

**EFL Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Sources of  
Students' Demotivation: A Comparative Study**

---

---

**Moriam QUADIR**

East West University, Bangladesh

Email: [moriam@ewubd.edu](mailto:moriam@ewubd.edu)

**Abstract**

EFL (English as a foreign language) learners' demotivation has not yet received adequate research attention in the third world countries. This paper reports on a study that was carried out to explore students' and teachers' perceptions of the sources of learners' demotivation to study English as a school subject at higher secondary (HS) level (grade 11 and 12) in Bangladesh. To collect qualitative data from HS students and teachers two interview guides were developed based on the identified EFL demotivation factors in a study (Quadir, 2017) conducted in the educational context of Bangladesh. 30 HS level students and 17 English teachers of five different institutions were interviewed to understand their perspectives of sources of learners' demotivation. The collected data was analyzed following Miles and Huberman's (1994) procedure of qualitative data analysis. A number of discrepancies between HS students' and English teachers' perceptions were identified. Acute gaps were identified in their perceptions of (a) English teachers' instructional style and behavior, (b) private tutoring, and (c) attitude towards English, and (d) students' past experiences. The other perceptions appeared to be less divergent. These insights have implications for education policy makers, curriculum developers, EFL students, and most importantly for EFL teachers' pedagogical preparations.

**Keywords:** *EFL students, English teachers, perceptions, demotivation, higher secondary (HS) level, Bangladesh.*

## **Introduction**

EFL (English as a foreign language) learners' demotivation is a persistent concern in many Asian contexts (Falout et al., 2009; Jung, 2011; Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007). L2 demotivation is a potent individual difference (ID) which is considered to be opposite to learning motivation. L2 motivation determines the extent of learners' involvement in learning activities (Dörnyei, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1996, Wlodkowski, 2008), maintenance of language skills (Scrcella & Oxford, 1992), learning outcomes, language performance (Falout et al., 2009), and by contrast, L2 demotivation is supposed to bring all adverse learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In the area of L2 learners' psychology the concept of demotivation has received less research attention compared to L2 motivation. Dörnyei (2001) defined L2 demotivation as 'specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action...' (p. 143). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) explained that demotivated learners are those who were once motivated, but have lost their interest and enthusiasm in learning for some external influences which 'cancel out existing motivation' (p. 138). Both the definitions indicate that some *external sources* or negative influences adversely affect learners' motivation, eventually becomes internalized, and generates negative learning outcomes. A number of scholars in the area, however, have argued against the term *external forces* used in the definition (see Falout et al., 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007). They explained that learners' demotivation is subject to both external (e.g. teachers' instructional skills, teaching method, textbooks, peers' reactions) and internal (e.g. learners' anxiety, attitude towards the L2, self-confidence) factors. In subsequent EFL demotivation research works (Hamada, 2011; Kim, 2015; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Quadir, 2017) both internal and external influences were explored and identified. Recent EFL research literature also suggests that learners' de/motivation is a 'dynamically evolving process' (Jung, 2011, p. 48) which is affected

by learners' social and educational environment (external factor) and their own psychological trait (internal factor) (Falout et al., 2009; Jung, 2011). Therefore, L2 learners' demotivation is an intricate and multifaceted individual difference which deserves substantive research attention in any EFL context.

In Bangladesh, as a school subject English is given huge importance in both academic and social contexts. English language proficiency is seen as a 'crucial linguistic capital' (Hamid, Khan & Islam, 2017, p. 870) which is associated with learners' future achievements (Quadir, 2017). English language proficiency is required to get access to university education and to qualify for a range of jobs. In the national education system of Bangladesh, English is a compulsory school subject from grade 1 to grade 12. At all academic levels English language education is given huge importance "to strengthen human resources development efforts of the government of Bangladesh" (NCTB, 2003, cited in Seargeant & Erling, 2011, p. 3). At higher secondary (HS) level (grade 11 and 12) two English papers, English Paper-I and English Paper-II, are taught for 3 to 4 hours per week in classroom setting. Both in rural and urban areas English is highly valued as a school subject (Hamid & Baldauf, 2011) as English language proficiency is seen as means of economic achievements (Erling, Seargeant, & Solly, 2014). However, research findings indicate that plenty of internal and external sources of students' demotivation are prevailing in many Bangladeshi English language classrooms (Quadir, 2017, 2019).

In the educational context of Bangladesh, conventionally the teacher is regarded as the primary figure in a classroom, and students engage in academic activities under his or her instructional guidance (Rahman et. al., 2019). In institutional teaching-learning process, students stay in close contact with their teachers. English teachers and students, however, may have very different or similar perceptions of the factors which contribute to students' demotivation. Kern (1995) argued that mismatches between foreign language learners' and teachers' views may negatively affect students' involvement in learning activities and can potentially lead to poor learning outcomes. However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, very little research has explored and

compared students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the sources of students' demotivation to study English in EFL contexts.

Although recently some EFL research studies have investigated the sources of learners' demotivation (Falout et. at., 2009; Kikuchi, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Quadir, 2017) from learners' perspectives, perceptions of English teachers' are not taken into account. In other words, the previous research investigations have identified the contextual demotivation factors collecting information from EFL students, whereas little attention is paid to English teachers' views regarding the phenomenon. Since EFL students and teachers closely interact in classroom context, they mutually experience and perceive the contextual factors which demotivate students. Therefore, it is imperative to listen to both teachers and students to identify the factors behind EFL learning demotivation more comprehensively. The current study is designed to address the paucity of EFL demotivation research by exploring both students' and teachers' perceptions about the aspects of English language education which adversely affect learners' motivation to study English in the context of Bangladesh. A more comprehensive understanding of the crucial fact of students' demotivation may have ramifications for the effectiveness of pedagogy where English is taught as a foreign language in institutional settings. The interactions between teachers' and students' views of students' demotivation would be insightful to work out feasible remedial measures in some EFL contexts.

This study emphasizes qualitative method because the general exploratory capacity of such research is relatively stronger (Dörnyei, 2007). Creswell and Poth (2017) stressed that qualitative research leads us to a critical and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. And importantly, qualitative research allows EFL students to explain their experiences of demotivation in their own words from their perspectives (Kim & Kim, 2013). The principal objective of this study is to collect and compare English teachers' and students' perceptions of sources of students' demotivation to study English at HS level (grade 11 and 12) in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, the specific research objective that guided the study is as follows:

1. To compare HS level students' and English teachers' perceptions of sources of students' demotivation to study English.

### **Review of Literature**

A large number of research studies following qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are conducted to explore the sources and nature of English language learners' demotivation across wide EFL contexts. The sources of demotivation detected in different EFL contexts appear to be largely correspondent, whereas some factors are found to be unique to the particular contexts.

Dörnyei's (1998, reported in Dörnyei, 2001) qualitative study is one of the earliest works in the history of L2 demotivation research. He conducted the study with the objective to make an exploratory analysis of secondary school students' L2 demotivation in Budapest. He collected qualitative data conducting semi-structured interviews of 50 secondary school students who were selected as demotivated to study English. This study listed nine sources of learners' demotivation: the teacher, inadequate school facilities, reduced self-confidence, negative attitude towards the L2, compulsory nature L2 study, interference of another foreign language, negative attitude towards L2 community, attitude of group members and course books.

Learners' demotivation has received extensive research attention in the EFL context of Japan. Kikuchi (2009) also applied qualitative method to explore Japanese high school students' demotivation factors from students' perspectives. The study identified teachers' behavior, grammar-translation method, tests and university entrance examination, memorization based nature of learning, and textbooks as major demotivators of EFL students.

Trang and Baldauf (2007) asserted that learners' demotivation is a significant issue in the EFL context of Vietnam. They applied case study method and analyzed recall essays collected from 100 university students. They revealed that students attribute their demotivation to both internal and external factors. The internal attributes listed in the study were: learners' experiences of failure, attitude towards English, and self-esteem. The most salient external attribute was identified as teacher related

demotivation factors (e.g. English teachers' instructional methods, competence, behavior etc.).

In two different qualitative studies conducted in the EFL context of Korea some similar and different demotivation factors were listed. Kim and Lee (2013) adopted a qualitative verbal account analysis approach, and the identified demotivation factors of their study were: L2 teachers, peers, instructional methods, and textbooks. However, the factors identified in Kim et al. (2018) study were: ineffective teaching, load of private tutoring after school hours, and impractical lessons (emphasizing grammar rather than oral proficiency).

Some research studies have also used quantitative method to investigate EFL students' demotivation factors. In Japanese EFL context, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) used questionnaire to identify EFL students' demotivators. The factors listed by them, from most impactful to least: learning contents and materials, teachers' competence and teaching style, inadequate school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation, and test scores. In the same context, Falout et al. (2009) identified nine demotivation factors grouping those into three different categories: external conditions of the learning environment (teacher immediacy, grammar-translation method, and course level), internal conditions of the learners (self-denigration, value, and self-confidence), and reactive factors (help-seeking, enjoyment seeking, and avoidance). Therefore, in the context of Japan in the two different studies almost two distinct sets of factors appeared.

In Korean EFL context, Jung (2011) collected data from 125 college students. Using descriptive analysis of quantitative data the study revealed that EFL students' experience the highest degree of demotivation at high school level. The external factors which negatively affect learners' motivation were: difficulty of English, low score in exam, and uninteresting English class.

Mixed method approach is also applied to explore the sources of EFL learners' demotivation in several studies. For example, Hamada (2011), and Song and Kim (2017) used mixed method investigation to identify Japanese and Korean high school students' demotivation factors respectively. With only a few exceptions (e.g. nature of English in Japan, and social pressure in

Korea) most of the identified factors of these studies were consistent with the findings (e.g. English teachers, test, textbook, self-confidence etc.) of the previous qualitative and quantitative research works conducted in different EFL contexts.

Research investigation on the issue of EFL learners' demotivation is sparse in the educational context of Bangladesh. Only recently, Quadir (2017) conducted a qualitative research collecting data from university freshmen and sophomore to explore the sources of EFL students' demotivation experienced at high school level to study English. Conducting interviews with 36 participants seven demotivation factors were identified in the study, in descending order: English teachers, students' past experiences, private tutoring, attitude of peers, institutional facilities, textbooks, and attitude towards English. The study reported EFL demotivation factors from students' perspectives. However, to dates, little research initiative is taken to explore English teachers' perceptions of the sources of their students' demotivation to study English in the EFL context of Bangladesh.

All the aforementioned studies collectively show that whatever the research methods are, (qualitative, quantitative or mixed method) a good number of demotivation factors identified in different EFL contexts appear to be correspondent (e.g. English teachers, grammar-translation method, teaching materials, learning difficulty, test), however, some of the factors are also unique to the specific contexts (e.g. private tutoring in Bangladesh, social pressure in Korea, self-denigration in Japan). Although the cited studies are conducted in different EFL contexts, they mainly focused on students' perspectives to explore the sources of students' demotivation to study English. Little research attention is paid to English teachers' viewpoints of the sources of their students' demotivation in any of the previous studies. Taking the existing gaps into consideration the current research has addressed the phenomenon of EFL students' demotivation from both teachers' and students' perspectives. The intersections and combinations of the two sets of beliefs of the two different stakeholders of English education would be informative for other EFL contexts.

## **Methodology**

This study has followed qualitative research method to identify and compare English teachers' and students' perceptions of the sources of students' demotivation to study English as a compulsory school subject at HS level in Bangladesh.

### **Participants**

A number of 30 HS students of five different institutions were selected to collect data for the study. The students were identified by their teachers as demotivated based on the characteristics of demotivated learners explained by the researcher. Their age ranged from 17 to 19 years. Altogether 17 English teachers from the same five institutions participated in the study. The teachers were 6 to 15 years' experienced in teaching English at HS level. All the teachers had Masters Degree in English. All the participants were enthusiastic to participate in the study to share their perceptions of students' demotivation to study English. The five different institutions were selected on convenient sampling. Among the schools two are located in urban areas, two are in sub-urban areas, and the other one is in a rural area.

### **Instruments**

Two separate interview guides were prepared to collect data from students and English teachers. The interview protocols were developed based on the demotivation factors identified in Quadir's (2017) study. In the context of Bangladeshi education that study is the only substantive research investigation of HS students' sources of demotivation to study English. The identified factors of the study (Quadir, 2017) are largely correspondent to the findings of some research studies (Kikuchi, 2009; Kim & Lee, 2013; Trang & Baldauf, 2007) conducted in different EFL contexts, however, some factors were unique to the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, the framework of Quadir (2017) is considered useful and applicable to develop the interview guides for the current study. Both of the instruments comprised the following items: English teachers, students' past experiences, private tutoring, attitude of peers, institutional facilities, textbooks, and attitude towards English.

### **Data collection and analysis**

One-to-one interviews were conducted with all the participants of the study. The participants were informed about the purpose and content of the interview 1/2 days earlier to support their preparation of recollection. The interviews took 40 minutes to an hour, and were audio recorded. The interviews were conducted in the participants' first language, *Bangla*. The interview guides were semi-structured and there were additional follow-up questions for further exploration on the raised concerns. The participants were allowed plenty of space for response. English translations of the interview protocols are given in the Appendix. The first question in both of the instruments was asked to create the initial ice-breaking period. The recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and accuracy of content was checked by a colleague who is a researcher in the area of Applied Linguistics.

The collected data were analyzed following the procedure suggested in Miles and Huberman (1994). They suggested a three-step process for qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. The qualitative data collected from the interviews were reduced and displayed by constructing separate matrices of students' and teachers' perceptions.

### **Findings of the Study**

Table 1 presents the list of students' and teachers' collective perceptions of the sources of students' demotivation to study English at HS level as a school subject.

**Table 1. Students' and English teachers' perceptions of sources of learners' demotivation**

Factors	Students		Teachers	
	(N=30)	%	(N=17)	%
Teachers' instructional styles and behavior	25	83.33%	4	23.53%
Attitude of peers	23	76.67%	13	76.47%
Private tutoring	22	73.33%	4	23.53%
Institutional facilities	17	56.67%	10	58.82%
Past experiences	15	50.00%	12	70.59%
Attitude towards English	14	46.67%	15	88.24%
Textbooks	13	43.33%	8	47.06%

Comparing students' and teachers' perceptions a number of mismatches and similarities are detected in the current study. In Table 1 students' collective perceptions are presented from most potent to least, and the correspondent perceptions of teachers are put in the next column. The factors listed in the table comprised a number of further underlying themes based on the reported perceptions. Table 2 to 8 present students' and teachers' perceptions side by side under the factors. The similar perceptions reported by both students and teachers are underlined. The number of participants citing the same perception is put in the parenthesis next to the citation.

### **Students' and Teachers' Perceptions towards English Teachers' Instruction and Behavior**

Table 2 reports students' and teachers' perceptions of institutional teaching method and teachers' behaviors. According to the analysis, 83% students perceive that their English teachers' instructional practices and unbecoming behavior adversely affect their motivation to study English as a school subject. By contrast, only 23.5% instructors reported that quality of instruction and teachers' behavior affect students' motivation. Under this potent theme two distinct components are found in both students' and teachers' sets of perceptions: teachers' instructional style and teachers' behavior. The reported perceptions of students and teachers indicate that English teachers are not aware of students' expectations and discontents regarding their instructional style and

behavior. Though a few similar perceptions are listed under the theme, the intensity hugely varies between the two groups. Table 2 reports the collected perceptions in separate columns.

**Table 2. Students' and teachers' perceptions of EFL teachers' instructional style and behavior**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
Teachers' instructional style	Teachers' behavior	Teachers' instructional style	Teachers' behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers do not provide any guidance to improve English language skills. (22)</li> <li>• <u>lack of communicative activities.</u> (20)</li> <li>• do not explain lessons clearly. (19)</li> <li>• <u>traditional teacher-centered pedagogy.</u> (18)</li> <li>• little/no pair or group works in classroom. (17)</li> <li>• encourage to memorize. (16)</li> <li>• discourage to use students' own language ability in speaking and writing. (14)</li> <li>• <u>unclear/ incomplete instructions.</u> (13)</li> <li>• no activities suitable for large classroom. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>rude and humiliating behavior in classroom.</u> (20)</li> <li>• impatient to explain difficult lessons slowly. (19)</li> <li>• do not inspire to overcome weaknesses. (19)</li> <li>• do not try to interact with students who sit in the back of classroom. (18)</li> <li>• keep busy with some good students. (16)</li> <li>• do not listen to students' problems. (14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>unclear /incomplete instructions.</u> (3)</li> <li>• <u>lack of communicative activities.</u> (3)</li> <li>• <u>traditional teacher-centered pedagogy.</u> (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>rude and humiliating behavior in classroom.</u> (5)</li> </ul>

### Students' and Teachers' Perceptions towards Peers' Attitude

Data analysis shows that 76.6% students and 76% teachers believe that peers' negative attitude adversely affects students' motivation towards English. Under the clusters of students' and teachers' perceptions of impacts of peers' attitude two distinct components are detected: peers' proficiency and peers' reactions. Table 3 presents the cited perceptions regarding this factor. The table shows that teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the impacts of peers' attitude in English language classrooms are mostly parallel.

**Table 3. Students' and teachers' perceptions of effects of peers' attitude**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
Peers' proficiency	Peers' reactions	Peers' proficiency	Peers' reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>many students perform well in classroom activities, but I cannot.</u> (20)</li> <li>• <u>my peers obtain good marks in examinations which frustrates me.</u> (19)</li> <li>• I do not believe I can ever reach their proficiency level even if I try my best. (15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>making mistakes in speaking in front of my peers is too embarrassing for me.</u> (20)</li> <li>• <u>they mock at my faulty pronunciation.</u> (18)</li> <li>• <u>I am frustrated of performing poorly in examinations.</u> (17)</li> <li>• <u>my peers react negatively when I try to respond in classroom.</u> (16)</li> <li>• they react negatively to the initiatives of practicing English outside of classroom. (15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>when other students perform well in classroom activities, but the weak ones cannot, they lose confidence.</u> (9)</li> <li>• <u>weak students become frustrated when their peers obtain good marks in examinations.</u> (8)</li> <li>• <u>they are frustrated of performing poorly in examinations.</u> (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>when weak students are emotionally bullied by their peers, (e.g. for faulty pronunciation or poor marks) they lose motivation.</u> (12)</li> <li>• <u>making mistakes speaking in front of their peers is too embarrassing for the weak ones.</u> (9)</li> <li>• <u>peers' negative reactions hinder some students' participation in classroom activities.</u> (8)</li> </ul>

### Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Private Tutoring

Altogether 73% students mentioned that the practice of private tutoring in English is a potent source of EFL learning demotivation. By contrast, only 23.5% teachers reported their concerns regarding the negative impacts of the wide spread practice of private tutoring. It is important to note that most of the teachers perceive private tutoring as a supportive means for HS level students' exam preparation. Under this dominant theme of private tutoring the payment of private tutors was cited repeatedly by the students as an additional burden, whereas only a few teachers reported concern about it. The collected perceptions are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Students' and teachers' perceptions of private tutoring in English**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
<b>Payment of private tutors</b>	<b>Private tutors' competence and management skills</b>	<b>Payment of private tutors</b>	<b>Private tutors' competence and management skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>the amount of money paid to the private tutor is an extra burden.</u> (17)</li> <li>• inability to pay private tutor is too frustrating to study. (16)</li> <li>• the payment is inevitable as the English classes are ineffective. (14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>incompetent private tutors cannot guide us properly.</u> (14)</li> <li>• again a large group of students. (14)</li> <li>• ineffective feedback/ guidance. (12)</li> <li>• only exam oriented study. (10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• too much dependence on private tutoring. (2)</li> <li>• <u>the amount of money spent may affect needy families.</u> (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>incompetent private tutors cannot guide students' properly.</u> (1)</li> </ul>

### Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Institutional Facilities

Both HS students (56.6%) and English teachers (58.8%) perceive that inadequate institutional facilities also adversely affect learning motivation in English language classrooms. Both students and teachers cited mostly similar concerns regarding the effects of insufficient institutional facilities (e.g. large class size, lack of

technological support). Their perceptions are presented in Table 5 in different columns.

**Table 5. Students' and teachers' perceptions about institutional facilities**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
Classroom atmosphere	Logistic facilities	Classroom atmosphere	Logistic facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English classes are noisy. (17)</li> <li>class size is too large (60-160 students) to be effective. (16)</li> <li>hot and suffocating classrooms. (15)</li> <li>we cannot hear instructions/see board from the back. (13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no technological facility provided for listening practices. (15)</li> <li>no useable board for demonstrating lessons. (13)</li> <li>no electric fans even in hot summer. (13)</li> <li>no loud-speaker used for large classes. (10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class size is too large to conduct effectively. (9)</li> <li>students cannot hear instructions/see board from the back. (9)</li> <li>some students escape participation taking chance of largeness of class size. (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of technological support causes boredom. (8)</li> <li>no technological facility provided for listening practices. (8)</li> <li>hot and suffocating classrooms. (8)</li> </ul>

### Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Past Experiences

The participants were asked whether students' experiences at previous academic levels cause demotivation at HS level. 50% students and 70% teachers reported the past experiences which negatively affect students' motivation to study English. This factor comprised two different categories: inability to succeed and negative experiences. Compared to students, English teachers perceive the factor to be more impactful to hinder HS students' motivation. Some differences are found in the cited perceptions of the two groups. Compared to teachers' students' perceptions are more specific to point out the past experiences (e.g. weakness in grammar, vocabulary) which affect their motivation at the current level of study. Table 6 reports the summary.

**Table 6. Students' and teachers' perceptions towards students' past experiences**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
Inability to succeed	Negative experiences	Inability to succeed	Negative experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• previous levels' weakness in grammar caused lack of confidence in speaking and writing.(10)</li> <li>• did not learn enough vocabulary to express my ideas. (5)</li> <li>• it is always tough for me to memorize content. (3)</li> <li>• felt worthless in English classes, and that experience still frustrates. (3)</li> <li>• texts are always complex and full of unfamiliar vocabularies. (2)</li> <li>• too complex syntactic structure to master. (2)</li> <li>• never could study independently. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I always obtained poor marks in English even after working hard (5)</u></li> <li>• avoided responding in class because of humiliating experiences in the past (6)</li> <li>• tried to escape class as classroom instruction was always ineffective. (4)</li> <li>• always studied for exam, not to use practically. (2)</li> <li>• teachers always neglected because of poor performance. (1)</li> <li>• could not share problems with teachers. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear of English perceived at lower levels still persists at HS levels. (11)</li> <li>• low proficiency in English causes demotivation at HS level. (10)</li> <li>• some students are unnecessarily scared of English at all levels. (6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• previous levels' weakness in English makes students frustrated at HS level. (10)</li> <li>• incompetent teaching at lower levels continue to demotivate students at HS level. (9)</li> <li>• <u>poor marks in previous levels' examination demotivates HS students.</u>(8)</li> <li>• some students do not find English necessary outside of classrooms. (5)</li> </ul>

### **Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Attitude towards English**

Although a large number of English teachers (88%) believe that students' demotivation is sourced from their negative attitude towards English, a significantly smaller number of HS students (46.6%) perceive this factor to be impactful. Some of the listed perceptions also appear to be different between the two groups. The cited views are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Students' and teachers' perceptions regarding students' attitude towards English**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)	
Difficulty	Priority	Difficulty	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English is tough as a school subject. (12)</li> <li>English grammar is complex. (10)</li> <li>English is different from my L1. (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other subjects are more important than English. (12)</li> <li>speaking is the only necessary skill in English. (11)</li> <li>we need English, but we should not in a monolingual country. (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English is tough as a school subject. (13)</li> <li>they are scared of making mistakes. (10)</li> <li>foreign language anxiety makes them reluctant to study English. (9)</li> <li>English is uninteresting to some students. (7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other subjects are more important to them than English. (12)</li> <li>they consider speaking is the only necessary skill in English. (9)</li> <li>they don't perceive the importance of reading and writing skills. (8)</li> <li>they are not aware about the necessity of English language proficiency in the future. (6)</li> </ul>

### Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of English Textbooks

43% students and 47% teachers perceive English textbooks as a source of learners' demotivation. The perceptions are listed in Table 8. Under the theme both students and teachers reported almost identical concerns regarding the quality of English textbooks.

**Table 8. Students' and teachers' perceptions about English textbooks**

Students' perceptions (N=30)		Teachers' perceptions (N=17)
Quality of textbook	Difficulty level	Quality of textbook
lessons in textbooks are inadequate for HS level examinations. (12)	difficult contents and exercises. (7)	lessons in the textbooks are inadequate for HS level examinations. (6)

---

no effective guidance in textbooks to improve language skills. (10)	contents are not interesting for their age. (5)
instructions are not clear enough. (9)	instructions are not clear enough for students. (4)
contents are not interesting. (8)	
textbooks are not standard enough for HS level. (8)	

---

## Discussions

The principal objective of the study was to compare HS students' and teachers' perceptions of sources of students' demotivation to study English. Analyzing the two sets of perceptions some mismatches and similarities are detected between the two major stakeholders of English education in Bangladesh. Acute differences are identified in their perceptions of English teachers' instructional style and behavior, private tutoring, attitude towards English, and student' past experiences. However, their views appear to be similar about impacts of textbooks, institutional facilities, and peers' attitude.

According to the study, 83% students perceive that EFL teachers' instructional style and behavior affect their learning motivation. By contrast, only 23.5% teachers recognize the negative impacts of those factors. A number of clear discrepancies can be detected from the underlying themes. More than 73% students pointed out that they do not get guidance to improve their language skills from classroom instructions, however, instructors showed little awareness of such needs. Compared to teachers, significantly a larger number of students cited the need for communicative activities in classroom to practice and improve their linguistic ability. Another related and frequently reported perception by students is the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy. Consistency of this factor with other EFL contexts (see Dörnyei, 1998; Kikuchi, 2009; Trang & Baldauf, 2007) indicates powerful impacts of this factor on students' demotivation. It is necessary to adjust teaching method with students' needs and interests for effective learning

outcome (Trang & Baldauf, 2007). Interactive and participatory classroom activities promote learners' motivation (Jung, 2011), and enhance students' communicative competence (Quadir, 2019). Therefore, English teachers need to plan student-centric communicative activities to involve students in interactions in English classes. Under the theme of teachers' behavior the negative effects of teachers' rudeness and humiliation are perceived both by teachers and students, however, the needs for patience in instruction, inspirational guidance, democratic classroom atmosphere are emphasized only by students. Findings of the current study inform that English teachers need to be aware of their students' affective feeling caused by teachers' unbecoming behavior. Emotionally affected students may suffer long term inhibition in their mind which may cause serious disinterest towards the subject (Trang & Baldauf, 2007). Teachers need to play a powerful role to establish fearless, democratic and interactive classroom atmosphere where every student gets opportunity to participate in classroom activities.

HS students (73%) perceive that the practice of private tutoring adversely affects students' motivation towards English. On the contrary, instructors (23.5%) perceive it to be one of the least impactful factors. Most of the teachers rather appreciate private tutoring as a supportive parallel practice with institutional pedagogy, whereas the burden of payment, inevitable dependence, consumption of time, and incompetence of private tutors were the most cited complains from students. English teachers need to be aware of the fact that only usefulness of institutional pedagogy can reduce the necessity of private tutoring which imposes an additional financial burden on many needy families in the less affluent society (Hamid et al., 2017; Khan, 2016).

Acute gap is also found between teachers' and students' perceptions about the effects of negative attitude towards English on students' motivation. According to teachers' (88%) reports learners' attitude towards English is a powerful source of demotivation. By contrast, only 46.6% students perceive the impacts of attitude so powerful to affect their motivation to study English. Differences are also detected in the perceptions listed under the attitudinal theme of learning difficulty. The difficulties

caused by the contrastive features between learners' L1 (Bangla) and L2 (English) are entirely ignored by teachers. English teachers need to focus on the contrastive linguistic features between English and students' L1 (Bangla) to support students' comprehension and grammatical skills.

Students and teachers also differed in their perceptions of the effects of students' past experiences on their current level's study of English. 70% teachers believe that students' negative experiences in the previous academic levels adversely affect their motivation to study English at HS level. In contrast, 50% students perceive the negative impacts of their past experiences on their current academic level. The underlying components of students' and teachers' perceptions, however, are not very different from each other. Since previous levels' perceptions of difficulty create long term negative effects on students, English teachers of elementary and secondary levels need training on how to make teaching-learning activities and classroom materials interesting, simple and effective so that learners do not perceive English to be fearful in their early years of education.

The other three sets of perceptions of students and teachers appear to be near. Regarding the impact of textbooks on students' motivation, 43% students and 47% teachers mentioned that limitations in English textbooks are potential source of learners' demotivation to study English at HS level. The English textbook of HS level, *English for Today*, has been criticized by a number of academics for its limitations (Alam, 2018; Ali, 2014). It is necessary to upgrade textbooks taking the analogous perceptions reported by HS students and teachers into consideration.

Altogether 56.6% teachers and 58.8% students reported that inadequate institutional facilitates adversely affect students motivation towards their study. This factor corresponds with a similar factor identified in Japanese EFL context (see Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). However, the underlying perceptions appear to be distinct between the two EFL contexts. In this third world country, largeness of class size, suffocation in summer, and lack of technological support were the most cited problems both by students and teachers. To maintain healthy classroom atmosphere the provision of minimum logistic facilities need to be assured.

Both students (76.6%) and teachers (76%) perceive the strong negative impacts of peers' attitude on students' motivation at HS level. The two sets of underlying themes; peers' proficiency and peers' reactions, constructed from their views are also mostly correspondent. Unfavorable attitude of peers and sense of failure affect students' motivation to study English. English teachers need to play a powerful role to create and maintain harmonious and cooperative classroom culture to support mental health of struggling learners (Dörnyei, 2006). In addition, provisions of counseling in institutional setting may contribute to healing mentally affected students (Quadir, 2019).

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, this qualitative research has investigated HS students' and teachers' perceptions of sources of students' demotivation to study English in order to compare their viewpoints. A number of gaps and similarities between the two stakeholders' perceptions are detected from the analysis of the current study. The existing gaps between students' and teachers' perceptions of the sources of learners' demotivation to study English may hinder positive learning outcomes. It is important to understand the interactions of their notions regarding the crucial phenomenon of students' demotivation to work out practical and realistic remedial measures to ameliorate the situations in this context of education.

The study carries message for English teachers to be aware about the potential sources of students' demotivation and to be reflective about those factors in their pedagogical practices. This study would be insightful for curriculum developers and teacher trainers to reflect on students' needs and expectations in their preparations. The findings of the study may be informative to some other EFL contexts where English is taught as a foreign language in institutional settings and learners' demotivation affects expected learning outcomes.

The study has compared students' and teachers' perceptions of students' demotivation to study English at HS level. Future research may investigate the phenomenon at other academic levels from the perspectives of other stakeholders of English education in

EFL contexts. This study suffers the limitation of its dependence on self-reported interview data. Future research may include classroom observation, textbook analysis and other approaches to substantiate the findings of this paper.

### **About the Authors**

Moriam Quadir, PhD, is currently Associate Professor in the Department of English at East West University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She completed her Doctorate Degree in Applied Linguistics from Hiroshima University, Japan. Her research interests include EFL learners' individual differences, group-dynamics, and innovative teaching approaches.

### **References**

- Alam, F. (2018). Revisioning English studies in Bangladesh in the age of globalization and ELT. In R. Chowdhury, M. Sarker, F. Mojumder & M. Rashid (Eds.), *Engaging in Education Research: Revisiting Policy and Practice in Bangladesh* (pp. 241-262). Singapore: Springer Nature.
- Ali, M. (2014). An evaluation of 'English for Today: For class 11-12' as a textbook for Bangladeshi higher secondary education. *The English Teacher*, 43(1), 1-18.  
<https://journals.melta.org.my/index.php/tet/article/view/219>.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Demotivation in foreign language learning. Unpublished paper presented at  
the TESOL 98 Congress, Seattle, WA.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow, UK: Longman.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2006). Creating a motivating classroom environment. In J. Cummins, & C. Davison (Eds.), *Handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 639-651). New York: Springer.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Longman.
- Erlign, E. J., Seargeant, P. & Solly, M. (2014). English in rural Bangladesh: how is language education perceived as a source for development in rural communities? *English Today*, 30(4), 15-21.
- Falout, J., Elwood, J. & Hood, M. (2009). Demotivation: Affective states and learning outcomes. *System*, 37(3), 403-417.
- Hamada, Y. (2011). Different demotivators for Japanese junior high and high school learners. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 15(1), 15-38.
- Hamid, M. O., & Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2011). English and socioeconomic disadvantage: learner voices from rural Bangladesh. *Language Learning Journal*, 39(2), 201-217.
- Hamid, M. O., Khan, A., & Islam, M. (2017). The spread of private tutoring in English in developing societies: exploring students, perceptions. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 39(6), 868-886.
- Jung, S. K. (2011). Demotivating and remotivating factors in learning English: A case low level college students. *English Teaching*, 66(2), 47-72.
- Kern, R. (1995). Students and teachers' beliefs about language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28, 71-92.
- Khan, S. (2016). Opinion: When did private tuition become a crime? *Daily Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/country/opinion-when-did-private-tuition-become-crime-1205644>.

- Kikuchi, K. (2009). Listening to our learners' voice: What demotivates Japanese high school students? *Language Teaching Research*, 13(4), 453-471.
- Kim, T. -Y., & Lee, J. -Y. (2013). Korean student' English learning motivation and demotivation through biographic essays: Retrospective reconstruction. *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 29(1), 37-68.
- Kim, T.-Y., Kim, Y., & Kim, J.-Y. (2018). A qualitative inquiry on EFL Learning Demotivation and Resilience: A study of primary and secondary EFL students in South Korea. *Asia Pacific Education Research*, 27(1), 55-64.
- Kim, Yoon-Kyoung., & Kim, Tae-Young. (2013). English learning demotivation studies in the EFL contexts: State of the art. *Modern English Education*, 14(1), 77-102.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oask, CA: Sage.
- National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). (2003). *Project Performance (PP) for English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP): Phase-2*. Dhaka: NCTB.
- Oxford, R. L., & Shearin, J. (1996). Language learning motivation in a new key. In R. L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Path ways to the new century* (pp. 121-160). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.
- Quadir, M. (2017). Let us listen to our students: An analysis of demotivation to study English in Bangladesh. *The English Teacher*, 46(3), 128-141.
- Quadir, M. (2019). Exploring English language learning demotivation in Bangladesh. *THT Journal: The Journal of Teachers Helping Teachers*. 7, 65-91.
- Rahman, M. M., Johan, M., Selim, S. M. M., Singh, M. K. M., & Shahed, F. H. (2019). Teachers' beliefs and practices of implementing secondary English curriculum reform in

Bangladesh: A phonological study. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(2), 591-607.

Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the ELT classroom. *System*, 37(1), 57-69.

Seargeant, P., & Erlign, E. J. (2011). The discourse of “English as a language for international development”: Policy assumptions and practical challenges. In H. Coleman, (Ed.), *The English language in development* (pp. 248-267). London: British Council.

Scarcella, R., & Oxford, R. L. (1992). *The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Song, B., & Kim, T-Y. (2017). The dynamics of demotivation and remotivation among Korean high school EFL students. *System*, 65, 90-103.

Trang, T. & Baldauf, R. (2007). Demotivation: Understanding resistance to English language learning-The case of Vietnamese students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 4(1), 79-105.

Wlodkowski, R. J. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults*. San Francisco, Ca: Jossey-Bass.

### **Appendix 1 The interview guide for students**

1. Do you like studying English?
2. Please share your perceptions of the effects of the following factors on your motivation to study English:
  - Do you think your English teachers' behavior, teaching style, classroom management etc. affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think your past experiences affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think the practice of private tutoring affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think attitude of your peers affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think your institutional facilities affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think your English textbooks affect your motivation to study English?
  - Do you think your attitude toward English affect your motivation to study English?
3. Is there any important point left what you want to share here?

## **Appendix 2 The interview guide for teachers**

1. How are you sir/ madam?
2. Please share your perceptions of the effects of the following factors on students' motivation to study English:
  - Do you think English teachers' behavior, teaching style, classroom management etc. affect students' motivation to study English?
  - Do you think students' past experiences affect their motivation to study English?
  - Do you think the practice of private tutoring affect students' motivation to study English?
  - Do you think attitude of peers affect students' motivation to study English?
  - Do you think institutional facilities affect students' motivation to study English?
  - Do you think English textbooks affect students' motivation to study English?
  - Do you think students' attitude toward English affect their motivation to study English?
3. Is there any important point left what you want to share here?