

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON ACHIEVEMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The article discusses the influence of gender difference in learning English as a second language. In order to identify this, the methods and discussions are given. Additionally, it has been shown that the results of participants demonstrate the influence of gender in SLA.

Introduction. It can be clearly seen that English is considered to be a second language in many countries meaning that they can acquire easily. However, there are a wide range of people who have difficulty in learning English as a second language. One of the most vital thing in second language acquisition is to take into consideration in learner's difference, namely age, gender, personality. The role of gender is important to achieve success in learning a second language.

Research methods. The study consisted of three steps according to gender difference. These are analyzing gender attitude, participants' observation in a week and examination on speaking competence.

Results and discussions. It is noticeable that the role of gender difference influences on SLA. Considering collecting of the participants' results, the influence of gender difference in learning English effectively should be emphasized. Creativeness for women is more than men according to results of the research. Additionally, female dominated male as to analyzing their competence in SLA. Writing skill with the help of creativeness for female overwhelming male knowledge of writing skill.

Besides that, male tended to writing in a formal way while female one uses informal way in writing. Men utilized more academic vocabulary rather than women.

Conclusion. To sum up, it is emphasized that Second Language Acquisition does not only depends on gender difference, but also people' character and mind. In addition to family plays a great role on children's future life. A shining example of it, girls dedicated to more four occupations, namely, nurse, mother, teacher and housewife in Asia rather than Europe.

Key words: second language acquisition, gender groups, gender dominance, mixed gender classroom, language proficiency, female, male.

Introduction. The English language is becoming more and more important in any sphere around the world. It must be pointed out that if people have communicative competence in English, they can get higher job prospects and also promotion. Additionally, it does not only help people to get higher job but also provide with huge

opportunities in any field life. For instance, people can utilize any digital tools with the help of English language which means that a wide range of modern technologies are based on English language.

Second language acquisition is not related to people's knowledge, but also learner's differences with age, gender and personality. Gender is important to achieve success in learning a second language. As to Ehrlich (2008): 'second language researchers assumed that there are differences in gender groups to acquire a second language. The research paid attention to what learners do, not who they are'. Gender dominance in SLA is related to country which means that each field of life has its own gender dominance as to country. Considering this concept, it is undeniable that distinctions between gender groups are related to learn a second language. Ellis (2012) and Norton (2010) noted that "some investigations witnessed a relationship between gender and speech features meaning that gender as a dynamic feature in social activities and concepts". There are some concepts gender distinctions in SLA given by many scholarships. Cameron (1995) pointed out that there is a difference between three models of language and gender. As to deficit model, females' speech is lower rather than the speech of males which means that men's speech is considered to be the accepted norm when the latter is perceived as deficient. Gascoigne (2002, 83) claimed that the dominance of gender in communication is related to men who utilize many interruptions in their speech and speak more than women.

Gender distinction in a second language acquisition is highly emphasized. There is no conclusion of making research gender distinctions in learning English as a second language. (Ellis, 1994: 203). According to Ellis (1994, 203) gender is important to acquire a second language proficiency. It is not always possible males overcome females in L2 proficiency means that women outperform men in some countries. Asian men can have higher proficiency in English than Asian women. Because as to culture, Asian females are 'isolated' in home which means that it causes to lose their most of time to caring for families instead of studying.

On the other hand, Aslan (2009) pointed out that the influence of gender is related to choose learning strategy. As to Ehrman and Oxford (1990) gender differences played a great role in strategy use. They made a research with the help of 1200 university students. As a result of this, they concluded that males tend to utilize more digital tools in SLA rather than females. Nima Shakouri (2012: pp. 1-6) consider that the theme of the article or text impacts on gender's reading comprehension and competence. It must be pointed out that males are keen on reading texts and news in L2 which are dedicated to sports, football games and politics while females prefer to read female topics, namely fashion, sale. Considering this view point, girls show their attitude in reading competence than boys. Furthermore, girls have a long-term memory to remember novels or stories.

In a research by Aslan (2009) females have more positive attitude in reading and writing tasks than males. It is obvious that women are good at using their creativeness in writing and communicative competence, resulting they can easily acquire a second language. Farhady (1982) claimed that women have an ability in attainment listening in SLA while Boyle (1987) noted that males are good at acquiring listening in vocabulary for EFL students who live in China. However, Bacon (1992) consider that there is no distinction between gender in listening competence in SLA.

I made this research with the help of two learners who study in the same sphere. Both of them have knowledge of grammatical competence, but a lack of speaking, writing and reading. This research is based on various activities (reading, writing, and speaking) during the lesson and oral questionnaire to examine their general knowledge in English as to their genders. The aim of my study is to find out which gender dominates to acquire English as a second language.

The participants are a freshman and a final year students who are studying in Tashkent Medical Academy. Jumayeva Jamila is 19 years old and come from Surkhandarya. Her nationality is Uzbek, but she can understand Tajik language as well as Uzbek. From her school years, she began to learn and took part in extra English courses. She graduated school with high level, decided to enter University. Having graduated school, she wanted to acquire English as a second language and continued her dream job in this sphere. Despite the fact that she was interested in learning foreign languages, her parents made her be a doctor like them. She studied chemistry, biology to enter in Medical sphere and stopped learning English. As she had an ability to study any sphere, she entered university which her parents want. These days she is being taught English language based on too basic grammar, vocabulary and writing. Definitely, she faced difficulties in acquiring English and misunderstood how to speak, how to use grammar structures to communicate. From time to time she get accustomed to listening to English music more than our classic one. As to her personality she is extrovert, outgoing and punctual to do anything. Besides that, she tends to watch videos, movies which are dedicated to English, resulting she imitates to speak like native speakers.

Second participant in my study is a final year student in Tashkent Medical Academy. His name is Aziz and his nationality is Uzbek. As coming from Bukhara, he can also speak and understand Tajik language. From his childhood, he always wanted to be a doctor. He entered university by preparing entrance exams, including chemistry, biology and mother tongue. During his school years, his second language was English, because he studied the school which was specialized English language. As to Critical Period Hypothesis, he began to learn English at the age of 7. He graduated school with high level, especially English. According to his studying at school, he had learnt English for 9 years. At a time when his parents encouraged and gave motivation him to learn English and take extra lessons. During school years he finished a wide range

of books, namely Headway (all levels), Longman Photo Vocabulary, Murphy. Unfortunately, he gave up learning his second language after leaving school. He prefers to read English books than to utilize speaking competence.

In the first day of my study, the participants were illustrated clear data about the aim of my research, its duration and importance. One of the most important thing was that participants should influence to one another. What I mean by this, I decided to teach in the same room, providing with different types of materials. The study was organized in per week utilizing various activities as to gender differences. The study consisted of three steps: 1) analyzing gender attitude in English (psychological test which is based on extra questions). 2) a week observations of participants at English lessons. 3) final exam based on speaking competence.

Step 1. Analyzing gender differences in English.

The questions were organized to identify gender's personality and attitude in English. In this task the participants were given questions and they had to write answers as to their character. The task was based on defining psychological checking of both genders. Considering their reading comprehension, the subjects had to complete the answers by using their reading comprehension in English and critical thinking. The task was also dedicated to enhance productive skill (writing) and it took them to do 20 minutes.

Step 2. Identifying reading and writing competence.

The lessons were based on reading and writing skill activities which the subjects had to show their background knowledge in general English. The activity was dedicated to reading competence in order to check their reading comprehension as to gender. The text 'A strong friendship' was taken the book (4000 essential words) which was well-known among EFL students and was downloaded from '<http://www.compasspub.com>'. Both learners were required to read the text and then they had to discuss what the text was about. Jamila read the text by using skimming and scanning strategies, but Aziz could not comprehend the meaning of the text completely because of a lack of vocabulary. Once finishing a lesson, Aziz asked me how to utilize reading strategies while reading any text and how to develop his level of vocabulary. During one-week lesson, Aziz was eager to learn by heart academic vocabularies and practice reading strategies. As a result, Aziz's reading skill was levelled up to not only understand the meaning of the text and learnt to take a pleasure from interesting reading texts. Considering Jamila's reading skill, she was a person who took a pleasure from reading stories. For this reason, she was able to be active in this activity.

The next activity was based on writing competence of English. The subjects were required to write a letter to their friend which was an informal letter. At the beginning of the lesson, I explained how to write informal letters by providing handouts. I taught them how to identify formal and informal letters one another and I asked them to add

their personal creativeness in informal letters. Jamila's letter was a sample of creative informal letter while the letter written by Aziz was a formal one.

Step 3. Checking speaking competence.

In the last step of my observation, I decided to check the participants' speaking competence in general English. In this task the subjects had to answer the questions based on different topics. The final speaking exam consisted of Part1 including simple questions and Part 2 describing a situation. After recording oral speaking test, I took into account and summarized their speaking competence.

Results and discussions. In the first stage of my study I utilized the psychological test in order to analyze their general knowledge and attitude in English. After finishing the psychological test, I found out that they differentiate one another as to their gender. Considering their answers, Jamila was good at productive skills including writing and speaking while Aziz had knowledge of grammar and reading. It must be pointed out that Aziz only paid attention to learn English by using traditional way, namely grammar rules, and reading texts. For this reason, he chose answers as to knowledge and interests. One of the weakest side of Aziz was that if he did not comprehend new words, he would stop reading the text. It is obvious that he is a person who denied to be overcome. As to Jamila's personality, she had strong knowledge of all skills and understood to answer the meaning of the questions easily.

As to **the second part of my research**, the participants were provided with three lessons that include different types of activities based on checking reading and writing competence.

At the beginning of the first lesson, I explained them what reading competence is. And next they were given the text 'A strong friendship' that was taken from the book. (4000 essential words). Their task was to read the text individually and then we discussed what the text was about. During the process, I revealed that Aziz had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the text, because he took into account vocabularies. However, Jamila acted as a person who read the text beforehand. Because she was able to understand the text completely and she was eager to discuss. Considering this issue, I advised Aziz to work on his vocabulary skill.

The second lesson was devoted to check their writing ability meaning that the subjects were needed to write a letter to their friend. I must emphasize that both participants were aware of how to write a letter which means that utilize writing structures. In spite of this, I gave an explanation how to write letters with details. Jamila used her creativeness as to her personality while Aziz wrote a very formal letter without any informal structure. I analyzed his attainment in writing by giving positive feedback. Considering his writing, I can say that he is a type of person who received any information in a formal way.

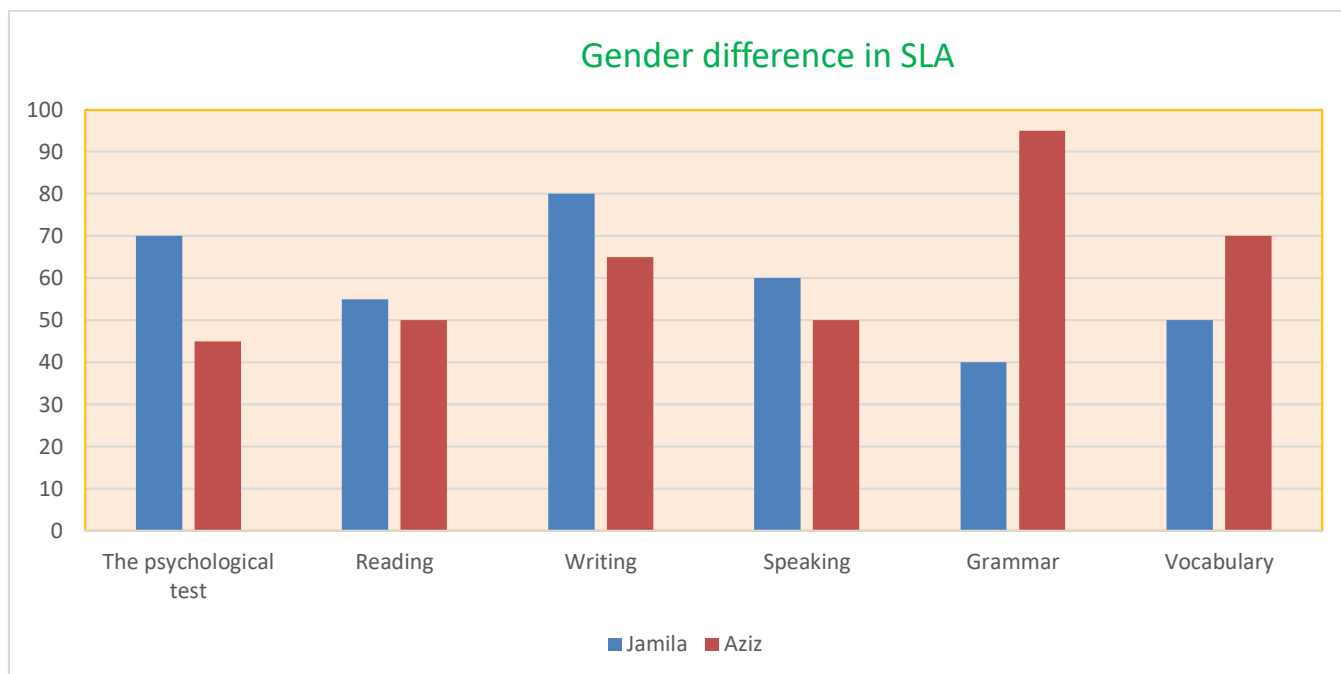
In the last lesson, the subjects had to pass speaking oral exam to identify speaking competence. The speaking task included Part1 to answer personal questions and Part 2 based on describing a situation.

In the third part of my study, I found that there was gender difference in speaking performance which means that Aziz had a lack of communicative competence because of hesitating, he always took into consideration grammar, vocabulary errors. On the other hand, Jamila utilized basic vocabulary and linking words appropriately. It was noticeable that Jamila were ready for speaking any type of topic as to her personality.

Jamila's result was noticeable to demonstrate that she could show her communicative competence during my research. She was a type of person who could utilize her creative ability in each skill. At the beginning of my research, she had difficulty in using appropriate words in her speech which means that she mixed academic and non-academic words. As a result of this, she made a mistake in her writing. Additionally, she is extrovert who is sociable and outgoing to communicate. For this reason, she was able to develop each skill of English. I admitted that she did not have a strong knowledge of English, but she was a good learner to study hard. One of the weakest side of Jamila was that she utilized simple vocabularies. Besides that, she did not use feelings in her speech. By teaching her, I thought that she enhanced to speak naturally. All in all, she had a creative ability which helped her to enhance English. Turning to Jamila's overall result, attainment in English as to the psychological test was 70 %, reading competence was 55%, writing skill was 80%, speaking was 60%, grammar was 40%, vocabulary was 50%.

As to **Aziz's** result, he tried to take part in lessons actively, but he could not do because of a lack of knowledge and his personality. He was already dedicated to himself for medical sphere. For this reason, he did not have an ability to acquire a second language. At the beginning of the lesson, he chose passive answers as to his personality and option. He mixed writing structure which means that he had to write an informal letter instead of formal one. Besides that, he did not take into account the meaning of the text while reading. But one of the strongest side of Aziz was grammar which was utilized correctly in speaking oral exam. It must be pointed out that his vocabulary was levelled up by working hard on this skill. It is noticeable that he utilized a strong vocabulary in his writing and speaking. Turning to Aziz's overall result, the psychological test was 45%, reading competence was 50%, writing skill was 65%, speaking was 50%, grammar was 95%, vocabulary was 70%.

Table 1.



The given chart illustrates the influence of gender in learning English as a second language. It can be clearly seen that female dominates male as to analyzing their competence in SLA. It must be pointed out that female developed significantly in writing skill at 80% compared to male. Turning to the male's result, he overcame in grammar and vocabulary competence than her. Overall, there was a huge distinction between gender in SLA as to her personality and interests.

Conclusion.

By way of conclusion, acquiring a second language is considered to be a complex process. From my point of view, it should be based on special construction and time-management. It is an undeniable fact that one can learn English grammar whereas communication competence is more vital in SLA. As to Oktay Aslan (2009) cited that "there are some crucial factors which influence on learners' learning process, namely age, social ability and gender distinction". Gender differences in communication should be emphasized which means that men tend to speak more in a formal way rather than women. According to Biber and Burges (2000) noted that "female's speech in conversation is to take into consideration personal and interactional aspects of conversation while male's speech focuses on transferring information. As to the influence of gender, learners in the same class are different and come from various background concluding they are different.

There is a huge difference that female and male in communication can be seen in non-verbal communication. It is cited by Griffin et al (1999) that women affect other non-verbal interaction than men. Female tend to utilize more eye contacts, gestures and smiles in communication. Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (1994) cited that "using language by female is to reflect female's conservatism, standing consciousness,

insecurity, connectedness and solidarity”. On the other hand, using language by men reflects their toughness, lack of effect, independence and control.

Considering collecting of the participants’ results, the impact of gender difference on achievement in learning English as a second language must be emphasized. As to my research, it is obvious that SLA does not only depend on gender distinction but also person’s personality and interests. Additionally, the family has played a huge role in children’s future meaning that Jamila’s family was a real sample of this idea. A year ago, I was provided by my teacher with the article which was about female stereotype. According to some researches, there are some textbooks in a school of the United States which was dedicated to be center on boys’ future job prospects than girls’ one. Schoolgirls who was fourth grade tend to be dependent to their future husbands. As a result of this, girls consider themselves to be only four occupations, namely nurse, mother, teacher and housewife. As far as I am concerned that, it is clear that gender difference influences on learning a second language. At the same time not only gender difference but also environment which surrounds us impact on any children’s mind, brain, personality and even learning process.

From my perspective, this study can be an important material for future researchers which want to create their own research about the gender distinction. I think that other researchers will require to make a research based on learning language as to learner age, creativity, personality or communicative competence.

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