

# DEMOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

---

Ćorić, Ana

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2022

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split / Sveučilište u Splitu, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:172:867796>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-11-30**

Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of Faculty of humanities and social sciences](#)



UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT



SVEUČILIŠTE U SPLITU  
FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET  
Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

# **DEMOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Završni rad

Studentica:

Ana Ćorić

Mentorica:

doc. dr. sc. Danijela Šegedin Borovina

Split, 2022.

UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Department of English Language and Literature

# **DEMOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

BA Thesis

Student:  
Ana Ćorić

Supervisor:  
Danijela Šegedin Borovina, PhD, Assistant Professor

Split, 2022

# Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Motivation and Demotivation.....	2
2.1 Motivation.....	2
2.2 Motivation in Second Language Learning.....	3
2.3 Demotivation.....	5
2.4 Amotivation.....	7
3. Studies on demotivation in L2 learning.....	8
3.1 Chambers (1993).....	9
3.2 Oxford (1998 and 2001).....	10
3.3 Ushioda (1998).....	12
3.4 Dörnyei (1998).....	13
3.5 Sakai and Kikuchi (2009).....	14
3.6 Muhonen (2004).....	15
3.7 Bednářová (2011).....	17
4. Studies in the Croatian context.....	19
4.2 Vidak and Sindik (2018).....	19
4.2 Bešlić (2018).....	20
4.3 Tomić (2020).....	23
5. Discussion.....	25
6. Conclusion.....	26
7. Bibliography.....	27
Summary.....	29
Sažetak.....	30

# 1. Introduction

The English language is nowadays a part of the school curriculum in many countries. Even outside the classroom, the English language fulfills a wide range of personal and professional needs. However, the process of learning English as a second or foreign language can be complex due to different reasons, some of which are individual (personal) and some of which belong to external influences. Therefore, the progress of learning varies from individual to individual. For the learning process to be successful, a student needs some kind of driving force to push him/her forward. In psychology and, consequently, in the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA), this driving force is called motivation. Students can also encounter a variety of demotivating factors that distance them from their desired goals. SLA researchers have mostly focused on investigating the construct of motivation. On the contrary, there are few studies on the demotivating factors and their role in foreign language (FL) learning.

This thesis aims to describe a selection of studies investigating demotivating factors in learning English as a second and foreign language (ESL/EFL)<sup>1</sup>. The first section provides information about the concepts of motivation and demotivation and discusses the importance of these constructs in second language learning. The distinction is made between the terms demotivation and amotivation. After an insight into the main characteristics of the aforementioned constructs, this thesis gives an overview of studies on the second language (L2) demotivation in Croatia and abroad. The results of the studies are compared to each other in the last chapter, and some main conclusions are presented.

---

<sup>1</sup> ESL stands for 'English as a Second Language' and is taught to students in an English-speaking country, whereas EFL stands for 'English as a Foreign Language' and is taught to students in a non-English speaking country.

## **2. Motivation and Demotivation**

### **2.1 Motivation**

Dörnyei and Otto (1998: 64) define motivation as “the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out”. In the aforementioned definition, the authors point out several important aspects of motivation. First, they emphasize that motivation is a dynamic and ever-changing construct that influences every aspect of the task that people want to accomplish. Second, they describe a kind of an imagined motivational scale, in which motivation dynamically changes, supporting our effort to begin, sustain and complete a task. Third, they also talk about evaluating cognitive and motor processes leading to success or failure. Evaluation is often neglected as an aspect of motivation, but its importance lies in the fact that it influences our next choice of task to accomplish.

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), the only thing about motivation that most researchers would agree on is that it deals with the direction and magnitude of human behavior, which refers to the choice of a particular action, the persistence with the action and the effort a person is willing to invest in it. Motivation functions in a cyclical relationship with learning. Therefore, it is defined in terms of positive and negative cycles, that is, high and low motivation, which can lead to high and low achievement. Researchers paid a lot of attention to finding out how to break those negative cycles which, naturally, lead to low achievement by modifying learners’ cognitive processes in the relationship between learning and motivation. In other words, they investigated how one can modify a learner’s self-perception or his/her interpretation of a particular demotivating situation in order to reduce their demotivation.

Furthermore, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) point out the complexity of motivation in real-life situations because the experience of motivation does not only include the cause and effect of doing a task, but also the ‘pre-actional phase’, ‘actional stage’ and ‘post-actional phase’. The first phase includes setting a goal, planning and forming one’s intentions. The ‘actional stage’ consists of implementing sub-tasks in the action plan, constant appraisal of the success and controlling the action with self-regulatory strategies. The last phase refers to evaluating the

outcomes of actions, e.g., students compare their initial plans for learning with their results and think about changes that need to be made for better outcomes in the future (Ellis, 2015). In the following chapter, the focus will be on the specific type of motivation, that is, motivation in L2 learning.

## **2.2 Motivation in Second Language Learning**

Second language motivation has long been an independent and important research field within SLA, with many developed theories (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Dörnyei (2011) identified three main phases in the L2 motivational research: the social-psychological period, the cognitive-situated period and the process-oriented period. In the social-psychological period, Lambert and Gardner investigated language acquisition in the bilingual social context of Canada. Their work emphasized the relationship between motivation and orientation, which was Gardner's term for 'goal'. Namely, orientation helps arouse motivation and direct it towards a certain goal. Gardner developed the Socio-educational Model in 1985, emphasizing the influence of the social and cultural milieu, that is, the influence of the environment in which L2 learners grow up. According to Gardner (1985, in Ellis, 2015), the social and cultural milieu influences learners' cultural beliefs and attitudes towards the target language, native speakers, as well as their learning outcomes. He further introduced the terms *integrative* and *instrumental* orientation. While the former type of motivational orientation refers to the desire to interact with members of the L2 group and become similar to them, the second one involves other reasons for learning, such as a higher salary or getting a better job. However, Gardner (2001, in Ellis, 2015) recognized "other supports for motivation not directly associated with integrative orientation, such as learner's attitudes towards teachers or his/her effort." Therefore, the construct of motivation involves orientation, attitudes and effort. More specifically, L2 motivation includes motivational orientation, that is, the reasons to learn a second language, behavioural motivation, which refers to the learner's effort to complete tasks, as well as attributional motivation, that is, the effect of learner's evaluation of his/her progress on subsequent learning behavior (Ellis, 2015).

The cognitive-situated period followed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Ellis (2015) put it, “the ‘social’ component of Gardner’s theory was under-theorized,” whereas the researchers in the cognitive-situated period focused on the classroom teaching and students. They emphasized the importance of cognition by examining factors that were responsible for the learner’s intrinsic interest, which resulted in two theories: self-determination theory and attribution theory. Deci and Ryan (in Ellis, 2015), who introduced the self-determination theory, stated that learners could be motivated by both external factors (e.g., rewards, grades) and internal factors (e.g., interest, curiosity). Therefore, they distinguished intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. The notion of intrinsic motivation is related to the behavior of a learner who wants to experience the joy of accomplishing a task. Extrinsic motivation refers to the behavior with a goal of getting a reward or to avoid punishment, while motivation concerns the absence of motivation.

The main principle of attribution theory concerns the causal relation between past success or failure and future achievements. Ellis points out that both of these theories “recognized the importance of situation-specific factors”. Still, none of them considered the ebb and flow of motivation over time (Ellis, 2015: 62). The third period at the end of the century was the process-oriented period. It focused on the variation of motivation during time and its dynamic character. A researcher who made significant contributions to L2 motivation research in this period was the Hungarian applied linguist Zoltán Dörnyei. The whole period led to many developments in L2 motivation research: the identification of motivational phases, recognition of reasons for L2 learning, explanation of the influence of group dynamics<sup>2</sup> on motivation, explanation of the motivation as an act of communication<sup>3</sup> and explanation of the importance of self-regulation<sup>4</sup> in learning (Ellis, 2015).

Furthermore, Ushioda (2009) pointed out the importance of considering learners of a second language as real people who are located in a certain cultural and historical context, which means that their motivation is shaped by the context. The biggest attempt of the process-oriented period to represent the dynamic nature of motivation was the Process Model. It consists of three phases: pre-actional, actional and post-actional phase (see 2.1). The first phase builds on

---

<sup>2</sup> Individuals tend to behave differently in groups, that is, other learners can influence their motivation (Ellis, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Motivation as an act of communication refers to the fact that motivation is displayed and developed through interaction (Ellis, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Self-regulation refers to the actions that a learner takes in order to organize his/her learning, e.g. plan his/her study time (Ellis, 2015).



Gardner's perspective, since motivational influences in this stage include 'attitudes towards the L2 and its speakers' (Ellis, 2015). The actional stage, as the self-determination theory, pays attention to the importance of the intrinsic motivation derived from the performance of tasks and the last phase includes attribution theory.

Moreover, Dörnyei (2001, in Muhonen 2004) stated that a language should be considered and investigated as a socially and culturally bound concept because learning a second language inevitably involves some elements of the L2 culture. Therefore, languages differ from other school subjects and they need to be specifically analysed "by identifying the unique behavioural and psychological implications of acquiring a new set of habits" (Ushioda 1998: 83 in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). L2 motivational research aims to clarify how some people learn a second language easily while others struggle, even if they are all given the same opportunities. Hence, language learners are observed in context and researchers analyse how they interpret events in L2 learning and L2-related experiences and how such cognitions and beliefs shape their involvement in learning (Ushioda 2009: 122). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) argue that motivation ebbs and flows in response to internal and external influences, such as interest, attitudes or learning environment. Motivation does not remain constant but changes during the course of months, years and even during a single lesson. Furthermore, Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006: 562) also talked about "constant (re)appraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to". Therefore, they also described motivation as a mental process that dynamically changes and evolves, which means that they agreed with Ushioda's statement about the learning experience being "a motivational flux rather than stability" (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Namely, it is common for learners to experience a fluctuation in their enthusiasm/commitment daily (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006). Moreover, they often encounter negative influences, which can eventually diminish their motivation. Those negative influences, that is, demotives, decrease an action tendency and negatively influence L2 learning. The notion of demotivation will be elaborated upon in the next subchapter.

### **2.3 Demotivation**

The notion of motivation has been described and researched as a construct that has a positive influence on learning (Ellis, 2015). On the other hand, language learners may encounter a lot of negative, demotivating factors, which have a detrimental effect. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011:139)

use the term demotivation to describe the process during which specific external forces “reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action”. The demotivating factors can be, for instance, materials, teachers, environment, or bad results (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011). The authors provided the following hypothetical examples of demotivation: a student who was demotivated to learn a language after his class was split into two groups and he was sent to the ‘slow’ group, a student to whom the teacher talked in a rather brusque and impatient manner and a student who was embarrassed to talk in front of his class. They also claimed that each demotivated learner was once a motivated learner, but he/she lost commitment/interest for a particular reason. However, these authors also concluded that not all negative factors are demotivating factors, such as distractions/more attractive options, e.g., choosing a good movie over accomplishing a task, the gradual loss of interest or the internal process of deliberation, e.g., realization that an evening course would be too demanding. Based on the analysis provided by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), Muhonen (2004: 16) used the same examples to illustrate the notion of demotivation and claimed that demotivation could not be related to every reluctant learner. In the first example, a movie was a distraction, so it did not carry a negative value. Gradual loss of interest was not a demotive because demotives “reduce motivation on a single event” and the third example involved the “internal process of deliberation”, which means that the given examples do not illustrate demotivating factors (Muhonen, 2004: 16).

Although Dörnyei and Ushioda focused on the external forces (e.g., teachers, textbooks, learning environment) leading to demotivation, many researchers included internal demotives in their research studies. These factors include, for instance, attitude toward learning a language or the lack of self-confidence. In fact, Falout, Elwood and Hood (2009, in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011) speculated that internal factors might be stronger determinants of learning outcomes than external factors. Internal factors that they analysed were self-denigration, value and self-confidence. They found that more proficient students built self-confidence in L2 while less proficient students experienced self-denigration. Their research showed the necessity of optimizing the external conditions and factors that influence the internal ones, to protect students from loss of self-confidence and to enable the development of adaptive self-regulatory skills<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Self-regulatory processes are important for maintaining motivation during the task and they include person's own strategies to 'manage their own achievement through specific processes' (Nitta and Baba, 2015).

(Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Even Dörnyei, in his study from 1998, included reduced self-confidence and a negative attitude toward L2 in his list of demotivating factors, which contradicts the definition of demotivation from 2011 (Dörnyei and Ushioda). However, this probably meant that Dörnyei had emphasized the importance of the internal factors in his earlier definition (1998), but chose to focus on the importance of the external ones in the later definition (2011). Building on Dörnyei's ideas and the results of her own research, Bednářová (2011) gave her definition of demotivation, describing it as 'a psychological state' of a learner who was once motivated to learn, but certain internal or external factors restricted his/her progress.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also talk about the related concept in motivational psychology, that is, amotivation. The concept of amotivation and how it differs from demotivation will be discussed in the following subchapter.

## **2.4 Amotivation**

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) highlighted the importance of understanding the difference between the terms amotivation and demotivation. Namely, amotivation is a significant component of self-determination theory, presented by Deci and Ryan (1985), and it is "related to general outcome expectations that are unrealistic for some reason", while demotivation is "related to specific external causes" (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 140). Deci and Ryan defined amotivation as "the relative absence of motivation that is not caused by a lack of initial interest, but rather by the individuals experiencing feelings of incompetence and helplessness when faced with the activity" (Deci and Ryan, 1985 in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The behavior of a person who is amotivated lacks intentionality and a sense of personal causation or commitment. This happens when a learner feels incompetent to do something and thinks there is no point in pursuing the activity (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

On the other hand, demotivated learners do not lack motivation completely, and some positive influences of their initial motivation may still be present. For example, if a student thinks his/her English teacher is incompetent or malevolent, he/she can still be motivated to learn the language. Dörnyei (2001, in Muhonen, 2004) believed that motivation could be regained, while an amotivated learner experienced a complete loss of motivation. In addition to this, Muhonen (2004: 77) asked an interesting question, wondering where demotivation ended and

amotivation began. It is possible, in fact, that a series of demotivating experiences lead a learner to amotivation. An example that Muhonen (2004) provided was the situation of a student who was constantly humiliated by his/her teacher. Such an experience could result in losing interest in the language, but if the demotive was removed, then the learner could be motivated again, that is, the learner in the described situation could regain his/her interest in the language with a new teacher.

As for the sources of amotivation, Vallerand (1997, in Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011) introduced four: capacity-ability beliefs, strategy beliefs, capacity-effort beliefs and helplessness beliefs. The first source refers to people who think they do not have the ability to perform an action, e.g., learn a language. The second source of amotivation (strategy beliefs) includes people who doubt the effectiveness of strategies they should use. The third source (capacity-effort beliefs) is based on thinking that the required effort will be far too excessive, whereas the last one deals with an effort that is inconsequential compared with the enormity of the task. Therefore, amotivated learners lack motivation from the beginning of a process so they give up on learning, while the demotivated ones continue attending lessons and facing demotives.

In the following chapters, research studies on demotivation conducted abroad and in the Croatian context will be discussed in more detail.

### **3. Studies on demotivation in L2 learning**

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) claimed that failing in at least one language is common and that the L2 domain is an area of education often characterized by learning failure. Therefore, it is unclear why demotivation for learning a second language remains under-researched in the SLA field. In the following subchapters, we will present some existing research studies dealing with L2 demotivation. The studies will be divided into those conducted in the Croatian context and those conducted abroad. The selection of research studies described in the thesis closely follows the book by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). Croatian studies described in this thesis were selected based on their availability in *Hrčak* and *Dabar*.<sup>6</sup> The following aspects of each study will be

---

<sup>6</sup> *Hrčak* and *Dabar* are digital academic archives with Croatian scientific and professional journals which offer open access

described: the participants, the method and research questions, the method of analysis and the results. In the discussion and conclusion sections of this thesis, we will discuss the differences between L2 demotivation studies and present the main conclusions.

### **3.1 Chambers (1993)**

One of the first investigations of L2 demotivation was conducted by Chambers (1993, "Taking the 'de' out of demotivation", published in *Language Learning Journal*, 7:1, 13-16). His paper began with a description of typical uncooperative students who 'sit at the back', 'swing on their chairs' and 'chew gum'. Chambers considered their behavior in the classroom a challenge, and he even disclosed the names of three of his students, for whom he wanted to find the right way to motivate them. A method that Chambers chose for his research study was a questionnaire that was completed by 191 year-nine pupils at the age of 13 and by seven teachers in four UK schools. The questionnaire consisted of fourteen questions where students had to choose which number on a four-point scale best described their opinion. The questionnaire also contained two open questions. The participants had to give reasons for their answers. The questionnaire items aimed to investigate the importance of learning languages, enjoyment in learning, opinions about preferable methods, materials, the classroom where they learned languages, feelings about learning and their progress and the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Chambers did not give a detailed analysis of the answers or examples of questions, but only a summary of his findings.

Teachers' answers indicated that they were aware of demotivation because they constantly witnessed students with poor concentration, lack of belief in their own capabilities, lack of cooperation, and students who make no effort to learn a language or bring materials to class. Only one of seven teachers thought that demotivation was a very serious problem, two teachers thought it was quite serious and the remaining four saw some grounds for concern. They stated that they tried to find solutions in the form of *Well-done!* stickers, appropriate materials, making cheerful lessons or emphasizing the importance of learning a language. What Chambers found especially interesting was the fact that among a variety of social, psychological, historical, geographical and attitudinal reasons, teachers did not include themselves as a demotivating factor, that is, they did not perceive their behavior and methods as having a negative influence on students. On the other hand, most of the students claimed that the teachers had a negative

influence on their motivation because they experienced unclear instructions or shouting when something was not clear. Students also said that they experienced too much criticism in front of the class. Another reason for demotivation referred to inadequate teacher-produced materials and textbooks that were either 'too old' or 'covered in graffiti'. When it came to group work, most of the students liked the fact they could chat or let their partner do the job, but some of them were frustrated with unclear instructions. According to Chambers, the least popular skill among students was listening, because recordings were unclear and the speakers were too fast. Hence, they perceived this activity as a test rather than a learning experience. For some students, speaking was seen as an enjoyable activity, while others were too afraid to speak. That was the case with writing, as well, because some students found it interesting or thought of it as a good way to avoid talking in class. Other students described writing tasks as a meaningless activity. Due to the fact that students' preferences varied, Chambers concluded that "what one pupil likes, the next pupil detests", which meant that "the data offer nothing conclusive" (Chambers 1993: 14).

Chambers also described how students' attitudes about foreign languages were influenced by others. For example, if family members believed that foreign languages were useless, a student was bound to express a similar opinion ("My brothers told me it would be boring"; p.15) or otherwise, they could be influenced positively ("I'd never done a language before and my older friends could talk a language and it sounded really good"; p.15). Some answers also indicated that demotivating factors were low self-esteem, bad experience in learning languages and lack of rewards for progress. Finally, Chambers (1993) emphasized that students' opinions and answers can help to better understand the problem of demotivation, so it is important to "adjust the attitude of parents, friends and society" in order to help students. Furthermore, he pointed out that demotivated learners do not want to be given up on, but encouraged. After his investigation, Chambers did not discuss what the demotivating factors were. What he wanted was to satisfy his own curiosity, but he realised that there were many aspects of demotivation and that this first investigation was only "a barely perceivable scratch on the surface" (Chambers 1993:16).

### 3.2 Oxford (1998 and 2001)

In her longitudinal study<sup>7</sup>, Rebecca Oxford (1998, in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011)<sup>8</sup> investigated L2 demotivation among approximately 250 American high school and university students. Through a period of five years, the respondents were asked to describe situations such as the experience of conflict with a teacher or classroom in which they felt uncomfortable. These descriptions were written as an essay, and content analysis<sup>9</sup> showed the occurrence of four broad themes. The first one was the teacher's personal relationship with the students and it referred to the lack of caring, general belligerence, hypercriticism and favoritism/patronage. The second theme dealt with the attitude of teachers towards the course or materials, including characteristics such as the lack of enthusiasm, sloppy management and close-mindedness. The next broad theme referred to 'style conflicts between teachers and students' and it included conflicts about the amount of structure or the degree of 'seriousness' of the class. The final topic concerned the nature of classroom activities, which included irrelevance, overload and repetitiveness.

Based on the fact that the teacher's role emerged as one of the main demotivating factors, Oxford expanded her research. In her 2001 study, she investigated the opinion of 473 student participants from various language and cultural backgrounds, whose task was to write narratives about a language teacher with whom they had a positive or negative experience. The main focus was on the metaphors used to describe teachers with whom students experienced harmony or conflict or whom they liked or disliked. In her analysis, Oxford focused on metaphors that students used to describe their teachers, which resulted in identifying three major teaching approaches, as follows: the autocratic approach, the demotivating/participatory approach and the laissez-faire approach. The first one concerned the teachers with the total power in the classroom, e.g., Teacher as a Hanging Judge, Preacher, Tyrant. The next approach referred to teachers who shared their power with students and included them in making decisions (e.g., Teacher as Family Member, Co-learner, Nurturer), while the laissez-faire approach diminished the authority of teachers (e.g., Teacher as Blind Eye, Babysitter, Absentee).

---

<sup>7</sup> Longitudinal studies repeatedly observe the same participants over a period of time to see the changes that happen for various reasons, (e.g., biological or environmental influences).

<sup>8</sup> Oxford's studies (1998 and 2001) were presented at conferences, but never published as scientific papers. Therefore, the main source of information for her 1998 longitudinal study was Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Content analysis is a research method used to determine the presence of certain words or content in the given data.

Teacher behaviors that were associated with the autocratic and laissez-faire approach were found to be the major demotivating factors, e.g., lack of organization or imagination, disinterest, sarcasm or inattention to students' needs. Hence, the author concluded that "both too much and too little control by the teacher was perceived to be demotivating" (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 144). Both investigations (1998 and 2001) showed the strong influence of teachers' attitudes and behaviors on students' motivation and performance. Teachers' appropriate behavior serves as a 'motivational tool', while certain behaviors can be a source of demotivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

### **3.3 Ushioda (1998)**

The participants of Ushioda's longitudinal study (1998 in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011) were 20 Irish learners of French at Trinity College, Dublin. Interviews were organized in two rounds over the period of 2 years. Each interview lasted 15 to 20 minutes. The first-round interviews had a loosely structured format, where students had to explain their motivation for learning French. To investigate motivational experience over time, the author developed motivational profiles of every student. She conducted a second round of interviews 15-16 months later and these interviews followed a semi-structured format based on the prompts that referred to motivational change, influence and experience over time. The link between the two interviews was the aforementioned motivational profile, the change of which was examined in the second round (a follow-up interview).

After students identified demotivating factors they faced in their L2 learning experience, Ushioda conducted a qualitative content analysis. The author concluded that the majority of responses were related to the negative aspects of the institutionalised learning framework, such as teaching methods, rather than personal aspects, such as low grades. Students limited their current motivational damage from the enduring motivation for learning a language, which means that they attributed their loss of motivation to external factors, rather than personal factors (Ushioda, 1998 in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

The participants also claimed that they sustained or revived their positive motivational disposition while dealing with negative aspects, such as teaching methods or learning tasks. Their self-motivating strategies included dividing tasks into short-term goals, positive self-talk



and doing activities which did not include teachers, essays and exams, but rather watching a movie in a foreign language etc. However, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) stated that ‘motivational autonomy’ can be extremely difficult to reach if there is no harmony between students’ preferences and teachers’ methods. In this case, a student can experience resistance and submission instead of autonomy, meaning that he/she will only focus on passing the course.

### **3.4 Dörnyei (1998)**

The results of previous research studies (Chambers, 1993 and Oxford, 1998) showed the importance of communicating with students to understand what demotivates them. This is why Dörnyei also decided to cooperate with his participants closely, that is, to conduct one-to-one interviews to obtain detailed answers. Unlike previous researchers, he chose to focus exclusively on students who were already identified as demotivated, either by their teachers or their peers. The study participants were fifty secondary school students in Budapest. Their foreign languages were English or German. The content analysis of the answers led to establishing the common themes and identifying the most important demotivating factors for each student. Dörnyei focused solely on the primary demotives (listed below), that is, common themes, because he assumed that some negative factors were only a result of already existing demotivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Dörnyei grouped the identified demotivating factors into nine categories, as follows: the teacher, inadequate school facilities, reduced self-confidence, negative attitude towards the L2, compulsory nature of L2 study, interference of another language being studied, negative attitude towards L2 community, attitudes of group members and the coursebook. He included only those factors which were mentioned by at least two participants.

The author established that the main demotivating factors were the teacher and his/her personality, commitment, competence, and the teaching method. This corresponded with previous research results (Chambers, 1993; Oxford, 2001). The second largest category also concerned the teacher’s influence, but in an indirect manner, since the teacher’s control (e. g. Some students thought that the teachers were strict while giving grades) caused the reduced self-confidence of learners. Other categories with more than 10 per cent of occurrences were inadequate school facilities (e.g., too big groups or frequent change of teachers) and negative attitudes towards the L2. Although school conditions were often neglected in the studies, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) claimed that this factor can constitute an ‘affective filter’, meaning

it can either facilitate or hinder the language learning process. On the other hand, negative attitudes towards the L2 referred to issues such as dislike of the sound of the language. While the first contact with the language gives an unclear picture about it, closer contact can result in strong positive or negative feelings towards learning that language. Other studies also confirmed usual perceptions about different languages; for instance, French is typically seen as an attractive, romantic, ‘the language of love and stuff’, while German is perceived as the language of the war (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

### **3.5 Sakai and Kikuchi (2009)**

As reported by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), Dörnyei’s 1998 study stimulated research on demotivation among learners of English in Japan. Based on Dörnyei’s (2011) definition of demotivation, which included only ‘external forces’ negatively influencing L2 students, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009, “English Language Learning Demotivation of University Students”, published in *JALT Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2) also focused on those factors. They wanted to overcome what they saw as issues in previous research studies on demotivation in the Japanese learning context, such as focusing on environmental conditions or using Dörnyei’s nine categories as a framework. Such frameworks, as they stated, could not give valid results for Japanese learners of English since their applicability had not yet been successfully demonstrated.

For this reason, Kikuchi conducted an explorative study before his study with Sakai (2009); he interviewed five university students and administered an open-ended questionnaire to 47 university students. The participants were asked to explain what discouraged them when learning English and to say if they enjoyed learning. They were also asked to share their opinions about teachers, classrooms, English-speaking communities, materials, classmates, and other foreign languages that they learn. A method of reduction and display of the qualitative data led to the following five categories: teacher behaviors, grammar-translation method<sup>10</sup>, tests and university entrance examinations, focus on memorisation, textbooks, and reference books. The results from Kikuchi’s small-scale study showed that demotivating factors in the Japanese school mostly refer to the use of grammar translation approach and insisting on preparation for

---

<sup>10</sup> The Grammar Translation Method or the 'Classical Method' was first used in teaching of classical languages (Latin and Greek) for the purpose of the learners' intellectual development. This method consists of analysing the language through grammar rules and applying this knowledge to the translation of sentences. Focus on translating sentences and mother tongue use are distinctive features of this method (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

university entrance exams. What Kikuchi highlighted after his study was the importance of educational reforms in schools, which would help students to develop their oral communication skills. His findings were the basis for further investigation.

Following Kikuchi's independent investigation (2009) Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) administered a 35-item questionnaire based on six demotivating factors, as follows: teachers (e.g., behavior, teaching style), characteristics of classes (e.g., boring lessons, course pace), the experience of failure (e.g., bad grades), class environment (e.g., attitudes of classmates), class materials (e.g., boring or hard materials) and lack of interest (e.g., opinion that English is not necessary). The questionnaire was given to 656 participants (aged between 18 and 21) who were asked to circle one answer on a five-point Likert scale (Points meant the following: 1. not true for me, 2. not true for me so much, 3. cannot say either "true" or "not true," 4. true for me to some degree, and 5. true for me). The questionnaire also contained some open-ended questions asking students to describe their experiences of demotivation. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) conducted a factor analysis<sup>11</sup>, which resulted in five following factor labels: learning contents and materials, teachers' competence and teaching styles, inadequate school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation and test scores. Contrary to previous research results, which showed that teachers were the most frequent demotive, Sakai and Kikuchi came to the conclusion that the strongest demotivating factors were learning content and materials and test scores. The results also showed the lack of intrinsic motivation, which led researchers to investigate if demotivation includes internal forces and not only external ones (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) identified several limitations of their study. Namely, they examined relatively successful English learners and they focused on external forces, just like Dörnyei, but they pointed out the necessity of examining the influence of internal factors and the relationship between the internal and external ones. In addition to this, the study was cross-sectional, whereas the longitudinal study would have shown the change in participants' motivation over time.

---

<sup>11</sup> Factor analysis is used when concepts cannot be measured directly; researchers have to sample a wide range of items and then examine their interrelationships (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

### **3.6 Muhonen (2004)**

To carry out her descriptive investigation as a part of her diploma thesis “Factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language”, Muhonen chose a Finnish comprehensive school in Jyväskylä and asked 91 ninth-graders (aged from 15 to 16) to complete a writing task. The study aimed to answer four questions: which demotivating factors students found discouraging, how frequently and in what order those factors occurred, what the relation of demotives was to gender and finally, what their relation was to school achievement. The last two aims were not investigated in previous studies. Muhonen combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. The frequency and the order of importance of demotivating factors were obtained by counting the number of factors and by arranging these factors based on the emphasis that students gave to them.

To answer the first research question, Muhonen used in-depth qualitative analysis and complemented it with quantitative analysis for the remaining three questions. To carry out the qualitative analysis, the author requested that students name demotivating factors and explain the reasons behind them. The following five factors were most frequently mentioned: teachers, learning material, learner characteristics, school environment and learner’s attitude towards the English language. According to the results, most students mentioned that their teachers were the primary source of demotivation, which was consistent with the findings of the previous studies (Chambers 1993, Dörnyei 1998, Oxford 1998). Students complained about their teaching methods, personality and lack of competence. The second factor, in order of importance, was learning material. While some learners claimed that textbook exercises were too difficult, others wanted more challenging tasks. Regarding the third source of demotivation, learning characteristics, students complained about poor English skills (e.g., students could not deal with the tasks because they were too difficult), good English skills (students felt there was no challenge) and bad experiences (e.g., they get got bad grades). Complaints about the learning environment were ranked fourth and they referred to the workbooks, scheduling of classes, teacher change and inadequate classrooms. The fifth factor- learners’ attitude – included opinions that English was not interesting and that there was no point in learning it.

When it came to the relation of demotivating factors to gender, Muhonen concluded that there were differences in boys’ and girls’ responses. On the one hand, a predominant negative

factor for boys was the teacher. The next primary demotive, according to the boys' opinion, concerned learner characteristics. On the other hand, girls identified learning material as the strongest source of demotivation. Muhonen, however, did not deal with the reasons for gender differences in demotivation - she only established that the differences exist without investigating why boys emphasized teachers as a primary demotivating factor and girls, on the other hand, emphasized learning material as the primary factor. In order to investigate the relationship between demotivating factors and school achievement, Muhonen compared learners' grades and the sources of demotivation. While the teacher was the most frequent factor for students with grades 'Good', 'Satisfactory' and 'Excellent', those with the grade 'Satisfactory' thought that their own attitude had a demotivating influence. This led Muhonen to conclude that teachers had the most powerful influence on learners. Besides that, the most commonly reported aspect of learner characteristics was lower confidence in language skills, which indicated the importance of including internal factors in L2 motivational research.

Muhonen also listed certain limitations of her study, such as not dividing demotivating factors into internal and external or not involving a larger sample. In addition, she did not include a possible connection between demotivation and students' age. She concluded that a follow-up interview would have provided additional explanations, necessary for the study.

### **3.7 Bednářová (2011)**

For her diploma thesis, entitled "Demotivating Influences for Learning English among Students on Lower Stages of 8-year Grammar School", Bednářová conducted a study whose participants were 29 third-grade learners and 27 fourth-grade learners of English in the eight-year program at a Czech grammar school.<sup>12</sup> The author assumed that these learners would have more experience with demotivation than younger learners. All of them learned English as a second language. Learners brought up in a bilingual environment (Czech-English and English-Czech) were excluded because their exposure to these languages influenced them differently than other learners. Bednářová decided to use the stimulated recall (SR) procedure.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, students had to recall their experiences of learning English and describe them in the form of an essay. To

---

<sup>12</sup> In the Czech school system, students can apply for grammar high school at the age of 11, which means that students in this research study were between 14 and 16 years old.

<sup>13</sup> SR refers to the series of introspective research procedures, which serve to investigate cognitive processes by subjects who are prompted by a video sequence to recall "their concurrent thinking during that event" (Lyle, 2003).

gain valid information, the term ‘demotivation’ was first explained to the students. They were also given a warm-up task as an encouragement to share their feelings and experiences. After the author drew two chalk lines on the floor, they were required to sit in the circle. These lines represented ‘a river of learning languages’ and the students had to recall their experiences, placing the stones (representing negative memories) and fish (representing positive memories) in the river.

The essay that the students were asked to write after the warm-up task consisted of three parts, each containing different questions for students. The first part served to gather data about the existence and reasons why students felt demotivated. The second one was designed to investigate students’ ability to deal with demotives and they were asked if they enjoyed learning English after demotivating experiences. The third part aimed to get an insight into students’ ideas on how to reduce demotivation. The results were obtained through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis showed that most of the students felt demotivated at some point while learning English. While 51% of them managed to regain motivation, 23% of learners had almost overcome it and 19% still felt demotivated. To develop categories, Bednářová used the inductive content analysis<sup>14</sup> approach as a means of avoiding influence from previous research. Eleven established categories of demotivating factors were further classified into two main categories: internal and external factors.

Internal factors included learners’ experience of failure, attitudes toward English, and their reduced self-confidence. The category of external factors was divided into teacher-related factors, the learning environment, and other factors which reflected external constraints. The findings showed that external factors had a stronger influence than internal ones, but the major role of the internal factors was confirmed. Students pointed out they were affected by misunderstanding during a lesson, inability to communicate in English or the feeling that others were better than them. The most influential factors related to the reduced self-confidence were a feeling of shame and a fear of not satisfying parents’ expectations. Among the external factors, the role of the teacher was identified as the most influential demotivating factor, because students attributed their loss of motivation mostly to the teacher’s personality, behavior, teaching

---

<sup>14</sup> Inductive content analysis was used for an objective analysis that is free from the theoretical background. It allows the emergence of analytical units. In other words, this analysis serves for grouping the data and establishing the categories or themes to answer the study questions (Patton, in Bednářová, 2011).

styles, teaching methods and assessment. The second large theme with a demotivating impact was the learning environment. Complaints referred to learning conditions, the atmosphere in the classroom, learning materials, and interference with another foreign language.

Responses showed that internal motives were significant for overcoming demotivation. Learners' attitudes towards dealing with this problem were classified into three categories: self-determination, the drive to compete and the drive to feel good after some progress. The activities which students wanted to include in lessons to regain their motivation were, for instance, learning through games, role-playing, surfing the Internet, reading blogs, listening to the radio, watching movies, travelling, singing, etc.

## **4. Studies in the Croatian context**

The studies described in the following sub-chapters have been conducted in the Croatian educational system (Vidak and Sindik, 2018; Bešlić, 2018; Tomić, 2020). They will be described following the same procedure as above: participants, methods, results, and main conclusions.

### **4.2 Vidak and Sindik (2018)**

Nives Vidak and Joško Sindik conducted a study entitled “English Language Learning Demotivation of University Students” in 2013 (published in *Coll. Antropol. Vol. 42 No. 2*) in order to determine the correlation between factors of motivation and demotivation during EFL learning. Moreover, they wanted to determine the relation of demotivation to gender, year of study and programme of study. The participants were 172 students at the University of Dubrovnik, enrolled in 3-year undergraduate study programmes. The initial hypothesis was that there would be no differences regarding demotivation between students of different departments – the Maritime Department and the Mass Communication Department. The former department had a predominance of male students, while the latter had mostly female students. Given the similar socio-educational context of students, Vidak and Sindik also did not expect any differences in levels of demotivation between students from different years of study or between genders.

The authors used a questionnaire consisting of two parts to collect the data. The objective of the first part was to collect demographic data, such as age, gender, the year of study, and the study programme of study. In the second part, the authors used the Questionnaire for Measuring Type and Intensity of Motivation of Croatian Students for Learning English as a Foreign Language (TIMLEFL), that is, a self-evaluation instrument constructed in 1989 by J. Mihaljević Djigunović for the purpose of researching Croatian EFL students' motivation. TIMLEFL comprised 38 statements measuring three types of student motivation and two types of student demotivation for learning English. The three motivational types included pragmatic-communicative, affective and integrative motivation, while the two demotivators were the teaching setting and learning difficulties. Participants' task was to define to which extent they agreed or disagreed with the items, based on the Likert scale of five points (one being strong disagreement and five being strong agreement). Vidak and Sindik used inferential statistics to determine differences in demotivating factors in relation to gender and study programme and the year of study. The results showed that students complained more about the 'teaching setting' than learning, which confirmed the importance of the teacher's role, teaching methodology, and teaching materials. The differences in demotivation according to gender, programme, and year of study were statistically nonsignificant. Vidak and Sindik stated that the absence of gender differences in demotivation was consistent with the previous research studies, referring, among others, to Muhonen's study (2004), who concluded that there were only slight differences. Specifically, Muhonen (2004) concluded that male students were more inclined to ascribe their demotivation to the teacher than female students. However, none of the mentioned studies explained the reasons behind such results. The results also confirmed the researchers' assumption that a year of study is not significant for the level of EFL demotivation.

Researchers explained the absence of statistically significant differences related to the study programme with the fact that all of the participants saw English as a tool for obtaining a job and for their professional development. They were all aware of pragmatic goals of learning English, such as employment, integration into the global community, and socialisation. It was concluded that "some specific factors are responsible for motivation and some others for demotivation" and that these results should be compared to other study programmes in the Croatian context (Vidak and Sindik, 2018: 114).



## 4.2 Bešlić (2018)

As a part of her master's thesis entitled "The Role of Demotivation among English Language Learners", Anamarija Bešlić investigated the most frequent demotivating factors among English language learners in Croatian high school, as well as students' personal reasons for feeling demotivated. Her survey participants were 105 second-year students<sup>15</sup> from three different high school programs in Zadar. Data collection was done by both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the quantitative part, Bešlić used a questionnaire based on the *Passivity/Demotivation Inventory*, designed by Warrington in 2005. The first part of the questionnaire collected basic information, such as school, gender, and year of study. In the second part, the participants were asked to choose 5 out of 23 statements on a scale from 1-5 to express what they perceived as a demotivating factor, with 1 being the most important reason and 5 the least important. Their task in the third part was to name other reasons for their demotivation. Bešlić also conducted semi-structured interviews with ten students to get additional explanations for demotivating factors.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The author calculated the mode values for each mentioned reason in the questionnaire, that is, she calculated the percentages for five main reasons (listed below) of demotivation to explore the frequency and significance of factors. The answers from the open-ended question were divided into different categories, just like the answers from interviews. The five most frequently mentioned demotivating factors in the first part of the questionnaire were ranked and presented in the order from the most important one to the least important one. Results showed that the main demotivator was the teacher, since the majority of students circled the following statement: "Because the teacher does not have a high-level proficiency in the language". The second statement, in order of importance, was "Because there is no focus on oral skills (speaking and listening)" and it reflected the school system and teaching methods as the next big source of demotivation. The following statements: "Because of my numerous spelling and grammatical errors" and "Because books are difficult and boring" were ranked third. Students were also bothered by the fact that they had no chance to speak to native English speakers in their surroundings, while the last reason was related to students' stress level and anxiety that comes with learning.

---

<sup>15</sup> In the Croatian school system, students usually begin their secondary school education at the age of 14 or 15, which means that the participants of the described study were 16 years old.

The open-ended question allowed the participants to express their opinion on the sources of demotivation in more detail. The answers were classified into three broad categories. Based on the importance, the discontent with the program and school was the most significant problem, the teacher was ranked second and students' personal characteristics were ranked third. The first category referred to problems such as dissatisfaction with hard and unclear exams, complicated coursebooks, or lack of homework. There were also complaints about boring and irrelevant topics in the classroom, which was the reason why students preferred learning English through music, games or movies. The second category encompassed relationships within the classroom, teachers' lack of knowledge or neglecting students with lower grades, and dissatisfaction with the grading system. The third category included students' preferences, mood, lack of will, and struggling with grammar rules. Regarding the particular reasons students wrote, five top reasons were related to exams, teachers' focus on good students, boring teachers, his/her vocabulary and students' anxiety and fear of talking in English.

In the interview part of her study, Bešlić talked to ten participants in a casual manner to find out what demotivated them. She transcribed the data and analysed the answers, including pauses, facial expressions, and signs of nervousness. Eight out of 10 participants said that they felt demotivated by learning L2. The main reasons for demotivation mentioned by the interviewed students were the teacher, lack of knowledge, lack of interest, and personal reasons. The author also concluded that all the opinions about demotivation were unique. Moreover, the results indicated that high school learners in Croatia were fully aware of sources of demotivation, and their answers were consistent with previous studies (e.g., Chambers, 1993). However, when it comes to the teachers' role, answers indicated that it was mostly related to the level of his/her proficiency, while in previous studies, students complained more about teacher's behavior and attitude. Sources of demotivation in Bešlić's study also involved no focus on oral skills and too much focus on grammar, listening and reading, as well as difficult textbooks, which correlates to the findings of Kikuchi (2009) and Dörnyei (1998).

As for the importance of demotivating factors, the author concluded that teachers were ranked first, as they were often the only source of the second language for students. The open-ended question revealed huge dissatisfaction with the school program. The interview showed that the most important factors were the lack of knowledge and not knowing how to start learning a

language. The open-ended question and the interview helped to gain more personal opinions, but they revealed that teachers were among the main demotivators, which matched the results from the first part of the questionnaire. The participants' answers indicated that they wanted to improve themselves through real-life situations and become better in international communication because they were not satisfied with the school programme.

### **4.3 Tomić (2020)**

Tomić investigated L2 demotivation among 140 EFL learners aged between 15 and 18 in Split-Dalmatia County. The study was a part of her master's thesis entitled "Demotivation in Learning English as a Foreign Language". All of the participants studied English for eight years in elementary school. The difference was in their high school programs ('opća, jezična and prirodoslovno-matematička gimnazija'<sup>16</sup>). Based on the program, they had a different number of English classes per week. The author deliberately chose secondary school students, since she assumed that this group was aware of demotivation compared to younger learners and had more experience in facing demotivating factors during elementary and high school. The research aimed to discover which demotivating factors students faced and how frequently these factors occurred.

The author chose a method that Bednářová (2011) and Muhonen (2004) used for their own research, meaning that she constructed an essay task to collect data. In order to find a way to encourage students to share their ideas, a small-scale pilot study was conducted before the essay task. The participants were two students, whose responses revealed that instructions for the essay had to be additionally explained, in order to encourage participants to think of and describe more than just one demotive. For this reason, Tomić explained the term 'demotivation' to students for her main study, and she divided the participants into pairs to perform a short warm-up task. They had to do a simple brainstorming on paper so they could share thoughts on what they perceived as motivating or demotivating. Following the warm-up task, they were asked to write a short essay.

---

<sup>16</sup> In the Croatian school system 'opća, jezična and prirodoslovno-matematička gimnazija' are considered the best schools. In 'prirodoslovno-matematička gimnazija' the focus is on science and mathematics and students have fewer language classes per week, whereas in 'jezična', students have less hours of science and more hours of languages. In 'opća', students have 3 hours of English per week and they learn one additional language, but they have no particular emphasis on science.

As for the essay part, students had to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences when they felt demotivated to learn English. The responses were written in Croatian so that students could express themselves more clearly and coherently. Data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. More specifically, for qualitative analysis, the author chose content analysis. In total, nine essays were omitted because some participants claimed they did not feel demotivated and some wrote about topics unrelated to demotivation. Each part of students' responses that referred to negative influence was considered for further analysis. Demotivating factors were divided into general themes and later into categories. Following Mackey and Gass (2012), Tomić decided to check the consistency and validity of the categories by giving approximately 30 essays to an independent researcher. She used quantitative analysis to assign numerical values to the results of qualitative analysis, that is, categories. The purpose of that process was to gain more general results about learners' demotivation.

Two main categories were established: external and internal demotives. Factors labelled as external demotives referred to the role of the teacher and the learning environment. There were 219 responses that concerned the negative influence of teachers, and these were related to teachers' personality, behavior, teaching styles and methods, way of testing and grading, pace, and pronunciation. The learning environment involved the following subcategories: teaching material, learning conditions, school facilities and atmosphere in the classroom. As for the internal factors, loss of motivation was attributed to the lack of self-confidence, experience of failure, attitude towards English, and other demotives. Results demonstrated the prevalence of external factors, which was in accordance with the previous research results (Chambers, 1993; Ushioda, 1998; Muhonen, 2004; Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009; Bednářová, 2011). Although internal factors were not as numerous as the external ones, their presence indicated their significance in L2 demotivational research. As Ushioda (1998) stated, students tend to attribute their lack of motivation to external factors because it helped them to "dissociate the negative affect they are currently experiencing from their own enduring motivation". Furthermore, answers indicated that students disliked teachers' favouritism, which included both the focus on stronger students and the focus on weaker students. Since there were numerous comments on the issue of favouritism, the author suggested that different students maybe described the behavior of one and the same teacher, which is reminiscent of Chambers' statement that what one student likes, the other one dislikes. One of the limitations of the study that Tomić pointed out is subjectivity. Namely, it is

questionable whether students would have remembered some demotivating factors if the warm-up task was not included and if the author did not provide examples of demotivation to explain the term. The author also did not include the temporal aspect, as well as additional methods, such as interview, which could have provided more details.

## **5. Discussion**

This thesis aimed to give an overview of the studies on L2 demotivation that were carried out abroad and in the Croatian context. Given that the researchers used both qualitative and quantitative methods in their studies, it is somewhat hard to compare them. There are, however, certain similarities in results. For instance, the teacher's role turned out to be the most important demotivating factor in almost all studies (Chambers, 1993; Oxford, 1998; Dörnyei, 1998; Muhonen, 2004; Bednářová, 2011; Bešlić, 2018; Tomić, 2020) because students frequently complained about the teaching methods or teachers' behavior. Some other significant demotives that appear in studies are learning materials, inadequate school facilities, students' previous experiences, which shows the prevalence of the external factors. However, many studies showed that internal factors should not be neglected as well (Bednářová, 2011; Muhonen, 2004; Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009).

Croatian studies also showed that teachers were among the most relevant demotives. As for Vidak and Sindik's study (2018), the teaching setting was described as the most important demotive, involving the teacher's role, methodology, and materials. Although they did not use the same method as Muhonen, it should be noted that both studies investigated the role of gender in L2 demotivation, which other researchers had not considered before. The results from Vidak and Sindik's study showed that differences between genders were not statistically significant, while Muhonen (2004) found only slight differences in male and female students' opinions on demotivating factors, but she did not investigate the reasons for that difference. Along with gender, Vidak and Sindik (2018) also investigated the relation of year and study programme to demotivation, which had also not been investigated before.

With respect to Bešlić's study, all three parts (questionnaire, open-ended question and interview) indicated that teachers were among the most influential demotives. However, the

difference was that students mostly complained about teachers' level of proficiency rather than behavior and attitude, as in other studies. Demotivating factors that were also of great importance were textbooks and focus on memorization and grammar, which was consistent with the result of Dörnyei's study (1998) and students' spelling and grammatical errors, which was consistent with the result of Sakai and Kikuchi's study (2009).

The most recent survey on L2 demotivation in Croatia was conducted by Tomić (2020), whose methods and results were based on Bednářová's study (2011). Namely, they both used the warm-up task to explain the construct of demotivation and the essay to collect data. Their results showed the teacher's demotivating effect on motivation and that, in general, external factors were dominant. Nonetheless, both studies confirmed the important role of internal factors, especially lack of self-confidence. Another similarity with Bednářová's study was the fact that students talked about the feeling of injustice in the classroom. The participants of Oxford's study (1998) also thought they were sometimes treated unfairly.

If we take a look at the research studies in chronological order, certain similarities and differences can be found. As for Chamber's study (1993), he did not give a detailed overview of the research questions and answers as the researchers in subsequent research studies. Also, later studies took more factors into account, such as gender (Muhonen, 2004; Vidak and Sindik, 2018) or year and study programme (Vidak and Sindik, 2018). They also used diverse instruments, for instance, Bešlić constructed her own questionnaire and also included open-ended question and interviews in her methodology, analysing not only answers, but also students' facial expressions and pauses. Some of the new studies included warm-up tasks (Tomić, 2020) and pilot studies (Kikuchi, 2009; Tomić, 2020). If we compare study results, all of them indicated the importance of both internal and external factors, with the teacher appearing among the main demotives.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it should be noted that every research study described in this thesis showed students' awareness of demotivation and reasons for it. Students sought the solution by learning the English language outside the classroom, e.g., while travelling, on the Internet, in movies or in friendships abroad (Noels et al., 2000). It was interesting to notice that researchers in the

Croatian educational system obtained similar or even the same results as the ones abroad. A comparison of studies in chronological order gave us a better picture of the progress in investigating demotivation from the earliest study (Chambers, 1993) to the latest one (Tomić, 2020). Generally, all studies showed the importance of motivation in second language learning and they indicated that demotivation is a serious and common problem. Although researchers used different methods of data collection and analysis, they concluded the same: the external factors are dominant, but internal factors are also relevant. Student participants recognised that their inner characteristics (e.g., lack of self-confidence) influenced their motivation. Some other frequent demotives were learning materials, learning environment and attitude towards the English language.

Given the fact that the English language nowadays represents the most important means of communication worldwide, it is necessary to conduct more research on L2 demotivation. However, the new research studies should include not only one, but several research methods to gain more information.

## 7. Bibliography

- Bednářová, N. (2011). *Demotivating influences for learning English among students on lower stages of 8-year grammar school* (Diploma thesis). Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. Available from: [https://is.muni.cz/th/rvpnb/Bednarova\\_diploma\\_thesis.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/th/rvpnb/Bednarova_diploma_thesis.pdf) [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022]
- Bešlić, A. (2018). *The Role of Demotivation among English Language Learners* (Graduation Thesis). University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia. Available from: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:023802> [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022]
- Chambers, G. N. (1993). Taking the ‘de’ out of demotivation. *Language Learning Journal* 7 (1), 13–16.
- Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York, Plenum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Demotivation in foreign language learning. Paper presented at the TESOL ’98 Congress, Seattle, WA, March.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 Motivational Self System. In Dörnyei, Z. and Ushioda, E. (eds.) *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*. Bristol, Multilingual Matters, pp. 9–42.
- Dörnyei, Z. and Otto, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics (Thames Valley University, London)*. 47, 173–210.
- Dörnyei, Z. and Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Second Edition. Harlow, Pearson Educational Limited.
- Ellis, R. (2015). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Second Edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Falout, J., Elwood, J. and Hood, M. (2009). *Demotivation: Affective states and learning outcomes*. *System* 37(3): 403–17.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London, Edward Arnold.
- Kikuchi, K. (2009) Listening to our learners’ voices: What demotivates Japanese high school students? *Language Teaching Research* 13 (4), 453–471.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2006). The emergence of complexity, fluency, and accuracy in the oral and written production of five Chinese learners of English. *Applied Linguistics* 27(4): 590–619.



- Lyle, J. (2003) Stimulated Recall: A Report on Its Use in Naturalistic Research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29, 861-878.
- Mackey, A. and Gass, S. (eds.) (2012). *Research methods in second language acquisition*. Chichester, West Sussex (England), Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mihaljević Djigunović J. (1998). *Uloga afektivnih faktora u učenju stranoga jezika*. Zagreb, Filozofski fakultet.
- Muhonen, J. (2004) *Second language demotivation: Factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language* (Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis). University of Jyväskylä, Department of Languages.
- Nitta, R. and Baba, K. (2014). *Self-Regulation in the Evolution of the Ideal L2-Self: A Complex Dynamic Systems Approach to the L2 Motivational Self-System*. In Z. Dörnyei, P. MacIntyre & A. Henry (eds.), *Motivational Dynamics in Language Learning* (pp. 367- 396). Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters.
- Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L., Clément, R., and Vallerand, R.J. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Orientations and Self-Determination Theory. *Language Learning*, 50, 57- 85.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publications.
- Richards, J., Rodgers, T. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Cambridge Language Teaching Library). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sakai, H. and Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom. *System* 37 (1), 57–69
- Tomić, B. (2020). *Demotivation in Learning English as a Foreign Language* (Diploma thesis). Available from: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:172:987217> [Accessed April 17<sup>th</sup> 2022]
- Ushioda, E. (1998). Effective motivational thinking: A cognitive theoretical approach to the study of language learning motivation. In: Soler, E.A. and Espurz, V.C. (eds.) *Current Issues in English Language Methodology*. Castelló de la Plana, Universitat Jaume I, pp. 77–89.
- Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university. Exploring the role of motivational thinking. In: Dörnyei, Z. and Schmidt, R. (eds.) *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition*. Honolulu, HI, University of Hawaii Press, pp. 93–125.
- Vallerand, R. J. (1997). Towards a hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In: Zanna, M. P. (eds.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol. 29. San Diego, CA, Academic Press, pp. 271–360.
- Vidak, N. and Sindik, J. (2018). English Language Learning Demotivation at University Students. *Collegium antropologicum*, 42 (2), 111-116. Available from: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/205647>

## Summary

The goal of this thesis was to describe the existing research on demotivation in learning a second or foreign language. The first part of the thesis contains explanations of the main terms, that is, motivation in second language learning, demotivation and amotivation. The central part of the thesis describes research on demotivation abroad and research in the Croatian context. For each research, the following aspects were described: the participants, instruments used, method of data analysis and results. In the discussion section, research studies were compared to each other and some main conclusions were summarized. The results of most research on demotivation in second/foreign language learning showed that the external factors (e.g., grades, the learning environment, teachers) reduce motivation more than the internal ones (e.g., interest in languages, attitude towards language and community).

**Key words:** demotivation, L2 students, qualitative and quantitative research

## Sažetak

Cilj ovog rada je opisati postojeća istraživanja vezana za demotivaciju u učenju drugog ili stranog jezika. U prvom dijelu rada objašnjavaju se temeljni pojmovi, a to su motivacija u učenju jezika, demotivacija i amotivacija. U središnjem dijelu rada opisana su istraživanja provedena u inozemstvu i istraživanja provedena u hrvatskom kontekstu. Za svako istraživanje navode se sljedeći aspekti: ispitanici, instrumenti korišteni u istraživanju, metoda analize podataka i dobiveni rezultati. U raspravi su istraživanja međusobno uspoređena i ponovljeni su neki glavni zaključci. Rezultati većine istraživanja demotivacije u učenju drugog/stranog jezika pokazali su da vanjski čimbenici (ocjene, okolina za učenje, profesori) utječu na smanjenje motivacije više nego unutarnji (zanimanje za jezike, stav prema jeziku i kulturi).

**Ključne riječi:** demotivacija, učenici drugog/stranog jezika, kvalitativno i kvantitativno istraživanje

SVEUČILIŠTE U SPLITU  
FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET

**IZJAVA O AKADEMSKOJ ČESTITOSTI**

kojom ja ANA ĆORIĆ, kao pristupnik/pristupnica za stjecanje zvanja magistra/magistrice ANGLISTIKE I GERMANISTIKE, izjavljujem da je ovaj diplomski rad rezultat isključivo mojega vlastitoga rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima i oslanja na objavljenu literaturu kao što to pokazuju korištene bilješke i bibliografija. Izjavljujem da niti jedan dio diplomskoga rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno da nije prepisan iz necitiranoga rada, pa tako ne krši ničija autorska prava. Također izjavljujem da nijedan dio ovoga diplomskoga rada nije iskorišten za koji drugi rad pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj ili radnoj ustanovi.

Split, 20. 09. 2022.

Potpis Ana Ćorić

IZJAVA O POHRANI ZAVRŠNOG / DIPLOMSKOG RADA U DIGITALNI  
REPOZITORIJ FILOZOFSKOG FAKULTETA U SPLITU

STUDENT/ICA	ANA ČORIĆ
NASLOV RADA	Demotivation in Second Language Learning
VRSTA RADA	Završni
ZNANSTVENO PODRUČJE	Humanističke znanosti
ZNANSTVENO POLJE	Filologija
MENTOR/ICA (ime, prezime, zvanje)	Danijela Šegetin Borovina, doc.dr.sc.
KOMENTOR/ICA (ime, prezime, zvanje)	
ČLANOVI POVJERENSTVA (ime, prezime, zvanje)	1. Danijela Šegetin Borovina, doc.dr.sc. 2. Mirjana Semren, doc.dr.sc. 3. Ivana Petrović, doc.dr.sc.

Ovom izjavom potvrđujem da sam autor/ica predanog završnog/diplomskog rada (zaokružiti odgovarajuće) i da sadržaj njegove elektroničke inačice u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenog i nakon obrane uređenog rada. Slažem se da taj rad, koji će biti trajno pohranjen u Digitalnom repozitoriju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Splitu i javno dostupnom repozitoriju Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu (u skladu s odredbama Zakona o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju, NN br. 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 174/04, 02/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14, 60/15, 131/17), bude (zaokružiti odgovarajuće):

a.) u otvorenom pristupu

b.) rad dostupan studentima i djelatnicima Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu

c.) rad dostupan široj javnosti, ali nakon proteka 6/12/24 mjeseci (zaokružiti odgovarajući broj mjeseci)

U slučaju potrebe dodatnog ograničavanja pristupa Vašem ocjenskom radu, podnosi se obrazloženi zahtjev nadležnom tijelu u ustanovi.

Split, 20.09.2022.  
mjesto, datum

Ana Čorić  
potpis studenta/ice