

# A Qualitative Analysis of Motivational Factors and Learning Challenges Impacting Proficiency Among Yemeni Female EFL Undergraduates at Thamar University

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**Abstract**—It has been asserted that motivation is a necessary factor in second/foreign language acquisition, as it significantly influences learners' initiation, persistence, and achievement in studies. This paper examines the primary motivations of undergraduate students for acquiring English as a foreign language and how different socio-cultural factors influence these motivations. The study also discusses various interconnected factors that impede proper language acquisition among students. The research employed an interview-based ethnographic framework with 16 female undergraduates from the first and second years of the English language department at the College of Arts, Thamar University. The thematic analysis of participant responses revealed diverse motivational orientations, which indicates that motivation toward learning should be treated as more complex and dynamic. While intrinsic motivation was the dominant form, several students reported extrinsic or blended motivational patterns. A few also described a shift in motivation over time. The analysis also suggested a series of recurring challenges that emerged under six general headings: linguistic, practical, cognitive, communicative, psychological, and structural. Most respondents had multiple issues, and so their barriers are interrelated and cumulative. This research can be of help to curriculum planners, teachers, and government officials who address the need to enhance EFL teaching for other female students in similar settings. The study also promotes more student-friendly and culturally competent language instruction by pointing out the driving forces as well as the obstacles to learning.

**Index Terms**—EFL proficiency, motivation, learning challenges, qualitative research, female undergraduates

## I. INTRODUCTION

The English language has played the role of a lingua franca in the contemporary and increasingly internationalized world of education, intercontinental communications, and careers. The knowledge of the English language has become not only an academic need but a passport to international knowledge, a source of employment, and engagement with other cultures. This recognition has increased its importance, and many nations that do not mainly speak English have identified English language learning as one of their main academic pursuits. In Yemen, this is witnessed as the number of students joining the English language classes is rising. Nonetheless, to numerous Yemeni students, the experience of studying EFL is characterized by institutional barriers: an aged curriculum, few specialist teachers, little language exposure, and infrastructural inadequacy. Most students, if not all, portray a lesser level of English proficiency to meet academic demands. Available facts lead to the conclusion that the issue of such proficiency gaps is influenced by several variables, including structural ones as well as a lack of exposure to English in everyday situations, inadequate, learner-centered instruction, as well as a shortage of preparatory instructions. The field view consists of the female undergraduates at Thamar University whose experiences are shaped by the interaction between motivational factors and inhibitors in a complicated educational relationship. Moreover, their education experiences are influenced by socio-cultural expectations, restricted mobility, and access to resources. Therefore, understanding their motivation helps in determining not just their initial interest but also their enthusiasm and eventual achievement. Psychologically, motivation has been central to establishing persistence, confidence, and learners' success in the acquisition of their second or foreign language (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2010). Learning the reasons why these students study English and what prevents or causes them to do so is essential for developing a gender-responsive pedagogical approach. In this way,

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this research gives a voice to this underrepresented group in the academic discourse within Yemen's educational, economic, and cultural context.

### *Research Questions*

The study is framed around two research questions to identify the motivational and experiential levels in learning the English language by female undergraduates at Tamar University:

(1) What are the main motivations for female undergraduate students at Tamar University toward learning English as a foreign language, and how do socio-cultural variables affect these motivations?

(2) What are the challenges these students face while learning the English language?

These questions are meant to probe the students in detail to provide a sophisticated explanation of the variables affecting their engagement with the English language.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *A. Theoretical Framework*

Previous studies have emphasized the role of motivation as a necessary factor in second/foreign language acquisition. Theoretical orientations to motivation have changed substantially with time, from very static models to dynamic and culturally oriented models (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Ushioda, 2015). Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguished between integrative, which brought in the difference between a student with the goal of connecting to the language community, and instrumental motivation, the one with the view that learning about language is a vehicle to some other goal, whether career or academic success.

One of the key differences in the theory of motivation is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). For them, intrinsic motivation is a kind of motivation where people are motivated by personal satisfaction, fulfillment, or enjoyment of an activity done, while extrinsic motivation is an external factor that can involve rewards, recognition, or social pressure. Notably, the two kinds of motivation are not mutually exclusive. Learners in most instances have a combination of both, or transition between the orientations as time passes (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The additional expansion of the theory of motivation by Dörnyei (2005) presented the L2 Motivational Self System, a model that presents language learning perspective of motivation through three correlated dimensions that include the Ideal L2 Self (the image of a successful speaker of the target language), Ought-to L2 Self (external standards and social demands), and L2 Learning Experience (the role of classroom context and individual experience).

Recently, the fluidity and changeable nature of motivation has been highlighted by the complex dynamic systems theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). This view differs with the one that thinks of it as a given entity by viewing motivation as a dynamic outcome of the recurring interaction between the individual and the environment and puts into emphasis the contextual significance of cultural values, relationships with peers, and the institutional organization as determinants of the attitudes and persistence of learners (Ushioda, 2015). The systematic relationship between these types of motivation is important in the planning of educational practices so as to develop a form of engagement that both lasts long and can have significant results that can be learned. This study, referencing these theoretical models, aims to reflect reality and provide insight into the realization of the nature of motivational factors, whether static or dynamic, affecting language learning among students in an environment where support systems tend to be inconsistent.

### *B. Previous Studies on Motivation and Challenges in Similar Contexts*

Acquisition of the English language presents challenges to learners in contexts where it is not regularly used outside of class time. The interconnected factors that impede this acquisition among students can be classified into: linguistic, psychological, socio-cultural, and pedagogical ones. Linguistically, differences in the structure between Arabic and English complicate the learning of vocabulary and grammatical correctness, including orthographic (Ryan & Meara, 1991), sentential (Smith, 2001), and pronunciation differences (Al-Shuaibi, 2009). Most learners are also unable to memorize new words or apply them in actual situations (Nation, 2001). Psychologically, language anxiety and low confidence hinder participation (Horwitz et al., 1986). Embarrassment, fear of failure, or speaking in front of a crowd may also lessen the desire of students to participate in classroom activities. Such emotional difficulties limit practice opportunities, which develop communicative competence. Socio-culturally, there are aspects that affect the direction of the students with regard to English (Norton, 2013; Pennycook, 2017). Students, especially females, in conservative settings do not have access to English speakers, non-course-related activities, or online materials that promote immersion. Moreover, there may be discouraging attitudes toward any active use of English that attach a sense of not speaking proper English, but rather being foreign, besides the fear of speaking English publicly in society. Pedagogically, more than a few classrooms depend on teacher-based methods and tend toward rote learning and text translation. Scarce resources, big classes, and inadequate training of teachers contribute to the ineffectiveness of teaching even more (Nunan, 2003). These restrictions, along with grammar-translation teaching methods, usually lead to the fact that students do not have many possibilities to speak English, get personal feedback, and have some valuable communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The convergence of these issues forms a kind of learning environment that limits language learning and reduces motivation among learners. These barriers and their nature must be understood and

addressed to create responsive teaching practices, learning environments that will support students in their linguistic and emotional growth.

Issues of motivation and difficulties in learning the English language have been studied by many scholars in Arab countries. A good number of such studies have aimed at determining the extent to which learners are internally motivated or motivated by other external factors. Concurrently, it has been shown that there are general issues with mother tongue influence, large classes, as well as vocabulary retention, fluency of speech, and exposure to the language's everyday usage (Al-Khasawneh & Al-Omari, 2015; Alrabai, 2016; Fareh, 2010; Khan, 2011). In the Yemeni context, there has been a pattern of reported studies with both male and female learners grouped together and with a tendency to adopt quantitative techniques of measuring attitudes, examination results, or level of proficiency (Al-Sohbani, 2015; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Muthanna & Sang, 2016). Although the results of such research are really valuable, they have the likelihood of ignoring the personal experiences of students who study the English language as a specialization, which has an influence on learning processes. Researchers who have carried out research with the Yemeni learners have reiterated the role of motivation as a factor affecting success in learning English (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). Nonetheless, the emphasis has often been put on all-purpose trends more than the actual dynamics of students belonging to the underrepresented population. Likewise, the issues of traditional curricula, big classes, and underestimated teachers are usually discussed using institutional views in lieu of using students' voices (Muthanna & Sang, 2016). Furthermore, available studies seldom focus on concomitant involvement between learning barriers and motivational attributes. Consequently, very little information is available on how the barriers influence motivation, as well as how some challenges may stifle or transform the objectives of learners with time. The study fills this gap because the adopted qualitative approach focuses on the perception of female undergraduate students. It provides new perspectives on how these students deal with motivation and challenges in a highly academic and social environment. In so doing, the paper expands with its sense of urgency the knowledge on English language learning in Yemen with a more contextual and holistic knowledge base.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Study Context

The study was carried out in the English language department of the Faculty of Arts at Tamar University. The department accommodates a wide pool of students, with the majority being females. In our case, approximately 95% of the students in both first- and second-years were females. These students study a four-year program offered by the department in the English language, covering a wide range of courses related to linguistics, literature, and translation. The program equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively communicate in English in various settings. Nevertheless, the department works in the larger system of educational constraints, such as low access to technologies, conventional approaches to education and pedagogical delivery, and the lack of language immersion opportunities.

#### B. Adopted Approach

Our study adopted an interview-based ethnographic qualitative design to understand the reasons and issues faced by female undergraduates pursuing English as a foreign language. This method is especially appropriate for exploring complex psychological and cultural structures like motivation and learning problems. The aim is to obtain deep, descriptive insights into the learners' perspectives on matters that are usually neglected by the quantitatively overdriven research. The paper is expected to establish which personal, social, and academic factors influence students' participation in learning the English language.

#### C. Participants

The participants targeted in this study were 16 female students in their first and second years. The reason behind selecting female participants is that the majority of the students joining the humanities were female.

To address the power dynamics between the researchers as professors and the students, we recruited other students to conduct interviews with their colleagues. Additionally, in Yemen, it is culturally and religiously prohibited for male and female participants to sit alone together for an interview. To navigate this challenge, we trained two female students from the fourth level to conduct interviews with their female peers. This approach helps create a comfortable environment, allowing participants to express their thoughts and ideas freely and reflect their true feelings.

#### D. Data Collection

To ensure we gathered reliable and extensive data and to meet the aims and objectives of this study, we employed a triangulation approach that incorporated three different methods: a demographic survey, open-ended questions, and in-person semi-structured interviews. All of these methods were conducted in Arabic, the participants' native language, so that they could be understood without a doubt. Likewise, this would enable participants to describe themselves more immediately and properly (Harkness, 2003).

##### (a). Demographic Survey

To gather quantitative data on different demographic variables, including email ID or WhatsApp number, age, educational level, number of English speakers in the family, participants' travel experience, and their engagement with English entertainment, as well as their willingness to continue to participate in answering the open-ended questions and to appear in the following interviews, we developed a structured demographic survey using google forms. The purpose of this demographic survey was to obtain background information to filter and validate our participants.

#### *(b). Open-Ended Questions*

Out of 40 students, we received responses from 27 students only. Of these, we validated 16 students whom we found fit for our study and to whom we emailed our open-ended questions. The validation relied on the students' willingness to continue with the open-ended questions and interviews. While most students were willing to answer the open-ended questions, few were prepared to participate in the interviews. These open-ended questions aimed to encourage detailed and descriptive responses, facilitating the collection of rich qualitative data. These questions were specifically designed to help participants become familiar with the types of interview questions they would encounter, preparing them for the interviews.

#### *(c). In-Person Individual Interviews*

After receiving the responses to the open-ended questions, we proceeded to conduct individual in-person semi-structured interviews with each participant so as to provide a deeper understanding and address any ambiguities or incomplete responses from the open-ended questions. The interviews were scheduled over three consecutive days, taking into account the availability and preferences of the participants. We started the interviews by assuring them that their data would be kept anonymous and the recordings would be deleted after being transcribed. We obtained their consent for recording before the interviews on a sheet of paper. During the interviews, we used a Samsung Galaxy S22 Ultra for audio recording.

#### *E. Data Processing and Analysis*

The recorded interview data was stored in MP3 format, and we used TurboScribe software to transcribe all the files. This transcription was later improved manually, as the software struggled with dialectal data. Each interview was transcribed into a separate Microsoft Word File. The participants' names were given aliases, referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and so on. We utilized MAXQDA Software (Version 24) for data coding and theme generalization. Each code was labeled to indicate its content and meaning, reflecting the various types of motivation that students have for learning a foreign language as well as the challenges that impede their learning. We only coded the responses that relate to the research questions. We translated the coded segments into English for the final report. During this process, only the quotations included in the report were translated.

#### *F. Trustworthiness of the Study*

The data collection for this study employed a triangulation approach that incorporated a demographic survey, open-ended questions, and in-person individual semi-structured interviews. We made it clear that participation was completely voluntary and that they could stop or withdraw at any moment. Throughout the recruitment process, questionnaire administration, and interviews, we ensured strict confidentiality by refraining from discussing other participants' responses. Since the participants were female students, additional measures were taken to ensure that only the researchers could access the audio recordings, which were destroyed and deleted after the research report was written. This multilayered data collection approach, combined with robust informed consent and data protection procedures, lends a high degree of trustworthiness to the data gathered for this study.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *A. Motivation*

The results of the first study question are shown in this section:

***“What are the main motivations for female undergraduate students at Tamar University toward learning English as a foreign language, and how do socio-cultural variables affect these motivations?”***

Thematic analysis of participant responses revealed diverse motivational orientations (see Figure 1). While intrinsic motivation was the most dominant form, several students reported extrinsic or blended motivational patterns. A few also described a shift in motivation over time. These variations are discussed below, supported by illustrative quotes from participants.

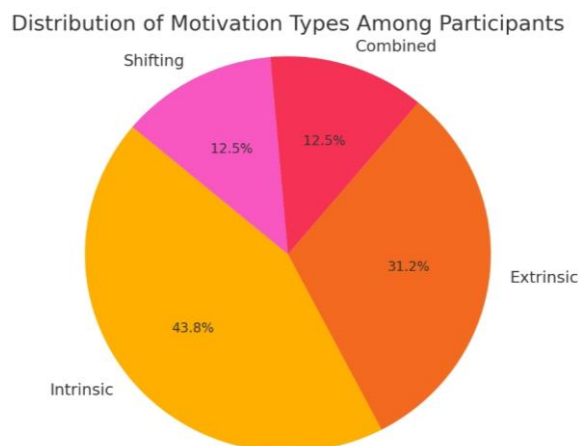


Figure 1. Distribution of Motivation Types Among Participants

(a). *Intrinsic Motivation*

The majority of participants reported intrinsic motivation, demonstrating a sincere interest in learning English for one's benefit, enjoyment, or long-term personal growth. These students were primarily driven by internal goals such as self-improvement, cultural curiosity, and the aspiration to become fluent speakers or future educators. For instance, Participant 1 said, 'I study it because I love the English language very much. I hope to become a speaker in the future.' Another participant reported, 'The reason I chose this major is my love for learning English and speaking fluently, and my general passion for learning languages' (Participant 4). Such responses suggest that these learners are self-directed and emotionally invested in the subject matter. Their motivation stems from internal values rather than external expectations, indicating a strong sense of autonomy.

(b). *Extrinsic Motivation*

Five participants were primarily extrinsically motivated. Their decision to study English was influenced by external variables, including parental expectations, career prospects, and societal recognition of English as a "language of opportunity." For instance, participant 3 said, 'My mother always says that English has a future and is the language of the era. She advised me to study it because it will secure my future.' Similarly, Participant 10 said, 'I study English because it's a well-known language and offers better chances for employment.' These responses reflect the impact of social influence and future-oriented practical benefits. Although extrinsically motivated learners may be goal-driven, they might lack the same emotional engagement as those with intrinsic motivation unless their experiences become more personally meaningful over time.

(c). *Combined Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation*

A few students expressed both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, blending internal interest with practical considerations such as job opportunities or social mobility. For example, participant 6 stated: 'I love English very much and I also think it will help me find many job opportunities after graduation.' Likewise, Participant 5 said: 'It was always my ambition since childhood to study English. I want to master the language because I believe it will open up career opportunities and allow me to connect with a wider range of people.' These participants viewed language learning as both fulfilling and functional. Their dual motivation offers flexibility and resilience, enabling them to stay engaged across different learning conditions.

(d). *Shifting Motivation*

Two participants described motivational shifts. One initially pursued English due to parental pressure, but later developed a personal interest: 'I entered English without desire; it was my father's choice. But from the second level, I started to love it' (Participant 7). Another participant began with enthusiasm but became discouraged due to negative university experiences: 'I used to love English in school because of my teachers. However, when I came to university, it changed' (Participant 8). The presented cases demonstrate that motivation is dynamic and chooses new shapes depending on the situational conditions that include teaching style, environment, or institutional support. A favorable learning condition can transform extrinsic interest into intrinsic involvement, whereas an unfavorable condition can work the opposite. Figure 1 shows the distribution of motivation types.

The results indicate that the most common type of motivation among the respondents is intrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, the role of extrinsic drivers, including the chances of getting a job and the impact of family, is significant. These findings are highly compatible with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to SDT, although intrinsic motivation is essential for psychological health and development, extrinsic motivation may also be internalized and integrated, transforming into a form of autonomous motivation that is associated with favorable effects. Other studies support the notion that learners who are internally motivated tend to interact with the language more

deeply and stick with their studies longer (Dörnyei, 1998; Gardner, 1985; Noels et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ushioda, 2008).

The existence of dynamic and composite drives highlights the contingency of teaching tactics that allow encouraging internal involvement as well as external reward. This emphasis on dynamic and compound drives further aligns with expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983), which posits that motivation is a function of individuals' expectation of success and their value placed on the tasks, including intrinsic, attainment, utility values, and perceived costs.

Teachers can encourage intrinsic motivation through establishing student-centered conditions, an interactive approach, and tying language studying to personal tasks of learners. Meanwhile, covering the extrinsic interests like career preparation and social validation can serve to keep the learners going who may not initially find personal interest in the subject. This fits with the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) model of motivation and behavior and the role of self-efficacy, observational learning, and reciprocal determinism as motivators at the individual level. This focus on the incorporation of these diverse perspectives implies that dynamic teaching strategies should tap into the internal reasons for learning as well as the motivating aspirational context to create a motivational environment that is holistic in nature.

### B. Challenges

In this section, the results of the second research question were provided:

***“What are the challenges these students face while learning the English language?”***

A thematic analysis of interview responses suggested a series of recurring barriers. These problems emerged under six general headings: linguistic, practical, cognitive, communicative, psychological, and structural. Most respondents had multiple issues, and so their barriers are interrelated and cumulative (See Table 1).

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF LEARNING CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

No.	Types	Challenges	Freq.	Participants
1	Linguistic	Limited Vocabulary	6	2,6,7,9,10,11,13
		Difficulty in Comprehension and Translation	5	5,8,9,11,15
		Understanding Abbreviations	4	3,4,12,13
		Pronunciation Difficulties	3	3,9,14
		Lexical Ambiguity	2	7, 9
		Sentence Construction	1	8
2	Practical	Practical application of English in everyday life	6	6,9,10,11,12,16
		Achieving a high level of proficiency	1	14
3	Cognitive	Forgetfulness	6	4,5,6,7,11,13
		Vocabulary Retention	5	3,6,8,9,10
4	Communicative	Speaking fluency	8	1,5,7,8,9,12,15,16
		Lack of Activities and Interaction	4	5,9,10,13
		Difficulty in expressing thoughts	4	4,6,7,16
5	Psychological	Shyness	1	4
6	Structural	Lack of Preparatory Courses	1	2

#### (a). Linguistic Challenges

The majority of the respondents reported linguistic issues that affect their overall proficiency. These issues can be further divided into six categories: Limited vocabulary (6 participants), comprehension and translation issues (5 participants), the ability to understand the abbreviations (4 participants), pronunciation (3 participants), lexical ambiguity (2 participants), and sentence construction (1 participant). These language deficiencies made them unable to understand written materials and communicate effectively. Here, we present samples of the students' direct quotes taken from their interviews to highlight these linguistic challenges.

##### 1. Limited Vocabulary

There were 6 out of 16 participants who reported limited vocabulary as one of the main challenges they face while learning the English language. For instance, Participant 3 said, 'The difficulties, to be honest, are the lack of vocabulary, a very strong mix-up in the vocabulary' (Participant 3). Another example was mentioned by Participant 6, who emphasized the importance of having sufficient words to communicate effectively. She stated, 'I can't convey the idea because my vocabulary is limited' (Participant 6). Another example is stated by Participant 9, who revealed the complexity of vocabulary, where multiple meanings of words create confusion and hinder understanding. She said, 'I face many difficulties because I don't have a lot of vocabulary, each word has several meanings, and I can't determine this from that.' (Participant 9). These vocabulary challenges made the stutterer more hesitant about talking and made her less confident about being more active with the language.

##### 2. Difficulty in Comprehension and Translation

There are 5 out of 16 participants expressed the difficulty in translation and comprehension as their main challenge while learning English. For instance, Participant 5 said, 'Understanding the language quickly and translating it.' Another example is expressed by Participant 8, who emphasized the frustration that arises from not understanding

spoken language by saying, 'I'm saying that the difficulty lies in when someone speaks to you and you don't understand that' (Participant 8). Participant 9 highlighted a common issue where learners may recognize words but struggle to interpret their context or significance. She said, 'When it comes to understanding, I don't understand the meaning of what you're saying'.

### 3. Understanding Abbreviations

There are 3 participants who illustrated their struggles with abbreviations and the speed of language use. For instance, Participant 4 highlighted a specific challenge with understanding abbreviations. She said, 'I face many difficulties, especially with abbreviations; I can't understand them' (Participant 3). Similarly, Participant 13 reflected the frustration of not only understanding abbreviations but also recalling how to pronounce them. She said, 'One of the challenges I face is that I forget how to pronounce the abbreviations; it feels difficult' (Participant 13).

### 4. Pronunciation Difficulties

Out of 16, 4 participants reported challenges with pronunciation and phonetics in learning English. For instance, Participant 3 said, 'I have a problem with pronunciation sometimes.' Similarly, Participant 9 explicitly stated her struggle with vocabulary pronunciation. She said, 'I don't understand how to pronounce this word or that word' (Participant 9). Another participant noted that the phonetic rules they learned in school do not align with what they encounter in practice, leading to confusion. She said, 'The phonetics are very different from what I learned in school; it feels like I'm learning it anew' (Participant 15).

### 5. Lexical Ambiguity

Two out of 16 students reported lexical ambiguity as another challenge in their EFL learning. For instance, Participant 7 said, 'When a word has multiple meanings, this makes it difficult for me to comprehend.' Another example is reported by Participant 9, who said, 'Understanding the meaning can be difficult because each word can have several meanings, making it hard to distinguish them' (Participant 7).

### 6. Sentence Construction

Other challenges encompassed a range of difficulties that significantly impact their language learning experience. These include Sentence construction reported by Participant 8, who struggled to form sentences. She said, 'Sometimes you have vocabulary, but you can't form the sentence' (Participant 8).

## (b). Practical Challenges

### 1. Practical Application of English in Everyday Life

Another common challenge was the practical application of the English language, which was reported by 6 participants. Participants felt their classroom learning did not adequately prepare them for using the language in real-world situations. Many of them were complaining about the unavailability of the chance to speak in English language outside the classroom. They singled out a lack of practical practice, minimal exposure to other learners of English, and greater emphasis on rote learning at the expense of communicative use. For instance, Participant 2 said that teachers paid much attention to memorization and grammar, instead of acquiring speaking or listening skills.

*The challenge is that there are no activities, no interaction between the student and the professor. The ones who teach us just say, 'Memorize the handout and that's it.' There are no activities, and we don't enjoy it, honestly.* (Participant 2)

This absence of practical interaction constrains language knowledge and fluency to a certain extent; thus, this makes the classroom experience unrealistic.

### 2. Achieving a High Level of Proficiency

Another challenge, which was reported by Participant 14, who reflected a positive mindset and determination in language learning, is reaching a high degree of English proficiency. She said, 'I challenge myself to master the language easily and quickly' (Participant 14).

## (c). Cognitive Challenges

Memory loss became one of the most frequent problems. Six students explained that they had problems in remembering vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures most of the time, and mostly were not stressed by way of making them exercise. For instance, Participant 5 links forgetfulness to insufficient practice; she said, 'Forgetting due to lack of language practice.' (Participant 5). Similarly, Participant 5 expressed frustration that forgetfulness hinders their ability to articulate thoughts and emotions, she said, 'For me, the main challenge is definitely the frequent forgetting' (Participant 5). The failure to remember acquired knowledge influenced both the comprehension and production skills, and it was usually caused by a lack of exposure and practice.

## (d). Communicative Challenges

The most frequently cited obstacle was speaking fluency, mentioned by 8 out of the 16 participants. Many struggled to speak the language fluidly and comfortably, which can be a significant barrier to effective communication. For instance, Participant 1 said, 'There are difficulties in speaking' (Participant 1). Similarly, Participants 9 mentioned difficulty in producing fluency, elucidating idea, and oral accuracy, which were mainly the results of absence of practice or fear of failure, 'My difficulty is speaking fluently which I think due to lack of practice, as we don't speak the language much, and therefore we find it difficult' (Participant 9). This difficulty was strongly interconnected with language deficiencies and classroom conditions, which provided little chance to talk freely.

*(e). Psychological Challenges*

A group of participants referred to shyness, anxiety, and fear of getting criticized as the notable obstacles to learning. Such emotional problems affected a positive engagement in the classroom, and students were disinclined to pose questions or present themselves publicly, as Participant 4 reported, 'There are times when I would like to ask a question, but I end up not doing it because I am shy.' All these psychological barriers led to a pattern of silence that perpetuated speech and listening deficits as time went by.

*(f). Structural Challenges*

There are also more general systemic factors that students themselves pointed out as outdated teaching approaches, the absence of preparatory courses, and the lack of classroom interaction. Some students said that teachers paid much attention to memorization and grammar, instead of acquiring speaking or listening skills. 'When I joined college, I was shocked, no actual lessons, only memorizing' (Participant 2).

The results point out that there is a complicated system of obstacles that influences the learning of English among students. The two problems are not taxonomic but mutually supportive, as a lack of confidence is caused by linguistic constraints, lack of motivation, and the chance to practice structurally.

The consideration of the internal and external challenges to these learners allows teachers and colleges to progress toward a more equal and successful language learning process.

The results of this research provide new evidence regarding a complex association between motivation and language learning problems among Yemeni female undergraduate learners. This knowledge has long-term pedagogical implications, and it is worthwhile to think about how the current methods of teaching English might be changed to create a more inclusive and successful educational system.

One of the determinations that can be made as a result of the data is that motivation is dynamic (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Ushioda, 2001). Although a vast majority of participants were very intrinsically motivated at the beginning of their academic life, it did not necessarily stay that way during their university experience. A change in motivation was commonly associated with practices in the institutions, teaching methods, and/or some form of perceived mismatch between promises and reality. These facts show that motivation is not an invariable quality but a dynamic structure that is influenced by exposure to the educational environment. The key to working in the educational field is to acknowledge fluidity because the educator might want to preserve and improve engagement with students over the course of their education.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are discussed most of the time in theoretical writing to be binary; however, the students' actual experiences in the analysis of this study point to a more intricate relationship. Lots of learners started their pathway being pulled by external causes- by the influence of parents or by the prospect of employment or a job- but finally turned into interest and inner dedication. This transition is a core concept in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (1985), which describes how extrinsic motives can become more autonomous. On the other hand, some of those who began to take the program with a passion expressed that they lost their interest because they felt that there was no two-way interaction in the classroom, a lack of feedback, or poor ways of teaching. The findings indicate the necessity of a learning environment, which not only recognizes the existence of both types of motivation but supports their development and reinforcement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Among the most evident themes presented in the results, there is the discrepancy between the wish of students to communicate using the English language and their lack of space to do so in their educational environment. Although students were keen on speaking in a fluent way and getting to converse, the learning processes were very much cross-bred with memorization, translation, and grammar. Such a discrepancy between the requirements of learners and the methods of teaching activity leads to less attention and self-confidence. Educationalists thus have to ensure the creation of communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies that focus on speaking, listening, as well as interaction of substance.

One of the major influences on classroom motivational climate is through its instructors (Patrick et al., 2011; Andersen, 1979). The supportive, interactive, and culturally sensitive teachers may influence learners and their confidence and participation to a considerable degree. Language instructors in Yemen must be trained to have areas on motivational psychology, student-centered pedagogy, and classroom management, which enhance a sense of inclusion and equity. Furthermore, student feedback must be used as a central component of teacher evaluation and curriculum review as a measure of the degree of quality of the instructions.

Mental blocks or blocks like anxiety, fear of failure, and shyness also prevailed among the narrations of the participants (Horwitz et al., 1986). Emotional reactions are not just merely personal characteristics, but are frequently

caused by stern classroom hierarchies, assessment imposed by performance, and culturally oriented norms of expectations in which the disclosure of discussion is not encouraged. The effects should be countered through training of strategies that minimize language anxiety, i.e., pair work, role plays, and the way students participate anonymously, so that students speak under less pressurized situations.

Along with the instruction reform, the results imply that the interventions should take place at the institutional level to serve students outside the classroom. Universities are supposed to come up with language support centers, mentorship programs, and additional activities that will give the students the opportunity to practice English in less formal environments. These are safe risk-taking, experimentation, and peer learning platforms, which are some of the critical aspects of language learning that are usually absent in classes (Vygotsky, 1978).

The other strong implication is related to onboarding in first-year students. Some respondents told us that they were optimistic when they joined the university, only to give up because they were not given a smooth transition and did not get much academic assistance. The university could aid in the students' developing basics through orientation programs or preparatory English classes during the first months of the year, and change their expectations accordingly and adapt to the university level of performance (Tinto, 1993). These classes are to combine diagnostic tests, study skill training, and group learning tasks.

The study also found that learners' decisions to study English are heavily influenced by social and familial expectations. On the one hand, some students had great support from their parents or elder brothers and sisters; on the other hand, some of them were obliged by their parents in the choice of their major against their will. Educational counselors have to play a bigger role in advising existing students depending on their likes, abilities, and future objectives. Pre-college counseling and sensitization programs might empower students and their families to make better academic decisions.

Policy-wise, the results imply that national policies on education must respond to the gap between the policy of English education and practices in the classrooms. It is of the essence that they invest in teacher development, school and curriculum innovation, and institutional infrastructure. Policy makers ought also to consider the incorporation of gender responsive practices and the allocation of materials, considering the needs of the female learners, especially in conservative areas where it is not easy to move and reach.

Lastly, this research gives emphasis to student voice as relevant to educational reform. The respondents provided feedback that can be further used to directly inform changes in the areas of improved instruction, assessment, and institutional support. The department should consider establishing institutional mechanisms enlisting the student input into program assessment and program building, which may be in the form of advisory committees or feedback panels. This aligns with the work of Cook-Sather (2002), who argues, positioning students as partners in teaching and learning can lead to more meaningful and effective educational change.

Altogether, the pedagogical implications of the study are extensive. They generate a need to move to more interactive, inclusive, and motivationally conscious teaching, which is facilitated by institutional regulations and national frameworks taking into account the socio-cultural reality of students. Through a holistic and student-centered view, English language programs within a setting in Yemen and other settings with comparable contexts can lead to both academic achievement and personal empowerment of the female student in the foreign language learning intricate world.

## V. CONCLUSION

The research examined the type of motivation and obstacles faced by female EFL undergraduate students at Tamar University. The qualitative study revealed a great variety of motivational patterns and multi-level learning barriers, which demonstrates that motivation toward learning should be treated as more complex and dynamic. Black-and-white ways of classifying motivation, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, would often miss the dynamic attributes of the learners concerning their goals, particularly in those settings with limited educational conditions.

These findings have relevance to educators and curriculum developers who develop learner-centered teaching with the interests of learners through intrinsic interest, and at the same time are aware of the social and economic situations of the students. More communicative task-based activities should be included in language programs; learners need to be scaffolded on vocabulary acquisition, and learning environments should be set up that do not penalize students who speak up. Professional growth in interactive and culturally responsive pedagogies is also of some benefit to the instructors. The institutional level may begin to address the gap by offering some orientation of preparatory courses to freshmen students so that they can reduce the gulf between the ends of secondary and university education, especially in the case of incoming students who are low proficient in English or have little exposure to the language (Tinto, 1993).

A small sample of female students of one university limited the generalizability of the study findings. Besides, qualitative data is self-reported, which is also affected by personal preferences or the desire of participants to report their information.

Subsequent studies may also be useful because wider multi-location studies can be conducted that can involve male learners and scholars of various academic institutions in the country of Yemen. A longitudinal model would also be useful in tracking the changes in motivation over dimensions and associating them with the success or progress in academics or language development. Moreover, the comparison of different cultural settings (or regional ones) might offer information about the motivation and challenges differences in different socio-educational contexts.

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