

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS:
IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON
MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on finding out the impact of socio-economic background on the motivation to learn English as a second language. To execute this study, two schools of Hyderabad city of Sindh province were selected for study. Rockford Cambridge School (RCS), an English-medium school where most of the students have a very stable and high socio-economic background; and Dr. N. A. Baloch Model School (MS), Sindh University, Hyderabad, a school where most of the students belong to lower and middle class background. Quantitative method of data collection used through a close-ended questionnaire using Likert scale (range 5) comprising 11 items. Four factors of motivation were included to test the motivation level of both groups. Those factors were: (i) instrumental motivation, (ii) international exposure, (iii) intrinsic motivation, and (iv) self-regulated motivation. A total of thirty participants were selected through purposive sampling in order to ensure the representation of participants from both categories i.e. elite and non-elite. Each group consisted of fifteen participants. The data was analysed statistically. The results showed that upper class students were highly motivated and the case with lower and middle class students was the other way round. Major differences were observed in three factors: international exposure, intrinsic motivation and self-regulated motivation. It implied that the higher the socio-economic status of the learners, the more motivated they grow to learn English as a second language.

Key Words: Motivation, Socio-Economic Background, English Language Learners, English as a Second Language, Social Classes

INTRODUCTION

Keller (1983, cited in Schmidt *et.al.*, 1996) describes motivation by comparing it to ability saying that ability is what a person can do and motivation is what a person will do. Johnson (1979: 283, cited in *ibid*) defines motivation as “tendency to expand effort to achieve goals.”

Kormos & Kiddle (2013) in their study of socioeconomic factors behind motivation in foreign language learning in the context of Chile assert that generally this area of research has remained neglected with only few exceptions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Instrumental Motivation: According to Schmidt *et.al*, (1996) instrumentalist and integrated motivation are the two most researched areas of motivation. They define instrumentalist motivation as an impulse for gaining ‘practical advantages’ by learning a particular language, these advantages include economic prosperity, better or lucrative jobs, to achieve some higher social status or pass examinations.

International Exposure Motivation: Jenkins, (2007); Seidlhofer, (2005); Widdowson, (1993 cited in Kormos and Kiddle, 2013) posited that in 21st century context, English language has become a global lingua franca, however, there are other global lingua franca too such as Spanish, French, Arabic, Portuguese, and Urdu in their limited context.

Intrinsic Motivation: Intrinsic motivation is regarded as a very important element of motivation which is very subjective in its nature. Where, intrinsically motivated learners feel a sense of joy while learning some target language; they do it because they love to do it. They are motivated internally and thus, this motivation gets the name intrinsic.

Self-Integrated Motivation: Zimmerman (2000, cited in Abdulhay & Sarkeshikian, 2015) describe self-integration as “...thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals.” Zimmerman (1998, cited in *ibid*) further asserts that self-integration was not a mental capability like intelligence or competence on the contrary it is “self-directive” process in which learners transfer their mental abilities into academic skills.

English Language in Pakistan: A Historical Overview: Pakistan is a multilingual country where several languages are spoken as the mother tongues such as Sindhi, Punjabi, Seraiki, Pashto, Balochi and Urdu are the most important lingua franca in Pakistan (Rehman, 2002). Despite the existence of all those various languages, English still dominates the country in terms of administration, judiciary, officialdom, and arms forces, etc.

English as the Language of the Privileged: In order to be a part of the British power sphere, one needed to be competent in English. According to Rahman (1998) the princes and raja’s would often send their children to England for education, and when they returned they would be able to maintain healthy relationships with the British and would remain on good terms with them.

English as the Gatekeeper to success in Pakistan: Pennycook (2000) calls English as the gatekeeper in job market. This is true for Pakistani context as well. English is a compulsory subject from class one to bachelors in all public sector schools, colleges and universities. Besides, the other parallel educational systems like private schools and missionary schools impart education right from kindergarten levels in English. In public sector,

the medium of instruction for all subjects is English from college to post-graduate level.

EFL Motivation Research in Pakistani Context: There has not been sufficient research in Pakistan on the role of motivation in foreign language learning; even lesser research has been directed towards the socioeconomic factors behind motivation for learning a second/foreign language. However, Akram & Ghani (2013) have contributed significantly in this context, since their study aimed at analysing the relationship between socioeconomic status and the motivation to learn English language in their particular context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was quantitative in nature and based on the questionnaire containing eleven items of investigation. This was designed using Likert scale of range 5. The questionnaire was administered to 30 students. Two schools of city Hyderabad were selected for this purpose. Rockford Cambridge School (RCS), Hyderabad is an O/A Level school affiliated with the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. The majority of enrolled students had a very rich and privileged economic background. The monthly fees of school, the expenditure and fees of each examination in O/A levels are beyond the affordability of middle and lower class families. Fifteen students were selected from this school using purposive sampling. Another school of the city namely Dr.N.A.Baloch Model School, University of Sindh, Hyderabad (MS) was selected for this study. This school despite of being among the oldest in the city has students mostly coming from lower and middle class families. The same numbers of fifteen students from matriculation class were recruited from this school too. But unlike RCS where some of the respondents were females, we had all male participants from Dr.N.A.Baloch Model School as the co-education in this school is limited to primary education only. Purposive sampling instrument was also used. The students' age ranged between the age of 13 and 16. They were asked about the professions or occupation of their parents/guardians in order to determine their socioeconomic status. Therefore, two different schools were selected to determine the differences in motivation created by socioeconomic factors.

According to the information provided by participants through questionnaire, the parents' occupation of four students from RCS was as follows:

Family Business	04
Factory Ownership	02
Superior Civil Services Officers	05
Politician	01
Landlords	04

Whereas, the parents' occupation of students from MS was as follows:

Clerks	03
Secondary School Teacher	01
Government Employees (BPS 07 to 16)	08
Small Shop Owners	02
Bus Driver	01

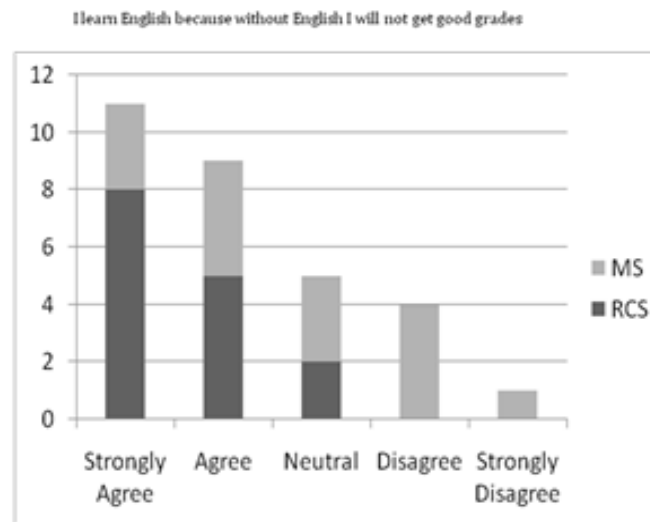
Four factors were analysed to measure the extent of motivation in participants. These factors adopted from Kormos & Kiddle's (2013) study:

1. Instrumental: 2 Items
2. International Exposure: 2 Items
3. Intrinsic Motivation 3 Items
4. Self-Regulated Motivation 4 Items

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. I learn English because without English I will not get good grades.

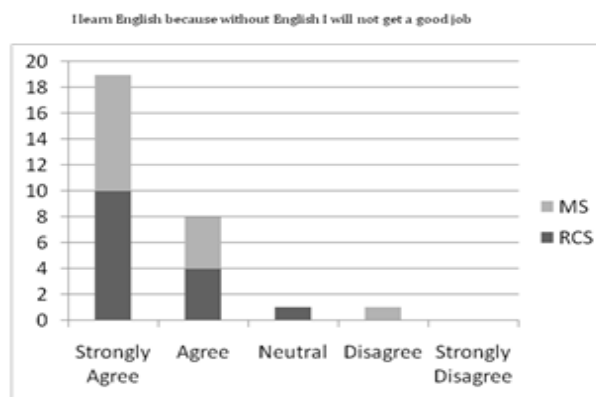
FIGURE-1



Discussion: At RCS, almost all the subjects are taught in English, that is why the students need to be good at English in order to pass examinations and get good grades, at MS however, most of the subjects are offered in mother tongue, so students there do not necessarily need English language to pass their examinations.

2. I learn English because without English I will not get a good job.

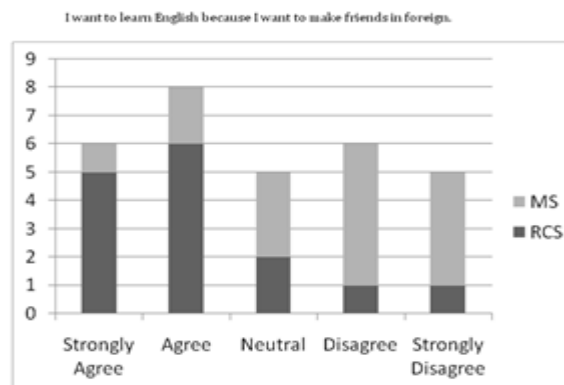
FIGURE-2



Discussion: It is a common impression in Pakistan that English is the gateway to success especially in job market. That is why most of the students want to be proficient at it for this instrumental purpose both at RCS and MS as this motivation works as an impulse for both groups almost equally.

3. I want to learn English because I want to make friends in foreign.

FIGURE-3

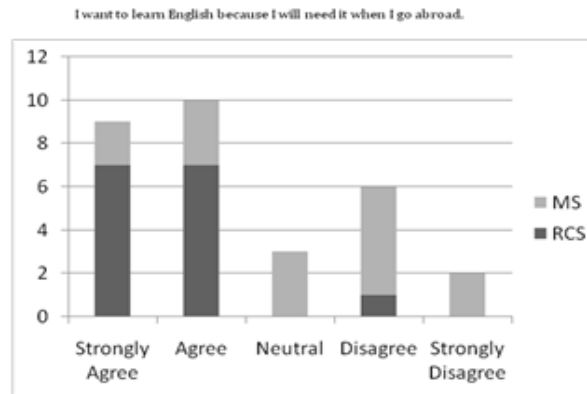


Discussion: Through personal informal interaction with students we came to know that RCS students were keen to make friends in foreign as they often keep visiting other countries due to their stable economic background; hence they have the opportunity and chance to do so as they come in interaction with the foreigners. Students at MS, however, cannot afford to go to foreign and hence have no chance to make friends there that is why there

is hardly any motivation to learn English for this purpose. However, students agreeing have a chance to befriend foreigners through social media but that practice is not very common.

4. I want to learn English because I will need it when I go abroad.

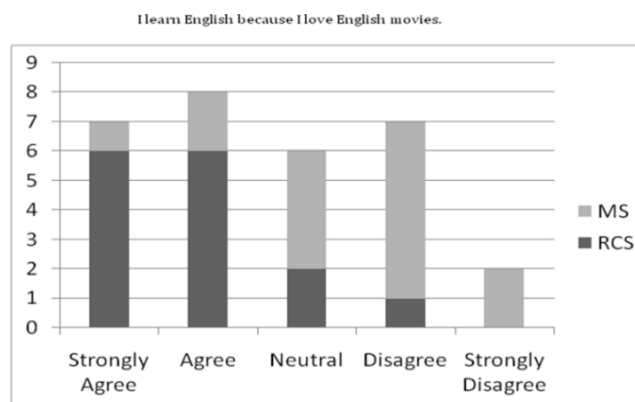
FIGURE-4



Discussion: As discussed earlier, due to the lack of opportunities to go abroad, MS students were less motivated to learn English for this purpose; but for students at RCS, this worked as a great motivation as they aspire to study and work in foreign lands due to abundance of opportunities and economic resources.

5. I learn English because I love English movies.

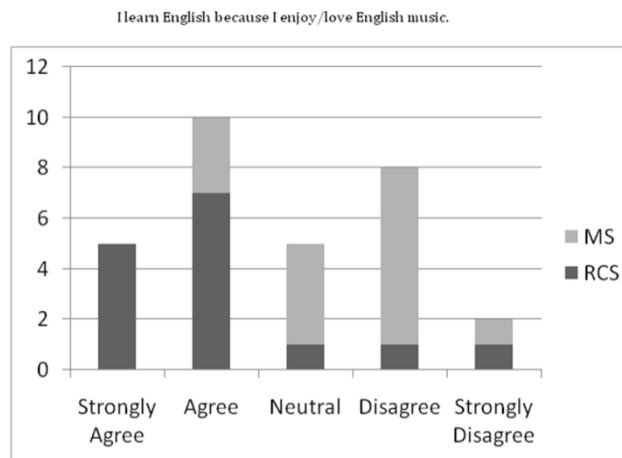
FIGURE-5



Discussion: RCS students watch English movies and understand them due to sufficient competence in British and American English pronunciation and verbal communication. However, students at MS do not have that proficiency to understand English movies. Some students said that they watched English movies hardly understanding any of the dialogues. Love of English movies also happens to be a fashion among upper class students as per our observations.

6. I learn English because I enjoy/love English music.

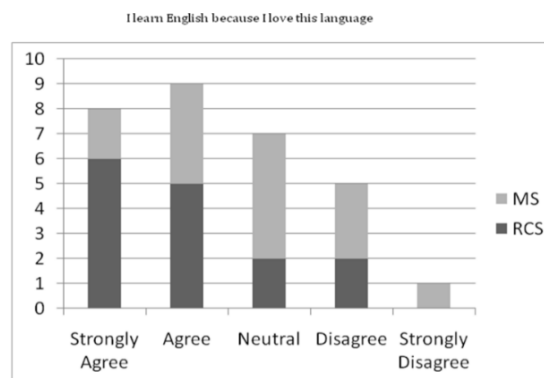
FIGURE-6



Discussion: Observations and discussion made above are also true for this item. Competence and fashion are the motivation and determining factors behind learning language for this purpose.

7. I learn English because I love this language.

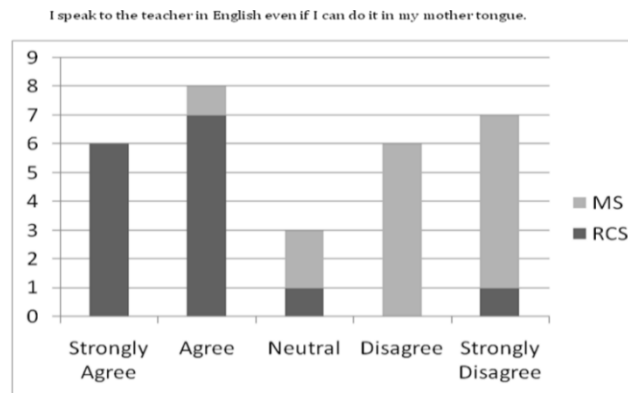
FIGURE-7



Discussion: RCS students had access to English-medium schools since their primary level and hence they had a considerable amount of exposure and socialization into English language to love it. In contrast, for the MS students, English often happens to be a source of trouble and difficulty and they start fostering adverse feelings against it. But, due to global and instrumental importance of English, some students at MS also love it as a result of intrinsic motivation.

8. I speak to the teacher in English even if I can do it in my mother tongue.

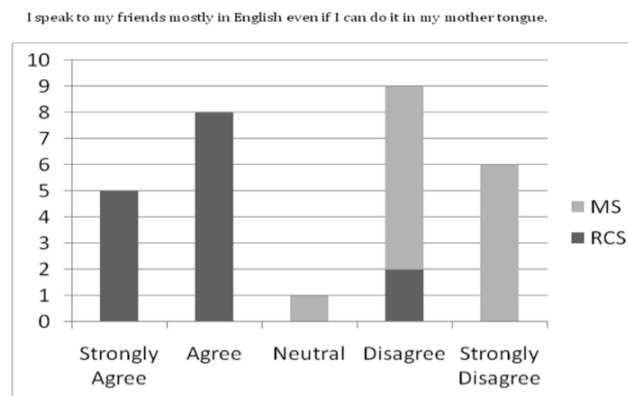
FIGURE-8



Discussion: Teachers at MS mostly interact with students in their mother language and as compared to MS students' English competence level to those in RCS, the former lag far behind the later. Lack of confidence and that of required competence do not allow students at MS to be motivated to speak English on the self-regulated basis. In RCS, however, as the chart clearly shows, students are very much motivated to speak to their teachers in English, voluntarily.

9. I speak to my friends mostly in English even if I can do it in my mother tongue.

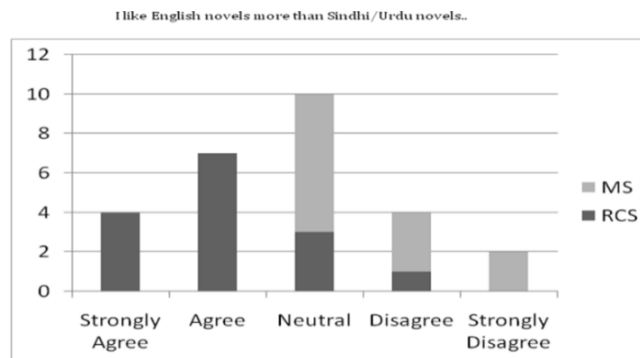
FIGURE-9



Discussion: At this level, there is a complete disparity between the two target groups. RCS students speak to their peers or friends in English voluntarily most of the times. This is confirmed by our own observations as well. Even if they do not speak English all the time, but still their sentences contain very huge amount of fragments in English and there is a lot of code-switching and code-mixing observed in them. The phenomenon at MS was completely reverse to this.

10. I like English novels more than Sindhi/Urdu novels.

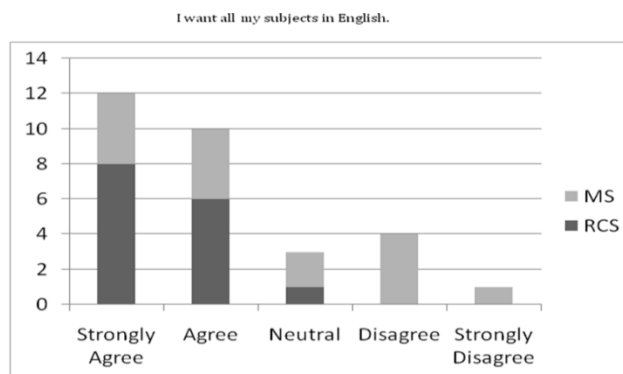
FIGURE-10



Discussion: Due to their rarest exposure to literature in mother language, students at RCS hardly had any experience with novels in Sindhi/Urdu except one student who read Urdu novels. The neutral category highlights the students who do not read novels in any language. RCS students were keen to read English novels and there was no mentioning of reading English novels among MS students. Only a few of MS students read Sindhi or Urdu novels.

11. I want all my subjects in English.

FIGURE-11



Discussion: Students at RCS already had all their subjects in English language so there was no problem for them desiring to have all their subjects in the same language. The scenario at MS was, however, a bit interesting, that in a sense that students lack proficiency in English language and have their subjects in mother tongue but despite these factors some of them wanted their subjects to be in English. That might be due to global and instrumental importance of English in Pakistani context.

CONCLUSION

The present study found that the higher the socio-economic status and the more stable student's socio-economic background, and the more motivated they were to learn English. Four factors were analysed to measure the level of motivation. There was not a big difference between the instrumental motivation behind the two groups. A considerable amount of disparity was also noticed between the two groups when it came to international posture and intrinsic motivation; these two factors were directly related to the opportunities available to students. However, a dramatic and a very huge disparity observed in terms of self-regulated motivation. Students at RCS were highly motivated and in contrast, MS students hardly showed any such response or motivation caused by self-regulated factor.

There may be other confounding factors causing this disparity, this study analysed the socio-economic factors as resulting in the same. This study also found that upper-class students were more motivated due to their stable and prosperous socio-economic status to learn English as second language then the students belonging to middle and lower middle classes of society.

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