

Factors Affecting the Motivation of Female Students in Learning English: Sociocultural, Psychological and Pedagogical Dimensions

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Abstract: The article analyzes the factors that influence the motivation of female students in learning English in the context of higher education in Uzbekistan. Drawing on the ecological approach to human development and on modern theories of second language motivation, the author groups these factors into three interrelated dimensions: sociocultural (family attitudes, gender role expectations, regional and socioeconomic conditions, availability of female role models), psychological (self-efficacy, foreign language anxiety, attributions of success and failure, the ideal L2 self, willingness to communicate) and pedagogical (the personality and expectations of the teacher, teaching materials, methods, classroom climate, feedback and assessment). It is argued that these factors act not in isolation but as a system in which pedagogical factors can compensate for unfavourable sociocultural and psychological conditions. On this basis, the article outlines the structure of a diagnostic instrument for studying the motivation of female students and identifies the pedagogical factors that the English teacher can purposefully influence.

Keywords: Female students, learning motivation, English language teaching, sociocultural factors, psychological factors, pedagogical factors, foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, gender.

Introduction: Learning motivation does not arise in a vacuum: it is shaped by the interaction of the learner's personality with the immediate learning environment and the broader social context. This is especially evident in the case of female students, whose educational trajectories in many societies are influenced by specific social expectations. In Uzbekistan, where the state has set the goals of achieving gender equality and expanding women's access to quality education [1] and of raising foreign language learning to a qualitatively new level [2], identifying the factors that strengthen or weaken the motivation of female students to learn English is a necessary precondition for developing effective methodological solutions.

In the psychological and methodological literature there are various classifications of motivational factors. M.

Williams and R. Burden [10] distinguish internal factors (interest, perceived value, sense of competence, self-concept, anxiety) and external factors (parents, teachers, peers, the learning environment and the wider society). Z. Dörnyei [8; 9] describes motivation at the level of the language, the learner and the learning situation. U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory [14] considers human development as a result of interaction between nested systems, from the immediate environment of family and classroom to the cultural values of society. Synthesizing these approaches, we propose to group the factors affecting the motivation of female students into three dimensions: sociocultural, psychological and pedagogical.

The sociocultural dimension covers the influence of the family, the community and society as a whole. The first and most significant factor here is the attitude of the

family to the education and professional future of the daughter. In families that regard English as an important resource for further study and a career, the female student's ought-to L2 self, in Z. Dörnyei's terms [9], supports her learning, and her instrumental orientation towards the language, described by R.C. Gardner [7], is strengthened. Conversely, where the main expectations are associated exclusively with early marriage and household responsibilities, the value of long-term investment in a foreign language may be perceived as low. The second factor is the system of gender role expectations in society, which, as J. Sunderland notes [15], is transmitted through everyday communication, the media and educational materials and affects which professions and activities are considered "appropriate" for women.

The third sociocultural factor is related to regional and socioeconomic conditions. Female students from rural areas may have had less access to qualified English teachers, additional courses and digital resources at school, which affects their initial level and confidence. The fourth factor is the availability of female role models: women who have achieved success in science, education, diplomacy or business thanks to their knowledge of foreign languages. As B. Norton [16] shows, learners invest in a language when they can imagine themselves as members of the communities to which it gives access; visible role models make such imagined communities tangible.

The psychological dimension includes the learner's internal characteristics, which are themselves partly formed under the influence of the social environment. The key factor in this group is self-efficacy, that is, belief in one's ability to succeed in learning English. According to A. Bandura [13], self-efficacy determines the choice of tasks, the effort invested and persistence in the face of difficulties. A closely related factor is foreign language anxiety, which E. Horwitz, M. Horwitz and J. Cope [11] described as a specific complex of self-perceptions, beliefs and feelings arising in the language classroom and including communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. For female students who have been brought up with expectations of modesty and restraint in public speech, speaking in front of the group may be associated with increased anxiety.

Other important psychological factors are the

attributions learners make for their successes and failures and the strength of the ideal L2 self. If a female student attributes her difficulties to a lack of ability rather than to insufficient practice or an ineffective strategy, her motivation gradually declines. The ideal L2 self, the vivid image of oneself as a competent English user [9], provides long-term direction for effort. Finally, willingness to communicate, defined by P. MacIntyre and colleagues [12] as the readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person using the second language, determines how actively the female student uses the opportunities for practice that the classroom provides. Russian psychologists also emphasize that the emotional and volitional sphere is an integral part of the structure of learning motivation [4; 6], and that in foreign language learning communicative motivation largely depends on the learner's emotional comfort [5].

The pedagogical dimension comprises the factors directly related to the organization of teaching and is of particular importance because it is the area that the teacher can purposefully influence. The first factor is the personality, professional competence and expectations of the teacher. Teachers' unconscious stereotyped expectations can be reflected in the distribution of attention, the choice of students for leadership roles and the type of feedback [15]. The second factor is the content of teaching materials: texts and illustrations in which women appear mainly in domestic roles reinforce stereotypes, whereas materials presenting women in diverse professional roles contribute to the formation of a positive ideal L2 self.

The third pedagogical factor is the teaching methods and forms of work. Communicative, interactive and project-based tasks, work in small groups and pairs and the use of digital resources increase opportunities for speaking practice and reduce anxiety compared with frontal forms of work [8]. The fourth factor is the classroom climate: a psychologically safe atmosphere in which mistakes are treated as a natural part of learning supports both self-efficacy and willingness to communicate. The fifth factor is feedback and assessment. Feedback that attributes success to effort and strategy, highlights progress and gives concrete recommendations strengthens motivation, whereas assessment focused only on errors increases anxiety [3; 10].

It is important to emphasize that the three groups of factors act not in isolation but as an interconnected system. Sociocultural conditions shape psychological characteristics: for example, low family expectations can reduce self-efficacy, and the absence of role models weakens the ideal L2 self. Psychological characteristics, in turn, influence how the learner perceives pedagogical conditions. At the same time, pedagogical factors are capable of compensating for unfavourable sociocultural and psychological conditions: a supportive teacher, well-chosen materials and a safe classroom climate can strengthen a female student's self-efficacy and form a positive image of her future self even when the external environment provides little support. This conclusion is consistent with the results of studies showing that gender differences in language learning motivation are socially constructed and therefore changeable [17].

The proposed classification has practical significance for diagnosing the motivation of female students. A diagnostic instrument based on it should include three blocks of questions: a sociocultural block (family attitudes to the daughter's education, the perceived value of English in the student's environment, the presence of role models, household responsibilities); a psychological block (self-efficacy, foreign language anxiety, attributions, the ideal L2 self, willingness to communicate); and a pedagogical block (perception of the teacher's attitude, teaching materials, methods, classroom climate and assessment). Combining a questionnaire with interviews and classroom observation will make it possible to determine which factors are dominant for specific groups of female students and to select appropriate methodological means of motivation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the motivation of female students in learning English is determined by a system of interrelated sociocultural, psychological and pedagogical factors. Sociocultural factors create the background against which learning takes place, psychological factors determine how the learner perceives herself and the learning situation, and pedagogical factors form the area in which the teacher can intervene most effectively. Therefore, the methodology of motivating female students should be built on a careful diagnosis of these factors and should focus on pedagogical means capable of strengthening

self-efficacy, reducing anxiety, broadening role models and connecting English with the learners' personal and professional prospects.

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