University Students' Reticence in English Language Classes and Outside: A Micro-level Study from Socio-Economic Perspectives

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Abstract

Students' verbal participation in class is of paramount importance for fruitful learning. It also helps students to achieve interpersonal skills. But, students tend to remain reticent in classes across the world. The reasons for this problem has long been studied from cognitive, affective and socio-cultural perspectives. But learners are not merely biological entities with only cognitive and psychological attributes. They also belong to society and their learning behavior is influenced by socio-economic factors too. The reticent behavior of learners are similarly influenced by the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the learners and their parents. This study aims to investigate whether the tertiary level students' reticent behavior is influenced by parents' socio-economic factors as well as by the cognitive and affective factors. This study follows the mixed approach to research. Surveys were conducted among students and interviews were conducted among teachers of the English Department of a university to investigate the real reasons for the students' reticent behavior in language classes. The findings reveal the fact that the students' reticent behavior is mostly due to their anxiety created by financial stress. It was also investigated to see if there is any link between parents' educational qualification and students' overall academic achievement. A positive correlation was found between these two variables. It was found that parents' higher academic qualifications have a positive impact on their children's success in the English language. Though this study investigates the reticent behavior, its recommendations can be applied to find out the reasons for students' under-achievement in any subject. It can also be applied to know whether difference in parents' financial capability impacts their children's academic success.

Key Words: Reticence; Oral participation; Socio-Economic status; Parental income; Parental education.

BGC Trust University Journal
Vol. 06, July, 2022, pp. 85 - 110
© BGC Trust University Bangladesh
ISSN : 2073- 5448

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1. Introduction

To make the acquisition of English effective and successful students' oral engagement is important in the classrooms. This claim is compatible with the conceptualization of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach of teaching English, which considers language being taught as a system for expression of meaning (Nunan, 1999). The 'communicative competence' of students can be developed in the classrooms through various activities (Hymes, 1972; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Chang & Goswami, 2011). For this reason, students 'verbal contribution is very important. On the basis of the belief that verbal participation contributes to learning, students are encouraged by their teachers to participate in the classroom discussion, and their participation is often assessed in terms of the 'amount and quality' of their discussion (Warayet, 2011). Students' oral contribution is considered as a criterion for teachers 'success in conducting a good lesson. Although student participation may have different forms and patterns according to the nature of 'interactional activities', the ultimate objective is somewhat to 'increase student involvement' (Bean & Peterson, 1998).

Generally through teachers' 'encouragement and efforts', students are always expected to be able to fully participate in the 'classroom discourse'. In spite of that, the ESL classroom may be a disappointing place if most students remain silent in class, and only a few of them actually participate (Fritschner, 2000). Many teachers experience a great deal of silence in the EFL classroom. This situation is usually called 'reticence.' This creates an uncomfortable feeling for the teachers since it reflects negatively on their teaching practice. Many teachers explore appropriate strategies to encourage their students to participate more in classroom discourse. This reticence has always been construed as a problematic attribute that hinders the development of oral proficiency in the English language. Many Asian EFL teachers who are experiencing this phenomenon at various degrees in their classrooms have always attempted to seek an answer to it. This reticent behavior also extends to the extra-curricular activities of the students. Those who are reticent in classes are so in extra-curricular activities. However, the explanations given are normally simplistic and termed as a stereotypical characteristic of passivity or lack of cooperation (Harumi, 2001). It is simply explained from a linguistic, cognitive perspective.

But it is found that many fluent students also do not want to participate in oral activities. That is why, there is an urgent need to examine this problemfrom other points of view to have a better understanding of this behavior.

The university students of Bangladesh are no exception to this phenomenon described above. The students in the language classes are not interested in verbal participation. Though they are scoring satisfactory marks in the English language courses, their speaking skill does not develop as it should. They are found to be reticent, quiet in the language classes. There is a common trend to blame teachers for their inability to engage students in verbal interaction. The common reasons always attributed to are students' lack of confidence, skill and interest in participation. Most of the research also have focused on these issues. But, the researchers think that this problem may be explained from the socio-economic perspectives too. But what about the non-participation in extra-curricular activities? The socio-economic status (SES) of the students' parents, such as, education, income, is a strong factor in this regard. Our hypothesis is that the students' sense of anxiety derived from financial constraint acts as a strong barrier to their verbal interaction. So, our study aims to investigate the problem from a socio-economic perspective and find out if there is any co-relation between parents' financial constraint and the students' under-achievement including non-participation in classroom interaction.

Objectives of the Research

In tune with the current popular theoretical perspectives of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which highlights the importance of interaction and communication, as well as L2 pedagogy calling for open participation in class, there is a growing demand for oral classroom participation in higher education. That is why, many researchers and teachers generally consider the orally non-participating students reticent and unmotivated (Cao, 2009). Hence, it is important to explain the ESL and EFL students' reticence in L2 classrooms as a complex phenomenon, not merely a behavioral and cognitive problem. We all know that learners belong to a society and their socio-economic constrains influence all their behaviors. Their learning is both accelerated and weakened by factors which are always neither under their control nor that of their teachers.' But, few research is there to correlate reticence with socio-economic factors in higher education level. Most of the research dealing with this issue

concentrates on the students' linguistic, cognitive and behavioral factors. The socio- economic factor that has a strong correlation with teaching-learning in general has been ignored in previous research. So, this research attempts to investigate whether the students' reticence has been mainly influenced by the parental poor economic condition and the subsequent anxiety among students. It aims to find out whether the low income parents' children tend to remain reticent in the language classes. It also aims to investigate if there are other reasons for reticence in class among university students.

We should explain why we have focused on mainly the reticent behavoiur, not on the overall academic achievement? The stereo-typical concept of university graduates has changed worldwide. Only subject- specific knowledge or content knowledge is not enough for graduates to survive in a competitive world. They need interpersonal skills. In the backdrop of the demand for all-round graduates, universities are re-designing their curriculum to incorporate these requirements so as to produce graduates with these attributes. These attributes are the ability to interact, work in group or team and present viewpoints in public.

Research Questions

Given the scarcity of research in this area, this study was undertaken to investigate students' reticence in EFL classrooms at the tertiary level. To achieve this aim, the following research questions have been framed.

1. Are the poor students more reticent than the rich ones?

2. Does the students' reticent behavior change over time?

3. What are the problems that contribute to the university students' reticence in the classrooms and outside?

Literature Review

Reticence

Reticent people tend to be silent or uncommunicative in speech. They are reserved and restrained in expression and presentation. It is though a personality-related or behavioral characteristics, some social factors influence this behavior.

Gerald M. Phillips published the first article on reticence in 1965 stating that some individuals face difficulties while communicating in various situations (Keaten & Kelly, 2000). It was a starting point for the communication researchers to further study reticence in newer perspectives. This construct has gone through revisions and re-conceptualizations ever since. Phillips's original conceptualization considered reticence as a behavior and anxiety related disorder. In his later work, however, the focus has been shifted away from personality-based perspective to a poor communication skills-related issue (Phillips, 1984, 1997).

Based on Phillips' works, Keaten and Kelly (2000) re-conceptualized reticence. Their newly proposed theoretical model added affective component with behavioral and cognitive dimension. Keaten et al. (1999), in a study mentioned that in comparison with non-reticent people, reticent individuals have higher levels of anxiety for negative evaluation and a 'heightened sensitivity' to the views of others. Thus, the reticent people have the tendency to remove the problem of fear by remaining silent as they are afraid of the threat of negative evaluation by others.

Reticence among the Asian Students

Asian students are often portrayed as reticent in the English language classrooms with the minimum or no participation in the classroom discourse (e.g. Li & Jia, 2006; Liu & Jackson, 2009, Arafat, 2013). Most of them are blamed for being irresponsive to their teachers or not being interested in whole-class and group discussions. In different studies conducted across the Asian regions, many reasons for ESL/ EFL students' reticence in class have been identified. Among the common reasons reported include 'fear of losing face', 'low proficiency', 'negative evaluation', cultural beliefs regarding appropriate behavior in classroom contexts, 'incomprehensible input', teacher's 'teaching techniques', 'lack of confidence', 'introversion', 'anxiety', 'perceived communicative competence', etc. (Tsui, 1996; Li & Jia, 2006; Jenkins, 2008; Liu & Jackson, 2009; Xie, 2009; Li & Liu, 2011; Delima. In other words, most of these studies attribute reticence to students' linguistic competence, socio-cultural, psychological, behavioral and pedagogical factors. Such a huge number of reasons identified in the present literature has motivated researchers to find out the real reasons for students' reticence.

Do All Proficient Learners Speak in the Classroom?

But, do all proficient learners participate in classroom interaction? Do all learners who do not participate in oral interaction learn nothing? We also see that some of the proficient learners are also found not to be engaged in conversation using English in classroom although sufficient communication opportunities are provided there. Wen and Clement (2003) found mismatch between students' strong command over grammar and vocabulary and weakness in carrying out English conversations.

Familiarity with Topic

Does familiarity with the topic motivate the students to participate in conversation? The topic of the tasks in the classroom significantly affects L2 use (MacIntyre et al. 1998). Lack of knowledge about a topic of discussion may inhibit learners' self-confidence, and consequently, decrease the possibilities for communication, affecting situational willingness to communicate (WTC). Interest in the topic has also been found to influence learners' decision to speak. In Kang's (2005) study, learners were more likely to engage in a conversation when they feel comfortable and secure about the topic of discussion. Kang suggested that when the topic is of intrinsic or instrumental interest to the learners, they may enjoy getting involved in the discussion. Similar findings were reported by Cao (2011), who found that learners were reluctant to talk about uninteresting topics. Cao and Philip (2006) showed that familiarity with and interest in the topic discussed affected learners' WTC. Correspondingly, in her study on international teaching assistants' (ITAs)'s view of the content of the discussion and its impact on WTC, Compton (2007) concluded that learners were more interested to communicate when the knowledge about the content was common or if they felt confident in their L2 speaking ability.

Anxiety

Anxiety, a psychological illness, is a kind of nervousness. It makes people feel worried about a whole range of issues. It's a long-term condition and people living with anxiety usually feel anxious most days. There are times when people feel more anxious than others, but it tends to last longer than nervousness. It can respond to specific events. However, anxiety doesn't have to be in response to a specific event. It can emerge with almost no warning at all.

What makes anxiety different from nervousness is the length of time that people experience. With anxiety, people's feelings and symptoms are usually fairly constant. On the other hand, nervousness is usually a short-term feeling. It isn't usually constant. A sense of insecurity gives birth to anxiety among people. Financial insecurity also creates anxiety. It cannot be removed within a short time and lasts until it is eradicated. Moreover, anxiety causes changes in human behavior.

Learner silence has been thought to expose foreign language anxiety and hence unwillingness to communicate. Indeed, some researchers (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) described L2 speaking as profoundly anxiety-provoking, so the relation between silence and anxiety is justified. A learner who remains silent in language class is construed as experiencing high levels of anxiety in apprehension of real or anticipated communication. Hence, there is a question, do students prefer one kind of interaction to another? Do students try to avoid specific pattern of classroom interaction? In majority of the cases, students prefer talking to their peers to speaking in front of the whole class. In their study, over one third of their participants reported that they felt anxious in their English class and feared being negatively evaluated. (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Socio-Economic Status and Academic Achievement

Dubow, E. F., Boxer P. and Huesmann, L. R. (2009) mention that there are a number of theories and models that deal with the inter relationship between family socio-economic status and children's behavior. Family process models (e.g., Conger et al., 2002; McLoyd, 1989) stipulate that indices of family SES, including parent education determine the quality of family interactions and child behavior. The social-cognitive-ecological models (e.g., Guerra & Huesmann, 2004; Huesmann, 1998; Huesmann, Eron, & Yarmel, 1987) reveal that "parental education, the quality of family interactions, and child behavior mould, by late adolescence, educational achievement and desire for future educational and occupational success." The Eccles's expectancy-value models (Eccles, 1993; Frome & Eccles, 1998) highlight that ''late adolescent ambition for future success affects real educational and professional success in adulthood.''

There has been a growing body of research which investigated how EFL students' English achievement is affected by parents' poor socio-economic status. Educational achievement is not independent of family influence. It is a well-known fact that family is a social institution since the development of our civilization. Therefore, we cannot ignore the direct and indirect influence of family on children's education. Rollande, D., Pierre, P. and Danielle, L. (1999) say that there are researches that proclaim that children and adolescents from 'lower income, less educated, single-parent and large families' achieve less in school than those from 'higher income, better-educated, two-parent and small families' (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Dombusch, Ritter, Mont-Reynaud &Chez, 1990; Sputa &Paulson, 1995; Violette, 1991).

Abigali and Ifeoma (2013) say that family background is a collective terminology comprising social class or status, family size, family structure, the level of parental education, occupation and other factors pertaining to family life. The research finding of this study is novel because unlike the previous major studies in this field (Triventi 2011; Carneiro et al. 2013; Gonzalez et al. 2017; Wigfield et al. 2006; Hamid & Baldauf 2008; McLachlan et al. 2013; Kyriacou & Zhu 2008, Meir 2004; Han 2007; Byrner & Gelman 1991; Easter brooks &Baker 2002; Gardner 1985), it has highlighted the involvement of parents in L2 learning and performance of children.

Ahmed and Bose (2005), cited in Hamid and Baldauf (2008) have identified this reality and pointed out that a large number of secondary students in rural Bangladesh are either poor or disadvantaged and their families cannot afford to invest for their education, and such socio-economic realities largely influence academic performance of children. Parent's level of income is the most strong parental factor to influence children's academic achievement ata school. According to Mayer, " … the children of affluent parents are more expected to succeed in life than those of disadvantaged parents probably because the rich parents invest more than poor parents on their children and these "investments" lead to better outcomes for their children.'' (cited in Machebe, C. H., Ezegbe, B. N. & Onuoha, J.(2017).

Dubow, E. F., Boxer P. and Huesmann, L. R.(2009) opine that children living in 'achievement oriented behavior' (e.g., obtaining advanced degrees, reading frequently, encouraging a strong work ethic) and enjoying 'achievement-

oriented opportunities' (e.g., library and museum trips, after-school enrichment programs, educational books and videos) form the belief that achievement needs to be 'valued, pursued, and anticipated'. This belief ultimately leads to fruitful outcomes along development, including 'high school graduation, the pursuit of higher learning, and the acquisition of high-prestige occupations'. There are positive relations between parents' educational levels and the expectations for their children's achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005), which indicates that more highly educated parents motivate their children to 'develop high expectations of their own.' On the contrary, McLoyd's (1989) review found that parents experiencing stressful economic condition have children who are more hopeless about their educational and professional futures (Dubow, E. F., Boxer P. & Huesmann, L. R. (2009).

McLoyd's (1989, 1998) important literature reviews have shown how poverty and low SES are related to a range of inadequate learning outcomes, including 'low IQ, educational attainment and achievement, and social emotional problems.' Parental education being an important criterion of SES determines children's 'educational and behavioral outcomes.' However, McLoyd has pointed out that among the different indices of family SES, including 'parental degree, longtime versus temporary poverty, income, and parents' professional status', income level and poverty might be the more powerful predictors of children's cognitive outcomes in comparison with other SES indices (e.g., Duncan et al., 1994; Stipek, 1998).

A study by Sirin (2005) reviewed the literature on the relation between socioeconomic status and educational achievement in journal articles published between 1990 and 2000. The sample included 101,157 students, 6,871 schools, and 128 school districts collected from 74 liberated samples. The results found a medium to strong relation between 'economic status and academic achievement' (Sirin, 2005).

Young (1994) mentions that parents can play an important role in improving children's positive thinking towards foreign languages. Parents' attitudes towards foreign languages dictate their children's success in multilingual competence. Both the way in which parents think about foreign languages and the way they treat them have effects on their children's 'linguistic development'

(Young, 1994). But, there is no remarkable research that investigates the impact of parental SES on university students' classroom reticence.

Socio-Economic Status and Reticence

The amount of research regarding parents' socio-economic status with students' reticence in classroom is very scant. (Asgari and Mustapha (2011), Butler (2013), J. Am. Coll. of Health (2016).

Asgari and Mustapha's (2011) study investigated the primary students' speaking performance. In their study most of the participants in their study stated that their parents were their first teachers, who had helped them in having primary knowledge about L2, providing good facilities either at home or in school to improve their vocabulary, reading and speaking. The study of Butler (2013) finds that while the parents' socioeconomic status(SES) does not have much effect on their children's listening, reading and writing performance during their elementary school years, it indicates an effect on their speaking abilities at the fourth-grade level, if not earlier.

Adams, D. R., Meyers and Beidas (2016) investigated the reason for university students 'anxiety. This study applied a cross-sectional survey methodology with a sample of university undergraduates to investigate the relationships among financial stress, felt stress, psychological symptoms, and academic and social immersion at college. Students reported that four out of the five top stressors in their lives involved personal finances, and that these stressors affected their academic progress and performance. Furthermore, unmet financial needs may require low-income and/or first-generation students to work full-time jobs and live off campus, which may hinder their academic and social interaction on campus as well as increase the probability for attrition.

Methodology

The research follows the mixed method. It relied on both survey and interview. The survey was conducted in the English Department of a private university in Chattogram. Questionnaires were collected from students. Questionnaires were collected from 117 students of 3rd, and 4thsemesters. The time of the data collection was January, 2019. From among the student samples, 80 were selected through random sampling for input and analysis. Data were also

collected from 4 teachers. Interview was used for the teachers. The teachers' interview contains 5 questions. The students' questionnaire contains 19 questions in two parts. The first part has questions related with demographic ones and the part two has questions related with academic issues. The questions in the first part are related with place of residence, family members, parental education and income, reasons for studying at the English Department of the university. Though two important demographic factors were not included in the questionnaire during the collection of data, these two factors were analyzed later on from the input. As all respondents are the regular students of 3rd and 4the semesters, their age range ids between 20 and 21. Another factor, that is gender was identified from their names and it was found that 56 respondents are male and 24 respondents are female. The second part is related with their score in two previous language courses, views on participation in classroom and extra-curricular activities in school, college and the present rate of participation in classroom activities and extra-curricular activities at university, the reasons for their non-participation in these activities. All the questions were close-ended. Students were also asked to write their grade points in two language courses as well. Teachers' interviews were recorded and, later on, transcribed. The teachers are named as teacher -A, teacher-B, teacher-C and teacher –D. The syllabus and course books of the two language courses were checked. There are a lot of activities that require interaction like pair work, group work and discussion.

Analysis of Questionnaire

Teachers' Interview:

In response to the question, How many students do you usually have in your class, all teachers say that their classes have 41 to 50 students. All teachers say that they try to engage their students in interaction 'sometimes' in classroom activities involving pair work / group work/ project. While mentioning the percentage, who enthusiastically participate, they say that 21-30 percent of the students willingly participate in interactive activities. In response to the question, "Do the course books you follow have interactive activities?" all agree that they have.

In response to the question, "What according to you, are the reasons for students non-participation in the interactive activities in the class?" teachers mostly attribute this to the students' nervousness as well as the students' cognitive and language-related factors.

Teacher- A ascribes it to anxiety of the students and students' socio-economic backwardness. Teacher- B attributes it to anxiety of the students and students' socio-economic backwardness and students' lack of interest in interactional activities. Teacher-C says that students' lack of proficiency in English as a medium of interaction, anxiety of the students and students' socio-economic backwardness are the key problems. Teacher-D ascribes it to students' lack of proficiency in English as a medium of interaction and anxiety of the students.

So, from the four teachers' interviews, it becomes crystal clear that three count anxiety and the students' socio-economic backwardness as the reasons for students' non-participation in interactive activities in the class. On further enquiry, two teachers said that as many students always remain worried about their educational expenses, they remain de-motivated and unenthusiastic about classroom participation.

Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

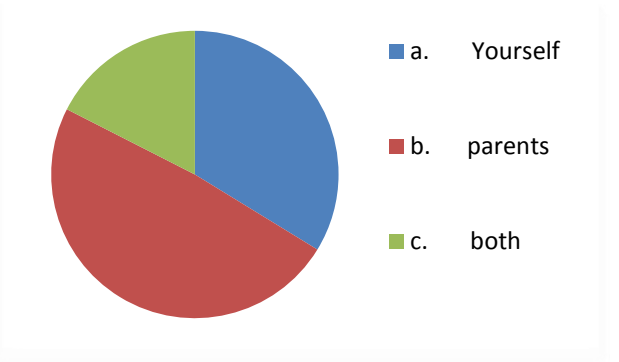
It was found that all respondents are between 20 and 21 years of age and 56 respondents are male and 24 are female. Out of 80 students, 66 are from Chattogram. 50 students are from rural area and 30 students are from urban area. There is a general perception that affluent people live in city. Regarding the number of family members, 26 students have family with five members. 20 students have family with more than six members. Only 3 students' family consists of 3 members. Bigger family is supposed to have negative impact on economic solvency and affordability to maintain educational cost.

In response to the question, "Why did you decide to study English at this university?" 32 students' choice is related to the economic factor, i.e. the two options: affordable tuition fees and monthly tuition fees. The factor 'nearness to the residence' is rated by 20 students which is also linked with the socio-economic factor because it also involves cost. 21 opt for the fame of the Department and the University. Interest in the subject counts for only 7 students.

Regarding parental education it was found that 43 students' fathers are between HSC and below SSC. On the other hand, 37 students' fathers have graduation and post-graduation. Regarding mothers' educational status, only 14 students' mothers are graduate and above graduate. On the other hand, 66 students' mothers are between HSC and below SSC.

Regarding the approximate monthly income of parents, 32 students say that their parents' monthly income is between 21 and 25 thousand taka, followed by 17 having below 20 thousand monthly income. 10 say their parents' income is between 26 and 30 thousand taka and 9 have between 31 and 35 thousand taka. However, only 12 parents' monthly income is more than 40 thousand taka.

In response to the question, who bears your present educational expenses, 27 students have to bear their own educational expenses which is unique. 14 say that their expenses are borne by both parents and themselves. If we add these two categories, the number is 41 which is almost half of the total samples. 39 students say that their parents bear their educational expenses.



Pie chart-1: Source of educational expenses

Regarding the question, "Do you have to worry about your educational expenses?" majority, i.e. 56 students say Yes. In response to the question, "Do you have to help your family with money or household chores or in any other form?" 48 students say they have to finance their families and do household chores.

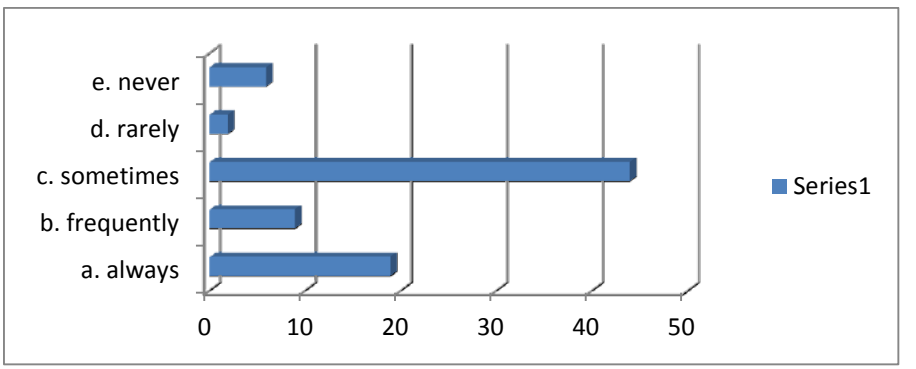
Regarding the average GPA in two language courses at the university, the students mentioned the following results-

a. 2.25-2.50	47
b. 2.50-3.00	23
C. 3.00-3.25	10

Table-1: Students' Results

This score does not reflect the satisfactory achievement in any way. Regarding the question, "Did you participate in any classroom activities, i.e. pair work / group work project work in your school/ college life?" 67 say they participated in those activities in their college and school lives.

In response to the question, "How frequently did you participate in those classroom activities?" 72 students state that they did it with different frequency, if we combine the number of students who did it always, frequently and sometimes.



Bar chart- 1: Rate of participation in extra-curricular activities

While replying to the question, "Did you participate in extra-curricular activities at school/ college?" 64 say that they did. In response to the question, "How often did you participate?" 70 students altogether say they did it in different frequency, 17 always, 11 frequently and 42 sometimes.

Regarding the question no. 16, "Do you now participate in extra-curricular activity at university?" only 33 say that they participate in extra-curricular activities. But, 47 say they do not participate. In response to the question no.17, 47 reply in the negative and only 33 students say Yes.

Yes	33
No	47

Table- 2: Rate of participation in extra-curricular activities at the University

Regarding the question, how frequently they participate, 6 say always, 7 say frequently and 20 say sometimes. Regarding the reason for non-participation in the interactive activities in the class, out of 47 respondents, 32 attribute to their financial anxiety followed by lack of interest by only 6.

While mentioning the reason for their non-participation in the interactive activities in the class, they reveal the following reasons.

a. Your lack of interest	3
b. Course teachers' inability to engage you in such activities	2
c. Financial anxiety	32
d. Your course teacher was not friendly	3
e. Classmates were not cooperative	4
f. Other	3
Negative evaluation by classmates	
The class size is very large	
The teaching materials /activities do not require interaction	

Table-3: Reasons for non-participation in interactive activities

The table above indicates that among the 47 responses as included here, 32, which is, 68.08 percent, mention their financial anxiety as the reason for their skipping interactive activities. Other factors are not significant at all to be mentioned.

Discussion

If we compare the demographic questions with the academic ones in the students' questionnaire, we see that there is no significant relation between gender and reticence among the students. Among the 80 respondents, 56 are male and 24 are female. The female students in rural areas are assumed to be reserved because they do not tend to open up and express their opinions in public. But the number of male respondents being 56, does not seem to be a strong variable to have a significant impact on student reticence here. If further comparison is done between the demographic questions and academic questions, the relations between socio-economic factors and students' academic achievement in English becomes clear. We see that there are 26 students whose family consists of 5 members and 20 students who have more than six members. Similarly, 50 students say that they are from rural areas. If we correlate it with the number of the students who rate the three reasons for choosing the university, the number is almost the same, that is, 52. This again corresponds with the number of students whose parents' monthly income is very small. The number of parents whose income is less than 30 thousand taka is 49.

Again, if we see the number of students who have to bear their own educational expenses, it is 27. In addition to that, 14 say that they have to contribute too to their educational expenses in addition to their parents' contribution. In addition to bearing own educational expenses, 48 say that they have to help their family financially. If that is the case, how can these huge number of students concentrate on their studies without any anxiety? This fact is corroborated strongly by the GPA in two courses where 47 students' GPA is between 2.5 and 2.75.

Furthermore, if we compare the rate of interaction in classroom and participation in extra-curricular activities in two levels, i.e. school/college and university, a point becomes clear. The number of students who participated in

school/college is much more than the number who now participate in university. Regarding the reasons for non-participation in interactive activities in the class, out of 47 respondents, 32 attribute it to the anxiety followed by 6 who say that they do not have any interest in participation. The most important reason they mention for their reticence is financial anxiety. Their participation declined at university level because they are now mature and conscious enough to realize the brunt of financial pressure. 47 students are not seen to participate. This number is around 49 whose parents' monthly income is between Tk. 25 thousand and below. It again corresponds well with the percentage of students who have to bear their own educational expenses. Again the fact that 27 students have to bear their educational expenses themselves and 14 have to share the expenses with their parents, corresponds well with the number of students. McLoyd's (1989) also found that parents who experience stressful economic condition have children who are more hopeless about their educational and professional lives and pointed out that among the different indices of family SES, including 'parental degree, longtime versus temporary poverty, income, and parents' professional status, income level and poverty seem to be the more powerful predictors of children's cognitive outcomes in comparison with other SES indices (Duncan et al., 1994; Stipek, 1998).

The presupposition that parents 'low academic qualification is a strong predictor of children's academic achievement is proven in our study. Here in our study we see that 43 fathers are between HSC and below. On the other hand, 60 mothers are between HSC and below. It corresponds well with the students' score in two language courses. In our study it is proven that parents' education and higher income have a positive impact on their children's better achievement. Parental motivation and support is a crucial factor in motivating students to do better results. These views go well with (Davis-Kean, 2005) who found that more highly educated parents motivate their children to 'develop high expectations of their own.' Asgari and Mustapha's (2011) study is relevant here though it is concerned with the primary level students. In their study most of the participants stated that their parents being their first teachers gave them primary knowledge about L2, providing good scope either at home or in school to 'improve their vocabulary, reading and speaking' (Asgari and Mustapha (2011). Butler (2013) finds the effects of parents' socio-economic status (SES) on their children's speaking abilities, though not on their listening, reading and

writing performance, at the fourth-grade level, if not earlier. Adams, D. R., Meyers & Beidas (2016) also mention that unmet financial needs may require low-income and/or first-generation students to work full-time jobs and live off campus, which may hinder their academic and social interaction on campus.

To sum up, the findings of this study indicate that gender does not count as a significant factor for the students' non-participation in interactive activities. But the financial anxiety of the students as they grow and transition through primary, secondary, higher secondary and finally tertiary level of studies, grows gradually and that factor works as a great stressor in their academic and personal lives. The huge number of students whose parents are not only from low-income group but also less educated are seen to perform worse than those who have parents from high-income and educated class. The respondents who are rather contributing to their educational expenses are seen to participate less in their classroom interaction as is evident from the data. So, parents' socio-economic status (SES) works as a strong factor in their children's academic achievement and participation in interactive and collaborative activities inside and outside of the classroom.

Limitations of the Study

This study depends on questionnaire and interview. It would be more reliable if a number of classes were observed to have a first-hand knowledge about the pattern and nature of classroom interaction. In absence of that, we relied only on the teachers' opinion and the students' replies. There might be other factors such as, class size, students' lack of interest for students' non-participation in classes. For example, how a teacher can execute interactive activities in a class of 40 or above students is a pertinent and important question.

Conclusion

Students' educational achievement depends on multiple factors which include the learners' cognitive, affective aspects as well as socio-cultural and socio-economic issues. We have found from our study that the cognitive, affective attributes of the learners must be supported by the home and family environment. The parental education and income are the strong factors that may either support or weaken the learners' morale, motivation and effort. The data analyzed in this study show that financial stress of the students acts as the most

powerful de-motivator for the students not only in opening up and joining discussion in the class, but also in having satisfactory score as is evident from the results of the samples of this study in two language courses. So, by ignoring the learners' Socio-economic Status (SES), it is not possible to ensure students' oral participation in the class. Students cannot have good score even in their writing examination where they do not need to show their speaking skill. Again, even though they may fare well in the written examination, their oral performance does not improve and morale and confidence in the long run become weaker. It also affects their future career performance and prospects. Though the soft skills can be cultivated through proper teaching –learning and extra-curricular activities, students do not want to participate in the interactive activities in the classroom and the extra-curricular activities of the institution when they are constrained by financial difficulties.

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Annexure-1

Teachers' Interview Questions:

Factors behind Withdrawal from Classroom Interaction and Extra-curricular Activities

1. How many students do you usually have in your class?
2. Do you engage your students in classroom activities involving pair work / group work/ project?

1. Always 2.often 3.sometimes 4. Rarely 5.never

3. If your answer is yes, mention in percentage, the number of students who enthusiastically participate in interactive activities, i.e. Pair work, group work in your class.
4. Do the course books you follow, have interactive activities?
5. What according to you, are the reasons for students' non-participation in the interactive activities in the class?

Annexure-2

Students' Questionnaire:

Factors behind Withdrawal from Classroom Interaction and Extra-curricular Activities

Demographic Information

1. Home District

2. Are of residence?

a. City	
b. Village	

3. No. of Family members ----------

4. Why did you decide to study English at this university? Rate according to importance-

a. Name and fame
b. Nearness to your place
c. Affordable tuition fees
d. Monthly tuition fee payment system
e. Easy admission policy of the university
f. Fame of the Department and University
g. Others

5. What is your father's educational status. Tick the right one.

a. Below SSC
b. SSC
c. HSC
d. Pass /Hon's
e. Masters

6. What is your mother's educational status. Tick the right one.

a. Below SSC
b. SSC
c. HSC
d. Pass /Hon's
e. Masters

7. How much is the approximate monthly income of your parents in BDT?

a. Below 20 thousand
b. 21-25 Thousand
c. 26-30 Thousand
d. 31-35 Thousand
e. 36-40 Thousand
f. More than 40 Thousand

8. Who bears your present educational expenses?

a.	Yourself
b.	parents
c.	both

9. Do you have to worry about your educational expenses?

a. yes
b. No

10. Do you have to help your family with money or by doing household chores or in any other form?

a. Yes
b. No

Academic Information:

11. What was your average GPA in two language courses at 1st and 2nd semester at the university?

Course-101

Course -201

12. Did you participate in any classroom activities, i.e. pair work / group work project work in your school/ college life?

a. Yes
b. No

13. How frequently did you participate in those classroom activities? Tick the right one.

a. always b. frequently c. sometimes d. rarely e. never

14. Did you participate in extra-curricular activities, debate, sports/ cultural programs in school/college?

Yes-

No-

15. How often did you participate?

a. always b. frequently c. sometimes d. rarely e. never

16. Do you participate now in extra-curricular activities, debate, sports/ cultural at university?

Yes
No

17. Do you participate now in pair work / group work project work at your university?

Yes
No

18. How often do you participate in pair work / group work/ project work?

a. always b. frequently c. sometimes d. rarely e. never

19. Mention the reason for your non-participation in the interactive activities in the class. Mention according to importance. You may mention more than one.

a. Your lack of interest
b. Course teachers' inability to engage you in such activities
c. Financial anxiety
d. Your course teacher was not friendly
e. Classmates were not cooperative
f. If others, specify-