

# Demotivating Teaching Practices in EFL Classrooms in Saudi Secondary Schools

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**Abstract**—This study explores demotivational teaching practices, such as teachers' behaviours, teaching methods, personality traits, and competencies to examine how these practices negatively affect students' motivation to learn foreign languages. The study utilised a qualitative approach in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 female students in a public secondary school in Almadinah, located in the western region of Saudi Arabia. The study identified five teaching practices that secondary students found demotivating: (a) teacher-centred teaching; (b) excessive use of Arabic; (c) teachers' lack of motivation; (d) lack of learning feedback; and (e) excessive strictness. Therefore, English teachers should avoid these practices and raise awareness of the detrimental effects they can have on students' motivation.

**Index Terms**—L2 demotivation, EFL teacher, teaching practices, secondary schools

## I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation significantly impacts students' achievement when learning a language (McDonough, 1983). Motivated students are more excited to learn and succeed. The term "demotivation", which describes the negative counterpart to motivation, describes "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behaviour intention or an ongoing action" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 143). Therefore, a demotivated learner is a person who was once motivated but, for some reason, has now lost interest or enthusiasm. Unmotivated students see no point in studying because they do not perceive a connection between their behaviours and outcomes. Moreover, demotivated students attend lessons and engage in activities, but only when they feel like it. Since demotivation is contextual, demotivated students may regain motivation (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002).

Researchers have found that students' motivation to learn a language declines throughout the school period (Dörnyei, 2006; Gardner et al., 2004). Furthermore, students in the 12th grade have been found to be the most demotivated secondary school students; this finding can be interpreted to mean that students lose motivation as they progress through their academic careers (Akay, 2017). Similarly, Song and Kim (2017) found that most students recorded a decrease in enthusiasm attributed to external influences upon reaching high school. Therefore, demotivation is not just a phenomenon among EFL learners but a widespread problem that must be addressed explicitly (Trang & Baldauf, 2007). Although the Saudi Ministry of Education has attempted to resolve this issue, students' English capacity remains poor and below expectations (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The cause of low proficiency in EFL among Saudi learners is multi-factorial, and one of these factors is L2 demotivation (Alrabai, 2016). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) found that demotivation has a significant impact on English learning achievement.

This explorative qualitative study aims to provide contributions to the field of EFL teaching. These findings may form part of the discussion on demotivation in English learning and provide valuable pedagogical implications for EFL classroom practices. Furthermore, the findings could provide suggestions for teachers' professional development. The role of teachers is essential in education. Teachers' competencies, behaviours, teaching styles, and personalities significantly influence students' motivation in language learning. Since teachers often determine students' motivation or demotivation, their awareness of this problem is a key component of the solution (Trang & Baldauf, 2007). Therefore, this study assumes that if teachers become more aware of the negative effects of certain teaching practices, they can more accurately understand their students' feelings and resulting demotivation. This understanding can help teachers seek effective solutions for their students.

### Research questions

This study answers the following two research questions:

1. What teaching practices lead to demotivation among EFL students from their point of view?
2. To what extent do these practices lead to demotivation among students?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies conducted in the field of second language acquisition have found that teacher behaviours and attitudes in the classroom are significant components of demotivation for ESL and EFL learners (Chambers, 1993; Dörnyei, 1998; Oxford, 1998; Ushioda, 1998). Unlike the previous studies that have dealt with a general cross-section of students, both motivated and unmotivated, Dörnyei (1998), as cited in (2011), selected only those who had lost their interest in learning English. This choice was based on the assumption that this cohort would be ideal in identifying the causes of this issue. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 50 Hungarian secondary school students, and the results indicate that teacher-related factors are the largest source of students' demotivation.

The grammar-translation method has also emerged as a salient source of students' demotivation in several studies (Falout et al., 2009; Kikuchi, 2009; Kim et al., 2018; Normazidah & Hazita, 2012; Song & Kim, 2017). For example, two studies by Kikuchi (2009) and Falout et al. (2009) found that the most demotivating factor among Japanese university students was the use of grammar-translation methods focusing mainly on reading and writing skills. This issue was also found by Song and Kim (2017), who state that most Korean students become demotivated in high school because of the use of the grammar-translation teaching method. Furthermore, Quadir (2017) qualitatively examined the sources of high school students' demotivation and how they negatively affect student performance in university. By analysing 36 interviews, he found that teachers were the largest source of demotivation, specifically their instructional styles.

In addition, students are not as eager to learn English if classrooms lack opportunities for speaking and practising the target language (Normazidah & Hazita, 2012). Moreover, high school students consider memorising grammar rules and vocabulary to be impractical means of acquiring a foreign language and expect teachers to focus on communicative methods (Kim et al., 2018). It can be inferred from these results that EFL high school teachers fail to engage students in the learning process, and there appears to be a mismatch between the common teaching methods and students' preferences for learning. Whereas students prefer a communicative approach, EFL teachers tend to adopt traditional teaching methods (Trang & Baldauf, 2007).

Teachers' lack of motivation and interest in teaching has also been highlighted as having a negative impact on students' motivation (Bonta, 2019; Ghonsooly et al., 2017; Frenzel et al., 2009; Tambunan et al., 2018). If EFL teachers lack enthusiasm and passion for their jobs, it affects their students by making language learning appear unappealing. Consequently, English classes become uninteresting for students under these circumstances, causing them to lose interest in learning (Bonta, 2019; Ghonsooly et al., 2017). Toraby and Modarresi (2018) found that teachers are vital influencers, and their emotions affect how students perceive them. According to their study, when teachers show positive feelings about their jobs and demonstrate enthusiasm in their classes, they encourage students to work actively and appreciate their teachers' success at school.

Despite the widespread acknowledgement among researchers of the need to use L1 in L2 classes, there is a risk of L1 overuse and L2 underuse in English classes (Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018; Burdujan, 2020). The excessive use of L1 is thought to have a negative effect on students' motivation and learning (Burdujan, 2020; Kalanzadeh et al., 2013; Nazary, 2008). In an empirical study conducted through interviews and classroom observations by Kalanzadeh et al. (2013) to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of using L1 in EFL classrooms, they found that the overuse of L1 may be demotivating to students. Similarly, Nazary (2008) concludes that most students do not believe in the effectiveness of L1 usage and are hesitant to use their native language in English language contexts, strongly preferring to gain more exposure to L2.

Furthermore, a lack of corrective feedback from teachers can be a demotivating factor for EFL students (Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Krishnan & Pathan, 2013). Trang and Baldauf (2007) qualitatively investigated the reasons behind Vietnamese university students' demotivation by analysing 100 stimulated recall essays. The findings show that, among teacher-related factors, grading and assessment in general have an impact as demotivating sources, particularly the lack of corrective feedback. This finding is in line with those of Krishnan and Pathan (2013), who quantitatively and qualitatively explored the causes of demotivation among university students. In their qualitative results, the lack of teacher feedback emerged as a source of demotivation. On the other hand, Vollmeyer and Rheinberg (2005) conclude that, although feedback improves learning strategies and students' final performance, it has no impact on their motivation.

Regarding teachers' personality traits, the most demotivating factors are unkindness and excessive strictness (Chen, 2012; Song & Kim, 2017; Tsang, 2017). Students perceive unkind teachers who do not build a rapport with students as unpleasant (Tsang, 2017), causing students to lose interest in learning English (Song & Kim, 2017). Moreover, it has been found that students experience a high level of anxiety when learning from strict EFL teachers (Chen, 2012). Han et al. (2019) identified the dominant EFL demotivators among Turkish EFL university students and found that approximately 23% of respondents mentioned teachers' behaviour as the main source of demotivation. More specifically, when teachers respond negatively toward students' mistakes, students become afraid of negative feedback and develop anxiety when speaking.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Setting and Participants*

The setting for this study was a public secondary school located in the western region of Saudi Arabia. Twenty female students studying at this school were interviewed. The participants' native language was Arabic, and they had started studying English as a foreign language in the fourth grade. All participants had received their education in public schools, and their ages ranged between 16 and 19. This study employed non-probability purposive sampling.

### B. Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the main method to facilitate in-depth conversations with the participants. According to Kakilla (2021), the interactive and generative nature of semi-structured interviews allows for free responses, helps in exploring a variety of issues using numerous themes, and increases the possibility of inspiring new ideas to be implemented. A pilot study was conducted with three participants who were excluded from the main study because their interviews did not provide significant data. The interviews were audio-recorded to observe and identify mistakes. After analysing the data, some questions were modified to be more straightforward and precise.

### C. Procedure and Data Collection

As a teacher in a government school with an official account on the Madrasati Platform, I have access to students' online classes. I gained permission from English teachers to attend their virtual classes for 10 minutes to introduce myself and explain my research topic. I then asked students if they had stories from their learning experiences and asked for volunteers. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Interviews were conducted in Arabic to ensure that participants were not intimidated by using English, allowing them to express their experiences freely without L2 restrictions.

### D. Analysis of Methods

After transcription, interviews were imported into NVivo (Version 12) in Arabic without translation into English to preserve the original meaning. However, the codes created and the quotes presented in this article were translated into English. Data were analysed using applied thematic analysis. This approach analyses qualitative data by exploring the data to identify recurring patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2012), including interpretation in selecting codes and creating themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). According to Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is an effective, efficient approach that can be used to comprehend a series of experiences, perceptions, emotions, or actions through a data set. After analysing the data, member checking was conducted, in which the main findings were presented to participants to obtain their feedback. Participants' comments were an essential instrument in enhancing the credibility and validity of the study results.

## IV. FINDINGS

### A. Teaching-Related Factors

#### (a). Teacher-Centred Teaching

The analyses of interview data suggest that teacher-centred teaching is a salient demotivating factor among high school students. Two features of teacher-centred teaching were mentioned in the interviews. Firstly, a teacher's dominance in English classes tends to make students passive learners whose role is to receive information. Secondly, teachers who emphasise memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary rather than practising the use of the target language are also demotivating to students. Students feel bored when the teacher spends too much time explaining without stopping to discuss the lesson or ask questions to evaluate student understanding. According to one participant, Abeer, "I feel bored when my teacher speaks all the time, not giving us opportunities to discuss or interact with her." When the teacher does not encourage students to participate actively throughout the lessons, it demotivates students. This teaching style also negatively affects student comprehension, as reflected in the following response from Kholoud: "Even in grammar lessons, she gave examples and did the exercises. I didn't understand because I was not using effort or doing the activities by myself."

In addition, participants reported feeling demotivated when they failed to accomplish the primary purpose of studying English, which is using the language in everyday life. Some participants expressed frustration because of their lack of English-speaking ability, as shown in the following response by Nouf:

*The problem is that some teachers focus on teaching grammar at the expense of speaking. We don't get enough opportunities to practise speaking. I am good at grammar and usually get full marks in written exams. But when it comes to speaking tasks, I feel lost and can't communicate well. Sometimes, I know what my teacher means by her questions, but I can't respond. I don't know how to compose a simple sentence. This frustrates me a lot.*

Participants also expressed being reluctant to speak in everyday situations because they do not frequently practice the language for communication. These findings suggest a relationship between teacher-centred teaching and students' difficulties communicating in English.

#### (b). The Excessive Use of the L1

The participants in this study perceived the overuse of L1 (Arabic) in English classes as a demotivating factor. Due to this overuse, students reported a lack of sufficient input to enable them to learn more effectively and communicate in L2. The overuse of Arabic creates L1 dependency, making students unwilling to express their ideas and thoughts in English, as explained by Amani: *"It will create a bad habit, and we will become dependent on Arabic."* The overuse of Arabic also causes students to forget what they have learned due to a lack of adequate L2 exposure and practice.

Students reported difficulty respecting teachers who depend mostly on L1. For example, according to Fatimah, the most effective way to learn English is through English:

*To increase students' interaction, my teacher allows students to speak Arabic. For example, a student asks the teacher: "Can I explain it in Arabic?" The teacher replies: "yes". I was shocked because it's an English class. Everything should be in English. It frustrates me because I feel as if I am in an Arabic class. When this kind of situation happens repeatedly, the aim of the class will be lost, and we will never learn.*

Interestingly, even participants who evaluated themselves as low achieving in English proficiency perceived the heavy use of L1 in classroom practice as a hindrance to English learning and a cause of communicative incompetency. As Kholoud stated, *"One of my past teachers allowed students to answer in Arabic because they didn't participate in the class. By doing so, the students wouldn't acquire speaking skills."*

## B. Behaviour-Related Factors

### (a). Teachers' Lack of Motivation

The interview data suggest that teachers' motivation has a direct and decisive influence on students' motivation. For instance, some interviewees reported that the enthusiasm is mirrored by the class when they see their teacher enthusiastically and actively presenting the lesson. Therefore, teachers' positive or negative feelings transmit to their students. Waad stated the following: *"When the teacher shows enjoyment during teaching, I enjoy it as well."* Teachers can express this enjoyment through physical displays of enthusiasm, such as facial expressions and tone of voice. In contrast, teachers who are not passionate about teaching make students feel uninterested in learning. This feeling was described in the following response by Abeer:

*One of my previous teachers seemed like she didn't have the desire to teach. She came to class with no enthusiasm, as if she had been forced to teach. She presented the lessons without any energy. Her style was so boring and monotonous that we felt that the class was too long. When her class started, we couldn't wait for it to be over.*

It can be argued that unmotivated teachers usually have low job commitment and do not enjoy teaching. As a result, students develop negative attitudes toward them. In her interview, Amani said the following: *"These teachers don't like their jobs; therefore, even if they give assignments, they don't check or correct students' answers."* Although this lack of verification means that students who do not care about their learning are happy, it frustrates other students and negatively affects their education. As Sara said, *"In that year, I made no efforts and did not improve my language."*

The interviews highlighted several such issues that students in Saudi secondary schools consider to be demotivating factors resulting from teachers' lack of motivation. One of the most frequently mentioned factors was pervasive teacher absenteeism. When a teacher is repeatedly absent from school, learning is interrupted, negatively impacting students' achievement. Not being prepared for the class is another demotivating factor that makes teachers heavily dependent on readings from the textbook. This teaching style causes students to feel bored and demotivated, as suggested in the following quote from Lamia:

*I get bored when my teacher reads from the interactive book, gives us the same sentences in the textbook, but does not give us external examples or make us create our own sentences. She sticks to what is in the book. This teaching method never holds my attention.*

### (b). The Lack of Learning Feedback

Student interviews also showed that a lack of effective feedback, advice, and especially appreciation is considered a salient demotivating factor. Hard-working students usually expect to hear encouragement or praise from their teachers and view it as a sign of the teacher caring about their learning. Thus, when students' efforts are not appreciated, they lose their motivation. As Ghadeer stated, *"When my teacher doesn't appreciate my hard work, I won't be motivated to do my best next time."* This theme is also exemplified in the following excerpt from Reema:

*Since I love English, I usually like to make an extra effort. I still remember last year when I had a speaking task, and I stayed up all night making sure that I did outstanding work, thinking of creative ideas, and designing attractive PowerPoint slides for my presentation. However, I was disappointed with my teacher's reaction. She just said "good" as if I didn't do anything. Her response made me blame myself. Why did I do all that hard work on a speaking task when I am so busy with other subjects?! Why did I waste my time preparing for such a speaking task while there is no appreciation from my teacher? I then decided not to work hard on any other assignments.*

The interview data suggest that students are eager for the teacher's acknowledgement of their hard work, and they do not exert effort on tasks if they know they will not receive feedback from their teachers. Students consider these tasks a

waste of time and therefore tend to copy and paste from online sources. As Maram stated, *“When I see that the teacher doesn’t check what I have written, I use Google Translate for writing tasks.”*

Additionally, from the students’ perspective, achieving a perfect mark without comments or praise for their hard work is insufficient to motivate them. Teachers’ praise is essential in making students feel accomplished and positive about themselves. For example, Bushra discussed her feelings when the teacher gave her a perfect mark without comments:

*I know that she gave me the full mark on that project, but I cared about her comments and appreciation. I was disappointed since I expected her to praise my project or at least tell me what she did or didn’t like. For me, the teacher’s comments are as important as grades.*

### C. Personality-Related Factors

#### Excessive strictness

The majority of the participants agreed that strict teachers made them feel stressed and nervous, caused them to dislike the class, and made them afraid to ask teachers for help or further explanation. For example, Amani stated, *“I was so afraid of my teacher that I would forget what I was saying.”* Bayan also stated, *“I do not mean the class should be fun all the time, but too much strictness makes students feel overwhelmed and dislike the subject.”* Unfriendly teachers who do not smile at students intimidate and discourage them from communicating, as Amani explains in the following response: *“I do not like classes where the teacher never smiles. Being serious does not mean being unable to laugh with students.”*

Moreover, the participants considered English classes as having unique characteristics that require a friendly atmosphere to encourage students to participate and communicate freely with the teacher. This perception is reflected in the following response from Kholoud:

*The English teacher, in particular, needs to be flexible when students make mistakes and accept that we are not perfect. My teacher was very strict, insisting on using only English in the class. She was a thorough teacher and did not accept mistakes. According to her, we had to match the level that we are in, so we were supposed to speak English correctly. This made me tense in the class. I hated her class.*

It should be noted that, although a teacher’s strictness can motivate students to work hard, it can also make students less interested in learning. This situation is exemplified in the following response by Jana:

*I did not like the fear that I felt before the class with my strict teacher started. I was so scared of her. Although her strictness made us study hard, it was a bad practice since we did it because of fear, not because we loved the subject.*

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Teaching-Related Factors

This study found that secondary school students considered teacher-centred teaching the strongest demotivating factor when learning English. This finding aligns with previous findings from the literature (Falout et al., 2009; Kikuchi, 2009; Kim et al., 2018; Normazidah & Hazita, 2012; Song & Kim, 2017). The finding suggests that students in the Saudi context prefer an interactive classroom environment that encourages them to be active learners.

An essential finding in the present study is that, despite years spent studying English and achieving high marks in EFL written exams, most participants were hesitant and lacked the confidence to speak English freely in everyday situations. This finding verifies Quadir’s (2017) viewpoint that students’ lack of confidence results from a lack of English practice. In addition, the inability to communicate properly makes students feel frustrated. Based on this study’s findings, students’ lack of English-speaking ability is largely attributable to teaching methods that focus on teaching grammar and reading at the expense of speaking and listening skills. In these cases, students do not receive adequate opportunities to practice using the English language in a classroom environment. Therefore, EFL teachers should concentrate on communicative activities that encourage students to speak and use English in the classroom to promote their confidence in using English.

In addition, the participants in this study stated that the excessive use of L1 (Arabic) in English classes has a demotivating effect. This response is in line with studies conducted to investigate the effects of using L1 in EFL classrooms (Nazary, 2008; Kalanzadeh et al., 2013; Burdujan, 2020). Most of the participants – particularly learners with lower levels of English proficiency – acknowledged the importance of the balanced use of L1 for scaffolding, such as explaining abstract ideas or when there is a communication gap between the students and the teacher. Nevertheless, the students confirmed that overuse of their native language decreased their interest in learning English. This view is consistent with the findings of Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018) and Burdujan (2020), who suggest that L1 should be used judiciously to serve specific functions: explaining abstract terms, maintaining discipline, giving instructions, discussing errors, and teaching grammar.

The participants believed that the frequent use of their native language made them more dependent on L1, resulting in a lack of competence in L2 communication. This practice prevents students from thinking in the target language, making them hesitant to speak the target language. Thus, when students want to speak English, they feel embarrassed and reluctant because they have not had adequate exposure and practice in the classroom environment. Notably, even

low-achieving students in this study were dissatisfied with the excessive use of L1 because it hindered their English learning. This finding supports the assertion of Kalanzadeh et al. (2013) that both high- and low-achieving students reject the overuse of L1 in EFL English classes.

The findings from the interviews and my experience teaching at secondary schools show that EFL teachers use L1 to encourage student-teacher interactions and include all students, particularly low achievers, in English classrooms. However, teachers should remain aware of the frequency and purpose of using L1 and limit its use to develop students' fluency in English. To maximise the use of English while maintaining student comprehension, EFL teachers can employ visual aids and body language cues, such as variation of voice tone and body movements, to convey the meaning of unknown words. In addition, teachers can use simple language that students can easily understand.

### *B. Behaviour-Related Factors*

This study aligns with a body of research showing that teachers' lack of motivation and interest in teaching has a detrimental impact on students' motivation (Inayatullah & Jehangir, 2012; Bonta, 2019; Ghonsooly et al., 2017; Frenzel et al., 2009; Tambunan et al., 2018). EFL teachers lacking in motivation and passion for their jobs will hinder students' progress because unmotivated teachers make language learning uninteresting. As a result, students will find English lessons uninteresting under these conditions, and they will lose interest in studying.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that teachers' positive or negative feelings transmit to their students. When teachers do not enjoy teaching, it negatively affects students' motivation. These findings confirm the assertion of Frenzel et al. (2009) that there is a strong link between teacher enjoyment and student enjoyment in the classroom. In light of these findings, EFL teachers should express enthusiasm and enjoyment during teaching, which, in turn, will positively affect students' reactions to the material.

The results of this study also show that teacher absenteeism is one of the most common issues that students in Saudi secondary schools report as a demotivating factor. Frequent absenteeism results from a lack of teacher of motivation. When a teacher is absent from school regularly, learning is disrupted. These conditions have a detrimental effect on student achievement, negatively affecting teachers' performance and the quality of education. This result aligns with other studies conducted in different EFL settings on the impact of teacher absenteeism. Existing studies have found that, although student absenteeism does not affect academic achievement of other students, teacher absenteeism significantly impacts student performance (Ameeq et al., 2018; Porres, 2016). Moreover, the results of this study show that unmotivated teachers are usually unprepared for lessons and, consequently, are more likely to rely heavily on readings from the textbook. This teaching strategy causes students to feel bored and demotivated.

Furthermore, the interview results suggest that secondary school students consider the lack of effective feedback – teacher comments showing appreciation in particular – as a salient demotivating factor. Students expressed an eagerness for their teachers' praise and acknowledgement of their hard work. This result is consistent with previous studies conducted by Krishnan and Pathan (2013) and Trang and Baldauf (2007), who found that lack of feedback can lead to L2 demotivation. However, the findings contradict Vollmeyer and Rheinberg's (2005) findings that, although feedback is important for enhancing students' learning strategies and final performance, it has no positive effect on motivation.

Nevertheless, this study's results confirm that students are concerned with their teachers' comments and see them as encouragement and validation of their work first and as guidance second. Therefore, when students do not receive feedback, they report feeling disappointed that the teacher did not review their work. In this situation, students then cease to exert effort in their following assignments. Thus, students become demotivated when teachers do not verify their learning outcomes. This finding is consistent with Vollmeyer and Rheinberg's (2005) experimental study, which found that feedback enhances learning strategies because students work carefully when they know that their teachers are monitoring their academic performance.

These results suggest that teachers should genuinely deliver praise because students can quickly determine whether praise is superficial. Examples of meaningless praise include not showing enthusiasm or using single words such as "good" or "excellent." This finding confirms Yingwen and Jian's (2016) assertion that appreciation should be expressed at a clause level because words or phrases alone do not consistently achieve the desired results. Thus, insincere praise is meaningless, particularly when students have exerted significant effort.

### *C. Personality-Related Factors*

This study is also consistent with the literature identifying teacher strictness as a demotivating factor among EFL learners (Chen, 2012; Song & Kim, 2017; Tsang, 2017). The findings show that strictness is a double-edged sword; although a certain level of strictness is needed to manage the class and motivate students to work, excessive strictness makes students lose interest in learning English.

The findings indicate that strict teachers who do not accept students' mistakes create a threatening atmosphere, making students reluctant to communicate with teachers. This finding is in line with Chen (2012), who found a strong relationship between students' foreign language anxiety and teacher strictness. Considering that English classes have unique characteristics, EFL teachers should be flexible with students to encourage them to participate in class activities, particularly during speaking lessons. Conversely, when teachers react negatively to students' mistakes, it makes students fearful of negative evaluation and causes them to be reluctant to speak up (Han et al., 2019).

## VI. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

EFL teachers must understand that students' lack of communicative ability plays a crucial role in L2 demotivation, causing them to lose confidence when speaking English. Therefore, teachers can help students by adopting more communicative activities that enable students to receive adequate L2 practice within the classroom environment. Teachers should also strive to be less authoritarian in EFL classrooms – playing the role of facilitators instead – to engage students in meaningful classroom interactions, including group work derived from real-life situations.

Although some L1 use may help facilitate learning, EFL teachers limit the circumstances and frequency of L1 use in the classroom. The L1 should be used judiciously to serve specific purposes, such as creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere or explaining abstract ideas. Teachers should otherwise use English as much as possible and encourage students to do the same. Visual aids and body language cues can also be employed to assist students' comprehension and maximise English use. Furthermore, EFL teachers should increase their awareness of the crucial role that their motivation and enthusiasm play in determining their students' performance. In doing so, teachers must consider how their feelings are interconnected with those of their students. Teachers should strive to show enthusiasm for the subject by preparing well, varying their techniques, and employing warm-up activities that break up the monotony in the classroom.

Moreover, to increase student motivation, EFL teachers should provide effective feedback and appreciation for students' hard work on each assigned task. Corrective feedback can include in-person feedback delivered with instruction and recommendations on how to improve. In terms of encouragement, teachers should express appreciation and praise in front of the class. Based on the characteristics of adolescent growth, such encouragement can help students to build their confidence, inspire their interest, and discover their strengths. Teachers should also show genuine enthusiasm when praising students' work orally. When expressing praise in written form, teachers should write at the clause level instead of using single words.

When students like their teachers, they tend to engage at a higher level with the subject matter being taught. Therefore, building a strong relationship with students will produce a greater chance of influencing students' motivation to learn a foreign language. Because of the unique features of EFL classrooms, teachers should pay particular attention to creating a safe, friendly atmosphere where students can practise English without fear of making mistakes. To achieve this atmosphere, teachers should be kind, friendly, mindful of students' feelings, and flexible with accepting students' mistakes.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study explored demotivational teaching practices in EFL instruction – namely teachers' behaviours, teaching methods, personality traits, and competencies – to examine how these factors negatively affect students' motivation to learn a foreign language. The findings of this study highlight demotivating teaching practices comprising five themes: (a) teacher-centred teaching; (b) excessive use of Arabic; (c) teachers' lack of motivation; (d) a lack of feedback for students; and (e) excessive strictness. However, this study had a number of limitations. The first of these limitations is that the sample included only 20 female students in secondary school. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to all students due to how small and undiversified this sample was. However, the emergent themes of this study may be tested to gain more generalisable findings on L2 demotivation. Further studies should be conducted to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards current teaching practices. Such studies can help policymakers organise appropriate training programmes capable of raising teachers' awareness of psychological issues that can emerge among EFL students. In addition, this study only examined L2 demotivation among Saudi female students in secondary school. Therefore, exploring male students' responses to demotivating teaching practices and comparing the findings with those of this study could be useful.

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