A Brief Study of Motivation in English as A Second Language Learning in Bangladesh

Md Abu Hasnat, Business Administration, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh, dr.hasnat@ius.edu.bd

Kaniz Rahman, Teacher and Playgroup Coordinator, Glenrich International School, Dhaka, Bangladesh, kaniz.nsu121@gmail.com

Hissan Khandakar, A Level, Cambridge Assessment International Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh, hissanbd@gmail.com

Faham Ahmed Kalam, Senior Lecturer, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh, fahamhmd@gmail.com

Khandakar Kamrul Hasan, Department of Educational Leadership, Policy & Technology Studies, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA, kkhasan@crimson.ua.edu

Recommended Citations:

A Brief Study of Motivation in English as A Second Language Learning in Bangladesh

Md Abu Hasnat[1], Kaniz Rahman[2], Hissan Khandakar[3], Faham Ahmed Kalam[4], & Khandakar Kamrul Hasan[5]

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the dynamics of motivation in learning English as a second language (ESL) among university students in Bangladesh, focusing on how motivation evolves and the influences of cultural interest, native accents, and self-awareness. A qualitative approach was employed, involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five university students from Bangladesh. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes related to the participants' motivation and learning experiences, integrating Gardner's socio-educational model, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The study found that students' motivation to learn English evolves from extrinsic motivations, such as academic requirements, to intrinsic motivations driven by personal and professional aspirations. Cultural exposure and fascination with native accents significantly enhance motivation and engagement. Self-awareness and alignment with personal goals play crucial roles in sustaining motivation. This study addresses the gap in understanding the dynamics of motivation in learning ESL among university students in Bangladesh. It explores how socio-economic factors, cultural influences, and educational challenges shape students' motivation in the local context, from extrinsic to intrinsic factors. It offers valuable insights for educators and policymakers to develop strategies that foster and sustain motivation among ESL learners.

Motivation has always been pivotal in learning English as a second language (ESL), especially in contexts like Bangladesh, where English is not the primary language. Gardner (1985) defined motivation as the extent to which individuals strive to acquire a language due to their desire to do so and the satisfaction

[1] Business Administration, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh, dr.hasnat@ius.edu.bd, +8801855479856

[2] Teacher and Playgroup Coordinator, Glenrich International School, Dhaka, Bangladesh, kaniz.nsu121@gmail.com, +8801850676505

[3] Hissan Khandakar, A Level, Cambridge Assessment International Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh, hissanbd@gmail.com, +8801712864513

[4] Faham Ahmed Kalam, Senior Lecturer, University of Scholars, Dhaka, Bangladesh, fahamhmd@gmail.com, +8801850967788

[5] Khandakar Kamrul Hasan, Department of Educational Leadership, Policy & Technology Studies, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA, kkhasan@crimson.ua.edu, +15618666032

derived from it. Extensive research suggests that motivation can maximise students' learning outcomes, often determining their success or failure in language acquisition (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) emphasise that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula or good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement."

The problem addressed in this study is the need for more understanding of the dynamics of motivation in learning ESL among university students in Bangladesh. While English is a critical tool for academic achievement and career advancement in the globalized world (Gardner, 2010), many Bangladeshi students face unique challenges that influence their motivation, including socio-economic barriers (Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2021), subpar teaching methods (Zubaydova, 2023; Karim et al., 2023), and limited exposure to English outside the classroom (Islam & Stapa, 2021). Previous research on ESL motivation has predominantly focused on Western contexts (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), leaving a gap in understanding how local cultural and socio-economic factors shape motivation in Bangladesh. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the evolving motivational factors among university students, from extrinsic goals (such as academic requirements) to intrinsic aspirations (like personal growth and career goals), and how these factors interact within the Bangladeshi educational landscape.

English has become a crucial skill in Bangladesh due to globalisation and its status as an international lingua franca. Despite the lack of an English-speaking environment, the necessity to learn English for better educational and career opportunities has never been higher. According to a recent survey, approximately 94% of employers in Bangladesh prefer candidates with proficient English language skills (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Motivation, therefore, plays a critical role in this learning process. Understanding how students' motivation to learn English influences their language acquisition is imperative.

This study aims to understand how motivation operates for learners of English as a second language in Bangladesh. It examines whether motivation evolves and whether learners are predominantly interactively or instrumentally motivated. To do so, the research aims to focus on three themes: (1) the changing nature of motivation over time, (2) interest in English culture and attraction to native accents, and (3) self-awareness. The research also focuses on a learner from a non-English-speaking background who had to learn English due to its global importance.

Motivation is widely recognised as one of the most influential factors in learning English, particularly for learners from non-English-speaking countries like Bangladesh (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This study examines the motivational factors of a learner who was born and raised in a non-English-speaking environment but needed to learn English due to its global significance. The objective is to explore how motivation influenced this learner's language acquisition and to understand the dynamics of their motivation over time.

This study contributes to the existing literature on ESL motivation by providing unique insights into the experiences of university students in Bangladesh. It expands upon established motivational theories, such as Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, by incorporating the specific socio-cultural and educational challenges faced by Bangladeshi learners. Furthermore, it highlights how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors evolve within a local context, offering valuable implications for educators and policymakers seeking to improve ESL teaching strategies in Bangladesh.

2. Literature Review

The study of motivation in language learning is deeply rooted in various theoretical frameworks. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of second language acquisition is foundational in understanding motivation. Gardner distinguishes between integrative motivation, which involves an interest in integrating with the culture of the language being learned, and instrumental motivation, which pertains to pragmatic benefits such as employment opportunities. Gardner's theory posits integrative motivation leads to more effective and sustained language learning outcomes than instrumental motivation.

Dörnyei's (2014) L2 Motivational Self System expands on Gardner's model by integrating concepts from psychology. Dörnyei introduces three main components: the Ideal L2 Self, which reflects the learner's aspirations to become a proficient language user; the Ought-to L2 Self, which involves external pressures and expectations; and the L2 Learning Experience, which includes situational factors affecting the learning process. This framework underscores motivation's dynamic and multifaceted nature, emphasising that internal desires and external factors play crucial roles.

In addition, Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a broader psychological context by differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from genuine interest and enjoyment in the language learning process, while external rewards or pressures drive extrinsic motivation. SDT posits that fostering intrinsic motivation is crucial for long-term engagement and success in language learning.

2.1. Theoretical Framework and its Relevance to Bangladeshi ESL Learners

This study integrates Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, Dörnyei's (2014) L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to examine motivation among Bangladeshi ESL learners. Gardner's model distinguishes between integrative and instrumental motivation, which is relevant in Bangladesh, where learning English is often driven by career advancement and academic needs (Gardner, 1985; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Dörnyei's system, emphasizing the ideal and ought-to L2 self, aligns with Bangladeshi students' aspirations to strive for English proficiency to meet external goals like employment (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). SDT highlights the role of intrinsic motivation, emphasizing autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, in Bangladesh's educational context, where English learning is typically externally driven by societal pressures, autonomy is often limited (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Candan & Inal, 2020). These theories, while insightful, must be adapted to the unique challenges faced by Bangladeshi learners, such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom and a focus on rote learning.

Empirical studies provide substantial evidence supporting the theoretical models of motivation in language learning. A study by Noels et al. (2000) found that students with higher levels of integrative and intrinsic motivation exhibited more remarkable persistence and achievement in language learning. Similarly, Csizér and Dörnyei (2014) demonstrated that the Ideal L2 Self is a significant predictor of motivated behaviour in language learners, highlighting the importance of personal aspirations and identity in driving language learning.

Research in the Bangladeshi context aligns with these findings, illustrating the practical implications of motivation theories. For instance, Rahman and Pandian (2018) explored the motivational factors influencing Bangladeshi students' English learning. They found integrative motivation, influenced by exposure to English media and culture, significantly enhanced students' engagement and proficiency. This is consistent with the global trend where learners motivated by an interest in the target language, culture, and identity show better outcomes.

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that motivation is not static but evolves. Studies by Dornyei and Kubanyiova (2014) and Lamb (2012) emphasise the temporal dimension of motivation, showing that learners' motivation can fluctuate based on their experiences, successes, and failures in language learning. This dynamic view of motivation suggests that educators should continuously adapt their strategies to sustain and enhance learners' motivation.

2.2. Integration of Theoretical and Practical Insights

Integrating theoretical and practical insights, it is evident that fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment is crucial. Educators can enhance motivation by creating opportunities for meaningful interaction with the target language and culture, thereby supporting integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985; Noels et al., 2000). Additionally, setting realistic and achievable goals can help maintain students' Ideal L2 Self while providing positive feedback and reducing anxiety can address the Ought-to L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

From a policy perspective, enhancing access to English media and cultural resources can support integrative motivation among learners. This aligns with Rahman and Pandian's (2018) findings in Bangladesh, where exposure to English-language media significantly motivated students.

Therefore, motivation is a complex and dynamic construct influenced by various theoretical and practical factors. Theoretical models such as Gardner's socio-educational model, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms of motivation (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2014; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Empirical studies validate these theories and highlight the importance of fostering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning (Noels et al., 2000; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). By integrating these insights, educators and policymakers can develop effective strategies to enhance motivation and improve language learning outcomes.

2.3. Bridging Theoretical Frameworks and Practical Applications in ESL Motivation

Despite the substantial body of research on motivation in ESL learning, there remain gaps in understanding the specific factors that influence motivation over time in different cultural contexts (Dörnyei, 2014; Gardner, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Most studies focus on Western or global contexts, with limited research on how motivation manifests and evolves in countries like Bangladesh (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Additionally, while the theoretical frameworks provide a robust foundation, there is a need for more empirical research that examines the interplay between different types of motivation and specific educational outcomes in diverse settings (Noels et al., 2000; Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

To address these gaps, this study aims to explore the motivational factors affecting Bangladeshi learners of English as a second language, focusing on three themes: (1) the changing nature of motivation over time; (2) interest in English culture and attraction to native accents; and (3) self-awareness. Using a qualitative approach, this research will provide in-depth insights into how motivation evolves and interacts with various contextual factors in Bangladesh (Dörnyei, 2014; Gardner, 1985; Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

The findings from this study will contribute to the existing literature by offering a detailed understanding of the motivational dynamics in a non-Western context. This will help educators and policymakers develop tailored strategies to enhance and sustain motivation among ESL learners in Bangladesh. For example, incorporating cultural elements and real-life communication scenarios in the curriculum can foster integrative motivation, while providing precise and achievable language learning

goals can support the development of the Ideal L2 Self (Noels et al., 2000; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2014; Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).
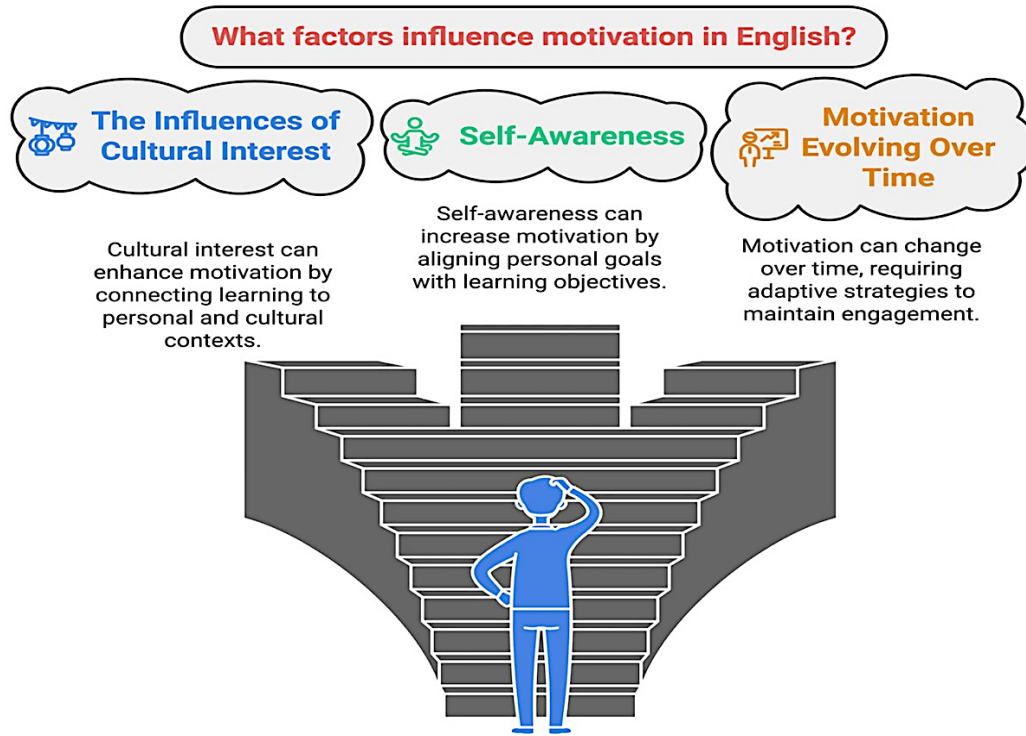
2.4. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Motivation in English (Source: Authors)

The conceptual framework of motivation in English as a second language learning (Fig. 1) integrates Gardner's socio-educational model, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The study investigates the motivational factors influencing English as a Second Language (ESL) learning among university students in Bangladesh, specifically within the context of the University of Scholars. The research focuses on five participants, aged between 21 and 25, enrolled in the Business Administration department. All participants are native Bengali speakers, and English is their second language. The selection of participants aimed to capture a range of experiences with English language learning, providing insights into how motivation evolves within this particular demographic. The University of Scholars in Dhaka is a private institution known for its diverse student body, including many learners from middle to upper socioeconomic backgrounds. In Bangladesh, the role of English in higher education is significant, as proficiency in English is often seen as a gateway to better academic and

professional opportunities. However, English remains a second language for most students. While there is no universally agreed-upon number of interviews in qualitative research, general guidelines suggest that a sample of 5 to 50 participants can be sufficient depending on the study's context and objectives (Dworkin, 2012). In homogeneous populations like this study, data saturation can typically be reached with a smaller sample size, ranging from 5 to 12 interviews, as thematic saturation tends to occur more quickly (Vasileiou et al., 2018). This sample size is adequate to provide deep insights into the motivations of Bangladeshi learners of English.

3.2. Instruments

The study employs an interview method to collect data through one-to-one interviews with semi-structured questions (Roulston, 2010; Maxwell, 2013; Denzin, 2017), during which the participants were asked to share their learning experiences. The interview questions were designed to investigate their initial motivations, challenges, changes in motivation over time, rewards involved, the influence of English-speaking cultures, and future aspirations related to English proficiency (Seidman, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2014; Bryman, 2016). This qualitative approach aimed to provide a deep understanding of Bangladeshi ESL learners' individual experiences and perceptions.

3.3. Data Analysis

The research employs a thematic analysis approach to investigate the impact of cultural interest, self-awareness, and motivation on motivation in learning English as a second language. Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which has been widely adopted in qualitative studies (Calandra et al., 2024). Thematic analysis is a simple process that allows for theoretical framework flexibility. Thus, it can be adapted to any theory and is suitable for use in the present context (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Laila et al., 2020). As in the context of this study, inductive thematic analysis is adopted to code and develop the theme based on the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To address the methodological choices in this study, it is important to justify the selection of five participants. Qualitative research often uses small sample sizes to provide in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The choice of five participants was based on data saturation, which suggests that saturation occurs when no new themes or insights emerge from the data (Guest et al., 2006). Given the exploratory nature of the research and the focus on a specific group of university students in Bangladesh, this sample size was deemed appropriate to capture a range of experiences without overwhelming the analysis.

Regarding the data analysis process, thematic analysis was chosen as the primary method for identifying patterns and themes within the interview data. A straightforward coding procedure was followed to enhance the transparency and replicability of the analysis. This included an initial phase of open coding, followed by developing themes through iterative data comparisons (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Additionally, inter-rater reliability checks were performed, with a second researcher reviewing a subset of the data to ensure consistency in theme identification and coding decisions. This methodological rigour ensures that the findings are credible and reliable, offering a transparent path for future study replication.

However, the paper conducts a comprehensive literature review that acts as a basis for theoretical underpinnings to establish a conceptual framework for motivation in learning ESL. Moreover, the paper proposes integrating Gardner's socio-educational model, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci

and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to ensure the role of motivations behind learning ESL among university students of Bangladesh.

4. Findings and Discussion

As it is a thematic approach of a qualitative study, the findings mainly interpret my participants' responses. The findings are categorised into three themes: (1) changing nature of motivation over time; (2) interest in the English culture and attraction to native accent; and (3) Self-awareness and understanding of the language's importance.

4.1. Qualitative Analysis: Thematic Exploration of English Learning Motivation

Thematic analysis of interview responses from five participants revealed several insightful themes regarding the motivation behind learning English. The participants—Shuvo, Aisha, Rahim, Imran, and Sarah—each provided unique perspectives on the factors influencing their English learning journeys. This section outlines the key themes and sub-themes identified, with notable participant quotes highlighted to illustrate the findings.

4.2. Theme 1: Changing nature of motivation over time

One of the most prominent themes identified in the interviews was the shift in motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic. At the beginning of their English learning experiences, all participants reported being motivated primarily by external factors, such as academic requirements and the need to pass exams. This is exemplified by Shuvo (21), who stated: *"I started learning English in school, as it was always part of our curriculum."* This quote underscores the obligatory nature of English learning during early education, a common experience shared by most participants. However, as participants continued their academic careers and gained exposure to real-world applications of English, many expressed a shift toward more intrinsic motivations. Rahim (22), for instance, described a pivotal experience when his cousins from the USA visited: *"When my cousins from the USA visited, I realized there was a gap between textbook English and real-life conversations."* This realization led him to recognize the importance of improving his language skills for effective communication rather than simply for academic success.

Similarly, Aisha (21) noted that her motivation evolved beyond academic achievements. Initially focused on passing exams, she later developed a deeper appreciation for the practical uses of English in her future career: *"I started to want to communicate effectively and use English for better job opportunities in the future."* This shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation reflects the broader trend of learners finding personal relevance in language learning as they progress. However, not all participants experienced this shift. Imran (23) needed to be more inspired by English throughout his educational journey. He stated: *"English was just another subject I had to get through to complete my education."* Imran's response highlights the role of personal relevance in language learning motivation, as his lack of intrinsic motivation ultimately limited his progress and engagement with the language.

The interview revealed that motivation to learn English evolved significantly over time. Initially, all participants reported disliking English and learning it solely because it was a compulsory subject, highlighting their extrinsic motivation, such as fulfilling academic requirements (Pathan et al., 2021; Dörnyei, 2014; Gardner, 1985). However, as they progressed, intrinsic motivation emerged. For instance, Shuvo's motivation shifted from merely passing exams to recognising the importance of English in his

business career. Similarly, Rahim's encounter with his English-speaking cousins highlighted the gap between textbook English and real-life communication, driving him to improve his skills for practical purposes (Harmer & Khan, 1991; Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Illés, 2020; Hasan et al., 2024). They became more interested in learning and communicating in English, discovering that the true purpose of learning English is compelling communication rather than just achieving high scores. Their motivation changed over time, and they believed it was for their betterment.

On the other hand, the data revealed that Imran's motivation never changed. He could not find any real connection or necessity for learning English beyond the classroom, resulting in failing to learn the language effectively (Liu, 2022). This contrast underscores how personal relevance and intrinsic motivation are crucial for successful language acquisition (Noels et al., 2000; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005).

Previous research noted that motivation can change as individuals grow and their circumstances evolve. Dörnyei's (2014) model recognises that motivation is dynamic rather than static. It fluctuates, being influenced by various factors over time. A learner's motivation can increase or decrease depending on their situation and needs (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015). Dörnyei's model also suggests that learners' abilities to envision an ideal future for themselves as positive, competent, and successful second language speakers play a crucial role in maintaining motivation.

In the case of our participants, their initial exposure to English was limited to textbooks and textbook-based learning, which only engaged them a little. However, the communicative aspect of English gradually attracted them (Derwing et al., 2022). This shift occurred when they discovered that learning English could be exciting and practical, leading to more successful learning outcomes. They noted that they learned to communicate using various resources besides textbooks, such as online courses, podcasts, movies, and YouTube tutorials (Harmer & Khan, 1991). They also practised with friends outside the classroom. This highlights a shift towards intrinsic motivation, where they began to learn English out of genuine interest. Over time, their motivation transitioned from extrinsic to intrinsic due to their evolving needs and circumstances (Harmer & Khan, 1991; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

4.3. Theme 2: Interest in English culture and attraction to native-like accent

The theme of cultural influence emerged as a key motivator for some participants, particularly about English-language media. For Rahim (22), exposure to English through interactions with his cousins from the USA was a transformative experience that sparked a more profound interest in the language. He shared: *"This experience made me realize the gap between textbook English and real-life communication."* This realization motivated him to engage with English beyond the classroom, seeking to bridge the gap between academic learning and everyday conversations. Aisha (21) similarly expressed an interest in English culture, which developed after watching English-language movies. Her growing curiosity about cultural nuances motivated her to improve her language skills, as she explained: *"I got interested in the culture and wanted to understand the language better."* For Aisha, English learning became a necessity and a gateway to exploring the wider world, illustrating the role of cultural interest in shaping long-term language learning motivation.

The interview showed that participants like Aisha and Rahim expressed a growing interest in English culture and native accents. Aisha's trip to London and her desire to understand English movies without subtitles highlight the role of cultural exposure in enhancing motivation (Bresnahan et al., 2002). Rahim's positive experience during his cousins' second visit underscores this point. Global media and movies provide opportunities to be exposed to different cultures (Tamimi Sa'd, 2018; Namaziandost et al., 2023). Accessing other parts of the country from home has become more manageable. This exposure to the culture often significantly impacts leaner's lives and learning. It gives students insights into different cultures (Ziegler & González-Lloret, 2022). White (1985) claims that "for most young people, interest in

culture serves as a valuable tool which helps them to cope with the difficult task of building and maintaining an identity."

The data also states that most participants accessed different online platforms and subscribed to different YouTube channels to learn English more (Candan & Inal, 2020). Subscribing to different channels and websites and using different online resources can help to understand English from different English-speaking countries. As learning is supposed to be goal-oriented, knowing different cultures and travelling there gave Aisha, Rahim, and Sarah the goal to travel, study, and settle down in English-speaking countries. Their intrinsic motivation influenced them to pursue their goal (Yashima, 2002; Namaziandost et al., 2023). Yashima et al. (2004) introduced the notion of an inter-national posture, referring to a complex trait that includes an "interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to study or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners and a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (Yashima, 2002; Liu, 2022).

One exciting factor revealed from the interview was that the participants were always interested in native-like speaking. They especially mentioned that they were always fascinated by the British accent and tried to imitate it (Yildirim et al., 2020; Ryong et al., 2024). On the other hand, they also try to be here to pick up the different accents from the movies or documentaries they watch (Krashen, 1981). Their fascination with being native-like shows their intrinsic motivation towards learning English. It also determines their sense of being part of the community. It is known that learners often judge their fluency in terms of their native accent (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022; Hasnat et al., 2024). Rahim's interview states that he does the same with his learning and thinks he has yet to reach his desired level of fluency. Lamb (2012) drew attention to Jensen's (2010) summary of the psychology of globalisation, in which the author argues that "most people now develop a bicultural identity, in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture while another part stems from an awareness of their relation to the global culture."

4.4. Theme 3: Self-awareness and Understanding of the Language's Importance

Self-awareness regarding language proficiency and its global significance was another important theme. Several participants acknowledged that, despite early struggles, they eventually understood the practical value of learning English. Sarah (24) noted that her motivation stemmed from the realization that English was essential for global communication and future opportunities: *"I know that having good English skills is essential as it is the international language."* This recognition of English's global importance served as a driving force for continued learning despite the challenges faced along the way. Imran (23), however, remained somewhat disengaged from this realization. While he acknowledged the global significance of English, his focus remained local, with limited interest in the language's potential for personal or professional advancement. He shared: *"I've always felt more comfortable using Bengali, but I understand English is important globally."* Imran's experience underscores the tension between acknowledging the global utility of English and finding personal or professional motivation to engage with the language.

Self-awareness and personal goals have emerged as significant motivators in language learning. For example, Sarah's interview highlights her self-awareness; her challenges with grammar and pronunciation did not hinder her but spurred her to improve for future travel and career prospects (Benson, 2021). Similarly, Shuvo's awareness of the prestige and community connections that proficiency in English can bring illustrates how personal and social motivations play a crucial role (Ryong et al., 2024). This alignment with one's sense of the second language (L2) self is essential for successful learning (Dornyei, 2013). Rahim's case further emphasises this, as his precise needs, goals, expectancies, values, and interests drive his language learning efforts (Kormos & Csizer, 2014; Hasnat et al., 2024). In contrast, due to his focus on local business aspirations, Imran's lack of interest in mastering English underscores the importance of aligning language learning with personal goals (Brown, 2014; Rahimi et al., 2023;

Namaziandost et al., 2023). Learners who perceive English as a valuable skill for their future, such as Sarah, Aisha, and Rahim, are likelier to persist despite challenges (Gardner, 2010). Conversely, those like Imran, who do not see English as relevant to their immediate goals, may need more motivation to advance (Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Liu, 2022).

The Dörnyei & Ottó (1998) Process Model states that the learner's initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading (hopefully) to the accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process. Markus and Nurius (1986) introduced the term possible self, describing how learners set goals for themselves. Those goals are supposed to be practical, and they work on fulfilling the goal and reaching their desired level (Hasnat et al., 2023; Namaziandost et al., 2023).

The findings from this qualitative study highlight the dynamic and evolving nature of motivation in language learning. While external factors such as academic requirements initially drive learners to engage with English, many participants experienced a shift toward intrinsic motivation as they discovered the broader, personal relevance of language proficiency. The theme of cultural influence also emerged as a significant factor in motivating participants, mainly through exposure to English-language media and interactions with native speakers. However, individual differences were evident, as some participants, like Imran, struggled to find a personal connection to English, underscoring the importance of intrinsic motivation in fostering long-term language learning success. By weaving in participant quotes and reflections, this analysis provides a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between external pressures, personal aspirations, and cultural influences in shaping language learning motivation. Table 1 shows the summary of themes.

Table 1
Summary of Themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quotes
Changing Nature of Motivation	*Extrinsic Motivation*	**Shuvo (21):** "I started learning English in school, as it was always part of our curriculum."
		Imran (23): "English was just another subject I had to get through to complete my education."
	Intrinsic Motivation	**Rahim (22):** "When my cousins from the USA visited, I realized there was a gap between textbook English and real-life conversations."
		Aisha (21): "I started to want to communicate effectively and use English for better job opportunities in the future."
		Sarah (24): "I know that having good English skills is essential as it is the international language."
Interest in English Culture	*Cultural Influence*	**Rahim (22):** "This experience made me realize the gap between textbook English and real-life communication."
		Aisha (21): "I got interested in the culture and wanted to understand the language better."
Self-awareness	*Understanding the Gap*	**Imran (23):** "I've always felt more comfortable using Bengali, but I understand English is important globally."
		Shuvo (21): "I learned English because I had to, not because I wanted to."

This study highlights the personal motivations of university students in Bangladesh to learn English, which shift from extrinsic academic goals to intrinsic aspirations like career advancement and cultural exposure. These findings suggest that language policies in Bangladesh could benefit from integrating more engaging, communicative, and culturally relevant learning approaches. Tailoring interventions to the diverse motivational profiles of students could enhance both language proficiency and long-term engagement with English for personal and professional growth.

5. Limitations and Further Scope of the Study

This study is limited by its reliance on only five interviews with the participants, who were aware of the research aims and made an effort to provide organised and accurate responses (Benson, 2021). This data source may introduce bias, as the participant's awareness of the research objectives could influence their responses, potentially leading to socially desirable answers rather than a true reflection of their experiences (Yin, 2018). Additionally, corroborating evidence from more interviews or observational data is necessary for the findings to have depth and fully capture the participant's language learning behaviours and attitudes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Liu, 2022).

To enhance the robustness of the research findings, future studies should consider incorporating more interviews with the participants and conducting close observations. This approach would allow for a more comprehensive analysis by comparing verbal responses with actual behaviours, thus addressing potential discrepancies and providing a more accurate picture of the participant's language learning process (Patton, 2014). Expanding the study to include additional participants and varied contexts could further enrich the understanding of how personal goals and self-awareness impact language learning, leading to more generalisable conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Hasna & Salleh, 2018; Ryong et al., 2024). Moreover, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how attitudes and motivations evolve, offering a deeper understanding of the dynamics of language learning (Yin, 2018).

While the limitations of this study are acknowledged, future research could address these gaps by adopting a longitudinal design to track the evolution of language motivation over time. Additionally, incorporating quantitative methods, such as surveys or experiments, would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the broader patterns of motivation across diverse student populations. This approach could also provide statistical validation to complement the qualitative insights gained from individual interviews.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative study highlights the dynamic nature of motivation in learning ESL among Bangladeshi students, categorised into three key themes: the evolving nature of motivation, interest in English culture and accents, and self-awareness. The findings illustrate that initial extrinsic motivations, such as academic requirements, often shift towards intrinsic motivations as learners recognise the practical and personal benefits of mastering English (Dornyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Ryong et al., 2024). Cultural exposure and fascination with native accents further enhance this motivation, revealing a deeper engagement with the language and its global context (White, 1985; Yashima, 2002; Liu, 2022). Self-awareness and alignment with personal goals also play crucial roles in sustaining motivation, with learners who see English as relevant to their future demonstrating more remarkable persistence and success (Dornyei, 2013; Kormos & Csizer, 2014). This study underscores the importance of integrating personal relevance and cultural interest into language learning strategies, suggesting that future research should explore these themes in greater depth to provide more comprehensive insights into effective language acquisition. Regarding practical implications, language educators should align learning activities with students' personal goals

and interests by incorporating real-world applications, cultural exposure, and native accents. Using multimedia resources, facilitating cultural exchanges, and encouraging self-reflection can significantly enhance learner motivation and language acquisition success.

The study's findings are based on a small sample size and are limited by the reliance on self-reported data from interviews. Future research should incorporate more interviews and observational data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of motivational dynamics. Language educators should design learning activities that align with students' goals and interests, incorporating real-world applications, cultural exposure, and native accents. Utilizing multimedia resources, facilitating cultural exchanges, and encouraging self-reflection can significantly enhance learner motivation and language acquisition success. Enhancing ESL learners' motivation can lead to better educational and employment opportunities, contributing to economic development and social mobility. Additionally, increased cultural awareness and communication skills can promote cross-cultural understanding and integration, strengthening social cohesion in an increasingly globalized world.

References

Benson, P. (2021). Space in a narrative inquiry on second language learning. System, p. 102, 102602.

Boonsuk, Y., & Fang, F. (2022). Perennial language learners or competent language users: An investigation of international students' attitudes towards their own and native English accents. *RELC Journal, 53*(1), 40–55.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2),* 77–101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bresnahan, M. J., Ohashi, R., Nebashi, R., Liu, W. Y., & Shearman, S. M. (2002). Attitudinal and affective response toward accented English. *Language & Communication, 22(2),* 171–185.

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition.* Pearson.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods.* Oxford University Press.

Calandra, D., Lanzalonga, F., & Biancone, P. Pietro. (2024). Exploring IFRS in Islamic finance: a bibliometric and coding analysis of emerging topics and perspectives. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, *17*(4), 711–729. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-11-2023-0444

Candan, K., & Inal, D. (2020). EFL Learners' Perceptions on Different Accents of English and (Non) Native English-Speaking Teachers in Pronunciation Teaching: A Case Study through the Lens of English as an International Language. *Journal of English as an International Language, 15(2),* 119-144.

Chowdhury, T. A., Roy, S., & Kabilan, M. K. (2021). Learner motivation in the EFL classrooms: Voices from a Bangladeshi university. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *11*(1), 221-232.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach.* Sage publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Sage publications.

Csizér, K., & Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort. *The Modern Language Journal, 89(1),* 19-36.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11(4),* 227–268.

Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Thomson, R. I. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and speaking (pp. xviii-490).* New York, NY, USA: Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom* (Vol. 10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2013). *The psychology of second language acquisition.* Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2014). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition.* Routledge.

Dornyei, Z., & Kubanyiova, M. (2014). *Motivating learners, motivating teachers: Building vision in the language classroom.* Cambridge University Press (CUP).

Dörnyei, Z., & Ottó, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics (Thames Valley University, London)*

Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The Psychology of the Language Learner Revisited.* Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation.* Routledge.

Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of sexual behavior, p. 41,* 1319–1320.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation.* Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model* (Vol. 10). Peter Lang.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, *18*(1), 59-82.

Hasnat, A., Islam, M. M., Rahimi, Z., & Dağlı, H. (2024). A Correlation Analysis of Knowledge, Experience, Religious Belief, and Behavior of Malaysian EPF Investors Towards Investing in Islamic and Conventional Unit Trusts. *Turkish Journal of Islamic Economics*, *11*(1).

Harmer, J., & Khan, S. (1991). The Practice of English Language Teaching with DVD. *A TESOL Publication of English Australia Pty Ltd, 24(1),* 85.

Hasnat, M. A., Dağlı, H., & Kurtaran, A. (2023). An Analysis of Individual Investors' behavior: A Case of The Dhaka Stock Exchange. *Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari İncelemeler Dergisi*, (41), 303-316.

Hasan, K. K., Sharmin, S., Islam, A. F., Khandakar, H., Siddique, A. H., Shuhan, A. H., & Khandaker, M. A. (2024). Measuring the mediating role of quality education for ensuring employability skills: An analysis of higher education student perception in Bangladesh. *PloS one, 19(10),* e0310815.

Hasna, M. A., & Salleh, M. C. M. (2018). Comparative Analysis on EPF Investors' knowledge, Experience, And Behaviour Towards Investing in Islamic and Conventional Unit Trusts: The Case of Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Economics, Banking and Finance*, *14*(1), 125-145.

Hasnat, M. A., Dagli, H., Rahımı, Z., & Islam, M. M. (2024). Factors Influencing Individual Investors' Investment Decisions at the Dhaka Stock Exchange. *Journal of Research in Business, 9(1),* 104-134.

Illés, É. (2020). Helping to Maximise Learners' Motivation for Second Language Learning. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly, pp. 19,* 19–31.

Islam, M. S., & Stapa, M. B. (2021). Students' low proficiency in spoken English in private universities in Bangladesh: reasons and remedies. *Language Testing in Asia*, *11*(1), 22.

Jensen, L. A. (Ed.). (2011). *Bridging cultural and developmental approaches to psychology: new syntheses in theory, research, and policy.* Oxford University Press, USA.

Karim, A., Kabilan, M. K., Ahmed, Z., Reshmin, L., & Rahman, M. M. (2023). The medium of instruction in Bangladeshi higher education institutions: Bangla, English, or both? *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 22(3),* 232-246.

Kormos, J., & Csizer, K. (2014). The interaction of motivation, self-regulatory strategies, and autonomous learning behavior in different learner groups. *Tesol Quarterly, 48(2),* 275-299.

Krashen, S. (1981). Second language acquisition. *Second Language Learning, 3(7),* 19–39.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Sage.

Laila, N., Slamet Rusydiana, A., Che, M., Salleh, M., & Sucia Sukmaningrum, P. (2020). A Survey on Islamic Economics and Finance Literatures Indexed by Scopus Q1 via Thematic Analysis Approach. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *13*(10), 1036–1057. https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol_13/Iss_10/131027_Laila_2020_E_R.pdf

Lamb, M. (2012). A self-system perspective on young adolescents' motivation to learn English in urban and rural settings. *Language Learning, 62(4),* 997–1023.

Liu, Y. (2022). Investigating the role of English as a foreign language learners' academic motivation and language mindset in their grit: a theoretical review. *Frontiers in Psychology, p. 13,* 872014.

Namaziandost, E., Heydarnejad, T., & Azizi, Z. (2023). To be a language learner or not to be? The interplay among academic resilience, critical thinking, academic emotion regulation, academic self-esteem, and academic demotivation. *Current Psychology, 42(20),* 17147-17162.

Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning, 50(1),* 57-85.

Pathan, Z. H., Ismail, S. A. M. M., & Fatima, I. (2021). English language learning demotivation among Pakistani university students: Do resilience and personality matter? *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 13(4),* 1024–1042.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice.* Sage publications.

Rahman, S., & Pandian, A. (2018). A Critical Investigation of English Language Teaching in Bangladesh: Unfulfilled Expectations after Two Decades of Communicative Language Teaching. *English Today, 34(3),* 43-49.

Rahimi, Z., Hasnat, M., KARA, M., & Ahmad, F. (2023). Consumer ethnocentric tendencies in purchasing foreign products: A study in Afghanistan. *Uluslararası Ekonomi, İşletme ve Politika Dergisi, 7*(2).

Ryong, K., Lee, D., & Lee, J. G. (2024). Chatbot's complementary motivation support in developing study plan of e-learning English lecture. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, 40(10),* 2641-2655.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences.* Teachers' college press.

Tamimi Sa'd, S. H. (2018). Learners' views of (non) native speaker status, accent, and identity: an English as an international language perspective. *Journal of World Languages, 5(1),* 1-22.

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, pp. 18,* 1–18.

White, A. (1985). Meaning and Effects of Listening to Popular Music: Implications for Counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 64(1).*

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern Language Journal, 86(1),* 54–66.

Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The influence of attitudes and effect on willingness to communicate and second language communication. *Language learning, 54(1),* 119–152.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications.* Sage Publications.

Yildirim, F., Ghorbani, S., Talukder, K. I., Hasnat, M. A., & Nayeem, A. R. (2020). Applications of Hesitant fuzzy sets and FTA for selecting the best risk-based strategy for Green Manufacturing in GSC. *International Journal of Grid and Distributed Computing, 13(2),* 220-234.

Ziegler, N., & González-Lloret, M. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and technology.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Ziegler, N., & González-Lloret, M. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and technology.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Zubaydova, N. N. (2023). The Teaching Methods of Grammar and Vocabulary in Language. ″*England*″ *Modern Psychology and Pedagogy: Problems and Solution*, *10*(1).

Appendix A
Interview questions

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for taking the time to speak with me today. Please start by describing your background.
Interviewer	What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Interviewer	What were your main reasons for learning English when you first started?
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about or not particularly interested in?
Interviewer	Do you have any specific goals for learning English? What were those?
Interviewer	Can you describe any external rewards or incentives that motivated you to learn English, such as good grades, certifications, or a job?
Interviewer	Did you have any personal interest in the English language or culture? If so, what were they?
Interviewer	How did your initial motivations align with your long-term goals for learning English? Did you have any career or personal aspirations linked to your English skills?
Interviewer	How did your motivation for learning English change over time? Can you describe any events or experiences that influenced these changes?
Interviewer	Did you experience any periods of low motivation? If so, what caused it, and how did you overcome it?
Interviewer	Can you describe a specific moment or experience that significantly increased your motivation to continue learning English?
Interviewer	Have you ever wished to join an English-speaking community or culture? If yes, what aspects of that culture appealed to you?
Interviewer	How did your motivation shift from seeing English as a requirement to viewing it as a valuable skill for your future?
Interviewer	What learning strategies did you find most effective for improving your English? Did you use particular resources such as classes, books, or online tools?
Interviewer	Did you engage in activities outside of formal English lessons? How did these activities affect your motivation?
Interviewer	How did exposure to English-speaking cultures (through travel, media, etc.) influence your interest in English?
Interviewer	How did the support or attitudes of people around you influence your motivation to learn English?
Interviewer	How did achieving milestones in your English learning journey affect your motivation and confidence in your language skills?
Interviewer	Thanks for sharing your experience with me.

Appendix B
Sample Extract from the Interviews

#Participant 1

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for taking the time to speak with me today. Please start by describing your background.
Shuvo	Hello, I'm Shuvo. I am 21 years old and currently studying in the Business department at the University of Scholars.
Interviewer	Nice meeting you, Shuvo. What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Shuvo	My first language is Bengali. I have learnt English as well.
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Shuvo	I started learning English in school, as it was always part of our curriculum.
Interviewer	What were your main reasons for learning English when you first started?
Shuvo	Initially, it was mainly for school. English was mandatory, and we had to pass, so that was my primary motivation.
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about or not particularly interested in?
Shuvo	I was uninterested in it as it was a complex foreign language. I learned it because I had to, not because I wanted to.
Interviewer	Do you have any specific goals for learning English? What were those?
Shuvo	My main goal was to pass exams and get good grades in school.
Interviewer	Can you describe any external rewards or incentives that motivated you to learn English, such as good grades, certifications, or a job?
Shuvo	The primary reward was getting good grades. There was also the understanding that English proficiency could help with future job prospects.
Interviewer	Did you have any personal interest in the English language or culture? If so, what were they?
Shuvo	Not really. I was driven mainly by academic requirements and future career prospects.
Interviewer	How did your initial motivations align with your long-term goals for learning English? Did you have any career or personal aspirations linked to your English skills?
Shuvo	Initially, my motivations were short-term, focused on passing exams. Over time, I realized that English is essential for my business career, so my long-term goals became more aligned with improving my language skills.
Interviewer	How did your motivation for learning English change over time? Can you describe any events or experiences that influenced these changes?
Shuvo	My motivation changed when I started my undergraduate studies in English. The need to understand lectures, write reports, and participate in discussions made me realize the importance of improving my English.
Interviewer	Did you experience any periods of low motivation? If so, what caused it, and how did you overcome it?
Shuvo	Yes, I experienced low motivation when I struggled with speaking. It was hard to find the right words, and that discouraged me. I tried to overcome it by watching English movies and reading books, even though it was not the same as practicing with someone.
Interviewer	Can you describe a specific moment or experience that significantly increased your motivation to continue learning English?
Shuvo	A significant moment was when I successfully gave a presentation in English. It boosted my

	confidence and motivated me to keep improving.
Interviewer	Have you ever wished to join an English-speaking community or culture? If yes, what aspects of that culture appealed to you?
Shuvo	I never thought about moving to an English-speaking country. My focus has been more on the practical benefits of learning the language.
Interviewer	How did your motivation shift from seeing English as a requirement to viewing it as a valuable skill for your future?
Shuvo	The shift happened when I realized the practical benefits of English for my studies and career. Understanding its importance in business made me see it as a valuable skill.
Interviewer	What learning strategies did you find most effective for improving your English? Did you use particular resources such as classes, books, or online tools?
Shuvo	Watching English movies and reading books helped me explore a wide range of vocabulary. Additionally, writing my assignments in English has been effective.
Interviewer	Did you engage in activities outside of formal English lessons? How did these activities affect your motivation?
Shuvo	I only watched movies and read books in English. It helped me to improve my language skills and kept me motivated, even though I did not practice speaking much.
Interviewer	How did exposure to English-speaking cultures (through travel, media, etc.) influence your interest in English?
Shuvo	Exposure to English-speaking cultures through movies and media has influenced my interest in the language. It made me realize the global importance of English.
Interviewer	How did the support or attitudes of people around you influence your motivation to learn English?
Shuvo	My teachers' support has been motivating. They helped me understand the importance of English and have always encouraged me to improve my skills.
Interviewer	How did achieving milestones in your English learning journey affect your motivation and confidence in your language skills?
Shuvo	Achieving milestones, like successfully giving presentations and writing reports, boosted my confidence and motivation. It showed me that I could improve and succeed with effort.
Interviewer	Thanks for sharing your experience with me, Shuvo.
Shuvo	You are welcome.

Participant 2

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for joining me today. Please start by describing your background.
Aisha	Hello, I'm Aisha from Bangladesh. I am 21 years old and currently studying in the Business department at the University of Scholars.
Interviewer	Nice to meet you, Aisha. What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Aisha	My first language is Bengali. I speak English fluently and know a small amount of Hindi from watching movies.
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Aisha	I began learning English as a child, as it was a mandatory subject in school.
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about?
Aisha	Initially, I struggled a lot with learning English and needed to be more excited about it. It

	felt more like a challenge for me to learn.
Interviewer	What specific goals did you have for your English learning at the beginning?
Aisha	My initial goal was to get good grades in school. Over time, I wanted to communicate effectively and use English for better job opportunities in the future.
Interviewer	Can you describe any external rewards or incentives that motivated you to learn English, such as grades, certifications, or a job?
Aisha	Yes, achieving good grades and the potential for better job prospects were significant external motivators for me.
Interviewer	Did you have any intrinsic motivations, such as a personal interest in the English language or culture? If so, what were they?
Aisha	Yes, I developed a personal interest in English, especially after watching English movies. I got interested in the culture and wanted to understand the language better.
Interviewer	How did your initial motivations align with your long-term goals for learning English? Did you have any career or personal aspirations linked to your English skills?
Aisha	My motivations were primarily academic but gradually aligned with my long-term goals. I aspired to use English in my career and move to an English-speaking country.
Interviewer	How did your motivation for learning English change over time? Can you describe any events or experiences that influenced these changes?
Aisha	My motivation changed when I visited London with my family. I loved the country and eventually wanted to move there. Their native language is English, and I wanted to learn the language better to become part of that English-speaking community.
Interviewer	Did you experience any periods of low motivation? If so, what caused it, and how did you overcome it?
Aisha	Yes, there were times when I felt demotivated, especially when I struggled with understanding complex grammar. I overcame it by taking English courses online and watching YouTube videos.
Interviewer	Can you describe a specific moment or experience that significantly increased your motivation to continue learning English?
Aisha	A significant moment was when I visited Landon and was able to communicate with the native speakers. It boosted my confidence and motivation to keep improving.
Interviewer	How did your motivation shift from seeing English as a requirement to viewing it as a valuable skill for your future?
Aisha	The shift happened when I realized the broader opportunities English could provide, such as connecting with more people and understanding global media.
Interviewer	What learning strategies did you find most effective for improving your English? Did you use particular resources such as classes, books, or online tools?
Aisha	Taking formal classes helped me initially. However, I made friends from different parts of the world via Facebook, and communicating with them in English was very effective for improving myself.
Interviewer	How did exposure to English-speaking cultures through travel or social media influence your interest in the English language?
Aisha	Exposure to English-speaking cultures significantly increased my interest in the language. It made me want to learn more and understand the cultural nuances.
Interviewer	How did the support or attitudes of people around you influence your motivation to learn English?
	My family allowed me to learn the language better. Also, my friends from different

Aisha	countries showed me a positive attitude and played an essential role in my language learning and overcoming challenges.
Interviewer	How did achieving milestones in your English learning journey affect your motivation and confidence in your language skills?
Aisha	Achieving milestones, like getting good grades, understanding a movie without subtitles, or being able to communicate with native speakers, significantly boosted my confidence.
Interviewer	Do you have any plans for the future related to your English skills?
Aisha	I look forward to moving to an English-speaking country to get more exposure and immerse myself further in the language and culture.
Interviewer	That sounds exciting. What motivates you to make this move?
Aisha	I want to experience the culture firsthand, improve my language skills even more, and explore better career opportunities.
Interviewer	How will living in an English-speaking country help you?
Aisha	It will provide me with real-life practice and help me better understand cultural contexts, making my communication more effective and natural.
Interviewer	What advice would you give to someone struggling with learning English?
Aisha	Find something you enjoy that involves English, like movies or music. Use social media to make friends from different parts of the world. Practice regularly, and do not be bold and make mistakes.
Interviewer	That is excellent advice. Thank you for sharing your experience, Aisha.
Aisha	You are welcome.

Participant 3

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for joining me today. Please start by describing your background.
Rahim	Hello, I'm Rahim from Bangladesh. I am 22 and studying Business Administration at the University of Scholars.
Interviewer	Nice to meet you, Rahim. What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Rahim	My first language is Bengali. I also speak English and know a small quantity of Hindi.
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Rahim	I started learning English in school because it was one of our main subjects, and we had to do well in English to maintain our overall school performance.
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about or not particularly interested in?
Rahim	In the beginning, learning English was more of a necessity for me. I wanted good grades but needed to be more excited about it.
Interviewer	Was it changed later? If yes, what changed your perspective on learning English?
Rahim	When I was in high school, my cousins from the USA visited us. Even though I knew enough English to get good grades, I realized I needed help understanding and communicating with them. This experience made me realize the gap between textbook English and real-life conversations.
Interviewer	How did this experience with your cousins influence your motivation to learn English?
Rahim	It was a turning point for me. I became determined to improve my English to communicate effectively with my cousins and understand spoken English better. I wanted

	to engage in conversations naturally.
Interviewer	What specific steps did you take to improve your English after this realization?
Rahim	I started watching English TV shows and movies and listening to podcasts. Also, watching YouTube videos was very helpful as they did not cost me any money, and I could watch them on my own time.
Interviewer	How did these activities help you improve your English skills?
Rahim	These resources helped me understand different accents and colloquial expressions. Listening to podcasts improved my listening skills, and different educational YouTube videos helped me understand the complex grammar of English.
Interviewer	Did you experience any periods of low motivation? If so, what caused it, and how did you overcome it?
Rahim	Sometimes, I felt frustrated because I could not understand everything or speak as fluently as I wanted. I overcame it by reminding myself of my goal and staying consistent with my practice.
Interviewer	Can you describe a specific moment or experience that significantly increased your motivation to continue learning English?
Rahim	A significant moment was when my cousins visited again a few years later. This time, I understood them much better and could converse with them. Their positive feedback and encouragement significantly boosted my motivation.
Interviewer	Have you ever wished to join an English-speaking community or culture? If yes, what aspects of that culture appealed to you?
Rahim	Yes, I wanted to be part of an English-speaking community. I want to explore diversity and different opportunities for my personal growth. Additionally, I would like to connect with people from different communities.
Interviewer	Was there a specific professional or academic goal you wanted to achieve through learning English, such as getting a job, advancing your career, or succeeding in your studies?
Rahim	My goal was to succeed in my studies and use English to advance my career, possibly by working in an international company or pursuing further studies abroad.
Interviewer	How did your motivation shift from seeing English as a requirement to viewing it as a valuable skill for your future?
Rahim	The shift happened when I realised that English was not just a subject in school but a tool for participating in a broader community.
Interviewer	What learning strategies did you find most effective for improving your English?
Rahim	Learning a foreign language from a textbook must be more than just learning it. Life practice is more important, so I tried to learn English from movies and different books and practised with my friends.
Interviewer	How did the support or attitudes of people around you influence your motivation to learn English?
Rahim	My family's support, especially my cousins and friends, was crucial. They gave me positive feedback and always encouraged me to keep learning.
Interviewer	How did achieving milestones in your English learning journey affect your motivation and confidence in your language skills?
Rahim	Achieving milestones and having a smooth conversation in English significantly boosted my motivation and confidence. It reassured me that my efforts were working.
Interviewer	Do you have any plans for the future related to your English skills?

Rahim	I plan to study in an English-speaking country further to immerse myself in the language and culture. I also aim to work in an international company where English proficiency is essential.
Interviewer	That sounds exciting. What advice would you give to someone struggling with learning English?
Rahim	Practice regularly, and be bold and make mistakes. Consistency and patience are key.
Interviewer	That is excellent advice. Thank you for sharing your experience, Rahim.
Rahim	You are welcome.

Participant 4

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for joining me today. Please start by describing your background.
Imran	Hello. I am Imran from Bangladesh. I am 23 years old and currently studying in the Business department at the University of Scholars.
Interviewer	Nice to meet you, Imran. What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Imran	My first language is Bengali. I also speak some basic English.
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Imran	I began learning English in primary school because it was part of the curriculum. It was a mandatory subject, so I had to study it to pass my exams.
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about or not particularly interested in?
Imran	Honestly, I always needed more motivation to learn English. It was just another subject I had to get through to complete my education. I did not see it as particularly interesting or useful for my future.
Interviewer	Can you elaborate on why you did not feel motivated to learn English?
Imran	To me, English is just a language. I understand its global importance, but I always felt more comfortable using Bengali. My focus has always been on local matters and how I can contribute to my community.
Interviewer	Have you had any experiences that reinforced your feelings about English?
Imran	Yes, even though I studied English during my school years, I struggled to get a decent grade, so I did not enjoy speaking or writing in English, and it always felt like a chore.
Interviewer	Do you have any plans that involve using English professionally or personally?
Imran	Not really. After I finish my studies, I aim to start a business locally. I plan to stay in Bangladesh and serve my local community. I do not need strong English skills to achieve this goal.
Interviewer	What kind of business do you plan to start, and how will your language skills play a role?
Imran	I plan to start a small business focusing on local products. Since my customers and partners will mostly be Bengali speakers, I will be OK with advanced English skills. Basic communication will be enough.
Interviewer	Are you improving your English skills, even if you plan to use them sparingly?
Imran	Some benefits are accessing more information or networking with a broader range of people. However, I prefer to go through the process of learning and practicing. I prefer to focus on my strengths and what I enjoy.
Interviewer	How do you feel about opportunities in English-speaking countries?

Imran	I am not interested in moving abroad. Although there are plenty of opportunities here in Bangladesh, I fear talking to any English speaker.
Interviewer	What advice would you give to someone who feels similarly about learning English?
Imran	My advice would be to focus on what truly interests you and what aligns with your goals. If English is not a priority for you, that is OK.
Interviewer	That is an efficient perspective. Thank you for sharing your experience, Imran.
Imran	You are welcome.

#**Participant 5**

Interviewer	Hi, this is Kaniz. Thanks for joining me today. Please start by describing your background.
Sarah	Hello, I'm Sarah from Bangladesh. I am 24 years old and currently studying in the BBA department at the University of Scholars.
Interviewer	Nice to meet you, Sarah. What is your first language, and what other languages do you speak?
Sarah	My first language is Bengali. I also speak some English. I can also read Arabic.
Interviewer	When did you begin learning English, and what was the initial reason for starting?
Sarah	I started learning English in school as part of the syllabus. My parents were keen on learning English and enrolled me in various courses outside of school.
Interviewer	How did you feel about learning English at the beginning of your studies? Was it something you were excited about or not particularly interested in?
Sarah	I could have improved my English initially, but it was challenging. I was not excited about it but knew it was necessary, so I tried my best.
Interviewer	How did your parents' efforts to help you learn English impact your experience?
Sarah	My parents were very supportive and invested a lot in my education. They put me in different courses to help me learn the language better. Despite their efforts, I always needed help to grasp it entirely, which was quite frustrating.
Interviewer	Can you describe some of the difficulties you faced while learning English?
Sarah	I needed help with grammar and pronunciation. Even though I took many courses and practiced a lot, I often felt overwhelmed and needed help to keep up with my more fluent peers.
Interviewer	Despite these challenges, you continued to work on your English. What motivates you to keep trying?
Sarah	I know that having good English skills is essential as it is the international language. My motivation comes from wanting to travel the world and explore different cultures.
Interviewer	How are you currently working on improving your English?
Sarah	I am taking courses on the British Council, watching English documentaries, and practicing speaking with friends who are fluent in English in my class. I am also trying to read more books and articles in English to improve my vocabulary.
Interviewer	Has your English improved over time despite the struggles?
Sarah	Yes, it has improved, but I still have a long way to go. I have made progress, and I am more confident than before.
Interviewer	How will improving your English impact your career prospects?
Sarah	Improving my English will open up more job opportunities for me, both locally and internationally. It will also help me perform better in interviews and communicate professionally.
Interviewer	What advice would you give to someone struggling with learning English?

Sarah	Do not give up; keep practicing even if it seems complicated. Find different tools to practice and learn.
Interviewer	That is excellent advice. Thank you for sharing your experience, Sarah.
Sarah	You are welcome.

Hasnat, M. A., Rahman, K., Khandakar, H., Kalam, F. A., & Hasan, K. K. The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, 2025–1, 74-97

97