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Chapter 2

Language Teacher Motivation

PHIL HIVER, TAE-YOUNG KIM, and YOUNGMI KIM

Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of teacher motivation and how it is theorized in mainstream educational literature. In order to highlight the complementarity of different theories, we have chosen to draw from Pintrich’s (2003) integrated perspective of how motivation underpins four key concerns: individuals’ choice of activity (i.e. why individuals choose one course of action over another), individuals’ level of activity (i.e. how much or how little individuals engage in this activity), individuals’ persistence through an activity, and individuals’ performance on an activity. These elements guide our review. Regardless of conceptual perspective, there is widespread agreement that teacher motivation is complex with interconnected personal, relational, experiential, affective and contextual layers. Teachers’ motivations too, like all human motivations, display both stable tendencies and variability. We continue in the chapter by examining L2 teacher motivation specifically and attempt to draw parallels between it and the larger discourse of mainstream teacher motivation. We review the growing body of L2 teacher motivation research thematically and highlight both trends and gaps in our current knowledge of this domain. Finally, we propose an agenda for research that we
hope will help recapture the relevance of L2 teacher motivation for the broader field of applied linguistics.

**Conceptualising teacher motivation**

In comparison to the research on student motivation, some have described the field of teacher motivation research as still ‘in its infancy’ (Urdan, 2014: 228). However, an increasing volume of scholarship has sought to better understand the dynamics of teacher motivation by reformulating established social cognitive theories of motivation initially applied in the domain of student motivation. The most prominent and productive motivational theories that have been repurposed and adapted to explore the motivation of teachers empirically are Self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; see also Wyatt, this volume), Achievement Goal Theory (Butler, 2012), Self-determination Theory (Roth et al., 2007) and Expectancy-value Theory (Watt et al., 2012).

Self-efficacy has been defined as an individual’s beliefs or confidence in their ability to engage in a course of action that is required to accomplish a given task (Bandura, 1997, 2012). Achievement goal theory focuses on the purposes for which individuals perform a task, and their orientations and perceptions of competence while engaged in that activity (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Self-determination theory is founded on the premise that when basic psychological needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) are satisfied as a function of interpersonal dynamics and social settings, individuals develop adaptive, growth-oriented propensities—namely, internalization and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2012). Expectancy-value theory emphasises that individuals’ investment of effort and persistence on a task depends on their
expectancy for success, belief in their ability and the degree to which they value the opportunity to engage in the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

In order to explore what each theoretical framework sheds light on and where its limitations lie, this chapter will address some broad questions from mainstream teacher education: (1) What motivates individuals to enter the teaching profession? (2) What motivates teachers in the classroom? (3) How is teacher motivation linked to teacher development? (4) How does teacher motivation influence the dynamics of classroom practice? As mentioned previously, these questions borrow from Pintrich’s (2003) four suggested concerns and serve as a guide for theoretical development and empirical research about teacher motivation.

**What motivates individuals to enter the teaching profession?**

Few would dispute the notion that the work of teaching is vital to the advancement of student learning and social achievement (Hanushek, 2011), and the questions of why individuals choose teaching as a career and what they hope to achieve have grown in significance as policy-makers and teacher educators worldwide grapple with how to attract and retain the highest quality teachers (Richardson & Watt, 2016). Because teachers’ career motivations are central to their professional engagement and commitment, it should not be surprising that research has intensified in the past few years into who chooses to enter the teaching profession, what attracts them to make this decision and how to retain effective professionals—almost across the globe (Zumwalt & Craig, 2008).

From the perspective of self-determination theory, the drive to become a teacher arises from intrinsic (autonomous) or extrinsic (controlled) antecedents thought to exist on a continuum of self-determination (Roth, 2014). Extrinsic motivation ranges from the least self-determined form,
external-regulation, to introjected-regulation (i.e. when external forces of control have been internalized to some extent), identified-regulation (i.e. when an internalized sense of the personal value of an activity is achieved), and integrated-regulation (i.e. when performing an activity becomes a means of expressing core aspects of one’s identity). Although it originates externally, integrated-regulation shares several characteristics with intrinsic motivation, given that it stems from values that are fully congruent with aspects of one’s self.

In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic categories, it is often the pro-social or altruistic value of teaching that draws individuals to the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2014). This includes factors such as love, passion and dedication to learners, as well as a personal or moral commitment to contribute to society or reduce social inequality. Research from an expectancy-value model posits that in addition to assigning a value to the task of teaching, individuals appraise the workload and commitment demands prior to entering the profession and weigh these against their expectations of their own ability to be effective teachers (Watt et al., 2012).

There is also growing evidence that sociocultural contexts play a significant role in shaping individuals’ initial teaching motivations, and that these teaching motivations impact teachers’ performance, effort and persistence in the profession (Alexander et al., 2014). This is evinced by the varying importance of the above factors across cultural and geographical boundaries. While intrinsic factors are the primary movers in many contexts, teachers in other countries reference more extrinsic motives including pay, job security and career status (Visser-Wijnveen et al., 2014). However, even within a single sociocultural context, different teachers will display different motivational profiles, and the context in which a teacher works can influence and change those motivations, regardless of how they are manifested at the outset of a teacher’s
career (Madni et al., 2015). Thus, in initial teacher motivation, the sociocultural context plays a significant role in who becomes a teacher and why.

**What motivates teachers in the classroom?**

Social cognitive theory emphasises the importance of agency through which individuals are able to make decisions about and exercise control over what they do; and, because teachers are thinking and feeling agentic individuals, a productive way of conceptualising teacher motivation is to look at teachers’ levels of confidence in their ability to help students learn (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are the judgments they make about how effectively they are able to engage students and help them to learn (Klassen et al., 2011). Positive appraisals of personal teaching-specific capabilities are important to a teacher’s motivation for many reasons. Among other things, these positive self-efficacy beliefs are associated with teacher enthusiasm and confidence, commitment to teaching, job satisfaction, instructional effort and persistence (Klassen & Tze, 2014). In addition to the strong sense of individual self-efficacy that motivated teachers are likely to possess, successful schools are characterised by teachers’ collective beliefs in their capabilities to create a climate of learning for students (Goddard et al., 2000). This collective teacher efficacy, conceptualised as an emergent property of schools, is thought to contribute to the differential effect that schools have on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2004). Additionally, while social cognitive theory sees self-efficacy as relatively stable once established (Bandura, 1997), the temporal nature of a career in teaching affords a dynamic aspect to teachers’ goals and self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, because there is constant potential for new challenges, obstacles, constraints and difficulties for teachers to overcome, teachers’ agency
and the expectations they hold of their capacity to accomplish desired teaching-specific outcomes are continuously developing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

The notion of goal pursuit, from achievement goal theory, offers another way of looking at what teachers seek to achieve in the classroom (Retelsdorf et al., 2010). In their teaching, teachers may be spurred by mastery goals, a desire to develop professionally and to enhance their teaching skills; performance-approach goals, a desire to demonstrate superior teaching ability; performance-avoidance goals, a desire to avoid displays of failure through poor quality teaching; or work-avoidance goals, a desire to get by and do as little as possible. Another unique dimension of teaching concerns the way teachers incorporate others’ goals into their own set of professional goals, and this has been explored by Butler (2012) under the rubric of relational goals. This program of research sees relational strivings (i.e. to achieve caring relationships with students) and mastery strivings (i.e. to develop competence) as two distinct teacher motivational goals, each with different consequences for teacher behaviours (Butler, 2007). A greater focus on relational goals is often associated with teachers’ socio-emotional support for students, while teacher mastery goals tend to contribute more to cognitively stimulating instruction and higher student interest. However, even relational goals are closely tied to teachers’ sense of personal accomplishment and feelings of competence (Butler & Shibaz, 2014). Generally, teachers’ dual endorsement of mastery and relational goals is associated with greater enjoyment of teaching and greater investment of effort, and they predict greater use of mastery-oriented instructional practices (e.g. encouraging students’ critical thinking) as well as emotional availability and supportiveness (Becker et al., 2014; Soenens et al., 2012). Thus, because teaching is a purposeful endeavour, it is by nature goal-directed. At times, these goals may target personal desires, while, at others, they may relate to a more interpersonal orientation.
For its part, self-determination theory sees ongoing teacher motivation as emerging out of the satisfaction of psychological needs through the activity of teaching (Roth, 2014). Self-determination theory suggests that people must feel autonomous, be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, understand how their needs can be met, feel capable in their abilities and connect to those around them (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2012). Autonomous motivation is crucial to motivated teacher behaviour because of educators’ inherent tendency to explore and assimilate new knowledge, seek out novelty and challenges and exercise their intellectual capacities. For teachers, this means that if they enjoy the process of teaching and engage enthusiastically in those tasks which make up teaching, they will exercise volition and choice, achieve a sense of personal accomplishment and satisfaction and fully realise their abilities (Roth et al., 2007). Of course, whether teachers experience need satisfaction while teaching—as opposed to need frustration—depends a great deal on the classroom context and broader educational environment. For instance, studies of the antecedents of teachers’ autonomous motivation highlight how role ambiguity, emphasis on high-stakes testing, external accountability and coercive school leadership undermine teachers’ autonomous motivation because these pressures represent controlling forms of motivation (Reeve & Su, 2014). This underscores the importance of school culture for teachers’ own goals for teaching and the classroom climates they create for students.

**How is teacher motivation linked to teacher development?**

Motivation research has attempted to account for how the level and quality of teachers’ motivations change across their lifespans and how this might parallel teachers’ career trajectories (Alexander, 2008). This is important because the complex and psychologically demanding task of teaching can span decades over the course of one’s career. Longitudinal research from the
expectancy-value model has shown that teachers’ instructional efforts, planned persistence, professional development, leadership aspirations and career satisfaction are linked positively to particular initial motivational profiles (Richardson & Watt, 2016). This is illustrated by evidence that self-reported and idiosyncratic descriptions of teachers’ classroom teaching style differ depending on whether those teachers associate with the more intrinsic values for teaching or extrinsic values such as personal utility and social persuasion (Reeve & Su, 2014). Another common pattern of motivational change relates to pre-service teachers who possess a positive idealistic motivational profile but when confronted by the challenges of reality experience a rapid decline in their self-efficacy, career satisfaction and commitment to the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2010).

Additional insights from self-efficacy research show that the discrepancy between teachers’ evaluations of their abilities and the needs of their students is often implicated in how teachers’ motivations to address those abilities and needs change as they progress through their careers (Remijan, 2014). Pre-service and early-career teachers often report a higher sense of teaching efficacy than mid-to-late career teachers do (Tang et al., 2014), likely because they have not faced the mismatch which often occurs between individuals’ anticipated experience of classroom processes and interactions and the reality of the experience. Low self-efficacy, as well as feelings of inadequacy and incompetence can significantly contribute to teacher demotivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Previously committed teachers often disengage from their work due to self-efficacy doubts, and teachers may even become apathetic, cynical or convinced of their inefficacy.
How does teacher motivation influence the dynamics of classroom practice?

Despite its clearly social objectives, teaching has tended to be regarded ‘primarily as a cognitive activity’ (Zembylas, 2003: 104). However, a situative perspective challenges this view, and provides evidence that motivation, cognition, and emotion are always situated and, furthermore, are fundamentally interdependent (Storbeck & Clore, 2007). The main implication of this notion for teacher motivation is the focus on the co-constitutive nature of classroom settings and teacher motivation (Radel et al., 2010). This reticulated view of teacher motivation is corroborated by evidence that teachers’ enthusiasm for teaching, their goals and their sense of professional autonomy, mediated through their classroom practices, shape their students’ perceptions and behaviours. Through the actions and responses of students, these contexts provide the necessary conditions for teacher motivation to flourish adaptively and relationally (Frenzel, 2014).

In fact, most of the existing evidence in teacher research consistently highlights the reciprocal links between teachers’ work and their motivation. For instance, teachers who are more autonomously motivated report (a) greater use of autonomy-supportive teaching practices (Reeve & Su, 2014); (b) more mastery-oriented goals, which in turn lead to more adaptive teaching strategies and better teaching performance (Soenens et al., 2012); (c) higher links with feelings of accomplishment (Moller et al., 2006); (d) greater support for students’ engagement in learning activities (Butler, 2007); (e) deeper value for the subjects they teach and methods for helping students master those subjects (Garner, 2010); and (f) increased investment in maintaining students’ quality of learning (Roth et al., 2007).

Other teacher motivations which impact powerfully on instructional practice again correspond to the teacher’s ability to engage, target and strengthen these factors in their students. These include intellectual curiosity, the need for genuine achievement, relational needs for affiliation
and the need for social support and approval (Butler, 2012). Although this research does not imply an ideal set of motivations which all teachers should demonstrate throughout their years in the profession, particular combinations of these are undoubtedly the hallmarks of a motivated and effective teacher (Pintrich, 2003).

Thus, the picture that emerges from this overview of the conceptual frameworks used to study mainstream teacher motivation is that there exists a solid foundation for understanding the reasons teachers enter the profession, how and why they construct their place in the profession and the links between teacher motivation and key processes and outcomes (Kaplan, 2014). We now focus on language (L2) teacher motivation in order to determine how it compares, whether there are equally systematic conclusions and implications to be drawn from recent field-specific research, to ascertain where there are gaps, and to explore what elements may or may not be particular to the domain of L2 teacher motivation.

**Language teacher motivation**

**What motivates language teachers to enter the profession?**

Studies conducted in recent years indicate equally prominent intrinsic and extrinsic motives for language teachers’ career choice. Intrinsic factors relate to satisfaction of needs and interests, emotional payoffs, and the internal desire for personal growth, intellectual fulfilment and meaningfulness often found in educational settings. Within the language teaching profession, these most often refer to individuals’ love of the language and of teaching itself; both powerful drives for career choice as a language teacher (Hayes, 2008; Wong *et al.*, 2014). Realizing this potential for growth can provide inspiration and motivation for language teachers in their profession of choice (Baleghizadeh & Gordani, 2012). Another source of L2 teachers’ intrinsic
interest in the language and in teaching is their previous learning experience; when individuals see themselves as possessing a strong language learning aptitude that engenders positive achievement in the process of learning a language, this may also function as a major driving force for those people to enter the language teaching profession (Hayes, 2008). In other instances, early learning experiences play a crucial role in individuals selecting their current job, including observing their own teachers’ enjoyment and dedication to teaching; these factors in turn motivate learners to later choose the L2 teaching occupation (Warford & Reeves, 2003). By extension, altruism and the desire to contribute to society in general is another superordinate intrinsic motive regarding professional career choice (e.g. Koran, 2015 for Iranian teachers; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012 for Turkish teachers), and these studies report that teachers entering the L2 teaching profession considered it important to be able to positively influence the next generation.

Beyond this intrinsic interest, extrinsic factors also influence the job selection of many L2 teachers. Extrinsic factors here concern external incentives such as material benefits, the social status accorded L2 teachers, and job security (Karavas, 2010; Koran, 2015). There is considerable socio-geographic variation in the occupational prestige and community respect afforded language teachers, and this is often linked to the perceived competitiveness of entry into, and the exclusivity of, the profession (Erten, 2014). In countries where a teaching job is considered to be a stable profession guaranteeing job security and social status, teachers, particularly female teachers, may be pressured to enter the L2 profession from significant figures such as parents (Kim & Kim, 2015; Koran, 2015). Economically, material rewards such as guaranteed pay and pension plans for educators in many disadvantaged local settings are also strong, attractive reasons for choosing the occupation (Gao & Xu, 2014; Hayes, 2008).
Additionally, in districts where educational opportunities are restricted, few choices present themselves, apart from teaching and nursing, as a pathway to continue towards tertiary education. In such cases, teachers may choose this occupation in the absence of any existing interest in the culture or language (Erten, 2014).

The stereotyping of teaching and teachers that is prevalent in certain educational contexts can, of course, have significant effects on the attractiveness of teaching as a career. For example, in the case of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), in the era of globalization, English proficiency can be perceived as a measure of affluence and social savviness. Thus, the implicit social values and interest in foreign cultures that accompanies English language use can create EFL teachers’ global orientation and function as a source influencing teachers to enter the profession (Baleghizadeh & Gordani, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2015). By contrast, in the case of less-commonly-taught languages such as Arabic, the perceptions of social value and attitudes of undesirability can exert a strongly negative influence on L2 teachers’ motivation to teach the language (Kong et al., in preparation). To sum up, previous L2 teacher studies have identified various influencing factors in intrinsic and extrinsic motives for language teachers’ career decisions. However, these studies are largely descriptive and are less based on the theoretical foundation of studies investigating general teacher career motives.

**How is L2 teacher motivation linked to teacher development and the dynamics of classroom practice?**

Those who choose a career as language teachers often enrol in institutions which prepare L2 educators. Formal pre-service L2 teacher education typically encompasses a range of courses, and a teaching practicum typically scheduled in the last year of training. The practicum is
arguably one of the more influential elements in a language teacher education programme. During a practicum, pre-service teachers often have the opportunity to observe practicing teachers as well as teach classes themselves in order to apply theory and practice from their training program and experience for themselves what really happens in an L2 classroom. When the teaching practicum unfolds in a supportive atmosphere, this can result in feelings of self-efficacy and self-reflection that are a vital boost to self-confidence and, thus, create motivation (Atay, 2007; Gan, 2014). It is apparent that when this input is positively re-constructed through interactions and self-reflection, practicum courses become a meaningful springboard for individuals pursuing their career and development as a language teacher.

After successfully becoming a language teacher, teachers’ motivations are undoubtedly shaped at a micro level by their ongoing experiences, as well as the more general developmental patterns of change across their professional life span (Kimura, 2014). Beyond their individual developmental process, contextual factors can also influence language teacher motivation on both a macro and micro contextual level (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Macro contextual factors here refer to the influence of students’ parents, the local community and society in general, whereas the micro dimension is more related to the actual institution and school context where the practice of teaching occurs.

At the micro level, novice teachers experience a transformation process from a pre-service L2 teacher to an in-service one, and this is accompanied by cognitive and emotional challenges. Novice L2 teachers may discover that the actual teaching site is different from what they have envisioned, despite having previously learned what and how to teach, and this experience of discrepancy can challenge L2 teachers’ motivation. This was the case, for instance, with novice L2 teachers in Japan who reported their primary source of difficulties as being the gap between
what they had expected and what they actually experienced in the classroom (Kumazawa, 2013). These teachers indicated their interest in employing more constructivist teaching methods, but encountered difficulty implementing these methods in the classroom due to learners’ limited L2 proficiency to interact in the target language.

As novice teachers gain more hands-on experience of teaching, the enjoyment of teaching and teaching autonomy in the classroom serve as motivating factors for L2 teachers (Hettiarachchi, 2013; Tsutsumi, 2014). A distinctive motivational dimension on the micro level is learners’ communicative involvement using the L2 (Tardy & Snyder, 2004). When L2 teachers observe learners’ genuine involvement in L2 learning activities and their authentic conversations in the L2, it can motivate teachers. In addition, because L2 teachers function as role models of competent L2 speakers (Chacon, 2005), this can stimulate L2 learners’ interactions, which in turn positively impacts on L2 teachers’ motivation.

Beyond the classroom, the school atmosphere can impact on in-service L2 teacher motivation. In particular, relationships with colleagues are found to have an important motivational effect (Cowie, 2011). Relationships with other colleagues who are unsupportive, emotionally cold, or at best display an ambivalent attitude toward innovative teaching methods can contribute to a sense of futility and isolation that causes negative shifts in the motivation of in-service teachers. With respect to the L2 specifically, a lack of interest among colleagues in developing their L2 proficiency and an absence of experts such as L2 teaching specialists or qualified teachers who are first language users has also been found to have an adverse effect on L2 teacher motivation (Erkaya, 2012; Hettiarachchi, 2013).

Another dimension to note in respect to in-service L2 teacher motivation on the micro level is the potential effect of oppressive bureaucratic school culture (Crookes, 2009). In many formal
instructional settings, language teaching may not even be the L2 teachers’ primary duty. In a characteristic pattern reported by Kim et al. (2014), Kumazawa (2013), Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013), and Sugino (2010), teachers are often expected to deal with an excessive amount of paperwork and prepare extracurricular activities. For those who dream of being a teacher dedicated to inspiring learners and helping them communicate in the target language, such a highly-regulated, administrative-heavy environment, can hamper teachers’ best efforts in teaching (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015).

On the macro level, the influence of parents and society can function as (de)motivating factors among L2 teachers. For example, whether L2 teachers receive recognition for their efforts and success from students’ parents is one element that can influence L2 teacher motivation (Zhang, 2017). Further, when parents express doubts regarding teachers’ ability and take an excessive interest in what transpires in the classroom, it can be detrimental to teacher autonomy, leading to L2 teacher demotivation (Kim et al., 2014). Besides parents, the wider community itself is another consideration at the macro level. For example, any discrepancy between socially preferred teaching methods and teachers’ actual practices can negatively impact L2 teacher motivation (Zhao, 2008). The social status or value of a specific L2 is also a key macro factor that affects broad levels of L2 teacher motivation. When an L2 (e.g. EFL) has high perceived status, it endows a prestigious position to the L2 teaching profession which enhances L2 teacher motivation (Hettiarachchi, 2013). As can be seen, L2 teacher motivation is deeply intertwined with both micro and macro contextual factors and cannot be thought of as solely an internal psychological state.

In this section, we have once again adopted questions from Pintrich’s (2003) orienting perspective of how motivation impacts human choice and action, and summarised some of the
most recent research with regard to L2 teacher motivation. In contrast to the strong theoretical threads which tie mainstream teacher motivation research together, it is apparent that L2 teacher motivation research tends to be more thematic and descriptive in how it explains phenomena of interest, which may lead casual observers to consider the field as being somewhat under-theorised. However, while this criticism may apply to certain aspects of L2 teacher motivation research, starting from practice and generating theory bottom-up could also be seen as an ecologically valid form of research. In the final section of this chapter, we examine what established theories of motivation have to offer for theorising L2 teacher motivation and propose how a program of L2 teacher motivation research might advance the field in the years to come.

**Research on teacher motivation: Future directions**

Over the last decade, the study of teacher motivation in general education has been revitalised by renewed interest, thus gaining prominence within contemporary educational psychology (Richardson et al., 2014). The field has begun to explore what established theories of learning and motivation have to offer in theorising teacher motivation (Richardson & Watt, 2010). The same challenge is now facing L2 teacher motivation, and researchers will need to explore how established theories could be adopted and adapted to explain L2 language teacher motivation specifically. An empirical program is now needed to systematically establish the usefulness and relevance of existing frameworks from more mainstream teacher motivation research (e.g. self-efficacy, achievement goal theory, self-determination theory) for L2 teachers and teaching. However, we must also acknowledge the wealth of evidence from established frameworks for L2 learning motivation (e.g. the L2 motivational self system) and consider what they have to offer when applied to language teacher motivation (e.g. Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The fact is that
many language teachers are both educators and language learners, and thus the domain of language teacher motivation is well-positioned to become a richer field of inquiry because of its crossover appeal. Drawing on all sources of insights and incorporating all perspectives from within SLA and beyond might allow L2 teacher motivation to embrace general educational theories as well as those being used specifically in respect to second language learners and their development.

Along with much of the past decade of work on self-related concepts in L2 motivation research (Boo et al., 2015), rapid advances are being made in terms of theoretical frameworks and empirical designs (e.g. Dörnyei et al., 2015). These include, among others, adopting a dynamic, situated perspective of motivation using complexity theory; reaffirming the interdependent nature of emotion and cognition for motivation; expanding research to account for the implicit and unconscious side of motivation; recognising the centrality of identity to motivational development processes; and reflecting on the role of technology-based L2 pedagogies. We would add, however, that due to the nature of the profession itself there are adequate reasons to suspect that language teacher motivation differs from L2 learning motivation. This warrants careful evaluation and adaptation of conceptual frameworks, models and methodologies for teacher motivation from theory and evidence within L2 learner motivation. One example of this is the language teacher motivation research adopting constructs from the L2 motivational self system which show that although possible future self guides may exist for certain practitioners (Hiver, 2013; Kubanyiova, 2012), these may not be the most desirable types of vision and there may even be language teaching contexts in which teachers are neither willing nor able to engage in the critical reflective thought required to construct and elaborate these future self guides (Gao & Xu, 2014; Hwang et al., 2010; Kumazawa, 2013; Wong et al., 2014).
Finally, because ‘the two are inextricably linked’ (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014: 3), the link to teacher classroom practice and by extension students’ motivation and learning must be made explicit empirically. Teachers undoubtedly deserve to enjoy positive professional well-being and greater motivation, and thus there is a compelling need for future research to reassess its practice-relevant impact for L2 classrooms. One way it might do this is to demonstrate whether and to what extent language teachers’ motivation links to desirable external outcomes, such as teachers’ instructional practices, student motivation, or student achievement. Research in general education has already shown that these links exist (e.g. Butler & Shibaz, 2014; Radel et al., 2010), and it is likely to be the case in the L2 domain as well. Given the complexity of what transpires in L2 classrooms, student and observer reports of teacher behaviour may not be directly associated with teachers’ reports of their own motivation. In instances where teacher motivation and practices have been linked to student outcomes such as motivation and achievement (e.g. Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Maeng & Lee, 2014; Papi & Abdollazadeh, 2012), the ways in which student behaviour and teacher motivation and practices might be mutually reinforcing remain unclear, partly because much of this research has not taken as its starting point the day-to-day concerns of practicing L2 teachers. In order to establish the direction and significance of these links, future research will need to incorporate measures that go beyond teacher self-reports, and while these effects are unlikely to be simple, direct, linear, or even unidirectional, our position is that empirical substantiation is essential in order to take the field forward.
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