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Contextual Factors that Enhance and Impair Directed Motivational Currents in Instructed L2 Classroom Settings

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Abstract: There is a growing interest in research on Directed Motivational Currents (DMC) that describes highly robust motivational surges in second/foreign language learning (L2). However, little is known about the validity of DMC as a construct in the Turkish EFL context. Besides, despite the alleged pedagogical significance of the construct, it still remains unexplored whether and to what extent the contextual factors in L2 classroom settings exert influence on DMC-type motivation. Against this background, the current study set out to meet two primary objectives: (1) to examine the contextual factors that affect learners' DMC-induced motivational trajectory either positively or negatively in L2 classrooms; (2) to provide further evidence on the validity of DMC model.To this end, the study utilized a database of four weeks of interview data collected from 2 focal EFL (English as a foreign language) learners, each studying in a different language classroom in a private university in Turkey. In total, 8 interviews were conducted. The interview data were examined using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.The findings show that DMC experience is enhanced and impaired by a wide range of micro-level factors in the classroom which could be examined under two main themes: classroom climate and exam pressure. Overall, the findings not only add to literature on the validity of DMC, but also offer implications for how to facilitate the pedagogical use of DMC-type motivation in language classrooms.

Anahtar sözcükler
İkinci dil öğrenme motivasyonu,
hedefli motivasyonel akımlar,
vizyon,
yabancı dil öğrenimi

İkinci Dil Öğrenimi Sınıf Ortamında Hedefli Motivasyonel Akımları Güçlendiren ve Zayıflatan Faktörler

Öz: İkinci/yabancı dil öğreniminde oldukça güçlü motivasyon dalgalarını niteleyen Hedefli Motivasyonel Akımlar modeline karşı artan bir araştırma ilgisi vardır. Ancak, modelin Türkiye bağlamında geçerliliğine ilişkin oldukça az bilgi bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, modelin iddia edilen pedagojik önemine karşın, sınıf ortamıyla alakalı bağlamsal faktörlerin bu motivasyon türünü etkileyip etkilemediği ya da ne ölçüde etkilediği henüz incelenmemiştir. Bu temelde, bu çalışmanın iki amacı vardır: (1) hedefli motivasyonel akımlar olarak tanımlanan motivasyon türünü deneyimleyen katılımcıların motivasyonel durumlarını sınıf ortamında olumlu ya da olumsuz etkileyen bağlamsal faktörleri araştırmak, (2) modelin geçerliliğine ilişkin ek kanıt sunmak. Bu amaçla çalışma, her biri Türkiyedeki özel bir üniversitede iki ayrı sınıfta İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen 2 öğrenciden 4 hafta boyunca toplanan mülakat verilerini kullanmaktadır. Toplamda 8 mülakat yapılmıştır. Veriler nitel içerik analizi ve tematik analiz yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Bulgular söz konusu motivasyon türünün sınıf ortamında sınıf iklimi ve sınav baskısı temaları altında incelenebilecek küçük çaplı birçok faktörden olumlu ve olumsuz anlamda etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Genel olarak, bulgular söz konusu motivasyon türünün geçerliliğine dair ek kanıt sunmakta, ayrıca bu motivasyon türünün dil sınıflarında pedagojik kullanımının kolaylaştırımasına ilişkin çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the landscape of second language acquisition (SLA) research has experienced a phase of transformation during which the focus has shifted towards studying the complex and multi-directional relations among a multitude of parameters in play. L2 motivation research is no exception to this socio-dynamic paradigm shift, and the current upward trend is to scrutinize the dynamic nature of L2motivational processes. In line with such advances, a group of studies published by Dörnyei and his team (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013; Dörnyei, Muir, & Ibrahim, 2014; Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015) have pioneered the introduction of 'Directed Motivational Currents' (DMC) to account for why some individuals at times find themselves in a unique state of concentration and productivity while engaging in a project which motivates them for weeks or even months.It is argued that understanding extremely powerful and goal-oriented motivational surges, namely DMC, is of great pedagogical value inasmuch as the core principles of DMC are in play for all the long-term motivational experiences. Accordingly, the outcomes from this line of research may open new avenues through which a much fuller understanding of how to sustain L2 motivation over time could be achieved.Considering the potential benefits, it would be useful to give further thought on this burgeoning area of research.

However, the major challenge now facing DMC research is the scant attention it has received from scholars thus far. The reason behind this lack of attention could be mainly attributed to the fact that research on DMC has begun only recently. In addition, another problem lies in the limited number of participants to be involved in research studies because of the rarely encountered nature of DMC phenomenon. It is because of these circumstances that there is still much room for progress in order to better capture the essence of DMC as a brand-new motivational construct. In particular, the DMC theory has been seldom studied in the Turkish EFL context and thus little is known about its validity in this setting. More notably, despite its alleged pedagogical significance, we have very limited guidance with respect to the practical application of the DMC model in language classrooms, and no study has yet been performed to clarify which contextual factors in instructed L2 classroom settings exert influence on DMC processes. This information can offer valuable insights into how language teachers can design instructional processes in a way that learners with DMC will get the maximum benefit from classroom teaching. In view of such considerations, the current study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on DMC by examining (a) the validity of the construct in the Turkish EFL context, and by exploring (b) the contextual factors that enhance and impair DMC-type motivation in instructed L2 classroom settings.

For the sake of explaining the characteristics of the phenomenon under inquiry, this paper starts by outlining what makes a directed motivational current. The paper then reviews the literature with a focus on highlighting the research gaps addressed in the current study, which is followed by methodological details. Next, findings are presented and discussed in light of our current knowledge. Finally, the paper concludes by suggesting implications for practice and giving directions for further research.

1.1. Hallmark features of DMC

The term "DMC" is used to characterize highly robust and productive motivational surges oriented to the achievement of a visionary objective. The presence of certain components is seen as essential for a fully-fledged DMC to set in motion. These main features are threefold: a) goal-orientedness, b) a salient facilitative pathway, and c) positive emotionality.

Central to DMC is the notion of vision. Vision has gained prominence recently as "one of the highest-order motivational forces" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 96), thereby serving as a unique source of motivational energy for the long-duration mission of mastering an L2. Obviously, the significance of vision in language learning lies in its capacity to provide a permanent "to-the-point" focus canalizing diverse factors down to a single ultimate goal. In this sense, the *goal-orientedness* aspect addresses the presence of a specific objective to which individuals are transported via the formidable energy of their motivational currents.

The initial energy created after the launch of DMC is sustained on the basis of a *salient facilitative pathway* that provides directional stability for the resulting motivational momentum. This pathway incorporates three main elements: 1) a clear start/end point, 2) regular progress checks, and 3) behavioral routines. First of all, a DMC springs out from a certain departure point when a multitude of interrelated cognitive, personal and time dimensions cluster in a cooperative and idiosyncratic manner (Dörnyei et al., 2015). In what follows, a set of proximal subgoals get involved in the process and the accomplishment of these short-term goals plays a pivotal role in scaffolding the subsequent progression. These proximal subgoals have a remarkable service for DMC in that they break the long-term progress into "digestible chunks," and the successful completion of such smaller steps serve as progress checkpoints which offer affirmative feedback on how strong the motivated behavior is sustained (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 100). Individuals caught up in DMC also take up new behavioral routines. These newly set behavior patterns become an integral element in the functioning of DMC and implemented without any conscious motivational processing.

As noted above, the completion of smaller tasks facilitates the mechanical automation of the overall motivational process. However, these subordinate activities are not necessarily carried out owing to their intrinsic enjoyment; but conversely, all relevant tasks to be performed are considered as rewarding in any case simply because "they *transport an individual toward a highly valued end-goal*" (Dörnyei, Henry,& Muir, 2016, p. 18, emphasis in original). In other words, continuous awareness of one's going in the right direction towards a target creates a positive affective reaction. It is the operation of this positive emotional loading that enables "mundane activities related to each subgoal to take on increased levels of significance, and for the strength of the overall vision to permeate throughout the entirety of the DMC" (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013, pp. 365-66). All in all, DMC represents a multivariate, highly intensive motivational process that encapsulates a set of defining features, the most distinctive ones are goal-orientedness, a salient facilitative pathway, and positive emotionality.

2. Literature Review

Very little research, to the best of our knowledge, has been published so far on DMC. However, previous work on the subject could be classified under three main headings. The first group of studies focuses primarily on producing empirical evidence for the validity of the proposed structure of the model. In a study conducted in Iranian context, for example, Zarrinabadi and Tavakoli (2017) assessed the validity of DMC as a construct in the cases of two highly motivated prospective EFL teachers.All defining characteristics of DMC were identified in the accounts of participants. In the same context, Safdari and Maftoon (2017) followed the same trend and provided empirical support for the validity of the construct by drawing on interview data from one focal participant.

The second group is concerned with analyzing the micro-level theoretical properties of the construct. To illustrate, Ibrahim (2016) set out to examine in detail the emergence of positive

emotionality within DMC, thereby aiming to highlight additional factors that could potentially stimulate a positive emotional loading during DMC processes. The desire for self-improvement and a sense of performing at a highly productive level were found to be the alternative sources of positive emotionality. In a later study, Ibrahim (2017) also provided an empirical analysis of the parameters triggering DMC. The study found that a vision-led goal and perceived feasibility are two essential prerequisites enabling a DMC to be set in motion. In the Turkish EFL context, Selçuk and Erten (2017) investigated patterns of change in the motivational and affective states of a learner caught up in DMC, and they sought to bring insights into the dynamic nature of the construct by adopting a dynamic systems perspective. They concluded that the pursuit of a visionary objective exerts a positive impact on the overall motivational performance of the learners.

The third line of research, on the other hand, aims at suggesting practical ways in which the pedagogical practices of DMC could be strengthened. This last strand includes only two published accounts. The first study is that of Watkins (2016) who made an attempt to shed light on whether it is possible to induce DMC by means of designing a focused curriculum around the hallmark features of DMC. The study was unable to reach definitive conclusions regarding the usefulness of a tailor-made curricular program in helping learners to get into a state of DMC. Following this, Ibrahim and Al-Hoorie (2018) explored possible ways of promoting the effectiveness of DMC group projects. The results showed that creating a group identity, finding the project as personally significant, and giving learners occasional opportunity to feel autonomous are three major parameters boosting the motivational power of DMC group projects.

Even if they do not fall into the scope of any of the above-mentioned research areas, two more studies are noteworthy. Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2017) investigated the orientations of Iranian EFL learners towards directed motivational currents with the purpose of validating the DMC Disposition Scale administered in the Ph.D. thesis of Muir (2016). The study explored to what extent participants' perceived level of DMC relates to their demographic features such as proficiency and education levels. The study revealed that BA and MA learners are more likely to experience DMC compared to those with lower-level educational background. More recently, Zarrinabadi, Ketabi, and Tavakoli (2019) co-authored a comprehensive book devoted to discussing the potential effects of DMC on learners' self-concept, self-confidence, autonomy, and willingness to communicate.

In sum, the studies reviewed so far provided important insights into our understanding of DMC. However, the above brief review indicates that the majority of the previous studies are limited in scope, and this line of research remains largely untapped in the Turkish EFL context. In addition, although DMC research is regarded to have great pedagogical value for language learning, prior work has largely failed to offer satisfactory insights into how we can facilitate the use of DMC-type motivation in language classrooms. In this regard, little research exists on the practical application of the model and much remains to be known about how DMC experiences are promoted and inhibited depending on context-related and situation-specific parameters in L2classrooms.Motivated by such considerations, the current study set out to meet two main objectives. First, it seeks to offer further evidence in support of the validity of DMC as a construct in the Turkish EFL context. Second, it aims to identify L2 classroom-related contextual factors that enhance or impair learners' DMC experience.

3. Method

3.1. Research Questions

The current project seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the core features of the motivational experience of the learners caught up in a directed motivational current?
2. Which contextual factors enhance and impair learners' DMC experience in instructed L2 classroom settings?

3.1. Research Design

In order to seek an answer to the formulated research questions, the current study utilized a qualitative case study approach based on a narrative interview design. By means of narrating their weekly motivational and demotivational experiences in the class, the participants presented a picture of how their DMC-type motivation was affected by such practices either positively or negatively. Arguably, DMC-related motivation may be influenced by a wide range of variables in classroom settings. Thus, drawing on personal stories is uniquely tailored to document such differential cases, most notably in that narratives allow researchers to participate in personal stories "as they are composed over time in relation with people or situations in a particular place or places" (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 439). In the words of Duff and Bell (2002, p. 209), narrative inquiry in particular "provide a window into people's beliefs and experiences" because even if such stories might be fictional in nature, they still display a story frame that a person possesses, which in turn enables "deeply hidden assumptions to surface." Given the above reasons, the current case study utilized oral narrative accounts of two focal EFL learners as a qualitative mode of inquiry.

3.2. Setting and Participants

This study was carried out at TED University over a four-week period during the fall semester of 2018-2019 academic year. TEDU is one of the private universities in Ankara, Turkey, using English as the medium of instruction. In this regard, all the students enrolled in a program at TEDU must have a certificate of proficiency showing that they have reached a sufficient level of proficiency in English. The students who lack an an appropriate score from a recognized standardized test of English proficiency (at least 79 from TOELF IBT and 6.5 from IELTS) are required to take English Proficiency Exam (EPE) administered by TEDU and score at least 75 out of 100 to become entitled to complete preparation classes and take departmental courses in their major study program.

In order to allow for a microanalytic inquiry at individual level, two focal EFL learners who are experiencing an identifiable DMC and currently studying at TED University English prep school were recruited for the study. A limit of two students was deemed sufficient because DMC is a rarely observed phenomenon, and thus even two DMC cases can highlight which contextual factors may potentially influence DMC processes in L2 classroom settings. The subjects were selected with purposeful sampling. Procedure and criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: In the first phase, five instructors from TEDU English Language School were contacted via e-mail, and they were given a brief description of DMC. In what follows, they were asked whether they have such DMC-experiencing students in their classes. After explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining a verbal consent to participate, each instructor, except for one, reported the names of two students, and the initial sample consisted of nine students. In the second phase, instructors who reported two student names were contacted again, and they were asked which student in the pair they give priority in terms of the intensity of their DMC experience. Accordingly, the initial sample decreased in number

from nine to five. In the third phase, of the initial cohort of five students, two subjects with elementary level were selected on the grounds that they are in the early stages of their L2 study and thus well-suited to experience an L2-related motivational current. The participants are introduced in the table below where pseudonyms are used to keep the identities secret.

Table 1
The profile of the participants

	Duygu	**Özge**
Gender	Female	Female
Age	19	19
Major area	Engineering Faculty (now at English prep school)	Architecture (now at English prep school)
L2 Experience	No English courses taken in the last two years. Two-week overseas Experience (Hungary).	No English courses taken in the last two years. No overseas experience.
DMC profile	**Vision:** To be able to speak English effectively in her social and academic life. **Behavioral routines**: Participation to office-hour sessions regularly, communication with native speakers of English. **Positive Emotionality:** Completing homework assignments with pleasure.	**Vision:** To be able to speak English effectively. **Behavioral routines:** Watching movies with English subtitles, reading articles and stories, doing translations. **Positive Emotionality**: Completing extracurricular tasks with pleasure.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Prior to undertaking the investigation, ethical clearance was obtained from TED University ethics commission, and the procedures of the study were approved. To begin the data collection process, the participants were sent an invitation via e-mail to take part in a series of four semi-structured interviews, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained. Within a four-week period, the participants were interviewed once a week individually, each with an average length of 15 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in Turkish and tape-recorded. The first rounds of interviews aimed at determining whether the cases are actually DMC or DMC-like, based on the criteria formulated by Dörnyei and his colleagues. Then, both participants were found to have an identifiable DMC. In the following stages of the interviews, the participants were questioned about which factors in the class influenced their DMC-related motivational experiences on weekly basis. The interviews were conducted in a retrospective manner at the end of each week on Fridays in order to capture the full scope of participants' weeklong motivational fluctuations. In order to identify the factors that cause a fluctuation in participants' perceived level of motivation, the following interview questions were addressed: How was your motivation during the week and why? How did you feel yourself? Can you please compare this week and the previous week in terms of your

motivation?Special care was also taken to ensure that the questions addressed during the interviews were neutral so that they would not lead participants to a particular answer.
In the first phase of the data analysis, each interview was verbatim transcribed into English, and the totality of the resulting transcription consisted of a corpus of 9466 words. In what follows, the data were first subjected to qualitative content analysis (Dörnyei, 2007) in order to seek answer for the first research question. After taking an in-depth look at the characteristics of two DMC cases under inquiry, the same database was then examined via inductive thematic analysis to address the second research question. By doing so, the aim was to cluster self-reported motivational and demotivational experiences of the participants into general defining themes. It goes without saying that any set of data may include deep level of information which is not stated explicitly and thus requires a more elaborate interpretation. In this regard, thematic analysis would be a reasonable approach to tackle this difficulty in that it lends itself to "identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas" (Namey, Guest, Thairu,& Johnson, 2008, p. 138). In addition, thematic analysis allows flexibility in terms of being conducted in inductive and deductive ways (Hayes, 1997). The inductive thematic analysis explores what is available in the data without following any preconceived agenda (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and is therefore particularly well-suited when there is no preexisting literature addressing the phenomenon under focus (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Given that there is no preliminary knowledge about which L2 in-class factors influence DMC experiences, qualitative investigation of this as yet unexplored topic utilized inductive thematic analysis which was guided by a well-established model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). In order to confirm the accuracy of the findings emerging from the analyses, an external expert researcher was asked to evaluate whether the interpretation of the data is accurate and complete. The report of the external researcher confirmed the legitimacy of the interpretations, thereby ensuring inter-rated reliability.

4. Results and Discussion

The next sub-sections will first summarize the core features of the DMC stories in focus and then present details about what kinds of in-class factors influenced these DMC experiences either positively or negatively. Demotivating and motivating factors emerging from the data will be presented under thematic categories. Before classifying self-reported demotivational and motivational experiences of the participants into thematic units, the researcher read the entire dataset repeatedly with a view to ensuring that the whole essence of the content was captured without failing to acknowledge any possible pattern. Meanwhile, the researcher also paid particular attention to regrouping overlapping patterns and eliminating those with ambiguous semantic category. In doing so, the aim was to confirm that resulting themes would be purely extracted from a dataset which coheres together.

4.1. The case of Duygu

First of all, the core characteristics of a DMC were identified in the case of Duygu. She reported that even if she had a deep interest in learning English since high school years, she had to give priority to other courses due to the pressure of the university entrance exam. She went on to say that her intense motivation manifested from the date she started English prep school at university. The vision of speaking English effectively in her social and professional life seems to be the driving force of her DMC. One particular point to be emphasized related to her vision is that she continuously made reference to speaking skills while explaining how willing she is to develop her English. It could, therefore, be argued that even a narrow-scoped vision pertaining to a single specific area in language learning could be intense enough to set a DMC in motion:

> One of my primary goals in life, after getting my life in order, is to travel the world. I am aware that I need to save to make my dream come true. But I think, what is more important is to develop my English, especially speaking, in order to communicate with foreign people there. There is no point of travelling the world and simply seeing attractive places without being able to express myself. (Interview 1)

The extract above shows that Duygu's intense learning experience with English is not simply derived from her passion to master spoken language. According to her perception, travelling around the world would not give pleasure to her unless she is unable to use English when needed. This implies that she considers learning English as a prerequisite and complementary to achieving her subordinate goals in other areas of her social life. This finding is consistent with that of Ibrahim (2017) who found that DMC goals may not be directly related to achieving a degree of proficiency in an L2, but rather related to achieving goals "for which learning an L2 was perceived as necessary" (p. 29). In addition, the passages below highlight the importance she attributes to English as an indispensable part of her academic development:

> I know that learning a language is very important, and I also know that English is a global language. Because of this and also because of the nature of my major area, I know that it is necessary for me to develop my English as much as possible, especially in terms of speaking. (Interview 1)

> I am not sure whether I can do it now, but I would like to do something related to my major area abroad after my graduation. This could be a master's study or attending a course. Thus, having good English is a must for this. I have the dream of speaking English fluently. (Interview 2)

The analysis also identified that the vision of Duygu is accompanied by a salient facilitative pathway loaded by a positive emotional perception. There were accounts showing that she started to engage in new behavioral routines, and she personally evaluated her progress through regular progress checks. The below excerpt is a good example of her changing routines because of DMC:

> The mother of one of my closest friends is African. I generally visit them, but in this process, I have started to visit them more frequently because they talk to each other in English all the time, and thus I am speaking English too.(Interview 4)

During the interviews, she also repeatedly said that she is attending office-hour sessions regularly at the school:

> We had an achievement exam, and after that, we attended the office-hour session because we had final exam next week. We thought that it could be better to start practicing.(Interview 3)

> On that day, there was supposed to be an office-hour session; we were planning to attend it. However, it was cancelled due to the program of our teacher. We felt sad and said, 'How come it was cancelled?'(Interview 4)

In almost every interview, there were signs of making progress with ease, without perceiving learning activities as challenging or hard to follow:

> But now, I study English willingly and with great pleasure, not because it is a responsibility. Whenever I do something related to English, I feel good, and this reflects on the other parts of my life as well. (Interview 1)

> We have online assignments to complete. There are certain dates on which they are opened. I try to complete all of them on the day they are opened. (Interview 3)

The passage below illustrates how she experiences a positive emotional loading, and how she checks her progress:

> I know it may sound odd, but I feel happy when we are assigned homework because I understand how much I have learned when I complete homework assignments. If I see that I am able to complete tasks, and I am able to give correct answers, I feel happy. I talk to myself and say that 'Yes, I am doing well.' (Interview 3)

One statement of Duygu was quite notable in terms of revealing the unique positive nature of DMC. This finding is also in line with those of previous studies (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2016) indicating that individuals who are captured by the unique motivational power of DMC generally apply to words implying excessiveness in order to explain the unique nature of their motivational experience:

> English makes me very happy. I feel as if I have moved to another planet. (Interview 1)

In sum, the overall DMC story of Duygu reveals that she is going through a DMC-induced motivational period. She has a salient vision of being able to speak English effectively in her social and academic life. This vision is accompanied by a facilitative pathway during which new behavioral patterns and vision-related tasks are carried out with ease, which fosters a positive emotional climate for sustaining motivational momentum.

4.2. The case of Özge

The self-reported DMC story of Özge includes the essential features of DMC. Notably, her motivational experience has several characteristics in common with the previous case. She stated that English has been a firm part of her life, and she has been interested in learning English since her childhood. Although her interaction with English was limited in the instructed learning setting of the high school, she still kept her interest alive through her own effort. In line with the case of Duygu, the DMC of Özge started after having started the prep school. It seems that what makes her DMC identifiable is the sociocultural environment of the university in which she has found a chance to prove herself:

> I speak more comfortably; I feel more confident after starting prep school. In the past, I was saying that 'Yes, I know English,' but no one believed me. Actually, there is no change in the way I love English, but the people around me, especially my friends, have started to realize that I know English. (Interview 1)

It is reasonable to assume that her sense of success and self-confidence grows stronger as she receives positive feedbacks from her immediate environment, which in turn promotes her

willingness as well as encourages her to use English. In a sense, she appears to regard knowing English as a tool to increase her social status. The paragraph that follows is her response to the question "How did you feel yourself when you received such positive comments from your surroundings?" and her response is particularly notable in terms of showing that the pursuit of self-actualization is an integral part of her DMC:

> I am proud of myself; there cannot be something more valuable than this. It has been almost three months since the prep school started, and now I am speaking English with my friends. I am speaking even with my family, even if they cannot understand me. I feel like I know something, and I prove myself. It gives me pleasure. (Interview 1)

As understood, speaking English is a way to satisfy her self-actualization needs, and thus she feels a heightened sense of self-realization. This point, however, is not something unexpected considering the essence of directed motivational currents. As noted by Dörnyei et al. (2016), there exists a specific type of goal uniquely gifted for creating motivational surges. It goes without saying that a truly internalized and personally significant goal is essential for such a prevailing sense of motivation to occur. This conceptualization fits well with the features of self-concordant goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), which refer to highly valued objectives to be met as a part of one's personal growth. In this regard, given that individuals with DMC are in search of goals "strongly linked to identities and to a sense of actualizing one's potential" (Henry, Davydenko, & Dörnyei, 2015, p. 332), the positive comments Özge received from her immediate environment as well as her efforts to show her speaking ability reinforce her existing self-identity. She becomes aware that she is able to put her self-capacity into practice, and the resulting personal pleasure creates a positive emotional climate. The excerpts below illustrate how she is making progress without perceiving the process to be demanding or boring:

> I have started to read books and academic articles. I do not understand everything but it is still pleasurable. (Interview 2)

> Sometimes, while reading articles or watching movies, I experience difficulty in understanding a whole sentence, but I notice some new grammar and sentence structures. This makes me happy. (Interview 2)

As implied by the accounts presented so far, the prominent feature of Özge's L2 vision, like Duygu, is to be able to speak English effectively. During the interviews, there were many accounts showing that speaking is the primary skill to be mastered for Özge:

> When I do not feel like studying, I say, 'let me open a cartoon film,'or I change the language of the TV channel into English in order to develop my pronunciation. I know that an English person will not talk to me like a Turkish person, piece by piece. I will miss some words. I am trying to get used to this. I am listening continuously because it is not possible to speak without listening. (Interview 3)

> There will not be a difference between me and a native speaker. I am so confident. (Interview 1)

As noted before, following the launch of a DMC, new behavioral routines go into operation, and they are performed without any volitional control. Such emergent behaviors too were

observed in the case of Özge. However, a major point worth noting is the distinctness of the activities she deals with. Interestingly, although having a salient vision related to achieving competency in spoken English, regular curricular activities are not of much interest to her. Instead, she is more interested in extra-curricular activities. As such, her behavioral routines mostly include out-of-school practices going beyond the scope of formal instructional tasks:

> I do not like doing homework unless I am instructed to do so. Instead, I like doing subsidiary activities such as watching movies, listening to music, reading something. For example, I hate presentation assignments because you are supposed to find information, you are trying to understand it and then translate into Turkish. It makes me sick, but actually, I am aware how beneficial it is. Similarly, I mostly do not complete vocabulary assignments as effectively as I do in the class (Interview 1)

> I was happy throughout the holiday; I was watching films with English subtitles and so forth. Everything was perfect until the day I started to come to school again. I do not care for school. (Interview 4)

The tendency of Özge to engage more in extracurricular practices raises an intriguing question regarding the idiosyncratic nature of DMC periods. Surprisingly, the accounts of Özge are suggestive of a link between prior learning habits and DMC, which is contrary to previous studies which have suggested that DMC brings along with it a new set of behavioral routines. It, therefore, seems fair to argue that learners undergoing a DMC process can still hold on to their earlier learning behaviors rather than totally engaging with newly set routines. A possible explanation for this tendency might be that because Özge maintained her passion to learn English with her own effort prior to the launch of her DMC; the formal instructional context of the prep school may not have captured her interest. This implies that previous learning experiences of the learners may subsequently influence their perception of DMC-related motivational activities.

Taken together, the data presented in this section contribute in several ways to our understanding of DMC. First of all, the data obtained from both of the participants are totally in accord with the hallmark features of DMC. The findings mirror those of the previous studies (e.g., Henry et al., 2015; Zarrinabadi & Tavakoli, 2017) and provide additional evidence for the validity of the construct. Perhaps the most interesting finding is that, as understood from the case of Duygu, learners can view DMC-related motivational activities as additional equipment to achieve certain social targets. In other words, no matter how strong or specific an L2 vision is, it could still be integrated with other coexisting social and individual objectives. Taking this into consideration, other sociocultural parameters may be of assistance in better understanding the functioning of DMC.

4.3. Contextual Factors influencing DMC

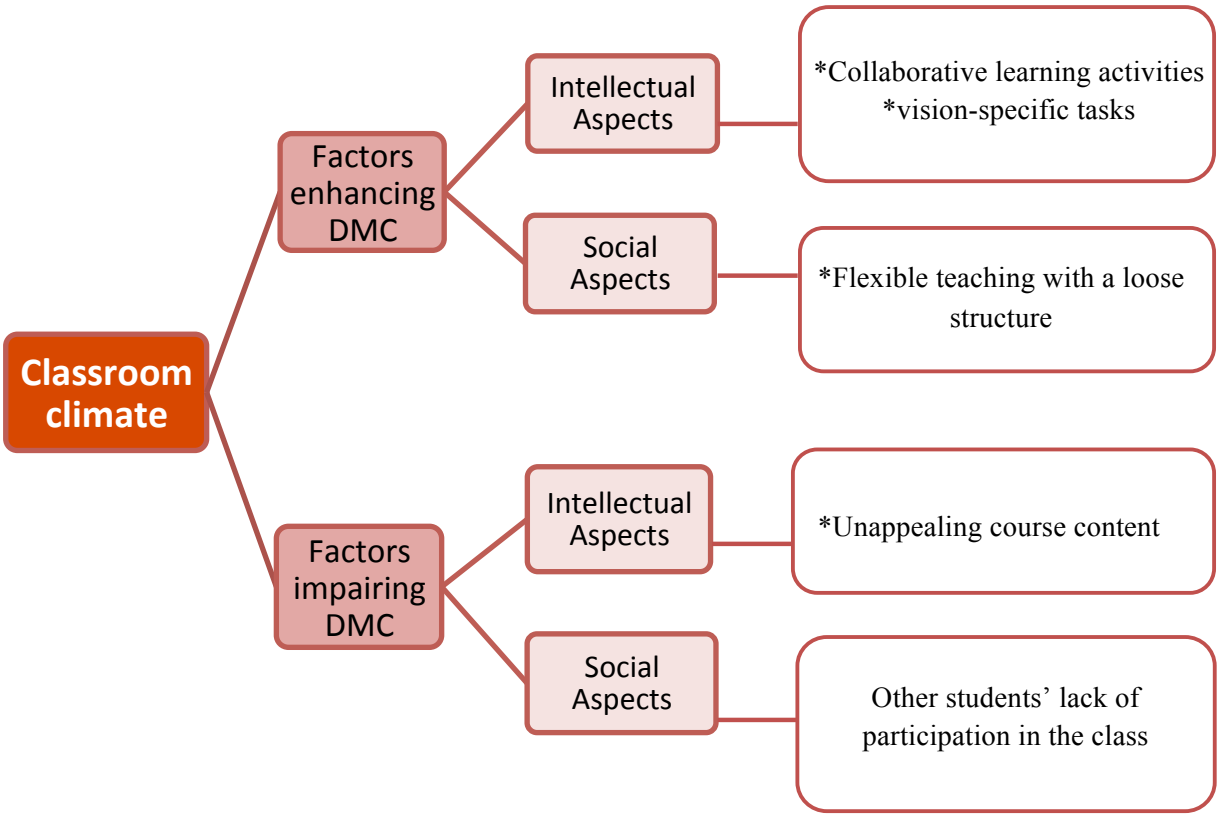
The results of the inductive thematic analysis revealed two major themes that have implications for the participants' DMC experiences. This part will provide an in-depth analysis of these themes with a focus on examining their related subheadings. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), it is not only important but also necessary to support themes with sufficient data extracts. Therefore, related interview excerpts were cited in reporting on findings. Meanwhile, special emphasis (italic text) has been put in some quotations by the researcher in an effort to highlight statements that are of particular relevance and significance.

Theme 1: Classroom Climate

Classroom climate emerged from the data as a salient theme. It was clear from the accounts of participants that the overall atmosphere of the classroom settings in which L2 learning takes place affects DMC-related motivational processes to a large extent. In this regard, both participants made reference many times to broad range of multi-level dynamics. The diagram below summarizes the micro-aspects of "classroom climate" as a major umbrella theme:

Figure 1

Micro-aspects of classroom climate as a major factor influencing DMC-type motivation.



As the diagram shows, classroom climate has a dual effect on the operation of DMC. Qualitative data revealed that sociodynamic relations in the class together with parameters pertaining to teaching processes are two predominant subcategories to which we can refer in discussing the potential role of classroom climate in enhancing or impairing DMC. The term "intellectual aspects"is used to denote any matters concerning instructional material used and practices applied in the class. "Social aspects"refer to personal and interpersonal issues relevant to the scope of the classroom setting. To begin with positive intellectual aspects, collaborative learning activities were reported to be more engaging and supportive of motivational growth.When asked to elaborate on the reasons for feeling well and productive during a regular class hour, Duygu often attributed her perceived effectiveness to the application of collaborative learning activities such as games and task-based practices:

> When we start a new unit, it means that we will learn new vocabulary. *I like learning vocabulary a lot because we are playing games in order to repeat the words. Following this, the teacher says that -I like this a lot- pair with anyone you want in the*

class and discuss the questions given on this page. In general, this is the part that I like most.(Duygu, Interview 2)

Despite feeling sick, my motivation was high on Thursday. I realized that I missed school so much. *We didspeaking practice in groups of three. Then, we repeated words with a game. After completing the game, we worked in groups and worked on how to develop this game. Then, each group gave suggestions. In general, the flow of the classes is the same, but the time passes quickly*. I think I am the only one in the class who thinks so. (Duygu, Interview 3)

On Monday, the classes were enjoyable, and the time went by quickly because *we practiced some good activities. We played games, and we practiced speaking. That's why I was energetic and enthusiastic.* (Duygu, Interview 2)

I like speaking a lot in general, and thus *I am trying to extend it as much as possible.* In addition, we had a writing task to complete. We worked in groups and prepared an advertisement brochure. Then, we presented our work in front of the class. *It was a bit difficult but enjoyable.*(Duygu, Interview 4)

As shown in the accounts of Duygu, collaborative practices enhance her enthusiasm and DMC-generated motivation level. It is worth noting that such practices are mostly carried out with a group, which implies that collaborative learning accelerates the motivational momentum of a DMC. The question then arises: On what grounds could we base this argument? In this manner,looking at the reported benefits of collaborative learning may help in offering a few convincing explanations. In their highly cited publication, Laal and Ghodsi (2012) concluded that Cooperative Learning (CL)leads to greater achievement and productivity.Likewise, a DMC by definition canalizes learners down to a single objective and thus pushes learners towards being achievement-oriented. With this in mind and given the benefits of CL identified above, one reasonable inference could be that the involvement of learners who experience DMC in collaborative environments leads them to feel a heightened sense of achievement. In such environments, learners have a chance to work in a mutually supportive and constructive manner, which in turn paves the way towards achieving more.Another potential reason lying behind Duygu's preference for collaborative tasks could be related to her vision to master spoken English. As already noted, a focus on speaking skills is the most salient aspect of her L2 vision. In this regard,CL provides her with an opportunity to foster oral communication skills since the success of a collaborative task depends heavily on the negotiation of meaning among participants. As is well-known, an effective group project entails the participation of each member in decision-making processes, during which the members look for ideas, exchange information and express their opinions. Arguably, this overall process not only promotes the social and interpersonal skills of Duygu but also improves her proficiency in oral communication.In a nutshell,an elevated sense of achievement and opportunities for improving communicative and interpersonal skills could account for why Duygu has a disposition which favors collaborative learning activities in the classroom.

As clearly highlighted in both Duygu and Özge's cases, vision-specific tasks, namely speaking practices, seem to be very prominent in boosting participants' attention, engagement and enthusiasm. Such a finding could be attributed to the fact that L2 vision of both Özge and Duygu is directly and specifically related to being able to communicate in the target language.

Arguably, this explains the reason why the participants have a general interest in communicative activities where they have an opportunity to practice spoken English. One possible interpretation is that an L2 vision, no matter how strong, can gain momentum only if nourished by relevant vision-specific learning practices.

As for positive social aspects of classroom climate, one major point is worthy of mention. It was revealed that providing greater flexibility on the part of teachers not only facilitates smooth and efficient lesson but also minimizes disruption of DMC. What is meant here by the term"flexibility" is related to a wide range of practices applied by the teacher. According to the reports of the participants, these practices involve occasional deviations from the predetermined flow of the course.

> I can say that I get on better with one of my teachers. We, as a whole class, get along fine with him because *we can interrupt the flow of the course and make jokes, or we can talk about out-of-class topics. Such things relieve some of my stress and refresh my mind to keep going.* (Duygu, Interview 2)

> The teacher mostly advocates a nonstop teaching style. *This is, of course, bothering everyone in the class and making us bored*. I don't feel like listening to the teacher. *I lose my concentration.* (Özge, Interview 3)

> For the last week, my level of enjoyment has changed between teachers. I don't know, I guess it is because of their teaching styles. With one teacher, we used to take classes in a stable manner. *We were doing just we were supposed to do. But now, the boot is on the other foot. The teacher who advocates this stable teaching style started to be more enjoyable. He is sometimes telling his stories or playing a film related to the course subject. I think this is more motivating.* (Duygu, Interview 4)

> On Thursday, *my motivation was at the top.* The teacher taught well. Everyone in the class listened to her closely. In the first 25 minutes, we repeated the previous unit about tourism, and in the remaining time, we talked about where and why we would like to visit. We had a nice conversation**.** *We are doing such opinion-sharing sessions from time to time. I think this is the way she chose to boost our motivation, and I think it works.* (Özge, Interview 2)

In terms of classroom teaching, both Özge and Duygu voiced their views in favor of teaching with a loose structure rather than following a tight schedule. They are instructed by three different teachers in a week, and notably, they have different judgments for each. It became evident that going on a teacher-driven formal learning pathway typically creates a sense of discomfort. On the other hand, loosely defined teaching procedures which provide room for individual autonomy and self-expression appear to be more supportive. In keeping with this finding, Ibrahim and Al-Hoorie (2018) found that giving learners autonomy to a certain extent while engaging in tasks could facilitate DMC group projects. At this point, it is worth remembering how motivational progress takes place in DMCin order to offer a reasonable explanation for this tendency. Muir and Dörnyei (2013) noted that a DMC is established on the basis of a powerful "self-propelling behavioral structure" (p. 369). As implied by the term "self-propelling," a DMC, in essence, does not require any external control and thus manifests itself in the form of a "personal journey that is central to the sense of self" (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 101). In the light of such arguments, it seems reasonable to argue that learners caught

up in a DMC feel disinclined or unable to stay focused on restrictive, linear and predetermined procedures set by third parties. Rather, they are disposed to engage in self-directed learning processes where they feel more autonomous and independent. This may arguably explain why Duygu and Özge look for opportunities to go beyond the formal ordinary scope of teaching processes in the classroom.

Let us now turn to the factors impairing the effectiveness of DMC processes. The comments of Özge implied that working on unappealing course content such as covering units which are of little interest disturbs concentration, and thus builds a downward motivational momentum. By referring to some specific subject matters, she explicitly said that topics of greater relevance serve a more useful purpose in increasing motivational gain. As noted below in the excerpts, the units such as "business" and "relationships" did not catch her interest:

> I find some units unnecessary. For example, we covered business, and we were supposed to do a writing exercise. But how can I write about business if I haven't started my business life? The units are not attention-grabbing. *There are specific units like business, and they are too boring. I want to cry.* (Özge, Interview 2)

> Today's topic was relationships. I said, 'what an earth is this!' It was absolutely silly. I couldn't apply myself to the class. *I did not feel like reading or listening to teacher. I felt bored all day.* (Özge, Interview 3)

In light of these findings, it seems fair to argue that learners caught up in a DMC are similar to other typical students in terms of showing tendency to favor the application of more attractive practices. This argument, however, casts some doubts on the premise that learners with a DMC perform every single activity with great pleasure no matter how boring they might be. In other words, although positive emotionality in DMC has been conceptualized as a unique sense of well-being carried on with strong persistency and consistency, the case of Özge produced evidence against this assertion. As noted above, engagement with topics perceived as irrelevant seems to come away with a negative feeling that gives rise to a considerable decrease in the level of motivation. Accordingly, it could be speculated that negative personal beliefs and ideas on course subjects may cause fluctuations in positive emotionality within DMC processes.

When it comes to social aspects influencing DMC negatively, the accounts of Duygu highlighted the potential influence of other classmates studied together in the class. As is well known, each classroom is a different socio-cultural environment in which students with different interests and from different backgrounds cluster together. Consequently, such a multifaceted environment not only makes it difficult for students to use their learning capacity at an optimum level but also raises particular difficulties for teachers in terms of integrating everyone actively in the teaching process. Consistent with this, interview data suggested that inadequate classroom participation of other students creates a barrier for learners with DMC to receiving optimal pleasure and benefit from instructional process, which in turn leads to disruption in their DMC experience. Quoted passages below demonstrate to what extent the attitudes of other class members impose limitations on the running of DMC:

> *When I see the lack of energy and the unwillingness of my classmates, I too start losing my motivation*. I am just listening to teacher, taking notes and feeling reluctant to answer questions. (Duygu, Interview 1)

> Our classroom climate is fine, but I would like others to be more interested. There are a few in the class who are detached from life. Instead, it would be better if the whole class becomes motivated, not just a few of us. I think our class has low motivation in general. *Sometimes, I feel alone and isolated.* (Duygu, Interview 2)

> Sometimes, the classes go too slowly; I mean the flow of the course. Sometimes, we create a good system in the class, and everyone immediately does what the teacher says. This being the case, the day passes by fast and with great pleasure. *On the other hand, sometimes everyone feels unwilling and bored. The teacher repeats something many times. Then, the classes go slowly, and I feel so bored.* (Duygu, Interview 3)

> To be honest, I would like to be in a different class because I think there are not as many uninterested students in other classes. *If I were in a different class, I could develop myself more.* (Duygu, Interview 4)

Previous arguments made to explain participants' tendency towards collaborative learning activities may possibly help in interpreting this finding too. As already discussed in detail, collaborative learning practices were found to accelerate the motivational momentum in DMC. In the same direction, we can postulate that active class participation of other students promotes a real sense of togetherness and collaboration, thus leading-learners with DMC to feel more productive, secured and supported. On the contrary, general lack of interest in the class triggers a feeling of isolation and separation. Taken together, the evidence provided is encouraging enough to conclude that an effective DMC process is impaired by inadequate interaction and exchange among class members. Having analyzed in detail the implications offered by the classroom climate, now it is time to move on the second theme: Exam pressure.

Theme 2: Exam Pressure

A further theme that emerged during the interviews was exam pressure. In accordance with the regulations of TEDU English prep school, students are supposed to take achievement exams at regular intervals. Then, the scores accumulated over time determine whether the students will pass to an upper level or continue studying at their current level. Given this, it is not surprising that exam pressure came out as an obvious phenomenon that has bearings on participants' overall motivational states. Both of the participants have voiced strong views and concerns regarding how exams contribute to their motivational development. However, one interesting point to be emphasized is that while Duygu has a positive attitude towards exams and thus feels more motivated to put effort in dealing with exam processes, Özge loses all her energy and interest once she has to study for an exam. The following excerpts illustrate the bilateral impact of the exams on the motivational cases of learners experiencing a DMC:

> During the classes, I am active; I am answering questions. But in exams, I say, 'I haven't seen any of these questions before.' *Then, I start to feel that I am not putting in enough effort, and I am not able to make progress. I feel a little bit teetered.* (Özge, Interview 1)

> How was this week? I am unhappy because I have an exam tomorrow. For example, we went to the library on Tuesday, but it didn't work. *I couldn't motivate myself. It is like torture to study for exams. I feel demoralized.* (Özge, Interview 2)

> In general, exams make me feel anxious because I have the fear of doing bad. I am doing good work during classes, I say, 'Yes, I am proficient in English.' *But when I have exams, the fear of failure grips me. My level of anxiety increases,* and I start make calculations as to how many points I need to gain in the following exams. *Then I start to feel reluctant during the classes. I wish exams were abolished.* (Özge, Interview 4)
>
> This week was quite fine. *As we have an exam on Thursday, I was extra motivated* and listened to the teacher more. (Duygu, Interview 2)
>
> Today, I was a little bit excited, but it was not negative. *I was highly motivated. It had to be so because we had an exam, and we had to focus on it.* (Duygu, Interview 3)
>
> This week was a little bit different. I felt sick, and thus I had no motivation, *but still, I was as motivated as possible on Monday because we had a writing exam.* (Duygu, Interview 4)

In the light of such conflicting findings, it is not easy to offer clear-cut explanations as to the role of exams in enhancing or impairing DMC; however, some tentative assumptions could be made. The case of Duyguseems to suggest that even if learners have a strong and specificL2 vision, they may still remain committed to meeting arduous and often unexciting demands arising out of the regulations of formal educational settings.Thus, learners who experience DMC may feel compelled to maximize their grades due to some practical reasons. The negative perception of Özge towards exams, on the other hand, is not something unexpected because it is not common to find learners who are in favor of exams. It appears that this well-established tradition is no exception even when it comes to learners with DMC. The underlying reason behindÖzge's lack of devotion for exams was revealed during the interviews. She often reported that she has the fear of scoring low on exams, and her anxiety level goes up dramatically when she is unable to score well.However, it could be speculated that what makes Özge demotivated is not the exams themselves. Rather,exams' potential hazard lies in their adverse impact on reducing self-confidence. As argued before, the positive feedback she gets from the environment raises her perseverance to put effort in learning English. In parallel, a feeling of anxiety originating from exams poses a potential impediment to her ideal L2 self-image,which in turn undermines her self-confidence and leads to avoidance behavior.

5. Conclusion

The aim of the current study was twofold: to provide further evidence on the validity of DMC as a construct and to make the first attempt to explore which contextual factors in instructed L2 classroom settings influence DMC-type motivation. First of all, the proposed structure of DMC was confirmed in the case of participants, thus yielding additional evidence on the validity of the construct. One interesting point to emphasize was that the findings suggested a possible link between former learning experiences and DMC. Whereas the preliminary works on the subject argue for the central role of newly set routines in sustaining DMC, this finding implies that earlier habitual practices may still be retained by individuals as an integral part of their DMC. However, more research needs to be undertaken before the association between background experiences and DMC is more clearly understood. Another significant outcome was the interaction between L2 vision and other coexisting social objectives. Thus, examining

the interaction of DMC with sociocultural parameters may be of assistance in better understanding what underlies the emergence of such motivational currents.

With respect to the factors enhancing and impairing DMC in instructed L2 classroom settings, classroom climate, and exam pressure emerged from the data as two major salient themes. In terms of classroom climate, employing collaborative learning activities such as games and task-based practices, applying practices specific to learners' L2 vision, and teachers' adopting a flexible teaching approach were found to be more engaging and motivating. On the other hand, unappealing course content along with general lack of classroom participation was reported to be draining and disruptive. As for exam pressure, it was found to have a dual impact. The case of Duygu showed that exams can bolster motivational progress of the learners caught up in a DMC. On the other hand, exam pressure revealed a demotivational power in the case of Özge. Based on these findings, it seems fair to postulate that DMC-type motivation is highly personal and typically dynamic in nature, which indicates an obvious need to analyze this idiosyncratic motivational experience through the lens of individual differences. Such a research focus can help shed light on individual-level variability in DMC and thus has the potential to inform which personal characteristics prove advantageous for a more productive DMC experience.

Based on the results obtained, some pedagogical implications could be drawn. The evidence from this study suggests that prior L2 learning experiences of learners should be valued and recognized when designing focused DMC interventions in language classrooms. Such a holistic approach, in turn, may help ensure an optimum motivational gain. Another possible implication is the need for giving particular emphasis on applying collaborative practices in the class. In general, it seems that such practices are more effective than individual learning in sustaining the motivational momentum in DMC. Thus, intentional use of collaborative games and task-based activities may prove to be useful in empowering L2 vision through creating an increased sense of achievement. The current study also highlights a need to define the scope of L2 visions that induce DMC. Judging from the findings, it appears that an L2 vision may relate to a specific language area such as achieving mastery in speaking. In this case, activities conducive to promoting learners' specific L2 vision bring more satisfaction and pleasure. With this in mind, designing tailor-made DMC group projects where learners who pursue similar L2 visions are gathered together in the same groups and work on vision-specific activities could facilitate progress towards approaching their vision. With regard to language teachers and practitioners, the results support the idea of avoiding an authoritarian teaching style in the class. It was revealed that providing occasional flexibility and planning courses in a way as to promote student autonomy has richer motivational value and prevents disruption in DMC. Furthermore, creating a positive, interactive and participatory classroom environment as well as utilizing attractive and engaging course materials seems to be supportive of DMC. When it comes to implications of formal exams administrated as part of instructional processes, it is hard to reach any clear-cut conclusions because the cases produced evidence for and against. Nonetheless, in terms of DMC group projects, it would be a reasonable approach to focus on overall progress made rather than simply assessing the final product.

Finally, a number of limitations need to be considered. The major limitation to be noted is that the current study is based on the self-reported accounts of participants. Accordingly, misleading responses may occur, for example, due to social-desirability bias. Another potential problem concerns the use of retrospective data which may suffer from recall bias.

Even if the participants were interviewed within a short interval of time, they may not accurately retrieve what happened in the past, or some details of the incidents may go unnoticed, which in turn may raise questions about the credibility of the findings. Given such considerations, the findings should be interpreted with caution. On the other hand, in the hope of producing more precise results, it would be a useful future step to use a triangulation of methodology by employing additional data collection sources such as classroom observation or learner diaries. Notwithstanding the potential shortfalls, the results make an important contribution to our current understanding by adding to literature on the validity of DMC as a novel strand. More to the point, the current study takes the first crucial step in providing empirical evidence regarding which contextual factors enhance and impair directed motivational currents in instructed L2 classroom settings. Future research could extend the findings of this study by investigating in what way(s) EFL and ESL classroom settings differ in their degree of influence on learners' DMC experience. Furthermore, another possible area of future research would be to examine which assessment policy is more convenient in scaffolding DMC-type motivation.

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