Interplay Between English Language Proficiency and Socio-Economic Mobility: Analysing the Impact on Proficiency

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Abstract

This research explores the influence of socio-economic background on language learning proficiency, self-regulation, and autonomous learning behaviours among secondary school students in Delhi NCR. For the research, criterion-sampling was applied, leveraging socio-economic classification data of students from selected secondary schools using a sample of 125 students. The participant was equally distributed among 5 different socio-economic groups. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyse the effects of socio-economic status (SES) on the motivational and self-regulatory factors of language learners.

The results indicate a moderate effect, with 11% of the variation in proficiency, self-regulation, and autonomous learning behaviours explained by socio-economic background. A significant divide was found between students from higher social classes (upper-middle and high) and those from lower social classes (lower-middle and low). This gap in motivational characteristics is attributed to the inequality created by the educational system, where disparities in school quality, resources, and access to technology contribute to differences in language learning motivation. The findings suggest that social class plays a key role in shaping students' language proficiency, and the study advocates for more targeted research and policy interventions to address the educational inequalities affecting socially disadvantaged students.

Key Words: Socio-economic Status, Language Proficiency, Language Learning Motivation, Autonomous Learning, Self-Efficacy.

Introduction

An individual's capacity to read, write, communicate, and comprehend English is referred to as English language proficiency. It is critical medium of communication and an essential skill for accessing educational, professional, and social opportunities (Renandya et al., 2018). It serves as the language of instruction in educational settings, thereby facilitating the pursuit of higher education and professional development. In sectors such as IT, business, and international commerce, where English is the primary medium of communication, English fluency is a valuable asset for employability, rather than just academics.

The potential for individuals or families to advance in their social and economic status is referred to as socio-economic mobility. It is influenced by factors such as education, income, employment, and access to resources (Frias-Martinez et al., 2012). English proficiency is essential in this process, as it provides access to higher education, higher-paying employment, and social recognition. The relationship between socio-economic mobility and English proficiency is reciprocal and dynamic. An individual's socio-economic status can, in turn, determine their access to quality English language education and learning resources, despite the fact that proficiency in English can considerably enhance socio-economic prospects. Private institutions, tutoring, and digital tools are more likely to provide individuals from affluent families or urban areas with early exposure to English, which provides them with a competitive advantage. In contrast, learners from underprivileged socio-economic circumstances frequently encounter obstacles, including inadequate educational infrastructure, limited resources, and a lack of exposure, which impede their ability to achieve English proficiency (Kormos and Kiddle, 2013).

Addressing systemic inequalities in education and employment necessitates comprehending this interplay. Targeted interventions can be developed by policymakers and educators to promote equitable opportunities and bridge disparities by investigating the impact of socio-economic factors on English language acquisition. Empowering individuals with English proficiency not only improve their personal socio-economic mobility but also contributes to the broader development of society by establishing a competitive and competent workforce.

In the context of India's diverse socio-economic landscape, language frequently serves as both a conduit and a barrier to progress, rendering this field of study particularly pertinent. Researchers can gain valuable insights to inform policy reforms

and develop strategies for inclusive development by conducting a more thorough examination of this interplay.

Language Proficiency

Language competency denotes the capability to use language effectively for diverse communication objectives. Proficient people have a strong command of the language, allowing them to understand, express, and interact effortlessly in both written and spoken forms. Proficiency is often evaluated using five principal indicators: accuracy, fluency, complexity, appropriateness, and capacity (Richards et al., 2013). Accuracy entails the flawless use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Fluency emphasises uninterrupted communication and logical arrangement of ideas. Complexity denotes the variety of language and grammar used, differentiating experienced users from beginners. Appropriacy assesses the relevance and usefulness of language about context, audience, and purpose. Capacity evaluates the proficiency to engage in diverse subjects with complexity and flexibility across various circumstances.

Proficiency levels are often classified into elementary, intermediate, and advanced categories, sometimes further separated for educational and certification objectives. The globally acknowledged Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) system categorises language competency into three tiers: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User, which are further subdivided into six sublevels (European Union Council Resolution, 2003). A Basic User at A1 can address basic communicative requirements, while a Proficient User at C2 can manage intricate, nuanced communication. While the CEFR is extensively used in Europe and several Asian countries, like Malaysia and Indonesia, its application in English language instruction in locations like Indonesia is rather restricted, with more familiarity with assessments such as TOEFL and IELTS (Kamil, 2023).

Socio-economic mobility plays a pivotal role in shaping English language proficiency by influencing key motivational and self-regulatory factors. Social and environmental dynamics, such as the economic status of a student's family, peer influences, and the broader socio-economic milieu, significantly impact their ability to set meaningful goals, develop a positive attitude, and maintain self-efficacy. These factors, in turn, affect the effort and perseverance students demonstrate in language acquisition. Furthermore, the wider social and educational contexts profoundly shape autonomous learning behaviours and the capacity for self-regulated language learning. This study aims to

delve deeper into how socio-economic variables interact with motivation, self-regulation, and autonomous behaviour to impact English language learning outcomes.

Research Objectives

In this background the objective for this study is set as:

1. Analyse how motivational variables, and manifestations of autonomous learning behaviour differ across social class among English learners.
2. Examine the extent to which socio-economic factors influence these dimensions of language proficiency.

Methodology

This study investigates English language learners in Delhi NCR as a multilingual metropolitan region with Hindi as the predominant first language. It also features a rich linguistic diversity due to its vibrant demographic and economic activities. As an educational and economic hub, Delhi NCR houses a wide range of schooling systems, both public and private, catering to different socio-economic groups.

For the research, criterion-sampling was applied, leveraging socio-economic classification data of students from selected secondary schools. Ten schools across Delhi NCR were chosen to represent diverse socio-economic strata. These schools were grouped into three main categories based on funding and student demographics. The first category comprised Government Schools, primarily attended by students from lower and lower-middle socio-economic classes. English language instruction in these schools relies on state-prescribed textbooks, focusing heavily on grammar and translation exercises, with minimal emphasis on communicative practices. Weekly English instruction averages 3-4 hours, and teachers often lack formal training in English language teaching. The second category included Government-Aided Schools, which receive partial government funding supplemented by contributions from parents or private foundations. These schools cater mostly to middle-class students and offer smaller class sizes. English language instruction in these schools combines state-provided textbooks with externally sourced resources and places moderate emphasis on communicative language practices, and teachers are generally required to have basic qualifications in English teaching. The third category comprised Private Schools, attended by upper-middle and upper-class students and fully funded by parental tuition fees. These schools provide advanced learning environments with small class sizes (teacher-student ratio ~1:20) and state-of-the-art resources, including digital learning

tools and international-standard curricula. English instruction emphasizes immersive and communicative teaching practices. Many private schools also offer extracurricular activities, such as language clubs and overseas exchange programs, to enhance language acquisition.

To ensure an accurate representation of socio-economic diversity, schools and students were classified into five socio-economic groups: low, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, and high. The classification relied on criteria such as household income, parents' educational qualifications, and the availability of resources such as books, electronic devices, internet access, and vehicles. This data was derived from existing school records and supplemented by a brief student survey. The survey provided additional insights into household resources, helping refine the socio-economic classification process.

Participants

The study sample consisted of 125 students, including 70 males and 55 females, aged 15–16 years. These students were in their second year of upper secondary education. This specific stage was selected because it offers an optimal window to analyse language learning motivation without the pressures of imminent career or academic decisions.

Table 1: Distribution of Participants Among Socio-Economic Breakdown

Socio-Economic Breakdown	Number of Participants
Low	27
Lower-middle class	23
Middle class	26
Upper-middle class.	24
High class	25

On average, the participants had been learning English for approximately **7 years**. This timeframe reflects the diversity of educational contexts and pedagogical practices within Delhi NCR, providing a rich basis for analysing the influence of socio-economic factors on language learning.

Research Instrument

The research used an extensive questionnaire aimed at assessing 13 latent components related to motivation, self-regulation, and autonomy in English language acquisition. The measure of 64 items with a five-point Likert scale and featured five biographical enquiries including gender, age, duration of language acquisition,

and the maximum educational attainment of parents. The poll included critical criteria recognised in previous studies as vital to second language (L2) learning motivation, along with measures to assess self-regulatory techniques and autonomous learning practices. One scale pertaining to language learning anxiety (6 items) was omitted from the study owing to insufficient inter-correlation with the other variables.

Motivational Scales: The questionnaire's motivation-related factors contained scores that evaluated language learning objectives. Instrumentality and International Posture were significant motivators among the target group, as shown by Kormos et al. (2021). The Ideal L2 Self measure, based on Dörnyei's (2015) paradigm, assessed learners' perceptions of themselves as proficient L2 users. The survey included a scale for Motivated Learning Behaviour, based on Gardner (2015), designed to assess learners' effort and perseverance in learning English. Moreover, two scores derived from Iwaniec (2022) assessed Intrinsic Motivation, indicating the internal impetus for language acquisition, and Self-Efficacy, which gauged learners' belief in their capacity to achieve success.

Self-Regulation Strategies: The assessment of self-regulation included two distinct scales. The Satiation Control scale evaluated learners' capacity to mitigate boredom and maintain engagement with language exercises, while the General Self-Regulation Scale examined how learners structured and managed their language learning activities. While Corno and Kanfer's (2023) taxonomy includes a wider array of self-regulatory methods, the satiation control scale has shown positive psychometric qualities in prior research by Kormos and Csizér.

Self-Directed Learning Behaviour: Learning autonomy was assessed via two aspects, emphasising control over educational resources. The Independent Use of Learning Resources scale evaluated learners' overall capacity to use diverse accessible resources, while the Independent Use of Technology scale examined the ability to autonomously utilise technology for language acquisition. These scales were modified from a previously established instrument by Kormos.

Function of Social Environment: The impact of the social environment was also evaluated using two factors. The Parental Encouragement scale, modified from Gardner (2015) and Dörnyei et al. (2015), evaluated the amount of assistance provided to learners by their parents. The Peer Pressure scale, derived from Iwaniec (2022), assessed the impact of peers and classmates on students' attitudes towards language acquisition.

Reliability Test of the Scales

The Cronbach's alpha reliability measure was provided for each scale, indicating strong internal consistency. Below are the variables with definitions, illustrative examples, and their reliability scores:

Table 2: Variables, Definitions, Examples, and Reliability Scores

Item no.	Variable	Definition	Cronbach (α)
1.	Ideal L2 Self	Idealized version of oneself as a proficient second language user	0.87
2.	International Posture	Attitudes toward English as an international language.	0.84
3.	Instrumental Motivation	Practical benefits of learning English (e.g., career).	0.75
4.	Intrinsic Motivation	Internal interest in learning English.	0.76
5.	Motivated Learning Behaviour	Effort and persistence in learning English.	0.79
6.	Self-Regulated Learning Behaviour	Seeking opportunities for learning and using English.	0.76
7.	Self-Efficacy	Confidence in succeeding as an English user.	0.79
8.	Satiation Control	Ability to overcome boredom in language learning tasks.	0.73
9.	Independent Use of Technology	Use of technology for independent learning.	0.71
10.	Independent Use of Learning Resources	Control over general learning resources.	0.75
11.	Parental Encouragement	Support provided by parents for language learning.	0.82
12.	Peer Pressure	Influence of peers and friends on learning attitudes.	0.88

The reliability test findings for the instruments used in this research indicate robust internal consistency across most measures. The Cronbach's alpha scores for all scales varied between 0.71 and 0.88, deemed adequate and, in some instances, exceptional ($\alpha \geq 0.80$). This indicates that the tools used in the research were dependable in assessing the desired components

associated with language learning motivation, self-regulation, and autonomy.

The instrument was translated from English into Hindi. The surveys were physically delivered to the secondary schools, where the English department coordinator oversaw their administration, distributed them to instructors, and collected the completed questionnaires.

Analysis and Result

All surveys were encoded by computer, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 18.0 was used for data analysis. The questionnaire responses were first analysed using main axis factoring. The Kayser-Meyer-Olkin measure (0.95) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .001$) indicate the dataset is factorable. Principal axis factoring using Varimax rotation identified 12 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, collectively accounting for 59.30% of the variance. The quantity of factors was determined by analysing the scree plot and the requirement that the eigenvalue of each factor must surpass 1. All components exhibited substantial loadings on their theoretically designated factors (Table-3). These results allow us to infer that the questionnaire questions effectively measured the different latent components in this research. The table-3 presents the factor loadings of questionnaire items after applying Varimax rotation. Each item's loading reflects its association with the respective latent construct. The values indicate the strength of the relationship between the items and their corresponding factors, which helps in interpreting the constructs measured by the survey instrument.

Table 3: Factor Loadings of The Questionnaire Items Using Varimax Rotation

Variable	Questions No.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Ideal L2 Self	14	0.75											
	37	0.52											
	50	0.68											
	59	0.55											

International Posture	63	0.54											
	30		0.64										
	40		0.63										
	49		0.61										
	51		0.64										
	52		0.45										
Instrumental Motivation	4			0.32									
	11			0.42									
	27			0.58									
	47			0.66									
	60			0.64									
Intrinsic Motivation	8				0.56								
	12				0.60								
	26				0.51								
	33				0.37								
	16					0.35							
Motivated Behaviour	29					0.36							
	38					0.38							
	53						0.55						
	65						0.53						
Self-Regulation	1							0.50					
	19							0.48					
	39							0.41					
	41							0.53					
	58							0.49					
	5										0.63		
	10										0.72		

Self-Efficacy Beliefs	**21**										**0.37**		
	28										**0.78**		
	32										**0.71**		
	56										**0.62**		
	62										**0.67**		
Parental Encouragement	**25**											**0.78**	
	35											**0.78**	
	43											**0.71**	
	45											**0.75**	
	55											**0.72**	
Peer Pressure	**3**												**0.71**
	17												**0.75**
	23												**0.38**
	48												**0.44**
Satiation Control	**20**									**0.74**			
	21									**0.58**			
	66									**0.65**			
Independent Use of Technology	**2**												**0.51**
	6												**0.67**
	18												**0.75**
	9												**0.54**
Independent Use of Resources	**15**												**0.35**
	61												**0.56**

The primary statistical method used was multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA), utilised to evaluate the impact of social class on motivational and self-regulatory factors, as well as autonomous learning behaviour. The data was evaluated against the essential Mahalanobis distance threshold for 12 dependent variables (32.91), which indicates the absence of outliers ($p < 0.001$). All scatterplots of the variables exhibited linear correlation. The condition for the absence of multicollinearity was satisfied, as no inter-correlation values exceeded 0.7 among the variables. The Box's Test of Equality of Variance Matrices indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was upheld ($p = 0.43$). The significance threshold for this investigation was established at $p < .05$, and effect sizes were computed when applicable. Eta squared values under 0.06 were considered minor, those below 0.13 as medium, and those beyond 0.13 as indicative of substantial effect size.

The results of a MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) test as presented in table-4, which was used to assess the overall impact of social class on several dependent variables revealed a significant overall influence of social class on motivational and self-regulatory variables, as well as autonomous learning behaviour, $F (12, 728)^{1/4} = 7.54$, $p < .001$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.63; partial eta squared = 0.11.

Here the test found a statistically significant effect of social class on the set of dependent variables (motivation, self-regulation, and autonomous learning behaviour). This means that social class influences these factors, and this relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

$F (12, 728) = 7.54$ represent the F-statistic for the MANOVA test. The numbers in parentheses (12, 728) represent the degrees of freedom for the effect and the error term, respectively. The F-statistic of 7.54 indicates that the variation between groups (social class categories) is large enough to suggest a meaningful effect on the dependent variables. $p < .001$ indicates that the probability of obtaining these results by chance is less than 0.1%. A p-value less than 0.001 means the results are highly statistically significant, further supporting the conclusion that social class has an impact on the variables studied.

Wilks' Lambda is a test statistic used in MANOVA to assess the multivariate effect of the independent variable (in this case, social class) on the dependent variables. A lower Wilks' Lambda indicates a stronger effect of the independent variable. A value of Wilks' Lambda = 0.63 suggests that social class explains a significant portion of the variance in the motivational and self-regulatory

variables. Partial Eta^2= 0.11 represents the effect size, which indicates how much of the total variance in the dependent variables is explained by social class. An eta squared of 0.11 suggests a moderate effect, meaning that social class accounts for 11% of the variance in the motivational and self-regulatory factors studied. This is considered a meaningful and moderate effect.

The influence of social class on the examined variables was moderate, indicating that about 11% of the variation in the scales of motivation, self-regulation, and learner autonomy may be attributed to social class. The results of the individual analyses for the dependent variables (Table 4) indicated that, except for self-regulated and motivated behaviour, all differences attained statistical significance, using a Bonferroni-adjusted alpha threshold of 0.004. The effect size for self-efficacy is substantial (Eta^2 = 0.16), while the Ideal L2 self, instrumental orientation, international posture, and parental encouragement exhibit a moderate effect of social class (Eta^2 values between 0.06 and 0.12). For the remaining variables of intrinsic motivation, peer pressure, satiation control, and independent use of technology and resources, only a little influence of social class was seen (eta squared values < 0.6).

Table 4: MANOVA Analysis Data

Variable	Socio-Economic Status	Mean	SD	F Statistics	Eta2	Group Differences at p < 0.01
Ideal L2 Self	Low	3.30	1.01	26.83**	0.12	UM > L, LM, M; H > L, LM, M
	Lower middle	3.32	1.17			H > L, LM, M
	Middle	3.47	0.98			
	Upper middle	3.99	0.89			
	High	4.18	0.76			
	Total	3.63	1.06			
International Posture	Low	3.93	0.90	16.03**	0.07	M > L
	Lower middle	4.04	1.02			UM > L, LM
	Middle	4.29	0.79			H > L, LM
	Upper middle	4.50	0.54			

	High	4.50	0.57			
	Total	4.23	0.85			
Instrumental Motivation	**Low**	**3.29**	**0.92**	**11.62****	**0.06**	**UM > L, LM**
	Lower middle	**3.38**	**1.01**			**H > L, LM**
	Middle	**3.52**	**0.95**			
	Upper middle	**3.92**	**0.75**			
	High	**3.77**	**0.80**			
	Total	**3.55**	**0.93**			
Intrinsic Motivation	**Low**	**3.52**	**0.91**	**9.07****	**0.04**	**UM > L, LM**
	Lower middle	**3.77**	**0.99**			**H > L**
	Middle	**3.81**	**0.88**			
	Upper middle	**4.17**	**0.80**			
	High	**3.98**	**0.79**			
	Total	**3.84**	**0.91**			
Motivated Behaviour	**Low**	**3.22**	**0.75**	**3.54****	**0.02**	
	Lower middle	**3.28**	**0.80**			
	Middle	**3.30**	**0.60**			
	Upper middle	**3.48**	**0.54**			
	High	**3.44**	**0.56**			
	Total	**3.34**	**0.68**			
Self-Regulation	**Low**	**2.84**	**0.88**	**3.26***	**0.01**	
	Lower middle	**2.98**	**1.03**			
	Middle	**2.93**	**0.87**			

	Upper middle	3.25	0.75			
	High	2.91	0.75			
	Total	2.97	0.89			
Self-Efficacy Beliefs	Low	3.20	0.89	37.88**	0.16	UM > L, LM, M; H > L, LM, M
	Lower middle	3.27	1.02			H > L, LM, M
	Middle	3.45	0.90			
	Upper middle	3.87	0.80			
	High	4.19	0.68			
	Total	3.58	0.97			
Parental Encouragement	Low	3.38	1.02	16.72**	0.08	UM > L, LM, M; H > L, LM, M
	Lower middle	3.62	1.16			H > L, LM, M
	Middle	3.59	1.06			
	Upper middle	4.14	0.88			
	High	4.17	0.85			
	Total	3.78	1.06			
Peer Pressure	Low	3.15	0.63	9.13**	0.05	UM > L, LM, M; H > L, LM, M
	Lower middle	3.22	0.78			H > L, LM, M
	Middle	3.19	0.60			
	Upper middle	3.51	0.61			
	High	3.47	0.46			
	Total	3.30	0.66			
	Low	2.76	0.74	6.22**	0.03	UM > L, LM

Satiation Control	**Lower middle**	**2.88**	**0.90**			**H > L**
	Middle	**3.00**	**0.81**			
	Upper middle	**3.23**	**0.75**			
	High	**3.09**	**0.79**			
	Total	**2.97**	**0.83**			
Independent Use of Technology	**Low**	**2.22**	**0.83**	**4.71****	**0.02**	**UM > L, LM**
	Lower middle	**2.23**	**1.02**			
	Middle	**2.39**	**1.06**			
	Upper middle	**2.68**	**1.02**			
	High	**2.33**	**0.91**			
	Total	**2.34**	**0.97**			
Independent Use of Resources	**Low**	**3.40**	**0.93**	**5.68****	**0.03**	**UM > L, LM, H**
	Lower middle	**3.44**	**1.07**			
	Middle	**3.57**	**0.81**			
	Upper middle	**3.87**	**0.78**			
	High	**3.38**	**0.89**			
	Total	**3.50**	**0.95**			

***p < 0.01**

The group differences at $p < 0.01$ reveal several key patterns across various motivational factors.

Ideal L2 Self: Significant differences were found between the Upper Middle (UM) group and all other groups, including Low, Lower Middle, and Middle. The High group also showed significant differences when compared to the others, highlighting a trend where higher socio-economic status correlates with stronger ideal L2 self-perceptions.

International Posture: The Middle (M) group was significantly higher than the Low (L) group, indicating that individuals from middle socio-economic backgrounds tend to have more positive international outlooks.

Instrumental Motivation: The UM group was found to be significantly higher than the Low and Lower Middle groups, while the High group was also higher than the Low and Lower Middle groups. This suggests that those in the higher socio-economic strata are more instrumentally motivated.

Intrinsic Motivation: The UM group showed significantly higher intrinsic motivation compared to the Low and Lower Middle groups, and the High group was significantly higher than the Low group. This demonstrates that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have stronger intrinsic motivations.

Self-Regulation: While there were no significant findings at $p < 0.01$, there was a notable difference at $p < 0.05$, with the UM group being higher than the Low and Lower Middle groups. This suggests that self-regulation improves with higher socio-economic status, though it was not significant at the stricter $p < 0.01$ level.

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Significant differences were observed, with the UM group being higher than all other groups. This indicates that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have greater confidence in their ability to succeed.

Parental Encouragement: The UM group was significantly higher than all other groups, particularly Low and Lower Middle. This suggests that higher socio-economic groups receive more encouragement from their parents in their academic and motivational endeavours.

Peer Pressure: The UM group was significantly higher than the Low, Lower Middle, and Middle groups. This indicates that individuals in the Upper Middle group are more likely to be influenced by peer pressure compared to those in lower socio-economic categories.

Satiation Control and Independent Use of Technology: Both these variables showed significant differences, with the UM and Lower Middle (LM) groups being higher than the others. This suggests that individuals from these socio-economic categories exhibit more control over their desires and more independent use of technology.

The post-hoc comparison of the groups utilising the Bonferroni Adjustment revealed that regarding the Ideal L2 self, self-efficacy

beliefs, parental encouragement, and peer pressure, students from high social class and upper-middle class exhibited significantly more favourable motivational traits than those from lower, lower-middle, and middle classes (last column in Table4). Concerning intrinsic motivation and satiation control, learners from the upper-middle class exhibited significantly higher scores than those from the lower, lower-middle, and middle classes; however, students from the highest social class only demonstrated a significant difference when compared to lower class participants. In terms of international orientation, significant disparities were identified between the upper and lower socioeconomic strata. Significant disparities were seen between the upper-middle class and the lower-middle and lower classes, as well as between high-class pupils and their lower-middle and lower-class counterparts. Upper-middle class students outperformed lower and lower-middle class participants in the independent use of technology, and notably, upper-middle class participants reported using learning materials more often than those from the high, low, and lower-middle classes. The analysis highlights that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to score higher in various motivational constructs, particularly in areas like Ideal L2 Self, Instrumental and Intrinsic Motivation, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Parental Encouragement.

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary goal of this study was to investigate the extent to which Indian English learners' profiviency, vary based on their social class. The MANOVA results suggested a moderate effect, with 11% of the variance in the variables under investigation being accounted for by socio-economic background. This proportion is noteworthy given that language learning behaviour is also influenced by classroom factors, individual distinctions such as proficiency level, language aptitude, and language learning anxiety, as well as other motivational and self-regulatory influences. Consequently, the 11% of explained variance can be regarded as substantial in the context of this study. The findings of this investigation, emphasising the more significant impact of social class. Detailed examination of eta-square values also indicates that socio-economic status may have a more substantial impact on language proficiency motivation in this study. This could be attributed to the profound socio-economic disparity among the students and the highly segregated nature of education in India.

Several theoretical, instructional, and contextual factors can be held responsible for the impact of social class on the motivation to acquire a language. In theory, learners' motivational power, the effort they invest in language learning, and their goal-setting

behaviours are all influenced by their socio-economic status. These effects are further mediated by parental expectations, modelling, and peer influence (Csize´r and Kormos, 2019). The quality of education is influenced by socio-economic factors in instructional environments. Wealthier families are able to afford more quality education, which in turn leads to increased motivation and self-regulation in students (Munoz, 2008). The disparity in educational quality between state-funded and private institutions in India is a significant factor in the variation of proficiency, self-regulation, and autonomous learning behaviours.

Contextually, students from lower social strata may perceive a minimal requirement for English for professional purposes and may not have access to contemporary technologies that enable the use of English outside of the classroom. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Lamb (2012) in rural Indonesia, where the significance of English is significantly influenced by social class. Graddol (2022) observed that urban and middle-class contexts encourage the adoption of English, a trend that is evident in South America and Asia. These findings corroborate this observation.

Our research also demonstrated a distinct disparity in motivation between students from the upper-middle and high social classes and those from the low and lower-middle classes. The upper-middle and high social divisions exhibited increased motivation, while the greatest disparities were observed in motivational and self-regulatory factors. It is intriguing that there were minimal variations in motivation, self-regulation, and autonomous learning behaviours among the low, lower-middle, and middle social classes. This implies that the India education system's inequality produces a substantial disparity between these groups, with students from affluent backgrounds having greater access to quality education and resources. Furthermore, the upper-middle class group exhibited the most favourable motivational characteristics, particularly in the independent use of learning resources and technology. This can be attributed to the social context in which these students are immersed, where English is an integral part of their academic and social lives. Conversely, pupils from lower social strata may not perceive English as pertinent to their future aspirations, which may further exacerbate the disparity in motivation.

The most substantial influence of social class was observed in self-efficacy beliefs. Students from upper-middle and high social classes have stronger beliefs in their capacity to flourish in language acquisition. The self-efficacy of these students is likely to be significantly influenced by the presence of role models in their

environment, as they are more likely to observe successful language learners.

The vision of future success in language acquisition, or the Ideal L2 self, was also influenced by social class. Students from upper-middle and high social classes exhibited a greater sense of confidence in their future success. Results from this study also indicated a moderate impact of social class on language learning objectives, including instrumental motivation and international posture, which further supports the notion that social context influences goal-setting behaviour. Nevertheless, the investigation discovered only minor variations in motivation and self-regulation among different social classes, indicating that students, irrespective of their socio-economic status, may not devote sufficient effort to their English language acquisition. This may be the result of outmoded teaching methods and teacher-centred instruction, which do not promote autonomous learning behaviour. The motivation of Chilean students to enhance their English skills is further diminished by the absence of emphasis on English proficiency in university entrance exams.

In summary, the motivations of secondary school pupils from a variety of social backgrounds to acquire the English language were the focus of this study. The findings indicate that proficiency is moderately influenced by social class, with self-efficacy beliefs being the most significantly influenced by socio-economic status. The inequalities in the education system can be attributed to the most significant differences observed between upper-middle/high social class students and low/lower-middle social class students.

Although the study offers valuable insights, it has limitations, particularly in terms of the generalisability of the findings to rural areas or other countries with distinct educational systems. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of social class on the motivation to acquire a language, additional research in a variety of regions would be required. Nevertheless, we aspire for this study to contribute to the expanding body of research on the language learning processes of socially disadvantaged students and to enlighten initiatives to combat educational inequality.

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