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# ESL Teacher Motivation in Sri Lankan Public Schools

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ESL Teacher Motivation in Sri Lankan Public Schools

by

Sujeewa Hettiarachchi

Thesis

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Eastern Michigan University

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for the degree of

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in

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June 11, 2010

Ypsilanti, Michigan

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving son, Savindu Pasandul who, at the time of my writing this, did not know why his father was away from him for a long time.

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## Abstract

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

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

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

Even in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, teacher motivation is currently viewed as a variable which has a strong impact on learner motivation (Gardner, 2007). In addition to teaching language, ESL/EFL teachers are expected to increase learners' intrinsic motivation by means of employing different motivational strategies: "instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation" (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 52). However, the extent to which teachers are able to motivate their students depends on how motivated teachers themselves are (Atkinson, 2000; Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). As Bernaus et al. (2009) concluded in a recent study on teacher motivation, classroom strategy use, learner motivation, and second language achievement, in the discussion of learner motivation, "teacher motivation is the most important variable because if teachers are not motivated the whole notion of strategy use is lost" (p. 29). According to this view, teacher motivation is a crucial factor

which directly influences the level of student motivation and achievement in the target language concerned.

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

In mainstream education recent studies on teacher motivation are mostly reported from the developing countries of the world. For instance, the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Department for International Development (DFID), Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have conducted a series of comprehensive studies on teacher motivation in many developing countries, especially in South Asia and some parts of Africa. Most of these studies reveal the existence of a crisis in teacher motivation in many developing countries, specifically, DFID (2007), GCE (2005), and VSO (2002). The main objective of the recent studies by these organizations, as well as individuals, has been to explore the nature of this crisis in terms of

what motivates and demotivates teachers and how teacher demotivation accounts for poor quality in education in many countries around the developing world.

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

Also, it is an obvious fact that Sri Lanka shares many socio-political and economic issues with other countries of the South Asian region. The common issues that all these countries share created the need to establish the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 to help each other in their common issues. So, if teacher motivation is a crisis in other neighboring countries in South Asia with similar economies, social structures, and education systems, it is most likely that it is an issue in Sri Lanka too. To understand the real nature of this “crisis” and its impact on the country’s education system, more empirical investigations are needed.

## **Purpose of the Study**

In this vein, the purpose of this study is to investigate teacher motivation in Sri Lanka in relation to the English language teachers in the country's public school system. In light of work motivation theories and research methodology suggested in teacher motivation research in different contexts, this exploratory study examines the elements of motivation and demotivation reflected in Sri Lankan ESL teachers.

## **Research Question**

Thus, the research question of this study is:

- What elements of motivation and demotivation are reflected in Sri Lankan ESL teachers?

## **Significance and Justification**

The current study is significant for three main reasons. First and foremost, this study contributes to the understanding of the role and nature of teacher motivation in SLA, an overlooked area of research in the field (Dörnyei, 2001). In the discussions of motivation in SLA, the whole focus is often on the language learner. Research on motivation reported during the last three decades in the field bears evidence for this. However, with the recent findings of a close relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation in many learning contexts (Bernaus et al., 2009; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), the phenomenon of teacher motivation also demands more empirical investigations to determine the nature of this relationship in different language learning contexts.

Also, according to Gardner (2007), for a student in a school context, the study of a second language offers a different experience from learning any other subject. This is mainly

because learning a second language involves “taking on elements of another culture” while the study of any other subject involves “elements common to one’s own culture” (p. 13). Because of this, Gardner (2007) proposes that language learner motivation should be considered both in terms of educational context as well as cultural context. Based on this claim, it is possible to assume that the complexity in learning a language in contrast to learning any other subject poses additional challenges to language teachers too. Language teachers, in contrast to other subject teachers in homogeneous classes, often have to be aware of a variety of socio-cultural and affective factors which determine the success of their learners. These factors often include self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, attitudes, and motivation (Brown, 2007, p. 164), just to name a few. Even though this can be a common experience of both ESL and EFL teachers regardless of the context in which they teach, teachers in non-native English contexts can face additional challenges when they teach English to students who have limited exposure to the target language outside the classroom or have only been exposed to their own culture. Moreover, most of these teachers also have studied English in similar contexts. Hence, their experiences can be unique compared to ESL teachers in native-English-speaking countries.

However, in SLA and TESOL, “the study of the non-native teacher remains a largely unexplored area” (Medgyes, 2000, p. 445) and consequently, “about the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher we know almost nothing” (Richards, 1997, p. 243). The above two statements are highly significant in the context that English is mostly taught by non-native teachers around the world today (Bolton, 2004, p. 388). Even though TESOL literature during the last decade has recorded a handful of studies about non-native English teachers around the world (Clerk & Paran, 2007; Hayes, 2009; Sifakis, 2009), there is still more to be

heard from these teachers than what has already been said. Therefore, the current study is significant for it provides in-depth information about English teachers in Sri Lanka, one context where English is taught by non-native teachers in the world.

Finally, the study is also significant in terms of the present educational context in Sri Lanka. Since the World Bank identifies the remotivation of teachers as a national priority in Sri Lanka (World Bank Report, 2006, p. 60), understandably, more empirical investigations are needed to identify the issues and concerns of the teachers of the country's public school system. In the absence of such research, "the incidence of poor teacher motivation and misbehavior could well be seriously over-exaggerated mainly because of the passive negative stereotyping of teachers" (DFID, 2007, p. 8). Due to the poor English proficiency of students who learn English for 13 years at school, currently the most susceptible to severe criticism among school teachers in Sri Lanka are the English teachers. As the World Bank report (2006) elaborates, "Only 10 percent of children of the public school system achieve a targeted level of mastery in English language skills" (p. 57). If, as some studies claim, poor teacher motivation accounts for poor quality in education (Atkinson, 2000), understanding the determinants of ESL teacher motivation in the country is significant for three reasons: It can improve student motivation; it can contribute to the country's language education reforms; and it can lead to the satisfaction and fulfillment of teachers themselves (Jesus & Lens, 2005, p. 120).

### **Context of the Study**

Sri Lanka is a country in the South Asian region with a population of about 19 million people. Among South Asian countries, Sri Lanka reports the highest literacy rate (92%) and

comparatively high achievements in education, i.e., 83% of children completing secondary education, 99% of children entering primary school, nine years of compulsory education for children, and free education from kindergarten to university.

The system of education in the country consists of five different levels (The Development of Education, National Report, 2004):

- Primary (Grade 1 - 5)
- Junior Secondary (Grade 6 – 9)
- Senior Secondary (Grade 10 – 11)
- Collegiate (Advanced Level) (Grade 12 – 13)
- Universities (Undergraduate & graduate education)

Education up to the collegiate level in the country is provided through 9,714 public schools managed by the Ministry of Education. These schools accommodate about 3,836, 550 students and they are served by 204,908 teachers. The student-teacher ratio in public schools is 19:1. Meanwhile, tertiary-level education is provided through 17 national universities managed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), which functions under the Ministry of Higher Education. The country also has 78 private schools and a number of technical colleges that provide employment-specific skills for those who do not enter universities.

In current Sri Lanka, Sinhala and Tamil are the two official languages while English is considered a link language (i.e., language used for communication between different ethnic communities) by the constitution. However, during the British rule in Sri Lanka, which lasted from 1815 to 1948, English was the official language of the country. It was also the medium



of instruction in many urban schools. By the time Sri Lanka received independence in 1948, about 180,000 students attended English-medium schools while 720,000 students attended vernacular schools (Goonetilleke, 2005, p. 34). However, eight years after independence, Sinhala and Tamil were made the official languages of Sri Lanka through the Official Language Act No. 33 of 1956. Following this, in 1959, the medium of instruction in all public schools also became Sinhala and Tamil while English was relegated to the position of a second language. Ever since then English has been taught as a second language in all schools starting from grade 3 to grade 13. With the educational reforms in 1997, English was introduced in first grade and is often taught by primary class teachers. However, from grade three onwards, English is taught by specially trained English teachers. Currently, English is also the medium of instruction in about 78 public schools out of 9,714 schools in the country.

In Sri Lanka, teachers are recruited both by the Ministry of Education and the nine provincial councils. The Ministry of Education directly manages 323 national schools located island-wide, while the provincial councils manage other schools in their respective provinces. According to the latest report by the Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka (2006), the number of teachers currently employed in the country's public schools is 204,908. This also includes 16,800 English language teachers. The minimum qualification required to become a teacher in a public school in Sri Lanka is the National Diploma in Teaching offered by one of the 17 colleges of education administered by the Ministry of Education. These colleges have been established in different regions in the country, especially for teacher education. But they do not have university status and can only offer diplomas in teaching.

Candidates who successfully complete the Advanced Level Examination (collegiate level) receive admission to colleges of education through an examination and/or interview.

Candidates to become English teachers usually sit for a selection test to assess their proficiency in English. The teacher-training program of these colleges includes two years of study in college and a one-year internship at a school. At the end of three years, the candidates receive a diploma in teaching. In the Sri Lankan school system, these teachers are often called “trained teachers” in contrast to “graduate teachers” who enter teaching with a degree from a university. Currently, the country has around 68,000 graduate teachers compared to 128,000 trained teachers. The responsibilities of trained teachers and graduate teachers also vary in most schools. Trained teachers commonly teach from grade one to grade eleven (secondary and primary). Meanwhile, collegiate level classes are taught by graduate teachers. Though graduate teachers often teach even at primary and secondary levels, trained teachers teach at the collegiate level only when there are not enough graduate teachers. In addition to colleges of education, teacher training is also provided through National Institute of Education (NIE), four university faculties/departments of education, four teacher education institutes, and 100 teacher centers around the country. In-service training for English teachers is also provided through 30 Regional English Support Centers (RESCs) located island-wide (National Report, 2004, p. 24).

Teachers in a Sri Lankan public school work six hours a day for five days a week. They also receive three vacations per year, the length of which varies from two weeks to one month. The salary scale for teachers is based on a specific scheme which consists of three grade levels. New teachers who join the profession are placed in grade III. The average salary of a grade III teacher is around 100 US dollars per month. With additional qualifications and experience, teachers receive promotion to enter gradually grade II and I. The salary of a grade I teacher is around 200 US dollars per month. However, it takes at least

15 years for a grade III teacher to be promoted to grade I. All teachers receive annual incentives based on their performance. Teacher salaries and incentives are paid by the zonal education offices. New teachers also have to complete four years of service in a remote school before they apply to a school that they like. According to most recent regulations by the Ministry of Education, the maximum number of years a teacher can work at the same school is limited to ten.

Currently, English is taught as a second language at all levels of education. But the significance given to it at each level is different. From grade one to grade three, English is often taught by primary teachers who also teach other subjects in the curriculum. But from grade three onwards, English is taught by English trained teachers or graduate teachers of English. Up to grade eleven it is a compulsory subject which is tested at the Ordinary Level (O/L) Examination (final exam for secondary school) conducted in all provinces of the country by the Department of Examination, Sri Lanka. Students who get through the O/L examination enter the collegiate level. They study a subject stream of their choice from arts, science, commerce, and mathematics for two years before the university entrance exam (Advanced Level). During this period, they follow a specific English course called *General English*, which aims at providing students with a working knowledge of English. Even though students are also tested on English at the Advanced Level examination conducted by the Department of Examination, their English proficiency is not considered as a criterion for university entrance. Due to this practice, English does not receive much attention from students at the collegiate level.

In Sri Lanka, all schools, located island-wide, follow a common national curriculum for each subject. In terms of English, the curriculum is designed by the Department of

English of the National Institute of Education (NIE). The NIE often obtains the services of experts in the field to develop the English curriculum and to write text books of English. They also develop teacher manuals that are used by the teachers in the entire country. Currently, English language teaching in public schools makes use of a competency-based curriculum. In terms of testing and evaluation, the nine provincial councils hold mid-term and year-end examinations in their respective regions, while Ordinary Level (O/L-final examination for Secondary Level) and Advanced Level examination (A/L- the final examination for collegiate level) are conducted island-wide by the Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka. With recent educational reforms, teachers also conduct school-based assessment for English, which often contain group and individual assignments.

The educational reforms of 1997 recognized the teaching of English and skills in Information Technology to be two major areas that need improvements in the school system. Even though English has been taught as a second language in schools after 1959, the country has witnessed a gradual decline in the quality of English education in the country. Quoting de Souza (1969), Canagarajah (1993) states that “the teachers, administrators and general public in Sri Lanka agree that English language teaching is a colossal failure” (p. 604) in the country. As the World Bank report (2006) reveals, “Only 10 percent of children achieve a targeted level of mastery in English language skills” at the end of their schooling. This situation is worse in rural schools, where only 7% of children acquire desired skills in English compared to 23% of children in urban schools (p. 57). Student demotivation, limited exposure to language outside classroom, problems in teaching methodology, poor English competency of teachers, and students’ negative attitude towards English have often been identified as factors that account for students’ poor proficiency in English (Canagarajah,

1993; Fernando, 1989; Guneseekara, 2005). However, despite this, the demand for English in the country has grown rapidly over the last two decades: “today fluency in English is the goal of many parents for their children” and it is often considered a “social accomplishment” (Guneseekara, 2005, p. 11). In current Sri Lanka, English is used for all purposes: education, trade, commerce, law, tourism, media and social interaction between different ethnic groups.

### **ESL vs. EFL**

In this discussion of the motivation of English teachers in Sri Lanka, I use the term “ESL teachers” to refer to them. But this is not in compliance with the popular ESL/EFL distinction made in TESOL. In TESOL, those who teach English in non-native English countries (except UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada) are often categorized as EFL teachers. The term ESL is only used to introduce language teaching in native contexts (Brown, 2007). However, this popular dichotomy, as both Kachru (1993) and Nayar (1997) argue, does not really reflect socio-linguistic complexities that exist in the *Outer Circle* (the term used by Kachru [1992] to mean the countries where English is important for historical reasons and is used as a lingua franca). He uses the term ESL to refer to English as used by the communities in the *Outer Circle*. These communities use *institutionalized* varieties of English in contrast to *performance* varieties of the *Expanding Circle* (countries like Japan and China where English is a foreign language) and *traditional* varieties of the *Inner Circle* (native-English-speaking countries like the UK and USA). As he notes, “*Institutionalized* second language varieties have a long history of acculturation in new cultural and geographical contexts; they have a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative and legal systems” (p. 19).

English, brought to Sri Lanka by the British in the 1800s, has also gradually developed its own identity in the country. In fact, “Today English is used for practically all purposes in Sri Lanka, but it is not the English of the colonizer, it is the English of the colonized” Gunesekara, 2005, p. 20). In this context, the term ESL (in contrast to EFL) is more appropriate to refer to English as used in Sri Lanka. It is also the term that has commonly been used with regard to the English education in Sri Lanka. For instance, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education have often used the term ESL to introduce the English language teaching program in public schools in the country.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Motivation is a common construct which has been explored both in TESOL literature and education research in general for the last four decades. However, the major challenge for motivation researchers, even today, is to provide an adequate definition of the construct. As Covington (1998) rightly puts it, “Motivation, like the concept of gravity, is easier to describe – in terms of its outward, observable effects – than it is to define” (p. 1). Also, Dörnyei (2001) considers motivation as “one of the most elusive concepts in the whole domain of the social sciences” (p. 2). But this has not stopped researchers from attempting to define this construct; research literature is full of such definitions. Some of these definitions are discussed in the following section.

### Definition of Motivation

The term *motivation* is derived from the Latin word *movere*, which means “to move.” Ryan and Deci’s (2000) definition of *motivation* captures this basic meaning of the Latin term when they state that “to be motivated means to be moved to do something” (p. 54). In Vallerand and Thill’s (1993) view, motivation is a “hypothetical construct that is used to describe internal and/or external forces that generate the kick off, direction, the intensity, and the persistence of behavior” (p. 18). Harmer (2001) also highlights this hypothetical nature of the phenomenon when he defines motivation as “some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action.” But, as he further says, a person is internally driven when the goal that he or she attempts to achieve is “sufficiently attractive” (p. 51). Meanwhile, Brown (2007) views motivation as a term that explains “the success or the failure of virtually any complex task” (p. 168).

Since motivation is a psychological construct which is directly unobservable, it has also been defined in terms of observable behavior patterns of individuals. For instance, Dörnyei (2001) states that motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something (choice), how long they are willing to sustain the activity (persistence), and how hard they are going to pursue it (effort; p. 8). According to this definition, motivation is an umbrella term which can account for a wide variety of human behavior. Applying this definition to language teaching, for example, what makes people enter the profession of teaching, what makes them stay in the profession or leave it early and how well they perform the act of teaching are all relevant questions in motivation research. Similarly, Williams & Burden (1997) identify three characteristics of someone who is motivated: interest, curiosity, and desire to achieve a goal (p. 111).

Also, Gardner (1985), who is a dominant figure in motivation research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), refers to motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire” to achieve a goal (p. 10). In Gardner’s view, motivation involves four main aspects: goal, effort, the desire to achieve the goal, and the attitude towards the target activity. Though Gardner identifies these aspects in relation to the process of language learning, they can also be applied to understand any human activity. For instance, a teacher who commits him- or herself to the task of teaching a language has a goal which could be disseminating knowledge, making his or her learners competent users of the target language and/or educating the next generation. In order to achieve the goal, he or she must make a conscious effort. But this effort can succeed or fail depending on whether the teacher is driven by a true desire to achieve the goal and has a positive attitude towards the task of teaching.



Definitions of motivation often contain words such as job satisfaction, commitment, morale, desire, effort, enjoyment, efficacy, and autonomy, which can also be identified as characteristics of a motivated person. However, “the relative absence of motivation that is not caused by lack of initial interest but rather by the individual’s experiencing feelings of incompetence and helplessness” in an activity is termed amotivation in literature (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 34). However, the term “demotivation” is also commonly used as a negative counterpart of motivation that basically means “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 143).

### **Motivation vs. Investment in SLA**

Motivation is a construct well documented in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. However, as mentioned elsewhere, the central focus of most of these studies is on the language learner, while teacher motivation mostly remains an area of neglect in the field. In SLA, motivation is often viewed as a crucial factor which determines the success or the failure of learning a second language. According to Gardner and Lambert (1959), “The achievement in a second language is dependent on essentially the same type of motivation that is apparently necessary for the child to learn his or her first language” (p. 266). Also, in Guilloteaux and Dörnyei’s (2008) view, “Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate second or foreign language learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning forces” (p. 55). Gardner and Lambert (1972) are highly regarded in SLA because of the contribution that they have made to the motivation research in the field. They not only “grounded motivation research in a social psychological framework” but also “set high research standards in the field by bringing L2 motivation research to maturity”

(Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 1). During the last three decades, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) social psychological framework has greatly influenced motivation research in SLA. This is obvious in extensive research on motivation reported from different language learning contexts of the world (e.g., Andrew, 2008; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; Warden & Chang, 2005; Weiner, 1992).

Another phase of the discussion on motivation in SLA is represented by Pierce (1995) who, in her well-known article entitled *Social Identity, Investment and Language Learning*, proposed the term *investment* as an alternative to the commonly used term *motivation*. As Pierce (1995) argues, the term *motivation*, as it has been used in SLA following Gardner and Lambert's model, does not capture the complex relationship between the language learner and the learning context in terms of power, identity, and language learning: "In the field of SLA, theorists have not adequately addressed why it is that learners may sometimes be motivated, extroverted, and confident and sometimes unmotivated, introverted, and anxious" (p. 11).

In Pierce's view, *investment*, unlike the term *motivation*, captures the complex "relationship of the language learner to the changing social world" and "it conceives of the language learner as having a complex social identity and multiple desires" (p. 17). Pierce's new term was also welcomed by many other researchers who have studied motivation in many contexts during the last decade (e.g., Ibrahim, 1999; McKay & Wong, 1996; Potowski, 2004; Siegal, 1996). However, the most common term currently used in SLA and TESOL in the study of learners' interest, commitment, desire, and willingness to learn a second language is still the term *motivation*. This trend is seen even in teacher motivation research in SLA/TESOL. While the number of studies on teacher motivation is limited in SLA/TESOL,

the existing studies have preferred the term *motivation* over *investment*. One possible reason could be that the term *motivation*, as elaborated under the definition of the term, covers a wide spectrum of human behavior in contrast to the term *investment*. The preference for the term *motivation* in teacher motivation research is verified by the fact that out of the nine studies on ESL/EFL teacher motivation reviewed later in this chapter, not a single study has used the term *investment*. This is also true with regard to teacher motivation research in mainstream education. In this vein, this study, in keeping with the common trend in teacher motivation research in mainstream education and TESOL, employs the term *motivation* to discuss the “external and/or internal forces” (Vallerand & Thill, 1993, p. 18) that impact Sri Lankan ESL teachers’ reasons to join the profession as well their work behavior in public schools.

### **Teacher Motivation**

In the discussion of motivation in SLA and TESOL, the language teacher is often viewed as one major source of learner motivation (Atkinson, 2000; Bernaus et al., 2009; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Muller, Allinata, & Bennighoff, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2002; Williams & Burden, 1997).

According to these studies, one of the primary duties of a language teacher is to enhance the intrinsic motivation of language learners which in result facilitates their successful mastery of a second language: “Effective instructors should act as an inspiration and resource, encouraging and supporting students’ intrinsic motivation to create, explore, learn and experiment” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 69). Brown (2007) also recently supported this when he said, “Our ultimate quest in this language teaching is, of course, to see to it that our

pedagogical tools can harness the power of intrinsically motivated learners who are striving for excellence, autonomy, and self-actualization” ( p. 174).

Therefore, research in SLA and TESOL for the last decade or so has examined pedagogical implications of motivation research by exploring different “motivational strategies” that language teachers can use to increase the intrinsic motivation of students in language classroom. In this context, motivation strategies mean “instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 52). Contributing to this discussion, Williams & Burden (1997) proposed a long list of strategies that teachers can use to motivate their students: for instance, involve learners in setting language learning goals; discuss with learners why they are carrying out activities; build up a supporting environment; and give informational feedback. Dörnyei and Csizer (1998, p. 138) also introduced a set of motivating strategies which they entitled *Ten Commandments for motivating language learners*:

- Set a personal example with your own behavior
- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom
- Present the task properly
- Develop a good relationship with the learners
- Increase the learner’s linguistic self-confidence
- Make the language classes interesting
- Promote learner autonomy
- Personalize the learning process
- Increase the learner’s goal-orientedness

- Familiarize learners with the target language culture

One factor obvious from these discussions is that in SLA or TESOL, motivation is often conceptualized as a construct totally related to the language learner. By making use of the strategies, teachers are supposed to increase learners' intrinsic motivation in classroom. But one factor that cannot be ignored is that the extent to which teachers can motivate his or her learners depends on how much the teacher himself or herself is motivated (Atkinson, 2000). Because of this, Bernaus et al. (2009) also consider teacher motivation as the most important variable in terms of learner motivation (p. 29). Also, recent research has explored a direct relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation which further highlights the significance of teacher motivation in SLA. For instance, Atkinson (2000), using a sample of teachers and students from four schools in the northeast of England, reports a direct relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation. Also, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), in their recent study in Korea, report how a teacher's motivational practice affects learners' motivated learning behavior as well as their motivational state (p. 56). Thus, teacher motivation in current literature is viewed as a variable which directly determines the motivation level of language learners.

As stated earlier, despite all its significance, surprisingly, teacher motivation still remains an overlooked area of research in SLA and TESOL. According to Dörnyei (2001), even in mainstream education, "The amount of past research on teacher motivation is far too little relative to its importance" (p. 156). As he further says, "The literature on the motivation of language teachers is even scarcer than on teacher motivation in general" (p. 170). However, during the last decade, teacher motivation has received significant attention at least in mainstream education. This is obvious from the large number of studies reported on the

construct in international journals during the last decade. Therefore, the next few sections of this review will provide an outline of these studies while briefly presenting their findings. In the process, I will discuss the role of theories in teacher motivation research, teacher motivation in mainstream education, teacher motivation in developing countries, and teacher motivation in TESOL/ SLA.

### **Theories in Teacher Motivation**

Johnson (1986) is one of the first researchers to have suggested a theoretical foundation for the study of teacher motivation. In his famous article entitled “Incentives for Teachers: What Motivates and What Matters,” he proposes that the measures often taken in the education sector to improve teacher motivation can be understood in terms of three motivation theories: *expectancy theory*, *equity theory* and *job enrichment theory*.

Among these, expectancy theory is a theory of motivation suggested by the American psychologist, Vroom (1964), in the 1960s. The basic premise of this theory is that “individuals are more likely to strive in their work if there is an anticipated reward that they value (such as a bonus or promotion) than if there is none” (Johnson, 1986, p. 55). The theory basically consists of three components: *expectancy*, *instrumentality*, and *valence*. *Expectancy* means the belief of an individual that the task that he/she undertakes will yield an outcome, the most basic outcome being the accomplishment of the task itself (Lawler, 1973, p. 63). The belief that the temporary outcome (first level) of the task will lead to another desired (second level) outcome is termed *instrumentality*. Finally, the *valence* is how much an individual prefers or values an expected outcome. According to Vroom, all these three elements together form the work motivation of an individual.

Just like expectancy theory, equity theory proposed by Adams (1963) is also concerned with work outcomes. This theory is primarily based on the fact that “individuals are dissatisfied if they are unjustly compensated for their efforts and achievements” (Johnson, 1986, p. 55). Workers often determine equity or inequity by comparing their input/output ratio with that of their “referents” (co-workers or workers employed by a different organization). Input here can mean anything from education, seniority, effort, experience, skills, and/or creativity to one’s loyalty to the organization. Meanwhile, output can mean things like pay, intrinsic rewards, seniority benefits, status symbols, job security, career advancement, recognition, and so forth (Disley, 2009, 57). Employees can make two kinds of comparisons: their own input with the output and their input/output ratio with their referents. Workers will be motivated if they perceive that they are treated fairly, while inequity can lead to their demotivation.

The third and final work motivation theory that Johnson proposes to understand teacher motivation is the job enrichment theory. This theory, proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), maintains that “workers are more productive when their work is varied and challenging” (Johnson, 1986, p. 55). To achieve the purpose, employers have to design “enriched work” for their employee which promotes skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Latham, 2006, p. 32).

As Johnson (1986) suggests, measures often taken to increase teacher motivation in different countries can be understood in the contexts of all these three theories. In his view, expectancy and equity theories provide a rationale for merit pay for teachers. Merit pay is a bonus plan to reward teachers either for special services, outstanding teaching, specific accomplishments, participating in extra-curricular activities or conducting in-service training

(p. 61). Teachers who receive merit pay can have high motivation, for there is always a reward that they value (i.e., depending on whether the person desires intrinsic or extrinsic outcomes). Meanwhile, job enrichment theory provides justification for “differentiated staffing” and “career ladders” in teaching (p. 65). Even though most teachers value intrinsic rewards and often enjoy the task of teaching, teaching the same subject or teaching at the same level for years can also lead to boredom for teachers: “Teachers often report that they are discouraged by work that promises the same responsibilities on the first and last days of their careers” (Johnson, 1986, p. 69). To remedy this, some states of the United States have introduced career ladder plans for teachers which allow them to assume varied roles during different stages of their career: mentor teacher and master teacher who take up the responsibilities like designing curriculum, teacher training, conducting research, and directing in-service training programs. This increases the motivation of the teachers for there is always an opportunity for teachers to perform activities which are “varied and challenging” during different phases of their careers (Jonson, 1986, p. 70).

Of the above three theories proposed by Johnson to study teacher motivation, expectancy theory has received the most attention in teacher motivation literature. For instance, Jesus (1993) used it as a theoretical basis to study the motivation of pre-service and in-service teachers in Portugal. Also, Mowday and Nam (1997) discussed how the propositions of expectancy theory can be used to increase faculty motivation at the university level. And Kelley, Heneman, and Milanowski (2002) used expectancy theory (along with goal setting theories) to study the motivational effects of school-based performance award programs on teachers in some schools in North Carolina. In a more recent study, Finnigan



and Gross (2007) used expectancy theory to examine the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) on teacher motivation in ten schools in Chicago.

A very common model of work motivation which has greatly influenced teacher motivation research during the last two decades is *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* motivation. This distinction proposed by Porter and Lawler (1968) was originally based on Vroom's expectancy theory of work motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 1). They used the term *intrinsic motivation* to describe an individual's "natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest and exploration that is essential to cognitive and social development" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). For someone who is intrinsically motivated, satisfaction in work comes from the activity itself. When motivation is extrinsic to a person or activity, it is termed *extrinsic motivation*. Someone extrinsically motivated derives satisfaction not from the activity itself but from other tangible or verbal rewards (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 1). According to Porter and Lawler (1968), both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation rewards are fundamental to the total job satisfaction of workers in any job (p. 9).

However, Deci and Ryan (1980, 1991), in developing *Self-Determination theory*, used this dichotomy as the basis to introduce a new motivation model called *autonomous motivation* and *controlled motivation*. An individual who acts with a sense of volition and has the experience of choice is characterized by autonomous motivation, of which intrinsic motivation is one example (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 334). In contrast, an individual who acts with a sense of pressure and does not experience choice in a given situation possesses controlled motivation. As Deci and Ryan (2008) state, both kinds of motivation can "energize and direct human behavior," though autonomous motivation has a tendency to "yield greater psychological health and more effective performance on heuristic types of

activities” (p. 334). They also propose that an individual becomes autonomous (i.e. self-determined) when three basic human needs are fulfilled: autonomy (experiencing oneself as the origin of one’s behavior), competence (feeling a sense of accomplishment), and relatedness (feeling close to and connected with other individuals; Deci, Kasser, & Ryan, 1997, p. 69).

Porter and Lawler’s (1968) intrinsic/extrinsic model of motivation has always been a common distinction discussed in teacher motivation research (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Dinham & Scott, 2000; Malmberg, 2008; Morgan, Kitching & O’Leary, 2007). Most of these studies also identify intrinsic rewards as the most satisfying aspect of the teaching profession (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Dinham & Scot, 2000; Dörnyei, 2001). Also, a handful of recent studies have used self-determination theory as a foundation to investigate teacher motivation. For instance, Roth, Assor, Maymon, and Kaplan (2007), through a study conducted in Israel, report a positive relationship between autonomous motivation of teachers and autonomous motivation in students’ learning in classrooms. Moreover, Keng, Wang, and Liu (2008) used self-determination theory to examine teachers’ motivation to teach national education in schools in Singapore. Sorebo, Halvari, Gulli, & Kristiansen, (2009), Reeve (2009), and Muller et al. (2009) also used self-determination theory to study teacher motivation in different contexts.

In addition to the theories discussed above, some recent studies have also incorporated constructs from many other theories to study teacher motivation. For instance, Jesus and Lens’ (2005) model for teacher motivation research integrates constructs from several cognitive motivational theories. These constructs include *learned helplessness/ attribution reformulation, professional disengagement, motivational discrepancy, goal value,*

*efficacy*, and *intrinsic motivation*. Moreover, Morgan et al. (2007) proposed a framework for teacher motivation research suggesting four constructs to be explored in such research: *teacher efficacy*, *organizational citizenship*, *commitment to teaching*, and *willingness for professional development*. All in all, teacher motivation research has mostly benefited from work motivation theories in psychology and organizational behavior. However, like in learner motivation research, the most influential in teacher motivation research has also been the intrinsic and extrinsic model of motivation proposed by Porter and Lawler in 1968. In the teacher motivation literature of the last two decades, one can hardly find any study which does not make use of this distinction.

### **Teacher Motivation in Education**

A considerable number of studies exploring teacher motivation have also investigated the reasons why new teachers join the profession of teaching (Bastick, 2000; Hayes, 1990; Morgan et al., 2007; Muller et al., 2009; Stiegelbauer, 1992; Young, 1995). The common reasons given by teachers for entering the profession can be categorized into three main groups: intrinsic reasons, extrinsic reasons, and altruistic reasons (Bastick, 2000; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Muller et al., 2009; Young, 1995). Reasons concerning the job satisfaction that is derived from the activity itself are termed *intrinsic*. Working with children and doing the work that they love are the most common intrinsic reasons that teachers often mention for entering the teaching profession (Dinham & Scot, 2000). Meanwhile, any reason that deals with the aspect of external rewards of teaching such as long holidays, job security, and social status of a teacher are conceptualized as extrinsic reasons. Finally, reasons such as educating the next generation, sharing knowledge, and furthering knowledge are altruistic reasons for they underlie the perception of teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job

(Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). Muller et al. (2009) view altruistic reasons as “internalized extrinsic motivation” because they often represent values associated with the teaching profession (p. 579).

A common finding in teacher motivation research is that most teachers, regardless of the context in which they work, are often driven by intrinsic reasons to join the profession of teaching (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Muller et al., 2009; Wadsworth, 2001). For instance, Wadsworth (2001), in a study involving 664 public school teachers and 250 private school teachers in the USA, reports that 96% of her sample had intrinsic reasons to join the profession: “teaching is work that they love to do” (p. 25). Also, 85% of her sample further said that they would choose teaching even if they were starting their career all over again (p. 25). Dinham and Scott (2000) in a large quantitative study conducted in Australia, New Zealand, and England also report a similar finding. Their sample included 2000 teachers, about 45% of whom stated that they always wanted to become teachers. This was the most frequent reason stated by the participants for joining teaching. In their study involving 466 student teachers in Northern Ireland, Moran et al. (2001) confirmed these findings when most of their participants had intrinsic and altruistic reasons to join the profession. In Carrington and Tomlin’s (2001) study in the UK involving postgraduate teacher students, the trainees stressed “ the importance of intrinsic (rather than extrinsic) considerations when describing their reasons for wanting to teach or alternatively, emphasized the social dimensions (altruistic) of teaching” (p. 156).

However, when Bastick (2000) studied the motivation of teachers in Jamaica, she found the extrinsic reasons like the profession with most holidays, adequate salary, job security, affordable tuition at teaching colleges, opportunities for earning extra money, and

the social status for teachers to be the major determinants for her participants to select teaching. In her study, altruistic reasons and intrinsic reasons became second and third categories, respectively (p. 11). She further found that male teachers in Jamaica are mostly motivated by intrinsic reasons to join the profession while female teachers are primarily motivated by extrinsic reasons (p. 11). But Moran et al. (2001) found contradictory evidence for this claim. As they record, extrinsic factors were more important for men while intrinsic and altruistic factors were more important for women (p. 30). However, neither study accounted for the different motivation patterns of male and female teachers in their samples.

Thus, teacher motivation literature shows that new teachers' decision to join the profession can be determined by intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic reasons. Even though intrinsic reasons have been found to be the most common motivators for teachers (Wadsworth, 2001; Watt & Richardson, 2008), it may not be equally true in all contexts (Bastick, 2000). However, most teachers not only join the teaching profession for intrinsic reasons but also are "ready to forgo high salaries and recognition" (Praver & Baldwin, 2008, p. 3). As Dörnyei (2001) rightly puts it, this is often a "fact that is recognized and abused by many national governments" around the world (p. 159).

As many studies report, a large number of beginning teachers who join the profession are highly motivated and enthusiastic to perform in their career. Wadsworth (2001) reports in her study that "enthusiasm for the job came up repeatedly in the interviews with teachers" (p. 25). Even for 75% of her sample, teaching was a lifelong career choice (p. 25). Watt and Richardson (2008) in their study of beginning teachers in Australia also identified a large number of beginning teachers as "highly engaged persisters" (planning a lifetime of teaching) in contrast to "highly engaged switchers" (teach for a while or fall back on teaching if

necessary) and “lower engaged desisters” (disappointed with teaching; p. 409). Despite this positive picture, some studies also report that “teachers have the lowest job satisfaction of any professional groups studied” (Pennington, 1995, p. 165). This dissatisfaction or demotivation of teachers also results in a high rate of teacher burnout. According to Ingersoll (2003), in the USA alone, about 46% of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first five years (p. 11). Based on evidence from both Europe and the USA, Kitching et al. (2009) state that “job dissatisfaction is a major factor in an exodus of beginning teachers” (p. 44). The high rate of teacher burnout along with high rate of reported teacher dissatisfaction or demotivation have also prompted recent teacher motivation researchers to examine factors that motivate and demotivate teachers around the world. This seems to be the main focus in most teacher motivation research during the last ten years (e.g., Addison et al., 2008; Dinham and Scott, 2000; Dörnyei, 2001; Fernet, Senécal, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008; Kitching et al., 2009; Muller et al., 2009; Pelletier et al., 2002).

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

and lack of support services for teachers (p. 389). In their review of teacher motivation studies conducted in the contexts of England and Wales after 1989, Spear et al. (2000) identified the common intrinsic rewards of teaching to be working with children, developing warm personal relationships with students, intellectual challenge of teaching, autonomy, and independence. The major demotivators for teachers are poor pay, work overload, and perceptions of how teachers are viewed by society (p. 4). In a study of factors affecting motivation and demotivation of primary teachers in England, Addison and Brundrett (2008) found that teacher motivation is mostly related to intrinsic issues such as positive responses from children, their progress, a sense of achievement from a completed and enjoyable task, and having supportive colleagues. Meanwhile, principal demotivators are poor responses from children, working long hours, and workload (p. 91). In addition to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors, they also identified a category called school-based factors such as school management and leadership. These have been categorized under extrinsic factors in many other studies (p. 91).

Even though teachers in many contexts in the world are intrinsically motivated, there are a large “number of detrimental factors that systematically undermine and erode the intrinsic character of teacher motivation” (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 165). According to Dörnyei, teacher demotivation is often associated with five main factors: *stressful nature of work*, *inhibition of teacher autonomy*, *insufficient self-efficacy*, *content repetitiveness*, and *inadequate career structure* (p. 165). Among these, “teacher stress” is a teacher’s experience of “unpleasant negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (Kyriacou, 2001, p. 28). It is a common concept that has been studied in existing research in relation to teacher

demotivation. Based on a number of studies on teachers in different contexts, Kyriacou (2001) states that “teaching is one of the high stress professions” (p. 29) in many countries. For instance, in Kyriacou and Chien’s (2004) study of 203 primary teachers in Taiwan, 26% teachers reported that being a teacher was “very or extremely stressful” (p. 88). As it has been found, teacher stress often results from factors such as bureaucratic pressure, lack of adequate facilities, low salaries and constant alertness needed in working with children or young adults, teaching pupils who lack motivation, maintaining discipline, coping with change, being evaluated by others, and role conflict and ambiguity (Dörnyei, 2001; Kyriacou, 2001). The high rate of teacher stress not only weakens the intrinsic motivation of teachers (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 167) but also results in a high rate of teacher burn out (Nagel & Brown, 2003, p. 255).

According to Dörnyei, the second source of teacher demotivation is restricted teacher autonomy. Autonomy means “experiencing oneself as the origin of one’s behavior” (Deci et al., 1997, p. 69). It is one of the basic human needs that promotes autonomous motivation of individuals (Deci and Ryan, 2008). In the profession of teaching, nationwide standardized tests, and national curricular and increasing administration demands often restrict teacher autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001, p.167). In their study involving 254 teachers in Quebec, Canada, Pelletier et al. (2002) reported three kinds of “pressure” that can restrict teacher autonomy:

- teachers’ perception that they are responsible for their students’ behaviors or students’ performing up to standard
- teachers’ perception that they have to conform to colleagues’ teaching methods or involvement in school activities



- teachers' perception that they had limited freedom in determining the course curriculum or that they had to cover a specific curriculum determined by school's administration

They also found that when teacher autonomy is restricted (when they are less self-determined), teachers become more controlling with their students (p. 194). Meanwhile, Roth et al. (2007) found evidence for the fact that autonomous motivation of teachers often promotes learner autonomy in classrooms (p. 771).

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

Just like low efficacy, teacher demotivation can also be caused by a lack of intellectual challenge in teaching that some teachers suffer when they teach the same subject or the same level of students for years (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 169). This makes teachers often say that "they are discouraged by work that promises the same responsibilities on the first and last days of their careers" (Johnson, 1986, p. 69). However, one objective of career ladder

plans for teachers in many countries is to provide teachers with different responsibilities like administration, curriculum designing, teacher training and material development so that they are motivated by different responsibilities that they are expected to take on during different phases of their careers. But as Dörnyei (2001) reports, such opportunities are also very limited for teachers in comparison to other professionals. This *inadequate career structure* often demotivates teachers because teaching offers a “closed contingent path,” especially for teachers who do not want to join management (p. 169). For such teachers, similar classroom procedures can be a monotonous experience.

Despite this, some countries have taken measures to reduce the impact of this situation in different ways. For instance, in Sri Lanka, teachers are offered a promotion scheme which allows them to move from grade III (lowest grade in teaching) to grade I (highest grade in teaching) based on their higher studies and experience. Accordingly, they can also apply to be teacher trainers, material writers, national exam evaluators, and so on. However, the major benefit in the scheme is monetary awards. To what extent these monetary awards can motivate teachers has also been debated in literature. Though Spear et al. (2000), Smithers and Robinson (2003), and Addison and Brundrett (2008) identified poor pay as a demotivator for teachers, Michaelowa (2002) claims that with regard to teacher motivation, “the role of salaries does not seem to be as important as many people believe” (p. 18). Even in the study on job satisfaction among American teachers by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997), “teacher satisfaction showed a weak relationship with salary and benefits” (p. 9). Instead, “teachers were more satisfied in a supportive, safe and autonomous environment” (p. 32).

## **Teacher Motivation in Developing Countries**

As mentioned in the introduction, in mainstream education, recent studies on teacher motivation are mostly reported from the developing countries of the world. These include studies undertaken by the organizations like the Department for International Development (DFID, 2007), Global Campaign for Education, (GCE, 2005) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO, 2002). While most of these studies are based on South Asia and some parts of Africa, they reveal that there is a drastic decline in teacher motivation in those countries, accounting for poor quality in education.

For instance, VSO (2002), based on a comprehensive study of teacher motivation in three developing countries in Africa (Zambia, Malawi and Papua New Guinea), concludes that “in many developing countries the teaching force is demoralized and fractured” (VSO, 2002, p. 1). As the report further states, the teaching profession in these countries “is characterized by high attrition rates, constant turn over, lack of confidence and varying levels of professional commitment” (p. 1). Through interviews, questionnaires, and focus-group discussions with stakeholders in education of these countries, the study reported a variety of factors that impinge on teacher motivation in case study countries. The common demotivators included inadequate resources, limited opportunities for teacher training and professional development, lack of support from school administration, decline in teacher status in society, and poor salaries and incentives.

Also, GCE (2005), in their review of recent literature on teachers’ issues in developing countries, claims that in those countries, “Teacher motivation and morale remain in a chronic state of decline” (GCE, 2005, p. 1). They also hold issues such as poor salary

and incentives, inadequate facilities for teachers (especially in rural areas), limited resources for teaching, overcrowded classrooms resulting in heavy workload, limited opportunities for professional development, and lack of teacher autonomy accountable for the decline in teacher motivation.

The most recent of the studies, *Teacher Motivation of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia* by DFID (2007), also confirms the findings of the previous studies, claiming that in developing countries, “Most schooling systems are faced with what amounts to a teacher motivation crisis” (DFID, 2007, p. 25). This study involved case studies from 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia: Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zambia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Based on the case studies, the report identifies many factors that often demotivate teachers in those countries: poor teacher accountability, increased workload and class sizes, poor teacher pay, declining social status for teachers, constant changes of school curricular, low teacher efficacy, and poor working and living conditions. These demotivators also result in high levels of teacher absenteeism, teacher transfers between schools, migration of qualified teachers to developed countries, and teachers leaving the profession to take up other jobs (p. 7). Thus, these studies not only report similar reasons that account for teacher demotivation in developing countries, but also offer various recommendations for the remotivation of teachers in their respective countries.

In addition to the common motivators and demotivators for teachers in developing countries, many case studies by DFID (2007) also report motivators and demotivators specific to teachers in some contexts. For instance, the case study by Ramachandran, Pal, Jain, & Shekar (2005) involving primary teachers in ten schools in Rajasthan, India (2005), reports how socio-cultural factors can also affect teacher motivation in India. As some

respondents in the study identified, one demotivator for them was the fact that they had to “teach children of poor communities and specific social groups who are ‘dirty’ (lower caste)” (p. 26). This shows the social distance between teachers and students, especially in terms of caste. The other significant finding of this study is the high rate of teacher satisfaction with the salary: “Nearly all the teachers were happy with their salaries” (p. 13). However, this finding about the salary by Ramachandran et al. (2005) contradicts the findings of the case studies in many other developing countries. For instance, in their study of primary teachers of ten schools in Tanzania by Bennell et al. (2005), 85% of their respondents in the urban district reported their pay as “very poor or poor” (p. 30). This has made more than 50% of the urban teachers seek secondary employment to support their finances (p. 43). Many other case studies, for instance, in Nigeria (Adelabu, 2005), Pakistan (Khan, 2005), and Nepal (Devkota, 2005) also report salary as a common demotivator for teachers.

The results of teacher motivation research reported from developed countries and developing countries show both similarities and differences. In many contexts, teachers often derive motivation from intrinsic rewards of teaching. This even makes new teachers “forgo high salaries and social recognition” (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 159) regardless of the context in which they work. But, once they are in service, teachers often become demotivated by external “rewards” of teaching and/or a variety of contextual factors that impinge on the intrinsic character of motivation. However, what exactly demotivates teachers and to what extent those demotivators impinge on teacher motivation differ from country to country. For instance, while the motivation of teachers in Tanzania is affected by inadequate infrastructure facilities (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005), the motivation of teachers in the USA can be affected by restricted teacher autonomy (Crooks, 1997, p. 72). Thus, teacher motivation in

education needs to be understood both in terms of universal issues related to teachers in general as well as parochial issues specific to teachers in specific contexts.

### **Teacher Motivation in TESOL**

Despite the fact that teacher motivation (as opposed to language learner motivation) is a vastly overlooked area of research in TESOL, a handful of studies on the construct have been reported in the field during the last two decades. First and foremost, Pennington and her colleagues, in the 1990s, conducted a series of studies on ESL/EFL teacher motivation in different parts of the world. In her review of teacher motivation literature entitled “Work satisfaction, motivation, and commitment in teaching English as a second language,” Pennington (1995) provides a detailed summary of these studies. Among them is a major quantitative study conducted by Pennington and Riley (1991) involving 100 members of the world TESOL organization who are also ESL/EFL teachers from different countries. In this study, they found a “moderate or high level of general job satisfaction” among ESL/EFL teachers (p. 134). However, as the results indicate, these ESL/EFL teachers, like many other teachers in the world, derive their satisfaction from intrinsic rewards of teaching often associated with moral values, social service, creativity, achievement, ability utilization, responsibility, variety, and independence (p. 130). Meanwhile, their dissatisfaction or demotivation is associated with teacher pay, limited opportunities for advancement, and company policies and procedures (p. 134).

A second study conducted by Pennington and Riley (1991) using a work satisfaction questionnaire called “Job Descriptive Index” also confirmed the above findings when their subjects reported issues related to teacher pay and promotions as demotivators for them (p.

37). In their study of EFL resource teachers in Hong Kong public schools, Wong and Pennington (1993) found that teacher dissatisfaction or demotivation was often associated with high stress, restricted teacher autonomy, difficult working conditions, limited opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, minimal work incentives, and poor resources (p. 134). These results also confirmed the findings of the previous studies by Pennington and others.

In addition to Pennington and her colleagues, Doyle and Kim (1998, 1999) also conducted a few studies on ESL/EFL teacher motivation both in the United States and Korea. Their objective in these studies was to “explore a variety of social, cultural and political reasons which diminish ESL/EFL teacher motivation” (p. 1). Drawing on in-depth qualitative interview data, they report salary, teachers’ relationships with school administration, lack of advancement opportunities, obligation to teach a set curriculum, limited choice of text books, heavy workloads, lack of autonomy in teaching and evaluation process, and lack of long-term employment and job security to be the main sources of teachers’ decreasing motivation or demotivation. They also report the intrinsic factors like being with students and doing work that they love to be the major source of teacher motivation.

Recently, a few studies on teacher motivation have been reported from different EFL contexts. For instance, Connie (2000), through a qualitative survey, investigated the motivation and demotivation of EFL teachers in Mexico. In this study involving 98 teachers, she reported different factors which motivate and demotivate Mexican EFL teachers. The major motivators for the teachers in the study included student performance, student responses, motivated students, activities that were successful in class, opportunities for training, support and respect by the administration, and a flexible curriculum that they can

modify according to student needs (p. 7). These results indicate that teacher motivation for these subjects was also largely associated with intrinsic rewards of teaching, a common finding in teacher motivation research around the world. Meanwhile, these teachers were also demotivated by students' lack of enthusiasm for studies, low salaries, unavailability of secondary teaching materials, work overload, inflexible curriculum, and limited resources for teaching.

Tiziava's (2003) study involving 52 EFL teachers in Greece also reported similar findings. For her subjects, poor teacher pay and incentives are the most demotivating factors. Meanwhile, the study found the desire to work with children to be the most common motivator for teachers (p. 82). In a more recent study on teacher motivation, Bernaus et al. (2009) explored how language teacher motivation affects student motivation and their language achievement. Using 31 English teachers and 694 students in compulsory secondary education in Spain, the study reported a close relationship between teachers' motivation, their use of strategies to motivate students, and students' English achievement: "Teacher motivation is related to teacher use of motivating strategies, which in turn are related to student motivation and English achievement" (p. 33). As Bernaus et al. (2009) further state, "If teachers are motivated, students are more actively involved in class activities and feel more motivated" (p. 33). With the increasing interest in learning English in different parts of the world, this finding is highly significant in TESOL for it demands more attention to teacher motivation (as opposed to learner motivation), a phenomenon hitherto overlooked in the field.

However, even among the existing research on teacher motivation in SLA/TESOL, only a very few studies have recorded any motivators or demotivators specific to ESL/EFL



teachers around the world. For instance, Pennington (1995) identified some motivators and demotivators which specifically affect ESL teachers. While the motivators included travel opportunities, possibility of interacting with people of other cultures, and chance to teach language in creative ways, demotivators included low salary, lack of benefits, job insecurity, and inadequate recognition on the job (p. 5). Still, Pennington's (1995) findings do not really reflect the complexity of teaching a second or foreign language, especially in non-native English speaking countries. As Crooks (1997) rightly put it, "Languages and language teaching are political, and language teachers are political actors" (p. 75). This suggests the unique nature of language teaching which often poses an additional set of challenges to language teachers in contrast to teachers in general. These challenges are mostly caused by socio-cultural and affective factors like attitude, inhibition, anxiety, willingness to communicate, risk-taking, and motivation (Brown, 2007, p. 154) often associated with language learning. How ESL/EFL teachers face these challenges in classrooms and what determines their motivation and demotivation in the profession in different contexts are significant questions in TESOL/SLA which have still not been adequately answered in the field. This reminds us of what Dörnyei (2001) stated at the beginning of this decade on teacher motivation research in mainstream education and TESOL: "Far more research is needed to do this important issue justice" (p. 156). Even after nine years, obviously this statement is still true and applicable to TESOL much more than mainstream education.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

### **Rationale**

One common consensus among education researchers is that motivation is difficult to define or directly observe because it is a “hypothetical construct that is used to describe internal and/or external forces that generate the kick-off, the direction, the intensity and persistence of behavior” (Vallerand & Thill, 1993, p. 18). This abstract nature of the concept has made even teacher motivation researchers often experiment with different research designs to study it. This is obvious in many studies on teacher motivation reported from different settings during the last few decades (Bernaus et al., 2009; Connie, 2001; Fernet, et al., 2008; Jesus & Lens, 2005; Johnson, 1986; Morgan et al., 2007). However, a careful reading of these studies shows that most researchers who have studied teacher motivation in the recent past have heavily relied on quantitative methods. For instance, out of twenty-eight individual studies cited in the literature review of this research, only nine studies make use of a qualitative or a mixed method design to investigate teacher motivation. Consequently, this frequent use of quantitative methods in research has prevented an in-depth and comprehensive investigation of different aspects related to teacher motivation, a perspective which only qualitative research can offer.

Investigating the elements of motivation and demotivation reflected in Sri Lankan ESL teachers, this exploratory study made use of a qualitative research design. According to Shank (2002), qualitative research in nature is “a form of systematic, empirical inquiry into meaning” (p. 5). In such inquiry, researchers study “things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). This study is also based on the assumption that the

participants' perceptions and experiences are highly significant in the investigation of an abstract concept like motivation. In order to capture the experiences and perceptions of the participants, this study mainly used in-depth qualitative interviews. They facilitated a very comprehensive grasp of the issues and concerns related to ESL teacher motivation in the Sri Lankan public school setting. As a measure to increase the credibility of the results of the study, the researcher also used a second source of data: a qualitative survey. This in qualitative research is known as data triangulation. Triangulation is "a procedure using multiple sources of data to see whether they converge to provide evidence for validating interpretations of results" (Perry, 2005, p. 251). In this study, interview data and survey results have been presented separately in the results section while they are integrated in the discussion to provide a broader perspective of the phenomenon of ESL teacher motivation in Sri Lanka.

## **Participants**

The participants of this study were ESL teachers currently employed in the public school system of Sri Lanka. A convenience sample of five ESL teachers, three females and two males, took part in qualitative interviews. In age they ranged from 36 to 43 years. Four of these participants are currently on study leave; that is, they are studying for a bachelor's degree in English at a university in Sri Lanka. The fifth participant, who is a graduate trained ESL teacher, currently works at an urban school in Colombo. A detailed description of each participant is included in the results section.

Meanwhile, a convenience sample of 83 teachers who attended a weekend external degree program in Colombo in the first week of April 2010 was approached for the

qualitative survey of this study. These teachers work in different regions of the country and come to Colombo during most weekends to study for an external degree in English. While the program was attended by about 100 teacher students in the given week, 83 teachers volunteered to take the survey. The following week, 54 completed surveys were returned making the response rate approximately 65%. The following table shows the characteristics of the survey participants.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Survey Sample*

Characteristics	Details
Gender	Female: 81.5% Male: 18.5%
Age	Mean age: 36.55 years
Years of Teaching	3 to 5 years: 18% 5 to 10 years: 12% 10 to 20 years: 61% Above 20 years: 7%

The majority of the survey participants was female (81.5%). The percentage of males that the sample included was 18.5%. This percentage of male teachers in the sample is slightly less than the percentage of male teachers in the public school system of the country. According to the UNESCO statistics on Sri Lanka (2007), the percentage of male teachers in primary schools is 21.5% while it is 36.8% in the secondary schools. The participants ranged from 26 to 56 years old. The mean age reported was 36.55 years. The participants also greatly ranged in terms of their teaching experience. The majority of teachers (33) had ten to

twenty years of teaching experience. Ten teachers in the sample had three to five years of teaching experience, and seven teachers had five to ten years of teaching experience. The total number of participants who possessed more than twenty years of teaching experience was four.

### **Data Collection**

The process of data collection in the study began after obtaining the human subjects approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) of Eastern Michigan University (EMU), USA. The researcher also obtained permission from the HSRC to use one of the interviews that he had conducted with a Sri Lankan ESL teacher for a class project in November 2009.

**Interviews.** The primary source of data in this study was interviews. A total of five interviews were conducted between November 2009 and April 2010. Out of the five interviews, one interview was conducted by the researcher himself using Skype software in November 2009 for a class project at EMU. During the time of this study, the researcher was away from Sri Lanka and had no direct access to the rest of the participants. Therefore, the other four interviews were conducted in Sri Lanka in April 2010 by a lecturer working at the Department of English of a leading university in Sri Lanka. She has also worked as an ESL professional at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka for five years and as an ESL teacher at a public school for a short time. In conducting the interviews, she made use of a semi-structured interview format (see Appendix A) prepared by the researcher. It was mainly based on the findings of previous teacher motivation research in different contexts (Connie, 2000; Hayes,

2009; Spear et al., 2000; Wadsworth, 2001; Watt et al., 2008). The four interviews were conducted in a quiet location at the university where the interviewer currently works.

Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary. They also signed an informed consent form (see Appendix C) which explained the purpose of the study, research procedures, the rights of the participants, the methods of results dissemination, and any direct and indirect benefits that they receive for participation. Before signing the consent form, they were given five to ten minutes to ask any questions that they had regarding the study and/or data collection. Their consent to audio-record the interviews was also obtained. Each participant received a copy of the consent form signed both by the researcher and the participant. In conducting the interviews, the participants were allowed to use either English or Sinhala, their first language. However, all participants used mostly English to share their experiences and opinions.

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewee was requested to provide a brief introduction of him- or herself. This mostly included basic information like age, place of work, years of teaching experience, the number of schools that they have worked at, and the classes that they teach at current schools. After that the interview mostly included open-ended questions to find out what motivates and demotivates the participants in their day-to-day experiences as teachers. In addition, they also described why they became teachers, why they elected to teach English, what a typical working day of a teacher is like, and how they spend time after work and during weekends. In conducting the interviews, the interviewer used several interview techniques recommended by Lichtman (2010) for qualitative researchers (p. 145). Accordingly, she used a variety of questions including *general questions*, *specific questions* and *comparison/contrast questions* (p. 146):

General Question: “Tell me about yourself.”

Specific Question: “Why did you decide to become a teacher?”

Comparison/Contrast: “Do you still have the same motivation that you had at the beginning of your career?” How is it similar or different?

Follow-up questions were also often used by the interviewer to obtain additional information about the themes which were discussed by the participants. The interviewer also occasionally paraphrased and/or summarized the statements by the participants to ensure accuracy. At the end of an interview, the participant was asked to suggest a pseudonym to identify the interview in future reference. Each interview lasted from 45 to 60 minutes and was also audio-recorded.

**Qualitative survey.** Data for this study were also collected through a qualitative survey (see Appendix B). The participants were a convenience sample of 70 ESL teachers currently working in public schools in the country. At the time of the data collection, they were studying for an external degree in English and attended a preparatory course at an institute in Colombo during weekends. First, the researcher obtained approval from the institute concerned to do the data collection in the first week of April 2010 in class. One week prior to the data collection, all teachers were requested through the course coordinator to take part in the study. In the following week, during the last 20 minutes of the class, the teachers were informed of the study, and once again their voluntary participation was requested. The class was attended by about 100 teachers on this day, and 83 teachers volunteered to take part in the study. After that the teachers were informed orally, in detail, of the purpose of the study, research procedures, the rights of the participants, the methods of

results dissemination, and any direct and indirect benefits that they receive for participation in detail. They were also allowed to ask questions regarding any aspects of the study. After that they read and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix D), which the instructor collected prior to distributing the questionnaire. The participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire at home and bring it back the following week. The instructor received 54 completed questionnaires, making the response rate approximately 65%.

The survey instrument used for the data collection in this study was developed by the researcher in light of three previous studies on teacher motivation in different settings: Connie (2001), Kitching et al. (2009), and Tiziava (2003). In addition, the results of a pilot study conducted by the researcher himself with a sample of three Sri Lankan ESL teachers in November 2009 for a class project at EMU were also used to design the survey. The designed survey was also piloted on four ESL professionals in Sri Lanka and was edited based on their feedback.

The survey instrument consisted of three sections. The eight questions of the first section were intended to gather basic demographic data about the informants: age, years of teaching experience, educational qualifications, and so on. The second section consisted of four questions to find out different reasons why the participants entered the teaching profession and chose to teach English: *Why did you decide to become a teacher? Why did you choose to teach English? If you had not had the opportunity to teach English, would you still have considered entering the teaching profession? Why or why not?* and *Have you ever wanted to change your career? Why or why not?* Finally, the third section consisted of two questions to find out what motivates and demotivates the participants when they function as ESL teachers in public schools: *What motivates you most in your current job as an English*



teacher? (If any), and What demotivates you most in your current job as an English Teacher? (If any). Both sections two and three gathered data through open-ended questions and free writing.

## **Data Analysis**

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

After transcribing the interviews, the researcher used *content analysis* to identify themes and patterns of the interview data. Qualitative content analysis is “an approach of empirical, methodological and controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification” (Mayring, 2000, p. 2). It is “used to develop objective inferences about a subject of interest in any type of communication” (Kondraki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002, p. 224). Also, it is one method that provides “protocols for efficient analysis of large data sets with textual components (Sonpar & Golden-Dibble, 2007, p. 800).

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), qualitative content analysis can be conducted in two different ways: deductive content analysis and inductive content analysis. In inductive analysis, themes and codes emerge from text data itself due to the “researchers’

careful examination and constant comparison” (p. 2). In contrast, in deductive content analysis, the researcher “begins with predetermined key words, categories, or variables (based on relevant literature or other resources) and sifts the data using these variables” (Kondracki, 2002, p. 225).

This study adopted the method of deductive qualitative content analysis. The main reason for this selection was the availability of an adequate amount of previous literature on teacher motivation to guide the coding process. As it has been elaborated in the literature review, many studies on teacher motivation have been reported from both developed and developing countries during the last two decades. Even though teacher motivation remains an overlooked area in Sri Lanka, it was assumed that the research findings on the construct in similar settings could guide the coding process of the interview data of this study:

“deductive content analysis is often used in cases where the researcher wishes to retest existing data in a new context” (Elo & Kyngas, 2007, p. 111). Hence, based on the results of the previous teacher motivation studies by Crooks (1997), Connie (2001), Tiziava (2003), Adelabu (2005), Bennell et al. (2005), Ramachandran et al. (2007), and Kitching et al. (2009), the researcher developed a list of ten codes to analyze the interview data. Table 2 shows the codes and their definitions.

Table 2

*Code Names and Definitions*

Code	Definitions
Students	Student performance and behavior
School administration	Issues related to principal or other administrative staff
Textbooks & Teaching materials	Availability, quality and content of materials
Teacher autonomy	Teacher freedom to make decisions in teaching
Professional development	Issues related to teacher education and training
Colleagues	Issues related to coworkers
Work conditions	Facilities, class size, and school location
Teacher pay & Workload	Facilities, class size, and school location
Parental involvement	Parents' help and interest in children's education

Existing literature on teacher motivation provides evidence that teacher motivation is commonly related to these codes. Thus, these were used as initial codes to identify the themes in the interview data. During this stage, the researcher's focus was to find out whether the interview data contained any evidence for the existing codes. Whenever any evidence was found, the researcher assigned a code from the list. The process was repeated several times to ensure accuracy. After that, all the transcripts were read carefully once again to make sure that all points are coded. Any concepts that could not be coded at this stage were identified and marked separately. If they did not represent a category

already existing, a new code was assigned. The rationale behind doing so was that there could be new codes and themes emerging from the data itself which could be either specific to the Sri Lankan context or ESL or EFL teachers. Thus, the following new codes were inductively derived from the interview data of this study:

Table 3

*Code Names and Definitions*

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

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

**Survey.** In analyzing the 54 surveys of the study, the researcher used frequencies and percentages. However, the last two questions of the survey about common motivators and demotivators for teachers were analyzed through the method of inductive content analysis. As it was mentioned earlier under the section entitled “interview data,” in inductive content

analysis, codes emerge from the data itself. In analyzing the results of the two questions, the researcher identified 16 codes with regard to motivators and 23 codes with regard to demotivators. (These codes are listed under the tables three and four in the results section.) Later these codes were categorized under three major topics: *students*, *teaching*, and *administration*. A number of other miscellaneous codes which could not be included in any of these three categories were listed under a separate category called *other*.

### **Confidentiality**

All possible measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants during each stage of this study. With regard to the interviews, all five participants read and signed an informed consent form which guaranteed that their identities would be kept confidential. They also received a copy of the consent form signed by both the researcher and the participant. The consent forms were kept separate, and they were never matched with interview transcriptions. Further, at the end of each interview, the participant was requested to suggest a pseudonym which was used to identify the interview in future reference. In the presentation of the results and data analysis, these pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants. In writing the results and discussion sections, the researcher also avoided using any information which directly or indirectly reveals the participants' identity or place of work. As another measure of protection of the participants' confidentiality, all the interviews were transcribed by the researcher himself, and all interview tapes as well as transcriptions were destroyed soon after the data analysis.

The same procedures were followed in the collection of survey data too. All the participants who volunteered were informed both orally and in writing that their identities would be kept confidential. They also signed informed consent forms which were collected

separately from the survey. Those consent forms were also not matched with the surveys during any stage. All consent forms and the surveys were always kept in a well-protected closet to which only the researcher himself had access. Soon after the data analysis all the surveys were destroyed.

## Chapter 4: Results

This chapter reports the results of the qualitative survey and interviews. Survey results are presented first in detail with frequencies and percentages as participants responded to each question. The presentation of the results of the interviews follows. With regard to the interviews, results are reported in terms of five common themes observed by the researcher in the data analysis process. These five themes are also supported by verbatim statements from transcribed interviews.

### Survey

The survey consisted of six questions. The results for each question of the 54 surveys are reported separately in this section. The data are summarized in a table for each question when appropriate for comprehension. Participants were allowed to make more than one response.

**Why did you decide to become a teacher?** The respondents reported 64 reasons that they selected the teaching profession. Some respondents had even reported more than one reason. The most common reason mentioned by the sample was their lifelong desire to become teachers: “always wanted to be teachers” (21 %). The second most common reasons were equally “enjoy being with children (18%) and “others’ influence” to become teachers (18%). Out of the twelve respondents who stated outsiders’ influence as their reason for joining the profession, nine of them (75%) had been influenced by their parents. The other common reason reported was the participants’ desire to do a service to society by imparting knowledge to students (17%). However, about 15% of the sample who selected teaching had neither a specific reason to do so nor other options for employment. Meanwhile, three teachers of the sample (7%) also selected teaching because they thought that it was a suitable

job for women. In the instances where the respondents had mentioned more than one reason, the most common combination was “always wanted to be a teacher and “enjoy being with children/students” (9%). The following table shows the participants’ responses for question one.

Table 4 – Question 1

*Reasons for Selecting Teaching*

Reason (n=64)	Number of References
Always wanted to be a teacher	14
Enjoy being with children	12
Others’ influence	12
Wanted to do a service to society	11
Had no specific reason	07
Had no other option	03
Suitable for women	03
More free time than in other jobs	01
Teaching English is prestigious in the country	01

**Why did you choose to teach English?** The total number of reasons stated by the 54 participants for selecting English teaching is 56. Out of these the largest category is teachers’ personal interest in English language (50%). The second most reported reason was the prestigious position of English in Sri Lanka (19%). Also, 16% of the reported reasons were participants’ good competency in English. The following table shows participants’ responses for Question 2.



Table 5 – Question 2

*Reasons for Choosing English Teaching*

Reason (n=64)	Number of References
Personal interest in English	23
Prestige position of English in the country	09
Good competency in English	06
No specific reason	06
Improve my English knowledge	02
Any other reasons	02

**If you had not had the opportunity to teach English, would you still have considered entering the teaching profession? Why or why not?** Thirty-six in the sample (67%) reported that they would have selected teaching even if they had not had the opportunity to teach English. The most common reasons reported were that they either enjoyed being with children (38%) or wanted to do a service to society (32%). But 18 of the sample (33%) only wanted to teach English and would not have entered the teaching profession if they had not had the opportunity to do so. For the majority of them, the common reason was their personal interest in English (86%). But for the rest (14%), teaching English was a source of social prestige; “English teachers are the most recognized among teachers.”

**Have you ever wanted to change your career? Why or why not?** The majority of the respondents (48%) stated that they had never wanted to change their career once they entered the teaching profession. The most common reason (54%) was that they enjoy the

work that they do or are satisfied with their job. The second most reported reason was limited employment opportunities available in the country (14%). The other reported reasons included more vacations and holidays than other jobs, fewer working hours, and social recognition for teachers. However, 42% of the sample had wanted to change their careers at some point after becoming a teacher. The most common reason (35%) was the difficulty they faced to obtain transfers once they were placed in rural schools for a mandatory period of service. Teachers also reported workload (18%), overcrowded classes (13%), and poor salary (5%) as other common reasons which made them want to leave the teaching profession.

**What motivates you most in your current job as an English teacher?** The total number of comments made by the 54 respondents in this section was 73. They were categorized under four different codes: *students*, *teaching*, *administration* and *other*. The highest number of motivators reported by the participants are related to *students*: students' performance, success, motivation, recognition and appreciation by students, being with students, and their positive attitude towards English. The number of motivators reported in this category is 41, and they represent 56% of the total comments. The second most common category reported was *teaching* (17%). The third most common category was *other*, which combined a set of different factors like social recognition for teachers, colleagues' support, limited working hours, and good salary. Meanwhile the category *administration* (11%) reported the least number of comments. Table 6 shows participants' responses for Question 5.

Table 6 – Question 5

*List of Motivators*

Response (n=73)	Number of References
<b>Students</b>	
Student performance and success	19
Being with children	09
Student motivation	06
Recognition and appreciation by students	05
Students' positive attitude towards English	02
<b>Teaching</b>	
Imparting knowledge	08
Improvement of my own knowledge	03
Good text books	01
Parental involvement	01
<b>Other</b>	
Social recognition	05
Colleagues' support	03
Limited working hours	02
The good salary	02
<b>Administration</b>	
Support of the administration	03
Appreciation by administration	02
Professional development Opportunities	02

**What demotivates you most in your current job as an English Teacher? (If any)**

Responding to the question of factors that cause teacher demotivation, the participants made 78 comments. These were also categorized by using the four codes used for analyzing motivators in the previous question. The highest numbers of demotivators reported by the sample are related to different issues related to *teaching*. They represented 51% of the total comments. The second highest-response category, *administration*, represented 26% of the total comments. The categories *students* (14%) and *other* (7%) reported the least number of comments. The following table shows participants' responses for Question 6.

Table 7- Question 6

*List of Demotivators*

Response (n=78)	Number of References
<b>Teaching</b>	
Less facilities & resources for teaching and learning	10
Overcrowded classes	08
Writing school-based assessments	07
Colleagues who don't work hard	04
Issues in teaching methodology	03
Textbooks which do not match students' proficiency level	03
Frequent changes of syllabus and text books	02
Having to teach some other subjects	02

Table 7 (Continued)

*List of Demotivators*

My poor knowledge in teaching methods	01
<b>Administration</b>	
Limited support from school administration	07
Extra-curricular activities	04
Limited opportunities for professional development	03
Inefficiency of zonal education office	03
Lack of proper evaluation of teachers	02
Lack of support from RESC (Regional English Support Centers)	01
<b>Students</b>	
Demotivated students	06
Students' limited proficiency in English	03
Students' negative attitude towards English	02
<b>Other</b>	
Poor salary	02
Limited parental involvement	02
Lack of recognition of teacher's work in society	02

## **Interviews**

This section reports the five interviewees' demographic details, the reasons for selecting teaching, and their basic assumptions about teaching and learning of English in Sri Lankan public schools. This will be followed by the presentation of major themes and patterns that emerged in the interview data.

**Nelum.** Nelum (not her real name) is a 37-year-old female English teacher currently working at an urban girls' school in Colombo. After her secondary education, she applied to one of the English teacher training colleges in Sri Lanka. Her decision to become a teacher had been greatly influenced by her mother, who also had been a teacher: "Actually I was influenced by my mother a lot." After studying for two years at the training college, she completed her internship at a public school. After that she started her career as an English teacher at a remote school in the Sabaragamuwa province. For the last thirteen years, she has worked at three different schools. Her transfers have been due to her personal reasons like marriage and change of residence. After ten years of service, she elected to follow an external degree in English at a university in Sri Lanka which she has recently completed. Currently, she teaches English language and literature at the secondary level. Her experience as a teacher also includes grading English language papers of the Ordinary Level (O/L) examination conducted by the Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka. She views the teaching of English at rural schools (in contrast to urban schools) as a challenge for teachers mainly due to students' negligence of English. However, she enjoys being an English teacher and has never wanted to change her career: "I like being an English teacher. That (English) is what I am comfortable with. I like teaching it."

**Sajith.** Sajith (not his real name) is a male ESL teacher between 30 and 35 years of age. He studied science subjects for his Advanced Level (A/L) examination and had primarily wanted to study science at a university. But when he did not receive high enough marks to get admission to a university, he decided to become an English teacher. After completing teacher education and internship, he started his career as an English teacher at a remote school in the central province of Sri Lanka. Now he has 13 years of teaching experience in public schools. During his entire service, he has worked at three different schools, all of which are in remote areas in the country. He has mostly taught English at the secondary level. He has also taught science subjects at some schools where he has worked. According to Sajith's view, the current English textbooks used in public schools do not suit the competency level of students in rural areas. He has also noticed a negative attitude in his students towards English: "They have a negative attitude towards English." He views this as a demotivator for an English teacher in rural schools. Currently, Sajith is on study leave. He is studying for a bachelor's degree in English at a leading university in Sri Lanka.

**Piyal.** Piyal (not his real name) is a male between 35 and 40 years old. He has 12 years of experience in teaching English at public schools. He had elected to become an English teacher mainly because of his personal interest in English: "I was very much interested in learning English." He had also greatly been inspired by his own English teacher: "It is because of him we were compelled to follow this career." Piyal's interest in English is such that he would have selected some other job (in which he can use English) if he had not had the opportunity to teach English. To become an English teacher, Piyal sat for a competitive examination conducted by the Department of Examination, Sri Lanka. He received a two-week pre-service teacher training before he was first appointed to a rural

school in the eastern province of the country. While working as a teacher there, he also completed a distance teacher-training program during weekends. After eight years of service in the eastern province, he obtained a transfer to a school in Colombo suburbs.

For the last 12 years, Piyal has taught English both at primary and secondary levels. He believes that an English teacher at a public school has to use his or her own teaching methods depending on the context in which they teach. According to him, the same method of language teaching which is often prescribed by the curriculum designers cannot be used in both rural and urban schools due to students' different proficiency levels and needs: "We have to use our own methods because of the standard of students and needs of students." Currently, Piyal is on study leave. He is studying for a bachelor's degree in English at a leading university in Sri Lanka. Upon the completion of his degree, he intends to join education administration.

**Malani.** Malani (not her real name) is a female between 35 and 40 years old. She has about 13 years of teaching experience. She currently works at a school in Colombo suburbs. However, Malani never wanted to become a teacher when she was a student. As she recalls, "it happened" because she "did not have any other choice" when she did not receive high enough marks at the A/L examination to enter university. Her primary ambition in life had been to become a doctor. When her plan did not work, she sat for a competitive examination conducted by the Department of Examination, Sri Lanka, to become an English teacher. Her first appointment was at a rural school in the eastern province. After some time, she received teacher training at the National Institute of Education in Colombo for a period of two years. During her entire period of service, she has worked at three different schools. At these schools, she has taught English at primary and secondary levels. At the current school, she



also teaches General English for Advanced Level students. In Malani's view, in current Sri Lanka, both "students and parents have lost their trust in public schools." She holds poor administration in schools responsible for this situation. She also believes that the remotivation of teachers should be a priority in education planning: "How can they (teachers) motivate students when they are not motivated?" Currently, she is on study leave. She is studying for a bachelor's degree in English at a leading university in Sri Lanka.

**Devika.** Devika (not her real name) became an ESL teacher at the age of 19. She had been greatly influenced by her parents to join the teaching profession: "My parents wanted me to join this job and I also liked it." Both her parents had also been principals and she had liked the profession from her childhood. Her decision to select English had been influenced by her English teacher at school: "He was a very attractive gent and he had a very attractive method of teaching. I was really inspired by his teaching. Because of him I wanted to be an English teacher."

Through a teacher recruitment examination conducted by the Department of Examination, Sri Lanka, Devika received admission to one of the teacher training colleges in Sri Lanka. At the college she completed a two-year training followed by an internship at a school. Now she has about 19 years of experience as an ESL teacher in public schools. For the last 19 years, she has worked at six different schools. She had obtained transfers from time to time due to personal reasons. At her current school in the Colombo suburbs, she is in charge of a special project to develop the English proficiency of primary school children. She thoroughly enjoys the profession and has never wanted to leave it. In Devika's view, English teaching only becomes successful when students are motivated. But student motivation depends on how teachers teach: "A child is really motivated by the teacher, especially in

things like English.” Currently, Devika is on study leave. She is studying for a bachelor’s degree in English at a leading university in Sri Lanka.

## **Themes**

The following five themes emerged from the data of the interviews:

- Students and teacher motivation  
(Student performance, attitudes and behavior)
- Teaching and teacher motivation  
(Curriculum, pedagogy, teacher autonomy, textbooks and teaching materials)
- Administration and teacher motivation  
(School administration, regional offices, teacher pay and workload)
- Professional development and teacher motivation  
(Teacher training and opportunities for professional development)
- Social-contextual influences and teacher motivation (do you want to make a link to investment here?)  
(Social status of teachers, colleagues, work conditions, and parental involvement)

For this and the following section, survey respondents and interviewees answered in English; therefore, no translating was necessary. What is written below is exactly what the participants wrote or said. Grammatical or contextual clues in brackets [ ] are provided for clarity only.

## **Students and Teacher Motivation**

One of the common themes that emerged from the interview data is that teacher motivation is directly related to students' performance, behavior in the classroom and their attitudes towards English. All five participants stated students as a major determinant of their motivation in work. For instance, being asked what motivates her most in the profession of teaching, Nelum in her interview says:

To see students learn. To see them get good results in exams. This year all students in my literature class have got through O/L literature. Eight A passes. I am happy they have done well. That's what keeps me happy and motivated.

During the interview, Nelum mentioned several times that the most satisfying aspect for her in the teaching profession is being with students: "[I am] happy to be with children, when they do well, it makes me happy." While responding to the same question Sajith says that the main motivator for him is also the satisfaction that he receives by looking at student performance: "If we can reach our targets with regard to students that is our satisfaction. Being a teacher that is the ultimate satisfaction that we get." Not only did Piyal affirm this but also added:

I am personally happy because when we teach students they learn something. They become knowledgeable and they become good people. We are very happy when we see those students. Students' performance is the only satisfaction that we can have. Not anything else.

Also he further described the satisfying aspect of teaching: "We are motivated anyhow when we enter the classroom. When we see the faces of children, we forget

everything, all problems we have.” Meanwhile, what motivates Devika most is the presence of motivated students in classroom: “I am really happy with children and by seeing how they are motivated I am really motivated. Every day I feel fresh. They are motivated by me and I am motivated by them.” In addition to student performance and motivation, Malani also derives motivation from students’ admiration of her teaching: “Whenever I get good responses, whenever I get admiration from my students not from others, I get motivated. Their performance, appreciation motivates me.”

Just like student performance motivates these teachers, students’ lack of interest in studies and their negative attitude towards English demotivate them. Nelum, commenting on students’ lack of interest in learning English, says:

Sometimes it is difficult to make some students realize the value of learning English. Some students do not care, especially, when I worked at my first school in Rathnapura [a rural school]. Most students had totally given up English. I had to teach basics in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grades. It was hard. They do not do homework. It was frustrating for me.

Sajith, who has taught English at remote schools for his entire career of thirteen years, has noticed a similar trend in his students:

Being a teacher I have the motivation, but there are some limitations which hinder my motivation. Well, students’ participation in class, especially in teaching English. I have worked most of the schools in remote areas. They were really a little bit reluctant to learn English. Their lack of interest is demotivating.

Sajith thinks that this demotivation of students is mainly due to their negative attitudes towards English: “They have a negative attitude towards English.” As Piyal says, students’ lack of interest in learning English can be both frustrating and annoying for a teacher:

Generally they [students] do not have a good attitude towards English education. They don’t care. Sometimes I feel that. Students are not concerned about their learning. At school we give them homework. When they don’t do the homework, we feel frustrated. We feel annoyed also. They don’t do homework. They do not support the teacher. They do not support themselves. In such situations, teacher is demotivated.

However, Malani’s observations in her students offer counter evidence for these comments by Nelum, Sajith, and Piyal. She, unlike others, has witnessed a great enthusiasm in her students for English both in rural and urban schools:

Students like English very much, even in the rural areas. I have worked at a fishing village. They have a very good motivation towards English. When I organized English day, students were interested and they participated. They were not reluctant. Frankly, I can say that both in urban and rural areas, students are motivated to learn English. That motivates me.

Devika also thinks that most students have a positive attitude towards English and are motivated to learn it. In her view, the teacher is an important determinant of language learner motivation: “They really like it. There are students who hate it. I think the fault is really with

the teacher. Because a child is really motivated by the teacher, especially in things like English.”

Thus, all five participants view students as their major source of motivation. Students’ performance, motivation, and interest in learning English motivate them. But students’ lack of interest in learning can cause demotivation in them. However, the five participants expressed different views about students’ attitude towards English. According to Nelum, Sajith, and Piyal, students have a negative attitude towards English. In contrast, Devika and Malani have witnessed a great enthusiasm and positive attitude towards English in their students.

### **Administration and Teacher Motivation**

The five participants commented on education administration in the country as a major source of demotivation for them. The four subthemes that frequently emerged in the interviews in this regard are inefficiency in school administration and regional education offices, teacher pay, workload, and teacher transfers.

Three out of the five participants mentioned in their interviews that they do not receive enough support from school administration to provide a better education for students. Nelum, who has worked at three different schools during her 13-year service, says “Administration in most schools is corrupted and politicized.” This for her is “totally demotivating.” Also, Sajith says, “Some principals do not have a positive attitude towards English.” He added:

The supervisors of ours, ISAs [In-service Advisors], directors want to improve English knowledge of students. We don’t have a support from principals and others.

They really have a negative attitude towards English. It is demotivating. Sometimes, if we speak in English, they don't look at me in a good way. That is also demotivating.

According to Piyal, many teachers are unhappy with the administration in schools because they are not concerned with teachers' needs: "We feel very frustrated with the system of administration in school. Many teachers always criticize the system." Sajith, commenting on the issues related to administration, says that it is difficult to obtain a transfer to a school where a teacher would like to work once he/she receives an appointment to a remote school:

Teacher transfers are not properly done because I had this problem. For 10 years, I was in Polonnaruwa. I couldn't get a transfer. Even though I tried it was a failure. I was really demotivated for some time. I had to struggle for that. They have a method to do transfers but it is not done in a proper way. Political influences are demotivating.

Nelum also commented on teacher transfers in schools. Being asked whether she ever wanted to change her career after becoming a teacher, Nelum said, "Yes, when I could not get a transfer from my first school. It is unfair. Some teachers get [transfers] using political influence."

The other subtheme that emerged in *administration and teacher motivation* was extra-curricular activities assigned to teachers in schools. Malani, commenting on this, stated that English teachers get assigned more extra-curricular activities compared to other teachers. She comments:

When we have a lot of extracurricular work like sports, sometimes we feel that it is very difficult to manage class work. So, we feel difficulty. Sometimes, my friends also have told me that they are overloaded and bored. It is very tedious and very difficult to manage everything. At such times, we get depressed and feel like leaving the career because of the overloaded things. The principals expect the maximum.

Sajith also mentioned in the interview that “English teachers are given more workload” than other teachers. According to him, they mainly include extracurricular activities like sports, training children for different functions, and so on: “English teachers are given more workload. Even in the administration work, organizing different activities, training children for this and that...” Meanwhile, Piyal commented on the impact of these additional responsibilities on his teaching:

It affects a lot. Because of the extra-curricular activities we have to miss lessons. We have to go outside with teams. Sometimes we have to talk with some outside people other masters in charge of other schools through telephone or whatever it is. It is a lot of work. In substitution, principals reduce our timetable. It is very difficult to continue both.

However, the participants stated that they were happy with the number of hours that teachers are expected to work at school. Nelum says that the working hours of a teacher are convenient; “I get time to do housework and help my daughter with her studies.” Sajith, Piyal, and Malani also identified the number of working hours of a teacher as a motivator for them.



The other subtheme that emerged with regard to *teacher motivation and administration* is teacher pay and incentives. Four teachers identified teacher salary as a direct demotivator for them, while one teacher did not see it having a strong impact on her motivation. Being asked what the worst part of being a teacher is, Devika says:

Salary. The salary is insufficient. But there is room for [tutoring]. Because I am very much devoted to my family, I don't do [tutoring]. I don't have time.

Salary is the problem. Unless it is very good.

When asked about the impact of salary on her motivation, Malani says:

It does not motivate a teacher. I know that there are many other colleagues, they have to conduct afternoon classes, and they have to [do tutoring]. Actually, the salary is not sufficient. If the husband is earning well, they don't have any problem. But if both are teachers, it is a big problem.

As both Devika and Malani stated, some teachers conduct private tutoring after school to earn extra money. Piyal, who currently tutors after school, says that he does so because of the insufficient salary that he receives: "I need an additional income. Salary is not sufficient." Commenting on the general response of his colleagues to teacher pay, Piyal says that "everyone grumbles about the salary and other facilities." Sajith, commenting on the salary, stated that poor salary often demotivates a new teacher to join the profession. However, Nelum holds a different view about teacher pay from other participants. When asked as to what extent salary affects her motivation as a teacher, she says:

Yes, it's good to have a good salary. I think we are getting a reasonable salary. Anyway I'm doing what I like. At the same time, I get more time to be with my daughter, help her in studies. I don't complain about the pay.

As the participants stated, teachers are entitled for annual incentives. But they were unhappy that the incentives are not given in time by the zonal offices of education. For instance, Malani complained in the interview that she has still not been promoted to grade II though she completed all requirements for her promotion one year ago: "I am still in grade III. They have not put me (to grade II). I have to go after the clerk, go after the director to get it done. That is very demotivating." The inefficiency of zonal education offices emerged as a common subtheme in other interviews data. Devika, talking about the administration work performed by regional offices, made a similar comment: "There are some officers in Zonal education offices. They are not functioning well. Actually it is hard to get a job done. We have to go several times." Nelum also narrated an incident during the interview when she had to go the regional office 13 times to get her overseas leave approved: "If you know someone in the office, you can get anything done. Otherwise it is a pain to get something done."

Thus, the five participants in the interviews talked about administration mostly as a source of demotivation for them. The most common subthemes that emerged with regard to *administration and teacher motivation* are school administration, teacher workload, salary, and the inefficiency of regional education offices.

### **Teaching and Teacher Motivation**

In the interviews, the five participants also talked about a number of motivators and demotivators which are related to the aspect of teaching. The common subthemes that

emerged with regard to *teaching and teacher motivation* are curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy, and teacher autonomy.

With regard to the curriculum and textbooks, it was a common consensus among the five participants that the national curriculum of English does not suit the proficiency level of students in remote areas of the country. This, according to them, makes teaching a difficult task which gradually causes teacher demotivation. Nelum says:

I think it is hard to teach some lessons in class. In the village school I first taught, I could not teach the textbook in grade 5. I had to teach very basics. Some students could not even read English. I like that we have a textbook but it is difficult to teach the same textbook in all schools.

Sajith, who has taught in remote schools for his entire period of service, supports this comment by saying:

Thinking about the schools I taught, this particular curriculum, textbooks do not match the level of students. So I have to simplify the lessons. Some students can manage but most of the students could not. Even I had to deviate from the textbook and do the other kinds of lessons, language improvement lessons etc.

Devika, commenting on the challenges the curriculum and textbooks offer for a teacher in remote schools, says:

New syllabuses are really interesting. But sometimes for students in remote places, the stuff is really tough. For these children we have to simplify things. Anyway we

have to follow the syllabus. That's the greatest burden. Students get nothing. Students get nothing. But we have to rush through the syllabus.

As Piyal has observed, the organization of the curriculum “does not go with the needs of the students in the country.” He adds:

English, although it is a subject, it is a language. So I feel sometimes, especially grammar, grammar lessons are not methodical. The grammar points do not suit the standard of the children. That happens. We have 8 tenses in passive voice and 12 tenses in active voice. They have taken grammar from here and there.

Manel, during the interview, commented on two other aspects of the English curriculum: workload and time constraints:

We can't find any problem with the curriculum. But that [is] too much of work, even for the students. Within one period, 40 minutes, how can we do such a big work? We have to do textbook, workbook and a teacher's manual, a newly introduced thing. When we do all three, textbook, workbook, and manual in class, one tends to get neglected.

All five participants commented on the English curriculum which does not match the student proficiency as a demotivator for them. Closely related to the curriculum and textbooks is the teaching pedagogy. Piyal stated that they are expected to follow the communicative approach which, in his view, is a difficult task in public schools. But he appreciates the fact that teachers have the freedom to select teaching methods according to the proficiency of students: “We have to use our own methods because of the standard of students, needs of students. We have the liberty to use our methods.” He also identified the

development of English speaking skills of students as a difficult task in schools. Piyal thinks that this mainly happens due to students' limited proficiency in English:

Speaking is the least used in classrooms. That happens in many cases because now we have 40-minute periods. Within 40 minutes, it is difficult to handle all 4 skills, because we have 45 students and the teacher sometimes take 25 minutes to do the lesson. Then the evaluation. When there is a speaking component, students [get involved], but in our own system it is difficult to develop the speaking ability. We have 8 periods per day. 7 periods students deal with Sinhala. It sounds impossible!

However, Devika thinks that the negligence of speech in classroom is due to the lack of significance given to it in national exams:

I think that there should be an oral test. Actually when I got appointed at the age of 19 also I was really embarrassed to speak in English. I knew my grammar but I was nervous. I was not very good in speaking. Though I know my grammar I was nervous. I suppose that there should be an oral test [in national exams].

Even though the five participants commented on several issues related to the English curriculum and textbooks as demotivators for them, they were happy with the freedom that they enjoy as teachers to make classroom-level decisions. For instance, Sajith says that he uses an eclectic method to teach English: "I personally change my style of teaching. I use [an] eclectic method." Devika says that she follows the communicative approach but uses students' L1 when students do not understand some lessons. Meanwhile, Malani says: "I have the freedom. While keeping with the curriculum, I can teach the way I want."

## **Professional Development and Teacher Motivation**

The participants expressed mixed responses about the opportunities that the ESL teachers have for professional development in the country. For instance, Nelum says: “Actually, I have attended several workshops. Every time they introduced a new textbook, they had a session to train teachers. I mean the RESC (Regional English Support Centers). Some sessions were useful, some were not.” Manel, who is currently on leave to study for a bachelor’s degree in English, says: “I got this opportunity because of the opportunities available for teachers. If you want to do postgraduate, another study leave period [is] given. If you had the talent, qualification, you can even be a director.” But she also admits that many teachers do not make use of these opportunities because they are not aware of them:

There are many courses conducted by NIE (National Institute of Education). But the thing is that teachers are not aware of those things. I feel that they only cater to the teachers who are in Colombo area. Outstation teachers are not aware of the courses, training programs etc.

Sajith also accepted that there are many professional development opportunities for teachers in the country: “If you do well in exams there are opportunities.” Piyal was also happy that he was able to enter university on study-leave to study for a degree. However, Devika, in contrast, thinks that the opportunities for professional development for ESL teachers in Sri Lanka are limited: “Not very many opportunities. For the last two years, I have not gone for any training. For one subject there are several teachers. So, opportunities are limited. If a seminar comes, only one teacher can go.”

Thus, four participants talked about the available professional development opportunities for ESL teachers as a motivator for them. But one teacher also stated that the limited opportunities for the professional development of teachers are demotivating.

### **Social-contextual Influences and Teacher motivation**

Several subthemes emerged under the theme of *social & contextual influences and teacher motivation*. These themes include the social status for teachers, teachers' relationship with colleagues, work conditions and parental involvement in education. Asked about the social status of an English teacher in the country, four participants stated that English teachers have more social respect and status than other teachers. This for them is a strong motivator. Malani, commenting on this, says:

Whenever I go to some place to get something done, when people know that I am an English teacher, there is some kind of respect. I feel proud of myself sometimes. I think that there is a special regard for English teachers. Even in marriages, it matters. People prefer to marry English teachers because of the social status, because of English.

Commenting on the reason for this respect and regard for English teachers in the country, Nelum says, "It is because of the position of English in the country. English is a social prestige. People who can speak it are seen differently in society." Meanwhile, Devika also thinks that English teachers, compared to the teachers teaching other subjects, "have higher social status." Piyal also agrees with this saying that "there is a very good social status for English teachers." However, in Sajith's view, there has been a gradual decline in teacher

status (i.e., in general) in the country: “compared to the past we don’t have a proper place today.”

The second subtheme that emerged in the interview data under *social and contextual influences* is teachers’ relationship with their colleagues at the workplace. One common finding is that poor relationships between colleagues in the current public school system demotivate teachers. Piyal comments:

Even among the teachers we do not have a good rapport. They are not close. Most of them are selfish. Now in parallel classes, teachers should work together, they should be very friendly, and they should support each other. Sometimes there are problems among those teachers also.

Devika identified the lack of support of the principal and the attitude of other teachers as a demotivator for her:

For English there are about nine to eight teachers and they have clashes. Some of them are working, some are not. When the principal asks us to do something, activities like English day camps, there were clashes. There were times when I was demotivated.

As Nelum says, when a new teacher joins the profession, the colleagues do not help him/her enough: “When I first joined the profession, I was helpless. Nobody to ask anything.” Meanwhile, Sajith, commenting on the support that he receives from colleagues, also stated that “other teachers do not support.”



The five participants during the interviews made several comments on work conditions in schools which impinge on their work motivation. For instance, Nelum says that what a teacher can do is limited by inadequate facilities in schools: “There are lessons on all four skills. But we can’t teach listening. We don’t have any cassette players at school.” When asked whether she uses any additional teaching materials in class, Nelum says:

Yes, we try to find additional materials. But the library doesn’t have many. Even if we find [them], we can’t make copies for students. [The] school has a photocopier but you have to get the permission from vice principal. Even then, copies are limited. I think most teachers teach only the textbook.

Devika also in her interview talked about the impact of work conditions on her motivation:

From the teacher’s side, actually teachers’ motivation depends on the classroom environment and the physical environment of the classroom. For instance, classrooms are not spacious and not very comfortable like... when there are facilities we are motivated.

Piyal also adds to this by saying:

So even in the school administration also there are situations where we became frustrated sometimes with facilities, especially with the welfare of the teachers. I mean when a teacher [is] in a school, he/she must have basic needs at school. That means when he/she is doing duty at school, sometimes there is no place to sit and prepare his lessons.

Describing an experience that she had in developing an activity room for English at her current school, Malani says:

We wanted to have an activity room for English. Nowadays, most schools have activity rooms. Whenever the students are free, they can go there and do some activities. We face [numerous] problems in implementing this thing. We tried several ways of getting some donations. So we had to go to businessmen to get money. In such cases, facilities are not enough. When teachers cannot do what they want, they are demotivated.

Sajith, who has worked at remote schools during his entire career as a teacher, also talked about travelling difficulties and lack of facilities in schools as demotivators for him.

Three participants during the interviews also commented on the kind of support that teachers receive from students' parents and how it affects their work motivation. Nelum, who has worked in both remote and urban schools in the country, views parental involvement in urban schools as a motivator for her. Comparing urban and remote schools, she says:

[In Village schools,] parents didn't really get involved in education. They do not know what's happening in school. Honestly, most parents are uneducated and couldn't help them. But in Colombo, it is different. Parents are concerned. They come and talk to us. Yes, that is encouraging for me.

Sajith, with his experience in remote schools, also echoed Malani's comment. In addition, he stated that parents in remote areas do not have a positive attitude towards English:

What I feel is that at schools that I have worked, I feel that they didn't have a positive attitude towards this particular language. Parents do come when we ask them to come. They listen to us when we talk but they neglect. Their response is passive. In today's learning, parental influence should be there.

Devika also sees more parental involvement in students' education in urban areas like Colombo than in remote areas: "In Colombo there is a massive involvement. It is motivating." But Piyal and Malani report different experiences even from urban schools. Malani, who currently works at a school in the Colombo suburbs, says:

Parents have the motivation only when children are in primary grades. When they go to upper classes, grade 10, 11, when we have parents' meetings, only 5 or 6 parents come. When students go to upper classes, parents' involvement decreases.

Piyal also thinks that students do not receive enough support from parents in education. This leads to students' negligence of homework, which is "frustrating" for teachers: "At school we give them homework. When they don't do the homework, we feel frustrated. We feel annoyed also. Parents don't know what their children [are] doing." This evidence from the participants suggests that inadequate parental involvement in students' education makes teaching a difficult task for the most of the participants. Because of this they identify inadequate parental involvement in their children's education as a demotivator for them.

Thus, the four subthemes that emerged under *Social-contextual influences and teacher motivation* are social status of English teachers, relationship with colleagues, work conditions, and parental involvement in education. The common demotivators for them

included poor work conditions, poor relationship with colleagues, and lack of parental involvement in students' education. However, the participants viewed English teachers' social status in the country as a motivator for them.

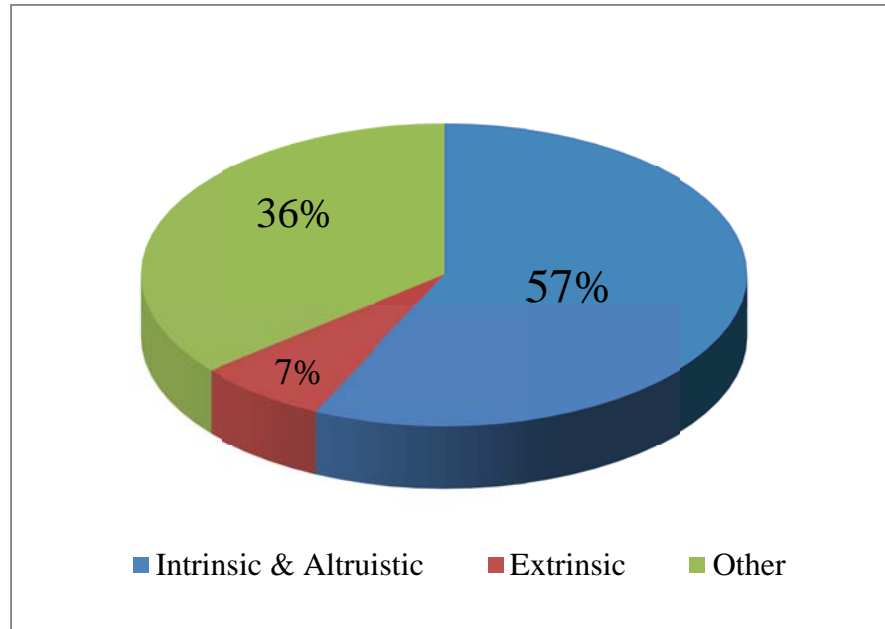
## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Reasons for Entering Teaching

The reasons that new teachers select the profession of teaching have been a common question in teacher motivation research in many contexts (e.g., Morgan, et al., 2007; Muller et al., 2009; Shipp, 2000). This is mainly due to the fact that one's reason for entering the profession of teaching can have a strong impact on his or her commitment to the task (Hansen, 1995). As discussed in the literature review, common reasons often stated by teachers to join the profession can be categorized into three groups: intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic. Any reason associated with the job satisfaction derived from the activity itself is termed intrinsic. But if a teacher is driven to teaching purely by the external rewards of the job like the salary and other benefits, his or her reason is extrinsic. Finally, altruistic reasons are associated with the perception that teaching is a socially worthwhile (i.e. teaching is a service) and important job. In this study, the participants' reasons to join teaching are discussed in light of this categorization of reasons in literature.

A very common finding in the existing research is that new teachers are mostly motivated by intrinsic and altruistic reasons to join teaching (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Muller et al., 2009; Wadsworth, 2000). The results of the current study also strongly support this finding. For about 53% of the survey participants (29), the main reason to join teaching was intrinsic and/or altruistic. Also, among all the reasons stated by all survey participants for selecting teaching, slightly more than 57% were intrinsic (40%) and altruistic (17%). The most common intrinsic reasons were “always wanted to be a teacher” (21%) and “enjoy being with children” (18%). The most common altruistic reason (17%) was “wanted to do a service to society.” The following pie-chart

(Figure 1) shows the percentages of the reasons reported by the survey participants for selecting teaching:



*Figure 1* – Reasons for selecting teaching

These findings of the survey were also confirmed by the interview data of the study. Three of the five interview participants had always wanted to be teachers. For instance, Piyal had been greatly inspired by his own English teacher at school: “He inspired me to become an English teacher.” Meanwhile, Devika derived her intrinsic motivation for teaching by looking at her parents who were teachers and later became principals. She had grown up in school quarters with her parents in her childhood and had gradually developed a love for teaching: “My parents wanted me to join this job and I also preferred [it].” Nelum had also been motivated to select teaching by her mother who had been a teacher at the same school that she studied as a child. Thus, these findings of the interviews along with the survey

results show how most participants in the study had been driven by intrinsic and/or altruistic reasons to join teaching.

However, the survey also revealed that approximately 47% of the participants had some other reasons to become teachers. These reasons commonly included others' influence, a job suitable for women, or the need for permanent employment. Some participants also reported that they had no specific reason to select teaching. Among these reasons, the most common was others' influence because it was the main reason stated by 22% of the participants for selecting teaching. The most frequent responses of these participants were "parents' choice, parents' wish and husband's choice." As the survey results revealed, these teachers, who did not have intrinsic and/or altruistic reasons for electing teaching, commonly had had other primary ambitions in life. But when they failed to achieve those, either they themselves had elected teaching or somebody else had suggested teaching as a better option for them. The following response by a participant in the survey shows evidence for this:

I didn't have enough marks to enter the medical college. I was selected to agriculture. But I didn't like it. My parents asked me to apply for a teaching job. They thought it [was] a good job for a girl.

Among the interview participants, Malani and Sajith also fall into this category of teachers. Initially they too had not wanted to join teaching because they had had other ambitions in life. For instance, Malani had wanted to become a doctor but could not achieve high enough marks at the A/L examination to enter medical college: "It was not my ambition to become a teacher. Because of the reason that I had no other choice, I became a teacher."

Sajith also had wanted to enter university to study science and when his plan did not work, he choose teaching.

The fact that about 47% of the survey participants joined teaching for reasons other than their interest in teaching is an important finding of the study. These participants were not drawn to teaching by intrinsic or altruistic motives like the rest of the survey participants. Surprisingly, the majority of them were not extrinsically motivated either. By definition, a person extrinsically motivated derives motivation from the external rewards of his/or her job (Gagne & Deci, 2005). For instance, in Bastick's (2000) study of school teachers in Jamaica, the most common reasons for the participants to select teaching were extrinsic like long holidays, adequate salary, job security, affordable tuition at teaching college, opportunities for earning extra money, and social status of a teacher. Even in the current study, the main reason for five survey participants to join teaching was extrinsic. Their reasons were "teaching is a job suitable for women," "more free time in teaching than in other jobs," and the position of English in the country which offers social prestige for English teachers. But for the rest, the majority of the 47% had either been influenced by others or had no specific reason to select teaching. Thus, their reasons were not intrinsic, altruistic, or even extrinsic but mostly circumstantial, determined by the personal circumstances in which participants found themselves at the time of applying for the job. For instance, Malani's following statement shows how personal circumstances can draw someone into teaching:

I wanted to become a doctor. It was my ambition. Anyhow I was not successful in my Advanced Level examination. So I had to select some other career. So, through a competitive examination held in 1994... I sat for that exam, I just sat for it. I got through anyhow. So I decided to become an English teacher.



As this remark implies, Malani was not driven to teaching by her intrinsic motives. She was also not attracted to it by any extrinsic rewards of teaching. Her decision was mainly determined by her personal circumstances. This situation of Malani is a common experience of many young people in a developing country like Sri Lanka where the unemployment rate among the youth is as high as 18%. In Sri Lanka, the biggest challenge for a young man or woman during adolescence is to find permanent employment. Hence, it is quite natural for young people to apply to many different jobs at the same time and accept whatever job they are offered, regardless of whether they like it or not. This is also demonstrated by what one participant had written in the survey: “With the fast moving time we can’t [wait] for getting one job. So, according to the qualification, I tried to get any sort of job.” As the *National Action Plan for Youth Employment, Sri Lanka* (2006) also recently revealed, most young people who thus apply for different jobs mostly prefer public sector employment over the private sector (p. 10). This is mainly because of the rewards like job security, pension scheme, and other benefits to which public sector workers are often entitled. For such young people, teaching becomes a common option because each year teacher training colleges recruit a large number of new teachers who are guaranteed teaching positions in public schools at the end of two years of training in colleges. This is why some survey participants, explaining their reasons for selecting teaching, reported the responses like the following:

“It was not in my mind till I got through the placement test.”

“I had no marks to enter medical college. As I wanted a job, I applied to teaching.”

“Because I got the opportunity to enter college of teacher education.”

“Never had motivation to become a teacher, because I passed the exam.”

Thus, these teachers have joined the profession mainly due to their circumstantial reasons, in contrast to the majority of the survey participants who had intrinsic reasons to join teaching. Their common responses included: “Childhood dream, enjoy being with children,” “Had a passion for teaching from childhood” and “Enjoy being with children and imparting knowledge.”

The fact that a large number of new teachers (46% in the survey sample) join the profession of teaching for circumstantial reasons is a common finding in teacher motivation research in other developing countries too. For instance, the VSO (2002) study of teachers in three African countries also recognized a large group of teachers “who never wanted to be teachers and have no commitment to the job” (p.18). As Wadsworth (2001) reports, such teachers are also found in some developed countries. In her sample of 914 teachers in the USA, 12% of them stated that they “fell into teaching by chance” (p. 25).

According to Dörnyei (2001), the teachers who are driven by intrinsic motivation to join teaching are more committed to the task than the ones driven by other reasons. They are even ready to “forgo high salaries and social recognition” for the sake of happiness that they derive from teaching or being with students (p. 159). But there is not enough evidence in the existing research to determine the kind of motivation displayed by the teachers who are drawn into teaching by circumstantial reasons. The only evidence found in the existing research is that teachers who do not have intrinsic and/or altruistic motives are likely to leave teaching when they find better opportunities (Watt & Richardson, 2008). The survey results of this study were also consistent with this finding. Slightly more than 58% of the survey participants driven to teaching by circumstantial reasons had wanted to change their career at some point after becoming a teacher. The most common reason was the difficulty that they

had to get a transfer to a school that they liked or their mandatory period of service at a remote school.

Meanwhile, the other 42% of the survey participants showed a different trend. Though they initially had had a circumstantial reason to join teaching, they had gradually developed intrinsic motivation for teaching once they joined the profession. The following response from one such participant bears evidence for this: “Really I didn’t decide to become a teacher. After the competitive examination, I was selected as a teacher. Ever since then I am doing [the] job very happily.” Even among the interview participants, Malani and Sajith fall into this category. Malani, describing her current level of motivation for teaching, said: “Now I am confident. I am enthusiastic. When I complete my degree, I can go and teach literature as well.” Sajith also foresees a lifetime of teaching ahead of him. Asked whether he ever wanted to change his career after becoming a teacher, he said: “No, I really like teaching.” He too has developed intrinsic motivation for teaching with time. Being asked what motivates him most in teaching, he said: “If we can reach our targets with regard to students that is our satisfaction. Being a teacher that is the ultimate satisfaction that we get.”

Meanwhile, the teachers who had intrinsic or altruistic reasons to join teaching (54%) also yielded revealing data. Among them, about 75% of the participants had never wanted to change their career and frequently stated that they thoroughly enjoy their work. This finding was also supported by the interview data. Among the interviewees, Piyal and Devika, who fall into this category of teachers, also explained why they never wanted to change their career. Apparently, the intrinsic motivation that they initially had keeps them motivated to continue in the profession. For Instance, Piyal stated in the interview that he is always motivated when he enters the classroom and sees the faces of children. Devika added that she

is motivated by motivated students in her classes: “By seeing how they are motivated I am really motivated.”

Even the survey participants who never wanted to change their career reported similar reasons for their decision. Their primary reasons for entering teaching kept them motivated to remain in the profession. This finding has strong echoes in the studies in other contexts too. In Wadsworth’s study in the USA, for 75% of her sample, teaching was a lifelong career choice (p. 25). In Watt and Richardson’s (2008) study of beginning teachers in Australia, a large number of participants were “highly engaged persisters” (planning a lifetime of teaching) who enjoy the task of teaching (p. 409). Even the case studies by DFID (2007) in developing countries strongly support this finding. But the survey of this study also revealed that about 25% of the participants who had even been driven by intrinsic or altruistic reasons to join teaching had wanted to leave the profession at some point in their career.

Even though this has been found to be a common phenomenon in many other developing countries (VSO, 2005), the most common reasons reported in those countries are insufficient teacher pay and poor working and living conditions for teachers. But in the current study, the most common reason which made many teachers want to leave the profession was the difficulty that they have obtaining a transfer to a school that they like after their mandatory period of service in a remote school. This indicates that the difficulty in obtaining teacher transfers in the country demotivates most Sri Lankan teachers regardless of the reasons that primarily motivate them to join teaching. As the participants revealed, many teachers find it very difficult to obtain a transfer to a school they like even after completing the mandatory service period in a remote school. This mostly affects ESL teachers due to the

shortage of English teachers in remote schools. Sajith, for example, tried to get a transfer from a remote school for ten years. He stated this was quite demotivating.

Thus, these results show that the participants of this study, like in many other contexts, have intrinsic and/or altruistic reasons to join teaching. But a significant number of teachers also join teaching due to other reasons that may not necessarily be extrinsic reasons. About 58% of the teachers who have been driven by other reasons have wanted to leave teaching, while the majority (75%) of the intrinsically or altruistically motivated teachers has always wanted to continue in the profession. The most common reason that the teachers want to leave the profession is because of the difficulties that they encounter in obtaining a transfer to a school that they like.

### **Reasons for Choosing English Teaching**

The participants of this study also described their reasons for electing to teach English. In the survey, the most common reason reported was participants' personal interest in English. It accounted for about 50% of all the reasons stated by the participants. The prestigious position of English in the country (19%) and their competency in English (16%) were the other common reasons. Survey data also revealed that 18 (33%) of the participants would not have even selected teaching if they had not had the opportunity to teach English. They had stated the personal interest and social prestige of English teachers in the country as their main reasons. These reasons can be displayed in a pie-chart as illustrated in Figure 2.

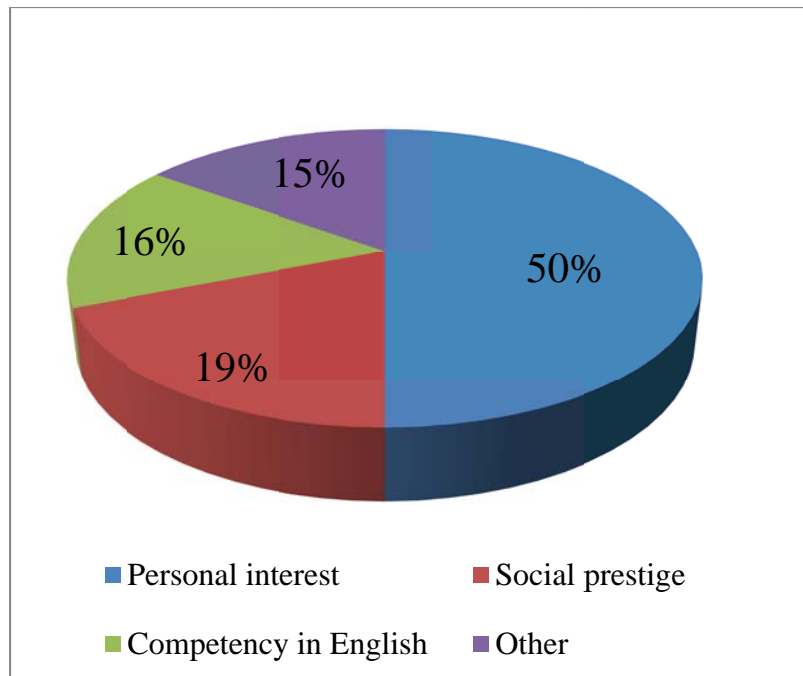


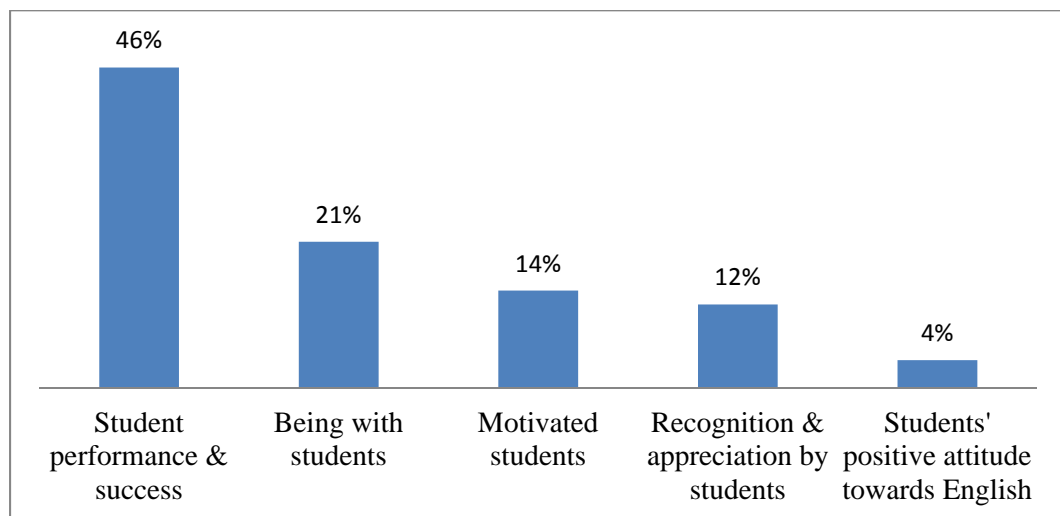
Figure 2 – Reasons for choosing English teaching

The high social prestige for English teachers in Sri Lanka, which motivated many survey participants to elect English teaching, commonly emerged as a theme in the interview data too. For instance, Malani in the interview identified it as a main motivator for her to even remain in teaching. Piyal also stated in the interview that “there is a very good social status for English teachers” which is motivating for him. Devika affirmed this by saying that English teachers “have higher status” than other teachers. Except for Sajith, who thought that there is a gradual decline in general teacher status in the country, all other participants were in agreement that English teachers receive higher social prestige in the country than the teachers teaching other subjects. The interview data implies that the social position for English teachers in the country not only motivates teachers to join teaching but also motivates them to remain in the profession. But it is also significant that for the majority in the survey (67%), the subject they taught did not really matter as long as they were in the

teaching profession. This is not surprising in the context that many participants, as stated earlier, had circumstantial reasons to join teaching. However, this supports the finding of Hayes' (2008) study of EFL teachers in Thailand that "individuals may choose to become teachers of their state teaching systems first and foremost and that their choice of subject to teach is a secondary consideration" (p. 1).

### **Teacher Motivation**

Major findings of this study also included a variety of factors that motivate and demotivate Sri Lankan ESL teachers once they enter the profession. To begin with, the study revealed three common motivators for teachers: students, teaching, and the position of English in the country, which gives teachers high social prestige. In the survey results, the most common category of motivators for the participants was related to students: students' performance and success, being with students, student motivation, students' recognition and appreciation of teachers and students' positive attitude towards English. The following graph (Figure 3) provides a detailed view of survey participants' responses in this regard:



*Figure 3- Students as a motivator*

Out of the 73 motivators reported in the survey, 56% of them were related to one of the above-mentioned aspects of students. This implies that these participants, like many other teachers in the world, mostly derive their motivation in the job from their students.

The interview data also strongly supported the above findings when all five participants recognized students as their main source of motivation. For instance, Piyal and Sajith recognized students' performance as the most satisfying aspect of teaching. Nelum and Devika also supported this finding in their interviews. However, Malani stated that she even derives motivation from students' admiration of her teaching. This was also revealed in the survey data when five teachers in the sample reported the recognition and appreciation by students as a motivator for them.

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

I am personally happy because when we teach students they learn something. They become knowledgeable and they become good people. We are very happy when we see those students. Students' performance is the only satisfaction that we can have. Not anything else.

The finding of this study, that participants in the survey as well as in interviews mostly derive their motivation from their students and the act of teaching, has strong echoes in teacher motivation research in many other contexts too. For instance, in their study of teachers in Australia, New Zealand, and England, Dinham and Scott (2000) reported that



most of the teachers in their study were motivated by “matters intrinsic to the role of teaching” (p. 390). This was also confirmed by Wadsworth’s (2001) study of public and private school teachers in the USA, Tiziava’s (2003) study of EFL teachers in Greece, and Addison et al’s. (2008) study of primary teachers in England. Teacher motivation research by VSO (2002), GCE (2005), and DFID (2007) found this as a common feature in developing countries too. Thus the results of this study affirm a common finding in teacher motivation research around the world: regardless of the context in which they teach, most teachers in the world derive their motivation from their students and teaching.

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

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

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

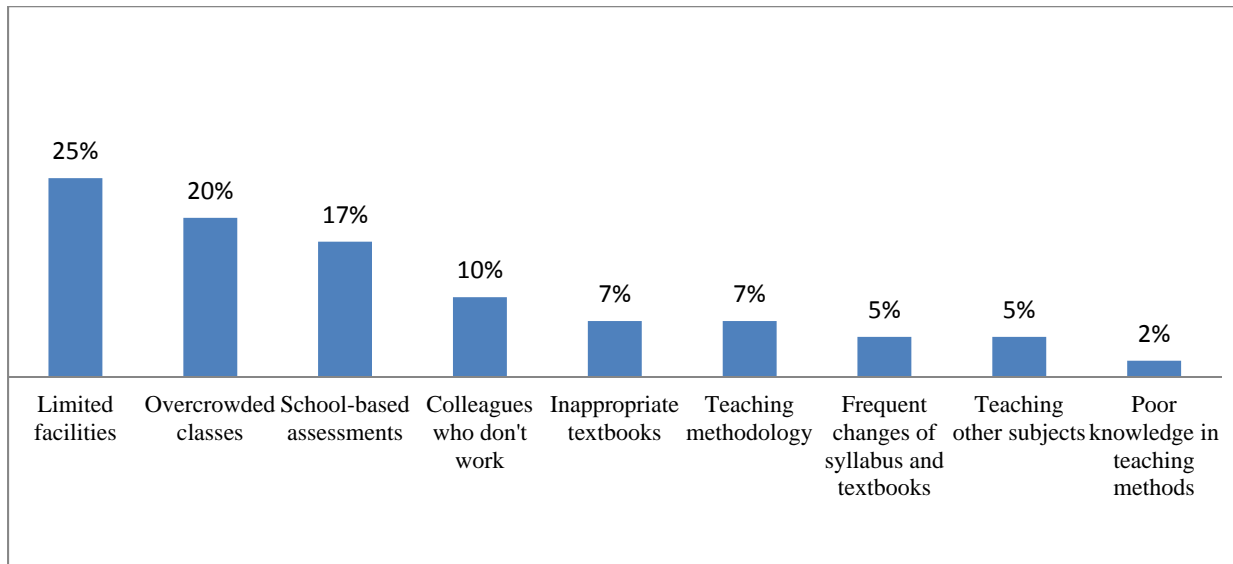
Because of this position of English in the country, it is quite natural that English teachers receive more respect and prestige than other teachers in Sri Lankan society. This seems to motivate them very much. Despite this, what Sajith revealed in his interview about the position of teachers in the country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

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

### **Teacher Demotivation**

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

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



*Figure 4- Demotivators related to teaching*

Among these, limited facilities for teaching and learning in schools frequently emerged as a theme in the interview data too. All five participants identified limited facilities at schools as a factor that impinges on their work motivation. As Nelum revealed in her interview, what a teacher can do at school is often limited by the inadequate facilities in classrooms. For instance, she mentioned that ESL teachers cannot teach listening because of the lack of cassette players in some schools. Meanwhile Devika, describing her first experience as a teacher in a remote school, explained how disappointed she was with the

facilities of the school. She compared her first school to “a small dilapidated hut in a tea state.” Piyal also expressed his disappointment with regard to the facilities in schools, even to the point of not having place for teachers to prepare their lessons.

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

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

The other most common category of demotivators reported in the survey was issues related to education administration in the country, 26% in contrast to 51% of issues related to teaching. The common themes that emerged in the survey in this regard were limited support from school administration, responsibilities of extra-curricular activities and the inefficiency

in the zonal education offices (an office in-charge of the administration of an education zone consisting of several schools) in the country.

These themes were also frequently supported by the interview participants. For instance, Devika, while commenting on the support that teachers receive from school administration, used the words “corrupted” and “politicized” to describe it. Piyal indicated his frustration with school administration and admitted that many teachers are critical of the system. Meanwhile, others stated that some principals do not have a positive attitude towards English and do not help ESL teachers enough to perform their duties. Many survey participants had also reported similar responses regarding school administration. For instance, one respondent wrote:

Most of the time administration tends to provide [fewer] facilities to [the] teaching-learning process. Even the resources, computer lab, library are not allowed to be used whenever students need them. They always try to confine language teaching to classroom.

In addition to the school administration, the participants also made several comments about zonal education offices which are responsible for many administration matters concerning teachers in the country including their salary, incentives and leave. As mostly revealed by the interview data, the inefficiency of the zonal offices often demotivates teachers. For instance, Malani stated that the inefficiency of zonal offices is so frustrating that she even “feels like giving up teaching.”

Devika also made a similar comment when she said, “There are some officers in Zonal education offices. They are not functioning well. Actually it is hard to get a job done.

We have to go several times.” As Nelum revealed in the study, she had to go to the zonal office 13 times to get her overseas leave approved. These responses of the participants imply how demotivating the inefficiency of zonal offices could be for teachers who mostly rely on the people in those offices for many services. However, the unhappiness of the teachers with school administration and regional offices in this study is also a common finding in many other developing countries. For instance, Ramachandran et al. (2005) report it as one of the seven major issues related to teacher demotivation in India. VSO (2002), in their study of teachers in three African countries, also found teacher grievances to be mostly associated with services that they receive from administration like salaries and allowances. DFID (2007) also confirmed this finding in their study in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. As they report, the majority of teachers in all twelve countries had expressed their displeasure over school administration (p. 10).

Even though most findings of this study were often consistent with the results of teacher motivation research in other developing countries, the survey result on the teacher pay produced a significantly different finding. According to many teacher motivation studies in the developing countries, one main demotivator for teachers is poor salary and incentives (DFID, 2000; VSO, 2002). But in the survey of this study, the majority of the participants did not identify salary as a demotivator for them. The number of participants who identified salary as a demotivator was as low as two (3.7%). Interestingly, two participants had also identified salary as a motivator for them. But the interview data yielded contradictory evidence when four participants commented on salary as a demotivator for them. For instance, Devika, being asked what demotivates her most in the teaching profession, said, “Salary. The salary is insufficient.” Sajith also saw poor teacher pay as a demotivator for a

new teacher to join teaching. Malani stated that teachers receive a very small salary compared to a worker in the private sector of the country: “Actually it is not enough. When we compare it with a private sector worker, we feel disappointed with what we are getting.”

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

As many participants revealed in the interviews, several issues related to the English curriculum in public schools also demotivate ESL teachers in the country. A common



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

This mismatch between the curriculum expectations and the students' English proficiency, as some participants revealed in their interviews, is aggravated by the passive responses of students in classroom. Three of the interview participants also identified students' lack of interest in studies and their negative attitude towards English as demotivators for them. Piyal, for instance, stated that it is difficult to make some students realize the value of learning English: "Some students do not care." Sajith also has noticed a lack of interest in his students in remote schools for English, which for him is demotivating. According to Piyal, students' lack of interest in English can be frustrating and annoying for an English teacher, especially when students do not do homework.

Even in the survey, 14% of the demotivators recorded by the participants were related to students' lack of motivation, limited proficiency in English, and their negative attitude towards English. But Devika and Malani's experiences with their students produced contradictory evidence to the above data in the interviews as well as the survey. Malani among them had observed a positive attitude towards English in her students: "Students like

English, even in the rural areas.” Devika, who had also seen a positive attitude in her students, believes that the teacher is a strong determinant of learner motivation: “A child is really motivated by a teacher, especially in things like English.” However, studies in others contexts have also recorded student disinterest in studies as a demotivator for teachers. For instance, Addison and Brundrett (2008) in their study of primary teachers in England found “children behaving badly or showing lack of interest” as the most common demotivator for the teachers (p. 86). This is not surprising because most teachers reportedly derive their motivation from their students and the act of teaching. If students do not show a positive attitude towards the subject that they learn or are not motivated enough, it is quite natural that teachers get demotivated.

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

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

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

Two other common demotivators revealed in the study were poor relationships between colleagues and the lack of parental involvement in student education. Four participants in the interviews talked about the poor relationship between colleagues as a demotivator for them. For instance, Piyal stated in his interview that there is not a “good rapport” even between teachers who teach the same subject in schools. Meanwhile, Devika commented on the lack of teamwork by English teachers in schools as a demotivating factor for her. This was also echoed by Sajith and Nelum in their interviews. However, this finding in the interview data was not strongly supported by the data in the survey because only four participants had reported “colleagues who don’t work hard” as a demotivator for them. Still three participants had also identified colleagues’ support as a motivator for them. Similar to this, the lack of parental involvement in students’ education was also not identified by the survey participants as a demotivator for them. But in the interview data it emerged as a frequent subtheme. As the participants revealed, parents’ involvement in students’ education motivates teachers, while their non-participation demotivates them. As Piyal and Nelum have observed, parents’ support in students’ education is very limited in rural schools. This is also supported by Nelum’s statement that parents “do not know what’s happening in school.” This, according to Nelum, is mostly because of parents’ lack of education.

Malani and Piyal have observed the same trend in urban schools too. As Malani stated, parents’ involvement “decreases” by the time students go to upper grades. Meanwhile, Piyal thought of students’ negligence of studies as a result of parents’ lack of involvement. However, Devika has seen a huge difference in parents’ involvement between urban and remote schools. As she says, “In Colombo there is a massive involvement. It is motivating.”

These data imply that teachers are also motivated by the amount of support that they receive from students' parents.

Finally, the other significant theme that emerged in the study was the opportunities for professional development that the ESL teachers have in the country. A common finding in teacher motivation research in developing countries is that teachers are often demotivated by the limited or lack of professional development opportunities available for them in their respective countries (DFID, 2007. p. 7). However, in this study, the participants, especially in the interviews, were happy with the opportunities available in the country for teachers' professional development. One reason for this could be that the convenience sample of this study included teachers who have already been benefited by the opportunities available in the country. At the time these interviews were conducted, four of the interview participants were studying for a degree at a university in Colombo. Even though they had to spend money of their own to study for the qualifying examination to enter the university, once they are admitted, they receive free university education as well as paid-leave for a period of up to three years. Malani, commenting on the opportunity that she has received, said, "I got this opportunity because of the opportunities available for teachers. If you want to do postgraduate, another study leave period [is] given. If you [have] the talent, qualification, you can even be a director." Sajith, Nelum, and Piyal also made similar comments in their interviews. But in Devika's view, teachers have limited opportunities for professional development in the country. However, the survey results did not strongly support any of the above views: three of the participants identified the availability of opportunities for professional development as a motivator for them, while two stated that the unavailability of enough opportunities demotivates them.

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

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This research began with the need to examine the elements of motivation and demotivation reflected in Sri Lankan ESL teachers in public schools. The current study derives its significance mainly from the contexts that there are no reported studies on teacher motivation in Sri Lanka (at least in international journals) and there is very limited research about ESL/EFL teacher motivation around the world. Drawing on in-depth qualitative data from 54 surveys and five interviews, this study found many motivators and demotivators associated with ESL teachers in Sri Lankan public schools.

As the results indicate, the main motivators for the sample of teachers in this study are students (students' performance and success, being with students, student motivation, students' recognition and appreciation of teachers and students' positive attitude towards English) and the act of teaching. This finding is very consistent with results of previous teacher motivation research conducted both in developed and developing countries: (e.g., Addison & Brundrett, 2008; Dinham & Scott, 2000; DFID, 2007; GCE, 2005; VSO, 2002; Wadsworth, 2001). It is a common finding in these studies that most teachers in the world derive their intrinsic motivation for the job mainly from their students' performance and success. However, this study also found a third common motivator for ESL teachers in Sri Lanka, which is determined by the socio-linguistic situation of the country. It is the position of English in the country which earns ESL teachers higher social prestige than other teachers in public schools.

The main demotivators for the ESL teachers in the study included inadequate facilities in schools for teaching and learning, inefficiency in school administration and zonal education offices, difficulties in obtaining teacher transfers, the mismatch between the

expectations of the English curriculum and students' proficiency in English (especially in rural areas), the poor relationship between colleagues in schools, and inadequate parental involvement in their children's education. Most of these issues have also been identified as demotivators for teachers in many other contexts, especially in developing countries (DFID, 2007; GCE, 2005 & VSO, 2002).

Compared with the results of previous teacher motivation research in developing countries, one surprising finding in the study was that the majority of teachers in the survey did not identify teacher pay as a demotivator. As it was also mentioned in the literature review, poor teacher pay is the most common reason that teachers in many developing countries leave the profession of teaching. In this study, it emerged only as a subtheme in the interview data. Meanwhile, the overall results of the study indicate that the common motivators mentioned above also encourage new teachers to join the profession while some demotivators make them want to leave teaching sometime after their recruitment. The most common demotivator which was found to influence teachers in this regard is the difficulty in obtaining a transfer to a school that they like even after completing the mandatory period of service in a remote school. This was found to equally demotivate teachers who join the profession for intrinsic/altruistic reasons or for circumstantial reasons.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The findings of the study mainly imply that ESL teacher motivation in Sri Lanka, like in many other contexts, is mostly related to the intrinsic rewards of teaching like student performance and being with students, while teacher demotivation is mostly related to matters extrinsic to the task of teaching: issues related to school administration, inefficiency of



regional offices, teacher transfers, limited facilities in schools, poor collegial relations, and inadequate support from students' parents. The other implication is that most of these motivators and demotivators found in the study are not only limited to ESL teachers in the country. They can most likely equally motivate and demotivate teachers in the country regardless of what subject that they teach in schools. The social prestige of English teaching and the discrepancy between the English curriculum and students' English proficiency are the only factors strictly related ESL teachers in the county. Finally, the findings of the study also imply that teacher demotivation is a significant issue in the country's public school system which needs the immediate attention of the education policy designers of the country. The failure to take immediate action may further increase teacher dissatisfaction in the job, which could eventually result in poor education outcomes for students in schools.

In order to increase teacher motivation in Sri Lankan public schools, therefore, several immediate measures are needed. First and foremost, the country needs the establishment of a proper mechanism for teacher transfers. Currently, most new teachers who join teaching become demotivated due to the difficulties in obtaining a transfer to a school that they like even after completing a mandatory period of service in a remote school. This may not only discourage new teachers to join teaching but also make qualified teachers leave the profession. The establishment of a proper mechanism for teacher transfers may not only increase the motivation of current teachers, but also will attract qualified young people to the profession which will eventually increase the professionalism in teaching and the quality of education that students receive. Also, it is essential that measures be taken to improve the basic teaching and learning facilities in schools, especially in non-urban areas. As the study results suggest, one reason why teachers do not like to work in remote schools is the poor

living and working conditions. As the study results revealed, even a teacher intrinsically driven can be discouraged by the lack of basic facilities in those schools. Further, measures are needed to improve the efficiency of administration in schools and zonal education offices. Perhaps, introducing technology and developing relationships between teachers and administration would prove helpful. Finally, collegial relationships between teachers in schools could be strengthened by means of promoting teamwork culture in schools. The establishment of a mentoring program in schools can facilitate the sharing of experiences among teachers and help new teachers build their confidence.

### **Study Limitations**

This study had three limitations. First and foremost, the number of the participants in the survey was small. Moreover, the study used a convenience sample, which may not accurately represent the diverse population of ESL teachers in the country. This limits the generalizability of the study findings. Second, during the time of the data collection, the researcher was not physically present in Sri Lanka. Because of this, most of the interviews were conducted by an English lecturer working at a university in Sri Lanka. Obviously, the researcher's direct access to the participants would have yielded more insight into the issues that emerged in the discussions through follow-up questions. Finally, the limited number of the sample of the study did not allow the researcher to examine the relationship between teacher motivation and variables like age, gender, years of teaching experience, and so on, which could provide a broader perspective of ESL teacher motivation in the country.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

In terms of future research on the topic in Sri Lanka, it is important that a large quantitative study be conducted involving English teachers in different regions of the country to validate the findings of this study. In such research, it is also important to examine how teacher motivation is related to variables like gender, years of teaching experience, and age of the participants. For example, even though it was not a focus of this research, the available data of the study imply that female teachers have more demotivators than male teachers in schools.

Also, further research is needed to understand the patterns of motivation of the ESL teachers who join teaching due to circumstantial reasons in contrast to the teachers who are driven to the profession by intrinsic and/or altruistic motives. As stated in the discussion, the results indicate that a large number of new teachers join teaching due to circumstantial reasons. How these teachers function in the school system is a significant question. Also, the results of the study indicate a close relationship between ESL student motivation and teacher motivation. For instance, some participants in the study identified student demotivation as a factor that impinges their work motivation. More empirical investigations are needed to determine the exact nature of this relationship between ESL teachers and students in the country. Finally, future research can also explore the relation between ESL teacher motivation and the complex socio-linguistic society that the teachers represent. The fact that English teachers are motivated by the position of English in the country suggests that teacher motivation is related to the socio-linguistic situation of the country as well. In future research exploring this relationship, “investment,” Pierce’s (1996) alternative term for motivation, can provide a strong theoretical foundation.

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## Appendices



Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

**Questionnaire**

**Section A: Basic Information**

- 01. Check One: Male  Female
- 02. The year that you were born in: 19.....
- 03. The highest educational qualification that you have obtained: .....
- 05. The kind of teacher training that you have received: .....
- 06. Number of years of teaching experience: .....
- 07. The grades that you teach at the current school: .....
- 08. The location of the current school: Urban  Suburban  Rural

**Section B**

01. Why did you decide to become a teacher?  
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02. Why did you choose to teach English?  
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03. If you had not had the opportunity to teach English, would you still have considered entering the teaching profession? Why or why not?  
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04. Have you ever wanted to change your career? Why or why not?  
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**Section C**

05. There are always things that motivate and demotivate people in their work. What motivates you most in your current job as an English teacher? (If any)

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06. What demotivates you most in your current job as an English Teacher? (If any)

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## Interview Format

### Tentative Questions structure

#### Step 1 – Basic Information

*Objective: to gather basic information about the subjects.*

- **Tell me about yourself? ( No need to mention the name)**  
*Age (if they are willing to reveal)*  
*Place of work*  
*Level of teaching (primary, secondary)*  
*What they teach (English language, English literature, English medium classes etc.)*  
*The number of schools they have worked at*

#### Step II

*Objective: To explore the reasons they became teachers; whether their reasons were extrinsic or intrinsic.*

(Hayes, 2008; Spear, Gould & Lee, 2000; Wadsworth, 2001)

- **Why did you decide to become a teacher?**
- Is this the job that you always wanted in life? If not, what did you originally want to be? How did you end up being a teacher?
- Why did you choose to teach English?
- If you had not had the opportunity to teach English, would you have still considered entering the teaching profession?
- After becoming a teacher, have you ever considered changing your career? Why or why not?

#### Step III

*Objective: To explore their lives as English teachers. (Kitching et al. 2009; Morgan et. 2007)*

- **Describe a typical day at work.**
- What do you do during/after your working hours?
- How do you spend your weekend?
- Do you do any part time work/jobs? Why or why not?

#### Step IV

*Objective: To identify how the subjects perceive **motivation**, how they perceive themselves and their colleagues as teachers*

- What is **motivation**? Or how do you define motivation?
- Do you consider yourself a motivated teacher?
- How did you feel when you first started teaching? Excited? Enthusiastic?
- Has it changed during your career? How and Why?
- Do you think your colleagues have the same trend (decrease or increase in motivation after entering the teaching profession) as you?

#### Step V

*Objective: To find out what motivates or demotivates teachers when they function in the public school system. (Connie, 2000; Crooks, 1997; Craige, 2001; David; 2005; Pelletiar et. 2002; Watt et. 2008)*

- What is the best part of being an English teacher?

(What motivates you most as an English teacher?)

- What is the worst part of being an English teacher?

(What demotivates you most as an English teacher?)

The interviewer will ask questions to find out how the following factors influence the subjects' motivation as teachers.

- The present salary scale for teachers
- The number of working hours
- Curriculum or syllabus, how text books are organized
- The degree of teacher's freedom in what and how to teach
- The kind of help that they receive from the school administration
- The kind of help they receive from the Ministry of Education, RESC, and NIE etc.
- Facilities available for language teaching
- The number of students in a classroom
- Opportunities available for professional development of teachers
- Students' attitudes towards English
- Parents' involvement in students' education
- The social status of English teachers

## Appendix C: Statement of Informed Consent for Interviews

### Consent for Interviews

I am Sujeewa Hettiarachchi Gamage, a TESOL graduate student at the Eastern Michigan University, USA. I am currently conducting a study on ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher motivation in Sri Lanka for my Masters thesis. The purpose of the study is to determine the factors that motivate and demotivate ESL teachers in the public school system of Sri Lanka. Hence, I would like to interview you to find out the factors that affect your motivation when you function as an ESL teacher in the school system. Please read the following details carefully and place your signature if you wish to take part in the study:

- Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary; you have the right not to answer any questions asked during the interview or withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without negative consequences.
- The interview will last for about 45 to 60 minutes, and it will be audio-recorded to enhance accuracy. During the interview, you will be asked questions mainly about the factors that motivate and demotivate you as a teacher.
- Your identity and information that you provide in the interview will be held in the strictest confidence. Any information that you provide will not be shared with your school administration under any circumstances. At the end of the interview, I will ask you to suggest a pseudonym which will be used to identify the interview in future reference. When the interview is transcribed, the audio-tape will also be erased or destroyed. This consent form that you sign will not be matched with the transcription. The transcribed data will also be destroyed in a shredder after the data analysis. Both the audio-tape and the transcription will be kept in a well-protected closet until they are destroyed.
- While you are among one of the five subjects to be interviewed for this study, the data generated through the interviews will be used as the basis of a thesis which will be submitted to the Graduate School of the Eastern Michigan University on ESL Teacher Motivation in Sri Lanka. Also, the results of the study may be presented at local/ international conferences and/or published in academic journals.
- There are no risks to you in this study. The study also does not have direct benefits to you. But it is assumed that the study will enhance our understanding of issues and concerns related to ESL teacher motivation in Sri Lanka which, in long term, will benefit the English

education sector in Sri Lanka.

- If you have any further questions about the research, you may contact me or the thesis supervisor:

Dr. Betsy Morgan  
Department of World Languages  
219 Alexander  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
734 487 3389  
[emorgan@emich.edu](mailto:emorgan@emich.edu)

- This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. If you have any questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734 487-0042), Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu)
- You will also receive a copy of this consent form signed by you and the researcher.

**I am over 18 and eligible to participate in this study. [circle one]:**

**Yes    No**

**I agree to be interviewed for this project. [circle one]:**

**Yes    No**

**I agree to be audio-taped during this interview. [circle one]:**

**Yes    No**

.....  
**Participant's signature** **Date**

.....  
**Participant's Name**

.....  
**Investigator's signature** **Date**

SujeewaHettiarachchiGamage  
416 Perrin, APT 107  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
USA  
734 576 5916  
[shettiar@emich.edu](mailto:shettiar@emich.edu)

## Appendix D: Statement of Informed Consent for Survey

### **Consent Form for the Questionnaire**

Dear Colleagues,

I am SujeevaHettiarachchiGamage, a TESOL graduate student at the Eastern Michigan University, USA. I am currently conducting a study on ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher motivation in Sri Lanka. The purpose of the study is to determine the factors that motivate and demotivate ESL teachers in Sri Lankan public schools. Attached here is a questionnaire designed to collect data for the study. While the questionnaire contains five sections, it will take you about 15 to 20 minutes to complete it. I kindly invite you to take part in this study by filling in the questionnaire.

However, your participation in the study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate, you may skip any questions that you do not like to answer or withdraw your participation at any time without negative consequences. The identities of all people who participate in the study will remain anonymous. Your responses will be used as data for writing up a Masters thesis which will be submitted to the Eastern Michigan University, USA in June 2010. The results of the study may also be presented at local/ international conferences and/or published in academic journals. The consent forms will not be matched with the questionnaires and they will be kept in a well-protected closet. Soon after the data analysis, all the questionnaires that you have filled in will be destroyed in a shredder.

Taking part in this study will not cause any risks to you. Also, you will not have any direct benefits. But it is assumed that the study will enhance our understanding of issues and concerns related to ESL teacher motivation in Sri Lanka which, in long term, will benefit the English education sector in Sri Lanka.

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski- Smith (734-487-0042), Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chairs of UHSRC, [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu).

For any questions about the study, you may also contact: Dr. Betsy Morgan (Thesis Supervisor), Department of World Languages, 219 Alexander, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, USA. TP: 734 487 3389; Email: [emorgan@emich.edu](mailto:emorgan@emich.edu).

Thank you

SujeewaHettiarachchiGamage

416 Perrin, APT 107

Ypsilanti, MI 48197

734 576 5916

[shettiar@emich.edu](mailto:shettiar@emich.edu)

**I hereby give my consent to take part in the study:**

.....

.....



Appendix E: Letter of Human Subjects Approval

**E**ASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

*Education First*

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March 31, 2010

Sujeewa Hettiarachchi Gamage  
World Languages Department  
219 Alexander Hall

Dear Sujeewa:

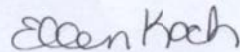
The College of Arts and Sciences Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) of Eastern Michigan University has granted approval to your proposal, "ESL Teacher Motivation in Sri Lankan Public Schools".

After careful review of your completion application, the HSRC determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals participating in your study are not at risk.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the HSRC of any change in the protocol that might alter your research in any manner that differs from that upon which this approval is based. Approval of this project applies for one year from the date of this letter. If your data collection continues beyond the one-year period, you must apply for a renewal.

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,



Ellen I. Koch, Ph.D.  
CAS Human Subjects Review Committee Chair

Note: If project continues beyond the length of **one** year, please submit a continuation request form by **3/30/2011**.

Cc: Elizabeth Morgan, Ph.D.

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University Human Subjects Review Committee - Eastern Michigan University - 200 Boone Hall  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
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