Korean language learning demotivation among EFL instructors in South Korea

Nigel Gearing
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1520-7461
nigelgear62@gmail.com

Abstract

Studies investigating the motivation of L1 speakers of English to learn the national language of the host society they currently reside in remain rare, despite the exponential growth of such individuals residing in these nations this century. Previous such studies in South Korea have concluded that learning Korean as a second language (L2) is largely perceived as difficult, unnecessary and is therefore accompanied by experiences of demotivation and amotivation (see Gearing & Roger, 2018). However, these studies did not explicitly address demotivation and amotivation when examining experiences that affect the motivation to learn Korean of 14 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors working in South Korean university language education centers (LECs). Therefore, this study investigates which learning experiences resulted in the amotivation of participants and how two participants who experienced demotivation employed strategies to remotivate themselves. Coding of semi-structured interviews and optional diaries found that despite intent, most participants displayed symptoms of both amotivation and demotivation. The main implication of this study is that in the absence of perceived necessity, affected individuals with insufficient internal motivation or vision to acquire Korean consequently attribute externally related demotivating experiences to pre-existing or resulting amotivation.

Keywords: amotivation; demotivation; learning experience; Korean; remotivation

1. Introduction

Thirty thousand native English speakers work as English language teachers in South Korea (Habid, 2014), typically on one-, or in some cases two-year contracts in elementary, middle and high schools, private language institutes (or *hagwons*), and universities, some for many years. This paper focuses on 14 English-speaking expatriates living and working as university language instructors there and the reasons why specific experiences caused participants to become demotivated. Empirical studies into demotivation of second language (L2) learners have tended to focus on their classroom experiences of English learning (see Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Farmand & Rokini, 2014; Kikuchi, 2011, 2013, 2015; Oxford, 2001; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Tsuchiya, 2006; Tuan, 2011) finding that students attribute motivation to themselves and their demotivation to teacher and classroom-related factors. Other empirical longitudinal L2 motivation studies (see Chambers, 1993; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; Tachibana, Matsukawa, & Zhong, 1996; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002) confirm a "general pattern of demotivation among students as the initial novelty of learning another language wears off and increasing cognitive, linguistic and curricular demands and social pressures set in" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, pp. 142-143). This can be reflected in the process model of L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998), where in the pre-actional stage students are initially motivated by choice and plans are formed. In the actional stage, the action is launched. In the post-actional stage, motivational functions are generated and appraised and causal attributions are made (Dörnyei, 2005). Ultimately, however, without a vision, or "the *pull towards* an imagined future state" or a future-self-guide, an individual's self-concept cannot realistically be sustained (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 9). A rare example of a study of demotivation among learners of other languages other than English (LOTEs) is provided by Ushioda (1998). This examination of 20 French learners in Ireland also confirms the dominance of teacher-related issues as demotivators for students. Interestingly, Dörnyei (1998) and Chambers (1993) also found significant non-classroom related factors including negative attitudes towards learning L2s and their respective communities. Dörnyei (1998) examined the demotivation of 50 self-identified demotivated learners of English or German in Hungary using one-on-one interviews. Chambers (1993) administered a questionnaire to 191 13-year-old English (first language) L1 speakers from four schools as L2 learners in Leeds, England, and seven of their teachers. However, in a globalized world, these studies offer limited insight being set in European contexts last century and analyzing demotivation among school-aged learners for whom L2 acquisition was compulsory. Adults may have additional, possibly

competing commitments to language learning necessitating a cost/benefit analysis of the time and cost versus the perceived return on such an investment (Norton, 2013), particularly, as negative gatekeeping encounters may result in marginalization (Norton, 2000, 2001). Thus, while the notion that in a globalized environment "the impact of negative social experiences and cultural encounters on L2 motivation is not confined to English" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011 p. 156) would appear to be obvious, its significance may be less so. This century, unprecedented numbers of individuals have located to English and non-English speaking nations and a significant number of adults have worked for many years in host nations with their own first languages (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Ushioda (2006) addresses the need to examine "motivational issues pertaining to linguistic diversity, mobility, and social integration" in response to "a rapidly changing and expanding Europe" (p. 149). This requires moving "beyond the individual, to focus critical attention on this social setting in facilitating or constraining the motivation of the individual L2 learner/user" (Ushioda, 2006, p. 158). This study fills a gap in the literature by examining one such context with English-speakers as learners of Korean, some having lived "on location" for more than a decade and their experiences which may have demotivated or amotivated them.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

A review of the literature reveals a gap between the number of studies on L2 learner motivation over those examining which experiences may cause these learners to lose motivation. This is significant because "language-learning failure is a salient phenomenon and the study of its causes is often directly related to demotivation" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 142). However, "few studies focus on why learners are *not* motivated to learn" (Sakui & Cowie, 2012, p. 205). There are several relevant constructs in the studies that do exist on a spectrum where, at one end, students see no point in learning an L2 (amotivation), through to specific external experiences that cause them to lose motivation related to that aspect of their L2 acquisition (demotivation). Amotivation, is the "realization that *'there's no point or it's beyond me'* which can be attributed to the learner's belief that the expectation of success is unrealistic" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 140). Demotivation, on the other hand, relates to:

> specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action. Demotivation does not mean that all the positive influences that originally made up the motivational basis of behavior have been annulled; rather, it is only the resultant force has been dampened by a strong negative component, while some other positive motives may still remain operational. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 139)

However, Meshart and Hassani (2012) make the point that not all researchers agree with Dörnyei's (2001) original definition of demotivation being solely attributable to external factors. Falout and Maruyama (2004), and Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) both include internal factors in their definitions of demotivation. Drawing no distinction between internal or external factors, Kikuchi (2015) differentiates between demotivation, which is situational, in that learners can be motivated again, from a more generic amotivation. In addition, Falout et al. (2009) note that some demotivating factors can result in a total loss of motivation. A further complicating factor is the interchangeable use of demotivation and amotivation in the literature. Chambers (1993) found that some students were demotivated before commencing learning in the L2 classroom. However, when Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) refer to these specific learners in that study who "simply did not see the point of learning an L2" (p. 140), they are applying their definition of amotivation. In response, the term *unmotivation* was established by Sakui and Cowie (2012) to address the difficulty of differentiating between amotivation and demotivation as "in practical terms, language teachers have to deal with both types and it is difficult to differentiate between the two in classroom situations" (p. 205). In this study, *demotivation* will refer to specific external factors or experiences that may lead to amotivation *or* to describe specific episodes where individuals lose their motivation but they retain an overall motivational intent to continue acquiring Korean. Finally, *remotivation* refers to the "strategies [language learners] use to cope with pressures, to make meaning of their situations and actions, and to revive their motivation" (Falout, Murhpey, Fukuda, & Trovela, 2013, p. 328).

2.1. Models and frameworks of demotivation

The main demotivating factors identified by Dörnyei (1998) and a review of Japanese studies of demotivation (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) rank the learner's perception and therefore experience of the teacher's competence, personality, teaching style and methodology as the most important demotivating factors. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 148) list nine demotivating factors as identified by Dörnyei (1998) in order of decreasing importance: (1) the teacher (personality, commitment, competence, teaching methodology); (2) inadequate school resources (group too large or not large enough, high teacher turnover); (3) reduced self-confidence (experiences of lack of success or failure); (4) negative attitudes towards the L2; (5) compulsory need to study the L2; (6) interference from another language being studied; (7) negative attitudes towards the L2 community; (8) attitudes of group members; and (9) coursebook. Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) review of multiple studies of Japanese English-language learning students and their issues of demotivation (see Falout & Maruyama, 2004;

Hasegawa, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006), identified a six-factor model of student demotivation. This comprises: (1) teachers (attitudes, behaviors, teaching competence, language proficiency, personality, and teaching style); (2) characteristics of classes (course content and pace, focus on grammar and external examinations, monotony); (3) experience of failure (disappointing results, lack of acceptance by teachers and others); (4) class environment (attitudes of classmates and friends, compulsory nature of study, inappropriate level of lessons, and inadequate use of facilities and resources within the school); (5) class materials (not suitable, uninteresting or too much reliance on books and handouts); and (6) lack of interest (a perception that English learnt in school will not be practical or necessary). Kikuchi (2015) confirms that all six factors were evident in questionnaire responses obtained from more than 1000 Japanese high school English language learners that participated in the Kikuchi (2011) study. He particularly noted the participants' ability to distinguish the behavior of the teacher and the class environment of their making, citing examples including a lack of use of technology in the classroom, using materials that were not relevant or timely, and large class sizes. However, teachers could not easily control these factors which were deemed more demotivating than issues more within the teacher's control, including "difficult or one-way explanations, poor pronunciation, or the instructional approach" (Kikuchi, 2015, p. 59). Placing the main demotivating factors identified by Dörnyei (1998) and the Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) studies together establishes a comprehensive framework of the most important factors and experiences comprising demotivation from the perspective of the *learner* who may then enter the language learning classroom where the powerful responses they brought with them from the outside may then be triggered by classroom practices. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 148) note, "by far the largest category (with 40 per cent of the total frequency of responses) directly concerned the *teacher.*" A further 15 per cent were related to reduced self-confidence (in part due to a classroom event under control of the teacher). More than ten per cent of demotives comprised inadequate school facilities and negative attitudes towards the L2 (which included the sound of the language and how it operates). Following teacher and classroom-related demotivators, the experience or fear of failure was the third factor. Factors two and four in the Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) model relate to characteristics of the class as do factors two and eight of the main factors identified by Dörnyei (1998) whereas the fifth factor in the Japanese model, that is, class materials, arguably equates to factor nine, the coursebook. The compulsory nature of English learning, negative attitudes towards the L2 and the L2 community, and interference from another language being studied are only mentioned by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). Nevertheless "closer contact with the L2 results in strong evaluative feelings which affect subsequent commitment to continue learning the language" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 149). If these are mainly negative, demotivation may result.

Interestingly, high-proficiency learners tend to attribute their demotivation to external factors (Falout et al., 2009). Therefore, because Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), and Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) find that demotivated language learners attribute much of their demotivation to classroom-related experiences, it appears that they can be regarded as high proficiency learners.

2.2. Self-regulation

Based on the findings of Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), Kikuchi (2015, p. 60) concludes that:

> less-motivated learners are more sensitive to demotivators than more highly-motivated learners. It is possible that students who are more motivated are more able to self-regulate their cognitive and emotional wellbeing when encountering demotivators. Learners who have a clear goal or reason to study the foreign language and are therefore motivated might not perceive potential demotivators as demotivating [and] might be more likely to overlook negative aspects of the learning environment and keep their focus on learning rather than on environmental conditions.

In addition, Kikuchi (2009) found that students without clear goals far more readily noticed potential demotivators including monotony of the lessons, unmotivated fellow classmates, and the student's own lack of ability to understand the class. Ultimately, while participants in many studies on demotivation attribute their loss of motivation to external forces, thereby identifying as high-proficiency learners (Falout et al., 2009), forming conclusions based on these findings of such learners' experiences alone may be premature. This is because by attributing the majority of their demotivating factors to the teacher and classroom-related experiences, the demotivated participants identified by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) could also be seen as perceiving themselves as high proficiency learners.

2.3. Situation-specific demotivation

A one-year longitudinal study of English L1-speaking university students learning French at a Canadian university by Gardner et al. (2004) showed that situation-specific motivation (including attitudes towards the learning situation) ultimately determined the level of success of individuals doing the course. This finding was confirmed by Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006). Their survey questionnaire of 13,000 Hungarian language learners in 1993, 1999, and 2004 targeted attitudes towards English, German, French, Italian, and Russian, finding a steady decline in the motivation to learn foreign languages apart from a marked increase in the direct instrumental benefits derived from learning English such as

career and financial opportunities. Conversely, studies of English L1 speakers as L2 learners have found that visiting an English-speaking environment was a key transformational event (Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2005). However, study abroad demotivators include a lack of enthusiasm regarding study involvement, setting unachievable goals, being ill-prepared, or an inability to deal with cultural differences or second language acquisition (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2013). Finally, in a globalized world "the complexity of the association between context and motivation lies in the unprecedented growth of English in mainstream education in many countries. It reduces students' interest in learning other foreign or local languages when the need to acquire English is prioritized" (Ushioda, 2013, p. 6).

It is against this backdrop that this study draws on relevant literature to explain "*why* some learners can 'bounce back' after a demotivating episode and others completely lose interest" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, pp. 100-101); and therefore, addresses the following research questions:

1. Which experiences demotivated participants once they had commenced learning Korean?
2. Which specific experiences significantly diminished participants' continued behavioral intent?
3. What strategies did participants employ to remotivate themselves?

3. Methods

Qualitative research employs a wide range of data-gathering tools, including recorded interviews and diaries (Dörnyei, 2007). When transcribed and analyzed, these provide an effective means to explore new areas, make sense of highly complicated situations, answer "why" questions and broaden the scope of understanding of interpretations of a phenomenon gained from rich data analysis of participants' experiences. For these reasons, a qualitative methodology was used to elicit data with the assistance of individual in-depth interviews forming the primary means of data collection, supported by optional diaries.

3.1. Participants

14 participants were recruited from the author's professional network in South Korea. Participants one to seven worked at the same university as the researcher. The remaining participants were recruited from seven different language centers around South Korea. Participants three and seven were employed on tenure contracts. All other participants were employed on one, or two-year, renewable contracts. Table 1 outlines each participant's details (the names used are pseudonyms).

Table 1 Participants

Participant (pseudonym)	Nationality	Age	Qualifications (highest degree obtained)	Number of years of work experience in South Korea
Andy	New Zealand	34	Bachelor (Hospitality Management)	4
Angela	United States	57	MA (Creative Writing)	9
Barry	United States	34	BA (Broadcasting)	10
David	Canada	49	BA (Psychology)	10
Duncan	England	39	MA (English Language Teaching)	6
James	Canada	40	BA (English Literature)	11
John	South Africa	26	BA (Human Resource Management)	2
Michael	England	28	BA (English Literature)	2
Paul	Australia	28	MA (TESOL)	5
Richard	United States	49	MA (TESOL)	15
Robert	New Zealand	64	MA (Education)	11
Sharon	United States	32	MBA	10
Vernon	Canada	46	BA (Computer Science)	6

3.2. Procedures

Participants were asked to keep optional diaries for two weeks prior to their individual in-depth semi-structured interviews and were given no instructions about what to include in them. Six participants brought these to their interviews to refer to where relevant and five gave them to the researcher for inclusion in the data analysis. The semi-structured interviews comprised 20 open-ended questions relating to a broader study on factors and experiences that may affect participants' motivation to learn Korean, or not, their motivation in general and how they coped with new and potentially challenging situations (see Appendix). The guide was developed based on the observations of the author who, as a peer of many participants, shared a similar profile and experiences as an EFL instructor in South Korea. The selection of the qualitative, semi-structured interview as the primary data-gathering tool was due to its suitability for studies designed to elicit descriptions and interpretations of the lived world related to the phenomena being examined (Kvale, 1996). Its flexibility provided a guide from which to probe, or possibly digress when necessary, to gain more specific information (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Each participant was accordingly interviewed at the venue of their choice. All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed.

3.3. Data analysis

The transcripts yielded 136,602 words of text. Coding was conducted in a line-by-line process in which words and phrases deemed relevant were placed into themes that concurrently emerged. Initial coding of one participant was initially

conducted as this allowed for subsequent reassessment if further coding of the remaining participants was required (Saldaña, 2013). The major advantage of this approach is that it allows for data to be compared for similarities and differences, a key aim of this study, and was therefore the approach used in data analysis. Themes that emerged are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Experiences of demotivation and ways of countering situation demotivation

Experiences of demotivation	
• Lack of perceived need/relevance	• Lack of perceived need/relevance
• Cultural differences	• Lack of accommodation in daily life
• Teaching methodology	• Difficulty accessing Korean communities of practice
• Curriculum/resources	• Dislike of L2 community
• The teacher	• Dislike of L2 language
• Other students	• Lack of time
• Size and level of class	• Korean-speaking partner
• Time of classes	• Peer attitudes
• Cost	• Difficulty of learning Korean
Countering situation demotivation – classroom	Countering situation demotivation – non-classroom
• Personal reflection – the importance of Korean proficiency as a goal despite obstacles	• Personal reflection – the importance of Korean proficiency as a goal despite obstacles
• Self-awareness	• Self-awareness
• Renewed self-study/goal setting	• Renewed self-study/goal setting
• Relocation to a more suitable language program	• Assertiveness in Korean communities of practice

4. Results

Results are presented around key emergent themes including how participants responded to non-classroom and classroom-related related experiences that they attributed their demotivation to, and situational demotivation experienced in the language-learning classroom and the broader sociocultural context.

4.1. Forms of learning undertaken by participants

Participants were placed in three groups regarding the Korean learning they undertook, as illustrated in Table 3. Group 1 comprised the participants who undertook Korean instruction in the formal language classroom environment. Those who also undertook Korean instruction, however in an informal manner, by way of tuition or language exchange, fell in Group 2. Finally, Group 3 comprised participants who did not undertake formal or informal Korean instruction and whose Korean learning was characterized autonomous self-study.

Table 3 Forms of learning undertaken by participants

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Participants who studied Korean in formal classroom setting. (Richard, Patricia, Robert, Vernon, Duncan, and James)	Participants who studied Korean by way of one-on-one lessons with Korean tutors. (Michael, Andy, Angela, Paul, and David)	Participants who self-studied Korean with no interaction with a classroom teacher or one-on-one tutor. (John, Barry, and Sharon)

4.2. Participants for whom amotivation and unmotivation are relevant

All participants exercised some initial motivation to learn Korean. However, nine participants became demotivated to the point of amotivation, once they entered the actional stage of learning (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998), including John, Richard, Andy, Robert, Angela, Patricia, Duncan, David, and Vernon. Overall, a sense of not knowing how long their South Korean sojourns would last, due to the temporary nature of their employment contracts, a realization that in everyday life it was possible to survive with only minimal Korean, and a lack of accommodation as Korean speakers were key themes affecting amotivation and unmotivation among participants. John self-studied Korean for a short time before discontinuing, stating: "I don't know how long I will be here. Even if you study Korean for deep conversations you will revert back to your first language", adding that "there's only the Korean way. It is very demotivating when every time [what is said in Korean by an English-speaking second language user of it] isn't right" (Interview). Andy undertook one-on-one informal language tuition, saying "my wife doesn't care and I can get by fine in daily life, as it is. She is back up [but] there's nothing that complex. You eat, need a taxi. Most doctors speak English" (Interview). Patricia extended this theme, noting that while she "should speak the language [Korean]. You learn that you can live here for years without speaking [it]" (Interview). Richard elaborated, making the point that: "For those that live in a foreign community, there is a great possibility that you will not learn the foreign language at all because you are only interacting in your own language" (Diary, day 11). Other participants in this group cited classroom management and teacher-related issues, the teaching methodology, curriculum and resources as demotivating. Patricia cited additional difficulties, such as the cost, size of and wide range of levels of students in her class, saying "we [herself and one other student] found the class to be too slow" (Interview).

The remaining participants comprised two groups, those who continued to self-study Korean on a sporadic, ad hoc basis while citing intermittent demotivating experiences, and those for whom learning Korean was a significant goal and developed strategies to counter situational demotivation. Participants defined their self-study as using textbooks and on-line language learning resources, attempting to understand aspects of Korean culture and history by reading Korean

books, listening to Korean music, watching Korean televisions programs and films, and using Korean in daily life. The first group included Michael, Richard, Barry, and Paul. Michael and Paul undertook informal language tuition. Michael and Paul discontinued after a short time citing lack of time and competing goals (e.g., other study commitments) as demotivating factors. Paul also mentioned a change of location from a smaller city to a large metropolitan city where it was comparatively easy to survive in daily life without Korean and his Korean partner as a demotivating factor "in the country, nobody spoke English." However, in his Korean communities, the ability and willingness of Koreans to communicate in English resulted in "self-guilt for not learning more [Korean]." Due to his relationship being conducted in Korean, Paul felt a sense of alienation at not being able to fully participate in conversations, particularly when "sometimes I get lost. I am curious to be able to communicate, but in Korean [to] get that perspective." While he represented the minority viewpoint of participants that he was accommodated by Koreans, he added that while some Koreans could speak English, "they shouldn't have to" (Interview). Barry cited Koreans preferring to deal with his Korean partner, a tendency to rely on her and a dislike of aspects of Korean culture as demotivating experiences (Interview). The second group comprised Sharon and James whose ability to manage situational demotivation was due to sufficiently strong future L2 self-visions. As opposed to other participants who also cited previous negative L2-learning experiences (i.e., Barry, Angela, and Patricia), their motivation to learn Korean appeared to be strongly *internalized.* This was despite Sharon's shared in the interview the sentiment with Patricia that she was not a "natural" language learner (Interview). Sharon and James also emphasized the role having chosen to study Korean had on their motivation, with Sharon saying "I started learning Korean because I wanted to [not because it was] something I have to learn to get a grade, [therefore] it was easier" (Interview). Her demotivation resulted from experiences related to the difficulty of assimilating certain aspects of the language, Koreans' lack of accommodation of her as an L2 speaker of their L1 and difficulties gaining deeper access to her Korean communities of practice. While James learned Korean formally for his entire time in South Korea, he experienced more specific episodic demotivation due to dissatisfaction with the teaching methodology, curriculum, resources, and his fellow students at the first university where he studied Korean.

4.3. Non-classroom related experiences

Largely due to a lack of exposure to English by Koreans residing there, all participants except Paul and James emphasized the difficulty of being understood due to their accented pronunciation in Korean. Significantly, participants believed that this specific form of lack of accommodation of them as L2 speakers of Korean

excluded them from opportunities to gain further experience as Korean learners and users. John's viewpoint was typical: "There is only the Korean way. They don't get into contact with foreigners often. They are so shy and focused on form and being perfect. They can't think outside the box or creatively" (Interview). Importantly, a significant number of Koreans that participants interacted with were motivated to learn and speak English, particularly those with Korean partners (John, Richard, Andy, Barry, Paul, James, and David). They also believed that among Koreans they encountered in daily life, particularly in the service industries, many preferred to communicate in their own first language with fellow Koreans, rather than with their non-Korean partners. Richard and Barry found the resulting lack of perceived opportunities to communicate in Korean in daily life, due to their partner's presence, or perceived comparative linguistic expertise in Korean, demotivating. For Richard, this took the form of Korean staff "automatically" addressing his wife over him in encounters (Interview). For Barry, his Korean wife's ability to conduct tasks and business more efficiently had resulted in his Korean use and level having "gone down, because I don't have to do those things" (Interview). Participants also believed that in in their LEC workplaces, the use of Korean was not required or encouraged:

> *There was strong discouragement from management to use Korean in the classroom, even to go to Korean classes. The president* [of the university] *was a fluent speaker of English. I have always felt a major disincentive in* [work] *places to learn Korean.* (Interview with Robert)

Some participants also attributed discouragement from Koreans to their demotivation to continue learning Korean. Andy was typical of this cohort, concluding that "there's no reward in learning Korean so when other priorities take over, it's the first thing I drop" (Interview). While the contributing factors to their demotivation varied, the overall theme of Korean acquisition being an ongoing, low priority goal, was shared by Richard, Barry, Patricia, and Paul. Negative feelings towards the L2 community manifested in strong criticism of the language related to Korean culture were expressed by Patricia, Angela, and Barry. Barry found "studying Korean included studying Korean culture"; however parochialism and nationalism caused defensiveness among some Koreans leading him to conclude that "there's so many topics that you can't talk about" (Interview). For Angela, the language and culture were linked as demotivating factors:

> *It felt really uncomfortable to even say those words* [because of the requirement to use] *some Korean phrases, and words in everyday life* [their usage] *helps a lot, but culturally Korea seems like a baby or adolescent. The language does not seem beautiful. I love Spanish so much more.* (Interview)

However, for participants who had committed to living permanently in Korea, their motivation to learn Korean was a high priority. While claiming Korean was a difficult language to learn, for Sharon "the only time Korean takes a back burner to anything" was when she was studying the Bible or preparing lessons (Interview). Her experience contrasted to those of Michael, Richard, Andy, Patricia, Robert, Paul, Duncan, and Vernon, who claimed lack of time was a demotivating factor. For Sharon, a total immersion lifestyle outside work was a powerful motivator with "baby steps dramatically" improving her Korean because "everything once I leave school" is in Korean (Interview). This included a Korean-speaking family "having adopted me as if I was a member of their family" (Diary, day 7), conducting all her business in Korean, membership of a Korean-speaking church and associated activities in addition to self-study of Korean and taking Korean proficiency examinations. However, she did experience demotivation as summed up by her relationship with her roommate:

> *Our whole existence is in Korean. That's helped. It's also frustrating. She can dominate the conversation. With her family, I was really nervous. I would make excuses not to go, or at certain times, when I know not everyone would have arrived, or when everyone was leaving, because I couldn't understand what was going on.* (Interview)

Participants with less robust visions of themselves as Korean speakers were more susceptible to demotivating experiences. While Sharon embraced taking formal Korean tests, Barry experienced such goal-oriented study as demotivating:

> *Last year, I tried studying for a few tests in Korean and gave up. The vocabulary was way too difficult, the grammar was way beyond me. Sometimes you study for a goal. I study because I want to. I'll stick with it more.* (Interview)

In summary, the findings of this section indicate that the greater the motivation of the participant, the more they were able to employ strategies to counter demotivating experiences outside the classroom environment. However, the majority appeared less able or willing to counter the demotivation they experienced.

4.4. Classroom-related experiences

Interestingly, Vernon was the only participant to undertake classroom instruction who cited the degree of difficulty of learning Korean as a demotivating factor. Other factors related to his classroom-related experience, the most significant being the teaching methodology, curriculum and resources. Duncan and James recounted a similar pattern of complaint. James described his first formal Korean learning environment as "terrible", claiming that "learning for enjoyment was almost sucked out of it" due to the grammar/translation and audio-lingual,

teacher-centered methodology which he claimed denied the students opportunities for communicative practice, He added that "they say they are communicative, but we are sitting in a half circle" performing tasks which he believed were "completely devoid of context" such as students taking it in turns to construct sentences using assigned sentence patterns (Interview). Duncan's demotivation was also directly related to the teaching methodology:

> *She* [the teacher] *tried to go through the material so fast we could never consolidate the information. She was trying to do a semester's worth of language teaching in two months one evening a week, for two hours. It became overwhelming.* (Interview)

Duncan commented that "there were only four of us. We could easily [have] done some good role plays." Rather, he found "the listen, and repeat style of learning, here is a list of vocabulary and verbs. Go and learn it by next week" inappropriate and stopped attending the class. He then took lessons at a cultural center noting the teacher's emphasis on students "communicating together, playing different games and really trying to go through it at a good pace" (Interview). He still believed the lack of opportunities to use the language outside the lessons made it difficult for him to consolidate the learning and discontinued attending these lessons. Patricia believed the formal Korean taught in her class was inappropriate for her daily-life needs with James expressing frustration at classroom materials and tasks, particularly those related to the culture of the language, being taught:

> *If you are interested in the culture, you are more interested in the language itself.* [It] *is not Hanbok* [the traditional Korean dress]. *That's a small* [part] *of it.* [It] *is what I am talking about to some dude in the coffee shop* [or a] *businessman.* [It] *is what I see on TV, not* [a] *Buddhist lantern festival.* (Interview)

Robert and Vernon found the teacher's inappropriate actions demotivating and Robert, James, and Vernon identified other students as an issue. Vernon criticized the teacher's inability to control the class as some students would take away the focus of the lesson rendering the lesson "a waste of time." Additionally, in attempting to protect students' feelings, the teacher was reluctant to give necessary feedback in a class where the levels of the students ranged dramatically (Interview), the latter point also being made by Patricia. Robert stopped attending his Korean class because:

> *One of the young, American, males fancied the teacher. He monopolized her time. The people organizing it said: "Well, we can't do much about it. These two seem to be developing a relationship.* (Interview)

James' criticism of his fellow students centered around their perceived acceptance of a teaching methodology that he believed would have been more readily challenged

if it had not been for the reputation of the university they were studying at. "Because of expectations, a lot of students seriously believe that they are in a class for fifty minutes, even if they are sleeping. The class was tough. I learned something" (Interview). The cost of formal language classes was mentioned by John, Michael, and Patricia as a demotivator and that the times formal classes were offered was almost exclusively when participants were themselves teaching with John, Michael, Andy, Barry, Patricia, and Paul attributing these two issues as the most prohibitive regarding entering the Korean language classroom.

In summary, for all participants except James, their pre-actional intent to learn Korean was a secondary goal, if it was a goal at all, initially in response to living in a nation with its own national language, although in Sharon's case, Korean acquisition emerged as her primary goal in reaction to the growing realization that she was "going to retire here [South Korea]" (Interview). James' primary goal was characterized by a "steady chipping away at the mountain," only stopping due to financial issues (Interview). However, the situational demotivation he experienced during his first Korean-language class led him to discontinue studying there. How Sharon countered situational demotivation outside the classroom, and James did likewise inside, which is the subject of the next section.

4.5. Remotivation strategies

For Sharon, demotivating experiences were the linked lack of accommodation in daily life and the difficulty of gaining access beyond the peripheral to Korean-speaking communities as a non-native speaker. Additionally, the hierarchical nature of the language, particularly the honorific form, had led her, at times, to conclude that the "grammar issue had gotten too much." To counter the resulting demotivation and to remotivate herself, she would "take a break [and then] go back into it." "Eventually," she would buy some more Korean books and return to focused study on areas she believed she needed to improve upon. Able to "understand more," she became re-motivated after assimilating the necessary new learning by practicing it in her Korean communities (Interview). In this way, her reliance on books was gradually replaced by increasing Korean language use in daily life. However, she readily acknowledged the challenge of attempting to function in entirely Korean-speaking communities, particularly her Korean family and church "who sometimes forget that Korean is not my first language" (Interview). Finally, she took Korean proficiency tests to impose self-discipline, particularly regarding Korean grammar acquisition. To counter situational demotivation, she engaged in enjoyable L2 activities, including listening to Korean singers, watching Korean television and engaging in simpler conversations, such as gossip within her Korean communities. James also employed specific

strategies to counter situational demotivation experienced inside the class-room. Driven by a determination that "this language is not going to beat me," James, removed himself from his first Korean-learning environment to keep his L2 vision alive, enrolling at another university program which emphasized the use of contemporary Korean television shows for listening tasks, as opposed to his prior learning experience where the institution made "its own body of vide-otape." He still referred to the "boring materials being better, but not great". However, concluded that the teaching methodology at his second school was far more appropriate and communicative (Interview).

5. Discussion

Participants' experiences reflect that "people differ in how they can generate a successful possible self, which suggests that one of the main sources of the ab-sence of motivation in some learners is the lack of a properly developed self image and an ideal language self-component in particular" (Dörnyei & Ku-banyiova, 2014, p. 34). Due to their perceptions of their learning environments, most participants experienced weakened motivation or amotivation. Such learners, with little intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, were more likely to interpret their learning environment as demotivating due to an inability to interpret en-vironmental conditions positively (Kikuchi, 2015). Interestingly, while Sharon was able to manage episodic demotivation, she was reluctant to describe herself as a high-proficiency learner. As stated, such learners tend to attribute their de-motivation to external factors (Falout et al., 2009). Rather, she took action to remotivate her ideal L2 self by interpreting demotivating experiences reflec-tively. In so doing, she proves that not all lower-proficiency learners need rele-gate themselves to becoming trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of demotiva-tion and poor performance (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). This is because, alt-hough she did not label herself a lower proficiency learner, she was reluctant to be identified as a high proficiency learner. This also implies insufficient internal motivation among other self-studying Korean participants whose incidents of demotivation were in direct contrast to hers.

Turning to demotivation inside the classroom, Duncan and James were experienced career EFL teachers working in highly-prestigious Korean universi-ties in a major metropolitan center. The amotivation that resulted from Dun-can's belief that he was largely unable to use the Korean learnt in class in daily life and demotivation of James reflected the findings of Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014). These authors believe that a classroom methodology and management that continually deny participants the ability to link their current activity to their future L2 self-visions, particularly regarding "studenty" tasks, will result in demotivation

(Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 34). Also, highly-motivated students may withdraw from their classes if the teacher's sole focus on pragmatic delivery of the curriculum is too removed from students' imagined identities (Norton, 2000). Conversely, "communicative tasks – especially L2 films, music, food enable students to link classroom activities with their future L2 visions" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 107). Therefore, Duncan's decision to discontinue learning Korean after his demotivating classroom experiences may be indicative of a student without clear goals who more readily experienced demotivators (Kikuchi, 2009). His first formal Korean learning class experience largely demotivated him with its lack of communicative opportunities. While his second Korean class *did* offer these opportunities, he then attributed his demotivation to being unable to use the Korean he had learned there in daily life. This implies that, contrary to Duncan's interpretation, his experiences correspond to those of an unmotivated learner (Sakui & Cowie, 2012), as upon entering the language-learning classroom, he then attributed his pre-existing (albeit denied) lack of motivation to demotivating events experienced there and outside it.

Correspondingly, James's continued learning Korean in the formal language classroom implies that *despite* negative experiences, he remained less susceptible to them. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) found that such students were able to look beyond the negative aspects of their classroom learning experience as a "counterbalance" should their ideal-L2 self-visions not be realized (p. 114). However, little evidence supports James interpreting any such environmental factors positively or neutrally, which Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Kikuchi (2009) claim is possible. Rather, he attributed his demotivation externally to classroom-related issues, an action in keeping with that of a high proficiency learner. Not surprisingly, therefore, the demotivation he experienced concurs with the findings of previous studies of student demotivation. These include a lack of a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere, skilled teachers, and choice as the most important (Rudnai, 1996), and teachers' behaviors, attitudes, context, classroom format, and structure as the most significant (Gorham & Millette, 1997), as well as the monotony of lessons, unmotivated fellow classmates and particularly the "poor instructional approach that teachers used in the classroom" (Kikuchi, 2015, p. 59). While Duncan's criticisms partially mirror the six-factor demotivation model of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), they possibly more closely correspond to Kikuchi's (2015) revised four-factor model of demotivation comprising: (1) teacher behavior, (2) class environment, (3) experiences of difficulty, and (4) loss of interest. Duncan had no interest in test scores or acceptance by the teacher and his classmates which partially define the third demotivating factor of Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) model. However, the same authors note that while they expected teacher variables to be the strongest predictors of demotivating

experience, they proved to be on par with a cluster of more internal variables, a finding supported by Falout et al. (2009). As a learner with clear goals, it could be presumed that James would be able to look beyond the negative learning environment and remain focused on the learning, not the environmental conditions (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kikuchi, 2009), particularly as "*future-oriented* students who ascribe higher valence to goals in the distant future [are] more willing and resolute when engaging in non-interesting yet essential activities" (Dörnyei, Henry, & Muir, 2016, p. 29, emphasis original). However, since James left his first Korean language program, his experience contradicts this. Rather, his actions appeared to more closely reflect those of an individual Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) describe as able to address "real or imagined barriers head on" (p. 97). Ultimately, his response to his negative learning environment explains why he left his first Korean class over continuing to engage with the non-interesting behavior which was the source of his demotivation.

Additionally, neither James nor Duncan referred to a "low regard for English-speaking people" (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009, p. 61), which in this context would imply Koreans. It could be argued that with the exception of James, all participants who undertook Korean language classroom learning entered it with pre-existing demotivating experiences resulting from reduced self-confidence, largely due to experiences of failure (Dörnyei, 1998). For all other participants, except James and Paul, the most demotivating of these were the expressed, negative gatekeeping encounters they believed they had experienced, particularly repeated attempts to use Korean in daily life as L2 speakers of Korean as they were met with a lack of accommodation. The resulting demotivation and amotivation were largely attributed to not being understood due to their pronunciation. In addition, participants believed that Koreans in their communities (where possible) would prefer to use English. These experiences were then used to justify their resulting lack of motivation, with Vernon noting that "a demotivating factor is talking with other foreigners about the pointlessness of learning Korean" (Interview). For those at the actional stage of the process model of motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998) (no matter how briefly or regardless of level of commitment), it appears that upon contact with the L2, strong negative evaluative feelings, particularly towards the L2 and L2 community, affected participants' subsequent commitment to learn Korean, regardless of whether this contact was primarily in the classroom or in the broader sociocultural context. The externalizing of this demotivation was then used to rationalize their resulting lack of motivation to learn Korean internally. However, in light of this, it becomes questionable as to what degree participants possessed intrinsic motivation, self-determination and/or an L2 vision.

To conclude, only Sharon and James reactivated their demotivated Korean learning through activities which limited the motivational damage that they

were experiencing. "This process of affirming this sense of motivational autonomy becomes self-motivation, of *getting your motivation on line again*" (Ushioda, 1998, p. 86, emphasis original). Participants largely externalized their demotivation and amotivation to factors they believed they experienced in the classroom and beyond it, in daily life in South Korea. However, internal, or reactive demotivational factors may give a clearer indication of learning outcomes over the external experiences which more proficient learners are more likely to attribute their demotivation to (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). James and Sharon's respective interpretations of demotivation illustrate this point. After 16 years as a Korean-language classroom learner and the understandable outsider presumption that such commitment would have resulted in advanced-learner status and fluency, James still identified himself as an "upper intermediate" student. However, as a self-identifying high proficiency learner, he still externalized much of his demotivation: "By projecting the responsibility of their loss of motivation onto external causes, learners may be better able to limit the motivational damage and disassociate the negative effect they are currently experiencing from their own enduring motivation for wanting to learn the language" (Ushioda 1998, p. 86). By contrast, Sharon's experiences illustrate that with sufficient internal motivation, the need to attribute demotivation externally becomes increasingly redundant.

6. Conclusion

This study addressed the following research questions: (1) Which experiences demotivated participants once they had commenced learning Korean?; (2) Which specific experiences significantly diminished participants' continued behavioral intent?; and (3) What strategies did participants employ to remotivate themselves?

In addressing research question one, this study found that participants did exercise initial effort to learn Korean. However, they tended to lose learning motivation due to perceived negative experiences in and outside the classroom. Those that undertook Korean language classroom instruction attributed their resulting lack of motivation to classroom-related experiences and to pre-existing factors that they brought with them. These were the result of experiences of limited success, or failure, when having attempted to use Korean outside it or in response to methodological and teaching-related issues inside it. Also, their initial experiences in daily life in South Korea may have led them to believe that there was little need to learn Korean. This was reinforced by their perception that they were largely not accommodated as non-native speakers of the language and that the Korean desire to acquire English, or for fear of using it, resulted in their attempts to access Korean communities being discouraged, particularly in their LEC workplaces. The resulting strong, negative evaluative feelings did affect any subsequent

commitment to learn Korean inside or outside the classroom. Participants also regarded as demotivating the time and cost of learning Korean, the number of students, their behavior and methodological issues, including the materials, teaching approach, form of language taught and the range of levels in the same class. Turning to research question two, participants tended to lack sufficiently strong future L2 visions and were therefore relatively poorly equipped to deal with episodes of situational demotivation that inevitably accompany the ebbs and flows of L2 acquisition. To deflect this internal deficit, participants externally projected the attribution of their loss of motivation onto the negative gatekeeping encounters they experienced as non-native Korean speakers and in the language classroom to the teaching methodology and associated issues of classroom management. Turning to research question three, as negative evidence, Sharon and James were more able to counter the situational demotivation they experienced over other participants. For Sharon, this largely involved further noting the gaps in her Korean proficiency which motivated her to further succeed. She did this by committing to relevant self-study before attempting to re-enter her Korean communities with the renewed goal of achieving a deeper level of membership through her practice of Korean there. For James, this entailed removing himself from a demotivating formal classroom situation to one more suited to his needs. Interestingly, Sharon, who was reluctant to be identified as a high proficiency learner, was more successful in this endeavor than James.

In summary, from the perspectives recounted by participants, demotivation can be viewed as existing on a continuum. At one end, lack of motivation represents the culmination of multiple demotivating experiences which were then attributed to a lack of language-learning motivation. However, the degree to which this rationalizing may come from amotivated language learners implies a form of denial on the part of those participants. Conversely, depending on the strength of the individual's future L2 self-guide, while the motivated language learner may well also experience demotivating episodes, these individuals appear to be more able and willing to manage related situational demotivation. This study corroborates findings of the literature on demotivation that the teacher and classroom-related issues are the most demotivating for L2 learners and, in this case, closer contact with the L2 did not change much in this respect. Therefore, the demotivating factors and experiences learners bring with them to the classroom setting should not be overlooked as they can affect the resulting demotivation. For participants, these may be directly related to previous negative experiences with the L2 itself, the L2 community and negative perceptions of the culture of the host nation and/or the projection of a limited vision of an ideal L2 self onto these experiences. Finally, this study has shown that the more internally motivated learners may be, the less inclined they may be to externalize issues of demotivation.

This study is the first to examine how issues of unmotivation, demotivation, and amotivation impact on the willingness of English-speaking EFL instructors to invest in learning the Korean language. Considerable practical advantage would be gained by knowing why some learners are more able to manage demotivating episodes, while for others amotivation results. The degree to which participants' experiences are unique to South Korea or would be replicated in comparable scenarios is a question that further research could profitably explore, particularly in a globalizing world. However, it is also important to note this study's limitations. As a colleague of participants, the author's shared profile arguably created an empathetic and conducive atmosphere which may have influenced interviewees and therefore the interviews themselves. Further studies would benefit from analysis of a wider cohort's experience (in terms of employment), to be conducted in other host societies with small national languages by a researcher unknown to participants.

Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX

Questions for semi-structured, in-depth interviews of participants

1) How important, as a goal, is learning Korean to you? Why/why not?
2) Why did you start learning Korean?
3) If you have stopped learning Korean, why?
4) If you have continued learning Korean, why?
5) Is learning Korean something you have chosen to do, or do you feel it is something you ought to do?
6) Do you feel social pressure to learn Korean? If yes, where does that pressure come from?
7) Is learning Korean something you do for pleasure or a hobby or interest?
8) Is learning Korean something you do because you believe it may provide some external benefit(s) in your life now or in the future?
9) What might these external benefits be? Do they apply to you?
10) In terms of goal-setting now, in this situation of one-year renewable contracts in a globalized environment, does learning Korean have to compete with other goals?
11) If so, can you rank your short-term goals and long-term goals and place learning Korean in this context and explain why you ranked it where you did?
12) Have your short and long-term goals changed since arriving in Korea? If so, how and why?
13) It has also been said that students who have no clear internalized purpose (learning for enjoyment) and no strongly felt externalized reason to learn another language (expectation, how well this relates to your present and future goals) are unlikely to expend the effort required. Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?
14) Do you believe you have much control over your own level of functioning in your life? For example, in an unfamiliar setting, or environment, do you see the challenge of overcoming the obstacles in your path as something you can easily take in your stride, perhaps enjoy, or even find exciting, or, in such a situation, do you tend to feel burdened, or even overwhelmed?
15) Do you have a belief system about yourself regarding learning languages (e.g., age, aptitude)?
16) What is your expectation regarding learning Korean, e.g., do you anticipate success? Why/why not?
17) It has been said that goals that are hard and specific lead to the highest performance. To what extent would you agree/disagree? Do you feel that this 'principle' applies to learning Korean?
18) In terms of formal learning and/or classroom learning what obstacles have you experienced while learning Korean?
19) What obstacles, if any, have you experienced when trying to use or experiment with Korean outside the classroom, in daily life?
20) What other obstacles have you experienced while learning Korean?