

Gender Differences in English Proficiency among Early, Middle and Late Immersion Undergraduate Students: The Role of Individual Difference Factors

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Abstract

A number of studies conducted across different levels of education have reported that female learners' capacity to learn second language successfully is higher than male learners'. However, few writers have been able to question and investigate the effects of different levels of immersions and various individual factors on male and female learners' English proficiency at university level. The aim of this study is to examine how gender differences in English proficiency is influenced by individual difference factors among early, middle and late immersion undergraduate students. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in investigating 221 undergraduate students from various colleges in the city of Gulbarga, India. The results reveal that the female learner's higher English proficiency compared with the male learners' is partly caused by their stronger attitude toward English language education and self-confidence to learn the language successfully. Implications of the results and future research directions are also presented.

Keywords : Gender differences, English proficiency, immersion, India .

1. Introduction

In the recent decades, the role of gender as a physiological factor that influences learner's performance in second language (L2) at university level has been studied extensively. The large volume of published research works in this area have focused on relationship between standardise test score and self-report assessment of male and female learners. While study such as Mohammad, Amirian, Alavi and Fidalgo (2014) adopted University of Tehran English Proficiency Test to evaluate Iranian undergraduate students performance in English, Motallebzadeh (2011) used Oxford placement test and IELTS test to measure English proficiency. Even though, majority of these studies reported higher level of proficiency in L2 among female learners, the role of past language learning experience of the students such as the effect of certain kind of immersion programmes on both gender remain elusive. The concept of immersion involves teaching a curriculum in L2 with the aim of producing efficient bilinguals (Baker, 2001). The author stated that different countries have succeeded in classifying immersion into different categories. Some categorised it according to learners' age, while some classifications are on the basis of amount of time spent in instructing a subject in a particular language. But based on Indian educational system, immersion is classified into Early immersion students (students who start learning English across the curriculum between class 1 and class 10, which comprises of both primary and high school educations), Middle immersion students (students who begins learning English in all subjects from class 11, which is the beginning of pre-university education) and Late immersion students (students who starts learning English across all subjects from the first year of their university education (Lasekan Olusiji, 2016). Considering different past duration of years, each group of students must have studied English across curriculum during the course of their education; it can be argued that such difference can be an enormous factor capable of affecting the performance of the students with respect to their gender.

Other than the neurobiological views adopted by many scholars to explain the disparity between male and female learner of L2 (Baxter et al., 2003; Clements et al., 2006), the comparative of both genders regarding the effect of individual difference (ID) factors such as cognitive, affective and socio-cultural on these learners have also been examined (Burstall, 1975). With respect to cognitive effect, a study conducted among ninth grade pupils learning French as a L2 in Canada showed that female students are more motivated to learn French than their male counterparts (Kissau, 2006). In another study to examine the role of socio-cultural factors on both male and female learning English in Japan indicated that the status of English as feminised academic and professional choices influence women's positive attitude towards English than male (Kobayashi, 2002). However, the effect of ID factors on male and female learners who are early, middle or late immersion students is yet to be investigated. This is crucial in shedding light on the extent at which these factors affect both male and female learners in these three different groups of immersion. Therefore, since the previous studies have failed to fill this gap of knowledge, this paper will then examine the level of English proficiency between male and female undergraduate students in early, middle and late immersion group and evaluate the effect of ID variables such as anxiety, willingness to communicate (WTC), self-confidence, motivational intensity on the performance of both genders.

2. Literature review

2.1. Gender difference in L2 learning

The difference in gender with respect to L2 learning has caught the attention of many scholars in various disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology amongst others. From the psychology stand point, female has greater mental ability to express language effectively than male (Qian, 2015). Considering the neurobiological point of view, females' better completion of linguistic abilities task is tied to greater activity in brain areas responsible for language encoding and deciphering information abstractly (). On the other hand, organs responsible for visual and auditory functions in boys are

more highly developed than their female counterpart. The implication of this finding is that female brain can directly process linguistics information, while male need to make use of their sensory machinery to decode language data (Harasty, Double, Halliday, Kril & McRitchie, 1997; Schlaepfer et al., 1995). That means, in a classroom setting, effective language teaching can only occur when boys are instructed visually (with a textbook) and orally (via a lecture), whereas a girl can learn successfully by either method (Oxford, 1994). All these different views have compelled scholars to probe the gender difference with respect to second or foreign language in different context.

Data from several sources show that girls' performance in language achievement is better than boys. A survey conducted by Boyle (1987) between male and female learners in Hong Kong revealed that girl's proficiency test score is higher than their male counterpart. Similarly, a secondary data containing the performance of class 10 students in Tamil Nadu, India from 2007 to 2011 revealed that female students score higher in English exam than the male students (Karthigeyan & Nirmala, 2012).

The biological hypothesis has been rejected by numerous scholars in cognitive linguistics. The rejection is on the basis of the fact that findings in sex difference with respect to L2 learning have not been consistent and relative smallness of difference are reported (Eks trand, 1980). Moreover, there are empirical works that showed that male is better in learning English than their female counterpart. For instance, in a study conducted among ESL students in the USA, it is reported that men performs significantly in test of academic lexicon than the women. Regarding listening skill, Morris (1998) reported better performance among male students when compared to their female counterparts.

However, Hyde and Linn (1988) faulted publishing practice emanated in the 50s and 60s, wh ich does not find any statistical difference in proficiency between both genders before reaching conclusion. Therefore, Ekstrand (1980) concluded that male and female are alike; the argument is that only behavioural difference between both genders can be explained from socio-cultural stand point. Therefore, gender is a socio-cultural construct and it should be contextualised in this manner.

Even though findings in this area have been relatively consistent, the result of most of the studies shows that female performance in L2 learning is better than their male counterpart, however, there is still a need to examine the role gender play in learners English proficiency with reference to different past years of studying in English across curriculum among the undergraduate students in India.

2.2. Gender and motivational intensity

Several empirical studies on the effect of gender difference on motivation to learn foreign language have been published. Regarding learning of various languages, males have been found to be less motivated (Kissau, 2006). Meanwhile, some of these surveys addressed the nature of motivation and the reasons why female tends to be more motivated than their male counterpart. In an article by Glynn and Koballa (2006), female students demonstrated the tendency of being punctual in class, take notes, go further in studying the textbook and do exercise and other behaviours that are associated with a relatively high motivation to learn. However, concerning the nature of motivation, girls tend to learn foreign language for integrative reasons. In other words, they are interested in the speakers and the culture of that language, while boys' motivation to learn foreign language is instrumental in nature. For example, learning of foreign language in order to secure a good job (Ahmadi, 2011 as cited in Tavakol & Sayadian, 2013). Having reviewed few literatures in this area, it can be observed that researchers have not treated the relationship between gender difference and learners' motivational intensity within immersion framework. Thus, the degree of motivational intensity to learn English between male and female in different immersion groups will be examined in this study.

2.3. Gender difference and attitude

Contrary to Gardener's view on the direct relationship between learner's attitude towards learning of a particular language, Spolsky (1989) believed that attitude does not have direct influence on

language learning. The author stated that attitude influences language achievement through motivation. In other words, learners' positive attitude can lead to high degree of motivation which eventually causes English proficiency. Very few studies have focused on the relationship between gender difference and learner's attitude. Prominent studies in this area noted that female learners have a positive attitude towards language learning and the culture of the speaker of the target language. For instance, in a survey conducted among Polish students who learn German as a foreign language, female learners were reported to have higher degree of attitude towards learning of German and German-language communities than their male counterparts (Okuniewski, 2014). Therefore, the evidence seems to indicate that female positive attitude toward foreign language is higher than male.

The attitude of learners towards the status of English and its education in India will be examined in this study. This will create data that will provide credible information from gender perspective on the learner's view of English language education and its status in India.

2.4. Gender and self-confidence

The relationship between gender difference and self-concept have been identified and established over the years. Overview of the body of the literature shows that females have more self-confidence in their linguistic competence for language learning, thereby, they tend to rate themselves more positively. Research by Powell and Batters (2006) suggested that males were self-assured of their abilities to master the L2 compared with girls. However, in another study conducted by Van der Meulen (1987), young female language learners believe in their personal abilities such as reading and spelling, while boys are self-associated with their physical abilities. The significant of this finding is that it supports the skills of specialisation which causes society and educational system to stereotype of particular activities and occupation on both genders. For instance, male students are to be considered to have strong aptitude for science subject, while their female counterpart is considered to have strong propensity for arts and humanities in which learning of English is a major (Francis, 2000). However, the scholar was able to provide a counter evidence of study that indicated that both male and female have the same ability at all subjects. As shown above, there is yet to be a study that examines relationship between gender difference and self-concept. Therefore, this study aims to experimentally investigate the relationship between learners' self-concept and their gender difference. This will help teachers in making informed decision on whose gender that should be motivated the more as far as the teaching of English is concerned.

2.5. Gender and WTC

Findings concerning these two relationships have so far been contradictory. A study conducted among Croatian young learners did not show significant difference between male and female with respect to WTC (Sirocic, 2014). But, similar survey in Iran revealed otherwise (Maftoon & Sarem, 2013). Since the literature offers contradictory findings in this area, this study will therefore, delve into examination of relationship between these two variables at undergraduate level in India.

2.6. Gender and anxiety

Numerous studies in the past have investigated the relationship between gender difference and foreign language anxiety. Some of the works claimed that gender plays significant role in foreign language anxiety. According to Mejias, Applbaum, Applbaum and Trotter (1991), Hispanic males are more anxious to learn language than their female counterparts. Similarly, in a quest to understand anxiety among Japanese learner, Kitano (2001) finding recorded higher degree of anxiety among male learners than female, With respect to using of foreign language anxiety in a classroom, the work of Campbell and Shaw (1994) asserted that male learners are more anxious to use foreign language anxiety in class than female learners. However, contrary to these findings, works conducted in Turkey

reported that female learners are more anxious to speak in English classroom than male (Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2013). Concerning language test anxiety, Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) reported that female showed higher degree of test anxiety than their male classmates. In sum, previous studies have not been able to reconcile the relationship between gender difference and anxiety in several contexts. Then, part of the aim of this paper is to find the correlation between the two variables in immersion context.

3. Methodology

A comprehensive approach was employed in the study to compare male and female level of English proficiency and ID factors among early, middle and late immersion undergraduate students. All the variables include motivational intensity, attitude, anxiety and self-confidence and English proficiency. A mixed methodology was then employed to identify and explore gender differences in regard to the various ID factors and immersion programme.

3.1. Participants

All the informants were either in first or second-year degree programme. Participants were recruited from three public colleges which include Government Degree College of Gulbarga, Ambedkar College and Central University of Karnataka and four private colleges which comprise of Reshmi College, Inamdar College, APPA College and Gurukul College. Except Gurukul College whose medium of instruction across all subjects in B.Com is English, all other colleges considered in this study are offering B.Com or B.A. courses in partial immersion mode. In other words, students are instructed both in English and in Kannada equally by code-switching between the two languages. Moreover, students are allowed to write exam in those subjects either in English or in Kannada. All the colleges of the participants are located in the city of Gulbarga. This location was chosen because the city is one of the largest cities in the Hyderabad–Karnataka region situated in the north-eastern part of Karnataka in India. Another significant factor that influences the choice of this research site is the low level of literacy rate in this district when it is compared with others.

In order to identify the three different groups of undergraduate whose years of studying in a particular medium of instruction varies from one another, informants were asked to specify in the questionnaire their past language medium of education ranging from at least class 1 to class 10, class 11 to class 12 and first-year undergraduate.

221 students from different disciplines (B.Sc, B.Com, B.Tech, B.A and B.C.A) in seven colleges responded to the administered questionnaire. 83 (41 males and 42 females) respondents claimed that they began studying in English medium at either primary or high school which ranges from class 1 to class 10 (early immersion group of students). 64 informants (31 males and 33 females) started at class 11 which is pre-university level (middle immersion group of students), while 74 respondents (37 males and 37 females) began studying English medium of instruction at undergraduate level (late immersion group of students).

3.2. Instrument

3.2.1. Questionnaire

Quantitative data were collected from the student-participants with the use of a questionnaire (see Appendix A). Although a brief section of the questionnaire sought demographic information from the participants (age and sex), the primary goal of the questionnaire was to determine the level of English proficiency, and also, establish the degree of motivational intensity and other motivational variable factors between male and female undergraduate students in early, middle and late immersion group.

A 5-point Likert scale was adopted for the respondents to reveal their responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. But to measure the perception of English proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing, a 5-point Likert scale of 'very poor to very good' was used.

For the purpose of this article, items in the questionnaire were organised under headings to clarify the relationship between the items and the motivational factors being measured. The questionnaire was an adaptation of a variety of instruments.

In this study, respondents' attitude towards language learning was conceptualised into two ways. First, informants' attitude towards language education and the perception of its status were addressed. Some of the items include the degree of easiness associated with the learning of English as a task and the value and importance of English in Indian educational system.

Motivational intensity is a construct whose items were used to understand the level of effort students put into learning of English. Some of the items are based on level of hours students spent in studying English, their level of concentration in English class and ability to work harder (Gardener, 2004; Gokce, 2008).

The sense of self-confidence which is an important factor that influences student motivation was assessed with items such as confidence to learn a language successfully and trust in their own intelligence which are used to measure the role of self-concept in English language learning in this study (Wimolmas, 2013).

WTC is a dimension that can give clarity to students level of interest in using English frequently. It can also be linked to a form anxiety. A sole question to determine if a participant has a tendency to respond in English and if he or she is being spoken to in mother tongue was asked.

3.2.2. Interviews

Following the quantitative phase of the study, qualitative data were collected via interviews. Eight students and six teachers' were interviewed for 30–45 minutes each. During the interviews, a number of open-ended questions were asked. Questions pertaining to each motivational factor were investigated that followed a very similar format. Without informing the participants of the quantitative results, questions related to how both gender perceived each other's capability to learn English and best ways to learn English. On the other hand, teachers were asked to express their views on differences between both genders with respect to English language learning.

The data provided by the interviews were intended not only help to validate the quantitative findings, but also to elaborate upon these findings, to explore the reasons behind these gender differences and to provide possible solutions.

3.3. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Science version 21 and Daniel Soper calculator were used to analyse the quantitative data.

T-test was performed on the data obtained from the questionnaires using variables as predictors of membership in two groups (males and females). This analysis helped to check whether raw score obtained through mean is a generalisable result or the score is just a mere artifacts of random variation. Overall, the findings allow for the building of a profile of male and female students with respect to their level of English proficiency at different stages of immersion and motivational variable factors. The data provided by the interviews were then analysed. In a manner consistent with data analysis procedures in grounded theory (Glaser, 1992), the researcher compared the data and looking for themes to emerge.

4. Results

4.1. Summary

In summary, Table 1 depicts the summary of the relationship between gender, English proficiency and motivational factors variables. Some of the key findings illustrate that female learners are highly more proficient in English than their male counterparts in early and middle immersion group. This is because female learners' attitude towards English language education and their self-confidence in most of these immersion groups are higher than the male learners. However, the anxiety level was higher only among late immersion male students than the female students and there was no difference between both genders with respect to the level of WTC in English.

Table 1. Summary of English proficiency and motivational variables between male and female among early, middle and late immersion students

Sno	Statements	Male	Female	Significance
1	English proficiency among late immersion students	3.0974 (lower)	3.2661 (higher)	No significant difference
2	English proficiency among middle immersion students	3.6200 (lower)	3.9674 (higher)	Significant difference
3	English proficiency among early immersion students	3.8250 (lower)	4.1439 (higher)	Significant difference
4	Motivational intensity among late immersion students	3.6827 (higher)	3.6452 (lower)	No significant difference
5	Motivational intensity among middle immersion students	3.6116 (lower)	3.8937 (higher)	Significant difference
6	Motivational intensity among early immersion students	3.4889 (higher)	3.3333 (lower)	No significant difference
7	Attitude among late immersion students	3.5962 (lower)	3.9806 (higher)	Significant difference
8	Attitude among middle immersion students	3.5821 (lower)	3.9717 (higher)	Significant difference
9	Attitude among early immersion students	4.1600 (higher)	4.0030 (lower)	No significant difference
10	Language anxiety among late immersion students	3.0705 (higher)	3.3656 (lower)	significant difference

5. Discussion

5.1. Gender in second language learning

This section of the discussion will be evaluating the role of gender in English language learning. First, the level of English proficiency between both gender will be established, followed by the influence of ID factor such as anxiety and self-confidence amongst others on language learning.

5.2. Gender and English proficiency

Prior work conducted in Indian context revealed through a secondary data collected between 2007 and 2011, which revealed that female students performed better in English language exam when compared to their male counterparts (Karthigeyan & Nirmala, 2012). This study, therefore, presents a recent finding on the relationship between gender and English proficiency among the three groups of immersion.

The findings of this research are consistent with the previous study in Indian situation. It was observed that female students (3.2661, 3.9674 and 4.1439) had higher proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing, respectively compared to their male counterparts (3.0974, 3.6200 and 3.8250). Beiser and Hou (2000) also observed the same trend in their study. However, the observed difference in English proficiency between male and female late immersion students was insignificant. This is plausible, because these group of students have the shortest period of English immersion (6–18 months). As a result of that, it might be difficult to find any difference in their level of English achievement within this short period.

Several reasons have been given for this trend, one is from a neurobiological point of view which states that two brain areas that deal with language processing are larger in female, and that language is processed in both hemispheres of the female, while males favour a single brain half (Kissau, 2006).

In subsequent section, this study will reveal the role of motivational intensity, attitude, language anxiety, self-confidence and WTC as a factor that influences the disparity of English proficiency level between male and female learner.

5.3. Gender and motivational intensity

Some of the studies considered in the body of the literature regarding the effect of motivational intensity indicated that female students have higher motivation than male students. But Akram and Ghani (2013) study conducted in Pakistani context showed that there is no statistical difference in motivational intensity on the two genders. However, in an attempt to investigate the role of motivational intensity on gender L2 learning among the three group of immersion students. The study indicated that female students have higher motivational intensity among middle (3.8937) immersion students, while there was no significant difference between both gender among the late and the early immersion students. In other words, the female middle immersion students tend to spend more time and exert extra effort to learn the language than male students. This shows that other than the neurobiological stands attributed for their better performance, it is possible that female students tend to take their language learning serious than male.

5.4. Gender and attitude towards English language education

Various conflicting reports have emerged in the course of investigating the role of attitude in language learning genderwise (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007). The intention of this study was to investigate gender difference in learners' attitude towards English language education and its status in India among the three group of immersions. The important finding in this study was a significant difference established among the middle and the late immersion students, whereby female possesses a higher attitudinal disposition (3.9806 and 3.9717) than their male counterpart (3.5821 and 3.5962). This means that female students tend to have stronger positive attitude towards English language education than their male counterparts and this reflect in their perceived better performance in English proficiency.

5.5. Gender and English anxiety

This study examined gender difference in relation to language anxiety among the three groups of immersion. The result showed that the only significant difference occurred among the late immersion students. Between both genders, male students (3.0705) were found to be more anxious to learn English than female students (3.3656). This is in line with the previous study conducted by Mejias et al. (1991). The present finding is another confirmation that anxiety tends to impede L2 proficiency. That explains the reason why the female late immersion students recorded higher level of proficiency than their male counterparts even though the gap between both genders is insignificant.

However, these data must be interpreted with caution because female students tend to undervalue their own performance, experience more negative feelings and feel less comfortable than men (Benson, Bandalos & Hutchinson, 1994). Therefore, it is possible that there is no difference between the two genders with respect to anxiety, but female are more willing to admit to anxiety because they are encouraged to do so from an early age, since this is a 'feminine' feature (Dusek, 1980).

5.6. Gender and self-confidence

Contrary to the study conducted in Turkish context (Gurler, 2015), this study revealed that female students (4.3406 and 4.4701) have higher self-confidence than male students (3.9911 and 4.1500) with respect to English learning. This result is evident among the middle and the late immersion students. It can be argued that female students put extra work into the learning of the language which eventually boost their self-confidence. The non-significant difference between the two is due to low self-confidence that existed among the male students at that level, considering the fact that most of the students have just begun their English immersion programme.

5.7. Teachers perspective

5.7.1. Several studies have shown that female students are performing better in second language learning than their male counterpart. Why do you think this is so?

Some of the teachers try to argue for this reason from a socio-cultural point of view. They claimed that the way parents raise female children is different from one parents to another. It is believed that most girls are being taught to excel in all their endeavours. The effect of that training pattern makes them be more diligent in English language education.

Furthermore, one of the teachers stated, 'female students perform better in L2 learning because they study harder when compare to male students, sometimes putting themselves under intense pressure, so as to justify the opportunity given them to study in a patriarchy society'. This assertion made by the teacher is reasonable, considering that the educational system is dominated by the males (Islam & Mustaquim, n.d.). This suggests that better English proficiency expressed by female learners is a reflection of pressure to succeed academically including in English language.

There are, however, other possible explanations other than the notion expressed by these informants. The prevailing gender inequality in the developing world necessitates female undergraduates to require more motivational orientation to learn English language. This is essential and necessary for employment purposes. According to National Sample Survey cited by (Bhalla & Kaur, 2010), the percentage of women in labour force stands at 25% for the past 25 years in India. This low percentage may be attributed to gender discrimination with respect to equal employment. Most of this discrimination stem from patriarchy and cultural belief that anchored on the argument that women do not need to take up employment. Hence, they are confined to the four walls of a house. The aftermath of this is that only few females get to pursue education. This determination and motivation to prove the patriarchy society wrong might be responsible for their outstanding performance in English language education.

5.8. Students' perspective

5.8.1. Students' view on the ability of male and female to learn English effectively

In reviewing the literature, no data was found on how male and female perceive each other's cognitive ability to learn the language better. This finding was then unexpected and suggested that majority of students believed that gender as a factor does not play any significant role in learning L2 successfully. While some participants argued that both genders have equal cognitive ability to learn the language successfully, some disputed scholars' neurobiological stands which favour female

learners' ability to learn English better than their male counterpart. One of the participants argued that the only factor that can affect language learning can be linked to sociological and pedagogical factor which includes access to learning resources as well as high level of interest in the target language. This finding has been unable to corroborate that of Yazici (2014) whose study showed that both genders did not significantly differed in their assessment of women being better than men at learning foreign language. This rather contradictory result may be due to the difference in cultural perception in gender equality which varies from one country to another. Thus, it is possible that male and female L2 learners in India view their cognitive ability to learn English on par, because they believe in gender equality unlike Turkish students.

5.8.2. What are the best ways to learn English?

Very little was found in the literature on the above question among different groups of immersion students. The most interesting finding was that both male and female early immersion students support learning of English at a tender age. They are of the opinion that the earlier an individual is introduced to L2, the easier the learner will be able to acquire it successfully. This result confirms the significance of language acquisition device which plays a critical role in L2 learning (Grimshaw, 1981). In other words, this view supports the general notion that a child has a higher capacity to learn a L2 than adult. However, even though both genders promote early introduction of English language to student at primary education level, but they both express different views on learning styles and strategies. For instance, male students opined that an audio–visual material such as English movies is an important tool to learn the target language effortlessly. This assertion confirms the earlier finding which demonstrated that male learners tend to acquire any foreign language better through visual and hearing. This is because unlike their female counterparts, males used visual and auditory cortex in the brain to process language (Burman, Bitan & Booth, 2008). Therefore, it is then important for teacher to adopt visual aids to facilitate effective teaching among the male learners. On the other hand, female students stressed the need to focus on learning all the four skills of language. Holding such views is an indication that female students are liable to have different learning strategies than the male learners. This is consistent with the previous research which found that women tend to deploy more learning strategies than the male learners (Bozinovic & Sindik, 2011).

5.8.3. Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?

The aim of this research question is to shed light on perceived difficulty associated to L2 learning with reference to gender. Different opinions were expressed across different levels of immersion. Majority of the female early immersion students believed that students who struggle with L2 learning are the late immersion students. Overall, the female participants in early immersion group expressed their opinion clearly on some of the reasons why English is an easy language to learn compared to their male counterparts. The male participants' reasons were simply based on comparison between mother tongue and English. They stated that L2 is easier because of the non-complexity of the structure of the language. Meanwhile, it is important to state that the view depicted by female learners in this study contradict that of Saudi Arabian female learners. Majority of the latter students believed that English is hard to learn. A possible explanation for this result is that the students considered in Saudi Arabian contexts are late immersion undergraduate students who are still struggling to learn the language. Therefore, the observed beliefs of the early immersion students about easiness of English are shaped by their earlier introduction to English immersion programme compared to the late immersion students in Saudi Arabia.

6. Conclusion

The present study was designed to determine the level of English proficiency between male and female undergraduate students among early, middle and late immersion group and evaluate the effect of ID variables such as anxiety, WTC, self-confidence and motivational intensity on the

performance of both genders. These findings suggest in general that female students have higher proficiency than the male students. While there is no major significant difference between both genders due to the effect of WTC, anxiety and motivational intensity between male and female, this finding was able to attribute higher proficiency in English reported largely across the three groups of female immersion students to higher positive attitude and self-confidence. Therefore, the present study provides additional evidence that the female learners have higher proficiency than the male learners who belong to different groups of immersion. The uniqueness of the evidence from this study suggests that higher proficiency reported among the female students cannot be solely linked to their brain capacity to process language learning better than male, but that strong positive attitude and self-confidence play a crucial role in L2 learning achievement among the gender. However, in spite of this compelling evidence, more broadly, research is also needed to determine how other cognitive and affective factors such as intelligence, aptitude and personality influence both genders in L2 learning.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Gender Differences in English Proficiency

Dear Students,

I, Lasekan Olusiji, Research Scholar at Center of Linguistic, Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi, Karnataka The purpose of this survey is to investigate the factors influencing students' motivation to learn English by Kannada mother tongue students, I have selected Kalaburagi district. This survey is anonymous and strictly confidential. You don't even have to write your name on it. This is not a test so there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. We are interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help in advance.

Appendix A1

I. Personal information

1. Gender : Male Female 2. Age: years

3. Category : ST/ST OBC General

4. Mother Tongue:

5. Which other languages can you speak? i)..... ii)..... iii)

6. What is Your Language Medium of Instruction:

i) Primary Education (2–3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kannada	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
ii) Upper Primary Education (4–5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kannada	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
iii) High School (6–10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kannada	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
iv) PUC (11–12)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kannada	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/> Others

Appendix A2

What is your perception of factors influencing you to learn English? Evaluate each statement and circle in the appropriate number using the following scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Not Sure (NS); 4 = Agree (A); 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
(SDA)	(DA)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1. I feel comfortable if I have to speak English in class	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am not bother about my mistakes in my spoken English	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am always glad if I don't have to say anything in English	1	2	3	4	5
4. I'm not afraid if other students will laugh at me when I speak English	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have never worry about my English exam	1	2	3	4	5
6. I prefer to respond in Kannada if people speak to me in English	1	2	3	4	5
7. The development of India is possible mainly by educated people who know English well.	1	2	3	4	5
8. English language learning is an easy task.	1	2	3	4	5
9. English is a very important part of the education system.	1	2	3	4	5
10. English language promotes national integration in India	1	2	3	4	5

11. In India, knowing English is more important than knowing any other languages.	1	2	3	4	5
12. English language education should start from UKG and LKG in all schools.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Spoken English is more important than other task of English	1	2	3	4	5
14. I spend a lot of time studying English.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I study English on my own beyond my English coursework.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I work hard to improve my English ability.	1	2	3	4	5
17. During my English classes I am always concentrate in what is being taught	1	2	3	4	5
18. I study hard for English exams	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am intelligent enough to master English successfully	1	2	3	4	5
20. I believe I can pass my English exam	1	2	3	4	5
21. I believe I have the self-confidence to speak in English in public	1	2	3	4	5
22. I believe I can be the best in English in my lifetime	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix A3

How can you rate your English proficiency? Evaluate each statement and circle in the appropriate number using the following scale where **1 = Very Poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, 5 = Very Good**

1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor (VP)	Poor (P)	Average (A)	Good (G)	Very Good (VG)

	Statement	VP	P	A	G	VG
I.	My speaking in English	1	2	3	4	5
II.	My writing in English	1	2	3	4	5
III.	My reading in English	1	2	3	4	5
IV.	My listening in English	1	2	3	4	5