Gender Differences in Using Language in the EFL Classes: From Teachers’ Views

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Abstract

The use of foreign language in the EFL classrooms can be shaped by many factors, among which gender has a leading role. Gender, which is a prominent element of language learning, has become a subject of research for years. Previous studies have shown that male and female students learn, study, and use language differently. The present study attempts to understand the role of gender in using language differently inside the classroom. Further, this research examines the factors that determine gender differences inside the EFL classrooms. Several hypotheses were predicted about gender differences in using language. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed to collect data. The data were collected from 14 teachers in English department at Koya University/Kurdistan Region-Iraq.

The results of the study confirmed almost all the hypotheses. As it was hypothesized, there were gender differences in using language. The results indicated that there are some factors that cause gender differences. The most significant factors related to the students' psychological conditions, the students' cultural and social backgrounds, the students' connection to the native speakers, the students' physical characteristics, and materials that are taught by the teachers. Besides, this paper recommends several pedagogical implications which are beneficial for the process of language teaching. This study affirms that the pedagogical implications deserve teachers' considerations.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Differences, Gender and Sex, Language Use, Language and Gender, Gender and Social Factors, Gender and Cultural Factors.

1. Introduction
Since earliest times humankind has used language to communicate. The history improves that the use of spoken language precedes the use of written language. In other words, people have learned to speak first, then started writing. Furthermore, people speak different languages in different areas of the world. Every nation has its own national language. Within the same language there may be different dialects, accents and vernaculars. Nowadays, people, apart from their native language, tend to learn other languages for many different reasons.

English language is one of the most common languages among people over the world. That is to say, English language, except by its native speakers, is spoken by many others. English became dominant because of many reasons such as a) it is the language of the people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and many countries over the world were British colony in the past; b) it is the language of people of the United States of America (USA), and USA has become one of the most powerful countries over the world due to their political, economical, and Hollywood power; and c) today, English has become the language of business, science, medicine and technology. Thus, English has become an international language. Many people think of English as an essential language that everyone must know; perhaps this is one of the strongest reasons why it is studied in most countries’ schools, institutes, colleges and universities.

Because there are various aspects of language, users of each language are expected to use that language differently. Gender is one of the factors that seem to have a profound effect on using language differently. When the word gender is seen, people think of the fact of being male or female. Sometimes, it is heard and seen that male and female use different language to express themselves. In other words, the language they use for the same thing or the same situation differs in many aspects.

Many researchers tried to investigate the differences in male and female style of using language. They have contributed various findings to the literature. However, the differences inside the EFL classrooms are not yet crystal clear. Thus, the present study chiefly focuses on that issue in order to find out to what extent male and female students do use the same language differently. In addition, this research aims to discover whether factors; like classroom environment, biological function, cultural background or social norms, play any role in those differences.

The current study also posits three hypotheses:

1. Male and female students use language differently; female students are hypothesized to use a more polite, and formal language in both spoken and written discourse.

2. Classroom environment and physical characteristics play a role in causing gender difference in the students’ language use.
3. The culture and social environment play a big part in the gender differences in using language.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Gender and Sex

Both the words “Gender” and “Sex” are unintentionally considered as synonymous by some people. Even some dictionaries define them as synonymous. Nonetheless, this may not be the case in the field of sociolinguistics. Researchers believe that gender and sex are different despite their close relationship. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 10) inform that “sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex.” Further, Merriam – Webster dictionary explains gender this way “gender is the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associates with one sex”. Moreover, Leap (1995: 402) states that “genders are cultural constructions, and not determined entirely or primarily by bodily form or biological function” (cited in Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003: 704).

It may help to start with an explanation of what is meant by the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. ‘Sex’ refers to biological category, which is usually fixed before birth. ‘Gender’ refers to social category, which is associated with certain behavior. Bicycle design neatly illustrates the difference between the two: bike saddles designed for women are usually wider than saddles designed for men, because women have a wider pelvic girdle (a sex difference). Bikes without a crossbar, so riders can wear skirts, are designed in response to a gender difference, since there is no biological reason why, in some cultures, women wear skirts and men don’t.

Thomas et al (2004: 76)

Thus, it seems reasonable to infer that sex covers biological structure that distinguishes male and female, whereas gender covers social and cultural behaviors.

2.2 Gender Differences and Language

Reviewing the literature shows that there are many studies concentrating on gender differences. Besides, various studies attempted to portray the link between gender and language. Aslan (2009:101) states that there is a relationship between gender and achievement in second language learning. His findings show that females outperform males in second language learning. Likewise, Lin (2003:442) suggests that females are faster in learning second language than males.
In addition, in terms of gender differences, scholars have provided much essential information. Chambers (1995:53) believes that women have greater verbal abilities due to their sex-based or biological function rather than culturally derived or gender-based constructions (cited in Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003: 103,104). Moreover, Xia (2013: 1485) mentions several differences between men and women in general such as a) physically, women have more fat and less muscles, b) males are usually stronger than females, though c) females mature more rapidly than males, and d) women live longer than men. She says women have a longer life span because of the different jobs they have to do in society. Men usually have to shoulder more pressure than women in life. Llach and Gallego (2012:67) support Xia when she says girls mature earlier than boys. Further, (Clements et al 2006; Kansaku & Kitazawa, 2001; Mack et al, 1996) proclaim that after a long time of “psychometric testing, observation and imaging techniques”, it has been revealed that, “in general, female brains process language activities more easily, earlier and faster than males, while males more readily excel at spatial - mechanical and gross motor skill tasks” (cited in Magon, 2009: 11)

Mei-Rong and Hsieh (2007: 92, 93) conducted a study to compare gender-related differences in the use of language for emotion terms. They came to a conclusion that both men and women used different languages to express their feelings and emotions. They said that the men participants mostly used nouns while most of the words mentioned by the women participants were adjectives and verbs. Furthermore, Gascoigne (2002: 83) suggests that “males tend to use linguistic devices such as interruptions, directives, and sentence-initial conjunctions. Females, in contrast, tend to rely more heavily upon questions, justifiers, intensive adverbs, personal pronouns and word-initial adverbs” (cited in Shakouri and Saligheh, 2012: 4).

In the last few decades, many studies have been conducted to identify the differences between men’s and women’s speech style (Ogunsiji et al, 2012:203). Sometimes, the differences between the language that males use and the language used by females can be observed very easily. Often, the intonation, tone, voice and some expressions that are used by females are quite different from the ones used by males. It would be inappropriate if a male person speak and behave the same way as females and vice versa. Amir et al (2012:106) proclaim that both genders understand each others’ language but they avoid using it; especially men, because they may be the laughing stock of others. People usually humiliate any effeminate person who uses a womanish voice or behavior.

2.3 Gender and Social Influence
There is a connection between language and society. Xia (2013:1489) states that language and society have a great relationship together; any change in the society results in change in the language. Moreover, Connell (2002:9) identifies gender as a social structure. In the past, there was a big difference between men and women in the society; even now in some societies, men and women are not treated equally. In some societies which men are dominant all the time, the role and the power of women are under-appreciated and under-rated. In the government, in the parliament, and in the administrative positions, the majorities are men; even inside the family, it is the patriarch who decides. Further, when a girl/woman gets married to a boy/man she will be addressed by her husband’s surname/family name. Unlike most of the societies over the world, Kurdish society in the Iraqi Kurdistan do not use surnames; so women are called by their names instead of husband’s family name. Moreover, in some societies, women are prohibited to communicate in public, interact with strangers, and participate in activities with men. Thus, in those societies people usually prefer baby boys more. These social discriminations certainly affect the performance of females in language use.

Indeed, the circumstances are different in some other societies in which women’s and men’s right are better. As previously mentioned, in general, females often outperform males; however, “this is not always the case” (Eliss, 1994:204). Eliss exemplifies with Asian men and women in Britain. He states that men can have a better chance to contact with English speakers due to their jobs; thus they attain a higher level of proficiency in ESL. Nonetheless, women do not have such an opportunity since they are often enclosed in the home. Similarly, Xia (2013:1488) in her probe into previous studies identifies levels of education as a great social influence on gender differences in speech style. She informs that “the greater the differences between educational opportunities for boys and girls, the greater the differences between male and female speech”. Additionally, Samar & Alibakhshi (2007:59, 60) carried out a study on language and gender interaction to provide a report on face-to-face communication in Persian language. They found out that education plays an influential role in gender difference.

When the society treats males and females differently, their role in the society, their speech style, and their behavior will be different too. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:17) State that when they are infant, males and females are interpreted and interacted with differently. People behave towards babies gently to be grown as female, and playfully to be grown as male. Thomas et al (2004:91) suggest that the way we think of gender creates differences in language use. If two newborn babies (one male and one female) are dressed identically, it is not easy to decide which one is boy and which one is girl. In many cultures, boys are dressed in blue while girls are dressed in pink. It would be disturbing for many people if you dress a baby boy in pink.

Sometimes, it is the society not the individuals that decides what is appropriate for each gender. Crespi (2003:2) states that people usually learn what is proper and improper for both genders through socialization. In some societies, females are not welcomed to use some
expressions and participate in some activities whereas for boys it is not a big deal. Samar & Alibakhshi (2007:62) assert that both genders are born into the same world but the society presses them to live in different worlds. Moreover, Idema & Phalet (2007:77) proclaim that it is socialization that aims at teaching boys and girls to accept their gender roles. Thus, it can be concluded that society has a relevant influence on gender differences.

2.3 Gender and Cultural Influence

If you search for definitions of culture, you will come up with lots of definitions by scholars. The meaning of culture may differ from a person to person, from a nation to nation, from a country to country, from East to West, from a generation to another, from a society to another, and from a gender to another. Mesthrie (2001:37) claims that though there have been many attempts to define culture sufficiently, the anthropologists do not agree on its nature. The term was first used in this way by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871. Tylor said that culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Choudhury (2014:2)

“Culture has many different dimensions. It includes ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a group of people in a given period of time; it is also the beliefs, values, and material objects that create our way of life” (Kuo & Lai, 2006: 2). Furthermore, Yilmaz (2006:19) maintains that “Culture includes every anthropological aspect related to ‘the way of living’ of a particular group of people whose ethnic roots descend back to the same ancestors.” In addition, it may be so reasonable if culture is defined as a part of language and vice versa. Chahak & Basirizadeh (2012:522) confirms that Language and culture are intertwined.

Ogunsiji et al (2012: 205) imply that culture and society are two concepts that cannot be separated. That is to say, culture is inextricably interrelated to the society. Thus, as it intricately connected to socialization, culture correspondingly has a strong relationship with gender differences in using language. Cultural background sometimes affects the way men and women think, behave and speak. Bernat & Lloyd (2012: 88) conducted a study to explore the effects of gender on EFL learners’ beliefs about language learning. They concluded that one of the factors that cause different responses by different genders is cultural impacts. Xia (2013: 1489) cites the Yana language of California as an example of cultural influence on gender differences. She informs that the aforementioned language “contains special forms for use in speech either by men or to men”. The present research will certainly take cultural and social influence on gender differences in language use into consideration.

3. Method
This research is a qualitative study that probes to understand the gender differences in using English language. For that reason, teachers of an English department have chosen as samples of the study. They are surveyed to test the hypotheses. Their responses will be analyzed and compared to the hypotheses in order to understand whether their responses are paralleled to the hypothesis or not.

3.1 Settings and Participants

This study is conducted in the English department/ School of languages/ Faculty of humanities and social sciences at Koya University. The reason behind choosing an English department is because the only language that is allowed in the classrooms for most of the subjects (except some subjects as Kurdology, French and Computer that other languages may be used as well) is English language. Moreover, the students of that department are males and females. Thus, the gender differences may appear very obviously.

The participants of this study are the teachers of the aforementioned department. It is thought that they have a better understanding of their students’ language use, and they are expected to be knowledgeable about any gender differences.

Questionnaires were administered to all the teachers in the department. Fourteen teachers handed the questionnaires back to the researcher. The following table will better explain the basic information on the participants:

Table 1 – Some basic information on the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index
Table (1) illustrates the answers of the first part of the questionnaire which was devoted to provide background information about the participant teachers. It can be seen that four females and ten males were participated in the questionnaire. Moreover, table (1) shows that 10 teachers had (2-10) years of experience, and three of them had more than 10 years while one of them had 2 years of experience or fewer.

3.2 The Instrument

The current study has used only one instrument which is an open – ended questionnaire (see appendix 1). The questionnaire was designed to show whether the hypotheses are confirmed or
rejected. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part asks the participants three questions to provide the reader with some basic knowledge about the participants. This part also attempts to diagnose any differences in answering the question items (in the second part) by the participants regarding their gender, degree and years of experience. This will be discussed in section five based on the results of data collection.

In addition, the second part of the questionnaire presents several open-ended questions with the aim of finding out appropriate answers for the hypothesized items. Questions (1, 2, 3 and 4) are designed on the basis of hypothesis (1); question (5) is created on hypothesis (2) and question (6) is based on hypothesis (3).

4. Results

This section sheds light on the results of the present study. As mentioned previously, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to the participant teachers. Their responses are shown in this section and will be discussed in the next section. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked six questions.

The first question asked the participants whether male and female students are different in using language aspects (pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammar and so on); if they are; how? The teachers’ responses vary. All the teachers agreed that there are differences between male and female students in using language. The majority reported that often male students are more active in using second language in general. Nevertheless, some teachers said that female students are better. Moreover, there were other teachers who stated that females are more active in some aspects while males are more active in some other aspects. Teacher one (T1), and T2 showed their dissatisfaction with females’ intonations and appreciated males’ intonations. T3 supported them this way: “in general, male students have a better ability to be native-like in pronunciation and intonation”. Further, T5 stated that “the female students use rising intonation, perhaps because of lack of confidence”. But, T4 disagreed with them and thought “female students use a more accurate intonation”.

In addition, in terms of vocabulary use, T4 believed that “female students use more vocabulary in their speech than boys”. Whereas, T3, T7, T9, and T12 thought that males are superior to females. T3 suggested that “they (male students) develop a richer storage of vocabulary items”. T7 and T9 in a similar quote indicated that ”males use a more advanced vocabulary than females”. Moreover, T12 stated that males care more about vocabulary than females. Besides, T5 and T11 had a different view on students’ vocabulary use. T5 revealed that “females choose vocabularies that indicate beauty and emotion; and they (female students) avoid dirty and rude words”. T11 claims that “Males tend to be harsher while females are gentler”.
Finally, some of the teachers remarked gender differences in grammar use. T10 believed that “male students are usually better in grammar and pronunciation”. In contrast, T3, T9, T12 and T13 disagreed. They insisted that it is the female students who follow the grammatical rules. Further, T3 asserted that “male students usually imitate the variety they hear from the films; sometimes, they use slangs”.

The second question of the questionnaire attempted to explore which gender uses a more polite language. All of the teachers revealed that female students usually use a more polite language. T1, T2, T6, T7, T13 and T14 acknowledged that using a more polite language by females is either due to social or cultural influence, or both. T1: “females use a more polite language because they are restricted to social norms and cultural virtues”. T2 thought that "females are more polite in their speech because of cultural instructions". T7: “female students use a more polite language because they pay utmost attention to social aspects”. Furthermore, some other teachers (T5, T10, T11 and T12) stated some psychological reasons behind using a more polite language by female students such as they are shy, gentler, and more sensitive.

The third question aimed to diagnose whether male students use a more formal/informal language or females. Like the previous question, the responses of the teachers were in harmony. They all agreed that the female students tend to use a more formal language. The teachers stated different reasons in their responses. T3, T6, T12 believed that the female students use a more formal language because they are more connected to their text books and what they learn in their lessons. Whereas, some other teachers (T2, T10, T13 and T14) asserted that male students use a more informal language because they have foreign friends, they may work in foreign companies, they are affected by movies, and they are more attached to social media.

The fourth question tried to investigate gender differences in spoken and written languages. The participants replied to this question in different ways. The majority of the teachers thought that the differences are observed in both spoken and written languages (for example: T1, T2, T4, T5, T6, T8, T11, T12 and T14). T5 indicated that "gender differences can be seen in spoken and written languages. Males seem to be better in the spoken language while females seem to pay more attention to their writings than males”. Moreover, some other teachers believed that gender differences are mainly seen in spoken language (T3, T7, T10, and T13) while one of them felt that gender differences occur in written language more (T9). To illustrate, T13 reported that "gender differences are often noticed in spoken language not in written language because both genders try to use a more structured, polite and formal language in their writings”. Unlike those teachers who supported the occurrence of gender differences in spoken language, T9 stated that "gender differences are noticed in written language more. Female students often use a better grammar in their writings while male students are better in vocabulary use".

The aim of the fifth question was to understand whether the classroom environment or the physical characteristics cause gender differences in using language. The responses differ from a
participant to another. Some of the participants (Such as T2, T4, T5, T7, T8, and T13) acknowledged that both the classroom environment and physical characteristics have their own impacts on gender differences. T5 in the response of the current question wrote "I think both. For example, the classroom environment may affect the female students to feel less free and shy in front of their male colleagues. Thus, their way of speaking, their choice of words and their voice are affected. Moreover, physical characteristics also have its role in gender difference since females and males are different biologically".

Furthermore, some other participants (T1, T6, T9, T11, and T14) maintained that the environment of the classrooms play a greater role in gender differences in using language. T1 "the classroom environment has a wider influence on both genders, especially on females. If the numbers of females are less than males, their language style will be affected". Similarly, T6 affirmed that "the classroom environment is responsible for creating some gender differences. The female students, therefore, are more silent inside the classroom". Moreover, T11 stated that "females might feel freer when they are with only female colleagues, and the same for males is true".

In addition to the viewpoints mentioned before, a few of them (T3, T10, and T12) believed that physical characteristics affects gender differences more. T3: "some of the differences (gender differences) that are noticed are due to their physical characteristics". Moreover, T12 suggested that "since they are physically different, both genders use different styles of language".

The final question aimed at discovering the influence of culture and society on gender differences. All of the participants agreed that culture and society, in a way, cause gender differences. They proclaimed that since students are the production of culture and society, they (culture and society) play a great role in shaping their (students') orientation. T1 said "in some cultures, women are more inclined to feel shy, and they are not as open as men". T3 supported this idea "female students are mostly not that confident and feel shy due to some cultural norms". Moreover, T10 and T12 have a similar view. T10: "cultural and social obligations force females to feel shy and isolated". Likewise, T12 believed that "culture and society have produced shy females in the classroom, but male students are better".

Furthermore, some other participants asserted that they have observed men's supremacy due to cultural and social impacts. For instance, T5 stated that "in many cultures, men are always the more powerful gender". Similarly, T6 mentioned male dominance due to social and cultural influence. Moreover, T8 suggested that "it is quite obvious that because of cultural and social influence, males show stronger self-confidence than their counterparts". Finally, T14 revealed that "due to culture which is an inseparable part of society, males usually have stronger personalities. This may be one of the reasons why male students are more active in some language aspects".
5. Discussions

The main purpose of the present study was to find out any gender differences in using language inside the EFL classes observed by teachers. Further, this research also aimed to investigate the reasons behind gender difference from teachers' points of view. Moreover, three hypotheses were predicted. Therefore, a questionnaire was prepared to provide answers for the predicted hypotheses. The results of the questionnaire revealed some interesting data from the teachers' observations.

**The first hypothesis**: Male and female students use language differently; female students are hypothesized to use a more polite, and formal language in both spoken and written discourse.

The first hypothesis consists of several parts. As mentioned in the previous sections, for each part different questions were prepared in the questionnaire.

**Part One**: The results confirmed the first part of this hypothesis. As predicted in the hypothesis, there were gender differences in using language. The consensus of the participants was that male students and female students use different languages in the classroom. The results showed that in some language aspects female students outperform males, and in some other aspects, males show a better performance. The teachers revealed that there are reasons behind gender differences. The females' compassionate, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and attachment to books and lectures, and males' interests in imitation were some valid causes of gender differences mentioned by the teachers.

**Part Two**: In the second part of the first hypothesis, it was predicted that females use a more polite and formal language than males. The results supported this part as well. The teachers acknowledged that according to what they observed in the classroom, female students are more inclined to use a polite and formal language than male students. The teachers thought that this polite and formal use of language by females interrelated with some psychological, cultural and social effect.

**Part Three**: In this part, it was hypothesized that there are gender differences in both spoken and written languages. This part was confirmed by almost all the teachers. They affirmed that they have noticed gender differences in the students' speech and writings. Some of the teachers reported the differences in both spoken and written language, and others shed light on gender differences in either spoken or written discourses. However, the answer of one of the participants partially contradicted this part of the first hypothesis. That participant informed that there are gender differences in the students' spoken language but they use a similar language in their writings in terms of structure, formality and politeness.

**The second hypothesis**: Classroom environment and physical characteristics play a role in causing gender difference in the students' language use.
The results of the questionnaire certified the truth of this hypothesis. The teachers admitted that either classroom environment or physical characteristics, or both lead to gender differences. The classroom environment affects the female students to be less active. Besides, the male students sometimes dominate the class participations and activities. Furthermore, as the teachers affirmed, since males and females biologically are different, their differences in language use are reasonable.

**The third hypothesis:** The culture and social environment play a big part in the gender differences in using language.

The findings of this research also confirmed this hypothesis. The teachers assured that culture and society have influence over gender differences in using language. Culture and society are interconnected. As enlightened by the participants, students are a part of their culture and society. Thus, cultural values and social norms affect gender differences. For instance, according to what teachers observed, it seems that culture and society sometimes produce dominant males and shy females.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, gender differences in using language are available in the EFL classrooms. In some language aspects, male students outperform female students, and in some other language aspects females outperform males. There are various factors behind gender differences in using language in the EFL classes; such as: classroom environment, physical characteristics, cultural, and social impacts. Gender differences are noticed in both spoken and written discourses. Further, It seems that female students use a more polite and formal language than males.

7. Pedagogical Implications

The results of this research showed that the teachers had different views about gender differences in using language, though they all agreed that there are such differences. The teachers identified some factors that cause gender differences. This study; therefore, recommends the following salient pedagogical implications based on what emerged from the participants' responses.

1. **The impacts of native speakers:** some students are affected by the language they hear from natives. Sometimes, they use slangs because of movies, social media and native speakers from foreign companies.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** The teachers have to direct the students to take benefit from native speakers academically: in a way that can be beneficial for both genders. The
teachers may teach them about slangs, and warn them of rude and offensive words. They can be shown movies in the class, or exposed to native speakers.

2. The impacts of classroom environment: some students are affected by the classroom environment. Thus, they use different languages.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** The teachers should create a classroom environment that every student (male or female) feel safe and comfortable. The teachers mentioned the dominance of boys and shyness of girls. So the teachers should stop any dominance and use some motivation strategies to encourage shy (silent) students participate more in the class activities.

3. The impacts of physical characteristics: Some students are affected by their physical characteristics. Their biological differences cause them to think, behave, and speak differently.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** The teachers have to be aware that some students are biologically different. Therefore, they have to prepare their lessons accordingly. Further, the teachers might pay rather attention to those students whose intonations are not good enough. The teachers may provide more time to help them improve their intonations, or motivate them.

4. The impacts of Textbooks and Lectures: some students are completely affected by what they learn from the textbooks and lectures.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** Because some students only learn what they study, the teachers should think about using authentic and up-to-date materials that are similar to the daily life, customs, traditions, literature, art, and life style of the target language speakers.

5. Psychological impacts: Some students may psychologically differ from others because they do not feel comfortable.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** The teachers have to take the students' psychological situations into consideration. If a student is psychologically not fine, the teacher can explore the problem and offer some advice.

6. Cultural and social impacts: some students are over affected by their cultural and social norms. They think, behave, and speak the way their culture and society want.

**Suggestion for pedagogical implications:** The teachers must know about the students' cultures and social mores. Sometimes, the students are coming from different areas of the country, so they may have different cultural and social backgrounds. Furthermore, the target language is a foreign language for the students; therefore, the students' culture must be different from the culture of the people of the target language. Thus, the teachers must take care of this issue.
because cultural and social values are often very important for people. Moreover, the teacher should help those students whose culture and society prevent them from showing their real performance.

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References


Appendix 1: Open – ended questionnaire

Dear Participants

The purpose of preparing this questionnaire is to diagnose gender differences in using language in the EFL classrooms from teachers’ views. Your answers will be kept completely confidential.

Part I: Background Information:

1) Gender: Male □ Female □
2) Years of experience:
   2 years or fewer □ 2-10 years □ more than 10 years □
3) Degree:
   MA □ PhD □

Part II: Teachers’ viewpoints on gender differences in using language

❖ Are male and female students different in using language aspects (pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammar and so on)? How?

❖ Do you think male or female students use a more polite language? Why?

❖ Which gender does use a more formal/informal language? Why?

❖ Are there gender differences in spoken languages and/or written languages?

❖ Do you think the classroom environment or the physical characteristics cause the gender differences in using language?
Have you observed any influence of culture and society on gender differences?

Thanks for your contribution

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