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GENDER ROLE DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION IN TERTIARY-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS IN BANGLADESH

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Department of English and Modern Languages

Independent University, Bangladesh

December, 2025

Declaration

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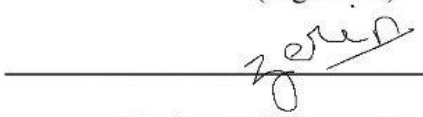
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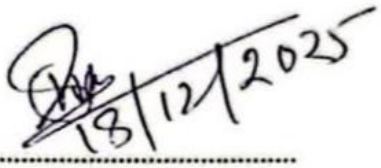
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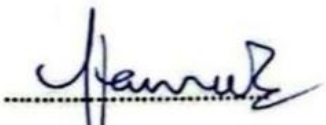
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Ethics Statement

This study was conducted with respect for all participants. They were informed about the research, gave their consent to participate, and were free to withdraw at any time. Their privacy was protected, and their identities remained confidential throughout the study.

Abstract

Male students of Bangladeshi private universities lag behind their female peers in classroom participation and overall academic achievement in the tertiary-level EFL classrooms, due to higher levels of speaking anxiety and fear of judgment. The affective barriers, along with socio-cultural expectations, appear to limit their engagement in English classes. Therefore, the study aims to acknowledge the gender role dynamics along with the factors and provide evidence. Drawing on a survey of 30 students enrolled in English courses at a private university in Dhaka, two classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with 12 students, the study identifies consistent patterns: male students being the minority population, female students participated more frequently in teacher-led and classroom discussions, while male students demonstrated greater hesitation in participation and fear of making mistakes. The study recommends inclusive pedagogical strategies, supportive feedback practices, and targeted confidence-building tasks. Future research should examine larger and more diverse institutions to capture broader national trends.

Keywords: Gender role; classroom participation; English classes; EFL; tertiary-level; Bangladesh

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List of Acronyms:

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMI	English Medium Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

English has become an integral part of higher education in Bangladesh, especially in private universities where English-medium instruction and interactive classrooms are now common. In these settings, participation is considered an essential component of learning because it builds confidence, communication, and language development. However, participation in English language classrooms is not only shaped by interest or proficiency. Research shows that gender roles, social expectations, and classroom dynamics influence who speaks more, who stays silent, and how students engage with teachers and peers (Sunderland, 2004; Holmes, 2013)

In Bangladesh, these differences in gender role patterns of classroom behavior are visible but not fully understood. Recent observations from private tertiary institutions indicate that male students often participate less in classroom discussions, group tasks, and question–answer sessions. Studies on Bangladeshi learners also show that male students may experience higher levels of language anxiety linked to speaking in English, fear of judgment, and pressure to maintain confidence in front of peers. This suggests that broader cultural expectations about masculinity and risk-taking may shape classroom participation.

Understanding how and why male and female learners participate differently is essential for creating equal learning environments in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. To frame this study, several important terms need to be known. Classroom participation refers to the students' active involvement in learning, including participating in activities, answering questions, asking questions, engaging in group discussions, and expressing their own opinions. Gender differences in this context refer to the variations in participation frequency, patterns, confidence, motivational factors, and behaviors in male and female learners. Language anxiety involves feelings of apprehension or fear that arise when students are required to use English in front of the entire classroom. Motivation refers to the internal and external factors that encourage learners to engage in different learning tasks. These terms collectively help explain the social, emotional, and linguistic factors that influence student engagement in EFL classrooms.

Gender and classroom participation have been studied in various global EFL contexts, with mixed pattern findings. Some studies found that male students speak more than females, often taking dominant roles in classroom discussions (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009) (Masuda et al., 2013; Akib et al., 2018). Others have shown that female learners participate actively in collaborative tasks and overall perform better academically (Murphy & Whitelegg, 2006; Faridizad & Simin, 2015). In South Asia, classroom participation is often shaped by cultural norms, teacher authority, and gendered expectations. Although some studies address gender in Bangladeshi EFL classrooms, most treat gender as a background variable rather than the central focus. Few explore how gender role expectations intersect with psychological factors. There is also a lack of mixed-method studies combining observation, self-report, and teacher perspectives to analyze actual participation patterns.

In Bangladesh, English language learning is taught from primary to tertiary levels, but university classrooms, especially private institutions, demand more interaction, spontaneous speaking, and

group engagement than earlier schooling stages. This creates discomfort for some learners. Previous research noted that Bangladeshi students often experience high English language anxiety due to fear of making mistakes, peer judgment, and teacher evaluation. (Al Mamun, 2021; Nimat, 2013) Female students, on the other hand, often demonstrate greater willingness to engage, possibly due to stronger academic motivation. This variation in participation raises important questions about how classroom environment, teaching practices, and cultural influences shape gender-based participation. International studies similarly highlight that participation is influenced by identity, confidence, and perceived social roles within the classroom (Norton, 2013). While global research has examined how gender role differences affect participation in language classrooms, the Bangladeshi tertiary context remains underexplored. Little is known about how male students' lower participation affects their overall learning experience and performance or how instructors can respond with more gender-sensitive pedagogical practices.

This study aims to address these issues by examining differences in gender-based roles in participation in tertiary-level EFL classrooms in Bangladesh, particularly regarding the under-participation of male learners. The chapter that follows outlines the statement of the problem, presents the research questions and purpose of the study, and identifies the significance and scope of the study.

1.2 Problem Statement

English language classrooms are more than just places where students learn a language. They are also spaces where identity, confidence, social norms, classroom learning environment, and expectations shape how students behave and participate in classes. Although teachers often assume that participation depends solely on a student's interest or English language ability, gender roles quietly influence who speaks, how often, and in what ways. Recent research shows that many tertiary-level students in Bangladesh struggle with English language anxiety, especially anxiety about speaking, being judged, or performing poorly in tests (Al Mamun, 2021). Male students, in particular, have been observed to experience higher levels of language anxiety, which may explain why they participate less compared to female students in private university English language classrooms in Bangladesh. Some male learners even hold back or resist speaking in English language classes due to factors that influence confidence, peer judgment, or maintaining a particular social image (fear of losing face). (Yasmin, et al., 2024) Together, these factors suggest that gender plays a meaningful role in shaping participation patterns and that lower participation among male students in tertiary English language classes is linked to both psychological and social influences. Despite these insights, a gap remains in this field of study: few studies have systematically explored how gender affects both participation (frequency and patterns) and the underlying affective and social factors in Bangladeshi tertiary English language classrooms. By frequency, it refers to the participation frequency for each member or category of students- male or female students, and by patterns of participation,

means the type of contributions usually made by each member of students. Patterns of participation include solicited and unsolicited responses to teachers' questions, discussions, or comments. (Bouhariche, 2017). Existing research does not fully explain why these differences exist. Within Bangladesh, research on gender in EFL classrooms remains limited. A 2019 case study

investigating gender and teacher-student gender in English classes found that socio-cultural definitions of male and female roles affect classroom interactions, shaping both confidence and participation (Gender in English as a Foreign Language Classroom: A Case Study, 2019). Other studies highlight high levels of language anxiety among Bangladeshi learners in EMI settings, attributed to fear of mistakes, peer judgment, negative evaluation, and lack of speaking opportunities, factors that arguably impact participation regardless of gender. (Mobarak, 2020) However, little empirical research has systematically documented participation by gender, particularly examining whether male learners indeed participate less, and why. Without understanding these factors, instructors may unintentionally be biased to some or gender-specific learners, overlook others, or misinterpret student silence as a lack of interest. A clearer understanding of gendered participation patterns is needed to support more balanced and inclusive English classrooms. Without a clearer approach, it is inefficient to design pedagogical practices that are sensitive to gendered dynamics or build equality in classroom participation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in gender-based roles in classroom participation among tertiary-level English learners in Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the lower participation levels of male students in private institutions. It seeks to explore how social, psychological, cultural, and classroom-related factors shape the engagement and participation of male and female learners. This study focuses on the following objectives:

1. To explore the nature and frequency of classroom participation among male and female students in tertiary-level English language classes.
2. To identify the challenges faced by students in participating in English classroom discussions, including fear of making mistakes and fear of judgment.
3. To investigate gender-based differences in anxiety and self-confidence in spoken English among tertiary-level students.
4. To examine students' perceptions of teaching styles and how these influence classroom participation.
5. To explore whether students perceive any gender bias in teachers' questioning patterns, attention, or encouragement and analyse the relationship between teacher support and students' willingness to participate in English language classrooms.
6. To provide pedagogical implications for creating more inclusive and supportive English language classrooms at the tertiary level.

The study also aims to provide insights into incorporating more inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching strategies, helping instructors and institutions make informed decisions and create learning environments that encourage equal classroom participation and support the language learning development of all learners.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do gender roles (male vs. female) relate to differences in frequency and patterns of participation in private tertiary-level English (EFL) classrooms in Bangladesh?

2. What are the key affective and social factors, such as motivation, language anxiety, and peer or teacher interactions, which shape male and female students' classroom engagement and performance?

3. How can insights from these gendered role participation patterns inform more gender-sensitive pedagogical practices for private tertiary-level English faculties in Bangladesh?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Gender continues to influence educational experiences across various contexts, even in settings where male and female students have equal access to classroom teaching and learning. In Bangladesh, where English proficiency plays a crucial role in academic advancement, employability, and global opportunity and competitiveness, ensuring equal engagement in English language classrooms is particularly important. This study is significant because it examines a dimension of English language learning that is often overlooked. The way in which gender roles shape participation patterns among tertiary-level students, especially in private universities, is considered a key component of language pedagogy. While many discussions around gender in South Asian education have traditionally focused on barriers faced by female learners, recent observations indicate that male students may also encounter distinct challenges that limit their classroom learning experience and involvement. This research provides valuable insights into understanding these emerging patterns. One important contribution of this study is to challenge the general assumptions about gender behavior roles in academic settings. In Bangladesh, female students are often assumed to be quieter and more hesitant in language classes due to religious, cultural, and societal norms. However, classroom realities in many private universities reveal a different scenario. Female learners frequently demonstrate higher levels of readiness to speak, participating more in group tasks, and engaging in discussions, whereas male learners sometimes show reduced participation and increased anxiety in English-speaking environments or EMI. By documenting and analyzing these shifting dynamics between genders, the study adds clarity to an area where misconceptions still influence teaching practices and institutional expectations.

Another significant aspect of this research lies in its attempt to understand why participation differences occur. Classroom participation is not just a matter of linguistic ability or individual preference. It is shaped by a combination of social expectations, confidence levels, self-perception, peer influence, and teacher-student interaction patterns. In Bangladesh, gender norms may unintentionally pressure male students to avoid situations where they fear making mistakes, facing embarrassment and judgment, or appearing less capable in front of peers. This can lead to disengagement and silence, even when students possess adequate language knowledge. By investigating these barriers, the study provides insights that help educators better understand the psychological, cultural, and social elements associated with gendered participation.

The findings of this study also hold practical significance for teachers and institutions. In many tertiary English language classrooms, participation is used as an indicator of engagement and is

sometimes included in assessment criteria. If male students participate less frequently due to anxiety, fear, or lack of confidence, they may be unfairly treated in both learning and grading. This research, therefore, encourages educators to reconsider traditional participation-based evaluations and explore alternative strategies, such as structured turn-taking, varied discussion formats, and supportive feedback techniques that accommodate the diverse needs of learners. Understanding gendered participation patterns can help instructors make informed decisions that lead to more balanced and inclusive classroom environments.

From a policy standpoint, the study contributes to the growing need for gender-sensitive pedagogical training in Bangladesh's higher education sector. Universities continue to expand their English-medium instruction and introduce more communicative teaching methods, yet gender awareness is rarely included in professional development programs for faculties. The insights from this research can inform teacher training modules, orientation programs, and curriculum planning by highlighting how participation barriers operate and how they can be reduced. For institutions that aim to support this holistic development of students, recognizing and addressing gendered classroom behavior is essential.

Ultimately, this research provides a valuable guideline for future academic work and studies. It provides a foundation for further extensive studies in the Bangladeshi context on related areas such as the influence of teacher gender on classroom interaction and comparative gendered participation patterns across both public and private Bangladeshi universities. By shedding light on an under-explored field of English language teaching education, the study encourages more research findings and promotes an expanded understanding of how gender shapes the overall learning experience in Bangladeshi tertiary institutions. By addressing these, the study not only fills the research gap but also provides practical insights to universities, helping them create Bangladeshi EFL classrooms that better support all students, regardless of gender.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the Study

The study focuses on undergraduate students at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh, enrolled in one English language course, two sections. It examines participation during classroom tasks and discussions. The study does not evaluate academic performances, proficiency scores, or long-term learning outcomes. It also does not include other private and public universities or secondary-level institutions in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The study is limited by several factors: the data collection takes place within a very short timeframe for an extensive topic such as this one, which restricts long-term observations, cross-checking, and detailed findings. Only one private university in Dhaka was included in this study, the one where I am completing my undergraduate degree in. This has made it easier for easy entry access and data collection procedures in such a short time as well as due to the unstable country's situation, and allowance in other institutions; hence, the findings cannot be generalized to all tertiary institutions in Dhaka, or other parts of Bangladesh. The research relies on self-reported surveys and interviews of only students, which may be influenced by respondents' comfort level and honesty. Teacher interviews could not be conducted due to time constraints. Participation patterns may also vary depending on other course types, teacher's style, and classroom environments, which may not be fully captured in limited observations. The use of Bangla language was not used for conducting this study's data collection, only the English language was used as a medium for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter examines the key bodies of literature on themes and understanding of gender, participation, language anxiety, motivation, teacher-teaching methods, classroom dynamics, and interaction patterns in tertiary-level English language classrooms. The review is organized around four broad themes that support the present study's focus: (1) Gender as a sociocultural construct in educational interaction, (2) Gendered participation patterns in language classrooms, (3) Psychological and affective factors that shape participation, and (4) The Bangladeshi tertiary EFL/EMI context. The purpose of this chapter is to identify what is already known in prior studies and research, highlight the points of agreement and difference, and show where the gaps remain, particularly regarding the relatively low participation of male students in English language classrooms at Bangladeshi private universities.

2.1 Understanding Gender as a Sociocultural Construct in Educational Settings

Research regarding gender roles in education has long moved away from prior biological explanations and now frames gender as a socially constructed identity shaped through cultural norms, expectations, and socialization. (Booth et al., 2010) Sociolinguistic work by (Holmes, 2013) explains that gender differences in communication emerge from learned patterns of behavior rather than innate predispositions. (Sunderland, 2004) Similarly argues that gender roles influence how students position themselves in academic spaces, shaping their confidence and comfort, and their willingness to speak or remain silent.

In language classrooms specifically, participation is strongly linked to social identity. (Norton, 2013) Notes that when learners speak, they internalize who they are and who they are allowed to socialize with their peers. If certain forms of participation are interpreted as inappropriate or culturally uncomfortable for a particular gender group, that group may not participate in such activities. This identity-based explanation aligns with studies showing that male students in some Asian EFL contexts are more likely to worry about negative judgment because of cultural expectations surrounding masculinity, confidence, and error-avoidance (Kobayashi, 2002; Mobarak, 2020).

Thus, gendered behavior in EFL classrooms is not accidental; rather, it is shaped by the cultural and societal norms that guide how young men and women are expected to present themselves publicly. This theoretical ground is essential for understanding why male students in Bangladeshi tertiary institutions may participate less, even when they have the linguistic ability to communicate and participate.

2.2 Gendered Participation Patterns in Language Classrooms

Linguistically, gender and sex are two arguable concepts. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "the words gender and sex both have the same concept, the state of being male or female, but they are used in different ways: sex usually refers to biological differences, while gender tends to refer to cultural or social ones." ("Compact Oxford English Dictionary", 2008, p.

419). (Al-Shibel, 2021) A large number of international research studies have shown how men and women participate differently in language classrooms. (Faridizad & Simin, 2015; Azhar & Iqbal, 2019) One of the earliest consistent findings is that participation is unevenly distributed across both genders, though this difference varies by context. In Western higher education, men historically dominated classroom discussions (Sadker & Sadker, 1994), receiving more teacher attention and speaking more frequently. However, subsequent research in EFL and ESL settings often finds different patterns. For example, (Oxford, 1995; Bouhariche, 2017) observed that female learners frequently engage more actively in communicative tasks, take more initiative in pair work, and use more strategies in the negotiation of meaning.

Similarly, studies conducted in East Asian EFL contexts reported that female students often outperform males in communicative English language tasks and are more willing to take risks in speaking activities (Aida, 1994; Rashidi & Naderi, 2012). These findings suggest that participation gaps do not always favor men; cultural norms regarding femininity, hard work, and language learning may support women's engagement in many EFL classrooms.

The issue becomes more complex when teacher gender is introduced (Al-Shibel, 2021). Sunderland (2000) found that some teachers treat male and female students differently in subtle ways, such as being biased toward a particular gender or interpreting silence differently depending on gender. Research in some South Asian university classrooms reported that female students felt more encouraged by female teachers, while male students felt more comfortable speaking when male teachers facilitated classroom discussions. These dynamics indicate that participation is a result of multiple intersecting factors such as student and teacher genders, types of tasks, classroom norms, and broader social and cultural expectations.

One noticeable gap in this international literature is the limited attention to contexts where male students show lower participation than female students. Although some studies touch on this pattern of gender role differences, very few investigate it systematically. This gap directly supports the relevance of the present research in Bangladesh, where anecdotal and preliminary findings suggest that male students participate less frequently in English-medium tertiary classrooms.

2.3 Language anxiety, motivation, and affective factors influencing participation

Language anxiety remains one of the main factors of low oral participation in EFL classrooms (Al Mamun, 2021; Mobarak, 2020). The individualities of classroom language acquisition give rise to a separate set of self-perceptions, views, and attitudes known as foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Zaman, 2024). Horwitz et al., (1986) construct of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), comprising communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, continues to frame research into why learners with adequate knowledge remain silent. In Bangladesh, a growing body of empirical work confirms that speaking anxiety is widespread among tertiary learners and is closely tied to classroom participation. Another survey of university students documented multiple anxiety sources. This language anxiety stems from distinct personality traits, including fear of public speaking, fear of making mistakes, fear of being negatively judged by teachers and peers, lack of self-confidence, peer comparison, fear of native cultural exclusion, and an overall unfavorable classroom environment (Barua, 2022) and found a clear negative co-relationship was found between anxiety test scores and frequency of voluntary speaking in class.

The study by (Islam & Stapa, 2021; Barua, 2022) provides a detailed, mixed-methods investigation of low spoken-English proficiency in private universities and identifies psychological factors (including anxiety and fear of making mistakes) as major barriers to developing speaking skills; they also highlight teacher behavior (teacher-centered control, corrective styles) and sociocultural pressures as reinforcing students' reluctance to speak. Their findings directly lead to participation patterns: when students fear public errors or negative evaluation, they strategically avoid speaking opportunities.

Several Bangladesh-focused studies further clarify the problem. Some studies document reasons for speaking anxiety in private university settings, ranging from the majority of Bangla medium-background students, large class sizes, the limited speaking practices and opportunities, to the sociocultural embarrassment, and the limited exposure to the English language use outside the campus (Tabassum & Aziz, 2024; Tanzin, 2023). Action-research evidence shows that even pedagogical shifts (e.g., practicing non-graded speaking tasks, interesting activities, and a student-friendly classroom environment) can reduce anxiety levels and increase participation, suggesting that anxiety can be reduced when instructors intentionally redesign classroom interactions (Barua, 2022).

Psychological factor such as motivation interacts closely with anxiety (Eragamreddy, 2024). (Dornyei, 2001) Dornyei's framework on motivation remains useful: learners with higher integrative motivation are likelier to risk speaking despite anxiety. Local studies suggest female students at many private institutions report stronger academic and career-related motivation for English, which can reduce anxiety and encourage participation; male learners, in contrast, sometimes experience motivational contradiction when speaking tasks threaten their social image. This combination of higher anxiety and lower situational motivation helps explain why male participation can be comparatively low in some Bangladeshi EMI classrooms.

Together, these local studies and analyses show that affective factors are major drivers of participation patterns in Bangladeshi English language classrooms. They also point to practicable interventions: reducing evaluative pressure, diversifying speaking activities, and training teachers in supportive feedback can lower anxiety and encourage wider participation and motivation levels.

2.4 The Bangladeshi tertiary EFL/EMI context: institutional features, classroom practice, and gender dynamics

The rise of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) across Bangladesh's private universities has reshaped classroom norms: interactive discussion, presentations, and communicative tasks are now standard, yet students often arrive with uneven oral skills and limited experience and language inability in spontaneous interactive English tertiary-level classes. Institutional studies and policy analyses note that the rapid adoption of EMI across institutions has outpaced teacher preparations and student readiness, creating a gap between pedagogical strategies and classroom realities.

Work within the Bangladeshi context highlights concrete classroom and teacher constraints. A case study at a private university describes large, mixed-ability classes where teachers revert to teacher-centered techniques to maintain control, which reduces opportunities for even, gender-balanced participation in classrooms. BRAC-based theses and action research from private

campuses report similar constraints (limited speaking time per student, corrective teacher practices and tone that increase fear of errors, low self-esteem, and lack of practical, ungraded speaking opportunities). Such structural features often exacerbate gendered patterns: when speaking is at high risk, students who are more sensitive to peer judgment, lack of self-efficacy, or to maintaining social images withdraw.

The study by Islam and Stapa (2021) as well as Barua (2022) explicitly links socio-cultural factors to classroom behavior: students' family and peer expectations, classroom norms about saving one's reputation, and teachers' corrective styles all contribute to limited spoken performances and, in turn, to less participation during interactive tasks. More importantly, this study identified psychological reluctance, more than linguistic incompetence, as a prominent reason for silence in classes. These findings support the argument that participation gaps are socio-cultural and affective as much as they are linguistic.

Recent local research also suggests another gendered dimension to typical older stereotypes. While historically girls have been portrayed as being more conservative in contexts, several Bangladeshi studies now observe that female tertiary-level students often show higher classroom engagement and participation in EMI settings, possibly driven by instrumental motivation (career orientation) around classroom behavior, while male students sometimes under-participate, reporting higher sensitivity to peer judgment and greater anxiety about being perceived as incompetent in English. These emerging findings are visible in institutional reports addressing voice, power, and classroom interactions in Bangladeshi tertiary EFL education.

Policy and institutional literature also matters: a critical assessment of EMI in Bangladesh argues that without targeted teacher development, EMI can result in inequalities, favoring students who already feel comfortable speaking English and disadvantaging those (regardless of gender) who do not feel comfortable or come from less proficient English-language backgrounds. Thus, the context combines macro-level policy pressures (EMI styles expansion), institutional constraints (class size, teacher training, and teaching methods), and micro-level social/affective factors (gender norms, anxiety, and motivation), all shaping participation levels.

2.5 Summary of gaps and relevance to the present study

Overall, the literature shows that gender, anxiety, motivation, teacher practices, classroom dynamics, and institutional features all combine to shape participation in EFL classrooms. However, three important gaps remain, and the present study justifies these gaps.

First, while Bangladeshi-focused research has shown high speaking anxiety and low oral proficiency in private universities, few studies systematically disaggregate actual observed participation by gender roles using mixed research methods and extensive studies. Research such as (Islam & Stapa, 2021; Barua, 2022) and others identifies aspects of anxiety, low motivation, teacher training and teaching methods, and classroom implementation factors, but it does not combine systematic classroom-turn analysis with student psychology and teacher interviews to explain gender role differences in participation frequency and patterns.

Second, there is a limited attention to the unexpected growing pattern emerging in many private tertiary-level classrooms: male under-participation. Much of the global literature assumes that male dominance in classroom discussions or treats female silence as the main concern; in Bangladesh, however, recent local reports and theses indicate situations where males speak or take part less, often for reasons tied to masculine societal norms, fear of losing status among peers, and motivational levels. These circumstances have not been extensively examined across multiple institutions or cross-studied with both observation and affective measures (anxiety, motivation levels).

Third, there is a shortage of action-based, locally pedagogical strategies that are implemented and tailored for Bangladeshi EMI classrooms. While some action-research projects show promising anxiety-reducing activities, broader guidance for gender-sensitive participation (e.g., structured turn-taking, practical ungraded speaking formats, and teacher feedback styles calibrated for reducing identity threat) is insufficient and not validated in local contexts.

By addressing these gaps (1) producing gender-disaggregated, mixed-methods evidence of participation patterns, (2) interrogating the causes of male under-participation in private university EMI settings, and (3) deriving evidence-based pedagogical recommendations that are feasible for Bangladeshi classrooms, this study aims to supply both scholarly insights and practical guidance. The intended contribution is not just descriptive: it seeks to link these observed participation patterns to affective variables and contextual features, then translate these links into classroom strategies that reduce language anxiety and other barriers, and encourage more equitable learning.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to investigate gender-based differences in participation within tertiary-level English classrooms in Bangladesh. The study adopts a mixed-methods design, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative traditions to capture the nuance of student behavior, social expectations, and institutional practices. Research on language classroom participation, particularly in contexts like Bangladesh, shows that participation cannot be understood through numbers alone; it is tied to psychological factors, identities, cultural norms, and teacher–student dynamics. For this reason, a methodological approach capable of examining both patterns and understanding is essential.

The chapter describes the research design, population and sampling strategy, instruments, data collection procedures, modes of analysis, reliability and validity issues, and ethical considerations. The goal is to provide a transparent account of how data were generated and interpreted within the reality of a Bangladeshi private university.

3.2 Research Design

A mixed-methods explanatory design was chosen, where quantitative data provide the overall trends and qualitative data help interpret those trends in a more contextualized manner. Creswell (2014) notes that mixed-methods designs are particularly useful when studying complex social phenomena affected by cultural norms, identity, or power relations, all of which are relevant to gendered participation. Bangladeshi studies on EFL classroom anxiety, participation, and gender issues have increasingly used mixed approaches for similar reasons, e.g., (Begum, 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2024). The quantitative component consists of a questionnaire measuring self-reported participation frequency, perceived barriers, and levels of foreign language classroom anxiety (using adapted items from Horwitz et al., 1986; Sultana, 2016; Chowdhury et al., 2024). Qualitative data come from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations designed to explore experiences that numbers alone cannot explain (Akhter, 2019), for example, how cultural expectations shape participation differently for male and female learners.

3.3 Research Setting

The study was conducted across a selected private university in Dhaka, Independent University of Bangladesh, where English is used extensively for both instruction and communication across all classes. This private institution was chosen because several studies show noticeable differences in participation norms between public and private universities in Bangladesh, with private institutions generally encouraging more communicative interaction but still reproducing gendered dynamics. This institution also represents a diverse urban student population, making it suitable for examining gender-linked patterns in participation.

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Population

The population includes undergraduate students enrolled in compulsory English foundation courses in a Bangladeshi private university in Dhaka. These classrooms typically include students of varying English proficiencies, mixed socioeconomic backgrounds, and diverse schooling histories. Previous studies (Sultana, 2018) indicate that these classrooms naturally reveal gendered participation dynamics because students interact in mixed-gender settings that still carry cultural expectations.

3.4.2 Sampling Strategy

Aspect	Description
Nature of the Study	Mixed-methods research combining qualitative and quantitative approaches
Sampling Technique	Purposive sampling
Study Context	Tertiary-level English language classrooms in Bangladesh.
Target Population	Undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses.
Qualitative Phase	Classroom-based data collection (online survey questionnaire and classroom observations checklist)
Qualitative Sample Size	Approximately 30–50 students.
Purpose of Qualitative Sample	To explore students' perceptions, experiences, and gender role participation patterns in English classrooms.
Quantitative Phase	Semi-structured interviews
Quantitative Sample Size	12–16 students

Gender Distribution	Both male and female students are included.
Purpose of Quantitative Sample	To gain an in-depth understanding of gender differences, confidence levels, anxiety, and classroom participation.
Sampling Rationale	Participants were selected based on accessibility, willingness to participate, and relevance to the research objectives

Table 3.1 shows the sampling strategy method.

3.5 Research Instruments

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used for the quantitative phase, divided into four sections:

1. Demographic information: gender, age, level/year of study, and proficiency self-rating.
2. Participation frequency: adapted from established classroom interaction scales (Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011).
3. Language anxiety scale: selected and modified items from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986).
4. Perceived barriers: items on gender norms, peer judgment, teacher behavior, and institutional factors (Sultana, 2018).

The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, allowing measurable comparisons between male and female learners.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews explored students' lived experiences of classroom participation, focusing especially on: (based on year/level of study, English proficiency, and motivation levels.)

Feelings during speaking activities, gender-related pressures or expectations, teacher influence, anxiety and fear of judgment, and experiences of encouragement or discouragement.

Interview guidelines were designed using insights from previous qualitative studies on Bangladeshi EFL classrooms (Islam & Stapa, 2021; Barua, 2022).

3.5.3 Classroom Observations

Observations took place over two sections or classes of the selected English course. Class A consisted of 30 students, and Class B consisted of 40 students in the ENG 101 course. An observation checklist was adapted from frameworks by Allwright (1988) and Walsh (2011), records: number of voluntary responses by each gender, teacher-student interaction patterns,

group-work behavior, and willingness to engage in oral activities. Observations allowed triangulation of data because self-reported behaviors do not always reflect classroom realities.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred over four stages:

Institutional Permission: Ethical approval and permission were obtained from the relevant academic department.

Questionnaire Administration: Survey form questionnaires were distributed online, following informed consent. Students were assured their responses were confidential and unrelated to academic grading.

Classroom Observations: Observations took place over two different sections or classes of the ENG 101 course, following the classroom observation checklist.

Semi-structured Interviews: Interviewees were selected after class observation, ensuring representation of both high and low participants across genders. Interviews were conducted in English and recorded with permission.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS. The following tests were used:

Descriptive statistics for overall trends.

Survey analysis through bar charts and pie charts.

Correlation tests between anxiety and participation frequency.

This analytical approach follows conventions used in participation and anxiety studies globally and locally (Horwitz et al., 1986).

3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis method guided coding and interpretation. Themes were generated around:

Gendered expectations, classroom environment, fear of negative evaluation, teacher influence, resistance, and silence.

Multiple readings of the data ensured close engagement with participants' narratives.

3.8 Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

For the quantitative tool, internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's alpha, a standard procedure in FLCAS-based studies.

For qualitative trustworthiness:

Combined questionnaire data, interview insights, and observations.

Detailed descriptions were used to preserve contextual nuance.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical measures included informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary withdrawal rights, and anonymous reporting. These guidelines follow ethical norms in educational research (BERA, 2018).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the methodological framework used to examine gender differences in participation in Bangladeshi tertiary English classrooms. The mixed-methods design, combining questionnaires, interviews, and observations, allows a comprehensive understanding of how students participate and why certain patterns persist. The next chapter will present and interpret the findings derived from this methodological process.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings on gender differences in participation in English-language classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Data were collected through an online survey questionnaire; of the total number of 30 respondents (n = 30), classroom observations of two ENG 101 classes (Class A with 30 and Class B with 40 students, respectively), and semi-structured interviews with 12 students (7 females, 5 males). The analysis combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of participation trends, sources of anxiety, and students' perceptions regarding classroom dynamics. The findings are presented in descriptive statistics analysis, tables, bar charts, and pie charts, followed by discussions that provide evidence to the research questions.

4.2 Demographic Information

The demographic profile of the respondents shows a female-dominated enrollment (66.7% female, 33.3% male), reflecting typical trends in Bangladeshi English language courses (BANBEIS, 2023). This also represents the male population as a minority group in tertiary-level English language classrooms. The age distribution was evenly split, with 50% between 18–20 years and 50% between 21–23 years. Most respondents were first-year students (73.3%), followed by second- and third-year students. Only one respondent was a fourth-year student.

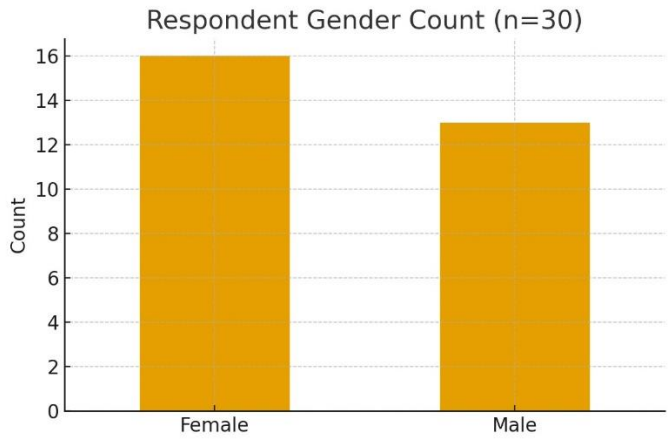


Figure 4.1 Bar graph of gender distribution

4.3 Participation in English Language Classes

4.3.1 Frequency of Participation

Survey responses and classroom observations indicate that female students participate more frequently than male students. 40% of female respondents reported participating very frequently, while only 20% of male respondents reported the same. Male students were more likely to participate sometimes or rarely, often due to anxiety, fear of making mistakes, or low vocabulary.

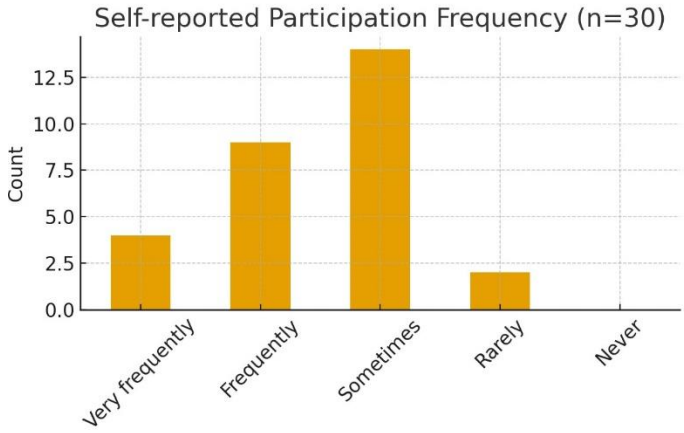


Figure 4.2 (i) Bar graph of self-reported participation levels.

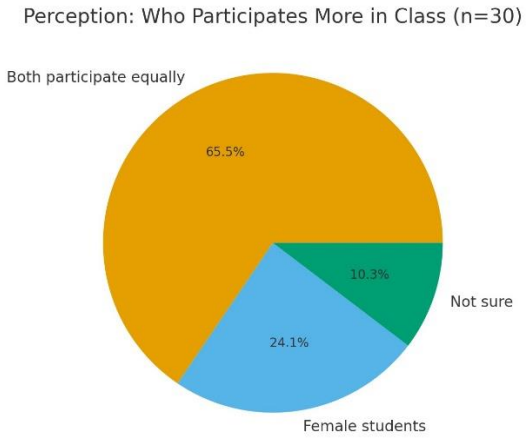


Figure 4.2 (ii) Pie chart of student participation levels.

4.3.2 Activities Encouraging Participation

Class discussions, group work, pair work, presentations, and teacher-led Q&A sessions were the most cited activities that encouraged participation. Female students particularly noted presentations and teacher-led Q&A activities as motivating factors. Male students highlighted interactive group discussions, pair work, and a classroom-friendly environment for active participation.

4.4 Sources of Anxiety and Motivation

Survey and classroom-observation data reveal that male students experience higher levels of English speaking anxiety, consistent with findings from prior Bangladeshi studies (Al Mamun, 2021; Mobarak, 2020). Sources of anxiety include:



Figure 4.3 Pie chart of sources of speaking anxiety

Motivational factors included supportive teachers, positive feedback, clarity of instruction, and collaborative classroom environments. Both male and female students emphasized teacher-positive attitude, building confidence through practice, and structured opportunities to speak.

4.5 Classroom Observation Findings

Observations were conducted in two classes:

Class A: 30 students (20F, 10M)

Class B: 40 students (26F, 14M)

Participation scores were recorded using a Likert-scale checklist (1–5) covering voluntary verbal participation, willingness to answer questions, observed anxiety signs, and teacher interaction response.

Checklist Item	Class A Avg. Score	Class B Avg. Score	Notes
Voluntary verbal participation	Female: 4.5 / Male: 3.0	Female: 4.6 / Male: 3.2	Females are more active.
Willingness to answer questions	Female: 4.3 / Male: 3.1	Female: 4.5 / Male: 3.3	Male hesitation observed.
Anxiety signs observed	Male: 3.8 / Female: 2.0	Male: 3.6 / Female: 2.1	High male anxiety.
Teacher interaction response	Female: 4.2 / Male: 3.2	Female: 4.3 / Male: 3.4	Teachers interacted more with confident females.

Table 4.1: shows classroom Observation Scores

Classroom observations recorded male students as the minority group of the total classroom population enrolled in both English language classes. Females are active and participate more in classroom discussions and direct teacher-led Q&A sessions and prompts. Teachers interacted more with female students, having higher confidence levels, whereas males showed higher anxiety levels and hesitation to participate in class discussions and direct teacher-led Q&A sessions.

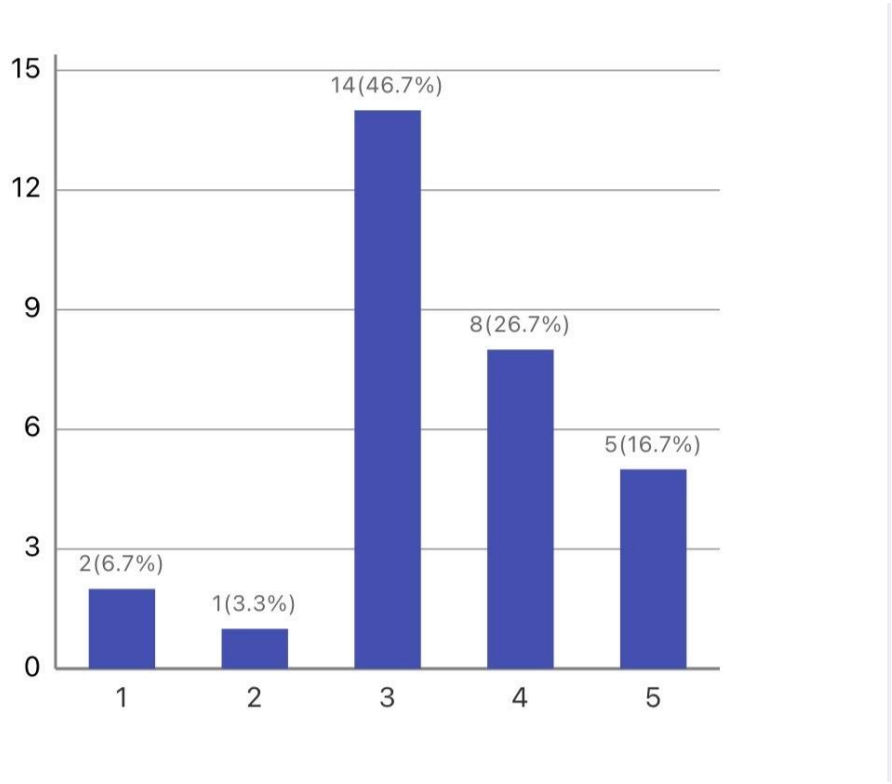


Figure 4.4 Bar graph of self-perceived motivation level of males and females in speaking in English class.

4.6 Semi-Structured Interview Findings

Twelve students (7 females, 5 males) participated in the interview.

Student	Gender	Participation Challenges	Gender Differences	Teaching Style & Bias	Self-Confidence
S1	F	"Sometimes I want to answer, but I feel nervous. I worry if my answer is correct, so I stay quiet sometimes."	"Girls speak more in our class. Boys are often quiet and hesitant."	"Miss encourages us to answer, and I feel comfortable participating."	"Moderate, I feel confident when I understand the topic."
S2	F	"I sometimes get nervous, but I still try to raise my hand and answer."	"Girls are more active; boys seem afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at."	"I like teachers who explain slowly and ask everyone, it helps me participate more."	"Moderate to high, I speak more when I feel prepared."
S3	F	"Sometimes I don't answer if I am unsure, but I usually try to contribute to discussions."	"Girls answer more frequently in our class; boys feel scared and nervous."	"Miss calls us randomly, which is fair and makes me feel encouraged."	"Moderate to high, I like sharing my thoughts."
S4	F	"I am unsure at times if my answer is perfect, but I usually participate anyway."	"Girls are bold, boys are more hesitant and seem scared of being judged."	"Interactive discussions and topics make it easier for me to speak up."	"High, I like sharing my ideas in class and participating in Q&A sessions."
S5	F	"I speak often even when I get nervous if the question is difficult."	"Girls speak more, boys stay quiet and seems stressed to participate."	"Faculties who gives time to think help me participate more."	"Moderate to high, depending on the topic."
S6	F	"I participate more in group discussions than in front of the whole class sometimes."	"Girls are more confident; boys hesitate and are worried about making mistakes."	"I feel encouraged when miss ask questions and listens carefully."	"Moderate, I can answer better if prepared."
S7	F	"I participate actively, but I sometimes prepare my answer in my head before speaking."	"Girls speak more; boys seem nervous and wait for others to answer first."	"I like when most of us participate and take part in Q&A discussions."	"High, I am not afraid to share my answers."
S8	M	"I feel anxious about making mistakes. Sometimes I know the answer but don't speak."	"Girls are more active; we boys hesitate more and stay silent."	"I like teachers who repeat questions and explain slowly, it	"Low, I often avoid speaking to not be judged or be wrong."

				helps me participate."	
S9	M	"I usually stay quiet unless called directly. I am afraid of saying wrong answers."	"Girls answer more confident, boys are more cautious I think."	"I feel anxious when the teacher expects fast answers."	"Low, I hesitate and becomes stressed."
S10	M	"I want to answer, but I feel nervous about classmates laughing at me or criticizing me."	"Girls are more confident, us boys are scared of making mistakes."	"I prefer when miss give time and encourage everyone to speak."	"Low, I speak only if I am sure."
S11	M	"I often stay quiet because I don't understand, I feel nervous about speaking in front of the class."	"Girls answer quickly, boys hesitate more and are anxious."	"Pair works are better, but I still feel pressure sometimes."	"Low, I feel judged easily."
S12	M	"I don't understand most of the times what is being discussed or taught."	"Girls are more active in class, boys like me are quiet."	"I feel more confident in pair or group works with peers."	"Low, I avoid speaking because my English is poor."

Table 4.2 shows semi-structured interview tabulated responses

Key trends included:

Male students demonstrated higher levels of anxiety and lower participation frequency, often hesitating to speak during teacher-led question-and-answer sessions or free-speaking activities. Their reluctance was largely linked to fear of making mistakes and feeling judged by peers or the teacher. However, their motivation and engagement increased in pair work settings and when positive reinforcement was provided, suggesting that supportive and low-pressure interaction formats are particularly effective for male learners.

Female students, in contrast, participated more frequently and displayed higher confidence in speaking activities. They were especially motivated by teacher encouragement, interactive learning approaches, teacher-led Q&A sessions, and interactive group discussions. These factors appeared to create a sense of confidence and willingness to contribute, allowing female students to engage more openly in classroom discourse.

Both male and female students emphasized the importance of a positive and inclusive classroom environment in enhancing engagement. Practices such as teacher neutrality, consistent positivity, a classroom-friendly atmosphere, and opportunities for collaborative group work were reported to foster greater participation across genders.

In terms of gender perception, male students reported experiencing stronger emotional barriers, including anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and sensitivity to being judged. Female students generally reported fewer barriers to participation; however, some still noted that teacher expectations could influence their level of confidence and willingness to speak.

Finally, teacher gender was identified as a factor influencing student comfort and confidence. Students of both genders, particularly females, reported feeling more comfortable and confident when taught by a female teacher, suggesting that teacher approachability and perceived emotional support may play a role in encouraging oral participation.

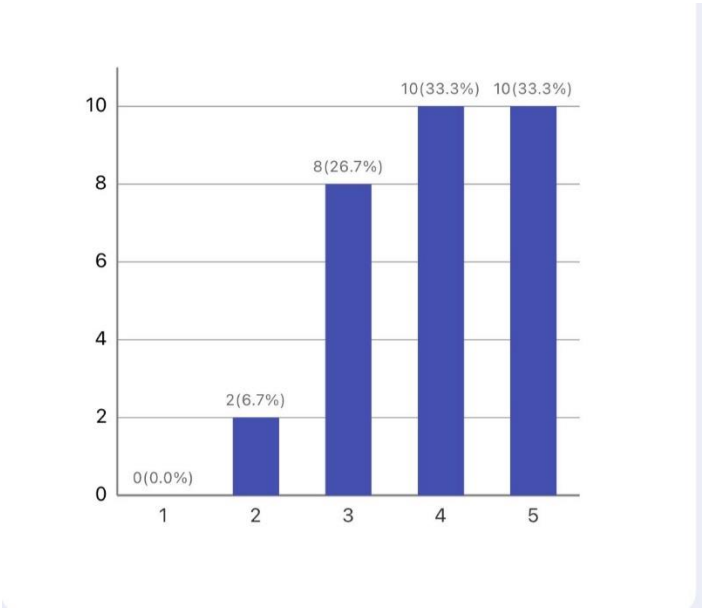


Figure 4.5 (i) Bar chart shows increased comfort levels when the teacher is a female.

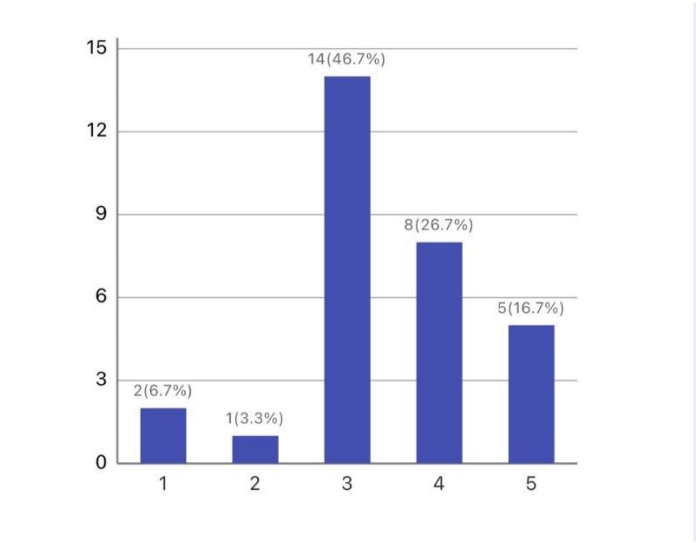


Figure 4.5 (ii) Bar chart shows decreased comfort levels when the teacher is a male.

Summary of Trends

Overall, the trends indicate a clear gender pattern in classroom participation. Female students consistently dominated verbal participation, demonstrating higher confidence and more frequent engagement in speaking activities. Male students, on the other hand, showed lower levels of participation and required confidence-building measures to support their involvement. These trends highlight the significant influence of teacher practices and peer behavior, as supportive, inclusive teaching approaches and positive peer interactions were found to play a crucial role in shaping and balancing gender-based participation in the classroom.

4.7 Analysis and Discussion

The findings confirm that gender significantly influences classroom participation in Bangladeshi tertiary English courses. Females participate more frequently, while males experience greater anxiety, echoing prior studies in similar contexts by Islam & Stapa, 2021; Al Mamun, 2021; Mobarak, 2020.

Classroom observations and interviews highlighted the impact of teacher behavior towards particular genders, peer judgments, and activity types on engagement. It also highlighted the lack of focus by teachers towards the minority male population among all English language classes enrolled. Mixed-gender group work, gender-neutral teacher attitude, and supportive environments were suggested for encouraging equal classroom participation. These findings directly address the three research questions:

RQ1 (Participation differences): Females participate more; males less, mainly due to anxiety and confidence issues.

RQ2 (Factors influencing motivation/anxiety): Male students report fear of mistakes, peer judgment, and low vocabulary as the main barriers; motivation increases with structured support.

RQ3 (Implications for pedagogy): Teachers should be trained to adopt inclusive strategies, encourage quieter students and focus more on the minority male student populations, and monitor participation equitably.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of gender differences in participation in English language classrooms in Bangladesh using survey, observation, and interview data. The summary highlights clear gender-role-based trends in classroom participation patterns and emotional engagement. Verbal activities were predominantly female-dominated, with female students demonstrating higher confidence, motivation and more frequent participation. In contrast, male students exhibited higher levels of anxiety and lower confidence and motivation, which negatively affected their willingness to speak and participate. The findings further emphasize that the classroom environment, peer behavior, and teacher teaching practices and methods play a critical role in shaping students' engagement across genders. These trends are supported by questionnaire

analysis and observational data, with descriptive statistics revealing consistent and meaningful gender differences in participation levels and affective factors. The next chapter will interpret these findings and discuss implications for pedagogy and policy.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study, interprets these results in relation to the research questions, and discusses their implications for pedagogy and educational policy. Furthermore, it acknowledges the study's limitations and proposes directions for future research. The focus is on gender role differences in classroom participation in tertiary-level English language classrooms in Bangladesh.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

Based on the analysis in Chapter 4, several key findings emerge:

Overall, participation patterns revealed that female students demonstrated a higher frequency of classroom participation and greater motivation and willingness to engage than male students. Male students, who constituted a minority in English language classes, were less likely to volunteer for oral activities, ask questions, or contribute to discussions, indicating lower levels of visible engagement.

In terms of the nature of participation, female students were more actively involved in responding to direct teacher questions, participating in collaborative tasks, engaging in peer interactions, and contributing to critical discussions. This pattern reflected a higher level of comfort and confidence in expressing their ideas. In contrast, male students' participation was often limited to brief responses or answers given only when directly prompted by the teacher, suggesting a more passive role in classroom interactions.

Classroom dynamics also played a significant role in shaping participation. The gender composition of the class influenced engagement levels, as male students were even less likely to participate spontaneously in classes where female students formed the majority. Additionally, teacher–student interaction patterns and instructional attitudes sometimes unintentionally reinforced female dominance in classroom dialogue, which contributed to the marginalization of male voices.

Finally, perceptions of participation differed notably by gender. Survey and interview data indicated that male students often perceived classroom participation as risky or intimidating and expressed fear of judgment, particularly in female-dominated classrooms. Female students, on the other hand, generally viewed participation as an expected and integral component of learning, a perspective that aligned with their stronger academic self-efficacy.

5.3 Discussions of Findings and Implications for Pedagogy and Policy Makers

Major Findings	Implications for Pedagogy	Implications for Policy Makers
Female students participate more frequently and confidently than male students.	Teachers should use structured participation techniques (e.g., think-pair-share strategy, small-group discussions) to encourage male participation.	Policies should support teacher training programs on gender-sensitive and inclusive classroom strategies and teaching methods.
Male students, as the minority, tend to participate less and passively.	Design activities that ensure minority voices are heard, e.g., targeted questioning, participation rubrics.	Encourage initiatives to balance gender participation, such as awareness campaigns on active engagement.
Participation quality differs: females respond directly to teacher prompts and classroom discussions; males mostly interact in group or pair discussions and presentations.	Incorporate collaborative and discussion-based tasks that allow all students to contribute meaningfully.	Curriculum reforms can integrate student-centered learning strategies emphasizing equitable engagement.
Class gender composition affects participation: male students participate less in female-majority classes.	Teachers should monitor and manage classroom dynamics to reduce intimidation or dominance effects.	Support research-based guidelines for classroom management addressing gender dynamics.
Male students perceive participation as intimidating or risky and judgmental.	Provide scaffolding, confidence-building exercises, and safe spaces or environments for male students to express ideas without peer or teacher judgment.	Policy can fund professional development workshops on classroom inclusion and confidence-building strategies.
Gendered patterns are statistically significant and consistent across observation and interviews.	Regular assessment of participation can help identify disparities and adjust teaching strategies.	Use evidence-based data to guide national or institutional policies promoting gender equity in classrooms.

Table 5.1 shows major findings and implications for pedagogy and policy makers

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study is subject to several limitations related to its sample and research methodology context. First, the research was conducted in a single selected tertiary private institution in Dhaka, which restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to a broader context of other educational institutions across Dhaka and other cities in Bangladesh. Variations in institutional culture and design, instructional practices and teaching methods, student gender demographics, and language proficiency levels across public and private institutions may result in different participation patterns. Additionally, the male student population in the selected English language classes was comparatively smaller, reflecting the existing gender imbalance in such courses. This uneven gender distribution may have influenced participation dynamics and limited the extent of comparative analysis between gender roles.

There were also methodological constraints to consider. Data were collected primarily through classroom observations, surveys, and semi-structured interviews, which may be subject to observer bias and limitations in self-reporting. The absence of teacher interviews further limited the study, as incorporating teachers' perspectives could have offered a more comprehensive understanding of instructional strategies, classroom management decisions, and their impact on gendered participation. Finally, the cross-sectional design, adopted due to time constraints, captured classroom participation at a single point in time and did not account for potential changes in student behavior, such as confidence and motivation levels, classroom performances, participation behavior, or teacher practices throughout the academic semester or extended time period over a series of semesters, which could be better examined through longitudinal research.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research in the field of gender based-roles of classroom participation could adopt several directions to build on the present study. First, **longitudinal studies** would allow researchers to investigate how male and female participation evolves across multiple semesters or courses, providing insight into trends, changes in pattern and behavior, and the long-term impact of instructional practices on student engagement. Tracking the same nature of study over time could also reveal whether initial anxiety, fear and reluctance among male students diminishes with repeated exposure to oral activities and collaborative tasks. Second, expanding the study to **broader contexts** including students from both public and private institutions, as well as rural and secondary educational settings would help identify regional, institutional, and cultural differences in gendered participation patterns across Bangladesh. This broader scope could inform context-sensitive effective pedagogical strategies that are applicable to a variety of educational environments. Finally, exploring **teacher perspectives** is crucial, as instructors play a significant role in shaping classroom dynamics. Future studies could examine how teachers perceive gender differences, manage participation behavior, and implement strategies to ensure equitable engagement, providing valuable insights of student-reported experiences

A suggested plan for future researchers could span **two to three academic years**. The first six months could focus on designing instruments, testing initial surveys, observation protocols, and interview guides across multiple institutions. The following 12–18 months could involve data collection, including repeated classroom observations for longitudinal analysis and the

implementation of intervention strategies in selected classes. The final 6–12 months could focus on data, triangulation of findings across student and teacher perspectives, and provide results through reports and publications. By adopting this phased approach, researchers can generate both comprehensive insights into gendered participation patterns and evidence-based recommendations for pedagogical improvement, contributing meaningfully to this underexplored but crucial field in English Language Teaching.

5.6 Conclusion

This study highlights significant gender differences in classroom participation within tertiary-level English language courses in Bangladesh. Female students, who constituted the majority in the observed classes, consistently demonstrated higher levels of engagement, actively participating in teacher-led discussions, collaborative tasks, and peer interactions. In contrast, male students exhibited more passive participation, often limited to brief responses or contributions only when directly prompted. These differences appear to be influenced not only by the numerical minority status of male students but also by socio-cultural expectations, affective factors such as anxiety, motivation, confidence levels, and fear of judgment, as well as classroom dynamics that inadvertently favor female dominance in speaking activities and classroom participation. The findings underscore the critical role of pedagogical strategies, classroom management practices, and teaching-methods in promoting equitable participation of all learners. Teachers' approaches, including encouragement, structured turn-taking, collaboration, and positive reinforcement, can help reduce anxiety and foster confidence and motivation among less active students, particularly male learners. Similarly, inclusive teaching practices and peer-supportive classroom environments can provide opportunities for all students to engage meaningfully and without fear of judgment, ensuring that participation is not limited by gender-based expectations or perceived social pressures. From a broader educational policy perspective, the study highlights the need for interventions aimed at addressing gendered disparities in classroom participation. Curriculum designers and institutional policymakers could consider professional development and training programs for teachers that focus on inclusive practices, as well as strategies to balance classroom gender dynamics, such as mixed-gender groupings and confidence-building activities for minority groups.

Despite the study's limitations, such as its focus on a single institution, cross-sectional design, and smaller male student population, it provides valuable insights into gendered classroom dynamics and contributes to understanding the complex interplay between gender, socio-cultural and psychological factors, and participation. More importantly, the research builds a foundation for future studies to explore these issues in broader contexts, including multiple institutions, rural and urban settings, and longitudinal designs, as well as incorporating teacher perspectives and intervention-based approaches. Such research can ultimately inform evidence-based practices that foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

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