Iranian EFL Teachers' Remotivational Strategies: The Integration of Ecological Systems Theory and Self-Determination Theory

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Abstract

This study investigated Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' remotivational strategies drawing on an integrative framework encompassing Ecological Systems Theory (EST) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). In this framework, the four EST layers consisting of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem and the three related aspects of SDT, including autonomy, relatedness, and competence, were integrated to unravel teachers' remotivational strategies. The participants included 32 Iranian EFL teachers teaching at six language institutes in Isfahan and Hamedan provinces in Iran. The data were collected via conducting semi-structured interviews. The results of a thematic analysis indicated that Iranian EFL teachers' remotivational strategies were embedded in the four EST layers consisting of the immediate classroom setting, situations beyond the immediate setting, the linkages and processes taking place between the settings, and the manifestation of a particular subculture. Moreover, the results revealed that teachers' remotivational strategies were also situated within the three SDT aspects, including autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Overall, the results of thematic analysis led to the emergence of various themes positioned in the four layers of EST, while such themes conceptually fit the three aspects of SDT. The results provide EFL teachers and teacher educators with awareness concerning how remotivational strategies are nested across multiple systems while simultaneously being informed by a certain motivation-specific theory.

Keywords: Motivation, Remotivation, Remotivational Strategies, EST, SDT

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Motivation is a significant factor in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Highlighting the significance of motivation, Dörnyei (2001) contends that motivation is the driving force behind SLA and is considered an integral aspect of language learning. A review of the literature indicates that the centrality of motivation in language learning has been reiterated in numerous investigations (e.g., Al-Hoorie et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021; Darvin & Norton, 2021; Ghasemi, 2021; Mohammadzadeh & Alavinia, 2021; Namaziandost et al., 2021; Norouzifard et al., 2021; Safdari, 2019) and this construct has been explored from different perspectives so far. Although motivation and maintaining it are integral factors in the SLA process, the results of previous studies (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998; Falout et al., 2009; Sun, 2018; Wang & Littlewood, 2021; Wu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020) reveal that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners sometimes become demotivated during the SLA process. Therefore, it is of high importance that EFL teachers adopt strategies to remotivate learners (Albalawi & Al-Hoorie, 2021).

Jung (2011) characterizes remotivational strategies as measures taken by teachers to remotivate those learners who have lost their motivation in the process of language learning. A review of previous investigations demonstrates that remotivational strategies have been explored mainly from learners' perspectives (e.g., Cho, 2014; Falout, 2012; Song & Kim, 2017; Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Ushioda, 2001; Wang & Littlewood, 2021). Comparatively, however, remotivational strategies from teachers' perspectives have not been subject to sufficient investigation. Moreover, the review of previous research indicates that in none of the previous extant studies, remotivational strategies have been investigated via the lens of either an Ecological Systems Theory (EST) and/or Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

Since motivation is a highly complex construct (Dörnyei, 2020), investigation into motivation and other motivation-related constructs should be done via a lens that can capture the associated complexities involved (Ushioda, 2020). Reiterating the multifaceted and complex nature of motivation, King (2021) maintains that since motivation is a multidimensional psychological process, any investigation into motivation entails frameworks capable of incorporating the multifaceted and complex nature of this construct. Therefore, in the present study, we decided to draw on SDT as the motivation-specific theory to guide us in terms of different aspects of remotivational strategies and use EST to assist us in identifying as many facets as possible related to remotivational

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strategies. In essence, via the integration of SDT and EST, a more comprehensive picture of teachers' remotivational strategies can be provided.

Literature Review

Motivation

Decidedly, motivation lies at the heart of the language learning process as it is a pivotal factor in gaining mastery over a second or foreign language (Dörnyei, 2020; Ushioda, 2020). The abundant number of recent investigations into motivation both in the international context of English Language Teaching (e.g., Al-Hoorie et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021; Darvin & Norton, 2021) and the Iranian ELT setting (e.g., Bagheri et al., 2009; Ghasemi, 2021; Mohammadzadeh & Alavinia, 2021; Namaziandost et al., 2021; Rashidi et al., 2013; Safdari, 2019) is a confirmation seal on the centrality of motivation in ELT contexts. Scholars in the field of motivation (e.g., Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 1998; Noels et al., 1999; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) unanimously assert that motivation is a vital factor for L2 learning since it influences different aspects of L2 development. Along the same lines, highlighting the centrality of motivation, Lifrieri (2005) notes, "when asked about the factors which influence individual levels of success in any activity – such as language learning – most people would certainly mention motivation among them" (p. 4).

So far, different scholars have proposed various definitions for motivation. As Gardner (1999) contends, motivation is defined as the learner's alignment with the goal to learn a target language. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivational psychology is about covert psychological processes that are supposed to explain which behavior or action an individual performs at each moment in time, which is the opening and persistence of a planned, goal-directed activity. McDonough (2007) views motivation as the driver of human action for a special purpose. As Dornyei (2001) maintains, motivation is regarded as a salient factor responsible for "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it" (p. 8). In defining motivation, Nakata (2006) highlights the interconnection of motivation with perceptions, feelings, emotions, and the situation. Along the same lines, McIntyre (2002) contends that motivation and emotion are strongly interrelated.

Motivation has so far been investigated from different perspectives in the realm of English language teaching. A review of the literature indicates that motivation has been explored in relation with self-regulated learning strategy use and EFL writing (Guo &

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Bai, 2022), skills and attitudes with drama-based activities and Facebook (Wongsa & Son, 2022), flipped teaching and writing (e.g., Chen et al., 2020; Mirzaei et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2020), cooperative learning and achievement (Bećirović et al., 2022), and changes in EFL learners' motivation (Üstünbaş et al., 2022). Such bulk of recent investigations highlights the pivotal role of motivation in the realm of EFL learning. Along the same lines and substantiating the utmost importance of motivation, researchers have found that a great number of English language learners believe that their lack of success in learning ESL/EFL is rooted in demotivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Falout et al., 2009; Hu, 2011; Kim, 2009). This fact has made many researchers (e.g., Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Moiinvaziri & Razmjoo, 2014; Noels et al., 1999; Pae, 2008; Ramage, 1990) attempt to identify the sources of demotivation among second language learners in order to motivate demotivated learners. Therefore, although insight into the sources of demotivation is a great help in removing the obstacles to motivation, the practical ways or intervening strategies to remotivate learners are also pivotal (Sato & Csizér, 2021).

Remotivational Strategies

Remotivational strategies refer to those specific steps teachers take to help learners become motivated again (Jung, 2011). In today's educational programs, assisting demotivated learners in becoming motivated again is an important aspect, and consequently, teachers should accommodate remotivational strategies in their teaching (Ghasemi, 2021). Awareness about the strategies to remotivate learners can assist teachers to help demotivated learners systematically and, thus, pave the way for taking appropriate measures in dealing with those EFL learners who have lost their motivation during the course of language learning (Falout, 2012). Therefore, researchers (e.g., Falout, 2012; Falout et al., 2013; Jung, 2011; Sahragard & Ansaripour, 2014; Song & Kim, 2017) have realized that it is vital to investigate teachers' remotivational strategies.

As a review of the previous studies (e.g., Alrabai, 2017; Alshehri, 2017; Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2015; Falout, 2012; Glas, 2015; Guilloteaux, 2013; Lamb et al., 2017; Munoz & Ramirez, 2016; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012) indicates, motivational strategies have already been investigated from both teachers' and learners' perspectives. Quite recently, motivational strategies have been explored in relation with teachers' pedagogical intentions (Yang & Sanchez, 2021), language learning strategies, and literal and inferential comprehension (Lin, Lam, & Tse, 2021), the feasibility of motivational

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strategies (Tim et al., 2021), and EFL teachers' perceptions on the motivational strategies for successful online learning environment (Abdemahdi Hazaymeh, 2022).

However, as Maeng and Lee (2017) maintain, while studies have investigated the role of motivation in learning and teaching, more research on teachers' motivational strategies is required. Moreover, although several studies have investigated motivational strategies, the area of teachers' remotivational strategies is quite underexplored. Furthermore, none of the previous investigations have explored teachers' remotivational strategies from an integrated perspective encompassing the EST and SDT. Remotivational strategies have their roots in the construct of motivation and motivation, and any motivation-related construct, i.e., remotivation is a complex and multifaceted construct. Thus, exploring the remotivational strategies necessitates an integrated framework in which different motivational ecological factors are acknowledged, and a more holistic and inclusive picture of motivation and, consequently, remotivational strategies is provided (King, 2021).

Ecological Systems Theory (EST)

Based on the ecological approach to L2 learning, the association between individuals' cognitive processes and their physical and social experiences is considered (Leather & Van Dam, 2003). Such a perspective seeks to shed light on the possible relations between each component in a context, focusing on the role of context in the individual learner's development (Cao, 2009). Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1979) looks at human development from an ecological perspective, claiming that both person and environment make important contributions to development. Following the introduction of EST by Bronfenbrenner (1979), many research studies have so far been carried out in L2 learning from an EST perspective. Quite recently, there has been an increase in ecological research on language classrooms (e.g., Cao, 2011; Chong, 2021; Gadella Kamstra, 2021; Peng, 2012; Shirvan et al., 2021; Zhang & Modehiran, 2021).

The ecological approach postulated by Bronfenbrenner (1979) examines human development based on ecosystems, which are comprised of four layers: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. As the innermost layer, the microsystem has to do with the immediate setting where the person is undergoing development. There is a close relationship between this layer and face-to-face interaction among persons and objects in the immediate situation. The mesosystem is concerned with a setting where the developing person is in situations beyond the immediate setting. The exosystem has to do

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with the linkages and processes occurring between two or more settings, with one of them lacking the developing person; however, the events take place here that indirectly influence processes in an individual's immediate setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Finally, the macrosystem contains micro-, meso-, and exosystems as a reflection of a culture or subculture.

Self-determination Theory (SDT)

While an ecological perspective highlights the role of the context in human development (Cao, 2009), motivation as a psychological construct can be better investigated if situated within a motivation-specific theory such as SDT (Jiang & Zhang, 2021). SDT has so far been adopted in many recent investigations (e.g., Garhani & Supriyono, 2021; Gil-Píriz et al., 2021; Jiang & Zhang, 2021; Khajavy et al., 2016; Printer, 2021) to address motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced SDT as a heuristic theoretical framework through which one can investigate motivated behavior in different contexts (e.g., university, school settings, etc.). SDT holds that we seek to meet three innate psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. There is a positive correlation between the satisfaction of these needs and high motivation, participation, well-being, and adaptive functioning. On the contrary, suppressing these needs can damage people's psychological well-being, bringing about negative feelings, low motivation, and maladaptive functioning (e.g., Cheon & Reeve, 2015). According to Gil-Píriz et al. (2021), SDT indicates the extent to which people do actions reflectively, participating in actions with a sense of agency. Based on the SDT model of change, autonomy contributes to facilitating an augmented sense of competence, yet competence is not adequate to guarantee change or adherence. Rather, competence should be related to a higher level of autonomy. Moreover, given the idea that we have the universal urge to engage, social environments may positively impact relatedness (such as a sense of belonging) or negatively influence growth and integration (Rosenkranz et al., 2015).

In line with SDT theory, Noels et al. (2000) differentiate among three kinds of extrinsic motivation: external, introjected, and identified regulation. The latter, as the least self-determined type of motivation, is related to activities external to the individual (e.g., tangible benefits). The second kind of motivation, as an internal one, is introjected regulation. It is concerned with performing an activity driven by internal pressure, such as keeping face value or enhancing one's ego. Identified regulation is considered the most self-regulated type of extrinsic motivation; learners do an action because of personal

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motives and a desire to obtain a valued goal. Noels et al. state that learners who lack an intrinsic and extrinsic reason to perform an action have no motivation and will quit the learning activity as soon as possible.

Notwithstanding the centrality of motivation and, consequently, the paramount importance of remotivational strategies, a review of previous explorations reveals that few investigations have examined Iranian EFL teachers' remotivational strategies via the integration of EST and SDT. Therefore, to fill the gap in the empirical literature and shed light on the complexities associated with remotivational strategies, the current study aimed to explore the strategies Iranian EFL teachers perceive to use to remotivate Iranian EFL learners through adopting an EST-SDT integrated framework.

Research Question

This study aimed to answer the following research question:

RQ: What strategies do Iranian EFL teachers perceive to use to remotivate Iranian EFL learners?

Method

Design

The design of the current study was informed partially by grounded theory in that while in pure grounded theory, there is not a firmly established framework prior to starting the investigation, in the current study, the interview questions were conceptually rooted in EST and SDT. Thus, in this study, an integrative qualitative design was adopted. In other words, initially, the interview questions were developed based on the study's conceptual framework, and then through the data analyses, the existing themes in the data emerged.

Participants

The participants included 32 Iranian EFL teachers teaching at six language institutes in Isfahan and Hamedan provinces in Iran. Of the 32 teachers, 17 were female, and 15 were male. The teachers were within the age range of 26 to 45 (M=34). They had different levels of teaching experience from three to 15 years (M=9.5). The teachers were selected based on convenience sampling due to availability reasons. Out of the 32 teachers, 17 were B.A. holders, 13 were M.A. holders, and two were Ph.D. holders in TEFL. Table 1 displays the demographic information of the participants.

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Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Participants

Category	Subcategory	Number
Gender	Female	17
	Male	15
	Total	32
Age	Between 26 to 30	16
	Between 30 to 38	10
	Between 38 to 45	6
	Total	32
Teaching Experience	Between 3 to 5 years	15
	Between 5 to 12 years	15
	Between 12 to 15 years	2
	Total	32
Academic Degrees	B.A. in Teaching English	10
	B.A. in Other Fields	8
	M.A. in Teaching English	10
	M.A. in Other Fields	3
	Ph.D. in TEFL	1
	Total	32

Instruments

The instrument used in the current study was a semi-structured interview which is explained in detail below.

Semi-structured Interview

To seek the strategies Iranian EFL teachers perceive to use to remotivate Iranian EFL learners, the participants were interviewed using a set of semi-structured interview questions. To come up with the interview questions, the researchers initially reviewed the literature related to remotivational strategies and based on the previous literature (e.g., Falout, 2012; Falout et al., 2013; Jung, 2011; Sahragard & Ansaripour, 2014; Song & Kim, 2017) wrote the initial questions. Following that, because the study's theoretical framework entailed the integration of EST and SDT, the questions were modified and situated within such a framework to accommodate both EST and SDT perspectives. The final list of questions included 9 questions (See Appendix) in which the first two questions addressed remotivational strategies from a general perspective to help set the stage for the whole interview process. Questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 addressed the EST perspectives in regard to remotivational strategies and the last three questions tapped into teachers' perceptions of remotivational strategies via an SDT lens. It should be noted that the

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interviews in the present study were of a semi-structured type. Thus, the questions developed were just used for initiating the interview process as the interview was conducted dialogically (Brown & Danaher, 2017).

Data Collection Procedure

The initial phase of the present study was developing the semi-structured interview questions. The questions were developed based on the available literature and later revised to fit the integrated theoretical framework adopted for the study. Then, 32 teachers who had given their consent to participate in the study were contacted via phone, and the timing of interview sessions was arranged. The duration of the interviews was within the range of 45 minutes to 1.5 hours.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Persian, the teachers' mother tongue. The reason behind using participants' mother tongue was that they felt more convenient with Persian than English as they could express their perceptions without the possible hindrance caused by a second language. Note should be taken that although the participants were English teachers and speculatively had a satisfactory level of English language proficiency, the researcher gave them the choice of either of the two languages for the interview process, and all the participants selected their mother tongue. The interview contents were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for content analysis. The excerpts reported in the current manuscript are the translated versions from Persian into English. To establish trustworthiness as a main step in qualitative research, the researcher used member checking to validate the responses in line with Merriam (1997). To establish credibility, the researcher and a research assistant with a Ph.D. degree in applied linguistics independently categorized the data. Following that, the degree of agreement was calculated based on Holsti's (1969) coefficient of reliability. The value turned out to be 0.89, indicating an excellent level of consistency regarding categorization.

To analyze the data, the researcher drew on content analysis procedures proposed by Auerback and Silverstein (2003). According to Auerback and Silverstein (2003), six stages should be observed for analyzing qualitative data. These stages are: getting familiar with the data, coming up with initial codes, looking for themes among codes, reviewing the themes, defining and labeling the themes, and producing the final report. All the six stages were followed to analyze the data.

Results

In this section, the results of the data analysis are reported. To this end, the results of the study are presented by dividing the data analysis section into four major sub-sections encompassing the four layers of EST: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Moreover, in reporting the results in each of these four sub-sections, the three main related facets of SDT, including autonomy, relatedness, and competence, are also incorporated.

Microsystem

The microsystem layer of EST refers to the immediate classroom setting and the individuals and objects in that immediate context. Table 2 demonstrates the results of thematic analysis for the microsystem layer of EST and the three facets of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Table 2.
Results of Thematic Analysis for the Microsystem Layer of EST and the Three Facets of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence

	Autonomy	Relatedness	Competence
Theme 1	Learner control	Encouraging learners to cooperate in learning.	Encouraging learners to self-assess themselves.
Theme 2	Encouraging learners to voice their needs and wants.	Asking learners to respect each other's opinions.	Encouraging learners to compare their performance with others.
Theme 3		Teaching learners to empathize with other classmates.	Complementing learners who have good performance.

As indicated in Table 2, learner control and encouraging learners to voice their personal opinions are the two themes in the microsystem layer of EST related to autonomy.

Regarding learner control, one of the participants commented:

To remotivate learners, I sometimes ask them to select the materials themselves. I think giving the learners some level of control regarding the instructional materials is really helpful in motivating them. Some learners may find the instructional materials boring, contributing to a loss of motivation. Therefore, I believe providing learners with choices concerning instructional materials can assist them in regaining their motivation.

With regard to encouraging learners to voice their needs and wants, one of the participants noted:

I always respect learners' voices as I think teaching should be more centered around students' learning than teachers' teaching. To help learners express their concerns, I always encourage them to talk about their personal views towards the whole learning and everything related to that. I know that sometimes learners may lose their motivation because their personal concerns are disregarded in the teaching and learning process. So I always make sure to help them express their personal viewpoints and accommodate such personal viewpoints in the teaching and learning process to the extent possible.

As shown in Table 2, encouraging learners to cooperate in learning, asking learners to respect each other's opinions, and teaching learners to empathize with other classmates are the three themes in the microsystem layer of EST pertinent to relatedness.

With respect to encouraging learners to cooperate in learning, one of the teachers contended that:

Because I think human beings are social creatures, and learning is a social event; therefore, if learners cooperate with one another, it helps them become more motivated. I have noticed this a lot in my teaching on a regular basis. I think learners sometimes lose their motivation since they do a lot of individual activities and when I include cooperative activities, I always can see that they become more motivated to participate in learning activities.

As presented in Table 2, encouraging learners to self-assess themselves, comparing their performance with others, and complementing learners who have good performance are the three themes in the microsystem layer of EST relevant to competence.

As for encouraging learners to self-assess themselves, one of the teachers noted:

Some learners sometimes forget how much they have progressed along the language learning route. In fact, they think that they are not making any progress at all. It is sometimes because they do not assess themselves to see the bits and pieces they are regularly learning. So, I always encourage them to have checklists to assess their progress with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects of

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language to help them become motivated if they have lost their motivation. I think it is very important for learners to see how far they have progressed.

It should be noted that there might be some inherent level of overlap between and among the extracted themes. For instance, encouraging learners to self-assess themselves can also fit autonomy as self-assessment can contribute to learners' autonomy. However, since self-assessment is more closely related to learners' competence, thus it has been categorized under competence.

Mesosystem

The EST mesosystem layer refers to examining situations beyond the immediate setting as related to the developing person. Thus, at this level, the developing individual is not directly the focus of attention, and the situations beyond that are of concern. For instance, the social relations between the teacher and colleagues, which influence learners' development in one way or another, are important. Table 3 shows the results of the thematic analysis for the mesosystem layer of EST and the three facets of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Table 3

Results of Thematic Analysis for the Mesosystem Layer of EST and the Three Facets of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence

	Autonomy	Relatedness	Competence
Theme 1	Enquiring the supervisor about the ways learner control can be prompted.	Seeking colleagues' advice concerning the improvement of interpersonal relationships between learners.	Seeking more experienced teachers' expertise in learners' self-assessment techniques.
Theme 2	Asking other teachers about how they acknowledge learners' preferences.	Asking the board of managers to hold sessions on how to cultivate rapport among learners.	Asking the board of education to hold sessions on self-assessment.

As demonstrated in Table 3, enquiring the supervisor about how learner control can be prompted and asking other teachers how they acknowledge learners' preferences are the two themes in the mesosystem layer of EST related to autonomy.

With respect to enquiring the supervisor about the ways learner control can be prompted, one of the teachers said:

I always go to the supervisor for advice when it comes to motivation, as I know motivation is an important factor in learning. I sometimes ask the supervisor about

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what we can do to give learners some control in the learning and teaching process. I am sure that when I gain help for this issue from the supervisor, he can give me valuable tips which I can use to assist my students in regaining their motivation.

As noticed in Table 3, seeking colleagues' advice concerning improving interpersonal relationships between learners, and asking the board of managers to hold sessions on how to cultivate rapport among learners are the two themes in the mesosystem layer of EST pertinent to relatedness.

With regard to seeking colleagues' advice concerning the improvement of interpersonal relationships between learners, one of the teachers held that:

I know that my colleagues have a lot of experience related to enhancing interpersonal relationships among learners. I know this is very important to create and maintain interpersonal relationships among learners since it helps them become motivated. So, I usually ask my colleagues for tips on this issue. They usually provide interesting tips. For instance, one of the tips I was given by an experienced colleague was asking learners to make a list of positive features about their classmates.

As presented in Table 3, seeking more experienced teachers' expertise about learners' self-assessment techniques, and asking the board of education for holding sessions on self-assessment are the two themes in the mesosystem layer of EST pertinent to competence.

With regard to seeking more experienced teachers' expertise about learners' self-assessment techniques, one of the teachers maintained that:

Remotivating the demotivated learners is a very important issue for which we should always seek other colleagues' opinions. One of the things which can help us remotivate learners is by instructing them to assess themselves because this way they will find evidence on how much they have learned and will gain more motivation to continue. But since self-assessment can be challenging for learners, I always ask my colleagues for the techniques or strategies they use to encourage learners to self-assess their learning.

Exosystem

The exosystem layer of EST refers to an examination of the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person. Table 4 depicts the results of the thematic analysis for the exosystem layer of EST and the three facets of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Table 4.

Results of Thematic Analysis for the Exosystem Layer of EST and the Three Facets of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence

	Autonomy	Relatedness	Competence
Theme 1	Explaining how learners' autonomy is related to motivation in professional meetings.	Explaining the linkages between cooperative learning and motivation in professional meetings.	Emphasizing a process-oriented perspective towards learners' competence in teacher development sessions.
Theme 2	Drawing colleagues' attention to promoting learners' autonomy in teacher development sessions.	Explicating how teachers' acknowledgment of the benefits of cooperation leads to more motivation in teachers' meetings.	Explaining the linkages between colleagues' perceptions of competence and the development of learners' competence in teachers' meetings.

As shown in Table 4, explaining how learners' autonomy is related to motivation in professional meetings and drawing colleagues' attention to promoting learners' autonomy are the two themes in the exosystem layer of EST related to autonomy.

With respect to explaining how learners' autonomy is related to motivation in professional meetings, one of the participants commented:

> *Whenever there is a meeting, I try to explain the motivation's importance. Since I know that motivation is a dynamic construct and can change from time to time and because I am sure that if learners are autonomous, they can maintain their motivation, I always try to focus on the relationships between autonomy and motivation. Most of the time, I tell my colleagues that if they can improve learner autonomy they can keep them motivated and even remotivate the demotivated learners.*

As presented in Table 4, explaining the linkages between cooperative learning and motivation in professional meetings, and explicating how teachers' acknowledgment of

the benefits of cooperation leads to more motivation are the two themes in the exosystem layer of EST pertinent to relatedness.

As for explaining the linkages between cooperative learning and motivation in professional meetings, one of the teachers thought that:

> *I invariably bring up the connection between motivation and cooperative learning in professional meetings. I know that understanding this connection can help teachers adopt cooperative learning strategies such as pair work and group work activities, leading to more motivation. When learners cooperate to do tasks, they can feel more motivated as they are involved in a social activity which is the main characteristic of human learning. Therefore, I always emphasize this important relationship when I attend professional meetings such as teachers' meetings at the end of the term.*

As Table 4 displays, emphasizing a process-oriented perspective toward learners' competence and explaining the linkages between colleagues' perceptions of competence and the development of learners' competence are the two themes in the exosystem layer of EST related to competence.

In regard to emphasizing a process-oriented perspective toward learners' competence, one of the teachers noted that:

> *I think teachers mainly adopt a product-oriented view when it comes to competence. However, competence and the formation of competence should be looked upon from a process-oriented perspective. In this way, teachers will know that learners' competence is a changing and dynamic construct and will always look at competence from different perspectives. Therefore, when a learner is losing motivation, teachers will better know where to look from a competence-building viewpoint. I am sure that if we consider competence as a process, we will be able to assist learners with language learning in general and remotivate the demotivated learners in particular.*

Macrosystem

The macrosystem layer of EST is characterized by an examination of the micro-, meso-, and exosystems as a manifestation of a particular culture or subculture. Table 5 presents the results of the thematic analysis for the macrosystem layer of EST and the three facets of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

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Table 5.

Results of Thematic Analysis for the Macrosystem Layer of EST and the Three Facets of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence

	Autonomy	Relatedness	Competence
Theme 1	Emphasizing a holistic view towards accommodating learners' control and preferences.	Explicating a multidimensional view towards cooperative learning.	Highlighting a multi-perspective, competence-development view in teaching and learning.

As presented in Table 5, emphasizing a holistic view toward accommodating learners' control and preferences is the emergent theme in the macrosystem layer of EST related to autonomy.

As one of the participants commented:

I always try to establish a holistic view of learners' control and preferences and how they contribute to motivation. In essence, I can see that developing a holistic view is important from my perspective, and other teachers should see this holistic view. When we can see that we all have an important role in remotivating learners, we can feel more responsible and all together can remotivate those learners who have lost their motivation. I, as a teacher, do my best to help learners become more autonomous in terms of the control and preferences they hold. Other teachers and the institute's manager should help to establish a collective viewpoint that can help learners feel more autonomous and motivated.

As shown in Table 5, explicating a multidimensional view towards cooperative learning is the emergent theme in the macrosystem layer of EST pertinent to relatedness.

As one of the teachers contended:

Sometimes I have seen that some of my colleagues have a limited number of techniques to improve learners' cooperation. Although it is helpful, I think more benefits can result from a multidimensional perspective toward cooperation. Such a perspective tells us about other factors that are also important in cooperation. For example, how learner differences play a role in remotivating demotivated learners. From a multidimensional viewpoint, different aspects related to cooperative learning can be analyzed, and we can assist learners in becoming more motivated. When learners work together cooperatively, they can develop together as human beings are socially-oriented in nature. Put another way, when learners

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are given a writing task to do together, they will feel more motivated since they can assist one another as different learners possess different resources.

As seen in Table 5, highlighting a multi-perspective, competence-development view in teaching and learning is the emergent theme in the macrosystem layer of EST related to competence.

One of the participants held that:

I believe that it is important to include a view towards developing learners' competence so that not only learners' viewpoints are taken into account but also teachers and supervisors' views, as well as the learning and teaching process, are also taken into consideration. From such multiple perspectives, it will be possible to help learners measure their competence and probably regain the motivation they have lost due to feeling rather incompetent during the learning process. This way a better way to understand competence and how it can help learners become motivated can be understood.

Discussion

This study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' remotivational strategies through the integration of EST and SDT. More specifically, the Iranian EFL teachers' remotivational strategies were explored in light of the four layers of EST: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Moreover, the three main facets of SDT, including autonomy, relatedness, and competence, were probed in each of the four EST layers. The thematic analysis results indicated that Iranian EFL teachers' remotivational strategies were embedded in the four EST layers consisting of the immediate classroom setting, situations beyond the immediate setting, the linkages and processes taking place between the settings, and the manifestation of a particular subculture. Moreover, the results revealed that teachers' remotivational strategies were also situated within the three SDT aspects, including autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

The results of the current study concerning the microsystem layer of EST indicated that learner control and encouraging learners to voice their personal opinions were the two themes related to autonomy. Moreover, it was found that encouraging learners to cooperate in learning, asking learners to respect each other's opinions, and teaching learners to empathize with other classmates were the three themes pertinent to relatedness. The results also demonstrated that encouraging learners to self-assess themselves,

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comparing their performance with others, and complementing learners who have good performance were the three themes in the microsystem layer of EST relevant to competence.

These findings are in congruence with the findings of previous investigations confirming the important role of learner control, agency, collaboration, and self-assessment in the process of remotivation. For instance, Egbert (2003) concluded that allowing a certain degree of learner control can induce a sense of flow which can, over time, produce enhanced motivation. Likewise, Carpenter et al. (2009) contended that developing agency on the learners' part would lead to remotivation. As Deci and Ryan (2002) maintain, students' recognition of their agency and competence can increase their motivation. Moreover, Wang and Littlewood's (2021) results also showed that giving students the freedom to choose what they like can provide them with more autonomy. Littlewood's (2001) findings revealed that adopting group work, cooperative, and interactive activities can contribute to learners' motivation and engagement. In a similar vein, Ibrahim and Al-Hoorie (2019) found that collaborative learning can lead to sustained motivation.

The results of the present study regarding the mesosystem layer of EST showed that enquiring the supervisor about the ways learner control can be prompted and asking other teachers about how they acknowledge learners' preferences were the two themes related to autonomy. Furthermore, the results showed that seeking colleagues' advice concerning improving interpersonal relationships between learners and asking the board of managers to hold sessions on how to cultivate rapport among learners were the two themes pertinent to relatedness. Moreover, it was found that seeking more experienced teachers' expertise about learners' self-assessment techniques and asking the board of education to hold sessions on self-assessment were the two themes in the mesosystem layer of EST pertinent to competence. These results corroborate the findings of previous investigations concerning the importance of the relationship between teachers and other colleagues, i.e., supervisors, in shaping the learning environment (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2014).

The results of this study in regard to the exosystem layer of EST revealed that explaining how learners' autonomy is related to motivation in professional meetings and drawing colleagues' attention to promoting learners' autonomy were the two themes related to autonomy. Moreover, it was found that explaining the linkages between cooperative learning and motivation in professional meetings and explicating how teachers' acknowledgment of the benefits of cooperation lead to more motivation were

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the two emerging themes pertinent to relatedness. Additionally, it was shown that emphasizing a process-oriented perspective toward learners' competence and explaining the linkages between colleagues' perceptions of competence and the development of learners' competence were the two themes in the exosystem layer of EST related to competence. These results confirm the findings of previous explorations concerning the process-oriented nature of remotivation (Sato & Csizér, 2021) and a dialogic view toward learning and teaching (Burns et al., 2015).

The findings of the present investigation with respect to the macrosystem layer of EST revealed that emphasizing a holistic view towards accommodating learners' control and preferences was the emergent theme related to autonomy. Furthermore, the emergent theme pertinent to relatedness was explicating a multidimensional view towards cooperative learning. Finally, highlighting a multi-perspective competence-development view in teaching and learning was the emergent theme in the macrosystem layer of EST related to competence. These results are consistent with scholars' (e.g., King, 2021; Lantolf & Genung, 2002; Zhang & Modehiran, 2021) interpretations of adopting an ecological view towards motivation in which the role of a holistic and multiple-perspective view can help sustain learners' motivation.

Conclusion

The results of the current study provide scholars, EFL teachers, and teacher educators with the potential of integrative frameworks in unraveling teachers' perceptions in regard to remotivational strategies. More specifically, the results of this study can be used to demonstrate how two seemingly separate theoretical perspectives can be integrated to reveal remotivational strategies from a more inclusive viewpoint. Moreover, the results of this study can also be used to provide EFL teachers and teacher educators with awareness concerning how remotivational strategies are nested across multiple systems while being informed by a motivation-specific theory. Apart from the theoretical implications, the results of the present study can be used to run workshops in teacher training courses to help teachers develop their repertoire of remotivational strategies for instructional practice.

Although the results of the present study have both theoretical and pedagogical contributions, the findings cannot be considered conclusive, and replications of the current study in other contexts can shed more light in regard to teachers' perceptions of remotivational strategies. Likewise, other factors, for example, the role of teaching

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experience and teachers' educational level, can provide more insight into teachers' perceptions of remotivational strategies. In the current study, teachers' perceptions of remotivational strategies were tapped, and the actual use of such strategies were not investigated. Therefore, investigations with instruments such as observation or stimulated recall interviews can be used to probe into teachers' actual use of such strategies.

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Appendix
Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Have you ever thought about how you usually remotivate your learners?
2. What do you think about remotivating your learners in general? What does remotivating your learners entail?
3. What strategies do you use to remotivate your learners related to the immediate classroom setting and the objects in this context?
4. What strategies do you use to remotivate your learners related to situations beyond the classroom?
5. What strategies do you use to remotivate your learners related to the interconnection between the classroom setting and the situations beyond the immediate classroom setting?
6. What strategies do you use to remotivate your learners related to the creation of a culture of remotivating your learners encompassing the immediate classroom setting, the situations beyond the classroom, and the interconnection between the classroom setting and the situations?
7. Do you use strategies that help learners develop a sense of autonomy?
8. Do you use strategies that help learners develop a sense of relatedness so that they help learners experience closeness and mutuality in interpersonal relationships?
9. Do you use strategies that help learners develop a sense of competence in learners to assist learners in experiencing personal effectiveness?