

**TSL 510**

**Motivation of Students toward English Learning  
in terms of Socio-economic Backgrounds:  
Case Studies of Tertiary Students in Dhaka**

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## **Abstract**

The research investigated the impact of students' socio-economic backgrounds in their motivation towards learning English at the tertiary level. It also dealt with the possible changes in motivation during their study in undergraduate levels. Case studies were conducted to collect information about the motivational orientation and its impact on the private university students in their EFL learning. The findings depict that several socio-economic factors (such as family; encouragement, occupation and education of the parents, exposure to schools) positively or negatively influence the motivation of students toward learning English in their tertiary classrooms.

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### **Statement of Original Authorship**

I declare that the thesis paper titled ‘Motivation of EFL Students towards English in terms of Socio-economic Backgrounds: A Study among Undergraduate Students in Dhaka’ is submitted to the BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the degree MA in TESOL. That no part of this dissertation copied or plagiarized from published or unpublished copied or unauthorized from other published work of other writers and that all materials, borrowed or reproduced from other published or unpublished sources have either been put under quotation or duly acknowledged with full reference in appropriate place(s). I understand that the program conferred on me may be cancelled/ withdrawn if subsequently it is discovered that this portfolio is not my original work and that it contains materials copied/ polarized or borrowed without proper acknowledgement.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 Introduction**

One of the crucial deliberations in EFL classroom is the relationship between the student's motivation and their socio-economic backgrounds. As students create some sorts of perception, motivation and knowledge in their school life, the level of their motivation depends on the environment, family and surroundings of their earlier educational institutions. In Bangladesh, students come from different social-economic and schooling backgrounds. The styles of teaching, perception of the society, environment and many other factors vary according to the geographical areas and among in societies.

Research shows the importance of the role of family in the motivation of the students regarding English. There are some reasons for why researchers give this factor more importance than others do. Harry Meyer (2008) includes the reasons regarding the importance of family in building up the motivation of a person stating, 'Family helps to build up motivation of a person regarding learning English by providing a comprehensible environment, support, enhanced understanding (p.148).' The roles of family and school environments in building up interest of learning English as a second language has been significantly stressed in many other works. As school provides more opportunities, experts and competitive environment for the students, it plays a key role in helping students to learn English as an L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Motivation, being a crucial issue in language learning, has several effects on students' learning and behavior in EFL classroom. First, motivation directs behavior toward giving attention in learning English in the EFL classroom. Motivation increases students' time on task and is an important factor affecting their learning and achievement. Motivation enhances cognitive processing in the EFL classroom. Motivation creates cues and reasons for the students to learn English from different angles considering their condition. Thus, they can improve their learning more quickly than before. Motivation also enhances confidence to learn English as L2. Researchers from around the world consider motivation as

the key factor for the improvement of the EFL students. In Bangladesh, EFL students from different socio-economic backgrounds and social classes come to Dhaka for higher education. Therefore, giving motivation to the students according to their backgrounds can help them to learn English as L2 more effectively than before.

### **1.1 Background**

Student's motivation has a great impact on their learning in EFL classroom. Motivation is a key factor in the EFL classroom and it plays a great role to facilitate the EFL learning of the students of diversified backgrounds. Due to change of technology, trend and ways of learning, it has become to identify the changes in motivation and right motivational techniques. This motivation depends on their motivational orientation in terms their socio-economic background and the motivation techniques of the teachers in the classroom (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). As the private university students of Bangladesh are from different socioeconomic backgrounds, there is the existence of both instrumental and integrative motivational orientation in their English as foreign language learning. The thesis focuses on the motivational orientation, techniques of motivation and changes in these techniques. Most of the students in private universities come from rural areas to study EFL. There are no in-depth researches whether the instrumental motivation or integrative motivation has impact on the motivation of the private university students in Bangladesh. The thesis investigates the changes in motivation and variation of the student's motivational orientation that are from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

As Bangla is the first language for the people of Bangladesh, people use Bangla for regular communication. Thus, most of the students get less chance to use English outside their classroom. Generally, Bangladesh Text Book Board publishes 'English for Today' as an English book that is followed in most of the public schools. However, the English medium schools do not follow Bangladeshi education system and those schools are actually under the administration of British Council. As English medium schools strictly maintain the use of English as a communication medium of the students, it makes students very weak in Bangla. On the other hand, most of the Bangla medium schools do not encourage



English communication among the students apart from the English textbooks. It makes most of the students weak in English. Thus, it creates a difference in the education system in Bangladesh. It is entirely based on the difference in the medium of education. Here, socio-economic elements of the students have a great influence as Bangla medium schools in urban areas encourage English learning and communication more than the rural areas. At secondary level, the issue of English language learning is an identical crucial phenomenon for Bangladeshi students. As Bangladesh is a non-English speaking country, students need special care and dynamic methods for developing English here.

There are three streams of education in Bangladesh (Kamol, 2009; Rahman et al., 2010):

1. Bangla medium.
2. English medium.
3. Madrasha medium.

The status of English in Bangladesh is that of a foreign language. It is one of the subjects taught from Class I to Class XII in both government aided and private schools. Almost all the government-aided schools, the medium of instruction for all other subjects are Bangla. However, in private schools English is the medium of instruction, and the school authority even forces to use English to communicate with the teachers in the classroom and among themselves outside the classroom. It brings high status to the individual communally as well as extends job opportunities. In Bangla medium, most of the teachers use Bangla in the class. In Madrasa medium, most of the teachers use Bangla and Arabic in the class. They cannot find actually any alternative way to teach except using L1. Making English study effective from primary to secondary levels needs a lot of inputs and resources like trained teachers who can use appropriate teaching strategies, communicative teaching resources, and management facilities. However, unfortunately, these resources are not equally available for learning English in all the educational institutions of the country especially in Bangla and Madrasa mediums. Although, some Bangla medium schools in the cities provide special care on English learning, others do not give so much importance and use appropriate teaching strategies, communicative teaching resources and

management facilities on it. Students coming from these three streams of educations have variation in motivation regarding learning English as L2 in the EFL classroom. This happens due to the different environment, opportunities and initiatives in different stream of education.

Apart from the streams of education, parental income & education, family members, entertainment & learning media & tools, friends and perception of the society etc. elements of the social-economic background of the students have large impact on their motivation of learning English in the EFL classroom.

## **1.2 Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate whether and to what extent students' socio-economic backgrounds influence their motivation towards English in tertiary classrooms. The secondary objective was to understand whether, and how far, students coming with lesser motivation are eventually able to upgrade their motivational status in English classrooms. This study discussed the reasons of regarding the influence of students' socio-economic backgrounds towards motivation of learning English in territory classroom. These research choosing private university students from different social classes and geographical areas to explore their variation in motivation according to their socioeconomic status.

## **1.3 Significance**

The study will help EFL teachers identify the patterns and development of their students' motivational orientations in classrooms. It will also give teachers the opportunity to understand the motivation of students according to their backgrounds—the personal, emotional and social culture they bring with them in tertiary classrooms. Teachers would thus be able to adjust to the demands of classroom situation and develop their teaching strategies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.0 Literature Review**

There has always been a variety of views regarding the motivation of the students in EFL learning regardless their socio-economic backgrounds. The effective use of motivational orientation of the students in terms of their socio-economic background can be used as a means of language learning and teaching. Teachers can give motivation effectively in the EFL classrooms if they know the motivational orientation of the student in terms of their socio-economic background. Appropriate motivational orientation based on socio-economic backgrounds can be an operative tool to teach English as a foreign language. Knowing the sources and types of the motivation of the students according to their socio-economic background may contain several advantages.

Ausubel (1968) connected motivation of learning English of the learners to the learner's experiences. He termed these elements as 'group and social factors' which are taken in some micro-level elements (for example authoritarianism within the classroom), though focus more on macro-level factors, including motivational aspects of cultural deprivation and social class stratification. He supports the idea that middle-class children emerge as more academically competitive than their lower-class counterparts, with the former demonstrating more ambition in their learning. Furthermore, he sees parents in lower-class families to be far less encouraging of the aspirations their children do have, because they do not give the same weight to education that middle-class parents do.

Language learning and teaching is a continuous procedure. The focus on teacher's perception to teach language and learner's level, age and backgrounds are both important. According to the Gardner & Lambert (1972), motivational orientation is the direction, engagement and reinforcing effort for studying and learning a second language. With the passage of time, the motivation of the EFL is changing. Gardner & Lambert (1972) termed this change a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift can be termed as some patterns for understanding situations,

generate predictions, raise questions and develop links to find the changes in the motivation of the students in the EFL classes (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumental motivation is the intention and zeal on learning the EFL for external and utilitarian benefits where integrative motivation comprises positive attitudes of students' toward learning EFL as it seems enjoyable to them (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The identification of changes in motivation can help to identify this motivational orientation of the EFL students.

Since the motivation of the EFL students is shifting towards paradigm, the identification of the changes of motivation and motivational orientation seems more important than ever (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In the early 1990s, Woodrow explained in his book that 'EFL teachers need to identify the changes in the motivational orientation, computers and customize their motivational techniques in the EFL classroom according to those findings and their backgrounds' (1993, p. 373). Ehrman (1996) concluded that teachers use traditional techniques of motivation in the EFL classroom without identifying the changes in students' motivational orientation. According to Guthrie (1997), intrinsic motivation has a significant impact not only on reading comprehension but also on the other aspects of reading, such as reading breadth.

Tercanlioglu (2001) stated that Turkish learners have positive attitudes towards reading because their teaching is given based on both intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Moskovsy and Alrabai (2009) said that instrumental motivation plays the more important role than the integrative motivation in EFL learning. The other result of this study indicated that integrative motivation is more pertinent to ESL learning. Recent studies in African and Asian countries found that EFL teachers perceived their importance and efficacy in identifying the motivational orientation and changes in teaching as the sixth least effective (Hubbard & Levy, 2006). Carr and Pauwels (2006) also link socio-economic status, mobility and language-learning motivation in their interview study of pupil and teacher in Australia. A survey conducted in a Queensland state school located in one of the lowest socio-cultural areas of the state showed that of sixty pupils, none had travelled abroad, and none anticipated doing so (Carr & Pauwels, 2006). Due to this reason, they had no integrative or instrumental motivation for learning the

second language and supports their comment that 'young working class people have not historically seen language study as having relevance to their lives.

According to Ditua (2012), learners were highly motivated with positive attitudes towards learning English. They were both instrumentally and integratively motivated. Chang (2010) expressed that class group impacted learners' motivation and they felt relaxed with the motivated classmates. The other finding was that the inattentive learners demotivated their classmates. According to the Judit Kormos and Thom Kiddle, students whose parents had higher qualifications performed significantly better in the language proficiency test administered to European school-age children. Munoz (2008) explained the strong links between socio-economic status and motivation in learning English by arguing that students from different social backgrounds have access to different types of schools (public vs. private) and to varying degrees of extracurricular exposure to the target language (e.g. private tuition, learning resources, study abroad etc.). For this reason, their socio-economic background influences the motivation to learning, self-regulation and self-related beliefs (Fan, 2011). The motivating power and relevance of the goals show great variation based on the language learners' social, cultural, linguistic and economic context.

The advantages knowing motivational orientation in terms of the socio-economic background are many. The main advantage of using this in EFL classes is that teachers can see differences in students in learning English due to the differences in their backgrounds. Moreover, teachers can increase learners' sense of security in L2 learning through teaching them according to their condition and interest. When students get motivation according to their orientation (instrumental or integrative), they are engaged with the situation or teaching and learn and improve quickly. Willis (1996) states the use of motivational orientation in terms of socio-economic background permits students to learn what they want to learn in the EFL classes.

Sometimes it is both desirable and economical to use the motivational orientation in teaching English in the EFL classroom. Teachers can use students' previous learning experience about the perception of learning English to increase learners' understanding level of L2. For example, if students want to learn English for

getting jobs and instrumental benefits, it is much easier for the teacher to motivate the students through giving them instructions in that direction instead of describing it other ways.

Weschler (1997) recommends teacher act using motivational orientation to increase classroom dynamics, provide a sense of security, validate the learner's lived experiences and allow them to express themselves. In addition, giving motivation according to the motivation and social backgrounds of the students can provide students with the opportunity to find out the similarities and differences between their understanding and required improvements. According to Ross (2000), for learning English as a foreign language, students need to follow different approaches and guidelines according to their cues and motivation of socio-economic backgrounds. This develops three essential qualities in them and they are accuracy, clarity and flexibility. These qualities can help students to learn effectively.

Cook (2001) recommends teaching according to the motivational orientation of the students will contribute to L2 learning; naturalness, as students will feel more comfortable and confident. Cook (2001) also recommends some uses of the motivational orientation in a classroom: to give instructions and explanations for a short-cut and build up a connection between the motivation of the students and learning of L2 in the students' mind to help them to achieve learning tasks through collaborative learning and code-switching.

Teachers can get a drastic change in the student's learning through using their motivational orientation in classroom management, prospect setting, and language analysis, explain grammar rules and few discussion about linguistics (phonology, morphology and spelling), discussion about cultural issues, giving instructions, enlightenment on errors, checking comprehension. Atkinson (1987) lists the following uses of students motivation orientation (instrumental and integrative) in the L2 classroom: eliciting language, giving instructions, connectivity among learners, checking comprehension, discussing classroom procedure, checking, testing, reinforcing & presenting language and emerging learning strategies. Auerbach (1993) categorizes the uses of motivational orientation in the following cases: classroom management, explain grammar

rules, language analysis, discussing cultural issues, delivering instructions, explaining errors and checking for comprehension.

Gardner and Lambert (2009) introduced the notions of instrumental and integrative outlooks. Instrumental orientation refers to the learner's need to learn a language for practical purposes (such as employment or travel or exam purposes). On the other hand, integrative orientation refers to the desire to learn a language to assimilate successfully into the target language community. Another dichotomy that emerged was the distinction between extrinsic motivation (which comes from outside factors such as passing an exam, getting a job, and so on), and intrinsic motivation (which comes from within the individual (such as the enjoyment of the learning process itself).

In my research, I attempted to get an overview of the status of our tertiary students' current motivational orientations in their English classrooms as regards the socio-economic situations they had been exposed to during their career in schools—as well as families and societies.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

This primary objective of this research was to investigate how and to what extent students' socio-economic backgrounds create impact on their motivation towards English in their tertiary classrooms. Considering the nature and scope of the issue, I decided to undertake qualitative approach instead of quantitative approach. The reasons were twofold: firstly, quantitative research would demand greater amount of time, resource and energy for which I had limitations on my part as a researcher; secondly, there was still no guarantee that the data collected from quantitative study would be in-depth representations of the reality. Thus, I had to undertake the qualitative study for gaining a deeper insight into the issue along with the ramifications involved with it. In order to have a comprehensive outcome, I followed the Case Study approach where seven selected students from different private universities were selected. With each of them, I sat for an in-depth semi-structured interview sessions—with questions related to their personal, social, academic information and the extent of motivation regarding English that they had experienced in all those circumstances.

The research explored the following research questions.

#### **3.1 Research question**

To explore my answers, I had designed the following research questions:

##### **General Question**

1. Do students' socio-economic backgrounds of their high school lives have any roles in shaping their motivational orientation toward EFL learning at tertiary levels? If yes, how?



**Specific questions:**

1. To what extent does socio-economic status determine a student's motivation for learning English?
2. Why do students get motivated to learn English as a foreign language regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds?
3. Despite their lack of proper motivations, do their tertiary English classroom teaching and learning create any positive changes their motivational orientation?

Finally, I tried to provide some recommendations based on the findings and analysis through my research.

**3.2 Design – strategy and framework**

I used the descriptive research design, i.e. conducted comprehensive case studies to identify students 'motivational orientations and their nature. The interviews comprised semi-structured questions; these were pre-determined set of open questions to prompt discussion where students had the opportunity to explore particular themes or responses further.

The students were selected through purposive random sampling from seven different universities (one from each university). They belonged to different socio-economic classes—upper class, upper-middle class and middle class. Comprehensive information was collected about their socio-economic backgrounds and motivational orientations regarding learning English, its importance as they felt, and the impact of their motivations on English learning at the tertiary stage.

**3.3 Research area**

There was a prime reason for choosing only private university students. While public universities do have a compulsory EAP course in every department, a

fundamental limitation exist: all four skills of language are incorporated in that one EAP course, providing very inadequate limited time frame for students (ranging between 45 minutes to one hour per class) to gain command on the language. On the other hand, most of the private universities run several EAP courses where the language skills are divided among different stages of the syllabuses. Thus, students get comparatively more time to deal with the language skills imparted on them and consequently a better chance to progress.

Around 70%, private universities are located in Dhaka region and students from all over the country from diversified backgrounds come here to study. Therefore, these universities are expected to represent a wider number of students coming from different socio-economic classes.

### **3.4 Participants**

The research was carried out among seven students. The participants were divided into two categories.

- Bangla medium Secondary level backgrounds
- English medium Secondary level backgrounds

The students had a mixture of usual and prominent schools. The students varied in terms of their semesters and ages. All of them had coeducation system. Among the seven students, two were females and five were males.

### **3.5 Interview of the participants**

I asked twenty-eight (28) questions (please see *Appendix A* for the interview questions) to the students to know their perception about how their motivation of learning English was influenced by their socioeconomic backgrounds. I built a good rapport with students and created a positive environment by being introduced with them in a friendly manner. However, my concentration was on to drag the answers of the preselected questions.

### **3.6 Data collecting procedure**

The students were managed through friendly behavior while they were answering the questions. Some students felt uncomfortable and some students felt uneasy finding me, an unknown visitor, in front of them. I managed to create a positive environment through a friendly introduction, explaining the objectives and purpose to motivate them and ask different questions to clarify their confusion related to the questions.

### **3.7 Procedure of data analysis**

I did the analyses through categorizing and classifying all the information collected from the interviews through according to the contents and aspects discussed.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration:**

Ethical issues were important while doing my research. The ethical issues were always in my mind. While doing case studies, I had made sure that nobody's name would be mentioned; the participants' names and addresses would be kept secret. Confidentiality was highly maintained regarding any personal information from any participant. I made sure that, through my research any individual, institution or any public figure would not be affected.

### **3.9 Limitations**

Although there is an attempt to find answers by the researcher, there are the unavoidable limitations of time and resource. In addition, since the sample size was comparatively small, necessary data, on which perfectly appropriate conclusions can be done, may not be available.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4.0 Presentation of the Cases**

#### **4.1 CASE ONE**

The respondent came from an upper socio-economic class, living in Dhaka. He had an English medium schooling background. His parents were well-educated—father being a businessperson and mother being a homemaker. He had two siblings; his elder sister was a graduate while his younger brother studied in class eight.

#### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that he got positive exposure from his family and his friend circle. He talked in English with his family and friends since his school life. His family was, in fact, serious about this matter. The members of the family regularly watched English movies and sports. His father encouraged him to read English novels. His sister had also encouraged and taught him different things of English from his childhood. The society in which he currently lives considered learning English as a common thing as everybody learns English there for knowing the English culture, travelling and study.

#### **Exposure to English in schools**

Coming from English medium backgrounds in school and high school, he had substantial exposure to English. The medium of communication between him and his teachers was predominantly English—in and outside classrooms. He always participated in debates at school that made this knowledge and exposure in English very effective.

### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that influence of his parents in his English learning was the primary reason for his English learning. He told that his parents were his main teachers from his childhood who had taught him the English language and its culture. The respondent got strong motivation in childhood from his parents as they kept a language teacher for him and got him admitted him in English debating club.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that there had been a direct relation between his parents' financial status with his English learning because he got more opportunities of learning due to it. He strongly believed that the high income, status, surroundings and education of his parents developed his strong background and motivation of English learning.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent did not feel any change or improvement in his English learning at the university level. He thought that he did not get any added motivation to learn English from the tertiary classroom. He admitted that he had been learning new things, but they were not playing any role in increasing his motivation for learning English.

## **4.2 CASE TWO**

The respondent came from upper-middle socio-economic class living in Rajshahi. He had a Bangla medium schooling background. His father, who was a manager in a local firm, was well-educated. His mother, a home-maker, was an SSC graduate. He had three siblings; his younger sister studied in a college while his younger brothers studied high school.

### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that he got positive exposure occasionally from his father and his friend circle. He did not get much opportunity to talk in English with his family and friends from school. His family was, in fact, serious about this matter. The members of the family regularly watched news, cartoons and sports. His father encouraged him to read English newspaper. He did not get enough encourage and support from other members as his siblings were too small then. The society in which he lived considers learning English as a way of getting honor, passing the examination and getting job.

### **Exposure to English in schools**

Coming from Bangla medium backgrounds in a school and high school of a village, he had had no substantial exposure to English. The medium of communication between him and his teachers was predominantly in Bangla—in and outside classrooms. His school did not encourage him to speak in English. He participated in debates at school but that was in Bangla. Thus, these things did not help him much to improve his knowledge and exposure in English.

### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that influence of his father in his English learning was the primary reason for his English learning. He told that his mother was his main

teacher in primary level and his father taught him the English grammars and essays. The respondent did not get strong motivation in childhood from his parents regarding English culture. He got motivation from parents about passing the examination only.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that there had been a direct relation between his parents' financial status with his English learning because he got less opportunities of learning due to it. He strongly believed that the medium income, unfavorable surroundings and education of his parents had both positive and negative effects on his English learning. Due to the financial barriers, he could not get enough opportunities to learn English.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent felt changes and improvements in his English learning at the university level. He thought that he was getting motivation to improve in his English speaking and depth of knowledge from the tertiary classroom. He admitted that he had been learning new things that were increasing his motivation for learning English.

### **4.3 CASE THREE**

The respondent came from middle socio-economic class living in Khulna. He had a Bangla medium schooling background. His parents were not educated—father being a farmer and mother being a homemaker. He had two siblings; his elder sister got married after her HSC while his younger brother studied in class five.

#### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that he did not get positive exposure from his family and his friend circle. He got any opportunity to talk in English with his family due to their lack of knowledge & friends from school due to their unwillingness. His family was, in fact, is not serious about this matter. Family members watched mostly Bangla contents and friends watch sports together. His father encouraged him to pass his examination properly but there was not direction or motivation to learn English. His sister had also encouraged and taught him different things of English from his childhood. The society in which he lived considered learning English as a matter of pride as most of the people do not know English.

#### **Exposure to English in schools**

Coming from Bangla medium backgrounds in a village school and high school, he had had minimal exposure to English. The medium of communication between him and his teachers was predominantly Bangla—in and outside classrooms. There was no arrangement of debates or other opportunities to get in English. Thus, self-managed learning was the only tool to learn English.

#### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that influence of his parents in his English learning was minimal. He told that his parents are uneducated and busy to support the family. Thus, they did not give any support specifically to learn English language.



However, the respondent said that he got strong motivation in childhood from his parents to learn English for getting a good job.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentions that there had been a direct relation between his parents' financial status with his English learning because he missed most of the opportunities to learn English due to the financial inability of his parents. He strongly believed that the low income, barriers due to the low status and unfavorable financial & social surroundings to learn English due to the socioeconomic status of his parents are the main reasons of his weak background and low motivation of English learning.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent felt drastic changes and improvements in his English learning at the university level. He thought that he was getting strong motivation to learn English from the tertiary classroom. He admitted that he weaknesses due the weak basics in English but he was learning new things and getting strong motivation for learning English here.

#### **4.4 CASE FOUR**

The respondent came from an upper socio-economic class living in Chittagong. She has a Bangla medium schooling background. Both her parents were well-educated—father being a government employee and mother being a banker. She had one elder brother who was a graduate.

##### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that she got positive exposure from his family and her friend circle. She talked in English with his family. Her family was, in fact, serious about this matter. The members of the family regularly watched English serials, drama and sports. Her parents encouraged her to watch English movies and read English newspapers. Her brother encouraged him to learn English through suggesting watching English movies and English commentary of different sports. The society in which he lived considered learning English as a common thing as everybody learns English there for knowing the travelling abroad, job and study.

##### **Exposure to English in schools**

Although the respondent is from Bangla medium backgrounds in school and high school, she had substantial exposure to English. The medium of communication between him and his teachers was mix of Bangla and English—in and outside classrooms. Although she participated in debates in Bangla at school, her English language class in the school made her knowledge and exposure in English very effective.

##### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that her parents had a great influence in her English learning. She tells that her parents were his main teachers from her childhood

who had taught her the English language, different cultures of English speaking countries. The respondent got strong motivation in childhood from her parents as they admitted her in an English debating club.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that she didn't find any direct relation between her parents' financial status with her English learning because she thinks that it was her interest and intention that help her to learn English properly. She strongly believed that the high income, status, surroundings and education of her parents were just secondary elements for motivation. Her strong desire and inner motivation were the main reason of her strong background and motivation in English learning.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent was feeling moderate change in her English learning at the university level. She thought that she is getting additional motivation to learn English from the tertiary classroom due to different surroundings & people. She admitted that she was learning new things but the motivation of learning English is not up to her expectations at the university level.

## **4.5 CASE FIVE**

The respondent came from a middle socio-economic class living in Gazipur. He had a Bangla medium schooling background. His father and mother were soundly educated who were a SME businessperson and a teacher respectively. He had two siblings both of them are graduate.

### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that he got positive exposure all the time from his family and friend circle. He got opportunity to talk in English with his family and it is the prime reason of his efficiency in English. His family was, in fact, serious about this matter. The members of the family regularly watched English news, movies and sports. His parents encouraged him to read English newspaper, novels and non-fiction books. He got enough encourage and support from his siblings as they were also studying in universities then. The society in which he lived considered learning English as a way of getting good job and doing well in the examination.

### **Exposure to English in schools**

Although the respondent was from Bangla medium backgrounds in his school, he had substantial exposure to English. The respondent always communicates with the teachers in English—in and outside classrooms. His school also encouraged him to speak in English. He participated in debates at school in both Bangla and English. Thus, these things facilitated his improvement in knowledge and expertise in English.

### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that influence of his family members in his English learning was the primary reason for his English learning. He told that his mother was his main teacher in primary level and his siblings taught him the English grammars and essays after that. The respondent got strong motivation in childhood from his family regarding English culture, countries and sports.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that there had been a direct relation between his parents' financial status with his English learning because he got plenty of opportunities of English learning due to it. He strongly believed that education of his parents and income created favorable surroundings for him that had a positive effect on his English learning. He thought if these things were not available, he would have faced many non-financial and financial barriers in learning English.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent felt changes in his English learning at the university level. He thought that he was getting strong motivation to improve in his English differently in the tertiary classroom. He admitted that he had been learning new things and improving knowledge that were increasing his motivation for learning English.

## **4.6 CASE SIX**

The respondent came from an upper socio-economic class living in Sylhet. He had an English medium schooling background. His father was a businessman while his mother was a home-maker who was not well-educated. His only sibling was his elder sister who was a graduate.

### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent thought that despite his parents' deficiency in educational qualification, he had always got positive exposure from his family. His family had continuously supported him to learn new things and improve in his learning in English as an L2. His sister had always motivated him to watch English movies, read English novels and watch sports with English commentaries. The society in which he lived considers learning English as a fundamental thing to excel in career, travel abroad and do higher studies to get a decent job.

### **Exposure to English in schools**

The respondent felt that he got the highest exposure to learn English in his school as it was compulsory for him and all to speak in English in his school. The medium of communication between him and his teachers was strictly English—in and outside classrooms. His school gave him the perfect exposure to learn English where teachers encouraged him to participate in debates, converse in English with the friends and read lots of books in English language.

### **Parental encouragement**

The respondent thought that his parents had a substantial influence in his English learning. He told that his parents facilitated his English learning through great

encouragement and motivation although they could not teach him English as a teacher from his childhood. They had encouraged him to join debating club and told his elder sister to guide him regarding English language. He considered this strong motivation in childhood from his parents as a key part of his English learning as a L2.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that he did not find any direct relation between his parents' financial status with her English learning because he thought that encouragement and motivation of the parents played more key role here than their socioeconomic status. He strongly believed that the high income, status and surroundings of his parents were just secondary elements for motivation. The combination of encouragement of his family members and his inner motivation were the main reasons of his strong background and motivation in English learning.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent did not feel any changes in his English learning at the university level. He thought that he learned few things and styles of English as a L2 but the motivation and changes in learning English from the tertiary classroom was low due to the environment and people; he got neither any motivation from the environment nor proper support from the people around him. He admitted that his motivation of learning English was not up to her expectations at the university level.

#### **4.7 CASE SEVEN**

The respondent came from a middle socio-economic class living in Rangpur. She had studies in a Bangla medium school. Her parents—father being a farmer and mother being a housewife—were also not well-educated. She had school-going three siblings.

##### **Exposure to English in family and friend circle**

The respondent mentioned that she had got a mixed exposure from her family regarding motivation for learning the English language. While she had got motivation to learn English for passing examinations, she faced lack of encouragement in other aspects of learning English as an L2. She did not get enough support from her family to learn English as they are not well-educated. His family had hardly been serious about this matter. She did not get enough support from other people in the family as they are younger than her. The society in which she lived in considered learning English as a way of getting good job as well as doing well in the examination.

##### **Exposure to English in schools**

She felt that coming from a Bangla medium schooling background, she did not get substantial exposure to English. She had always communicated with her teachers in Bangla—in and outside classrooms. Her school encouraged her to learn English grammar only. There were no opportunities to participate in debates at school in English. Thus, these things did not create favorable environment for her development in knowledge and expertise in English. She often suffered from frustrations and low expectations regarding her future career.

##### **Parental encouragement**



The respondent thought that influence of her parents in his English learning was not good enough for her English learning. She tells that his mother encouraged her to study English more without knowing the eventual purpose of acquiring English skills.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

The respondent mentioned that there had been a direct relation between her parents' financial status with her English learning because she lost plenty of opportunities of English learning due to the medium economic and social status of her family. She strongly believed that she lags behind in many aspects of English due to lack of proper guidance and support from her parents. She believed that she could learn English as an L2 better if she could get strong financial and other favorable social surroundings. As she did not get so, she had faced difficulties and barriers in learning English.

### **Changes in the University level**

The respondent realized positive changes in her English learning at the university level. She thought that she had been getting strong motivation and thus experiencing drastic changes in her attitudes as she is able to learn English differently in her tertiary classroom. She admitted that she had been learning new things from her teachers' teaching styles and improving her knowledge quite substantially. And due to this reality, her motivation for learning English had been in the rise.

#### **4.8 Syntheses of the findings from Cases**

From the responses of the case studies, it is found that socio-economic conditions of the students' families played key roles behind the motivation regarding learning English. All the participants agreed that their families had an influence on their abilities to learn English. All the respondents agreed that the motivation and support regarding learning English from the family from childhood had helped them to develop their skills and motivation of learning English substantially.

##### **Exposure to English within families and friend circles**

The results indicate that the exposure to English within families and friend circles depended on the socio-economic backgrounds of the participants. The participants who had educated family members and supportive school environments (which cared for teaching English) got positive exposure to learn English.

On the other hand, the participants who did not get positive exposure from their families and friend circles mentioned about their lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The key aspects that can be found here is that participants who had positive exposure inside families and from friends watched English news, English movies and English sports channels along with their family members and friends. Participants from upper and upper-middle class got encouragement from parents to read English newspapers, novels and nonfiction books whereas participants from middle class did not get this type of encouragement at all.

##### **Exposure to English in schools**

This item dragged mix responses. However, four participants who were from upper and upper-middle class had substantial exposure to English in schools, such as English debates at school that helped them to learn English substantially. On

the other hand, three participants from upper-middle class and middle classes did not get the opportunities, and exposure to English in schools; this had been negatively affected their motivation for their English learning in the current level.

### **Parental encouragement**

The findings indicate that the parental encouragement was directly related to their education and backgrounds. The participants whose parents possessed higher educational qualification and/or had higher professional status motivated and encouraged them for English learning than the parents who had no/lesser educational and professional statuses.

### **Influence of parents' socioeconomic status**

All respondents except the one in Case Four and Six mentioned of direct relation between their parents' financial status with their English learning as they got plenty of opportunities, support and good environment of English learning due to that.

### **Changes in the University level**

All participants except the ones in Case One and Six felt that they had undergone changes in their English learning at the university level. They think that they had stronger motivation to improve their English skills differently in their tertiary classrooms. They also admitted that their knowledge in English had been improving as they were learning new things and thus getting continued motivation for developing their standard in English.

In overall terms, it can be implied that socio-economic backgrounds play an important role in shaping the motivation of EFL students in learning English as an L2. However, the environment of families and schools play the most dominant roles in this regard. The middle class students accept the fact that their weaker

financial capabilities and lesser educational qualifications of parents played a key role behind their poor motivation for learning English. However, students from higher social class deem the environment of their schools and parental encouragement as more crucial in this case.

Thus, it can be said that students from upper-middle and middle class backgrounds have instrumental motivational orientation due to the perception of their society and socio-economic conditions. They want to learn English to get jobs and respect from the society.

On the other hand, students from higher social classes have integrative motivational orientation as they give more importance to the culture and societies of the English speaking countries.

## **4.9 Analyses of the findings**

### **4.9.1 Motivation orientation of students in Bangladesh**

Motivational orientation is the engagement, directed and reinforcing effort to study and learn a second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The motivational orientation differs according to the socio-cultural background and diversity of the students as different students are motivated to learn EFL in different ways according to their backgrounds. It may be implied from the findings that instrumental and integrative motivations are the two common and primary motivational orientations of the tertiary students coming from various backgrounds. They seem to consider these orientations as basic principles to make the decision of learning an L2.

Instrumental Motivation is the intention, zeal and embarks on learning the EFL for pragmatic, external and utilitarian benefits. This motivational orientation can vary according to the diversified backgrounds of the students. Students from middle and lower-middle backgrounds who learn English as a foreign language seem to be instrumentally motivated to get rewards, such as to find well-paid jobs. Other instrumental motivation can be to be respected by others or other benefits

(Gardner & Lambert, 1972)—though this has not been proven in the responses. By and large, the rate of instrumental motivation of learning English among Bangladeshi EFL students appears to be very high (Shahed, 2001). The number is high especially among the students from upper-middle and middle social class. They find more motivation of learning English as L2 to get well-paid job, respect and other external benefits than getting inner benefits such as to know English culture etc. (ibid)

Integrative motivation is the positive attitudes of the students' toward learning EFL, as it seems enjoyable to them (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). This motivational orientation has been somewhat reflected in the attitudes of students coming from upper class socio-economic backgrounds; they seem to have developed considerably positive attitudes toward the English language because of the English-related environment in their schools. We may also assume that they would have no apprehension to fulfill the other crucial aspects of integrative motivation, like enjoying interaction with naïve speakers of the English, positively valuing the people of the native community and having interests to be a member of that community (Belmechri and Hymmel, 1998). However, it is clear from their responses that family, surroundings and perception of society play a major role in creating integrative motivation of the students.

#### **4.9.2 Relationship between students' motivational orientation in EFL classrooms and their socio-economic backgrounds**

Measures of socio-economic status (SES), such as family income or maternal education, can suggest different factors responsible for a relation between variables (Hoff-Ginsburg & Tardiff, 1995 cited in Schuele C. Melanie 2001). Socio-economic factors consider the composite account of income, level of education and occupation of the parents as well as the surroundings of the society of the learners. Some researchers have examined the relation between learners' language performance and SES variables. According to Akhtar (2010), the home environment has direct focus on parents because they are responsible to build and manage it. Home environment includes the factors such as parent education, job,

attention and income. Apart from this, the school and social environment due to the social class are also included under this factor. All these factors together called socio-economic status (SES).

Thompson (2008) says that due to the variation under these factors of SES, learners are not given the equal opportunities when learning English as L2. Thus, the learners face learning inequalities in their language-learning careers. According to Yuet (2008), low-income parents may often be so preoccupied with the necessities of life that they have little time to consider how to promote their children's cognitive development. They might also have poor reading skills and so can provide few reading experiences for their children. This has been vividly proven in the responses by students coming from comparatively lower socio-economic strata. In addition, students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds may have lower aspirations for educational and career achievement as well in their high school lives (Shahed, 2001). The responses also support this reality.

The positive relation of high family income with students' higher levels of proficiency in English may be attributed to their earlier education in private English medium schools compared to students in the lower income bracket. According to Shamim (2011), a comparison of learners' socio-economic status with their English language scores in the most recent public examination revealed that learners in the higher income bracket (upper third of the population) consistently outperformed learners in the lower income bracket (lower two-thirds of the population).

A significant query can be raised based on the findings of the cases: despite experiencing unfavorable socio-economic and academic environment in schools regarding English, how could some respondents not completely lose their motivation and carry on with studying English? The reason may be concerned with 'resentment motivation'—a term coined by Agnihotri and Khanna cited in Shahed (2001)—which states that students study English out of resentment, i.e. they have to study it only because it is a part of their curriculum and they have no option to avoid it. Shahed (2001) proved its over whelming presence among Bangladeshi English learners at the secondary level.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The present study examines the overall circumstances of how socio-economic backgrounds create impact on student's motivation towards English in tertiary classrooms. Admittedly, this study represents a tip in the iceberg. Students believe that the teaching and guidance according to their motivation and changes in the EFL classroom can bring a greater development in them. However, though it was predicted that socioeconomic backgrounds have influence on the motivation of learning English it was unknown as to what extent the motivation takes place and how it shapes students' mindset regarding English. From the discussion of the theories, it was found that the elements of the socio-economic status can have a major impact on the motivation of learning English as a second language. The impact of socio economic factors in the motivation of leaning English is found greater than it was actually thought.

Depending on the findings, the study shows that students were aware of the influence of the socio-economic elements in their development and learning of English from the childhood. Students hold positive attitude to the influence of the socio-economic elements as they agree that it facilitates or distracts learning of learningof English in childhood and provides better opportunities if the socio-economic condition is good. The discussion of theories portrayed that students from of three mediums (Bangla, English and Madrasa) get different exposure and opportunities of English. The findings indicate the same. Motivation of the cases to learn English differ according to their education mediums and institutions. The findings also indicate that the parental encouragement is directly related to their education and backgrounds. Given these realities, tertiary English teachers can deal with students much effectively in their classrooms as far as their teaching of English language skills is concerned.

## 5.2 Recommendations

As these motivational orientations are influenced by the socio-economic condition, they tend to vary in different EFL students from different socio-economic backgrounds. When teachers would understand the differences of motivation according to their backgrounds, they would be able to come up with efficient classroom management and teaching strategies. So, this understanding of student's motivation in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds can yield better teacher performance in English classes.

Therefore, in the light of my findings, I put forward the following recommendations:

- a. Teachers at the tertiary level should try to maintain a good balance between their students' socioeconomic backgrounds, the extent of their previous exposures to English, and current conditions or changes of the student when teaching English.
- b. Teachers must develop an empathic mindset toward students while teaching to minimize their apprehensions, anxieties, lethargy regarding English. Accordingly, they should create a more favorable environment in their classrooms that would generate positive attitudes among learners toward English and motivate them to focus in their learning.
- c. Students in their tertiary level should try their best to generate positive motivation toward English and utilize the resources and opportunities that they get in and out their classrooms.
- d. Finally, further research should be conducted on this area of EFL learning in order to bring greater changes in the educational atmosphere as a whole—so that we can create a better English-knowing workforce for our country.



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## Appendix

### Questions for student interview

(This survey is trying to find out the motivation of EFL Students towards English in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds.

This is not a test. There are not correct or incorrect answers .It is your personal and honest answers that will be appreciated and valued here. I assure your response will be treated with the strict confidence in accordance with research ethics .Thank you for your kind assistance.)

Researcher's name: **Fahmida Ahmed**

### Please answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the occupation of your parents?  
.....
- 2- Which district you are from?  
.....
- 3- Do your parents have any influence on your English learning? How?  
.....
- 4- Did your parents tell you about the importance of English in life?  
.....
- 5- Did your parents motivate you to learn English properly?  
.....
- 6- Do you think your parent's financial status/income have positively or negatively influenced your motivation for learning English?  
.....
- 7- Do you think that there is a relationship between your parents' occupation and your motivation for learning English? How?  
.....
- 8- Which medium have you completed your primary and secondary education?

.....  
9- Did you get enough facilities in learning English in your primary education?  
.....

10- What was the perception of your society about learning English where you grew up?  
.....

11- What things personally motivate you to learn English?  
.....

12- Did the perspectives and surroundings of the society of your high school lives have any impact on your motivational orientation?  
.....

13- Did the educational background of your siblings have any impact on your motivation to learn English?  
.....

14- Did any media (such as newspapers) or sports motivate you to learn English?  
.....

15- Why did you get motivated to learn English in your socioeconomic position?  
.....

16- Do you think that your parents' social and economic status motivate/do not motivate you to learn English language?  
.....

17- If you were economically wealthy, did it give you self-confidence and motivate you to learn English?  
.....

18- Are you experiencing any positive changes in your motivational orientation of learning English in the tertiary classroom?  
.....

**Please respond by giving your thoughts and perspectives regarding these statements:**

1. I get motivated to learn English because I can get a well-paid job and earn respect from my society.
2. Studying English has helped me to improve my personality.
3. I like to practice English the way native speakers do.
4. I got motivation to learn English to communicate with my online friends all over the world in English effectively.
5. I prefer studying all my subjects in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.
6. Studying English is enjoyable and fun.
7. Studying English is an important goal in my life that will make me feel more confident.
8. I want to be skilled in English in order to upgrade the socio-cultural status of my family.
9. Although I had less motivation during the high school time, I am upgrading my motivation in the tertiary classroom.
10. The speed of improvement in my motivation to learn English in the tertiary classroom is high.