

## **‘INTEGRATIVE’ OR ‘INSTRUMENTAL’?: MOTIVATION THAT WORKS CLOSELY DURING THE ADOLESCENCE DAYS OF FEMALE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT BANGLADESH UNIVERSITIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

From my experience of four years of teaching basic English language skills development courses in two different Universities of Bangladesh, I found that – students with a tendency to be 'integrated with' the culture that comes with the language being taught, have a higher motivation to perform better than other students in classroom communication, as well as in formal exams. In this gender specific case study, focusing on the female students who have done basic English skill development courses with me in two specific universities of Bangladesh, I have attempted to figure out - whether their integrative motivation towards the target language (English) culture is the main driving force to learn English better, or whether is it their instrumental need to learn that particular language that makes them better learners of English. Through personal interviews with my research participants, who showed better competence and obtained better grades than others in my Communicative English class - I tried to figure out their root of motivation to master linguistic competence. In this case study, I have considered (Gardner & Lambert, n.d.) distinction of integrative and instrumental motivation as my primary source.

**Keywords:** *Bangladeshi SLA students, Bangladeshi female SLA students, integrated motivation, motivation, second language acquisition.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In every public or private Universities of Bangladesh, one, or two basic English language courses are offered under various titles. Irrespective of that, the course contents of this courses are more or less the same, covering up basic communication skills in English, be it oral or written. These are not courses where we, the course instructors, expect deep intellectual engagements. Rather if the students become adept in English language skills by the end of the course, we consider ourselves somewhat successful. Unfortunately, hardly ever that's the condition where we end up the semester. From my personal experience of teaching English language skills four years in two different Universities of Bangladesh, I never received a batch where 80 % or more of my students finished the basic English course as competent language users (according to their classroom interaction, as well as final evaluation and grades). Considering most of our students' previous educational backgrounds (schools and colleges) - where they hardly ever needed to converse or communicate using English inside the classroom, or considering the societal condition of Bangladesh in which most of them were born and brought up -

where English is not the necessary mean of everyday communication, we, the language instructors need to bear up with this result. Considering this reality check, it's not the cumulative batch result at the end of each semester/year that makes me upset anymore. Rather it is the blank face of my clueless students sitting in front of me - reluctant to communicate/respond, or, some of the students ending the semester without any kind of potential development in their uses of English language, from the place they started the course, are issues that disturbs me more now a days.

However, I kept on reflecting upon my students, both who failed to improve in the language course, and those who did significantly well - with an intention to figure out any similarity in their orientation and approach to this language. Among students who failed to improve their skills in English probably have two common stories to share. Firstly, they have always approached English like other subjects that they had to study and pass, for example - mathematics, history, or accounting. I remember from my personal experience that, in my school or college days, none of my English language teachers ever made me realize that English is not just a subject that I need to study and pass, rather it's a language, and I won't be able to develop my skills in it without using it as a medium of communication. Most of my students have a similar story. Secondly, English has always been a mandatory course in school and college levels in Bangladesh. So, even if the students do not have any particular fondness for it, still they have to pass it in order to get promoted. The same unfortunate circle is being continued in their university days as well, where they are approaching this course just like other course that they need to study and pass, and it's a mandatory course that they must take even if they have no particular fondness for it, in order to be promoted.

Somehow, I eventually get one or two students in my basic English classrooms - who are different than other language learners. They are very adept in all four varieties of English language skills, or at least half of them. I reflected on how they stood different than others. It's not like all of these kids, smart in English, are from English medium/version background. Their pronunciation, expression, and body language were different from one another, but the sole similarity that these students with better hold on English was - whenever I gave examples from recurrent events of global pop culture<sup>i</sup>, they were the first one to catch up the examples and respond immediately. So, I came up with the assumption that, students who are interested in the culture of target language (which is English in my case) - are the best learners of it. From here, I nurtured my interest in the subject matter of my case study, which is figuring out whether actually integrative motivation is the primary driving force in development of English as an L2. The reason behind working on female students with higher grades and rate of success in my basic English classroom is - I specifically work on female literacy and teaching English to them.

## **Motivation**

Motivation is primarily a psychological notion that deals with a person's inspiration to accomplish or achieve something. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, motivation means - "enthusiasm for doing something" (motivation, n.d.). Dictionary.com, on the other hand, mentions motivation as - "the act or an instance of motivating, or providing with a reason to act in a certain way" (motivation, n.d.). Beata Souders defines motivation as "an internal process", or "a condition inside us that desires a change, either in the self or the environment". Being tapped by motivation, we may be

endowed with "the drive and direction needed to engage with the environment in an adaptive, open-ended, and problem-solving sort of way" (Beata Souders, 2020).

However, motivation is discussed and studied with great significance by second language learning specialists and researchers globally. (Troike, 2017) tried to define motivation from a linguistic perspective as such:

*Motivation is variously defined, but it is usually conceived as a construct which includes at least the following components (Dörnyei, 2001; Ehrman et al., 2003):*

- *Significant goal or need*
- *Desire to attain the goal*
- *Perception that learning L2 is relevant to fulfilling the goal or meeting the need*
- *Belief in the likely success or failure of learning L2*
- *Value of potential outcomes/rewards" (Troike, 2017)*

In order to connecting the dots between language learning motivation, and learners' psychology, (Troike, 2017) quotes from more recent developments in SLA theory (Schumann, 1997, 2001) for example) and suggests that -

*Motivation for second language learning, along with L2 representation and processing, is controlled by neurological mechanisms. Specific areas within our brain conduct a 'stimulus appraisal', which assesses the motivational relevance of events and other stimuli and determines how we respond, including what our attitudes and ultimately degree of effort will be.*

From this discussion, we can understand that motivation in general and motivation, linguistically, both are somewhat associated with and driven from psychological aspects.

From the aspect of second language(L2) learning, Rod Ellis figured out five general factors of L2 learners, which make them vary on a number of dimensions in their route and rate of L2 acquisition. Motivation is one of them along with personality, learning style, aptitude, and age (Ellis, 2008). (Cook, 2000) also believes that the capacity of language acquisition is not equal among different language learners. Unlike (Ellis, 2008), he proposed four individual factors for language learners which influence directly the route / rate of second language acquisition: motivation, attitudes, aptitude, and age. He has also proposed some variables insignificant than the previous ones, for example - cognitive style, intelligence, sex differences, level of their first language, and empathy. (Cook, 2000) Motivation, from Cook's point of view has the most significant role to play among the rest of the variables (Sepora et al., 2012). According to (Gardner & Lambert, n.d.) 'motivation' is learner's overall goal regarding L2 learning. It means, motivation denotes the range of linguistic capability a particular language learner is going to achieve so far. (Ellis, 2008) This is clarified more in Richards and Rodgers notion, where they state motivation as - "learner's attitude, desire, interest in and willingness to invest effort in learning a second language." (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)

Motivation in language learning has been classified from various point of views. For example, (Webber et al., 2006) has identified three types of motivation, based on its context:

**a) Global motivation:** Global motivation - "consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning a L2". In other words, motivation that the learner generates at the

beginning of learning a particular second language considering the target language's global status and uses falls under the category of global motivation.

**b) Situational motivation:** Situational motivation - "varies according to the situation in which learning takes place". Later on, he further explains that - there is a certain distinction between the motivation associated with classroom learning, along with the motivation achieved during naturalistic learning. For some of the learners, instruction-based learning turns out to be more fruitful than naturalistic language learning, and for others, learning language without following certain steps and rules, rather practicing it in everyday atmosphere becomes more practicable.

**c) Task motivation:** in his last variety of motivation, (Webber et al., 2006) talks about a certain type that a language user feels while performing a particular language learning task. To explain further, it can be added that - in case of language learning in a classroom situation, language learners have to complete certain tasks. Some of the tasks motivate them more than some other tasks. That is the point Brown distinguishes while offering this classification (Ellis, 1999: 117).

However, the types of motivation that I am more interested in here in this paper are derived by (Gardner & Lambert, n.d.), a distinction they have made base on the practicality of learning a certain L2. They are - integrative, and instrumental motivation of language learning.

According to them, the integrative motivation occurs when the learner wishes to identify with the culture of the L2 group. It has similarity with (Mowrer, 1960) account of motivation in L1 learning. Mowrer argues that - when a child figures out its parents, it tries to associate with them through the linguistic signifiers they use while contacting each other. Similarly, according to him - "just as the child seeks to identify with his parents by learning their language, so the L2 learner may be motivated to identify with the L2 speech community by learning its language" (Ellis, 2008).

Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, instrumental motivation starts its operation when the learner's intention of learning a particular L2 is particularly function basis. For example, when a particular language is learned with an intention of - "passing an examination furthering career opportunity, or facilitating study of other subjects through the medium of the L2" we may point at it as instrumental motivation. This type of motivation is not originated due to language learner's aim of acculturation with the target language community, rather it originates from pure economic, or status-based needs, associated with learning of the target language (Ellis, 2008).

Whatever the condition is, motivation is always important because, as (Troike, 2017) states - "Motivation largely determines the level of effort which learners expend at various stages in their L2 development, often a key to ultimate level of proficiency" (Troike, 2017), and "The potential power of motivation can be seen in rare cases where even older learners may overcome the "odds" of not acquiring native - like pronunciation - if sounding "native" is perceived to be important enough." (Troike, 2017).

Now, coming to the point of gender and language acquisition, the western academia and SLA researchers popularly believe that - girls/women learn L2 quickly than their male counterparts - "There is a widespread belief in many western cultures that females tend to be better L2 learners than males, but this belief is probably primarily a social construct" (Troike, 2017). However, that particular social construct has not worked as my inspiration behind focusing solely on the effect of integrative/instrumental motivation among the women L2 learners of my classroom.

## METHOD

Instead of contacting female students randomly in various educational institutions, I started to work with apparently a smaller group of participants whom I know personally, and did an in-depth case study to figure out their motivation behind learning English as a L2. That's why I have selected only the sections I have taught so far in last two years at East West University as a fulltime employee, and the sections where I taught English for last three years, at the Department of Graphic Design, Dhaka University, as an adjunct faculty.

As East West University follows trimester system, I had to teach there 6 semesters and take total 19 service/ English language skill development courses in last two years. I contacted 17 best female grade holders from those 19 service courses I have taught so far at East West University. Their semester range was from 1st to 12th. Age ranging: 18 to 23. Departments were – English (5 students), Economics (2 students), CSE (2 students), CE (1 student), BBA (6 students), GEB (1 student). Their grades ranged from A- to A. At East West University, a student with score range of 87- 89, out of 100, gets an 'A -', and 90 - 96, out of 100, gets an A.

During my service at Graphic Design Department, DU as an adjunct faculty since 2017, I have taught 'Communicative English' to 3 batches of students, in a yearly system. In this department, English is not a 3 credits course. Rather it is a part of 1.5 credit course, which is comprised along with 'Basic Computer Skills course'. The whole course, comprised with 'Communicative English', and 'Basic Computer Skills' has 50 marks in it which is equivalent to 1.5 credits in Dhaka University. Both of the portions of this 1.5 credit course have 25 marks each. I have picked 3 female students of 3 years who scored around or more than 80 % (20 or above marks out of 25) in those three years. Their year range was from 1st to 3rd. Age ranging 19 to 21.

So, these 20 female students with higher scores were my participants of the case study. 1 of them was born and brought up in UAE. In total 3 of the 20 had English medium/ version education in schools and colleges. The sampling is obviously small, but for me - the sampling is very reliable, as I know each of them personally. I have had academic relationship with them for at least 4 months and even after that. So my research is basically a qualitative case study.

The research questionnaire was made of five simple open-ended questions. I took personal interviews of 4 of my most recent students. The other 16 from previous semesters/years preferred giving written responses.

The questions of the research questionnaire were -

I) How were you introduced to English for the first time in your life?

II) How did you start learning English?

III) Did you develop all of your skills in English academically/ through academic lessons?

IV) What were the other non - academic aspects that facilitated your developing competence in English from your childhood to adolescent days?

V) What is your future plan?

First four of the above questions were asked to figure out their initial motivation behind learning English as a L2. The last question was asked to figure out specifically, how much focused they are regarding their career, so that I can create an association with their instrumental motivation behind learning English as a L2.



## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The first question was - 'How were you introduced to English?'**

Answer analysis: 11 out of 20 participants said that - they were introduced to English for the first time through English programs/ cartoons aired in Television/ Internet. 8 of the rest 9 students claimed that they were introduced to English via their parents, as their father/mother used to recite English rhymes or read English story books to them when they were toddlers. There was one student who claimed that, she was introduced to English for the first time via formal classroom instruction, while she was admitted in a kindergarten.

### **The second question was - 'How did you start learning English?'**

Answer analysis: All of them except one said that, their formal development in English language skills started through getting into a school. The exceptional one, who was born and brought up in UAE, said - she actually has developed necessary communication skills in English language via using it with her family members, cousins and friends in pre-kindergarten situation.

### **The third question was - 'Did you develop all of your skills in English academically/ through academic lessons?'**

I have differentiated their responses based on 4 different language skills.

Reading skills: 14 of the participants told that - they developed their reading skills through reading books of fables, English classics, young adult English novels, and English/Japanese comics. 4 out of the 6 participants emphasized on their habit of reading the subtitles of their favourite English movie/ TV series and thus developed reading skills in this language. The last 2 participants said that they developed their reading skills formally, through reading text books of English language rigorously.

Writing Skills: 11 out of the 20 participants developed their writing skills through writing diary, as their parents pushed them to do that from their early age. 3 of those 11 participants have started working as a writing correspondent in different national dailies of Bangladesh, published in English. The rest of the 9 participants told that, their writing skills started developing after getting formal classroom instructions. However, all of them shared the thought that - their development in academic writings somehow helped all of them to develop their formal writing skills.

Speaking and Listening: 3 out of 20 students, who were taught in English medium/version schools, had the privilege of conversing in English in their classrooms all the time. But all of them confirmed that they are somehow inclined to the global pop culture (movies/TV series/popular music of their generation) generated in English language, and that following that have helped them developing their English spoken and listening skills. 7 of the 20 participants sternly mentioned that - they feel it makes them stand up and separate from other by giving them a status lift, to "speak and sound" like their favorite Pop stars - in music, in TV series or in Movies.

However, in cumulative responses about all these 4 skills, their responses matched more or less in one point, which is - though they have learned some formal grammatical rules through textbook instructions, but their schools and colleges were not - 'friendly enough' or 'sufficient enough' to make them create a bond with English as a language. So, they had to rely on personal sources.

**The fourth question was - What were the other non - academic aspects that facilitated your developing competence in English from your childhood to adolescent days?**

7 of them only spoke of English Movies and TV series, as well as anime. The rest of the participants (13) shared their interest in reading books (English novels of Young Adult genre /YA) or listening to audio books, listening to English songs, reading their lyrics, interviews of their favorite stars in English, commentaries of sports in football and cricket, chatting with friends from other countries in English, having conversation with them in messenger in English.

Some of the important comments they passed here is -

"As I was introduced to the English literature in general, through my textbooks - I gradually became interested in their culture as well."

"Whenever I saw any motivational English movie or series, I kept on talking to myself in English throughout the day."

"Knowing English and being a part of its culture can make you feel confident, and give you a posh vibe."

"I usually binge watch my favorite celebrities' interviews throughout the day."

"I don't enjoy reading newspapers through my parents force. Rather reading English articles shared in Facebook is much more enjoyable."

These responses, which were given by more or less every one of them, in the same wordings, or in different phrases, were important for two particular notions. Firstly, these responses challenged the popular believe that any English write up, newspaper articles for example, are helpful to develop English reading/writing skills. Because, any piece of write up in English, which is not contextually set, usually do not motivate language learners to learn from it. Rather they vowed for reading articles and interviews of the celebrities they like personally and subject matters of their personal choice. Secondly, these responses make it clear that, integrating with the culture that comes with the language motivates the language learners to learn the language better.

**The fifth question was - 'What is your future plan?'**

This particular question, sequencing with the previous questions related to their development of English language skills, was asked to figure out their instrumental motivation. My expectation was to receive some directive responses regarding their future plans aligned with their linguistic competence in English to achieve those goals - if they were motivated instrumentally.

Interestingly, 11 out of the 20 responses in that particular question started with sentences like these -

'My aim actually changes over time ...',

'I have always had so many plans regarding my life ...',

'I do not really like this question because it makes me face the ambiguity regarding career choice that I am going through currently ...',

'My aim in life is really ambiguous ...'

'There is no particular plan in my life...'

The other 9 participants didn't show such ambiguity regarding their career choice. They were more or less firm in whatever they wanted to do; career wise.

The English undergrads wanted to write contents and evolve in creative field. The BBA undergrads wanted to work in any bank or in corporate field, one of them showed interest to work as an academic. The Economics undergrads wanted to go for further studies and to work as university teacher. All the engineering undergrads wanted to go abroad for their M.Sc., without starting a job right after their completion of B.Sc. The Graphic Design students wanted to work in one of the best advertisement farms, or wanted to open their own design center.

From the perspective achieved from the discussion above, these understandings can be shared. Though students start learning English (L2) formally in classroom, but their acquisition of it starts from television and internet at a tender age, now a days.

Writing is the only skill that needs rigorous formal instructions inside classrooms. But for the three other skills, reading - speaking - listening, students with integrative motivation have higher rate of success. Even development of writing skills can be a resultant of integrative motivation if the student is highly inspired by reading fictions / nonfictions of any particular author, and wants to copy and adopt his/her favorite author's writing style.

Students with better competence, as well as higher grades in English language courses have a higher tendency of knowing about global pop culture in English.

From the last question of the case study conducted above, I have found 45 % of my attendees (9 out of 20) to be very firm about their career choice who could also somehow align their linguistic competence with their career plan, so it's pretty evident that instrumental motivation is a significant issue among them. However, their initial inspiration that those 45 % of the attendees achieved regarding their development of English language skills is also their likelihood for the cultural or creative aspect that comes along with the language. So integrative motivation is the primary driving force in almost all of the cases in my case study.

## CONCLUSION

Students of the English language class should be continuously reminded that what they are learning is not merely a subject to study and pass, rather a language that needs to be used as a tool / medium of communication. Restatement of this particular piece of information would make the learners, as well as us, the teachers, to believe on it and act accordingly, which will gradually break the vicious circle of "passing" in a language course that they are following since their toddlers' days in most of the Bangla medium schools and colleges, but still not being able to create a hold on it.

A language instructor with orientation of global pop culture represented in English, may have a higher rate of success in today's English language learning and teaching scenario in Bangladesh. So as a practicing English language teacher, it's better to keep oneself updated with it.

Imposing old strategies may not work in today's language teaching - learning context. For example - forcing a student to read English newspapers jammed with texts full of difficult vocabularies, and texts which are not graphic enough, or texts with which the learner can't contextualize himself/herself. Rather using contextual and graphic online resources that generates interest in them would be resourceful.

It would be better to go one step ahead and locate out students' preferable learning style and strategy, before the commencement of the classes. Broad and overall statements



like - 'taking help of technology, or internet, or using power point slides' may sound smart, but will not bring out solution to our problem. Even if we say we would take help of resources from internet, we need to know exactly of which resources we are pointing at, which resources our students feel more akin to inside the classroom. A language instructor needs to spend a substantial amount of time researching to pick up the exact material from internet, for example - articles or write ups from Facebook/websites, video clips from YouTube that may go with learner's interest and enhance their motivation.

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