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## DECIPHERING 'NOTHING' IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

Dr. Shah Mir Baloch <sup>1</sup>

Amjid Ali <sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing bears testimony to Shakespeare's uncanny ability to make his work amenable to a vast array of interpretations. While the play can be read as a self-evident tale of love, jealousy, playful intrigue, where the superior forces of love eventually triumph and evil is defeated, Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing is also a masterful manipulation of language as well where ordinary words can add multiple layers of meaning skillfully couched in the renditions of dialogue. This paper attempts to analyse the significance of Shakespeare's use of the titular 'nothing' in the title of the play Much Ado About Nothing. This is carried out through a critical textual analysis with a focus upon varied applications of 'noting' of perceiving by the characters in play. The findings suggest that the play challenges received notions of perceptions and the 'noting' of the title is a potent case in point.*

*Keywords: Much Ado About Nothing, Noting verses nothing, perception, Shakespearian wordplay*

### Introduction

Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* revolves around the love between Hero and Claudio and the relationship

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between Beatrice and Benedick forms a parallel to it. Don Pedro, Benedick's friend, Leonato, Beatrice's uncle serves to unify the plot lines between the two threads of the two threads of the story. The wedding of Hero with Claudio takes the center stage while an attempt is made to get Beatrice and Benedick to fall for each other despite their professed rivalry and 'merry war' and in a way admit that they love each other. Critic McEachern credits *Much ado About Nothing* for its ingenuous word play, supremely self-assured character of Beatrice along with a surreal attempt to subdue instincts of social and intellectual feats for inane humane desire to love and be loved in equal measure in return (McEachern, 2015).

While on the other hand the villain of the play, Don Pedro's half-brother Don John sets out to poison the well for all with his treachery. He devises a plot with his wingman Borachio to disrupt the merry occasion of wedding. Don John succeeds in driving a wedge between Claudio and Hero and triumphs in destroying Don Pedro's peace of mind. However, by the end of the play his attempts are rendered useless and the play ends with the marriage of the two lovers and he is arrested for his evil plans.

From the very onset, the act of noting, perceiving and indirect knowledge plays a vital part in furthering action of the play. The plot is governed by the 'noting' of conversation that takes place between Don Pedro and Claudio. Antoni notes it and gets the facts wrong (Act I, Scene 2). However, Don John's attendant and longtime servant, Borachio 'note. The exchange and brings it to Don Pedro's half-brother Don John. We see constable Dogberry's men 'note' Borachio talking to Conrad about how he plotted with Don John and duped Claudio and Don Pedro into believing that he was making love to Hero when in fact the girl was Hero's chamber maid, Margaret. In a similar fashion Ursula and Hero are noted by Beatrice when they try to make her fall in love with Benedick (Act III, Scene 1). Claudio and Don Pedro note the window scene. Claudio asks Benedick

if he has noted Hero. This presentation will critically analyse the myriad instances of ‘noting’ in the play and account for their significance in the play *Much Ado about Nothing*.

### **Analysis**

This foreshadowing of ‘nothing’ or the inability of to ‘note’ is orchestrated in the second act of the play in the masquerade scene where the characters are wearing masks and converse with their partners with their ability to note probably partially compromised. These acts of perceptions of ‘nothing’ on the part of characters governs much of the ensuing action of the play. This truly makes it a story about ‘noting’ or observing and perceiving reality. Therefore, the consequences as to how the characters are affected is governed purely by the way they ‘note’ and perceive the phenomena around them.

An insightful instance of ‘nothing’, with multiple connotations is illustrated in the following dialogue between Don Pedro and Balthasar, the singer.

Pedro: Do it in notes.

Balthasar: Note this before my notes;

There’s not a note of mine that’s worth the noting.

Don Pedro: Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks;  
Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing.

It may be kept in mind that the different occasions for ‘noting’ tend to brim with revelations. They instigate the characters to courses of action that they would not have opted for if it was for the noting in the first place. Benedick and Beatrice fall in love despite their constant exchange of derogatory warps and witty putdowns as a direct corollary of their respective ‘noting’ that they harbored none but a love for each other through the trick of Don Pedro, Claudio, and Hero.

It again occurs in the dialogue between Don Pedro and the musician Balthasar. This exchange is important for uncovering the multiple connotations of this word and in essence epitomizes the play and, therefore, holds the key to

grasping the themes of the play. In Don Pedro's final line, the word nothing would have actually been pronounced as "noting," serving to produce one last play on words before Balthasar sings. Thus, the meaning of the word noting is key here to understanding the subtle underpinnings of Shakespearean language. The word 'note; renders more usage in the scene than just its immediate musical context; the verb to note may can also mean to record, observe, or mark something (Bloom, 2010).

The act of perceiving informs most of the action in *Much Ado about Nothing*. What the characters both hear and see has to do with their faculties of judgement and discernment. If we engage with the dialogues more critically, we realize that the major characters are affected by the way they directly approach a new event and their reaction to it. Although this act of 'noting' is often adulterated with deception. This duplicity is illustrated by Don John's deception of Claudio and Don Pedro into believing that Hero is unfaithful to him and similarly Beatrice and Benedick are tricked into falling in love with each other. The plot moves forward as the series of erroneous 'notings' puts them in new circumstances.

Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that these instances of observations in characters usually happen with the sense of sight and the sense of hearing. Hearing is indirect in *Much Ado about Nothing* and gets transformed into overhearing. The scene is built up on an idea of overhearing and being secretly overheard. Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio go to the lengths setting up a charade for Benedick in order to convince him of Beatrice's love for him.

The three lines in the end of the dialogue are most important when Don Pedro tells Balthasar to "Do it in notes," he is making a pun on the word notes itself besides commenting on the music. suggesting that if Balthasar wishes to continue debating with Don Pedro over the quality of his voice, he should do it "in notes," in writing or in hints. Subsequently, Balthasar's

reply takes up the pun and extends it, asking that the listeners “Note this before my notes,” meaning regard this word of advice before he sings; “There’s not a note of mine that’s worth the noting,” he says, indicating that his music is not worthy of the Prince’s praise or attention (Bloom, 2010, p. 22). This line also be construed as a conceit on the word notes and as an extended metaphor as his claim there is not a ‘note of mine that’s worth the noting,’ could convey the opposite meaning that whatever he says for sings deserves all the praise and attention. In the wider context of the play Balthasar words of advice become relevant where duplicity, double meaning and deception rules the roast.

Don Pedro’s half-brother Don John feigns reconciliation although he in secret begrudges his brother and looks for every opportunity to defeat him. In a similar vein, almost every character in the play deceives or is deceived i.e. Don Pedro, Claudio, Leonato, Hero, Margaret, and Ursula are all unite in the scheme to unite Beatrice and Benedick. Don Pedro and Claudio devise a way where the former can win over Hero for him in disguise at the masquerade. Claudio is deceived twice at the masquerade Don John, Borachio, and Conrad into believing that the prince is wooing Hero for himself and he is yet again deceived along with Don Pedro at the window scene the night before his wedding. This deception continues as Don Pedro and Claudio wait for the actual wedding ceremony to publicly ridicule Hero. Hero’s maid of honor becomes an inadvertent accessory to Borachio when she is dressed up as hero to ruin the intended wedding.

Following the scandal at the wedding and Hero’s fainting, the Friar, Leonato, Beatrice, Benedick, Antonio devise a scheme to fake Hero’s death and trick Claudio and Don Pedro into believing that Claudio is being married to Leonato’s niece.

However, there are characters who do not participate in this mass deception. The police constable Dogberry, his constant partner Verges and the guards of the watch avoid

duplicity and play a role in unravelling the Don John's plot and bring truth to light through their important role in "noting" and observing in the play as well which turns out great as it opens the lid on deception. Thus, when Balthasar says that 'nothing' he speaks is worth noting is also true for most of the play as what the characters speak, hear, and do is founded on deception and falsehoods. This theme is succinctly captured when says, "Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing," saying it is in fact "much ado about" about "nothing."

The construct of 'noting' in *Much Ado About Nothing* and its significance in the play formed the center stage in critical interpretation in nineteenth century. This critical scrutiny was led by Elizabeth Inchbald who underscored the significance of 'nothing' in the title of the play and called it the actions of "many unwarrantable listeners," and eavesdroppers—and how the passive activity of listening and overhearing is essential to the text (Bloom, 2010, p. 65).

Inchbald (1811) identifies the construct of "nothingness" that dominates the text. Throughout the play, "much ado," or much excitement and upheaval is created over about something that essentially "nothing" but a series of misunderstandings, misconceptions, and a set of falsehoods. The same line of reasoning identifies the same recurring theme in *Much Ado about Nothing* through close critical look at "nothing" as it appears in the text and how it affects the pace of action amongst all the characters (66).

Critic Marjorie Garber (2005) believed there is a deeper meaning to the multiple connotations of apparent 'noting' in the play. William Shakespeare, through his distinctive flair of pushing linguistic tapestry to its farthest reaches, has adeptly managed to portray the malleability of the written word. She has the following to say with regards to the pliability of meaning in the 'nothing':

[...] "Nothing" could mean someone of little worth, like the foolish Watch headed by Dogberry. "Nothing," paradoxically,

also could mean “everything” or “all,”. Perhaps most surprising to a modern audience— though not to an audience that knows its Hamlet and King Lear—is the fact that “nothing” was a slang term for the female sexual organs. Hamlet teases Ophelia about the “nothing” that lies “between maids' legs” (3.2.106–108). (Garber, 2005, p. 343).

Thus, ‘noting’ could serve as an instance of shared knowledge of language use amongst the characters to appeal to disparate audience within the Elizabethan period as well as circumvent run of the mill viewpoints that pigeonhole the wider aspects of meaning in a singular ideological bracket. Besides, these different strands of meaning, ‘nothing’ Shakespeare’s time was also used to signify ‘taking note of’ as to ‘note’ was to watch or inspect and closely to observe. These instances of observing and ‘taking note’ are crucial to the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Don John involves Don Prado and Claudio into noting something that is explicitly been orchestrated for their eyes only and supposed to prove Hero’s infidelity to Claudio in general and her promiscuity in general. Don John serves Claudio a nasty coup de grace when he claims Hero is “Leonato’s Hero, your Hero, every man’s Hero” (3.4.74). As a result, Hero suffers public humiliation on the day of her wedding.

It, then, does not come as a surprise that Frier Francis comes up with an ingenious ruse to hide hero where nobody would be able to attack or injure her (4.1.240–242). Coming back to theme of ‘noting’, it is only through Frier Francis’s suggestion of hiding Hero from public eye that escapes being ‘noted’. When aspersions are cast on the character of Hero which transform the marry occasion of marriage into a public debacle, the escape from public eye through the Frier’s suggestions become her only means of proving the slanders wrong. Noting becomes an oft repeated theme of the play that affects almost all aspects of the tale. The characters are continuously engaged in noticing and decipher imports of events within the course of the play. In the very beginning we

hear Claudio asking Benedick if he has ‘noted’ Hero, Leonato’s beautiful young daughter. Various connotations of ‘noting’ emerge as Benedick responds that he ‘noted her not’ but only ‘looked on her’. Moreover, Don Pedro if Benedick, despite his avowals against marriage falls in love with Leonato’s daughter, it would be like proving ‘a notable argument’ (1.1.209).

Leonato, when he gets to confront Borachio following his confession of guilt with regards to the part he had played in ruining Claudio’s marriage with Hero, demands to see Borachio in the eye so that he can be more careful when he ‘notes’ somebody like him (5.1.243–245). Father Friar claims he can for all intents and purposes ‘note’ Hero’s virtue right in her face. When the ‘noting’ is subject to such a degree volatility, Don Pedro’s contrition over Hero’s death appears out of place when he proclaimed that Hero had been charged with ‘nothing’ except for all that was true. Nevertheless, we are introduced to this kind of word play and duplicity of meaning from very early on in the play when Don Pedro along with friend Claudio set on the plan to make Benedick fall in love Beatrice and enlist the support of Leonato and Hero in doing so.

However, it is apparent that Don Pedro and Claudio do not ‘note’ the singing as it means ‘nothing’ to them except for their intended ploy. Action along with language holds the center stage in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Many scenes are orchestrated for the very purpose of being overheard and observed ‘unnoticed.’ Both the instances where Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato go to a great length into making Benedick believe that Beatrice is love with him and similarly Margaret and Hero deliberately set out to let Beatrice believe that Benedick is in love with him are examples of such scenes. Again, the entire window scene which serves to disenchant Claudio from Hero artificially orchestrated for the very purpose of deception. At times, given the very nature of ‘nothing’ peculiar to this play, turn out to be erroneous i.e. Antonio’s report to Leonato with regards to Don Pedro’s intention of

marrying Hero for himself when he meant to woo her for Claudio. Again, this is an instance where both Antonia and Claudio are mistaken as to the true purpose of Don Pedro.

Don John plays a latent hand in the deception with his attendants and Borachio and Conrad in setting of the infidelity scene of Hero, played in disguise by Borachio and Hero's chamber maid Margaret. It is yet again Borachio who breaks the news of Don Pedro's plan of wooing Hero for Claudio which accords Don John to revenge himself against his brother Don Pedro.

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## **Learners' Perceived proficiency and Motivation to Learn English in Turbat, Balochistan**

**Ijaz Ahmed <sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*The current study explored the motivation of the undergraduate learners to learn English in Turbat, Balochistan. It investigated the impact of proficiency on the motivation of the learners. The data for the current study was collected from undergraduate students of Turbat, Balochistan in University of Turbat and two colleges of the city. The data collection was done thorough a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and it was followed by a proficiency test. The data was analyzed through simple regression analysis using SPSS. The results revealed that proficiency was a great predictor of learners' motivation to learn English in Turbat, Balochistan. The results also showed that both of the genders had a good proficiency in English as they their scores in last exam in English were good and they performed well in proficiency test as well. However, the female participants' scores were higher than the males to some extents in both of the exams.*

*Key words: Learner, perceived proficiency, motivation, English*

### **1. Introduction**

This research explored the impact of perceived proficiency of learners from Turbat, Balochistan to learn English as second language using L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) by Dörnyei (2005, 2009). It was the theoretical frame work for the

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study. The L2MSS, according to Lamb (2012) is “a theoretical framework for describing people’s motivation to learn modern languages” (p. 998). English, being used for speaking and taught across the country, is the official language of the country according to its constitution and, therefore, is used for official works in government departments (Coleman, 2010).

English is written and spoken around the world. Therefore, it is considered a Lingua Franca. It is rather believed that English is no more associated with only one nation. Associating it with English speaking nations only is not accepted any more (Blommaert, 2010).

The current research examined about the motivational factors of learners of Turbat, Balochistan for learning English. It focused on the perceived proficiency of the students for learning English. Using the L2MSS to explore the motivated behavior of the learners to learn English helped to understand how perceived proficiency had an impact on learners’ motivation.

English language is spoken and taught widely in Pakistan. People across the country have a taste for learning English. About their English learning motivation, several studies have been carried out in Pakistan, but majority of these are held in context of Punjab. The studies (Shahbaz, & Yongbing, 2015; Pathan, Shahryar & Mari, 2010; Islam, 2013), for instance examined the students’ motivations to learn English in Pakistani context. The importance of learners’ motivated behavior to learn English has greatly increased in Pakistan. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of size as it has got a vast area. Almost, no studies have been conducted on EFL learners’ motivation and perceived proficiency to learn English in context of Balochistan other than Rasool’s (2018) study on undergraduates’ motivation for learning English. The study emphasized on students’ motivation to learn ESL. It was necessary to know what motivates them to learn ESL. Data, for this study, was collected from Turbat. However, the researcher

kept in mind the ethical issues while approaching the participants. To access females, cultural issues were kept in mind. Therefore, the researcher took their informed consent before collecting data. The researcher also explained to them about the importance of their participation, how they would be involved, what would be the use of their data and the security of their record. At the same time the goals of the research were also shared with them. The researcher also assured them of the privacy of their data.

### **1.1 Background**

The concept of L2 motivation started in 1950s proposed by Gardner and Lambart (1959) which had a great influence on the field of SLA. They introduced integrativeness, a concept in which it was argued about the importance of getting integrated. According to the concept the integrative motivational learners learn L2 in order to get to know about the culture and its people. This concept had a long lasting impact on L2 motivation for decades.

Nonetheless, their concept lost its importance when its relevance was questioned by Dörnyei (2005, 2009). He negated the idea that the L2 learners had any direct contact with the community of the target language (Dörnyei, 2005). He replaced it with his L2MSS.

Keeping the L2MSS in mind, this study investigated the impact of perceived proficiency of undergraduate learners' motivations for learning L2. According to Falout and Maruyama (2004) the level of language learners' proficiency is an important factor to predict motivation. This study investigated if proficiency in L2 was the integral component of the learners' ideal or ought to self, to what extent it impacted the motivation of the learners.

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

Motivation plays a great role in learning a second language. The purpose of the present study was to determine learners'

motivation to learn English using the three dimensions of L2MSS. This study examined the effects of perceived proficiency on students' L2 motivation in context of Turbat, Balochistan.

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

1. To investigate the impact of perceived proficiency on learners' motivation for learning English in Turbat, Balochistan.

### **1.4 Research question**

1. To what extent does perceived proficiency impact learners' motivation for learning English in Turbat, Balochistan?

## **2. Literature Review**

In late 1950s the concept of integrativeness of L2 motivation was given by Gardner and Lambart (1959) in which they argued that L2 learners want themselves to be integrated to the society of target language. According to the concept the English as Second language is read to be integrated with the English speaking population. The concept of intergrativeness had a great influence for long time. However, after Dörnyei's (2005) rejection of it, the concept lost its influence to a great extent. According to Dörnyei (1998) there was no direct contact of the learners to the L2 community. Because of its global status, the concept of English being the lingua franca has grown stronger, and it is not the language of only one society but it has become a global language (Blommaert, 2010). The socio-psychological dimension of L2 motivation was substituted into L2MSS by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) which comprises of the constructs, the Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. This shift from one concept to another brought a huge change in SLA.

Several researches have been conducted on L2 motivation in context of different countries. Lamb (2012) did a study on

young language learners' motivation in Indonesia. One goal of the study was to test Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS. Another goal of the research was to compare the learners' motivation from rural and urban areas. In his quantitative study he collected data from 527 participants. The result showed that Learning Experience was one of the strongest predictors for learners' motivation. Another finding of the research was that the students had a great fascination in Ideal L2 Self and International Posture.

Similarly, Taguchi, Magid and Papi's (2009) research comparatively studied L2MSS in Iran, China and Japan context where data was collected from 5000 participants from mentioned countries. They used three versions of questionnaire one designed for each country. The findings suggested that Ideal L2 Self was a better motivational factor than the idea of integrativeness. And like Lamb's (2012) research, the findings indicated that learning experience was the most important element to contribute for the learning efforts of the ESL learners.

Magid (2014) conducted an experimental study applying L2MSS in context of Singapore in which he described a program he developed for the motivation of grade five elementary school learners of English. He categorized the participants in two groups, experimental group and control group. The findings suggested that around 90% participants from experimental group became more motivated and confident to learn English. However, only 50% from control group were motivated and the confidence of 75% enhanced for learning English.

Lamb (2012), like Magid (2014), conducted a study on the motivation of school students of Indonesia. In the study he examined students of 13 and 14 years of age from three different areas, metropolitan city, a provisional state and a rural district. He used Dörnyei's (2009) theory of L2MSS. The findings of the study suggested that there was a positive view about English learning experience which had a very strong

impact on the motivated learning behavior while about the metropolitan group Ideal L2 Self was the significant factor only.

Papi (2010) conducted a project on students' motivations in Iran to learn English as second language. This study explored "The temporal evolution of the motivational characteristics of Iranian learners of English as a foreign language" (p. 287). In the study Papi (2010) collected data from 1041 English learners. The result of his study suggested that Ideal L2 Self, Learning Experience and promotion focus variables like attitudes towards community of target language and instrumentality improved with the passage of time till university level. While at the same time family influence along with Ought-to L2 self had a great decline with the passage of time. The result is identical to the result of the study of Spanish context (Calvo, 2015) in which ought-to L2 self was not a great influencer.

Projects about motivation and perceived proficiency have also been carried out in different context. The research of Vandergrift (2005) examined L2 listening proficiency and its relation with motivation, in context of France. The finding of the study revealed that there was not a very positive relationship between them. Motivation was not a dependable influencer of proficiency in L2 listening. Kim & Kim (2017) carried out a research which examined the relation between proficiency and motivated behavior was examined in context of Korea. It found a high correlation between motivated behavior and proficiency. The studies reviewed above investigated and examined the role of proficiency and motivation in L2 learning. Majority of them applied Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS as the theoretical framework. However, the aim of the current study was to examine the motivations of female undergraduates to learn English and see if perceived proficiency is one of the most prevailing predictors for motivation. The study will also explore the motivational tools that influence the female undergraduates' motivation to learn English.

### **3. Research Methodology**

In this chapter I will describe the research method of the current study, the research design, data collection, sampling and research analysis tools. In the first section research design is explained, in the second section the data collection and variables of the study will be discussed and in the final two sections sampling and research analysis tools will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Mixed methods research was used in the study because its aim was to have a deep examination of the L2 motivation. The mixed methods research helped to understand a problem in a better manner as Creswell (2012) argued that “the core argument for a mixed methods design is that the combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data by itself” (p. 22). The mixed method is a process of collecting quantitative and qualitative data and analyzing them in either a single study or more (Creswell, 2012). In the study the researcher first collected quantitative data which was followed with by collecting some qualitative data as well in order to compensate the weaknesses of collected quantitative data. I used explanatory sequential design to collect the data. This design was suitable for this study because both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used. The results of the quantitative data gave a general perception to the problem and more analyses and explanation was required through the qualitative data to extend the general picture (Creswell, 2012). Using this design, the researcher collected data by providing questionnaires to the undergraduate students of the three institutions and after that a few students were interviewed as well. The participants were from three different institutions of Turbat: University of Turbat, Govt. Girls Degree College Turbat and Govt. Atta Shad degree College Turbat.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

Data was collected from undergraduate students of Turbat, Balochistan from three higher educational institutions, University of Turbat, Govt. Girls Degree College Turbat and Govt. Atta Shad (Boys) Degree College Turbat. Three of the institutions had undergraduate programs where students were enrolled in a great number, so it was relevant to collect data from these three different institutions. I used primary data in the study. The primary sources were questionnaires and that was followed by interviews. This was the technique of questionnaire surveys and follow-up interview where once the quantitative data was collected it was followed by the qualitative data collection which could “remedy this weakness” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 171) of quantitative data.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The researcher followed the random sample method in this study. Random sample is when each member of the target population would be chosen by chance or random basis to be included. The random sample “involves selecting members of the population to be included in the sample on a completely random basis” (Dörnyei, 2007, p 97). Following this method, the researcher first provided questionnaires to the undergraduate students of different departments of University of Turbat, Govt. Girls Degree College Turbat and Govt Atta Shad Degree College Turbat. After the completion of this process of data collection, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews of those students who were willing to participate in semi-structured interview phase. In the beginning the researcher informed the participants about the nature and the objectives of the study. When the questionnaire data collection process was completed I asked whether or not the participants were willing to be interviewed. So, the researcher asked the interested participants to provide their contact details at the end of the questionnaire so that the researcher could contact them for taking their interviews for having a deeper understanding of their views regarding the topic being studied.

### **3.4 Instruments**

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire**

The researcher in the first phase of data collection the distributed questionnaire to the participants. In order to understand the motivation of L2 learners, a questionnaire, which was based on L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) and perceived proficiency was employed. In this study the researcher used five-point Likert scale. After developing the questionnaire, it was piloted in order to check its reliability and the validity. The researcher requested 40 undergraduate students from the three institutes to check the suitability of the items. Once the pilot study was done, the researcher administered the questionnaire to two hundred students of the three institutes for the main study where they were asked about the English scores of their last exam. Among the two hundred participants, 105 were undergraduate students and 95 females participated in the study.

#### **3.4.2 Proficiency test**

Collecting data via questionnaire was followed by the second phase of data collection. In the second phase, the researcher held English Language Proficiency Test of almost 50 participants from the three different institutions. The researcher surveyed 10 reading passages selected from their English course of different classes which were used in their previous English classes for last 4 years. In the test the students' time duration was measured and examined. It was checked how much time an individual took to complete the passage and it was followed by different questions whose answers were present in the passage. The average time each student took to complete the test was between 35 to 60 minutes.

#### **3.5 Data Analysis tools**

In order to analyze the data simple linear regression analysis was used. The score the students mentioned as they had obtained from their last exam was the main element to examine and analyze. While the proficiency test result was analyzed

according to the answers the students gave while they were asked questioned from the passages and according to their comprehension as they explained the passage after they ended reading the passage.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

The result of the current study showed that proficiency had a great impact on the motivation of the students. The proficiency accounted for 35% of the variance in the motivation of the students as shown in table 1. However, it was also found that it was not necessary to have a very high proficiency in order to have motivation for learning English. It is because those learners who had less scores in their last exam performed well in the proficiency test comparing it with those learners whose scores were high in their last exams.

**Table 1. Simple regression analysis of proficiency predicting learners' motivation.**

Variable	R2	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Proficiency	.35	.32	5.487**	1.102

The results of the current study showed that although the students had high scores in their last exam, it was not necessary that they performed well in their proficiency test as well. It was found that almost 86 students scored more than 85 marks in their last exams in functional English paper while 79 students had obtained 70 to 84 marks in the same paper in their last exams. While the remaining participants scored below 70 marks. But the result of the second phase of the data collection showed that there was a huge contrast between the results of the participants' last exam's score and their proficiency test score. Those students who scored more than 85 in their English paper in their last exam, could not perform better than those who scored less than 70 in English in their last exam.

It was found that there was an average result of almost all students in proficiency test. Among 50 students, 28 students

got more than ten marks in proficiency test as the total marks were 20 in this test. And in these 28 students, the highest marks scorers were also included and those who obtained comparatively less marks in their last exam in English were also included. It shows that the proficiency of the students is not hundred percent measured by their last exam's score, rather they can come back in future and do well in English as they are motivated for learning English.

The result of the current study are contrary to the results of Vandergrift's (2005) study where it was found that there was a negative relation between the proficiency and motivation of the students. However, the studies of Kim (2009) and Tsuchiya (2006) had similar findings with that of the current study. They found good relations between the proficiency and motivation. There were some external some internal elements of motivation for the participants of these studies.

Moreover, what was interesting to find in the current study was that the proficiency level of the female students was higher than that of male participants. The findings of the current study suggest that among 86 high scores of English paper in last exam, 57 scores belonged to female participants and they had the highest scores than the male participants. While among 28 students who scored more than 10 in proficiency test 16 were female participants. It showed that female students were more proficient than the male students. Their scores in both of the phases of the data collection were higher than the scores of the male participants. It showed that their motivation level was also higher than the motivation level of the male students. Table 2 presents the result.

**Table 2. Gender wise scores of the participants**

<b>Male participants (105)</b>		<b>Female participants (95)</b>	
Last Exam	Proficiency	Last Exam	Proficiency
English	test score	English	test score
Score		Score	

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57% scored more than 85	16% scored more than 10	29% scored more than 85	12% scored more than 10
Top scores belonged to 5 females	Top scores belonged to 2 females	Top 5, Nil	Top 3, only 1 male

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So it shows that proficiency had a good relation with the motivation of the learners. It had a good impact on the motivation of learners. The findings of the current study reveal that proficiency can play a role to predict the motivation of the learners. However, it was also found that females scored better in their last English paper and in proficiency test as well.

## 5 Conclusion

The current study investigated the impact of proficiency on the motivation of the undergraduate students. The results showed that motivation did have an impact on the motivation of the students. It was found that the students were proficient and were motivated to learn English ahead. They not only scored good in their last exams but also in proficiency tests. The study found that female participants were more proficient than the male participants and they had obtained more scores in their last exams in English paper.

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