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English Learners' and Teachers' Preferred Strategies to Prevent Demotivation

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating learners' and teachers' perception of language learning demotivation and their suggested strategies for preventing it. Participants of the study included 36 female and 24 male EFL learners in the 15-18 age range and 19 female and 11 male EFL teachers in the 25-50 age range. Their anti-demotivation strategies were sought by using a 40- item Likert type questionnaire in learners' and teacher' versions, with Cronbach's alphas of .949 and .913, respectively. The results were analyzed and inferences were made. They indicated that both teachers and learners believed that "creating relaxing and stress free environment" and "setting goals" are the most effective ways to prevent demotivation. "Showing enthusiasm for teaching" was also regarded as effective as the above mentioned strategies. Although teachers and students had similar suggestions regarding the most effective strategies to fight demotivation, statistical analysis indicated that they were significantly different from each other when all their preferred strategies were juxtaposed and compared in one bulk. Taking the results of this study into account can help teachers be as closely aligned with learners as their practical wisdom guides them or favor their own preferences as their discretion and tact allow.

Keywords: demotivation, motivation, language learners, language teachers, strategies

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1. Introduction

Next to the many definitions which exist for motivation in the context of language learning, it can be roughly defined as the effort which the learner is willing to put into leaning a language. According to many researchers and language teachers (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001; Warden & Lin, 2000), motivation can be considered as one of the most influential factors in a person's success in second or foreign language learning. Skehan (1991) claims that, after aptitude, motivation is the second strongest predictor of success in second and foreign language learning.

At the same time, there are also the demotivating factors, which make learners lose their existing motivation and cause them to fail to reach adequate language proficiency. In fact, plenty of studies have indicated that the motivational level of the learners is highly changeable and susceptible to demotivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Some researchers (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009) call demotivation the other or flip side of motivation, which undermines learners' willingness to study the target language. Trang and Baldauf (2007) showed that the loss of motivation due to particular circumstances is a serious problem in foreign language teaching. They criticized the notion that demotivation is a phenomenon equal to low motivation and suggested that it should be studied in its own right. What is beyond dispute about demotivation is that it influences both the outcome and process of language learning. When learners lose motivation, a chain of reactions is triggered in such areas as attitude toward the teacher and materials, classroom behavior, group dynamics, achievement standards, and expectations (Falout et al., 2009).

Against the backdrop of ideas about motivation as an instrumental element in language learning and its vulnerability, an important question for people interested in motivation and demotivation has been what causes, enhances, removes, or reduces motivation. A plethora of negative influences in the process of language learning may contribute to demotivation. Quadir's (2017) research review shows that many researchers attribute demotivation to both internal factors (for example, self-efficacy, personality, and attitude towards the target language, community, and culture) and external factors (for example, teaching methods, and his competence, school facilities, textbooks, and classroom activities). Likewise, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) attribute demotivation to "particular learning-related events or experiences, such as performance anxiety, public humiliation, heavy work demands or poor test results" and "factors in the social learning environment, such as the personality and the attitude of the teacher or classroom counter-cultures and peer pressures"(p.148).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Awareness of and understanding the sources of demotivation among EFL learners and possible motivational strategies can help researchers and educationalists gain insights into students' lack of success and their reluctance to invest more on language learning. Such awareness also helps teachers to choose their anti-demotivation strategies in an informed way.

Attempts have been made to uncover the demotivating factors among English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. For example, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) reviewed previous demotivation studies of Japanese EFL learners and identified the common demotivating factors in them. Factor analysis of answers by 656 Japanese school students to a 35-item questionnaire showed that the learning contents and materials and test scores were the most demotivating factors for Japanese students. Moreover, they discovered some incompatibilities between the results of their analysis and those of the previous analyses.

In the Iranian context, Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi (2011) factor-analyzed the sources of Iranian students' demotivation in L2 learning and identified five categories of demotivating factors: 1) learning materials and their contents, 2) attitude towards the target community, 3) the teacher, 4) previous failure, and 5) attitude towards second language learning. Ghonsooly et al. (2017) investigated Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards demotivating factors using both qualitative and quantitative measures. Compatible with their qualitative findings, component factor analysis "revealed the presence of six demotivating factors, including lack of success, insufficient technological facilities, teacher's competence, teaching method and behavior, lack of interest, class materials, and the class environment" (p.417).

These studies and those reviewed below have looked for sources of demotivation and described categories and factors which could contribute to demotivation. However, in addition to seeking awareness about causes of demotivation, leaving practical and classroom decisions to teachers, researchers should explore more direct questions about what should be done in the face of demotivation and demotivating factors.

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Therefore, in order to know EFL learners' and teachers' preferences about what should be done to prevent or slow down demotivation, the present study undertook to investigate the strategies Iranian high school learners and teachers consider effective in preventing demotivation and, by extension, enhancing motivation of students for English learning.

1.2 Research Questions

To pursue the goal of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What strategies do Iranian high school students consider most effective in preventing demotivation?

2. What strategies do Iranian high school teachers consider most effective in preventing demotivation?

3. Are there significant differences between Iranian EFL learners and teachers concerning the most effective strategies they suggest for preventing demotivation?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The first and second research questions entail the elicitation of data to describe how learners and teachers think about proper ways of preventing demotivation. Based on the third research question, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H0: There is not any significant difference between Iranian EFL learners and teachers concerning the most effective strategies they suggest for preventing demotivation.

2. Review of the Literature

Motivation is viewed as the driver of human action in achieving a particular purpose (e.g., McDonough, 2007). It is "a psychological construct that refers to the desire and incentive that an individual has to engage in a specific activity" (Loewen & Reinders, 2011, p.119). For Hall (2011), motivation is a fundamental factor in the fulfilment of any activity. So, not surprisingly, researchers have considered it one of the crucial factors in second language learning. In accordance with the classical view of motivation, Gardner's socio-educational model regards motivation as the learner's alignment for reaching the goal of learning a target language (Gardner, 1999). Hall (2011) asserts that "It is difficult to imagine anyone learning a language without some degree of motivation" (p.134). He adds that experienced teachers often attribute language learners' success or failure to presence or absence of motivation.

Dörnyei (2001) advises that learner's motivation is not static; it is a dynamic process which interacts with many factors including language achievement. Identification of learners' demotivating factors is important particularly before or at the onset of language programs because it can and should influence decisions related to "the choice of language to be learned, the kinds of activities that learners are more inclined to engage in, the types and extent of proficiency that learners expect to attain, the degree of external intervention needed to regulate learning, and the extent of engagement in the long run" (Abu-Baker, Sulaiman, & Rafaai, 2010 p.72). According to Dörnyei (2001), demotivation arises from various factors and undermines the motivational basis of behavior or an occurring action. A demotivated learner is one who was once motivated but has lost all or part of his or her obligation for or interest in the act of learning.

Chambers (1993) used questionnaires to tap into students' and teachers' beliefs about demotivation in L2 learning. Teachers' and students' reasons for students' demotivation were different. According to the teachers, the causes of demotivation were related to psychological, attitudinal, social, historical, and geographical factors, while the students' reasons for demotivation included such factors as teachers' behaviors, material, and class size.

To see if there is a connection between demotivation and language proficiency, Falout and Maruyama (2004) prepared a 49-item questionnaire on the basis of Dörnyei's (2001) nine factors in demotivation. They surveyed 164 university students and identified six types of demotivators: 1) teachers, 2) courses, 3) attitudes towards English speaking people, 4) attitude toward English, 5) self-confidence, and 6) attitude of group members. Less proficient learners regarded self-confidence, attitudes towards the L2 courses and teachers, and attitudes of group members as the most demotivating. More proficient learners, viewed self-confidence as the most significant demotivating factor. While less proficient students related their demotivation to their feelings, more proficient students related their motivational problems to extrinsic factors and claimed to be more in control of their feelings and attitudes.

To investigate the relation between demotivation and gender and grade level, Muhonen (2004) obtained and analyzed feedback from 91 students and specified these sources of demotivation: 1) teachers, 2) learning material, 3) learner

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characteristics, 4) learning environment, and 5) attitude towards target language. The most and the least demotivating factors were the teacher and attitude towards L2, respectively. The quantitative analysis of the data showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in being demotivated, although the majority of male students attributed demotivation to the teacher while the majority of female students attributed it to instructional material. For all grade levels, teacher was the main source of demotivation. Teachers were also implicated for demotivation in a study by Song (2005).

The study by Keblawi (2006) on 294 middle and high school English learners and 10 English teachers identified such contextual factors as the learning group, course books, the assessment system, and the teacher, as demotivating. However, not many learners attributed being demotivated to internal factors. Gender was again found to mediate the attribution.

Qashoa (2006) investigated UAE school students' motivation for and demotivation against English learning. The sources of motivation proved to be varied and included peer pressure, problematic parts of English such as vocabulary, grammar, and spelling, teachers' characteristics, textbooks, teaching methods, lack of self-confidence, and social and religious beliefs. Kikuchi (2009) extracted five factors based on research on demotivating influences on Japanese high school EFL learners: 1) course content and material, 2) teacher competence and teaching style, 3) inadequate school facilities, 4) lack of intrinsic motivation, and 5) test scores.

Investigation of demotivation among Middle Eastern students in Finland by Hirvonen (2010) found students' "instrumental" demotives in four categories including the teacher, learning material and course content, learning environment, and concurrent learning of other languages. "Integrative" demotivation was associated with the three issues of experiencing failure, under-achievement, and negative attitude towards target language.

In the Iranian context, Sahragard and Alimorad (2013) investigated demotivating factors in the public schools of Shiraz, Iran, and found the following sources of demotivation: 1) lack of self-confidence, 2) teachers' incompetence, 3) lack of interest in English, 4) lack of school facilities, 5) unfitting learning contents and context, 6) focus on grammar, and 7) unsuitable teaching styles. Rashidi, Rahimi, and Alimorad (2014) studied the discursive construction of demotivation in four Iranian EFL learners and concluded that demotivation is not a one-dimensional and static construct; rather, it is multi-dimensional, dynamic, and changing and is socially and historically constructed with the passage of time. The learners' past and present learning experiences in the immediate language learning context, their future selves as well as the macro-social and political factors all contribute to the construction of EFL learners' demotivation (pp. 46-47).

Finally, Meshkat and Hassani (2012) reported the following sources of demotivation based on a survey of 421 high schools girls and boys in Qom, Iran: lack of facilities in schools, overemphasis on grammar, lengthy passages, and high expectation to be grammatically correct.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

The purpose of this survey was to elicit and describe the preferences of language teachers and learners for strategies to prevent learners' demotivation. To this end, it adopted a quantitative design in which the participants provided responses to multiple-choice items in a Likert-type self-report questionnaire.

3.2 Participants

To investigate the strategies that Iranian students and teachers considered most effective in preventing demotivation, the researchers administered a five-point Likert-type questionnaire to 60 high school students and 30 teachers. These students and teachers, who spoke Persian as their mother tongue, were selected from high schools in Tehran based on availability and administrative reasons. Efforts were made to include a similar number of male and female teachers and learners. However, this goal was not reached. Of the 60 students, 36 (60%) were female and 24 (40%) were male. Of the thirty teachers, 19 (63.4%) were female and 11 (36.6%) were male. The students' age ranged from 15 to 18 and the teachers' age ranged from 25 to 50.

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3.3 Instruments

To elicit feedback from Iranian EFL learners and teachers about anti-demotivation strategies, a five-point Likert questionnaire was employed. This scale was compiled based on previously-constructed, valid, and reliable questionnaires, i.e., Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Ajlan-Alshehri (2013), and Sahragard and Ansaripour (2014). The original wording of the selected items was changed to suit the purpose of this study, that is, each item was changed from a comment on a situation to a suggestion of an action or strategy to motivate or prevent demotivation. The responses could range from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. To make sure about the content validity and relevance of the questionnaire, its items were reviewed by an expert in TEFL as well as by the researchers and the necessary revisions were made. The final questionnaire had 40 items. The teacher version of the questionnaire was in English. But it was translated into Persian for the students to reduce language barriers. The translation was done by one of the coauthors who is a professional translator. In addition to the authors, two M.A. students were involved in reviewing both versions of the questionnaire to ensure the transparency of the items and clarify obscure wording. The two versions were piloted on 25 students and 22 teachers and obtained Cronbach's alphas of .949 and .913 for the students' and teachers' versions, respectively. The students in the pilot study were also asked to mark any item to which they could not easily connect.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

One of the researchers contacted and briefed the students and teachers who were profiled in the Participants section above about the purpose of the study and data collection. Upon consent to participate in the study, each participant was given a copy of her/his respective version of the questionnaire containing items about how to preempt demotivation. The students and teachers were invited to take their time and answer the items carefully. They were informed that there were no right or wrong answers. The students were told that their teachers would not know about the information they provided. To secure the cooperation of the respondents and encourage them to take the survey seriously and freely express their opinion about the statements in the questionnaire, the researchers reassured them that they were contributing to a serious and significant academic study and their answers mattered and would be kept confidential. Attempts were made to collect all the questionnaires from teachers and students. A few respondents delivered their forms after multiple contacts.

3.5 Scoring and Data Analysis

To make the marking of the respondents to questionnaire items appropriate for statistical analysis, the responses to each choice in the two forms of the questionnaire were added up and a score was assigned for each. This procedure provided outlines of English learners' and teachers' preferences over how to prevent demotivation (Tables 1 & 2 below). To compare the responses of the students with those of the teachers and see their overall differences, numerical values from one to five were assigned to the responses (one for strongly disagree and five for strongly agree) and scores were calculated for individual items and questionnaire forms. The scores for each participant were added up and mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for teachers' and students' scores. To be able to draw inferences and make generalizations about the difference between the preferences of teachers and learners, an independent samples t-test compared their mean scores. The software tool employed was SPSS version 21.

4. Results

4.1 Students' Perception of Strategies for Preventing Demotivation

Students' perception of anti-demotivation strategies was sought through administering the translated version of the questionnaire. Table 1 shows the percentages of students' responses to each item. To keep the practical usefulness of the results, all the items along with the responses to them are displayed.

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Table 1. The percentages of students' responses to each item in the anti-demotivation strategies questionnaire

	An English teacher should ……	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Establish good relationship with students	**2**	**6**	**12**	**48**	**32**
2.	Encourage students to try harder	**16**	**26**	**22**	**21**	**15**
3.	Allow students to get to know each other	**2**	**34**	**8**	**42**	**14**
4.	State the objectives of each class	**0**	**4**	**10**	**62**	**24**
5.	Break the routine by varying the presentation format	**0**	**8**	**16**	**54**	**22**
6.	Bring in and encourage humor	**0**	**12**	**6**	**66**	**16**
7.	Celebrate students' success	**0**	**22**	**36**	**26**	**16**
8.	Involve students in designing and running the English course	**6**	**18**	**10**	**54**	**12**
9.	Encourage students to imagine themselves using English in their future career	**0**	**6**	**22**	**50**	**22**
10.	Relate the subject matter to the students' everyday experiences	**8**	**28**	**16**	**42**	**6**
11.	Present tasks in a motivated way	**6**	**6**	**18**	**48**	**22**
12.	Show students how particular activities help them to attain their goal	**2**	**22**	**12**	**42**	**22**
13.	Recognize students' effort and achievement	**0**	**6**	**8**	**44**	**42**
14.	Provide face-to-face feedback to students about their progress	**0**	**34**	**32**	**24**	**10**
15.	Invite senior students to share their English learning experiences with the class	**0**	**12**	**20**	**44**	**24**
16.	Allow students choices about the learning process	**10**	**14**	**16**	**36**	**24**
17.	Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom	**4**	**24**	**12**	**36**	**24**
18.	Teach self-motivating strategies	**2**	**20**	**8**	**38**	**32**
19.	Use learning technologies in her classes such as the computer	**0**	**8**	**26**	**48**	**18**
20.	Reduce students' language anxiety when they are speaking in English	**4**	**30**	**12**	**32**	**22**
21.	Provide students with positive feedback	**0**	**18**	**14**	**42**	**26**

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22.	Show their enthusiasm for teaching English	**14**	**24**	**6**	**34**	**22**
23.	Draw her students' attention to their strengths and abilities	**0**	**24**	**22**	**40**	**14**
24.	Pay attention and listen to each student	**0**	**6**	**38**	**46**	**10**
25.	Encourage students to set English learning goals	**28**	**36**	**26**	**8**	**2**
26.	Give students opportunities to experience success in their learning	**16**	**20**	**14**	**28**	**22**
27.	Be careful to avoid embarrassing the students when giving feedback	**7**	**1**	**2**	**62**	**28**
28.	Create a supportive classroom environment so the students feel encouraged to take risks	**12**	**18**	**12**	**38**	**20**
29.	Make themselves available to the students outside class	**10**	**6**	**42**	**30**	**12**
30.	Encourage the students to assess themselves	**10**	**20**	**4**	**32**	**34**
31.	Use a short opening activity to relax and help the students to focus	**0**	**18**	**20**	**32**	**30**
32.	Tell the students that they can learn if they make the necessary effort	**12**	**24**	**24**	**26**	**14**
33.	Encourage the students to teach each other	**20**	**22**	**24**	**14**	**20**
34.	Make tasks attractive by using games and competitions	**0**	**2**	**32**	**42**	**24**
35.	Remind students that mistakes are a natural part of learning	**20**	**32**	**16**	**20**	**12**
36.	Provide students with the opportunity to communicate in English.	**10**	**22**	**16**	**32**	**20**
37.	Show their enthusiasm for teaching	**14**	**24**	**6**	**34**	**22**
38.	Make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct	**5**	**10**	**2**	**39**	**44**
39.	Help students develop realistic beliefs about English learning	**20**	**20**	**24**	**22**	**14**
40.	Display the class goal in a wall chart and review it regularly	**10**	**25**	**35**	**20**	**10**

The responses revealed that the students were positive about most of the strategies. Items 4, 5, 6, and 27 received the highest number of positive responses. Sixty-two percent of students agreed and 24% of them strongly agreed that *letting students know the objectives of the class* (Item 4) is an effective strategy for avoiding demotivation. Items 5, 6,

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and 27 were mainly related to *the atmosphere of the class* and students viewed *humorous, anxiety free, and friendly atmosphere* as ways to prevent demotivation. For instance, 66% of students "agreed" and 16% "strongly agreed" with Item 6, "An English teacher should bring in and encourage humor." For Item 5, 0% strongly disagreed, 8% disagreed, 16% had no idea, 54% agreed, and 22% strongly agreed that "the routine should be broken by varying the presentation format." With regard to anxiety free and friendly atmosphere (Item 27), 62 % of students agreed and 28% of students strongly agreed that teachers should "avoid embarrassing the students when giving feedback."

Students also indicated that "providing face to face feedback" (Item 14), "encouraging to set goals" (Item 25), and "teaching peers" (Item 33) are not effective enough to prevent demotivation. For Item 14, 0% strongly disagreed, 34% disagreed, 32% had no idea, 24% agreed, and 10% strongly agreed that "teacher should provide face-to-face feedback to students about their progress." Sixty-four percent of responses for "Encouraging to set goals" (Item 25) were "disagreements" and only 8% agreed and just 2% strongly agreed with it. This item should not be confused with the Item 4. In Item 4, it is the teacher who should set the goals but in Item 25 it is the students who are supposed to set the learning goals. In Item 33, 20% strongly disagreed, 22% disagreed, 24% had no idea, 14% agreed, and 20% strongly agreed that "teacher should encourage the students to teach each other."

Some items, particularly Items 29 and 40, should be called borderline anti-demotivation strategies if we want to rely on the reactions of students because most of learners were ambivalent about their effectiveness. For instance, 42% of students had no idea whether the "availability of teachers outside class" (Item 29) would be effective. In the same vein, 35% of the students had no idea whether or not "displaying the class goal on a wall chart and reviewing it regularly" (Item 40) would be effective.

4.2 Teachers' Perception of Strategies for Preventing Demotivation

Teachers' perception of anti-demotivation strategies was sought through administering the same questionnaire as was used for the students except that it was not translated into Persian. Table 2 shows the percentages of teachers' responses to each item. To keep the practical usefulness of the results, all the items along with the responses to them are displayed.

Table 2. The percentages of teachers' responses to each item in the anti-demotivation strategies questionnaire

	An English teacher should ……	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**No idea**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1.	Establish good relationship with students	12	32	20	28	8
2.	Encourage students to try harder	68	24	2	4	2
3.	Allow students to get to know each other	50	26	10	10	4
4.	State the objectives of each class	4	26	10	42	18
5.	Break the routine by varying the presentation format	0	24	12	40	24
6.	Bring in and encourage humor	2	10	2	44	42
7.	Celebrate students' success	6	34	24	24	12
8.	Involve students in designing and running the English course	2	34	26	20	18
9.	Encourage students to imagine themselves using English in their future career	2	18	12	46	22
10.	Relate the subject matter to the students' everyday experiences	4	34	24	28	10
11.	Present tasks in a motivated way	6	12	24	54	4

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12.	Show students how particular activities help them to attain their goal	8	24	22	26	20
13.	Recognize students' effort and achievement	14	28	10	30	18
14.	Provide face-to-face feedback to students about their progress	22	22	10	30	16
15.	Invite senior students to share their English learning experiences with the class	28	28	26	14	4
16.	Allow students choices about the learning process	6	38	22	20	14
17.	Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom	10	22	24	22	22
18.	Teach self-motivating strategies	14	34	14	26	12
19.	Use learning technologies in her classes such as the computer	20	56	14	8	2
20.	Reduce students' language anxiety when they are speaking in English	28	26	10	22	14
21.	Provide students with positive feedback	2	12	2	38	46
22.	Show their enthusiasm for teaching English	4	0	2	46	48
23.	Draw her students' attention to their strengths and abilities	8	8	14	30	40
24.	Pay attention and listen to each student	10	20	16	38	16
25.	Encourage students to set English learning goals	12	26	20	18	24
26.	Give students opportunities to experience success in their learning	0	18	14	44	24
27.	Be careful to avoid embarrassing the students when giving feedback	0	14	6	46	34
28.	Create a supportive classroom environment so the students feel encouraged to take risks	0	12	16	38	34
29.	Make themselves available to the students outside class	28	38	10	12	12
30.	Encourage the students to assess themselves	18	30	6	22	24
31.	Use a short opening activity to relax and help the students to focus	8	27	10	33	22
32.	Tell the students that they can learn if they make the necessary effort	16	20	33	20	11
33.	Encourage the students to teach each other	15	20	25	21	19
34.	Make tasks attractive by using games and competitions	13	17	20	28	22
35.	Remind students that mistakes are a natural part of learning	3	19	23	27	28
36.	Provide students with the opportunity to communicate in English.	13	16	21	33	17
37.	Show their enthusiasm for teaching	4	0	2	46	48

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38.	Make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct	19	18	30	20	13
39.	Help students develop realistic beliefs about English learning	15	17	18	29	21
40.	Display the class goal in a wall chart and review it regularly	22	27	11	27	13

On the whole, teachers were also supportive of most strategies in the questionnaires. However, in contrast with students' responses, which were densely concentrated around agreements, teachers' responses were more widely distributed across all Likert choices. Items 4, 5, 6, 22, 26, and 27 received the greatest number of positive responses from the teachers. Interestingly, the students also gave more positive responses to Items 4, 5, 6, and 27. These items concerned "setting objectives", "having more variety in classroom", "having humor in classroom", and "creating more friendly and safer atmosphere for taking risks", respectively. For Item 27, 46 % of students agreed and 34% of students strongly agreed that teachers should "avoid embarrassing the students when giving feedback" while 0% strongly disagreed and only 14% disagreed with it. For Item 22, 46% of teachers agreed and 48% strongly agreed that teachers "should show their enthusiasm for teaching English" and 44% of them agreed and strongly agreed that teachers "should give students opportunities to experience success in their learning" (Item 26) to preempt students demotivation.

On the other hand, teachers indicated that "encouraging students to try harder" (Item 2), "inviting senior students to share their English learning experiences with the class" (Item 15), "using learning technologies in classes" (Item 19), and "making themselves available to the students outside class" (Item 29) are the least effective strategies in preventing demotivation. For Item 2, only 4% of teachers agreed and 2% strongly agreed that teachers should encourage students to try harder while 68% strongly disagreed and 24% disagreed with this strategy. For Item 15, 28% of teachers strongly disagreed, 28% disagree, 26% had no idea, 14% agreed, and 4% strongly agreed that "senior students should be invited to share their English learning experiences with the class."

Items 32 and 38 received the highest percentages for the option "have no idea" from teachers. In other words, respectively 33% and 30% were not sure about the effectiveness of "telling the students that they can learn if they make the necessary effort" (Item 32) and "making clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct" (Item 38).

4.3 Comparison of Students' and Teachers' Responses

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' and learners' scores. According to this table, the teachers had a mean score of 104.23 (SD=3.04) and the students obtained a mean score of 122.77 (SD=4.17).

Table 3. Summary statistics for teachers' and learners' responses to demotivation prevention strategies

	Groups	N	Means	Std. Deviations	Std. Error Mean
Demotivation strategies	teachers	30	104.23	3.04770	.55643
	Students	60	122.77	4.17972	.53960

An independent samples t-test was run on the scores to statistically determine the significance of the difference. Table 4 shows the results of this test along with the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality of the distribution of the data.

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Table 4. Results of independent samples test and Kolmogorov Smirnov test of normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	Statistic	df	Sig.		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Teachers	.101	30	.200*	Equal variances assumed	4.634	.034	-21.564	88	.000	-18.53333	.85947
Students	.066	60	.200*	Equal variances not assumed			-23.911	76.107	.000	-18.53333	.77510

Based on the results of Kolmogorov Smirnov test of normality, the data from both teachers and learners were normally distributed (P>0.05) which legitimized the use of parametric test of independent samples t-test. Moreover, Levene's test of equality of variances indicated that variances were not equal in the two groups of participants and accordingly t-test with non-equal variance assumption was reported. Based on the results of the t-test, it was found that there was a significant difference between teachers and learners in terms of their reactions to the suggested anti-demotivation strategies.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to find the most effective strategies for demotivation prevention through the eyes of Iranian EFL teachers and learners. Based on the findings, students viewed *setting goals* and *humorous, anxiety free, and friendly atmosphere* as the most effective and *face-to-face feedback, encouraging to set goals*, and *teaching to peers* as the least effective strategies for preventing demotivation. In addition to *more relaxed learning atmosphere* and *setting objectives*, which they shared with learners, teachers viewed *showing enthusiasm for teaching* and *giving students opportunities to experience success in their learning* as very effective strategies. Teachers indicated that *encouraging students to try harder*, *inviting senior students to share their English learning experiences with the class*, *using learning technologies in class*, and *making themselves available to the students outside class* are the least effective strategies for preventing demotivation in foreign language classrooms. Finally, the results of statistical analysis showed that there was a significant difference between teachers and learners in terms of their views on effective strategies to prevent demotivation. In this section, some of the results of the study are discussed.

One of the main findings of the study was that both teachers and learners thought that providing *a more relaxed atmosphere for language learners*, and *reducing anxiety* are the most effective strategies to prevent demotivation. For instance, students believed that humorous, anxiety free, and friendly atmosphere are effective strategies to prevent demotivation (Items 5, 6, & 27). These findings are consistent with the movement in language teaching against anxiety, which started with the conceptualization of foreign language anxiety by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Since then, there have been numerous studies on the detrimental effects of anxiety on learning different language skills (Bekleyen, 2009; Chen & Lin, 2009; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Sellers, 2000; Zhao, 2009). It seems that both teachers and learners are cognizant of this detrimental effect on students' willingness and motivation and seek ways to relieve it, albeit in their own ways.

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Based on the results of the study, it was also found that students do not like to be *embarrassed in front of their classmates* and indicated that *reducing the amount of face-to-face feedback* is effective in preventing demotivation. This finding is also related to the issue of anxiety as one of the sources of anxiety in foreign language classes has been negative judgment by others and distress for negative evaluation (Kitano, 2001). Young (1991) maintained that the reason why learners were not active in the classroom activities was the fear of making errors. One can also mention Koch and Terrell (1991) who emphasized that learning a foreign language can lose color due to anxiety while speaking in front of others in classroom.

In contrast with students' reluctance for *receiving face-to-face feedback*, teachers were supportive of giving face-to-face feedback for preventing demotivation. This contrast can be attributed to differences in beliefs, concerns, and expectations between teachers and learners. Students may be worried about negative evaluation and resultant stress during face-to-face feedback while teacher may more think of the benefits of such feedback for language learning. While teachers are aware of the anxieties involved, and intend to cancel out the negative effects by proper strategies, learners only think of their fears. So, it may help if teachers communicate their agenda to the learners in a transparent fashion.

Both teachers and learners considered *goal setting* an effective strategy to prevent demotivation. Eighty-six percent of students and 60% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with Item 4, which advised on *announcing the objectives of the class* as a strategy to preempt demotivation. This means that learners like to know what their target is and what they are expected to learn. This deposition is also aligned with ideas expressed by such motivation theorists as Mitchell (1982), who states that motivators are "those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed" (p.81). It has also been found that giving people specific goals instead of telling them to do their best raises motivation (Bryan & Locke, 1967; Locke & Bryan 1966; Locke & Latham, 2002). The fact that many teachers also supported this strategy resulted from their correct intuition and rich experience with learners.

While there were similarities in teachers' and learners' views, differences between teachers' and learners' preferences could also be observed. For instance, in the item that suggested *more out-of-class interaction of teachers and learners* (Item 29), students were more positive than teachers in this regard. The significant difference between teachers' and learners' views about what strategies may work better to prevent demotivation can be attributed to their identities or roles as being teachers or learners. Teachers are more experienced and may have expectations and understandings quite different from those of learners. Students, who are usually younger, have different concerns, sources of gratification, visions, and values. So, it is understandable that their preferences may be different for some content, tasks, methods, strategies, and techniques. The question is which should be given priority: teachers' or students' preferences? Teachers and other practitioners should exercise discretion when making decisions. On the one hand, when there is a clash of preferences, ignoring the preferences of learners may lead to a psychological distance between teachers and students and undermine teacher-student relationship; on the other hand, submission to learners at the cost of giving up time-tested strategies may compromise serious learning goals and achievements. For example, the negative effect of submitting to student's reluctance to speak in class may override the temporary relief they may gain when exempted to do so. After all, one should distinguish *lacks* and *needs* from *wants* and *likes*-- what is required and what is desired (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

6. Conclusion

This study offered 40 statements about motivational strategies to English teachers and learners in order to elicit their reaction to them and record the degree to which the statements are supported by learners and teachers. The responses can inform language teaching practitioners, particularly teachers about what is expected on the part of learners and deemed effective on the part of teachers. Without compromising their principal goals, teachers can make tactful decisions based on these expectations and the collective practical wisdom. Awareness of the areas of dissonance between teachers and learners can also be helpful in the process of decision-making about the right incentives and tasks. The limitations of this study are hard to ignore. The respondents are likely to have been careless in choosing the alternatives, which could have been redressed by triangulating their answers through interviews for more in-depth information. Moreover, a longitudinal study to empirically test some of the more promising strategies may offer reassurance about what works in practice. Personality factors and other individual differences certainly interact with motivation/demotivation and deserve to be factored in the investigation of the issue.

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