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Teacher Motivation

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Abstract

Motivation is widely known as a dynamic and highly complex individual difference which plays an essential role in any learning situation in terms of success or failure. Over the past five decades, a huge amount of research on motivation has been conducted due to its relevance in a variety of fields. However, the majority of research studies on motivation focus on students and their motivation, while neglecting teachers'. This is why this paper aims at highlighting the overlooked significance teacher motivation has within the motivation framework by explicitly defining this concept and identifying the most influential factors which affect it. Fortunately, in the past decade, attention has been drawn to teacher motivation as an undoubtedly essential factor in students' motivational disposition and their learning achievement – owing to an increase in awareness of classroom realities. This paper also includes a wide range of motivational strategies/techniques, which will provide teachers with some tools they will be able to use in their classrooms in order to improve and turn them into motivating language learning environments.

Keywords: teacher motivation, student motivation, individual difference, influential factors, motivational strategies, motivating learning environment.

1. Introduction

Motivation has been traditionally investigated within second language acquisition as an individual difference (ID) since, as Dörnyei (2009) claims, it is a personal characteristic which endures over time and applies to everybody in varying degrees – i.e. it is an attribute that marks individuals as unique. Furthermore, the concept of motivation has been widely known as a dynamic and highly complex ID, as well as “an abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do”, which plays an essential role in any learning situation in terms of success or failure (Dörnyei, 2001: 1). In other words, motivation is responsible for the reasons why people make certain choices and engage in a specific action, how much effort they are willing to devote to this action and how long they are going to persist in it (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Over the past five decades, a huge amount of research on motivation has been conducted due to its relevance in a variety of fields, such as psychology, applied linguistics and language education. This is why many models and approaches regarding this complex issue have been developed and can be currently found in the literature. The majority of research studies on motivation focus on students and their motivation, but this paper aims at highlighting the overlooked and crucial significance teachers and their motivation have within the motivation framework. That is, this paper will pay special attention to teacher’s motivation, instead of adopting the predominant student-centred approach, as not only students but also teachers should be taken into account when considering motivation.

In the past, teacher motivation was an extremely neglected area and hardly any research was carried out in relation to this concept. Fortunately, in the past decade, a marked increase has been witnessed in the literature regarding teacher motivation research (Han and Yin, 2016). According to Dörnyei, attention has been drawn to teacher motivation as an undoubtedly essential factor owing to an increase in awareness of classroom realities “since the teacher’s motivation has significant bearings on students’ motivational disposition and, more generally, on their learning achievement” (2003: 26). Moreover, he further supports his previous statement by claiming that teachers, who hold the key position to shape classroom dynamics, are fundamental to the process of transforming a classroom into a motivating learning environment as this transformation starts with them (Dörnyei, 2018).

This paper consists of four main sections: *Definitions*, *Previous research on teacher motivation*, *Influential factors* and *Motivational strategies*. First of all, in the section *Definitions*, motivation is briefly introduced by not only addressing it as a general concept but also focusing on the motivation to teach – i.e. teacher motivation. Secondly, a review of previous research on teacher motivation is presented which mainly deals with a short selection of studies. Thirdly, some of the most powerful factors which significantly influence teacher motivation are identified and discussed in the section *Influential factors*, namely stress, restricted teacher autonomy, students and their parents, among others. Finally, before concluding this paper, a wide range of motivational strategies are considered in order to help teachers transform their classrooms into motivational learning environments.

2. Definitions

2.1 Motivation

The notion of motivation is an extremely complex one. This is why, despite the frequency with which this term is used in educational and research contexts by both teachers and students, little consensus has been reached on the literature regarding its exact meaning. Nevertheless, various attempts have been made to define this broad concept. According to Han and Yin, “motivation has been generally viewed as energy or drive that moves people to do something by nature” (2016: 3). Similarly, Dörnyei (1998) claimed that “researchers seem to agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behaviour by energising it and giving it direction” (p. 117). However, he does not appear to be completely satisfied by the previous statement since he ventures to propose a more complete definition of motivation. Dörnyei and Ottó view this concept as:

The dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplified, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. (1998: 64).

2.2 Teacher motivation

Teacher motivation, also known as the “motivation to teach” (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011), refers to the reasons that arise from individuals’ intrinsic will to teach and sustain teaching, and its intensity is indicated by the effort devoted to this process of teaching (Han and Yin, 2016). Furthermore, teacher motivation is extremely influential as well as contagious since “it has the potential to infect the students and to

generate in them an attractive vision of language learning” (Dörnyei, 2018: 2). In other words, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) state, teachers’ attitudes, energy and, overall, motivation is one of the most significant factors which may affect learners’ motivation to engage in learning. Moreover, they further comment on four characteristic features of teaching motivation: (a) its main constituent is a prominent internal desire to educate academically and socially speaking (intrinsic/vocational component); (b) it depends on contextual factors, normally related to institutional demands and constraints of the workplace and the profession; (c) this type of motivation does not only imply being motivated to teach but being motivated to involve in the process of becoming a teacher as a lifelong career; and (d) teacher motivation is highly fragile since teachers are constantly exposed to both positive and negative powerful influences.

3. Previous research on teacher motivation

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), although the literature in the area of teacher motivation has remained limited for a long time now, it is currently experiencing a growth in educational psychology and teacher education. Unfortunately, this increase of interest has not emerged yet in the second language (L2) teaching and language teacher education context. This is why, only a brief selection of studies, which are actually reviewed in Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), will be dealt with in this section.

At the end of the 20th century, when only an extremely reduced body of research had focused on issues of language teacher motivation, Pennington decided to start a series of studies on teachers of English. Pennington’s (1995) main focus of interest was on ESL teachers’ work satisfaction and motivation. She provided not only an

initial/provisional model of ESL work environment, but also a broad review of the literature on work and teacher satisfaction/motivation. On the basis of some of her studies, Pennington concluded that, on the one hand, there was a general tendency for teachers to feel satisfied with work facets such as *Moral Values, Social Services, Creativity, Achievement* and *Co-workers*, among others. Nevertheless, on the other hand, she realised that teachers did not consider institutional organisations to be supportive. They felt rather dissatisfied with *Supervision, Company Policies and Procedures, Promotion* and *Pay*. These dissatisfiers had consequently affected teachers in a negative way as they had reduced commitment mainly because of high stress, low autonomy, poor resources and minimal work incentives. As Doyle and Kim (1999) claimed, Pennington demanded the elimination of dissatisfiers, especially administrative/structural factors which prevented teachers from experiencing and enjoying the intrinsic rewards of the occupation. Furthermore, they also mentioned the fact that she requested ESL administrators to examine work satisfaction among teachers, to increase teacher satisfaction by creating morale action plans and to acknowledge the significance teacher satisfaction had on students satisfaction, motivation and educational performance, in general.

A less positivist approach was adopted by Terry Doyle and Young Mi Kim (1999). The aim of their investigation was to critically analyse the responsible social, cultural and political reasons for diminishing teachers' motivation and satisfaction. In order to do so, they examined data from EFL and ESL teachers in Korea and America, respectively. Their focus lied on three issues: intrinsic motivation, factors leading to dissatisfaction and mandated curricula and tests. According to the participating teachers, their main motivation was the intrinsic interest in teaching and helping students, a factor

which is normally taken advantage of by administrators. Adverse external factors, such as teachers' salary and lack of recognition/respect, were claimed to negatively affect teachers' motivation, together with bad employment conditions and a lack of advancement opportunities. Moreover, teachers' autonomy was restricted in the sense that they were being pressured, even by government-mandated directives, to teach a set curriculum and to use standardised tests.

At the turn of the 21st century, Shoaib (2004) intended to outline the teacher motivation field by investigating three main levels where variation in teacher motivation can occur: the teacher, managerial and ministerial/institutional levels. She also proposed key strategies to produce positive changes in these three levels. For example, some of the incentives she considered would overall help improve teachers' motivation were: (a) aiming for a further degree, (b) developing a system for collaboration and team work between language teachers, and (c) allowing the participation of teachers in curriculum design. Moreover, Shoaib elaborated a list of recommendations in order to further enhance teacher motivation. Apart from ministerial/institutional, supervision and management suggestions, this list included recommendations on teacher training, workload/curriculum and facilities/resources/salaries.

Later on, a very promising line of research within the L2 field was initiated by Kubanyiova (2012), who "attempted to articulate the connections among teacher cognition, teacher motivation and teacher development" (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 182). She based her analysis of teacher motivation on Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 Motivational Self System' and developed the concepts of: *Ideal Language Teacher Self* (to what language teachers aspire to be), *Ought-to Language Teacher Self* (how they

believe they should be, a belief normally established by external factors) and *Feared Language Teacher Self* (what they fear they might become if their expectations are not met). For her study, a reduced group of Slovakian teachers of English took a training course which introduced them to motivation-sensitive and autonomy-enhancing teaching approaches. The findings of her study suggested that teachers' engagement with the training input they had received and teachers' development of their own practice were dependent on: (a) how much the training input was coherent with their aspirations or *Ideal Language Teacher Self*; (b) the discordance between their current state and desired/ideal state; and (c) their level of motivation in order to minimise this gap between states. Moreover, she found out that teachers who embraced the training input were more likely to employ self-regulatory strategies to reduce the impact contextual constraints had on teachers' development. A major asset of Kubanyiova's analysis was that it examined how contextual conditions and demands affected teacher motivation in a detrimental way.

Having considered these empirical studies which constitute the fundamental basis of the literature on teacher motivation, it can be claimed that the main issues addressed within the field of teacher motivation are the complexities teachers normally have to face and the factors which directly affect their motivation and satisfaction – i.e. the work facets which satisfy or dissatisfy teachers the most. Actually, significant attention has been paid to the interaction between teachers and contextual factors not only in past research but also recently, and this is what will be discussed in the following section.

4. Influential factors

As it has been already considered, teacher motivation is a complex and dynamic issue which deserves much more careful analysis and attention than it currently receives. As a matter of fact, when reflecting on this matter, it can be claimed without any doubt that teacher motivation has not only been neglected in the literature but also by society itself. Teaching has been widely known for the vocational and intrinsic character of this profession. The problem lies in the fact that this intrinsic component has ended up being taken for granted and viewed as a feature inherent in all teachers. However, reality shows otherwise.

Even though teacher motivation essentially derives from a vocational drive, it is crucial to bear in mind that this type of motivation is extremely fragile. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to believe that teachers, who are constantly exposed to both powerful positive and negative influences, will have a positive attitude and high motivation at all times. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also dealt with the concept of ‘demotivation’. This notion is essential when considering teacher motivation since, as they described it, demotivation is “the ‘dark side’ of motivation” which “concerns various negative influences that cancel out existing motivation” (Dörnyei and Ushioda: 138). Hence, due to adverse circumstances and negative influences, some teachers may not be able to maintain their high motivation through time – i.e. although they were initially intrinsically motivated to teach, as the time passes by, some factors may undermine their motivation and, consequently, they may lose interest (Han and Yin, 2016). In fact, Dörnyei and Ushioda state that:

(...) teaching can be profoundly gratifying for teachers, satisfying their psychological needs, thereby generating intrinsic pleasure to go with the job. Yet all too often, at each level of education, we find teachers who are

frustrated, disaffected or just plain bored. One hears alarming reports indicating that a great proportion of teachers in many countries are not motivated to teach, and that this tendency is actually getting worse. (2011: 167-168).

Therefore, in order to better understand the concept of teacher motivation, it is key to identify some of the most influential factors which significantly impact teachers and affect their motivation – namely the intrinsic nature of teacher motivation. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), there seem to be five general factors responsible for undermining teachers' motivation and, hence, demotivating teachers: (a) the stressful nature of the teaching profession; (b) the restriction of teacher autonomy; (c) insufficient self-efficacy on the part of most teachers due to inappropriate training; (d) the repetitiveness of content and the lack of opportunities for intellectual development; and (e) the inadequate career structure.

4.1 Stress

Teaching is a highly stressful and challenging profession, mostly due to the fact that teachers' job is to deal with groups of children/teenagers who might show behavioural problems or are going through rebellious phases in their lives. Teachers must be alert at all times and extremely careful with what they do and say. Moreover, they have to teach the subject content to their learners, who seldom show interest in what the teacher is explaining. This is why, teachers sometimes feel the need to apply defence mechanisms against stress and anxiety, which encompass from breaking the teacher-student relationship to avoiding change and relying on ritualised performances. However, some teachers – normally those who have a strong professional commitment

and lack self-regulation skills – are not able to cope with this stressful part of the job and, consequently, end up experiencing shock and painful motivational crises.

4.2 Restricted teacher autonomy

Restricting teacher autonomy is one of the most powerful factors which affect teacher motivation. Education has a high social profile and authorities impose constraints on teachers, apparently for the sake of effectiveness, such as the introduction of standardised tests and set curricula or the increasing demands on the part of administration. All these measures aim at impeding teacher autonomy and increasing a centralised control. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that, by doing so, authorities are removing teachers' professional autonomy and, thus, not only demoralising them but also creating a negative cycle which will eventually have an effect on students, as teachers will have to adopt controlling practices with their learners.

4.3 Insufficient self-efficacy

Teachers do not always feel efficacious and confident about themselves and this is mainly because teacher-training programmes do not necessarily deal with classroom/group's management, since teacher education basically focuses on subject-matter training. Consequently, new teachers are normally confused and lost when they experience the reality of everyday classroom life as they mostly lack explicit knowledge/instruction on how to react to unexpected circumstances. This situation may

overwhelm new teachers due to the fact that it appears to be too challenging and, even, unfeasible for them.

4.4 Lack of intellectual challenge and development

Teachers do not have much freedom to decide or include variations in their subject content considering that they have to follow the prescribed requirements and imposed course content. These institutional constraints cause many teachers to get tired of always teaching the same and of their routinised classroom procedures. Moreover, they also limit teachers' interest because they are not allowed to expand or incorporate new knowledge in the subject content.

4.5 Inadequate career structure

The lack of an appropriate career structure in teaching is another major motivational impediment. Classroom teachers have little options if they want to progress in the professional path since there are very few areas of advancement and few further goals to attain. This is why many teachers feel demotivated and dissatisfied when they realise they have reached a steady state in their careers and that there are limited future plans or goals regarding their profession.

4.6 Further influential factors

So far, we have commented on the five detrimental factors Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) considered as the most detrimental ones for teachers' motivation. Nevertheless, further studies have been carried out throughout the past decade on the influential

factors which have demonstrated to affect and alter teacher motivation. Therefore, new categories have emerged containing more influential factors – apart from stress, the restricted teaching autonomy, the lack of self-efficacy and intellectual challenge, and the inadequate career structure. Some of these further factors are administration issues, colleagues, the immediate setting of the classroom, working conditions, parents and, last but not least, students.

On the whole, teachers consider that they are being controlled too much by the administration and, so, they feel confused and even stressed sometimes. The implementation of irrational policies is also viewed as a demotivational factor together with the lack of communication which exists between the administration and the department (Han and Mahzoun, 2018). Furthermore, the administration's negative attitudes towards teachers and their suggestions frustrate teachers as they feel a lack of support and little appreciation from the school administrators and authorities (Sugino, 2010; Öztürk, 2015; Roohani and Dayeri, 2019).

It is true that some teachers complain about communication problems with the school administrators, but they also mention there is a lack of communication between colleagues (Aydin, 2012). They consider this to be a huge demotivator since colleagues are supposed to provide moral support. However, sometimes, there seems to be no collaboration among teachers. Some teachers even state that colleagues' attitudes and motivation play a crucial role in influencing their motivation (Han and Mahzoun, 2018). Therefore, a positive teachers' atmosphere and relationship is key in order to improve teachers' motivation and develop a sense of belonging (Pourtoussi, Ghanizadeh and Mousavi, 2018).

The physical aspects and the facilities of the classroom (e.g. access to good equipment or unlimited amount of materials) can have an impact on teachers' motivation as well. Even physical conditions such as the temperature, tidiness and acoustics of the class, its size and seating arrangement can help both students and teachers concentrate. This implies that the physical setting of the classroom affects teachers' motivation as they can be directly motivated by this immediate setting, in a positive or in a negative manner (Pourtoussi et al., 2018).

Regarding working conditions, teachers believe that there is a mismatch between what is expected from them and their real job demands/requirements. They claim that there is no balance between the excessive workload they must complete and their salary (Roohani and Dayeri, 2019). In fact, some teachers admit having financial problems and being unable to perform adequately due to the number of classes they have and insufficient time. Moreover, they are frustrated with the extra responsibilities or unexpected duties they have to do at school (apart from their regular ones) and, also, with the frequent changes they have to make in their schedules, sometimes due to useless and tiring meetings (Aydin, 2012; Öztürk, 2015; Han and Mahzoun, 2018).

Additionally, parents are a major factor when considering teacher motivation. Teachers claim that parents' high expectations make them feel anxious and uncomfortable. Moreover, they feel distressed when parents undervalue them and their subject (English) or when they interfere in their teaching methodologies. However, the main points of discouragement for teachers are the lack of respect parents have towards them and parents' lack of interest in their children (Aydin, 2012; Han and Mahzoun, 2018).

Students themselves have been found to be the main source of (de)motivation for teachers (Han and Yin, 2016). This is why students' behaviour, enthusiasm for learning, motivation, attitudes and actions directly influence teachers' motivation (Sugino, 2010; Pourtoussi et al., 2018). Teachers consider disrespectful students, students' negative attitudes towards them and their subject, and general misbehaviours in the classroom atmosphere some of the most discouraging factors which have an obvious impact on their motivation (Aydin, 2012; Öztürk, 2015; Han and Mahzoun, 2018; Roohani and Dayeri, 2019).

5. Motivational strategies

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), teacher motivation has been seen in past research as an antecedent or even as an outcome of student motivation. Nevertheless, in reality, "this is not an either/or situation because teacher motivation functions in both roles simultaneously in an ongoing manner" (Dörnyei and Ushioda: 191). That is, teacher and student motivation should not be discussed separately since there seems to exist an inherent link between these two types of motivation. However, this is not surprising given the essential role students play as a major factor in teachers' motivation. Therefore, it would not be unexpected to realise that the influence students have on teachers is reciprocal, as it has been well accounted for in the literature for a long time now. In this section, the role teachers play in students' motivation and learning achievement will be considered by carefully examining how teachers can turn a classroom into a motivating learning environment.

It is fundamental to bear in mind that motivational skills, which can actually be consciously developed, and teacher motivation itself are core to teaching and classroom

effectiveness (Dörnyei, 2014; Han and Yin, 2016). In fact, due to the growing awareness of motivational issues in language classrooms, a wide range of motivational strategies/techniques are nowadays available to teachers for use in the language classroom environment (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei, 2014). Dörnyei (2001) presents an approach which focuses on the different phases of the motivational process “from the initial arousal of the motivation to the completion and evaluation of the motivated action” (p. 28). The four key units/stages of this approach are: (a) creating the basic motivational conditions, (b) generating initial motivation, (c) maintaining and protecting motivation, and (d) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

5.1 Creating the basic motivational conditions

Before attempting to generate motivation effectively, some preconditions (i.e. the basic motivational conditions) have to be created and well-established. At this initial stage, there are three motivational conditions which are imperative. One of this indispensable conditions is appropriate teacher behaviours which includes teacher’s enthusiasm, commitment to and expectations for the students’ learning, and a positive relationship with both the students and their parents. Another crucial aspect is creating a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere which can be achieved by establishing a norm of tolerance, encouraging risk-taking and accepting mistakes as part of the learning process, bringing humour in the class and, also, by encouraging learners to personalise the classroom environment. In addition, creating a cohesive learner group and establishing constructive group norms are essential facets as well and they include

promoting the development of group cohesiveness, formulating group norms explicitly with the students and making sure these norms are consistently being observed.

5.2 Generating initial motivation

Once these basic conditions are in place, teachers should start to, at least, try to generate motivation in the students. Dörnyei (2001) suggests generating this initial motivation through the enhancement of the learners' language-related values and positive attitudes towards the L2 learning process – for example, by promoting the learners' intrinsic interest in learning about the L2 itself and its speakers, and by raising awareness of the instrumental value of the L2. Moreover, teachers should increase not only the students' expectancy of success in the learning process but also their goal-orientedness by formulating explicit class goals – previously accepted by the learners. Further motivational strategies which are very useful to create initial motivation are making the teaching materials and the curriculum relevant to the students and helping create realistic learner beliefs.

5.3 Maintaining and protecting motivation

Nevertheless, teachers have to realise that it is not enough to generate student motivation since, “unless motivation is actively maintained and protected, it is likely to decrease in strength over time and can even disappear altogether” (Dörnyei, 2014: 524). This is why, at this stage, Dörnyei (2001) suggests it is fundamental to elaborate motivational strategies which will help teachers: (a) make the learning process stimulating and enjoyable, and present tasks in a motivating way – e.g. by breaking with

the monotony of the classroom and giving students an active role in the tasks; (b) set specific learners goals – e.g. by formulating students’ goal commitment; (c) protect the learners’ self-esteem and increase their self-confidence – e.g. by providing them with encouragement and regular experiences of success, and also by removing or reducing anxiety-provoking elements in the learning environment; (d) allow learners to maintain a positive social image while engaging in the learning tasks; and (e) promote cooperation among the learners, learner autonomy and self-motivating strategies – e.g. by increasing students’ self-motivating capacity.

5.4 Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation

The final stage of this approach implies that teachers need to encourage positive retrospective self-evaluation. It has been shown by a large body of research that the way learners feel about their past performance/accomplishments, which actually determines their predisposition towards learning tasks, depends on both the objective level of success they achieved and the way students interpret their achievements, subjectively. Hence, it is essential for teachers to use appropriate strategies in order to provide their students with tools to positively evaluate, analyse thoroughly and explain constructively their past performances (Dörnyei, 2014). For example, teachers can promote motivational attributions, a term used “to refer to the explanation(s) people offer about why they were successful or, more importantly, why they failed in the past” (Dörnyei, 2001: 118). That is, through these explanations, teachers can understand why their students think about their performance in a particular way. So, once they spot the reasons behind their students’ negative attitudes, they will be able to start changing

them. Additional strategies in order to enhance positive retrospective self-evaluation are providing motivational feedback to the students and increasing learner satisfaction – e.g. by giving them regular feedback about their progress and by regularly including tasks which involve the public display of the students’ skills, respectively. The last motivational facet Dörnyei (2001) presents is offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner. In order to achieve this aspect of motivational teaching practice, he proposes the following motivational techniques/strategies: (a) making sure that even non-material rewards have some kind of lasting visual representation, (b) making the assessment system completely transparent, and (c) encouraging acute student self-assessment by providing them with various self-evaluation tools.

5.5 ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’

As we have already mentioned, teacher motivation does not exist if it is not in relation to student motivation. This section deals with the actions motivated teachers take to keep up their students’ motivation, namely Dörnyei and Csizér’s (1998) ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’, which is a concise set of ten motivational macrostrategies obtained from an empirical survey carried out by two hundred Hungarian teachers of English. This set of motivational strategies represent the strategies which teachers considered most important in terms of their motivational nature. The final version of this set consists of the following ten macrostrategies:

(1) Set a personal example with your own behaviour. Teachers need to realise that students attitudes and motivation are modelled after them since, at least in the classroom, they are students’ most prominent role models.

(2) Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. The classroom climate also has direct bearings on L2 motivation, which can either reinforce or undermine it.

(3) Present the tasks properly. The way tasks are administered and presented is a factor which can easily influence students' predisposition towards the tasks.

(4) Develop a good relationship with the learners. A good rapport between teachers and students is crucial and beneficial for both parties at all levels.

(5) Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence. This principle refers to the idea that students' perceptions of their competence and judgements of their abilities determine their setting of goals and aspirations.

(6) Make the language classes interesting. The quality of the learning experience is a key influential factor which can instantly affect students' motivation to learn.

(7) Promote learner autonomy. This commandment highlighting the important and motivational role autonomy plays for students as their motivation is enhanced when they feel responsible for their learning, including their successes and failures.

(8) Personalize the learning process. The idea behind this commandment is the need for teachers to realise that the L2 course should be flexible and adaptable to different situations/students. In other words, this principle is concerned with the fact that the L2 course ought to be personally relevant to the learners.

(9) Increase the learners' goal-orientedness. Goal-setting has remarkable influence on students' motivation since setting goals is an excellent stimulant for L2 learning motivation.

(10) Familiarize learners with the target language culture. Language learning success has been found to be highly dependent on the learners' affective predisposition towards the L2 and its speakers.

It should be noted that the motivational strategies mentioned in this section “are not rock-solid golden rules, but rather suggestions that may work with one teacher or group better than another, and which may work better today than tomorrow” (Dörnyei, 2001: 30). Furthermore, it is crucial to take into consideration that although some macrostrategies can be universally treated as fundamental principles of teaching practice, certain strategies have shown to be rather culture-sensitive or culture-dependent, which implies that some of them may turn out to be useless or meaningless for some people on specific occasions (Dörnyei, 2001; Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007). In short, Dörnyei and Csizér address this issue by stating the following:

At this point it needs to be emphasized once again that no motivational strategy has absolute and general value because such strategies are to be implemented in dynamically changing and very diverse learning contexts, in which the personality of the individual learners and the teacher, as well as the composition and structure of the learner group, will always interplay with the effectiveness of the strategy. (1998: 224).

5.6 Additional empirical studies on motivational strategies

In this last section, seven empirical studies conducted in Asian and Middle Eastern countries are briefly reviewed. The reason why the selected studies for this section were all carried out in Eastern countries is because there is a scarcity of research on motivational strategies in Western countries, which have not shown as much interest in investigating this issue as Eastern countries. These studies focused on the actual application of motivational strategies in the classroom environment namely in Taiwan,

Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Oman and Iran. Most of them aimed at finding out the importance teachers attached to a set of motivational strategies and the frequency with which these strategies were implemented in their teaching practice.

Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) study findings showed that, although there were some strategies which were considered important by Taiwanese teachers, at the same time, they were underutilised in their teaching practice, e.g. 'making the learning tasks stimulating' and 'familiarizing learners with L2-related culture'. Another strategy which was not practiced and, unlike the previous strategies, was considered unimportant was 'promoting learner autonomy'. This strategy was overlooked not only by Cheng and Dörnyei's participants but also by Guilloteaux (2013), Astuti (2016) and Vibulphol's (2016) – i.e. by Taiwanese, South Korean, Indonesian and Thai teachers, respectively.

After comparing the data analysis and findings of seven empirical studies from different countries, it was found that 'displaying appropriate motivating teacher behaviour' was considered a universal strategy which could transcend cultures, together with 'promoting learners' self-confidence' and 'creating a pleasant and supportive classroom climate' (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Astuti, 2016; Abdullah, Al Ghafri and Al Yahyai, 2019). Astuti (2016) and Abdullah et al.'s (2019) findings also suggested that some of the best motivational strategies to motivate EFL learners were 'providing encouraging feedback' and 'using various learning resources and teaching methods' in order to turn learning into an enjoyable experience and tasks into interesting activities.

However, when contrasting studies, not only similarities emerge. For example, in Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) study, the strategy 'recognising students' efforts and

hard work' was attached significant importance which implied that it was a key strategy in the context of Taiwan – i.e. a culture-specific strategy. Guilloteaux (2013) also discovered a unique difference between her study and the others. According to her findings, teachers underutilised and gave little importance to all the examined strategies in the study. That is, the participating Korean teachers did not consider motivating their students a priority as the strategies 'generating a positive classroom climate', 'promoting positive self-evaluation' and 'making learning stimulating' were not implemented in their classrooms.

Further interesting data can be drawn from these studies. First of all, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) and Abdullah et al. (2019) suggested that the reason why some strategies were underutilised may be due to contextual constraints, such as language class size, which prevent teachers from effectively implementing these strategies in their classrooms. Secondly, Maeng and Lee's (2015) findings showed that Korean teachers with higher English proficiency level used more motivational strategies than experienced teachers, who may have already set their teaching practice. Thirdly, a significant finding of Vibulphol's (2016) study was that, on the one hand, teachers were more likely to initiate and maintain students' internal motivation in classes with highly motivated students than in classes with demotivated students. In the most motivated classes, Thai teachers created a positive learning atmosphere, students had the opportunity to play an active role in the class and the lessons were relevant to them. On the other hand, the least motivated classes were found to be teacher-centred classes in which students played a passive role. Abdullah et al.'s (2019) findings were also important as they showed that no motivational strategy would be effectively applied in the classroom unless a helpful, interactive, engaging and enjoyable environment was

already created. Finally, in Iran, another study was conducted by Safdari (2018) who found out that teachers and learners agreed on the relative importance of most motivational strategies. According to the participating students, teachers were frequently applying the most important strategies in their classrooms.

As a whole, these empirical studies show the key role teachers have in both motivating their students and creating an effective motivational classroom environment. It has also been mentioned that students' motivation is extremely relevant when considering teachers' practices in the classroom environment. Ultimately, what must be taken into account is that, regardless of the learning environment, creating a motivational environment and motivating students are complex and difficult tasks for teachers all around the world.

6. Conclusion

Overall, it is crucial to bear in mind that the field of teacher motivation should have deserved, and still deserves, more significant attention. Actually, even if the current focus of interest still lies on students and their motivation, the intrinsic relationship between students' motivation and teachers' motivation – together with their motivational practice – has become evident throughout this paper. Specifically, this study has attempted to show how teachers' level of motivation is extremely important as it is transferred, for better or worse, to their students and the classroom as a whole. Therefore, as this type of motivation has proven to be highly influential in the learning process, awareness should be raised regarding how teacher motivation is constituted, what factors influence it and how it can be fostered. Furthermore, we must not forget

that it is essential not to take for granted that all teachers will always show a high job motivation performance. Although some teachers seem to be inherently enthusiastic about teaching, it should be realised that other teachers may need to be further stimulated, inspired and challenged. That is, as any other type of motivation, teacher motivation has to be actively maintained and protected in order to prevent it from disappearing.

This study, however, is subject to some limitations. It is worth noticing that the most recent empirical studies reviewed in this paper, namely those in the section *Influential factors* and *Motivational strategies*, were carried out in Eastern countries. Apparently, Middle Eastern and Asian countries are showing great interest in the area of teacher motivation since they seem to be conducting more studies regarding this issue than Western European countries. As a matter of fact, it would have been interesting to also review some empirical studies about EFL teachers in Western countries in order to be able to compare studies carried out in different parts of the world and see whether significant cultural differences emerged when analysing teacher motivation. Unfortunately, this paper mainly includes sections dealing specifically with Eastern countries due to the lack of empirical studies regarding teacher motivation carried out in Western countries. In addition, it would have been a great idea to expand this paper by examining the relationship between teacher and student motivation in more detail.

As a final remark, further research should study teacher motivation not only from the perspective of teachers and students but also from that of members of the administration or parents, for example. As we have already observed, teachers' motivation is undeniably influenced by administrative issues and students' parents,

among other factors. Hence, it would be extremely interesting to find out what their opinions about teachers in general are, as well as their perspectives on teachers' motivation and their job. This way, by addressing some external influential factors, perhaps researchers will be able to obtain key information on how to further enhance teacher motivation effectively.

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