English Language Teacher Motivation in Sri Lankan Public Schools

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Abstract—Drawing on in-depth qualitative data from fifty-four surveys and five interviews, this study investigated aspects of motivation and demotivation among Sri Lankan English language teachers. The participants included a convenience sample of English teachers currently employed in public schools. The results of the study revealed that students themselves, the act of teaching students, and the prestigious social position for English teachers in Sri Lanka are main motivators for teachers. The main demotivators for the participants included limited facilities for teaching and learning in schools, inefficiency of school administration and zonal education offices, difficulties in obtaining teacher transfers, the discrepancy between the English curriculum and students' English proficiency, and the poor relationship between colleagues. Overall results of the study indicate that teacher demotivation is a significant issue in Sri Lankan public schools which needs the immediate attention of the country's education policy designers and management.

Index Terms—motivation, demotivation, English teachers, public schools, Sri Lanka

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Teacher motivation is a construct which has received significant attention in mainstream education during the last few decades. Recent studies on teacher motivation in education have explored different reasons for new teachers to join the profession, factors that motivate and demotivate teachers, the impact of teacher motivation on their teaching, the relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation, and the measures by which teacher motivation can be increased in different working scenarios (e.g., Addison & Brundrett, 2008; Dinham & Scott, 2000; Pelletiar, Levesque, & Legault, 2002; Roth, Assor, Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007; Smithers & Robinson, 2003).

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, teacher motivation is currently viewed as a variable which has a strong impact on learner motivation (Gardner, 2007). In addition to teaching language, ESL/EFL teachers are expected to increase learners' intrinsic motivation by employing different motivational strategies in instruction (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 52). However, the extent to which teachers are able to motivate their students depends on how motivated teachers themselves are (Atkinson, 2000; Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). As Bernaus et al. (2009) concluded regarding learner motivation, "teacher motivation is the most important variable because if teachers are not motivated the whole notion of strategy use is lost" (p. 29).

Despite the significance attached to it in mainstream education, teacher motivation still remains a highly overlooked area of research in SLA and TESOL (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 157). Except for a handful of studies by Pennington and her colleagues since the 1990s, Doyle and Kim (1999), Connie (2000), Tiziava (2003), and Bernaus et al. (2009), the number of reported studies on teacher motivation in SLA/TESOL is extremely limited. Consequently, this prevents us from precisely understanding what motivates and demotivates ESL/EFL teachers, how their (lack of) motivation affects their teaching practices in classrooms, and what impact teacher motivation has on learner motivation and language achievement. These are all significant questions in many second and foreign language scenarios in the world. This is why Dörnyei (2001), stressing the significance of teacher motivation in SLA and education, states that "far more research is needed to do this important issue justice" (p. 157). A survey of literature of the last ten years shows that this statement is still true and possibly more applicable to TESOL than to mainstream education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Motivators and Demotivators for Teachers

Dinham and Scott (2000), in a survey study involving 2000 teachers in Australia, New Zealand, and England, report that teachers are often motivated by "matters intrinsic to the role of teaching" while their demotivation is mainly caused by "matters extrinsic to the task of teaching" (p. 390). This has been a common finding in many other studies as well (Spear et al., 2000; Addison et al., 2008). According to Dinham & Scott (2000), common intrinsic motivators for teachers include student achievement, helping students modify their attitudes and behavior, positive relationship with students and others, self-growth, mastery of professional skills, and feeling part of a collegial supportive environment. Meanwhile, major demotivators include the nature and the pace of educational change, teacher workload, the community's poor opinion of teachers, the negative image of the teachers portrayed in the media, and lack of support services for teachers (p. 389). In their review of teacher motivation studies conducted in the contexts of England and

Wales after 1989, Spear et al. (2000) identified the common intrinsic rewards of teaching to be working with children, developing warm personal relationships with students, the intellectual challenge of teaching, autonomy, and independence. The major demotivators for teachers are poor pay, work overload, and perceptions of how teachers are viewed by society (p. 4). In a study of factors affecting motivation and demotivation of primary teachers in England, Addison and Brundrett (2008) argued that teacher motivation is mostly related to intrinsic issues such as positive responses from children, their progress, a sense of achievement from a completed and enjoyable task, and having supportive colleagues. Meanwhile, principal demotivators are poor responses from children, working long hours, and workload (p. 91).

Even though teachers in many contexts in the world are intrinsically motivated, there are a large "number of detrimental factors that systematically undermine and erode the intrinsic character of teacher motivation" (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 165). According to Dörnyei, teacher demotivation is often associated with five main factors: *stressful nature of work, inhibition of teacher autonomy, insufficient self-efficacy, content repetitiveness,* and *inadequate career structure* (p. 165). Among these, "teacher stress" is a teacher's experience of "unpleasant negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher" (Kyriacou, 2001, p. 28). It is a common concept that has been studied in existing research in relation to teacher demotivation. Based on a number of studies on teachers in different contexts, Kyriacou (2001) states that "teaching is one of the high stress professions" (p. 29) in many countries. For instance, in Kyriacou and Chien's (2004) study of 203 primary teachers in Taiwan, 26% of the teachers reported that being a teacher was "very or extremely stressful" (p. 88). As it has been found, teacher stress often results from factors such as bureaucratic pressure, lack of adequate facilities, low salaries and constant alertness needed in working with children or young adults, teaching pupils who lack motivation, maintaining discipline, coping with change, being evaluated by others, and role conflict and ambiguity (Dörnyei, 2001; Kyriacou, 2001). The high rate of teacher stress not only weakens the intrinsic motivation of teachers (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 167) but also results in a high rate of teacher burn out (Nagel & Brown, 2003, p. 255).

According to Dörnyei, the second source of teacher demotivation is restricted teacher autonomy. Autonomy has been defined as "experiencing oneself as the origin of one's behavior" (Deci et al., 1997, p. 69; 2008). In the profession of teaching, nationwide standardized tests, national curricular and increasing administration demands often restrict teacher autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001, p.167). In their study involving 254 teachers in Quebec, Canada, Pelletier et al. (2002) reported three kinds of "pressure" that can restrict teacher autonomy: i) teachers' perception that they are responsible for their students' behaviors or students' performing up to standard, ii) teachers' perception that they have to conform to colleagues' teaching methods or involvement in school activities, iii) teachers' perception that they had limited freedom in determining the course curriculum or that they had to cover a specific curriculum determined by school's administration. They also found that when teacher autonomy is restricted (when they are less self-determined), teachers become more controlling with their students (p. 194). Roth et al. (2007) found evidence for the fact that autonomous motivation of teachers often promotes learner autonomy in classrooms (p. 771).

Insufficient self-efficacy is the third demotivator for many teachers around the world (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 167). Self-efficacy is "teachers' beliefs in their ability to motivate and promote learning, affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve" (Bandura, 1993, p. 117). One reason why teachers often lack self-efficacy is due to the traditional approach to teacher training which puts more emphasis on subject matter training at the expense of practical skills of teaching needed to manage a classroom (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 168). As a result, teachers' doubts regarding pedagogical skills along with insufficient content knowledge can cause low teacher efficacy in many contexts (Redmon, 2007, p. 4).

Just like low efficacy, teacher demotivation can also be caused by a lack of intellectual challenge in teaching that some teachers suffer when they teach the same subject or the same level of students for years (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 169). This makes teachers often say that "they are discouraged by work that promises the same responsibilities on the first and last days of their careers" (Johnson, 1986, p. 69). However, one objective of career ladder plans for teachers in many countries is to provide teachers with different responsibilities like administration, curriculum designing, teacher training and material development so that they are motivated by different responsibilities that they are expected to take on during different phases of their careers. But as Dörnyei (2001) reports, such opportunities are also very limited for teachers in comparison to other professionals. This *inadequate career structure* often demotivates teachers because teaching offers a "closed contingent path," especially for teachers who do not want to join management (p. 169). For such teachers, repetitive classroom procedures can be a monotonous experience.

Despite this, some countries have taken measures to reduce the impact of this situation in different ways. For instance, in Sri Lanka teachers are offered a promotion scheme which allows them to move from grade III (lowest grade in teaching) to grade I (highest grade in teaching) based on their higher studies and experience. Accordingly, they can also apply to be teacher trainers, material writers, national exam evaluators, and so on. However, the major benefit in the scheme is monetary awards. To what extent these monetary awards can motivate teachers has also been debated in literature. Though Spear et al. (2000), Smithers and Robinson (2003), and Addison and Brundrett (2008) identified poor pay as a demotivator for teachers, Michaelowa (2002) claims that with regard to teacher motivation, "the role of salaries does not seem to be as important as many people believe" (p. 18). Even in the study on job satisfaction among American teachers by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997), "teacher satisfaction showed a weak

relationship with salary and benefits" (p. 9). Instead, "teachers were more satisfied in a supportive, safe and autonomous environment" (p. 32).

B. Teacher Motivation in Developing Countries

In mainstream education, recent studies on teacher motivation are mostly reported from developing countries. For instance, the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Department for International Development (DFID), Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have conducted a series of comprehensive studies on teacher motivation in many developing countries, especially in South Asia and some parts of Africa. Most of these studies reveal the existence of a crisis in teacher motivation in many developing countries (see specifically, DFID 2007, GCE 2005), which is taken to account for poor quality in education.

For instance, VSO (2002), based on a comprehensive study of teacher motivation in Zambia, Malawi and Papua New Guinea, concludes that "in many developing countries, the teaching force is demoralized and fractured" (VSO, 2002, p. 1). As the report further states, the teaching profession in these countries "is characterized by high attrition rates, constant turn over, lack of confidence and varying levels of professional commitment" (p. 1). Also, GCE (2005), in their review of recent literature on teachers' issues in developing countries, claim that in those countries, "teacher motivation and morale remain in a chronic state of decline" (GCE, 2005, p. 1). The most recent of the studies, *Teacher Motivation of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia* by DFID (2007), also confirms the findings of the previous studies, claiming that in developing countries, "most schooling systems are faced with what amounts to a teacher motivation crisis" (DFID, 2007, p. 25). As these studies report, teacher demotivation in these countries is mostly caused by limited opportunities for teacher training and professional development, lack of support from school administration, decline in teacher status in society, poor salaries and incentives, constant changes of school curricular, low teacher efficacy, and poor working and living conditions. These demotivators also result in high levels of teacher absenteeism, teacher transfers between schools, migration of qualified teachers to developed countries, and teachers leaving the profession to take up other jobs (p. 7). I will refer to the findings of these studies in the discussion section.

Among the South Asian countries where teacher motivation has been recognized as undergoing a "crisis," Sri Lanka has received very little attention from researchers over the last two decades. This is confirmed by the fact that no international journal has reported any studies on teacher motivation in Sri Lanka, during the last ten years. Even in the studies conducted in the region by international organizations (DFID, 2007; GCE, 2005; VSO, 2002), Sri Lanka has not been included. However, there is enough evidence to believe that the decline in teacher motivation, like in many other developing countries, is a significant issue in the Sri Lankan education system too. One source of such evidence comes from a recent World Bank (2006) report which states that in Sri Lanka, "teacher status, motivation and work attitudes have deteriorated over the past few years and the importance of remotivating and improving the attitudes of teachers should be a national priority"(p. 60).

Also, it is clear that Sri Lanka shares many socio-political and economic issues with other countries of the South Asian region. The common issues that all these countries share led them to establish the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 to help each other in their common issues. So, if teacher motivation is a crisis in other neighboring countries in South Asia with similar economies, social structures, and education systems, it is likely that it is an issue in Sri Lanka too. However, to identify and understand the real nature of this "crisis" and its impact on the country's education system, more empirical investigation is needed.

III. THE PRESENT STUDY

In this vein, the purpose of this study was to investigate aspects of teacher motivation/demotivation among English language teachers in Sri Lanka's public school system, in light of work motivation theories and also considering research methodology from previous teacher motivation studies in different contexts.

IV. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants of this study were English teachers currently employed in the public school system of Sri Lanka. A convenience sample of five English teachers, three females and two males, took part in qualitative interviews. In age they ranged from 36 to 43 years. All the participants were teachers specially trained at teacher training colleges in the country to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in public schools. The five interview participants will be referred to in the results and discussion sections by the pseudonyms *Piyal, Sajith, Malani, Nelum* and *Devika*.

The second source of data in the study was a qualitative survey. A convenience sample of 83 teachers who attended a weekend external degree program in Colombo in early 2010 volunteered to participate in the survey. However, only 54 of the 83 volunteers completed and returned their surveys, making the response rate approximately 65%. The majority of the survey participants was female (81.5%). The percentage of males in the sample was 18.5%. The participants ranged from 26 to 56 years old. The mean age reported was 36.55 years. The participants also varied greatly in terms of their teaching experience. The majority of teachers (33) had ten to twenty years of teaching experience. Ten teachers in

the sample had three to five years of teaching experience, and seven teachers had five to ten years of teaching experience. Four participants had more than twenty years of teaching experience.

B. Instruments and Procedure: Interviews

The first source of data in this study was interviews. A total of five interviews were conducted between November 2009 and April 2010. In conducting the interviews, we used a semi-structured interview format taking into account the findings of previous teacher motivation research in different contexts (Connie, 2000; Hayes, 2009; Spear et al., 2000; Wadsworth, 2001; Watt et al., 2008). While the participation in the interviews was completely voluntary, the participants' consent was obtained to audio-record them. During the interviews, the participants were allowed to use either English or Sinhala, their first language. However, all participants used mostly English to share their experiences and opinions.

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewee was requested to provide a brief introduction of him- or herself. This mostly included basic information like age, place of work, years of teaching experience, the number of schools that they have worked at, and the classes that they teach at current schools. After that the interview mostly included open-ended questions to find out what motivates and demotivates the participants in their day-to-day experiences as teachers. In addition, they also described why they became teachers, why they elected to teach English, what a typical working day of a teacher is like, and how they spend time after work and during weekends. The interviewer also occasionally paraphrased and/or summarized the statements by the participants to ensure accuracy. Each interview lasted from 45 to 60 minutes and was also audio-recorded.

C. Qualitative Survey

The survey instrument used for the data collection in this study was developed by the researcher in light of three previous studies on teacher motivation in different settings: Connie (2001), Kitching et al. (2009), and Tiziava (2003). It consisted of three sections. The eight questions of the first section were intended to gather basic demographic data about the informants: age, years of teaching experience, educational qualifications, and so on. The second section consisted of four questions to find out different reasons why the participants entered the teaching profession and chose to teach English. Finally, the third section consisted of two questions to find out what motivates and demotivates the participants when they function as English teachers in public schools: Both sections two and three gathered data through open-ended questions and free writing.

D. Data Analysis: Interviews

The process of data analysis started with the transcription of interviews, yielding 34 pages of transcribed text. At this stage, the researcher also translated into English any remarks that the participants made in their first language. Both the transcription and translation (when needed) of all five interviews were done by the researcher himself over a period of three weeks. In this process, attempts were made to identify possible themes and patterns, because in qualitative research, data analysis is an "iterative process, not a linear process following the collection of data" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 193).

During and after the transcription of the interviews, the researcher used the method of *content analysis* to identify themes and patterns in the interview data. Qualitative content analysis is "an approach of empirical, methodological and controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification" (Mayring, 2000, p. 2, see also Kondraki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). Also, it is a method that provides "protocols for efficient analysis of large data sets with textual components" (Sonpar & Golden-Dibble, 2007, p. 800).

This study adopted the method of deductive qualitative content analysis. As it has been elaborated in the literature review, many studies on teacher motivation have been reported from both developed and developing countries during the last two decades. Even though teacher motivation remains an overlooked area of research in Sri Lanka, it was assumed that the research findings on the construct in similar settings could guide the coding process of the interview data of this study: "deductive content analysis is often used in cases where the researcher wishes to retest existing data in a new context" (Elo & Kyngas, 2007, p. 111). Hence, based on the results of the previous teacher motivation studies by Crooks (1997), Connie (2001), Tiziava (2003), Adelabu (2005), Bennell et al. (2005), Ramachandran et al. (2007), and Kitching et al. (2009), the researcher developed a list of ten codes to analyze the interview data. Table 1 shows the codes and their definitions.

TABLE 1
CODE NAMES AND DEFINITIONS

Code	Definitions
Students	student performance and behavior
School administration	issues related to principal or other administrative staff
Curriculum & pedagogy	issues related to curriculum and teaching methods
Parental involvement	availability, quality and content of materials
Teacher autonomy	teacher freedom to make decisions in teaching
Professional development	issues related to teacher education and training
Colleagues	issues related to coworkers
Work conditions	facilities, class size, and school location
Teacher pay and workload	salary, incentives, teacher responsibilities
Textbooks and teaching materials	parents' help and interest in children's education

Existing literature on teacher motivation provides evidence that teacher motivation is commonly related to these codes. Thus, these were used as initial codes to identify the themes in the interview data. During this stage, the researcher's focus was to find out whether the interview data contained any evidence for the existing codes. Whenever any evidence was found, the researcher assigned a code from the list. The process was repeated several times to ensure accuracy. After that, all the transcripts were read carefully once again to make sure that all points are coded. Any concepts that could not be coded at this stage were identified and marked separately. If they did not represent a category already existing, a new code was assigned. The rationale behind doing so was that there could be new codes and themes emerging from the data itself which could be either specific to the Sri Lankan context or ESL or EFL teachers. Thus, the following new codes were inductively derived from the interview data of this study:

TABLE 2
CODE NAMES AND DEFINITIONS

Code	Definitions
Students' attitudes towards English	how students perceive English and ESL teachers
Social status of English teachers	the way English teachers are perceived by others

Therefore, a total of 12 codes was used for data analysis. Once the initial coding was completed, the researcher started organizing those codes into related categories. At this stage, some codes were identified as major topics, while several others were organized under a few major topics (Lichtman, 2010, p. 199). The process was repeated several times to do away with any redundancies on the list, as well as to ensure that any significant topics related to teacher motivation are not neglected. This process yielded five major topics or themes as related to teacher motivation: *students, teaching, administration, professional development* and *social & contextual influences*. These themes are elaborated on in the results section.
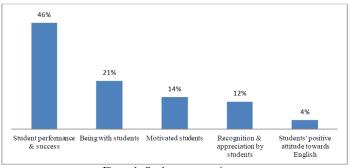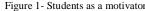
E. Survey

In analyzing the general results from the 54 surveys, the researcher used a quantitative (frequency) analysis. In addition, the questions of the survey about common teacher motivators and demotivators were analyzed through the method of inductive content analysis. In analyzing these questions (two questions in the survey), the researcher identified 16 codes with regard to motivators and 23 codes with regard to demotivators. Later those codes were categorized under three major topics: *students, teaching*, and *administration*. A number of other miscellaneous codes which could not be included in any of these three categories were listed under a separate category called *other*.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teacher Motivation

This study revealed a variety of factors that motivate and demotivate Sri Lankan English teachers in public schools. To begin with, the study revealed three common motivators for teachers: students, teaching, and the position of English in the country which gives teachers high social prestige. In the survey results, the most common category of motivators for the participants was related to students: students' performance and success, being with students, student motivation, students' recognition and appreciation of teachers, and students' positive attitude towards English. The following graph (Figure 1) provides a detailed view of survey participants' responses in this regard:

Figure 1- Students as a motivator

Out of the 73 motivators reported in the survey, 56% of them were related to one of the above-mentioned aspects involving students. This implies that these participants, like many other teachers in the world, mostly derive their motivation in the job from their students. The interview data also strongly supported the above findings when all five participants recognized students as their main source of motivation. For instance, Piyal and Sajith recognized students' performance as the most satisfying aspect of teaching. Nelum and Devika also supported this finding in their interview answers. However, Malani stated that she also derives motivation from students' admiration of her teaching. This was also found in some of the survey data.

The second most common motivator for the teachers in the study was the act of teaching. In the survey, it accounted for 17% of all motivators reported by the participants. This had confirmation in the interview data when the participants revealed how the act of teaching leads to their satisfaction in the job. For instance, Piyal said:

I am personally happy because when we teach students they learn something. They become knowledgeable and they become good people.[...] Students' performance is the only satisfaction that we can have.

The finding of this study that participants in the survey as well as in interviews mostly derive their motivation from their students and the act of teaching has strong echoes in teacher motivation research in many other contexts too. For instance, in their study of teachers in Australia, New Zealand, and England, Dinham and Scott (2000) reported that most of the teachers in their study were motivated by "matters intrinsic to the role of teaching" (p. 390). This was also confirmed by Wadsworth's (2001) study of public and private school teachers in the USA, Tiziava's (2003) study of EFL teachers in Greece, and Addison et al's. (2008) study of primary teachers in England. Teacher motivation research by VSO (2002), GCE (2005), and DFID (2007) found this as a common feature in developing countries too. Thus, the results of this study affirm a common finding in teacher motivation research around the world: regardless of the context in which they teach, most teachers in the world derive their motivation from their students and teaching.

However, this study also revealed one additional factor that motivates English teachers in Sri Lanka: the position of English in the country. As the study revealed, the position of English in the country gives a prestigious social position for English teachers in Sri Lanka. For instance, Malani, who has been an English teacher for thirteen years, mentioned in her interview that English teachers receive a special treatment in society which makes her feel proud of herself. In Malani's view, the respect that English teachers receive in society places them in a demanding position even when it comes to marriage: "Even in marriages, it matters. People prefer to marry English teachers because of the social status, because of English." The fact that English teachers receive more respect and prestige in Sri Lankan society than other teachers frequently emerged in other interviews too. A few participants in the survey had also written statements like "English teachers are the most recognized group among teachers," "An English teacher gets more social recognition than any other teacher," and "English teachers have a better place in society."

Nelum, in her interview, accounting for the reason for this position of English teachers in the country, said: "English [has] a social prestige. People who can speak it are seen differently in society." Many research studies on the position of English in Sri Lanka have also found enough evidence for Nelum's statement above. As Fernando (1997) elaborates in her study of *English and Sinhala Bilingualism in Sri Lanka,* English, ever since it was brought to the country by the British, has always been associated with social prestige in Sri Lankan society. As a result, its speakers have always received higher social recognition and advantages in the country, especially when it comes to employment. As she further says, "English still has a grudgingly recognized but decided social, cultural and economic value" in Sri Lanka (p. 348). In a recent study, quoting a former Minister of Education in Sri Lanka, Gunesekara (2005) writes:

In the case of social disparity, the real gulf in Sri Lankan society is not based on religion, ethnicity, money or caste: it is based on language. The gap between those who know English and those who don't know English denotes the gap between the haves and the have nots. (p. 34)

Because of this position of English in the country, it is quite natural that English teachers receive more respect and prestige than other teachers in Sri Lankan society. This seems to motivate them very much. Despite this, what Sajith revealed in his interview about the position of teachers in the country also deserves significant attention. In his view, there is a gradual decline in teacher status in the country: "Compared to the past, we don't have a proper place today." Here, he mostly talked about the declining status for teachers in general, which is also a common theme in teacher motivation research in developing countries. For instance, DFID (2007), in their study of teachers in Sub-Saharan

Africa and South Asia, identifies declining teacher status as a feature of the teaching profession in the developing world. VSO (2002) found the same trend in Zambia, Malawi and Papua New Guinea : "Teachers in all three case study countries reported feeling that the community did not value them as they had done in the past" (p. 36). As mentioned in the introduction, a recent World Bank report (2006) commented on the declining teacher status as a major issue in Sri Lanka too. However, the results of the study show a different trend with regard to the English teachers in public schools. Despite the declining status in the country for teachers in general, English teachers still receive high social recognition in Sri Lanka mainly because of the position of English in the country.

B. Teacher Demotivation

Even though a great deal of research suggests that teachers in many contexts derive motivation from intrinsic rewards of teaching, there are a large "number of detrimental factors that systematically undermine and erode the intrinsic character of teacher motivation (Dӧrnyei, 2000, p. 165). Dinham and Scott (2000) in their study of teachers in Australia reported that teacher demotivation is mainly caused by "matters extrinsic to the task of teaching" (p. 364). This also has echoes in many other studies, especially in the developing countries. Some of these studies include Adelabu (2005) in Nigeria, Bennell et al. (2005) in Tanzania, Khan (2005) in Pakistan, and Ramachandran et al. (2005) in India. In keeping with such findings, most participants of this study also reported many practical issues in teaching (mostly caused by limited facilities) and some issues with the administration as their main sources of demotivation.

Out of 78 demotivators reported by the teachers in the survey, 40 (51%) of them were related to practical issues in teaching. The most frequent demotivators related to teaching included limited facilities for teaching and learning in schools, overcrowded classes, textbooks that do not match student proficiency and issues in teaching methodology. The following graph shows the common demotivators that teachers had recorded in relation to teaching.
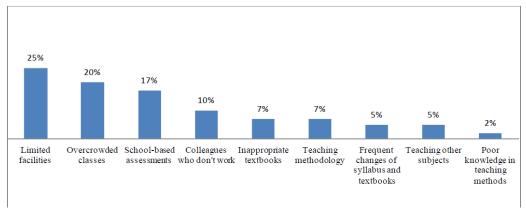

Figure 2- Demotivators related to teaching

Among these, limited facilities for teaching and learning in schools also frequently emerged as a theme in the interview data. All five participants identified limited facilities at schools as a factor that impinges on their work motivation. As Nelum revealed in her interview, what a teacher can do at school is often limited due to the inadequate facilities in classrooms. For instance, she mentioned that ESL teachers cannot teach listening because of the lack of cassette players in some schools. Meanwhile Devika, describing her first experience as a teacher in a remote school, explained how disappointed she was with the facilities of the school. She compared her first school to "a small dilapidated hut in a tea state." Piyal also expressed his disappointment with regard to the facilities in schools, even to the point of not having place for teachers to prepare their lessons.

It was obvious from both survey and interview data that limited facilities in schools along with overcrowded classes mostly demotivate teachers in Sri Lankan schools. This, as most studies reveal, is a common factor that affects teachers in developing countries. For instance, the studies by VSO (2002), GCE (2005), and DFID (2007) frequently found this as a demotivator for teachers in their case study countries. This is reportedly worse in remote schools in many countries. Even in this study, teachers' reluctance to work in rural schools implies that the situation in Sri Lanka is not far different from the rest of the developing countries.

Even though the survey participants identified writing school-based assessment as a demotivator for them, this was not supported by any of the interview participants. However, writing and conducting school-based assessment is a new responsibility given to ESL teachers with recent education reforms. Under these reforms teachers are expected to conduct several assessments per year, which could be time-consuming, mainly because of the overcrowded classes in many schools: "It takes a lot of time and there is no time to get ready for next day lessons."

The other most common category of demotivators reported in the survey was issues related to education administration in the country, which was mentioned in 26% of the answers, in contrast to 51% of issues related to teaching. The common themes that emerged in the survey in this regard were limited support from school administration, responsibilities related to extra-curricular activities and the inefficiency in the zonal education offices (an office in charge of the administration of an education zone consisting of several schools) in the country.

These themes were also frequently supported by the interview participants. For instance, Devika, while commenting on the support that teachers receive from school administration, used the words "corrupted" and "politicized" to describe it. Piyal indicated his frustration with school administration and admitted that many teachers are critical of the system. Meanwhile, others stated that some principals do not have a positive attitude towards English and do not sufficiently help English teachers perform their duties. Many survey participants had also reported similar responses regarding school administration. For instance, one respondent wrote "most of the time administration tends to provide [fewer] facilities to [the] teaching-learning process. Even the resources, computer lab, library are not allowed to be used whenever students need them. They always try to confine language teaching to classroom."

In addition to the school administration, the participants also made several comments about zonal education offices which are responsible for many administration matters concerning teachers in the country including their salary, incentives and leave. As mostly revealed by the interview data, the inefficiency of the zonal offices often demotivates teachers. For instance, Malani stated that the inefficiency of zonal offices is so frustrating that she even "feels like giving up teaching."Devika also made a similar comment when she said, "There are some officers in Zonal education offices. They are not functioning well. Actually it is hard to get a job done. We have to go several times." Nelum stated in her interview that she had to go to the zonal office 13 times to get her overseas leave approved. These responses of the participants imply how demotivating the inefficiency of zonal offices could be for teachers who mostly rely on those offices for many services. However, the unhappiness of the teachers with school administration and regional offices in this study is also a common finding in many other developing countries. For instance, Ramachandran et al. (2005) report it as one of the seven major issues related to teacher demotivation in India. VSO (2002), in their study of teachers in three African countries, also found teacher grievances to be mostly associated with services that they receive from administration like salaries and allowances. DFID (2007) confirmed this finding in their study in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. As they report, the majority of teachers in all twelve countries had expressed their displeasure over school administration (p. 10).

Even though most findings of this study were often consistent with the results of teacher motivation research in other developing countries, the survey results on teachers' pay produced a significantly different finding. According to many teacher motivation studies in the developing countries, one main demotivator for teachers is poor salaries and incentives (DFID, 2000; VSO, 2002). But in our survey, the majority of the participants did not identify salary as a demotivator for them. Only two participants identified salary as a demotivator (3.7%). Interestingly, two participants had also identified the salary that they currently receive as a motivator for them. But the interview data yielded contradictory evidence when four participants commented on salary as a demotivator for them. For instance, Devika, being asked what demotivates her most in the teaching profession, said, "Salary. The salary is insufficient." Sajith also saw poor teacher pay as a demotivator for a new teacher to join teaching. Malani stated that teachers receive a very small salary compared to a worker in the private sector of the country: "Actually it is not enough. When we compare it with a private sector worker, we feel disappointed with what we are getting."

Despite this data from the interviews, the fact that many teachers in the survey did not identify salary as a demotivator for them also deserves significant attention. Though this does not resemble the findings of many other developing countries with regard to teacher pay (DFID, 2007; VSO, 2002), the study by Ramachandran et al., (2005), in India also reported a similar finding about teacher salaries. In their sample, "nearly all the teachers were happy with their salaries" (p. 13). Meanwhile, it has also been found in some teacher motivation research that salary does not have a huge impact on the motivation of teachers (Michaelowa, 2002). As she says, "the role of salaries does not seem to be as important as many people believe" (p. 18). Even though poor teacher salary emerged as a theme in four interviews of this study, it was obvious that two of the participants talked about it only when the interviewer asked whether salary had an impact on their motivation. Otherwise, they mostly talked about other factors as their motivators and demotivators. These results of the study imply that teacher pay as a demotivator is not as strong as other common demotivators for Sri Lankan ESL teachers. This could be mainly because, as Nelum pointed out in her interview, teachers in public schools receive a reasonable salary in Sri Lanka: "I think we are getting a reasonable salary." The average salary of a public school teacher in the country roughly equals the salary of other employees in the public sector: a policeman, nurse, or clerk.

As many participants revealed in the interviews, several issues related to the English curriculum in public schools also demotivate ESL teachers in the country. A common consensus among the interview participants was that the current national curriculum on English does not match the proficiency level of the students, especially in rural schools. Apparently, this often makes teaching English in remote schools a difficult task for teachers. This difficulty also causes teacher demotivation. Nelum, sharing her experience in teaching English at a remote school, explained that she had to teach very basic English even in grade five when she was expected to teach a standard textbook. Sajith added that English teachers in remote schools have to spend extra time simplifying textbooks which do not match students' proficiency levels. Devika also admitted that the English curriculum, though interesting, is "really tough" for students in remote schools.

This mismatch between the curriculum expectations and the students' English proficiency, as some participants revealed in their interviews, is aggravated by the passive responses of students in classroom. Three of the interview participants also identified students' lack of interest in their studies and their negative attitude towards English as

demotivators for them. Piyal, for instance, stated that it is difficult to make some students realize the value of learning English: "Some students do not care." Sajith also has noticed a lack of interest in his students in remote schools for English, which for him is demotivating. According to Piyal, students' lack of interest in English can be frustrating and annoying for an English teacher, especially when students do not do homework.

Even in the survey, 14% of the demotivators recorded by the participants were related to students' lack of motivation, limited proficiency in English, and their negative attitude towards English. But Devika and Malani's experiences with their students produced contradictory evidence to the above data in the interviews as well as the survey. Malani among them had observed a positive attitude towards English among her students: "Students like English, even in the rural areas." Devika, who had also seen a positive attitude in her students, believes that the teacher is a strong determinant of learner motivation: "A child is really motivated by a teacher, especially in things like English." However, studies in others contexts have also recorded student disinterest in studies as a demotivator for teachers. For instance, Addison and Brundrett (2008) in their study of primary teachers in England found "children behaving badly or showing lack of interest" as the most common demotivator for the teachers (p. 86). This is not surprising because most teachers reportedly derive their motivation from their students and the act of teaching. If students do not show a positive attitude towards the subject that they learn or are not motivated enough, it is quite natural that teachers get demotivated.

Even though both interview and survey results revealed several issues related to the curriculum and student disinterest in studies as demotivators for teachers, most of the interview participants are motivated by the fact they have the freedom to select teaching methods according to their students' proficiency. Piyal in the interview revealed this, saying, "We have to use our own methods because of the standard of students, needs of students. We have the liberty to use our methods." Because of this "liberty," the participants were found to use their preferred methods for teaching English in classrooms. For instance, while Sajith uses an eclectic method for teaching, Devika even uses students' L1 when they have difficulty in understanding. Malani also appreciates the fact that she can use her own methods of teaching: "I have the freedom. While keeping with the curriculum, I can teach the way I want." These responses of the participants imply that they are motivated by the freedom that they enjoy to select their own teaching methods.

However, the freedom that the participants of this study recognized as a motivator for them is not experienced by many teachers in other contexts. This is obvious from the fact that many studies on teacher motivation in different contexts reveal restricted teacher autonomy as a common inhibitor of teachers' motivation (Dörnyei; 2001). As Pelletier et al. (2002) report in their study of teachers in Canada, three kinds of pressures in teaching can restrict teacher autonomy: teachers' perception that they are responsible for their students' behaviors or students' performing up to standard, teachers' perception that they have to conform to colleagues' teaching methods or involvement in school activities, and teachers' perception that they had limited freedom in determining the course curriculum or that they had to cover a specific curriculum determined by school's administration (p. 193).

Even though the interview participants in this study stated that they have freedom to use their preferred methods of teaching, apparently they also suffer from restricted teacher autonomy when they are expected to teach a national curriculum and textbook designed by the NIE (National Institute of Education). As it was also stated earlier, teaching this curriculum and textbook in remote schools is a difficult task because of students' limited proficiency in English. The pressure that a teacher feels in such a scenario is implied when Devika says: "Anyway we have to follow the syllabus. That's the greatest burden. Students get nothing. Students get nothing. But we have to rush through the syllabus." Hence, the participants' freedom to select their methods of teaching does not imply that they have immense autonomy in teaching in public schools. Rather their use of different methods to teach English mostly implies teachers' desperate attempts to reach their students somehow or other when the curriculum and textbooks do not match students' proficiency levels in English.

Three other common demotivators revealed in the study were poor relationships between colleagues, the lack of parental involvement in student education, and limited opportunities for professional development that the English teachers have in the country. Four participants in the interviews talked about the poor relationship between colleagues as a demotivator for them. For instance, Piyal stated in his interview that there is not a "good rapport" even between teachers who teach the same subject in schools. Meanwhile, Devika commented on the lack of teamwork by English teachers in schools as a demotivating factor for her. This was also echoed by Sajith and Nelum in their interviews. However, this finding in the interview data was not strongly supported by the data in the survey because only four participants had reported "colleagues who don't work hard" as a demotivator for them. Similar to this, the lack of parental involvement in students' education was also not identified by the survey participants as a demotivator for them. But in the interview data it emerged as a frequent subtheme. As the participants revealed, parents' involvement in students' education motivates teachers, while their non-participation demotivates them. As Piyal and Nelum have observed, parents' support in students' education is very limited in rural schools. This is also supported by Nelum's statement that parents "do not know what's happening in school." This, according to Nelum, is mostly because of parents' limited education. Malani and Piyal have observed the same trend in urban schools too. As Malani stated, parents' involvement "decreases" by the time students go to upper grades. Finally, with regard to the theme of professional development for English teachers in the country, the participants expressed contrasting views. While Sajith, Piyal, Malani and Nelum identified available opportunities for professional development as a motivator for them, while

Devika and many survey participants stated that the unavailability of enough opportunities in the country demotivates them.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study mostly support the findings of previous studies on teacher motivation in both developed and developing countries. As in many other contexts, the participants of this study also derive their intrinsic motivation mainly from students and teaching. However, this study revealed that a significant number of teachers are also motivated by the position of English in the country which earns them a prestigious position in society. The significance of this finding mainly lies in the fact that most teacher motivation studies in developing countries and some studies in developed countries instead indicate declining teacher status in society as a demotivator for teachers. Meanwhile, considering the results of our study, the main demotivators for English teachers in Sri Lankan public schools include limited facilities for teaching and learning, inefficiency in school administration and regional offices, difficulty in obtaining teacher transfers, poor relationships between colleagues, the mismatch between student proficiency and English curriculum in schools, and limited parental involvement in students' education. Our results also suggest that some motivators like the prestigious social position for English teachers in the country encourage new teachers to join the profession, while some demotivators like difficulties in obtaining transfers make teachers want to leave the profession sometime after joining it.

In conclusion, the findings of the study imply that teacher demotivation is a significant issue in the country's public school system which needs the immediate attention of the education policy designers of the country. The failure to take immediate action may further increase teacher dissatisfaction in the job, which could eventually result in poor education outcomes for students in public schools.

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