

The effects of socio-economic drawbacks on second language learning in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The Second Language (L2) research has presented vast curiosity to learners and their judgments on L2. The numerous directions of learner-focus study, however, have not been sufficient to emphasize the learning experiences of learners in relation to their social and economic context, particularly in third world countries. This research explores the perspectives and experiences of school learners in second language learning in the peripheries of Bangladesh. In addition, this research demonstrates how socio-economic drawbacks of students' family affect their English subject scores in secondary school certificate examination. Educational background of parents also contributes to achieve the better scores in L2. A close relationship is found between learners' family education, parents' occupation, and family income and their achieved scores in English in board examination.

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Introduction

English is an international language. The importance of English is beyond description in the present global context. English is used as a medium of communication, education, business, politics and almost every discipline and advance sector. In Bangladesh, English is treated as a second language. None can avoid the usefulness of learning English here. A good level of proficiency in English language is a prerequisite for getting a good job in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi learners try to experience English from primary to University level. But they are hardly successful to acquire a good command over this language. British rule in India applied English in this region to run their colonial activities properly. But, Pennycook (1994) said that it was neither feasible nor in the interest of the colonial project to incorporate English on a broad scale. At present, however, English's global image has changed consequentially. English is a crucial factor that affects the success of learners in schools, colleges, universities and in the work places. The importance of English in Bangladesh regularly emphasizes the importance of evaluating the factors influencing this success. Socio-Economic Status (SES) has arisen as a different scope of study in the 20th century. SES is a multi-disciplinary approach for research in economic phenomena. Economists and socialists have observed these social issues through an economic lens. The prime objective of this research is to find out the effects of socio-economic drawbacks of parents to learn English in Bangladesh.

Few researches have been carried out on the success of English as L2 relatively by the learners of socio-economic drawback backgrounds. Sadovnik stated that this little research in the education of L2 is not acceptable because sociological research of education successfully identifies the different social issues related to academic performance (Sadovnik, 2007). The few studies that have analyzed such interactions have made in conclusive results. For example, Cherian carried out a study in South Africa and his research supported authoritative relationship between family earnings and educational benefits in both developed and developing countries (Cherian, 1991). His analysis revealed effective relationship between family earnings and educational benefits for male as well as female learners. In the study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Tollefson calls for supervision to apply student variables to sociological theories and to see language as a social phenomenon (Tollefson, 1991). Pennycook explores differences in L2 learning with regard to social status, sex, geo-locations and more other student-affiliated components (Pennycook, 2004).

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Lin's findings in various social and economic environments of the four contrasting classrooms demonstrated how the social class histories of students influenced their academic experiences and how some teachers and learners were more able to function within these frameworks than rest others (Lin, 1999). Cooke's study with migrants in the United Kingdom exhibits the influence of their living conditions and profiles in their English learning experiences as a second language in the same way (Cooke, 2006). Palfreyman's conducted a study with the learners of a female university in the UAE and his study also highlights the contribution of socio-economic resources beyond traditional academic organizations (Palfreyman, 2006). His study confirms that learning is a process that takes place in a person along with other inter-related social factors like class, gender, and family income.

Performance is mainly a production of cognitive and financial happiness along with certain matters. Nigel and William said, if an individual is cognitively and socially happy, then in almost all, constructive production will be reflected on his or her success (Nigel & William, 2005). They also added that there is a clear correlation between socio-economic factors and the ad hoc success of students in English language. Seyfried showed that socio-economic drawbacks learners had been recognized to be approximately 10% lower in national examination grades than socio-economic high learners (Seyfried, 1998).

The few researchers reviewed above indicate conflicting association between socio-economic status and second language learning because of researcher's methodological biases and limitations. Moreover, the lack of study indicates that more study necessities to be conducted in this field.

It is also vital that Socio-Economic Status (SES) and second language learning relationship provide comprehensive methodological processes for operationalizing SES and L2 complex constructs. Although the data recoded in this analysis have shortcomings of their own.

The objective of the research is to find out the effects on academic achievement of L2 by social and economic variables. An outline of L2 learning theory, pedagogy and regulation may be provided by this experimental document. Another aim of this research is to realize various socio-institutional limitations that tell the choice of languages and experiences and outcomes of language teaching and learning in various socio-economic contexts. The research is designed to represent an effort to revitalize the request to concentrate on the social context of the second language learning.

Research and Methodology

This research was conducted in the rural area of the district of Barishal, a southern district of Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2011), Barishal's literacy rate is 61.2%. But the performance of the students of this area in English is not promising. The research was carried out in this peripheral context in the light of two objectives. Firstly, the research aimed at emphasizing the complexities of teaching and learning L2 in rural Bangladesh, taking Barishal as a standard example. Secondly, it aimed to create practical proof of the urban-rural gap in the achievement of L2 and to propose its consequences for unified English language policy and the management of English learning.

The study is based on the mixed method approach. The data are produced by the questionnaire survey, the semi-structured interview and the students' results in English in the National School Leaving Examination 2019 called the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) were collected from the schools. This paper contained a variety of independent variables linked to fiscal, cultural and social capital dimensions. Achievement in English are associated with the indicator of parental occupation, education, and income data.

A total of 160 SSC passed students (90 boys and 70 girls) from four rural secondary schools of Barishal have completed questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Two of the schools were for boys, one for girls and the other for boys and girls.

Data and Findings

The study data was analyzed at two stages -univariate and multivariate. These two stages of review are discussed as follows:

Univariate Analyses

Parents' occupation, education, income and monthly educational expenses for each learner.

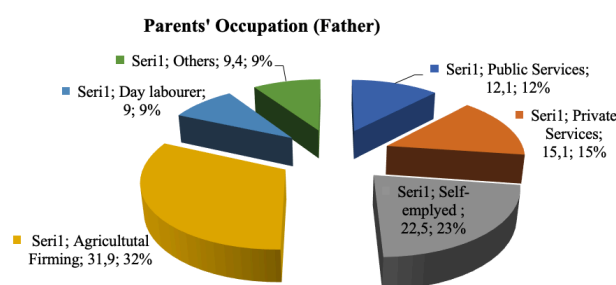


Figure 1: Parent's Occupation (Father)

Figure 1 displays the parents' (father) occupation of 160 students of the study and found that 32% of 160 students' parents (father) were involved in agricultural farming, 23% were self-employed, 15% were involved in private services, 12% were involved in public services, 9% were day laborer and 9% were involved in other occupations.

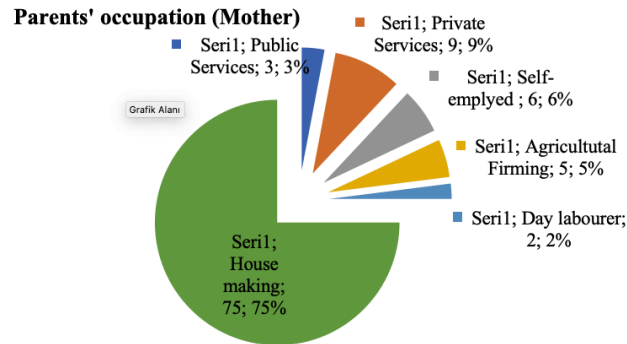


Figure 2: Parent's Occupation (Mother)

Figure 2 displays the parents' (mother) occupation of 160 students of the study and found that 75% of 160 students' parents (mother) were involved in house making, 6% were self-employed, 9% were involved in private services, 3% were involved in public services, and 2% were day laborer.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 display the parental occupation of the SSC passed learners. Although parents (father) were engaged in almost all categories mentioned, parents (mother) were astoundingly interested in home-making (75%). In a rural Bangladeshi background, where women mainly provide for the family by working from indoors, this is not unexpected. The highest numbers of parents (father) of the participants (32%) were involved in farming.

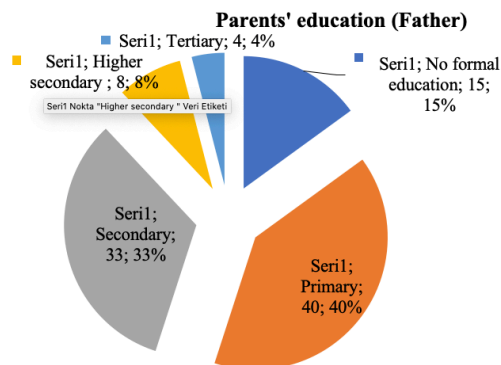


Figure 3: Parent's Education (Father)

Figure 3 displays the most parents' (father) of the participant students of the study had primary and secondary levels of education (73%). Fathers having no formal education of the respondents were more than that of higher secondary and tertiary education (15% versus 12%).

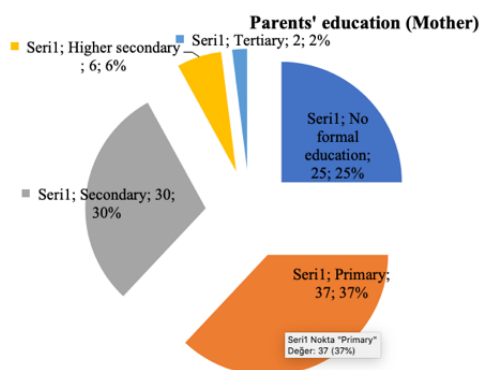


Figure 4: Parent's Education (Mother)

Figure 4 displays the most parents' (mother) of the participant students of the study had primary levels of education (37%). 30% of the respondents' mothers had the secondary level of education. 25% of the respondents' mothers had no formal education, 6% had higher secondary education and 2% had tertiary education.

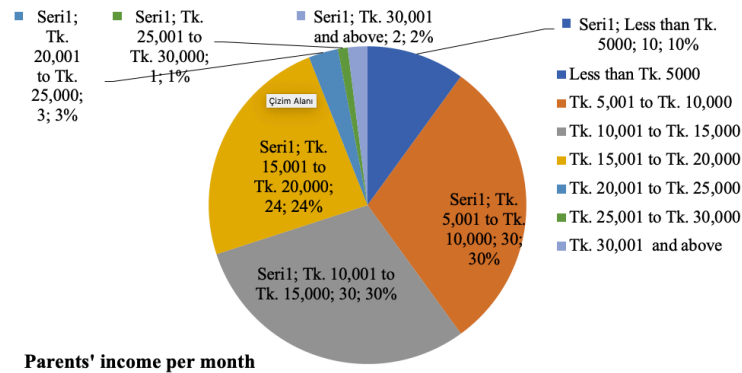


Figure 5: Parents' income per month

Figure 5 displays the highest range of parents' income of the participant students in the study was in the range of BDT 5,001 to BDT 10,000 and BDT 10,001 to BDT 15,000 (60%). 24% of the respondents' parents' income was in the range of BDT 15,001 to BDT 20,000. 3%, 1% and 2% of the respondents' parents' income was in the range of BDT 20,001 to BDT 25,000, BDT 25,001 to BDT 30,000 and BDT 30,000 over respectively.

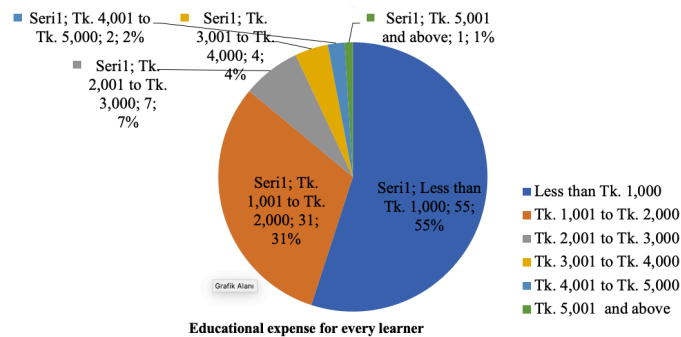


Figure 6: Educational expense for every learner

Figure 6 displays the highest range of educational expense for every learner in the study was in the range of less than BDT 1,000. 31% of the respondents' educational expense was in the range of BDT 1,001 to BDT 2,000. 7%, 4%, 2% and 1% of the respondents' educational expense was in the range of BDT 2,001 to BDT 3,000, BDT 3,001 to BDT 4,000, BDT 4,001 to BDT 5,000, and BDT 5,000 above respectively.

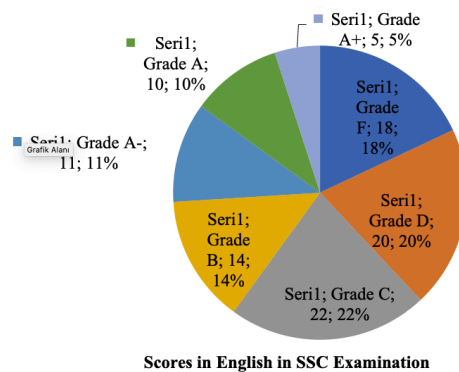


Figure 7: Scores in English in SSC Examination

Figure 7 displays the scores in English in SSC Examination. 5% of the respondents had got grade A+, 10% had got grade A, 11% had got grade A-, 14% had got grade B, 22% had got grade C, 20% had got grade D, and 18% had got grade F in English course in SSC examination.

Multivariate Analyses

The findings were further analyzed applying multivariate strategy retrogressions to explore variables (e.g. condition of social and economic resources) that were independently correlated with the SSC English grades of the learners. Multivariate techniques help one to comprehend relationships after correction for the impact of other factors that prevail in a particular context between specific forecast variables and result variables. Due to the relationships between the free variables (for example, parents' income was substantially associated with parents' education and education expenditures were associated with income), this section would only disclose the relationship of parents' income and parents' education to English scores in the SSC examination.

Multivariate analyzes disclosed that English grades of participant students in the SSC examination were significantly correlated with parents' income. Learners whose parents' income was in the range of BDT 30001 and above had got 2.25 times higher grades in English in the SSC than those whose parents' income was less than 5000 BDT. Equally, learners whose parents' income was BDT 10001-15000 had got 2.5 times higher grades in the SSC English than those whose parents' income was less than BDT 5000. Learners whose parents' income was BDT 5001-10000 had got higher grades than those whose parents' income was less than BDT 5000, but the possibility was not numerically important.

The findings further revealed that the students whose parents were highly educated had got higher grades in the SSC English. Learners whose parents had secondary education had got 2.6 times higher grades than those whose parents had no systematic education. Besides, learners of higher secondary or higher educated parents had got 4 times higher grades in the SSC English than the learners of parents who had no systematic education.

Discussion

Parents' occupation, education, income, as well as monthly educational expenses for each learner and L2 Proficiency

The study revealed that parents' occupation, parents' monthly income and the capacity of parents to spend for every learner per month had crucial relationship with English learning in rural Bangladesh. Variations in the achievement of the learners' in English as to whether their parents were in salaried service or in other professions. There will be higher levels of education for parents who were in salaried service than in other jobs. Likewise, it guaranteed a daily monthly income in a traditionally deprived area, such as the rural area of Barishal. Additionally, this professional choice has encouraged individuals to socialize with other learned people at service and to develop values, attitudes and behaviors that attach greater importance to the education and academic performance of children. The ethnographic analysis of child-rearing in the middle, working class and necessitous families in the United States, both white and black by Lareau revealed the professions of those parents 'mattered' because their jobs persuaded their values and practices of child-rearing (Lareau, 2007).

Parents' monthly income and their capacity to spend for each learner per month- the two other elements of economic resources were discovered to support learners from families with higher income and expenditure levels. Multivariate research found that an improvement in the amount of income has shown a comparable improvement in the mean ratings that students in SSC English were more likely to receive higher grades. Nevertheless, this is the maximum degree of parents' income that was importantly correlated with the success of English. Dubois in his study in the United States explained that insufficient income of parents had an impact on the arrangement of education supporting materials at home which in turn influences the impressions of students because they are discouraged from engaging in activities of self-development (DuBois, 2001). His point often refers to the current sense. Firstly, it is economic capital for parents to be able to afford books and educational supplies for their children and most specially, to provide them with private tutoring in English (PTE). There are adverse effects of not having access to sufficient capital: some students could not sit in the SSC examination because their parents were not able to provide the demanded examinations fees. More importantly, parents' low income prevented learners to take the opportunities of PTE. Secondly, parents' economic conditions have given rise to self-confidence among learners. In a nutshell, parents' economic characteristics influenced learners' educational success in L2 learning through controlling their entry to essential logistics (necessary books and other essential supplies), learning chances (like PTE) and self-development (like motivation and confidence).

The data of the study showed that learners who were from highly educated family surpassed learners who were from low educated family. Multivariate analyzes involved hardly education of father as an indicator. Analyses found that learners whose fathers were highly educated were about three times (on average) more likely to attain higher grades in SSC English than the learners whose fathers deprived of systematic education.

Biddle and Li showed that the connection between the education of father and English success validated in connection between parents' education and educational success in literature (Biddle, 2001; Li, 2007). The data produced by the study substantiated the function of parents' education in schooling and academic outcomes. For example, a large number of the learners from under-privileged family background marked that their parents were not learned enough to say what grades they looked forward to their youngsters in the SSC examination because they were not familiar with the phraseology applied in measuring educational success.

Besides, regardless of their level of education, both parents did indeed support their children, even though some of them do not have formal education or just a low level of education.

Conclusion

The results of research have some shortcomings but these results have involvements in Bangladesh and other developing areas for the strategy as well as implementation of L2 English teaching. The present research indicates that learners' family's socio-economic condition has much impact on the low English success. The contribution of family is important, especially in the context of: a) the low standard of English teaching in schools, and b) the lack of chances for learning outside schools in rural areas. For these reasons, learners have to depend on private tutors to learn English which needs considerable investment in family capital. There is no other way to enhance the standard of English at schools to bring significant improvements in the current standard of learning English in rural community, and to minimize the contribution of family on their educational achievements. In this circumstance, it is highly necessary to expand the opportunities for the school teachers of English to develop themselves professionally.

In addition, the results indicate that the poor educational achievement of drawbacks learners is not only an academic difficulty but also a socio-economic problem. It is not in the range of schools to address such type of social and economic problems. However, schools can discuss the problems of disparity in English learning outcomes and formulate mechanisms to minimize differences within their restricted means and capabilities. More feasibly, schools should coordinate formal and informal events that can lead to the positive self-performances of learners to enable them establishing higher yet reasonable aspirations in terms of potential education and career, and encourage them, in spite of the untoward circumstances, to work hard. The implementation of academic therapy in rural schools may be helpful for offering students proper aspirations, optimism and inspiration. The thesis has implications for L2 learning theory and analysis.

Considering its limitations, the results of the research as explained and addressed in the earlier pages, should be viewed. The sample for the questionnaire survey was not a representative specimen. In terms of practical investigation and methods, however, this was an arbitrary option. Although the results may be not widely relevant to the entire country, these would have relevance to other regions of rural Bangladesh since the social and economic conditions of other rural areas of Bangladesh are almost same.

Secondly, taking a specimen from a predominantly poor and comparatively equivalent area, considering socio-economic condition, also indicated that the results did not reveal huge variations between the respondents regarding their parents' income. On the contrary, the benefit of concentrating on a predominantly improvised group is that we can consider the average success of learners from the area.

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