

Demotivation in L2 classrooms: Teacher and Learner Factors

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Abstract

Studies on learner demotivation has attracted the attention of second language (L2) researchers and scholars worldwide in recent years. In this paper, L2 demotivation is defined as external and internal influences which can lead to the diminishing motivation to study the target language. This paper further identifies and discusses significant influences in the form of teacher- and learner-related factors that affect learner demotivation. For teacher-related influences, inappropriate teaching styles and attitudes, poor teaching quality as well as teacher demotivation have been cited by several studies as key factors of learner demotivation. Learner demotivation can also be affected by learner-related influences arising mainly from intrinsic issues such as low self-esteem or poor self-worth. Suggestions for pedagogical implications include the enhancement of teachers' professional development, the use of 5Ts (Teacher, Teaching Methodology, Text, Task and Test), as well as imparting students' coping strategies for self-regulation. Finally, we suggest that future studies on demotivation could explore less commonly applied theories and research methods and expand demotivation research to include older L2 learners.

Keywords: Demotivation, L2 learning, L2 motivation

Introduction

L2 motivation research has been around for decades and gone through several transitions in research focus. Researchers and educators have been interested in the study of motivation and its associated factors in a bid to push the boundaries of existing literature and develop new paradigms in order to value-add to the ever-changing landscape of language teaching environments. Although most research studies focused on the enhancement and influencing of L2 learner motivation in positive ways, recent motivation scholars have started to show interest in understanding why learners lose motivation in their language learning and what can be done in such situations. As suggested by Candlin and Mercer (2001, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013), it is important to remember that no language acquisition or teaching can take place in a classroom that is far removed from the outside world and beyond the reach of influences that learners might bring along with them in the learning process. Hence, students might be positively or negatively impacted during the learning process and that would warrant a closer examination of such influences.

A review of the L2 motivation literature done by Dörnyei (2001a) on the up and coming themes in L2 motivation research revealed several new research topics that caught the attention of scholars. In particular, he highlighted teacher motivation, motivation and learning strategy use, willingness to communicate, how to motivate language learners as well as demotivation as potential areas for future research. Specifically, Dörnyei viewed typical motivation research in the field to be that of a positive influence which scholars ranked on a continuum. However, scant research was done to investigate motivation as a negative notion. Prior studies done in related areas by Chambers, 1993; Dörnyei, 1998; Oxford, 1998; and Ushioda, 1998 suggested that demotivation is a common phenomenon and teachers have a role to play in causing such demotivation in L2 learning (as cited in Dörnyei, 2001a). It was then surmised by Dörnyei (2001a) that further research is required to find out more about this significant motivational factor.

Despite the decade that went by after 2001, as noted by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2013) in the second edition of their book on teaching and researching motivation, there continues to be an ongoing “shift towards socio-dynamic perspectives on L2 motivation research... to investigating the ‘dark side’ of motivation” (p. 156). It was then suggested by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) that in the investigation and discussion of demotivation, influences could be situated in the classroom setting or within the larger sociocultural context. This lends itself to the proposition that the study of demotivation is a complex yet relevant issue which could be further researched by L2 motivation scholars.

In this paper, we begin by explaining the concept of demotivation and offering an overview of its related constructs as considered by several prominent L2 scholars in the field of L2 motivation. We then review existing studies which identified significant factors associated with L2 learning demotivation, zooming in on teacher-related factors as well as learner-related influences of demotivation. We further address how some research gaps were identified and bridged as a result of the above research. Finally, pedagogical issues and implications for classroom learning are discussed and future research directions are proposed as recommendations to fill critical gaps in current research areas.

What is demotivation?

A clarification of concepts relating to demotivation would be best examined from the perspectives of the key researchers in the field of motivational research.

Firstly, in arguably the most authoritative review conducted in the understanding of demotivation, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2013) defined demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action” (p. 139). The authors also highlighted that demotivation was not caused by (i) more attractive options nor stronger distractions, (ii) gradual loss of interest, or (iii) internal processes of deliberation without the influence of specific external triggers. In accordance with the aforementioned definition, the authors further emphasized that demotivation does not equate to the complete annulment of the initial positive basis of motivation; on the contrary, it was the observation that the resultant motivational force has been greatly reduced by a highly detrimental influence, whilst not neglecting the fact that other positive influences might also come into play. An example to illustrate this concept was how a student who had lost interest in studying English due to the dislike of the teacher might nonetheless believe in the importance of this language as a potential world language.

A close concept in motivation psychology that is related to demotivation is that of amotivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) view amotivation as the absence of motivation resulting from an individual’s feelings of helplessness and incompetence when faced with a task but not due to a lack of starting interest. Vallerand (1997) also attributes amotivation to four

sources: lacking the belief in one's ability to do a task, finding the strategies ineffective, finding the task too effortful and the perception that one's efforts are miniscule as compared to the sizable amount of the activity to be completed (as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) further explain that amotivation is understood as related to unrealistic outcome expectations while demotivation is specific to external causes. While it may be true that some demotives can lead to amotivation e.g. prior negative experiences which lead to poor self-efficacy, for the case of other demotives, as soon as the detrimental external influences are removed, other co-existing positive influences may resurface to create positive motivation e.g. an individual discovers that he/she is lied to by another in the initial stage of dissuasion and regains motivation towards language learning.

Contrary to the definition of demotivation that Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) put forth above, there are other scholars who disagree with the notion that demotivation is strictly due to external causes. Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Kojima, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b are but a few of a growing group of researchers who included internal as well as external factors in their investigation of demotivation (as cited in Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Furthermore, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) further argues that, despite Dörnyei's & Ushioda's (2013) definition of demotivation arising solely from specific external influences, Dörnyei (2001b) nonetheless listed internal factors such as reduced self-confidence and negative attitudes towards foreign language learning as sources of demotivation.

Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, we would agree with the above group of scholars that the initial definition of demotivation should be revised and widened to include both external and internal influences which could lead to the diminishing motivation to study the target language.

Teacher-related influences on demotivation

In one of the pioneering studies done by Dörnyei (1998), 50 Hungarian secondary school students learning English or German as foreign languages were interviewed and nine types of demotivating influences were identified. These included: teacher-related factors, institutional facilities issues, reduced self-confidence, poor attitude towards the target language, compulsory nature of the target language, interference from another foreign language, negative attitudes towards the community of target language, negative attitudes of group members as well as the course books used in classrooms. The largest category was reported to be teacher-related factors which constituted 40 percent of the entire frequency of occurrences. This report evoked a subsequent surge in research on L2 demotivation, where many scholars took reference from the nine categories above to investigate demotivating influences in various contexts. Subsequently, a plethora of evidence emerged and supported Dörnyei's (1998) findings in that teachers were most commonly cited by learners as having the greatest negative influence on student motivation (Falout & Maruyama 2004).

In the Asian context where teacher-fronted teaching is often favored, further research was conducted in the field on the impact of teacher-related factors on learner demotivation. Kikuchi (2009) discovered that Japanese secondary EFL students' source of demotivation was mainly derived from the traditional authoritarian teacher-centered approach. Similarly, Trang and Baldauf (2007) reported that the highest source of demotivation amongst Vietnamese EFL students came from the teachers' teaching methodology. In another recent study conducted in Bangladesh, Quadir (2017) analysed 36 interviews from respondents in three universities and found that the finding was still consistent with what earlier studies had proposed: "Teachers had the strongest influence on students' demotivation" (p. 137). In particular, teachers' instructional style, teacher's behavior in the classroom and the competencies of the teachers were determined to have powerful effects on student's

motivation. The researcher also reiterated the need for recalibration of teacher-related factors to match students' needs and interests in order to decrease student's demotivation in language acquisition. Subsequently, Kim et al. (2018) identified several key demotivators amongst Korean EFL learners from primary to secondary level and discovered that teachers' lack of clear delivery for primary levels, impractical English lessons which focused too heavily on grammar and unrealistic communicative exchanges for secondary levels as well as the pressure of rote learning were common demotivating factors. It is thus reasonable to infer from Kim et al.'s (2018) results that the teacher's inability to deliver the lesson in a manner that engages and encourages the learners correlates with high levels of learner demotivation.

Lamb (2017) also presented other pertinent teacher factors in his review of literature from the studies done in 2000s. Firstly, poor teaching styles could be a contributor to learner demotivation: An overcontrolling approach (e.g. Little John, 2008) or laissez-faire approach (e.g. Oxford, 2001) or even an unapproachable demeanour (e.g. Yi Tsang, 2012) were considered sources of negative influences (as cited in Lamb, 2017). Secondly, the teacher's lack of understanding and insensitivity towards the individual learner's needs could also lead to demotivation (e.g. Farrell, 2015; Lantolf & Genung, 2002; Norton, 2001, as cited in Lamb, 2017). Finally, negative teaching practices such as the teacher's poor mastery of the subject content (Trang & Baldauf, 2007), provision of feedback that was over-negative (Busse, 2013) as well as the lack of variety in classroom tasks (Falout, Elwood & Hood, 2009) could also have detrimental effects on learner motivation (as cited in Lamb, 2017).

A closely linked issue on teacher factors in learner demotivation is that of teacher (de)motivation (Lamb, 2017). The aforementioned teacher factors which were posited as learner demotivators were often indicative of the teacher's lack of work motivation. In view of this, Lamb and Wedell (2015) as well as Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009) suggested that teachers who are highly inspired and motivated would in turn help to increase the motivation for students. This is because motivated teachers would be more energised and committed to offer variety in classroom activities and would express higher approachability, interest as well as adaptability to cater to the needs of individual learners. In other words, teacher demotivation could have very high association and impact on learner demotivation in class.

In another interesting study conducted by Sundqvist and Olin (2013) on how teachers dealt with demotivation in their EFL classrooms in Sweden, the researchers investigated the issue regarding the challenges that EFL teachers faced in order to bridge the difference between English taught in school vis-à-vis English used out of school (i.e., extramural English). This was in response to the national evaluation conducted by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate which concluded that the overall teaching quality was not up to standard. In spite of the good performance in English that Swedish youth achieved in international evaluations, it was reported that there were instances of zero usage of English in EFL classrooms and some teachers rarely varied their teaching methods and failed to cater to the needs and interests of their learners. Additionally, these teachers did not take into account the students' usage of extramural English which caused students to become demotivated due to the authenticity gap between the English learnt in and out of school. In a bid to alleviate the situation of learner demotivation amongst Swedish youth, the researchers suggested that empowering the teachers with professional development in the form of an in-service training course could improve teaching standards, which would have a consequential effect on student motivation. A questionnaire was administered to the teachers after their training to find out if there was a change in teaching competence and quality. An overwhelming number of respondents provided examples on how they incorporated different tools and worked on including students' experiences to enrich their teaching in the EFL classrooms. Such teaching strategies are considered beneficial for engaging students and reducing demotivation in

language learning (Ushioda, 2013, as cited in Sundqvist & Olin, 2013). Therefore, it seems clear that when teachers are empowered to improve their teaching experience, the increase in teacher motivation can subsequently lead to enhanced learner motivation. This is in line with what Lamb and Wedell (2015) and Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009) suggested previously on the link between teacher and learner demotivation.

In view of the above findings, it would be interesting to investigate the direct links between L2 teacher demotivation and its effect on learner demotivation, since few researchers have conducted studies which concluded explicit links between the two factors (e.g. Aydin, 2012; Karavas, 2010; Wyatt, 2013, as cited in Lamb, 2017).

Learner-related factors

In addition to teacher-related issues which can lead to demotivation, learner-related factors are also another common area of investigation amongst L2 motivation researchers. For instance, Trang and Balduaf (2007) identified factors such as negative poor self-esteem, experiences of failure and negative attitudes towards English as possible sources of learner-related demotivation. In particular, experiences of failure was reported to be the most significant internal influence. Respondents felt that their failure to make sufficient progress in their previous classes caused them to be unable to catch up with their peers due to large knowledge gaps. Consequently, they were unable to keep up with the current lessons and became demotivated. Other students who had negative attitudes towards English reported that English was difficult to learn due to challenges in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. These students were unable to sustain interest in learning and hence experienced demotivation.

In contrast to what prior research indicated on the high significance of teacher-related influences, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009)'s study yielded surprising findings. In a bid to bridge the gaps in motivational research where most other researchers focused on the differences in demotivating factors between higher and lower levels of proficiency, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) worked on identifying and comparing the demotivational factors amongst motivated and less motivated students. It was reported that both groups of learners felt that other than situation and coursebook factors e.g., lack of opportunities to practise English or uninteresting topics in textbooks, their low scores on tests contributed greatly to their demotivation in learning English. The test scores factor was part of what the researchers hypothesized as relating to learner experiences of failures. Furthermore, less motivated learners in the study were more likely to cite the lack of intrinsic motivation and poor test scores as demotivating sources. Such findings supported the proposition that other than external factors (e.g. teacher-related influences), intrinsic issues such as the learner's experiences with past failures might also greatly impact demotivation levels.

The above perception on learning experiences seems to resonate with the respondents in Song and Kim (2017). Out of the many categories that were identified and examined in their paper, it was worth noting that the researchers operationalised the "attribution" category as learners' self-confidence, experiences related to learning English as well as the willpower in putting plans into action. In particular, it was reported that learners' perceptions of their learning experiences contributed the most to motivation out of the above three aspects of "attribution". In other words, when test scores were low or when mistakes were made during examinations, the respondents felt inferior to their peers and it led to demotivation. Additionally, when the respondents failed to gain entry to an English high school, which learners perceived to be more superior, demotivation was also reported. As seen from the above two studies, learners' perception of their self-worth was closely linked to their test

performance, and when they failed to do well for their language exam, they became demotivated.

Prior to the aforementioned Sakai & Kikuchi's study, there were other researchers who had found that teacher-related factors might not be the most significant factor in affecting demotivation. Firstly, Rudnai (1996) conducted interviews with secondary students to find out the reasons behind the lost interest in learning English. She eventually concluded that the primary cause of demotivation were due to learner-related problems e.g. low self-confidence as a result of negative past experiences in addition to learning situation issues (as cited in Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Secondly, when Falout & Maruyama (2004) administered a demotivation questionnaire to university students, they found out that for both the less proficient and the more proficient learners, lack of self-confidence was the most significant source of demotivation amongst other factors. Next, a research conducted by Kojima (2004) on demotivation amongst high school students revealed that intrinsic issues such as learner proficiency levels influenced demotivation to a great extent (as cited in Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

In a more recent research conducted by Xaypanya, Ismail and Low (2017) to investigate demotivation factors in EFL classes amongst Laos undergraduates, the findings were overwhelmingly evident in terms of learner-related influences. Five dimensions of demotivation in the survey questionnaire were identified and examined, namely, anxiety towards foreign language, difficulty in achieving linguistic accuracy, curriculum issues, lack of support and resources and negative attitudes towards the learning conditions. Specifically, it was found that the most prominent dimension of demotivation was that of foreign language anxiety. Xaypanya et al. (2017) substantiated their findings further by explaining that other researchers such as Horwitz (2016) and Gardner (2009) suggested that foreign language anxiety was a common negative psychosocial phenomenon amongst EFL learners. Thus, when learners' self-consciousness about their English proficiency increase, foreign language anxiety exacerbates as a result. Such anxiety issues can therefore be seen as yet another source of learner-related factors of demotivation.

While earlier research from scholars such as Dörnyei (1998; 2001b) argued that sources of demotivation may be predominantly due to external influences, many recent studies have found evidence to the contrary, as seen from the plethora of studies cited in the preceding paragraphs (e.g. Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Furthermore, the research conducted in the past decade also revealed that while it might be the case that teacher-related influences accounted significantly for demotivation in some instances, one cannot ignore the growing prevalence of other influences in the form of learner-related factors. This is in line with the sentiments shared by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) about the complex nature of demotivation. As highlighted by the authors, it would be fundamental to keep in mind that different learners respond in a myriad of ways to the same set of classroom procedures and they might also respond differently to a particular stimulus. Similarly, Lamb (2017) also compared the findings between cross-sectional studies and longitudinal research and concluded that there were indeed many different influences of demotivation for learners from high/low proficiency (Falout & Maruyama, 2004) or high/low motivation levels (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). On one hand, some learners might experience a spiral of demotivation as a result of prior negative learning experiences (e.g. Lamb, 2011, as cited in Lamb, 2017); On the other hand, there were also learners who were seemingly unaffected by their poor classroom experiences (e.g. Campbell & Storch, 2011, as cited in Lamb 2017).

In essence, we argue that it would be wise to view each reported source of demotivation in context and not over-generalise the findings to different classroom settings due to the dynamic and complex nature of demotivation.

Pedagogical Implications

The current demotivation research landscape is an interesting one as findings by different scholars show that the nature of demotivation seems to be as complex as motivation, which can lead to an array of pedagogical implications for educators and policy makers.

In the case of studies which found strong teacher-related influences on demotivation, we suggest that continuing professional development of the teachers is crucial. We agree with Sundqvist and Olin (2013) that proactive measures and constructive approaches could be effective in reducing demotivation amongst EFL learners. By teaching in line with learners' zones of proximal development (e.g. Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2008), educators can help to invoke learners' ideal L2 self and reduce the discrepancy between their ideal and actual selves (as cited in Sundqvist & Olin, 2013). Teachers could also attend to the needs of students who are struggling with little exposure to English with the help of technology outside curriculum time. By understanding how the external media landscape shapes the attitudes of learners, teachers can become more attuned to harnessing the benefits of IT to improve their teaching. Moreover, with enhanced professional development, teachers are more likely to feel more comfortable and empowered in dealing with challenges arising from demotivation in the classroom. While changing teaching methods can be a tedious and long process, it could have potentially positive and lasting effects on learner demotivation.

Additionally, Renandya (2015) presented some interesting ideas about how teachers could focus on the 5 Ts of motivation i.e., T1 = Teacher, T2 = Teaching Methodology, T3 = Text, T4 = Task and T5 = Test, to engage students in their learning. He argued that teachers should reflect on classroom-specific factors that are within their control and be responsible for motivating students in different ways. The teacher (T1) should be an effective role model and be understanding and nurturing towards the language learning needs of learners. Teachers should be knowledgeable about different teaching methods (T2) and be skillful in lesson planning and motivating students by varying teaching methods, providing them with choices, and injecting lessons with curiosity and novelty. The choice of text (T3) or teaching materials should be appropriately pitched at the right levels for learners to be meaningfully engaged with the contents. Language learning tasks (T4) should be designed with tangible outcomes and be optimally challenging and interesting to the learners. Lastly, other than traditional high stakes tests (T5), the teacher should incorporate learning and learner-friendly assessments such as project work and portfolios to reduce students' anxiety level and enhance their intrinsic motivation. With the effective management of the 5 Ts, the teacher can foster a more conducive and ideal learning environment for language learners and help reduce learner demotivation.

Next, in terms of influencing learner-related sources of demotivation, students could be assisted by teachers in strategizing ways to regulate their own learning. Song and Kim (2017) suggested that more effective study methods could help to manage the stress of exams which could reduce demotivation. Students could also be guided in making meaning towards L2 learning by setting personal goals and developing positive attitudes in the long term. In the same vein, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also espoused the need for learners to find meaning in their learning of L2, and learners should be encouraged by teachers to set realistic goals for their tests in order to reduce the impact of poor test results on demotivation. Following a similar line of thought, Kim et al. (2018) also brought up the relationships amongst developing resilience and tenacity and effective goal setting for EFL learners. The authors argued that resilience was heightened when goal-setting was explicit and that clear and specific goals were crucial in increasing L2 motivation. In other words, when a goal is unclear and its relevancy and value are not well-perceived by EFL learners, their resilience level starts to fluctuate which in turn affected the levels of demotivation. Additionally,

tenacity, or the ability to persevere even when learners experience short term demotivation, is also important in the diminishing of demotivation over the long run. Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest that educators could work on helping the learners to manage their own learning via learning strategies in order to achieve significant reduction in demotivation.

Future Research directions

Exploring demotivation using less commonly applied theories and research methods

As noted by Kikuchi (2017), most research on demotivation is typically cross-sectional and uses a single quantitative method such as the administration of survey questionnaires to EFL learners. To value add to the field of demotivation, Kikuchi instead used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods such as interviews, reflective essays and surveys to launch a longitudinal study on the fluctuations in motivation over two semesters from a Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) perspective. This is a departure from commonly applied theoretical frameworks in demotivation research such as the Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), L2 Motivational self-system (Dörnyei, 2009) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997). The benefit of using the DST as a theoretical basis is that language learners could be seen as “agents in a dynamic system...(whose) interaction with events and people both in and outside of classrooms...(and) developmental states changes...(as well as) trajectories and variations within and among them can be investigated” (Kikuchi, 2017, p. 130). In particular, Kikuchi (2017) applied DST to understand how “learners’ systems and contexts adapt to each other and how...the dynamics of the system change over two semesters” (p.131). The researcher found that the beginning of the second semester was a turning point of learner motivation as students began to interact more with other parameters such as part time work or club activities. Thus, learners might be affected by their social life or interaction with other factors and it might be futile for teachers to attempt to control or regulate students’ motivation. Instead, she proposed that teachers can attempt to provide ideal social learning environments in and out of the classrooms. For instance, some ESL students reported that the positive interaction with senior students and teachers in club activities such as the English Karaoke Club and English Speaking Society were good sources of motivation. Such a perspective provides fresh insights in that motivation or demotivation could be viewed together as a dynamic system which might ebb or flow differently for learners within the same classroom. Furthermore, the use of a variety of methods e.g. reflective journal enables more reserved learners to express themselves freely and share their honest views on demotivation.

Thus, we propose that future research could tap on using less commonly applied theoretical frameworks such as DST to analyse demotivation and also explore the issues surrounding demotivation further with mixed research methods such as case studies and ethnographies.

Conducting demotivation research amongst older learners

With the global increase in life expectancy amongst those who are aged 60 years and above rising to 21% by 2050, it would be pertinent and timely to look at lifelong education for the elderly and the drivers behind their motivation and/or demotivation in learning and education (Purdie & Boulton-Lewis, 2003; United Nations, 2013, as cited in Kim & Kim, 2015). In spite of a rapidly ageing world population, few researchers have examined L2 learning experiences amongst the elderly. In fact, the majority of studies to date have only explored demotivation in the context of school-going students from elementary to tertiary levels or amongst L2 working adult learners. Kim and Kim (2015) thus aimed to fill this gap by

looking at motivational and demotivational factors affecting the older learners in Korea enrolled in lifelong learning institutes. Kim and Kim (2015) concluded that the excessive focus on exams as well as learners' difficulties in learning English were significant demotivators for these older learners. Additionally, they found that motivation and demotivation factors were positively correlated in their study, which showed that for older EFL learners, demotivation might increase in certain aspects along with the increase of motivation. Furthermore, it was reported that learners' motivation did not show a decline overtime and demotivation arising from prior negative perceptions and difficulties in EFL learning actually decreased as well. Such findings seem to suggest that demotivation should not be seen as a mere mirror image of motivation but should be further investigated as a cluster of complex psychological constructs that interact in complex ways. While this study presented interesting results for future analysis, more investigation and analysis should still be conducted in different countries amongst older L2 learners to review the existing understanding of demotivation.

Conclusion

With the recognition that learners might be subjected to various negative influences during the learning process, it is timely to investigate and review the discussion of the "dark side" of motivation in L2 acquisition. In this paper, we have provided an overview of the theoretical dimensions of demotivation and discussed a plethora of studies which examined significant factors such as teacher-related sources and learner-related influences. We have also offered suggestions on how demotivation can be reduced in the L2 classroom. While the literature on demotivation we presented in this paper is not exhaustive, we believe that that our analysis provides insights into the relatively new research focus on demotivation. In particular, fresh understandings on demotivation could potentially answer practical issues such as: why some EFL learners are demotivated despite the vast literature on motivational strategies and how we can view and interpret the relationship between motivation and demotivation and apply our nuanced understanding to the classroom. It is hoped that the attempt to answer such practical questions could inspire further applied research in how students' learning experience could be maximally enhanced for more optimal L2 learning.

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