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THE IMPACT OF GENDER IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The article examines the development of gender studies in linguistics, focusing on the key theories and scientific contributions that have played an important role in shaping the field. The aim of the work is to analyze how gender norms and gender representations influence linguistic behavior and communicative practices, as well as to assess the role of feminist linguistics in revealing the mechanisms underlying these differences. The main task is to study the specificities of gender influence in the foreign language learning process, identifying possible linguistic and psychological differences determined by gender.

Key words: gender, difference, teaching, foreign language, learning, motivation, perception.

Introduction

From birth, the individual is immersed in a gender system that influences his or her upbringing, behavior and perception of the world. In traditional societies,

this influence manifests itself from childhood through rituals, clothing choices and toys differentiated for girls and boys. These gender norms are then reinforced by the family, the education system and the media, which convey distinct representations of masculinity and femininity.

The study of the relationship between language and gender has developed progressively, particularly with the emergence, in the 1960s, of the conceptual distinction between biological sex and sociocultural gender. While some earlier theories suggested a direct link between grammatical gender and biological categories, the discovery of languages without grammatical gender challenged these assumptions. Moreover, sociolinguistics has revealed differences in language use between men and women, generally explained by historical and social factors.

The language of men and women plays an important role in shaping linguistic norms. However, the role of women in establishing linguistic standards remains crucial. On the one hand, women's language represents a full realization of the national language, and on the other, it reflects certain specific characteristics that emerge under the influence of broader linguistic trends and are shaped by gender-related factors. Bing, J. M., & Bergvall, V. L. (1998, pp. 536–548).

The impact of gender on foreign language learning is a rapidly growing field of research. It highlights differences in the ways men and women engage with language education. As a social and cultural construct, gender influences learners' participation, engagement, and motivation, thereby altering classroom dynamics. For example, communication styles and learning strategies often differ by sex, partly due to the differentiated maturation of the brain's hemispheres. These differences are reinforced by social norms that shape perceptions of education and language. Taking these elements into account in teaching methods allows instruction to be adapted to the specific needs of each group, thus promoting more inclusive and equitable learning. To conduct the analysis, the following research questions were addressed. Gender in education, particularly in foreign language teaching, is a highly relevant area of current research.

Our study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the key gender-related difference in foreign language learning?
2. To what extent does the gender of learners influence their skills and motivation in learning foreign languages?
3. Considering gender differences, which pedagogical approaches and methods can improve foreign language learning outcomes?

Our study is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and pedagogy, in order to better understand the influence of gender on foreign language acquisition and to explore pedagogical solutions adapted to the needs of each learner.

METHODOLOGY

In our article, we employed an interdisciplinary methodological approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. These strategies enabled us to conduct a theoretical analysis that allowed for a deeper understanding of the influence of gender on foreign language learning.

We also adopted a comparative approach to examine gender-based differences in the impact of foreign language learning. This approach helped us compare behavior, strategies, and levels of motivation according to gender and educational level.

Results

A survey was conducted as part of the research to identify public perceptions of the impact of gender on foreign language learning. 75 people from different age groups and educational levels participated in the survey. The questionnaire included a number of questions related to motivation to learn, the impact of the teacher's gender, as well as gender differences in language learning.

The survey results are presented below in percentage terms.

1. The impact of gender on foreign language learning

59.5% of the participants believe that gender does not have any significant impact on the ability to learn a foreign language. The remaining 40.5% indicated that gender can have some impact, in one way or another.

2. Motivation of women and men

40% of participants responded that women are usually more motivated than men to learn a foreign language. This perception can be linked to gender expectations in social roles and the importance of communication skills.

3. The importance of the teacher's gender

For 50% of respondents, the teacher's gender plays an important role in the language learning process. The other half see it as a secondary or insignificant factor.

4. Preferred teacher by gender

38.4% of participants indicated that they prefer to study with female teachers. This may be due to differences in communication styles, emotional attitudes, or teaching approaches. The remaining participants indicated that the teacher's gender is not significant for them or that they prefer male teachers. The survey revealed that although the majority does not see a direct connection between gender and language learning abilities, public perceptions often attribute greater motivation and social skills to women in relation to language learning. This indicates that there are persistent gender stereotypes that can affect both the learning process and assessment and participation.

Discussion

Theoretical Approaches to Gender in Linguistics

The article explores the concept of gender, provides a historical overview of the origin of the term, and examines sex-based differences between men and women that have historically influenced the development of their respective discourse patterns. It addresses not only the distinction between biological sex and social gender but also the two main approaches in the study of gender in linguistics: the functional asymmetry of the brain and the discursive and communicative behavior of men and women.

The article also highlights the significant advantage of girls in acquiring reading and writing skills, as well as the similarities observed in listening comprehension between boys and girls during lessons. Finally, it analyzes the influence of gender on classroom interaction in the context of foreign language teaching.

There are two main approaches to the study of gender in linguistics. The first focuses on the influence of gender characteristics on the development of language abilities through the theory of functional brain asymmetry. According to this theory, the interactions between the right and left hemispheres play a crucial role in language acquisition. Many neuropsychologists have studied the types of functional asymmetry and the specific features of interhemispheric interactions. A typological classification of language abilities distinguishes two modes of language learning: the rational mode, associated with left-hemisphere thinking, and the intuitive mode, associated with right-hemisphere thinking Beauvoir, S. de. (1949). *Le deuxième sexe*. Gallimard. (p.267).

Researchers following this approach believe that individuals possessing either of these language acquisition modes can achieve good results, but by using different strategies and means.

The second approach focuses on the discursive and communicative behavior of men and women, analyzing their lexical and stylistic preferences. Studies have shown that in girls, the left hemisphere of the brain matures more quickly. (Butler, J. 1990, pp. 25–34).

As a result, they tend to have more rational and symbolic thinking. Moreover, the cortical centers of their right and left hemispheres establish functional connections more easily, allowing them to switch more smoothly from one activity to another. Research conducted by V.A. Petrova revealed a statistically significant advantage for girls in spelling exercises, such as correcting spelling mistakes, vocabulary dictations, and writing short compositions at home. These results suggest that differences in brain development between boys and girls may influence their approach to language learning and their success in certain language skills. Studies show that girls perform better than boys in grammar exercises. This superiority is explained by the fact that learning grammar relies on rational and logical processes, which are characteristic of left-hemisphere thinking—an area that matures more quickly in girls. In contrast, the development of communicative

skills in boys presents specific features. Their right hemisphere develops faster than the left, which promotes more creative thinking and strong exploratory activity. Their speech is generally less expressive, with a reduced use of adjectives. Although they assimilate new language patterns quickly, they also tend to forget them more easily. Furthermore, their attention is more unstable, and they tend to excel in tasks involving visuospatial skills. Their period of linguistic productivity appears later than that of girls. Numerous research findings point to a significant advantage for girls in the acquisition of reading and writing skills. On the other hand, boys' and girls' performance is broadly similar in listening comprehension. There are no statistically significant differences in the learning of monological and dialogical discourse, although a certain gender specificity is observed in the teaching of oral expression.

Thus, the acquisition of communicative skills varies according to gender, due to differences in the interaction between the cerebral hemispheres. However, although these features are partly genetically determined, they can be modified under the influence of various social factors. Let's take a look at how a foreign language teaching method or strategy can be defined taking into account the gender factor, according to the theory of functional brain asymmetry. Some researchers believe that for girls, it is preferable to rely on traditional teaching methods: explanatory-illustrative and reproductive. Since girls with left-hemisphere dominance have more developed verbal skills, they prefer detailed analysis of texts, do better in exercises with pre-set answers, and more easily master tasks requiring mechanical memorization. For boys, problem-solving and research methods are preferable. Boys are more attracted to creative and exploratory activities. The teacher should present theory through practice, for example, by proposing that they formulate a rule themselves after completing a series of exercises. It's advisable to adopt a fast pace, introduce various forms of activity and make the course dynamic and enriching. Unfortunately, current teaching practices and most foreign language textbooks are based mainly on a left-hemisphere way of thinking, more characteristic of girls. This is why girls are often more successful at learning languages.

The second approach to the study of gender in linguistics is based on the analysis of the discursive and communicative behavior of men and women. Some authors, such as E.A. Zenskaya and M.A. Kitaigorodskaya, believe that the lexical fields of male and female speech reflect different worldviews: sports, hunting, professions, and the military domain (for men) versus nature, animals, the surrounding and everyday world (for women). This distinction should be taken into account when teaching vocabulary. Gender differentiation among adolescents influences personality development, their perception of the world, and their interests, which is linked to the development of gendered social skills. Courses that consider the distribution of interests engage the emotional aspect of students and, consequently, enhance their motivation to learn. Attention should also be paid to the differences in male and female listening styles. Girls tend to be more

emotional and impressionable, with a predominance of imaginative thinking. When processing information, girls place greater importance on the emotional content of speech. Boys, on the other hand, tend to express their interests through analytical thinking, focusing more on the detailed content of the discourse. From adolescence onward, gender differences become quite pronounced. However, it is estimated that 80 to 85% of men primarily exhibit a masculine thinking style, while 15 to 20% show a degree of feminization. Around 10% of women have brains programmed for a masculine thinking style. Thus, gender dominance does not always correspond to biological sex.

Moreover, in modern society, a trend toward the feminization of men and the masculinization of women has been observed. Researchers have determined that each individual possesses two types of sex:

- **Biological sex (sex)**
- **Sociocultural gender (gender)**

This distinction has made it possible to recognize and discuss the influence of stereotypes on our preferences, opportunities, and social roles as men and women. Therefore, a person's worldview and interests are not determined solely by their biological sex, but also by their sociocultural gender. It can be concluded that the gender-based approach aims to create conditions that allow students—whether boys or girls—to fully realize their potential. But why do modern methods of foreign language teaching not sufficiently take into account the fact that students of different sexes and ages perceive information differently? (Lakoff, R. 1975, 45–80).

Integrating the gender factor into the design of educational programs encounters several challenges. First, the issue of separate education for boys and girls remains a subject of debate. In Russia, in the countries of the former USSR, as well as in several Western European countries and in the United States, the number of schools practicing gender-segregated education is increasing.

According to some teachers, such as those from the village of Vassilievka in the Belgorod district, discipline in gender-segregated classes has improved, students are no longer hesitant to participate in class, and their self-esteem has increased, which has led to better academic performance. However, many teachers and psychologists argue that separate education has a negative impact on personality development, influencing children's socialization.

Secondly, there are no well-developed educational programs in this area, and the content of tasks that take gender into account requires thorough preparation as well as significant emotional investment from teachers. Implementing a gender-based approach in mixed-gender classrooms is challenging. Nevertheless, most researchers conclude that it is appropriate to guide the education of pupils and students toward differentiation based on the gender-based approach. It is essential to take into account different teaching methods for children of both sexes simultaneously. From a methodological point of view, this can be implemented through the use of interactive learning methods and the application of problem-based teaching principles. This will enable students not only to learn more

effectively, but also to adapt more easily to the world around them.

The Influence of Gender on Classroom Interaction in Foreign Language Teaching

The gender factor plays an important role in the process of learning foreign languages, influencing both the level of participation and the degree of student engagement in the educational process. Differences in behavior, motivation, and learning styles between boys and girls can shape classroom interaction dynamics and affect the overall effectiveness of teaching. (Trudgill, P., 1974, pp. 70–105).

Research shows that boys and girls adopt different communication styles in class. Girls more frequently use cooperative communication strategies, such as active listening, supporting the interlocutor, and seeking harmony in dialogue (Tannen, Veche Perseus, 1996, p. 212). Boys, on the other hand, tend to adopt more competitive forms of communication, often dominating discussions and expressing their opinions with greater confidence. This can create an imbalance in the classroom when one gender assumes a leadership role while the other remains less active.

Students' gender also influences their participation in discussions. Girls often show a tendency to follow communication rules, which can make them less spontaneous in debate situations that require quick responses and assertiveness (Sunderland, 2000, pp. 203–223). Boys, meanwhile, are more willing to take initiative but may be less inclined to listen to others' viewpoints.

These differences should be considered when organizing group work in order to highlight and leverage the strengths of each gender (A. Pavlenko, A. Blackledge, I. Piller, & M. Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001, pp. 17–52). Motivation to learn a foreign language also varies according to gender. Girls more often view language learning as a means of communication and socialization, as well as a factor contributing to academic success (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 63). Boys, on the other hand, may be less motivated to learn a language if they do not perceive immediate practical benefits. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to adopt diverse pedagogical approaches to engage both groups effectively.

Teachers may also—often unintentionally—interact differently with students based on their gender. Studies show that teachers generally give boys more response time and are less likely to interrupt them during discussions. (Sunderland J. o., 2000, pp. 103–107). Girls, in contrast, tend to receive more encouraging feedback but are offered fewer opportunities to develop their communicative skills in competitive environments.

This highlights the importance of a mindful and intentional approach to organizing classroom interactions (Ehrlich, 2001, p. 55).

Given the observed differences, teachers can implement several strategies to balance student participation according to gender:

- **Use role-playing activities** that encourage a fair distribution of initiative.

- **Organize mixed-gender groups** so that boys and girls learn to integrate different communication styles.
- **Implement active learning methods**, such as debates and projects, that stimulate participation from all students.

Consciously monitor the distribution of attention to both male and female students to ensure equal opportunities for expression.

To better understand society’s views on gender-related differences in foreign language learning, we conducted a survey of 75 people from different age groups, in order to identify society’s perception of the influence of gender on foreign language teaching.

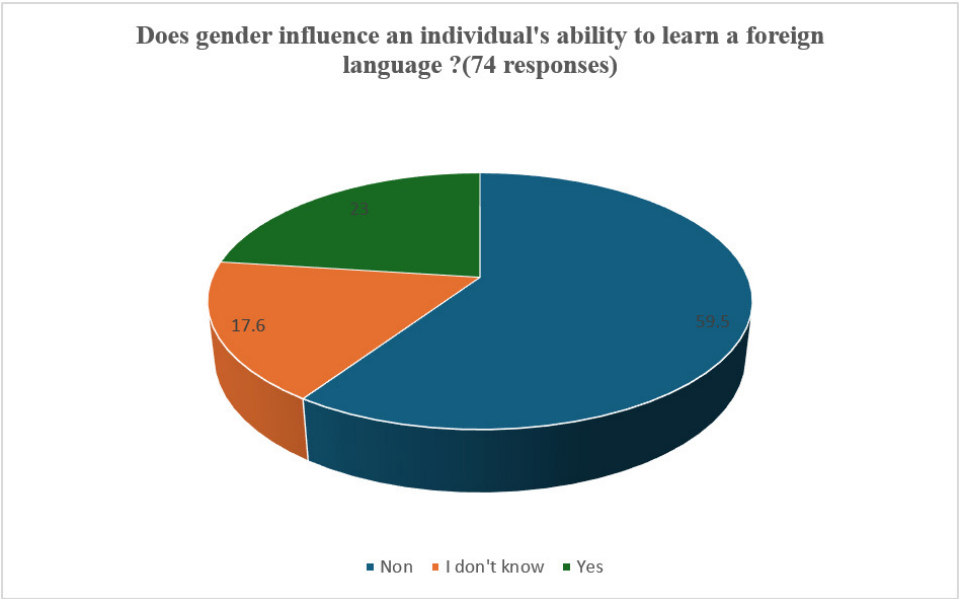


Chart 1. Does gender influence an individual’s ability to learn a foreign language?

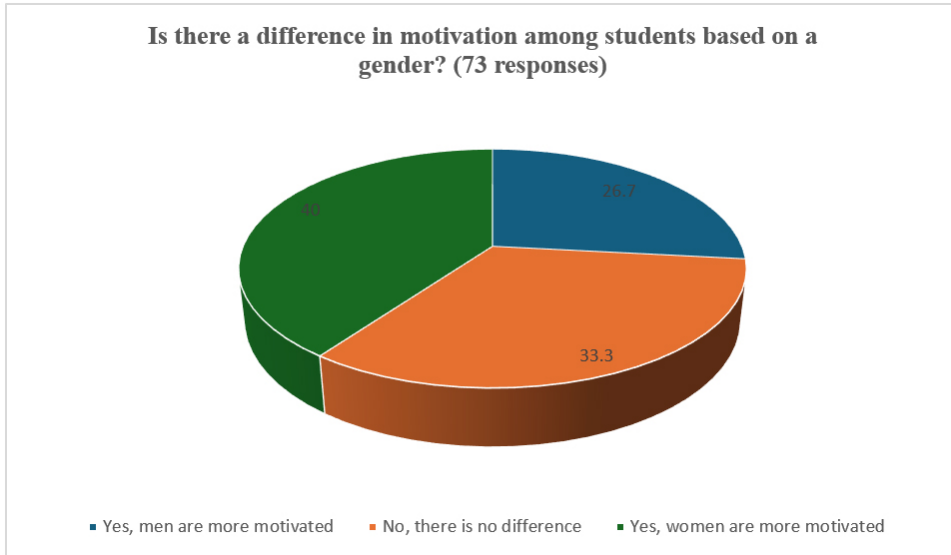


Chart 2. Is there a difference in motivation among students based on a gender?

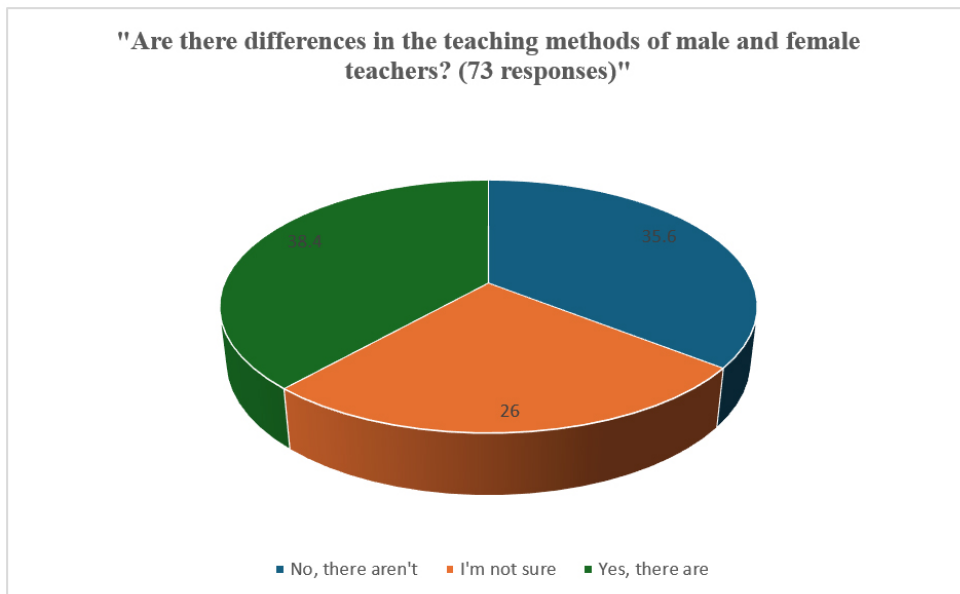


Chart 3. Are there differences in the teaching methods of male and female teachers?

59.5% of participants believe that gender has no influence on the ability to learn a foreign language, while 40% think that, in general, women are more motivated than men to learn a foreign language. Additionally, 50% consider the teacher's gender to be an important factor in language teaching. Finally, 38.4% of respondents expressed a preference for learning a foreign language with a female teacher.

These results show that although the majority believe gender does not directly affect the ability to learn a foreign language, social perceptions tend to attribute greater motivation to women and emphasize the significance of the teacher's gender in the learning process. This highlights the persistence of gendered representations in the field of language education. (Holmes, J. 2008, 3rd ed).

Thus, gender has a significant impact on student interaction in the process of foreign language learning. Taking gender differences into account and applying appropriate pedagogical strategies makes it possible to create a more balanced and effective learning environment. The analysis of classroom interactions reveals the central role of gender in student engagement and participation in foreign language learning. Differences in communication, motivation, and teacher interaction influence the overall classroom dynamic. (Davtian, E., & Chahmuradian, A. 2025, p. 23).

It is therefore essential for teachers to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices to promote equitable participation and optimize the learning experience for all students. By implementing targeted strategies, it is possible to minimize inequalities and foster an environment in which each student—regardless of gender—feels valued and engaged in their learning journey Cameron, D. (1992). *Feminism and linguistic theory* (2nd ed.). Macmillan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that gender plays a fundamental role in how students approach the learning of foreign languages. The differences observed in communication styles, motivation, and modes of thinking between boys and girls highlight the importance of considering these factors in language education. Traditional teaching methods do not always meet the specific needs of each gender, which can lead to unequal participation and achievement in the classroom.

However, by adopting a gender-sensitive pedagogical approach, teachers can better address students' needs, enhance their engagement and performance, and create a more balanced learning environment. This approach not only optimizes language teaching but also promotes a more inclusive education that acknowledges and values gender differences while fostering equal opportunities for all learners.

The results of our own research confirm the growing recognition of gender's influence on educational dynamics. We conducted a survey among people of various age groups to understand society's perception of gender's impact on foreign language teaching. The results showed that the majority of respondents believe gender does not significantly affect the ability to learn foreign languages.

In other words, according to general opinion, gender differences do not directly determine success or failure in this domain.

However, our in-depth analysis and linguistic study conducted as part of this work reveal a different reality. Despite the perceptions shared by survey participants, our observations show that gender indeed influences certain aspects of learning — notably in how learners interact, express emotions, perceive educational situations, or choose linguistic strategies. These differences, although sometimes subtle, affect the dynamics of language acquisition and the process of linguistic normalization.

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ВЛИЯНИЕ ГЕНДЕРА НА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

В статье рассматривается развитие гендерных исследований в лингвистике, особое внимание уделяется ключевым теориям и научным вкладам, сыгравшим значительную роль в формировании этой области. Целью работы является анализ влияния гендерных норм и гендерных представлений на языковое поведение и коммуникативные практики, а также оценка роли феминистской лингвистики в выявлении механизмов, лежащих в основе этих различий. Основная задача — изучение специфики влияния пола на процесс изучения иностранных языков, выявление возможных языковых и психологических различий, обусловленных полом.

Ключевые слова: гендер, различие, преподавание, иностранный язык, обучение, мотивация, восприятие.

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ՍԵՌԻ ԱԶԴԵՅՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՕՏԱՐ ԼԵԶՈՒՆԵՐԻ ՈՒՍՈՒՑՄԱՆ ՎՐԱ

Հոդվածը անդրադառնում է գենդերային լեզվական ուսումնասիրությունների զարգացման ընթացքին լեզվաբանության ոլորտում՝ շեշտադրելով այն առանցքային տեսությունները և գիտական ներդրումները, որոնք էական դեր են խաղացել այս ոլորտի ձևավորման գործում: Աշխատանքի նպատակն է վերլուծել, թե ինչպես են գենդերային նորմերը և սեռային ներկայացումները ազդում լեզվական վարքի ու հաղորդակցական պրակտիկայի վրա,

ինչպես նաև գնահատել ֆեմինիստական լեզվաբանության դերը՝ վերջինիս տարբերությունների հիմքում ընկած մեխանիզմների բացահայտման գործում: Գլխավոր խնդիրն է ուսումնասիրել օտար լեզուների ուսուցման գործընթացում գենդերի ազդեցության առանձնահատկությունները՝ բացահայտելով հնարավոր լեզվաբանական և հոգեբանական տարբերությունները, որոնք պայմանավորված են սեռային պատկանելիությամբ:

Հիմնաբառեր՝ սեռ, տարբերություն, դասավանդում, օտար լեզու, ուսուցում, մոտիվացիա, ընկալում:

Հոդվածը խմբագրություն է ներկայացվել՝ 2025թ. ապրիլի 10-ին:

Հոդվածը հանձնվել է գրախոսման՝ 2025թ. ապրիլի 16-ին:

Հոդվածն ընդունվել է տպագրության՝ 2025թ. հունիսի 11-ին: