students to learn English. From this sense, motivation is the premise and guarantee for studying. With the intention of the appropriate usage of the teaching strategies and the Internet, it can be seen that they have the intimate relationship with the motivation and they can stimulate the students' motivation to study English and even to improve the test scores, linking Liu's^[15] argument that motivation can stimulate the interests in learning English and higher effective use of the Internet and learning strategies can raise motivation.

Although this research is not perfect enough, there are some implications for the students, the teachers and the further researches. First and foremost, the students can pay more attention on the learning motivation and they can raise more motivation so that they can have the interests in learning English. Moreover, this research can make the teachers realize that the appropriate teaching strategies can make the students improve the motivation and interests in English learning. Last but not in the least, the process of this research can raise the attention of the experts and scholars to focus on the study of the relationship between motivation and teaching strategies and use of the Internet. This research can mainly remind the teachers if they use an outstanding teaching strategies during the study periods, they can also raise motivation or not just from the students alone.

There are still some shortcomings in this paper. It is hoped that these deficiencies can give certain implications for the further research. Firstly, this research uses the case study and only three participants take part in the study, so the sample is not big enough. Then, the research methods in this paper is not accurate. Finally, we still might have some deficiency in terms of research design and the statistics analysis. All this should be improved in the future research.

Despite the shortcomings and limitations in this research, it also can testify the importance of the motivation and the teaching strategies and the Internet can promote the motivation of the students. It is expected to improve the quality of English language learning, enhance learners' English proficiency and to make a reference for the further studies.

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