

EFL Teachers' (De)Motivation and Awareness: A Qualitative Study

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Key words: teachers' motivation, demotivation, awareness, solutions

Abstract:

Teaching seems to be a profession in crisis (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2015). According to Lamb (2017), there is sufficient research to evidence that language teachers are able to influence their students' motivation for better or for worse. In Spain, Betoret (2016, p. 535) found that workload, lack of rewards, school authority guidelines, classroom learning environment and relationship with colleagues "accounted for a greater portion of variance in teacher anxiety, job satisfaction and teacher motivation". Teachers who are anxious, dissatisfied and demotivated could affect students (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013); therefore, a closer exploration of EFL teachers' demotivation is needed. In-depth online and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with interview prompts, an innovative data collection instrument, and classroom observations were used in secondary state schools in Spain to examine teachers' demotivation, uncover possible solutions and comprehend teachers' motivational awareness.

The findings revealed motivators and demotivators, such as teachers' meeting their own expectations and goals as a motivator and the complex system to access teaching in state schools as a key demotivator. Improvements in the classroom context and changes needed in the educational system were proposed by participants. A more disciplinary teaching approach or empathising with students were identified as solutions to teachers' motivational problems, which were in turn, influenced by students' behaviour and motivation. Increasing teachers' motivational awareness and fostering changes, such as reducing the students' ratio in the classroom, might benefit teachers and their performance and could as a result, have a positive effect on students and their learning of a foreign language.

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