

Gender Differences in Motivation in Learning English: A study on University students

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***Abstract:** In Bangladesh, most private university students have learned English language since English was compulsory in the primary and secondary levels. In the tertiary level, the non-English majors continue to learn this language through various English language courses. However, after learning English for many years, their proficiency is far from satisfactory. In this research, the researcher assumes that students' less motivations are major factors for their poor proficiency in this language. Therefore, this research endeavors to focus on the difference of motivational patterns between male and female tertiary level learners who are learning English as a foreign language in different private universities of Bangladesh. The study also highlights the aspect whether male and female students are driven by integrative or instrumental motivation. This study was conducted through questionnaire, face to face interview and recording, where the researcher tried to find how far the learners are motivated towards English language learning and the effects of gender differences upon learner motivation. The participants were first year Non-English majors studying in renowned private universities in Bangladesh. Besides finding the motivation level, the researcher also provides suggestion and recommendations for improving English language learning in tertiary level in the private universities of Bangladesh.*

***Keywords:** Motivation, English Language, Integrational, Instrumental, Teaching, learning*

1. Introduction

In the private universities in Bangladesh, English language is always given more importance. The students of the Non-English majors must undertake English language courses along with their main courses every semester. Other than the course requirements, the students need to learn English to get good jobs, or to achieve good scores in exams. Therefore, the students require great motivation to learn this language. Here the researcher focuses on how the motivation of Bangladeshi learners drives them towards successful acquisition of English. The researcher tends to find out to what extent the

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Bangladeshi Private University Undergrad students are instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn English and how much the gender difference affect motivational level.

Second language learners vary on a number of dimensions depending on personality, motivation, gender, aptitude and age. Among all the factors motivation plays a great role in second language acquisition. In Bangladesh, both male and female (private) university students need to learn English in every department because the medium of instruction is English. Both motivation and gender are recognized as relevant variables in foreign language learning. Without proper motivation, learners fail to achieve success in learning a second language. Many researchers have discovered that female second language learners are more motivated than male learners. The researcher after working for eight years in English language and literature department in a Private University also hypothesizes that, females are more motivated in learning English than males. The reason behind this hypothesis is because she observed, female students achieved good scores than male students. She assumes that the motivational factors were the main reason behind females' good scores. She also observed that female learners were more integratively motivated. She hopes to find the similar result among the non-English majors studying in first year undergrad level.

2. Literature Review

Many great scholars gave different definitions of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition research. Rod Ellis defines "Motivation" as the enthusiasm for doing something. This enthusiasm contains "external and internal factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be interested in and committed to a job, role or subject and to exert persistent effort in attaining a goal." Rod Ellis (p118). According to Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Crookes & Schmidt (1991) motivation can be classified into integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is found among the learners who actually want to be a part of the second language society and are interested to know the culture and lifestyle of the second language society. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is identified through learners' goal of learning with a utilitarian purpose in mind such as, a better job or a higher salary. Thus, no matter what type of motivation students have, the strengths of motivation depend on the state of a student's needs and goals. Zoltan Dorney mentioned it as one of the fundamental determinants of

individual's action and considers it decisive enough to determine human **behavior** by energizing it and giving it directions.

Gender issues have been studied broadly in the field of SLA. It was found **that, learners** required strong motivation to learn a second language otherwise **the learning** outcome was not satisfactory. The early researches on motivation **were** all centered on social psychology but the recent researches in this area **have** mostly focused on the "Self" and "identity" of an individual.

Gardner and Lambert (1979) distinguish between two types of motivation; integrative and instrumental motivation or orientation to L2 learning. Based on their AMTB test battery they discover that males are found more instrumentally motivated while females are more integratively motivated in many researches.

Spolsky (1989) studied "to explore the requirements for a general theory of second language motivation. In a sample of pupils attending an English language-instructed school in a multi-ethnic community in Israel, Spolsky found that girls showed more favorable attitudes towards Hebrew language, the L2 they were learning, to Israel itself and to Israelis, the latter being equipped in statements such as "I'd like to know more" and they are considerate."(p.81)

Zoltan Dorneyi (2002) in his L2 motivational self-system researched on the Hungarian males and females on their motivation on L2 learning and says "Girls displays superior language attitudes to boys across the board. Girls are more successful in virtually every aspect of language learning and that foreign language learning is increasingly seen by boys as a girly subject in many countries." (p 613)

Kara (2009) believed that the students who posses positive beliefs about language learning have a tendency to increase more positive attitudes and motivation toward second language learning.

A very recent study of Hamad (2014) suggested that attitude and motivation have strong influences on the learning process of EFL. The objective of his study was to examine the genders and attitudes of male and female university students as motivating factors in studying English as a foreign language. His study focused on the examination results of L2 learners and discovered 'female students are better in learning EFL than males as formal examination

results show that females received significantly better grades in FL courses than boys.’ (p-3)

3. Research on Motivation in Bangladesh

Research on motivation has also been done by a number of researchers on the Bangladeshi perspectives. Most of the researchers in Bangladesh tried to find the role of Motivation in L2 learning. Some of them tried to search the different types of motivation among the learners such as instrumental or integrative motivation while some others focused on the components that contribute to the enhancement of motivation level of learners. But a very few of them gave importance on gender difference as a factor to detect proper motivation level of the learners.

Nargis Chowdhury (2010), an Assistant Professor in English department, Stamford University Bangladesh finds that Bangladeshi undergraduate students possess a strong instrumental motivation towards learning English. She explains students’ low level of integrative motivation in a number of ways. “Bangladeshi learners hardly get any chance to know the native speakers of English because the visit of the English native speakers to Bangladesh is very limited and infrequent. So it is not possible for the learners to know the English speaking society, people or culture directly by mingling with them. Most of the learners, especially those living in cities and towns, know about the English speaking society and culture through Electronic media, i.e, through the satellite TV. A number of English channels are broadcasted through satellite in Bangladesh; the younger generation is an intense listener of English songs; a lot of youngsters use the web based social networking applications like Facebook etc. where they become friends with a lot of English native speakers but do not get chances for direct interactions. Therefore they lack integrative motivation” (Nargis, p.116)

Rukanuddin (2014) Assistant professor in Ahsanullah University Bangladesh says “Motivation, as a psychological phenomenon, has multidimensional roles in ESL/EFL and other areas of learning and teaching. It affects different people in various ways in various situations, places and time. It may affect the same people in the same intellectual pursuit or in the same area of learning differently in different time, place, or environment. The same people may get motivated to learn English differently in different countries. A group of students, for example, may feel motivated to learn English in a way in China, which is different from the way the same group of students may feel motivated while they are in the United States of America.” (Rukanuddin, p, 78)

Haque (1994) finds that the learners of English in Bangladesh are mostly instrumentally motivated, because the students in Bangladesh learn English for the purpose of easing their higher education and getting better employment opportunities. They do not seem to learn English for the sake of knowing deeply about the culture and people who are native speakers of English. They are not interested in getting integrated with any English speaking group of people either. Their intention in learning English is to use it as an instrument for practical gain, not for expressing solidarity with any group of native speakers of English.

4. Methodology and Research Design

A descriptive research methodology was used for this study. A survey was administered to a selected sample from a specific population which means the undergraduate non-English majors of a number of private universities of Bangladesh. Here the researcher selected the undergraduate students of four well-known private Universities.

The research questions are:

1. How far are the first year non-English majors motivated to learn English?
2. To what extents are students integratively or instrumentally motivated?
3. What are the different motivational patterns across genders among non-English majors?

The method used in this study is that of giving a questionnaire to informants. Because of the aim to analyze the learners' motivational attitudes towards the English language, using a questionnaire is a good method. Since the study is about motivation, that is an emotion or feeling that could be affected in the case of an interview where the students could have answered in a way that they think is the "right" answer, instead of how they really feel about the subject. When visiting the different classes of Non-English majors to conduct the study, short information about the researcher and the study is given before handing out the questionnaires. The information is given in the students' L1 language, namely in Bangla to avoid misunderstandings. The layout of the questionnaire is introduced and the students are told to put a cross after each statement if they agree or disagree. The students are also told that it is important for them to put a cross for male or female in the beginning of the questionnaire and to not write down their names, as the questionnaire is anonymous.

5. Population and Sampling

In this study the researcher selected 97 non-English Major students from 4 renowned Private Universities of Bangladesh. Some of these students have already completed or are still doing the English Language credit courses. Among 97 students 22 students from Journalism Department, 26 from Business Administration Department, 30 from Civil Engineering Department, 19 from Architecture Department from different Private Universities. Among these 97 students 67 male and 30 female students were selected. The age of participants from 19-25 years (mean age 22). All the students, in their Secondary and Higher Secondary level had English as compulsory course. The researcher chose BBA, Journalism, Architecture and Civil Engineering Department because English language learning is quite demanding in these Departments. The percentages of the participating students according to the departments are given below:

Departments	Male and Female students	
	No.	%
Journalism	22	22.68
Civil Engineering	30	30.93
Business Administration	26	26.80
Architecture	19	19.59
Total	97	100

Number of male students and percentage chart table:

Departments	Only Male	
	Student Number	Percentage %
Journalism	16	23.88
Civil Engineering	24	35.82
Business Administration	18	26.87
Architecture	9	13.43
Total	67	100

Number of female students and percentage chart table:

Departments	Only Female	
	Student Number	Percentage%
Journalism	6	20
Civil Engineering	6	20
Business Administration	8	26.67
Architecture	10	33.33
Total	30	100

6. Instruments

The survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire developed by Gardner (1985) and Clement et al. (1994) commonly known as the Attitude /Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The Attitude/Motivation test battery is a research instrument which has been developed to assess the major affective components shown to be involved in second language learning. This instrument has been used by many researchers for more than 20 years. It provides a reliable and valid index of various attitude/motivational characteristics which researchers may wish to investigate in many different contexts. Using this instrument majority researches were conducted to investigate English-speaking students' motivation towards learning French language. Here the researcher prepared a questionnaire on the basis of AMTB test battery but the researcher modified some question patterns and alternatives to make it more adaptable for Bangladeshi context.

7. Analysis and Findings of Quantitative Data

Gender	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q.No.1 I like hearing spoken English								
Male	29	43.28	38	56.72	0	0	0	0
Female	10	33.33	20	66.67	0	0	0	0
QNo.2 I like reading and writing in English								
Male	37	55.22	27	40.30	3	4.48	0	0
Female	14	46.67	14	46.67	0	0	2	6.67

Q.No.3 Knowing English Language is the mark for an educated person								
Male	29	43.28	38	56.72	0	0	0	0
Female	12	40.00	16	53.33	2	6.67	0	0
Q.No.4 It is fun to learn English								
Male	12	17.91	24	35.82	17	25.37	14	20.90
Female	4	13.33	14	46.67	4	13.33	8	26.67
Q. No. 5 If I have children I would like them to be able to speak in English								
Male	34	50.75	27	40.30	5	7.46	1	1.49
Female	14	46.67	14	46.67	0	0	2	6.66
Q. No.6 English Language is important to know to make myself member of Global world								
Male	43	64.18	23	34.33	1	1.49	0	0
Female	22	73.33	8	26.67	0	0	0	0

This research was mainly conducted with the aim of finding male and female Non-English major's motivation towards learning English language. All the participants were male and female students studying in 1st year in different private Universities of Bangladesh.

When they were asked about their fondness towards English language hearing, reading and writing, 43% males strongly agreed while 56% of them agreed. Among females 46% strongly agreed while 46% agreed with the idea. This suggests that both male and female have good fascination towards hearing, reading and writing this language.

35% males mentioned that they found interesting and fun to learn English while 25% disagreed that English was not fun to learn. The similar type of results is acquired when females answered the question. 46% female students said that English language learning was fun while 26% strongly disagreed with it. Both male and female answered positively about the importance of English language learning for their future generation. 50% males said that they strongly agreed with it while 46% females strongly agreed with this. Only 5 males and 2 females disagreed that they did not want their children to speak in English.

The researcher assumes that the roles of teachers are important factors to make learning fun. Therefore, students' fascination to learn this language will depend on the atmosphere, teaching techniques, proper methods etc. But most

non-English majors expressed their opinion negatively. The rise of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” portion indicate that there are some lagging in teaching techniques or materials for which some students were not enjoying learning this language.

Table for question No. 9, 10 & 11 for “Instrumental Motivation”

Gender	Yes		Others		No	
	St. No	%	St. No.	%	St. No.	%
Q.9: I need to learn English because it will add an extra quality in my C.V.						
Male	58	86.57	4	5.97	5	7.46
Female	22	73.33	4	13.33	4	13.33
Q 10: I need to learn English to get good scores in IELTS/TOEFL/SAT						
Male	55	82.9	7	10.45	5	7.46
Female	22	73.33	2	6.67	6	20.00
Q11: I need to know English to achieve a successful career.						
Male	63	94.03	3	4.48	1	1.49
Female	22	73.33	6	20.00	2	6.67

Question No.9 focuses on students need to learn English. Here 86% males among 67 male students said “yes”, while 73% female among 30 female students agreed to it and said that they were learning this language to add an extra quality in their C.V. 7% males and 13% females disagreed and mentioned adding extra quality in their C.V was not the only reason they were learning English. Question No.10 explains why students would give importance to English language learning. 82% males among 67 male said “yes”, while 73% female among 30 female students agreed to it. Only 5 male and 6 female disagreed with it. Here the males’ average rank to say “yes”, is higher than females. This suggests that most non-English majors study English to get good scores in IELTS/TOEFL/SAT. This result also expresses students’ instrumental motivation towards learning this language. Question No. 11 again puts importance on students’ instrumental motivation. Here 94% males said “yes”, while 73% females supported this idea. This clearly shows that males are more instrumentally motivated than females.

When the researcher asked about how they usually respond in English in their language classes, it is discovered that females are more responsive than males. Because 73% said that they volunteer answers as much as possible while 67% males said that they would be interested to answer as much as

possible. Here the females' average rank is higher than males. Here the females also expressed in the face to face interviews that, they get better grades than males in English language courses.

Finally it can be said that among the non-English majors males are comparatively more instrumentally motivated than females. Here the researcher's hypothesis is proven wrong. The researcher always believed that female students are more motivated to learn English than males. Here the researcher thinks that after working for 8 years in the English Language and Literature department, she predicted that females are more motivated than males. The researcher always found females got better grades in both literature and language courses. Based on the performances also, females were more proficient than male learners. In the undergrad level most male learners had either undertaken literature and language courses because they did not qualify to get admitted in other departments, or were just waiting to give admission test in the Dhaka University. Therefore the researcher found that females were more integratively motivated to learn English language and actually fascinated to know more about English culture.

But, the result of motivational patterns among non-English majors was completely different. Here the males are more motivated than females. Most students are basically instrumentally motivated and want to learn English as a tool for achieving success in their career. Here the researcher assumes that, among the non-English majors the students focus is fixed towards a specific goal and that is they want to fulfill all the requirements to become successful in life. Consequently, they give more importance to English language learning with great motivation since it is greatly demanding in professional life.

8. Conclusion

Basically this research is intended to find differences in the motivational patterns among male and female non-English majors studying in different private universities in Bangladesh. The researcher tried to detect integrative and instrumental motivation among the learners. Regarding the findings of this survey it is revealed that, both male and female students of Bangladesh want to learn English as a tool or instrument for getting good jobs, for success in career or for earning higher education.

Bangladesh is a monolingual country but there is no denying the fact that English has occupied a significant position as a means of communication in different government and non-government organizations. In the Private Universities of Bangladesh, English is extensively used for their daily operations which necessitate the students to learn English for better grades and higher education. Being a foreign language, English also has the status of a prestigious language in this country. A person with good English skills is considered smart, knowledgeable and respectable in the society and accepted as a member of the global world. This also drives both male and female students to learn English. This suggests that the students do not learn this language to be a part of English society or for great fascination about English culture. They rather learn this language to meet their demands in professional life or to add extra quality in their resume.

Even though the reasons for learning English are instrumental, this may be taken as a positive sign for the students. It indicates that the students are not reluctant to learn English and they do not want to learn English for any non-productive purposes. If proper steps are taken, the learning of English by the concerned students will be effective. As Gardner (2001) also in his revised socio-education model says, "among other things, that the motivated individuals enjoy the task of learning the language" (p 24). He called it task motivation. Therefore, further researches may be undertaken for finding out how to utilize this instrumental orientation of the students in learning English properly. The students learning tasks must be interesting and enjoyable to motivate them more towards learning English.

This study on the non-English majors showed male learners were more motivated towards learning English than females while female learners' grades and performances were better than those of the males in the English language courses. Therefore it can be mentioned that both learners give utmost importance to learn this language.

To sum up it can be said that this research has shown both male and female students' strong inclination towards the utilitarian use of English in Bangladeshi context. It suggests that, with adequate help there are great opportunities to promote the standard of English in the private universities in Bangladesh.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for the participants

Department: _____ Age: _____

Put (✓) mark for each answer

Gender: Male Female

1. I like hearing spoken English
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
2. I like reading and writing in English
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
3. Knowing English Language is the mark of an educated and smart person
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
4. It is fun to learn English
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
5. If I have children I would like them to be able to speak in English.
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
6. The English language is important to know to make myself member of the global world
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree
7. I need to study English because It is a compulsory course for me.
 Agree Strongly agree Strongly disagree Disagree

8. I need to study English because most of the textbooks are in English
 Agree disagree others
9. I need to learn English language because it will add an extra quality in my CV
 Yes No others
10. I need to learn English to get good scores in IELTS/TOEFL/SAT
 Yes No others
11. I need to know English to achieve a successful career
 Yes No others
12. I like to watch and understand English movies, programs etc. on TV
 Always Most of the times Sometimes Never
13. If there were English-speaking families in my neighborhood, I would:
 - a) never speak in English to them.
 - b) speak in English with them sometimes.
 - c) speak in English with them as much as possible.
14. When I am in English Language class, I
 - a) volunteer answers as much as possible.
 - b) answer only the easier questions.
 - c) never say anything.
15. When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in English Language class, I.....
 - a) immediately ask the teacher for help
 - b) only seek help before the exam.
 - c) just forget it.
16. How would you rate your English proficiency?
 Very bad Bad Average Good Very good
17. To be sophisticated one must know EnglishWhat do you think?
18. Is it important to know English? Why?

Appendix 2

Interview questions:

1. Do you think English is important for your career? If yes explain why?
2. What is your attitude towards your English language teacher and class?
3. How do your parents encourage you to learn English?
4. Do you like to use English language in Social networking sites?
5. What is your attitude towards English speaking people and English culture?